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DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LITERATURE

MASTERS RESEARCH REPORT

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Fabricating Pleasure, Fabricating Black Queer Experience: The Time and Space of FAKA

Supervisor: Dr Danai Mupotsa

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the partial requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Department of African Literature

March 2019

Plagiarism Declaration

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Abstract:

This research report argues that deployments of pleasure by the black queer cultural duo FAKA, reconfigures engagements with time and space. Using performance studies as a method, I examine FAKA's video works, autobiographical utterances, and sartorial strategies, to think about the manifold ways in which pleasure is utilized by black queers, particularly the inhabitation of black femme, in a quest for greater freedom. Theorizing in affect and sensation studies, queer African Studies, and literary studies, allows for us to probe into the many ways in which black queer genealogies, erotic archives, and memories are surfaced by the duo.

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Contents

Plagiarism Declaration p. 2.

Abstract p. 3.

Acknowledgments p. 4.

Epigraph p. 9.

Intro p. 10.

Shebeleza: Assembling a Black Queer Here and "Now" p. 40.

Black Femmes in the Garden: Aesthetic Form, Sensorium and World Making in, *From a Distance* p. 73.

Un/Stitching Glamour and the Grotesque with Siyakaka p. 90.

Bye Family! A Conclusion/Exit p.116.

Bibliography p. 122.

'Every child, my child is wrapped in a
ribbon of rhythm
Every child, my child is wrapped in a
Ribbon of rhythm,
Every child, my child is wrapped in a
Ribbon of rhythm,
Wrapped in a ribbon of rhythm,
Wrapped in a ribbon of rhythm…

…. I've been told that these promises
come wrapped in satin skin
And the force that brings them forth
Is inherent in these vessels we use
To peruse this web-like journey of
existence'

-**Lebo Mashile, 'Every Child, My Child'**, ***In a Ribbon of Rhythm***

Intro

(20 to 25min/ 14 to 28 months)[1]

A prefatory remark dear reader, the above title signals some of the intellectual movements that this research report makes and draws from in its engagement with artistic and cultural practices produced on the continent. My own particular engagement with the Johannesburg- based performance art, music and fashion duo FAKA, has attuned me to the ways in which we can begin thinking about how pleasure is utilised by black queers in order to reconfigure our engagements with time and space. 'Intro' usually appears on the back-covers of music products such as LPs, CDs, cassette tapes, EPs, concert DVDs, and on our software and application playlists. The taken-for-granted assumption implicit in the preceding list, of the circulation of mass media that is in the interests of capital, is no oversight; rather I signal an approach which takes into account the ways in which dominant structures are colluded with, by- or involved in the construction of: bodies, objects, subjects, ideas, gestures, tastes and habits.

My use of 'Intro' over the more standardised approach to a research report, signals a break or departure from some of the methodological underpinnings which, as I will show below, inform theorizing on Africa and black queer. Instead, through a situatedness in performance, affect and sensation studies, queer African studies, black study and literary criticism I have been able to engage the various mediums which Desire Marea and Fela Gucci inhabit. Therefore I incorporate them here in order to defamiliarise the conventions of academic writing. Indeed, my use of 'Intro' performs perhaps, an inability to structure a research report within disciplinary mandates. Or, maybe the existing tools are inefficient for me at this point because the hope and

[1] Any error, malapropism, grammatical confusions identified and experienced in the report, are mine; some may be read as unconscious/non-conscious renderings or difficulties on my part.

aim of this project is to engage black queer experience in ways that are situated, embodied and ethical.

I have also included two periods of time that are cut off with a 'slash', (/). This splitting, or twinning, indicates on the one hand, an estimation of the time it will probably take you to read this intro. On the other hand, I have indicated the months that it has taken me to think about this research project. Of course, it has taken much longer (perhaps lifetimes) for me to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge I incorporate in writing this report, some of which I will be discussing in detail below. Moreover, this other length of time is not to be understood as suggesting a single-mindedness which afforded me the time and leisure to read, study and write. No. Any extensions that were taken are an indication of external pressures, traumas dealt with, procrastination, pleasures experienced, and healing journeys taken on with this project. In fact, I am tempted to say that more time was needed; by which I also suggest that this mode of address may be read as a strategy on my part to survive the deadline, and thus bypasses incurring more student debt.

Theatricalities aside (for now), one of the aims of this report is to explore the ways in which black queer subjects creatively arrive at, occupy or penetrate scenes, and the effect or affect of such occupation, arrival and penetration. The latter is a re-echoing of the isiZulu/ Xhosa meanings of the word faka[2], which mean to insert, penetrate and to occupy. Mainly, I think of how to 'occupy' is not only a term which impacts upon spatial coordinates, but as Sara Ahmed suggests, the term " 'occupy' allows us to link the question of inhabiting or residing

[2] The removal of quotation marks, or the decision not to italicise words from my mother tongues, is a refusal to accommodate certain readers at the expense of the (il)legibility of African languages. For more on this please see Ikhide R. Ikheloa, 'Of African Literature and the language and the politics of the stories', *Jalada* (3 years ago) (Online Article) Accessed 14 February 2019; Mapule Mohulatsi, 'The Nervous Conditions of the Mother Tongue', in Basit Jamiu (Curator), Uzoma Ihejirika and Emmanuel Dairo(Editors) *Selves: An Afro Anthology of Creative Non-Fiction* (Online: Brittle Paper, 2018), p.67-75; Namwali Serpell, 'Glossing Africa', *The New York Review* (Online Article) Accessed 11 March 2019.

within a space…to time (to be occupied with)." [3] Thus faka has implications on both time and space.

FAKA was established in 2015 and is the collaborative effort of two black queer creatives who are best friends, Buyani Duma and Thato Ramaisa, also known as Desire Marea and Fela Gucci respectively. Together they are the Legendary Mothers of the House of FAKA. It is important to honour this act of self-naming as it highlights an affiliation, one that is intimate, with the drag ball scene in Harlem New York during the 1980s- also captured in Jennie Livingstone's film, *Paris is Burning*.[4] However, throughout this report, I complicate how we read this relation, and even offer other possible scenes which are housed, or mapped onto the spaces which the duo fabricate.

This then leads us to my second aim, which focuses on the role of pleasure in these performative enactments; whether it be the deployment of modes of adornment and beautification, or even as an effect of traces from an ephemeral- even erotic, archive. More specifically, I engage with the life histories which both Desire Marea and Fela Gucci have made accessible to the public. Closely attending to the duo's various creative works in order to determine how pleasure is used to generate black queer landscapes and memories.

Rationale

This research report is important because it seeks to think critically about the uses of pleasure and the erotic by black queers. The preliminary question I ask is: what does pleasure do in our world-making practices? Thus it advances the growing field of African queer scholarship interested in questions of form and aesthetic by departing slightly from some social science approaches to research which are concerned with a gathering of identifiable subjects, who would

[3] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (Durham and London: Duke University, 2006).
[4] Jennie Livingstone (dir.), *Paris is Burning* Miramax, 1992. Film

be deemed legible as 'black queer'.[5] I have been cautioned in previous iterations of this project that it is important to be mindful of how meaning is also made out of the data gathered and preserved in the social sciences-and by extension the humanities. However, to make mention of an observation I first encounter through Keguro Macharia, (who implicitly suggests that social science research initiatives contribute to an erasure and an abstraction of a variety of ways black figures have, and continue to, inhabit the world)[6], need not be read as dissing the social sciences. Indeed, Macharia points to some of the complexities which come with being a researcher situated in the experiences of those whom you research. He is joined by Zethu Matebeni, Danai Mupotsa and Amina Mama, among others who point out similar difficulties.[7] The tendency which all these scholars teach me to resist, is one in which numbers and facts are gathered at the expense of narratives which are situated and located.[8]

Being mindful of the 'intellectual, ethical and methodological consequences to knowledge production in all spaces, particularly within academic spaces', as Mupotsa puts it, calls into question the requisite demand in which data is made to mean, and even that which it is supposed to mean. I therefore also deny the impulse to make all that I encounter through FAKA to reside within signification, especially as they utilise strategies which privilege opacity, artifice and gesture- categories which undermine an engagement with a fully 'knowable' subject, or research object. The analytical mode that I privilege then is one that does not separate object and subject. Inspired by an approach which foregrounds a feminist ethic, which I first encounter through Mama, my engagement with FAKA's strategies resists the required distinction between object and subject, and the demand for 'objective' quantifiable data.[9] What Mama points to in her

[5] Keguro Macharia, ' 5 Reflections onTrans* & Taxonomy (with Neo Musangi)', *Critical Arts* 30.4 (2016) p. 502
[6] Ibid.
[7] Danai Mupotsa with Lennon Mhishi, ' This Little Rage of Poetry/ Researching Gender and Sexuality', *Feminist Africa* (December 2008) pp.97-107; Amina Mama, ' What Does it Mean to Do Feminist Research in African Context', *Feminist Review* 2011 e4e20; Zethu Matebeni, " ' Vele Bambhentsele': Intimacies and Complexities in researching within black lesbian groups in Johannesburg' *Feminist Africa* (December 2008) pp.89-96.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Mama (2011) p. e13.

account of how the social sciences have been developed in Africa shows how a mode of objective science/ knowledge assumes that we ascribe meaning to the object that we objectify.[10]

The same limitations in terms of privileged analytical modes, occur in the humanities as well. Barbara Christian in 'A Race for Theory' points out how theory has become a commodity which helps determine whether scholars/researchers are hired or promoted in academic institutions; ultimately in this orientation 'works (–a word which evokes labour) have become texts. Critics no longer concerned with literature, but with other critics' texts, for the critic yearning for attention has displaced the writer and has conceived of himself as the centre.'[11] This report bypasses mechanisms which create a distance between the researcher and a 'research object'. By attending to the forms which FAKA deploys, forms which are grounded in modes of being femme, I proceed with an intention to enflesh experience and narrative in the (making of an) archive.

Also, in this project our attentions are turned slightly away from violence, an opportunity to take up a call made by Matebeni who, speaking in the context of black lesbian killings, urges us to imagine forms of visibility which are not governed by violence.[12] This follows an observation she makes about black lesbians only being hypervisible through violence. Her use of that term, 'hypervisible', brings to mind what Njabulo Ndebele has theorized as the representation of spectacle;[13] which is about the circulation of images which centre on exteriority and the obvious.

It would appear then that the black queer subject only enters the imagination through a spectacle of violence and being violated. Images of brutalized bodies however, are not the only vehicle through which such spectacle circulates. We can also note the circulation of spectacular

[10] Ibid.
[11] Barbara Christian, 'The Race for Theory', *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987) p.52.
[12] Zethu Matebeni, 'Death and the Modern Black Lesbian', *New South African Review 4.*
[13] Njabulo Ndebele, 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary', *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture* (Johannesburg: COSAW, 1891).

sensations which are generated in homophobic rhetoric on the continent, here I am reminded of Ugandan-American pastor Martin Ssempa who uses images of gay pornography in his sermons against homosexuality. The Infamous 'Eat da Poo Poo' video on YouTube is an example of the ways in which certain sex practices are spectacularized to further violence.[14] I mention all of this because FAKA's project responds to this video by matching that spectacle: an aspect I explore in detail in chapter 3 titled, 'Un/Stitching Glamour and Grotesque with #Siyakaka'. Here, I illustrate how the performative and affective dimensions of glamour and the grotesque reveal how both these categories are more related than we think. I also show how they are deployed by FAKA in order to contest the demands placed upon black femmes to conform to dominant formations.

Through dress and adornment and presence on social media, FAKA has also managed to gain a considerable following in a short amount of time, since their inception in 2015. They performed a much talked about piece at the Stevenson Art Gallery's "Sex" exhibition curated by Lerato Bereng; a visit on the Stevenson website reveals that the Joburg-based collective 'draws from the city's social clubs and restages a scene from a men-only sex club addressing inhibitions and public acts of sex.'[15] The performance took place on Thursday 21 April 2016, and although I was never there in my personal capacity, I encounter their performance through the gasps and shocks of many spectators who were there on the night. I have heard various versions detailing the sex acts that were performed: from the fact that Desire Marea and Fela Gucci were just masturbating, to the fact that they were having penetrative sex with each other. Both of these may have happened, none of these may happened, I can never know for certain, this is not to say that certainty would be guaranteed had I been there that night either. Rather, I am animated by the traces of evidence left behind, and the imaginative work which may occur in the minds of

[14] IstenKarikasOstora, 'What Obama wants in USA, people of Uganda don't wants: homosexuals eat da poo poo' [sic], Online Video Clip, YouTube. YouTube, Published 17 June 2013 Web, 25 July 2017.
[15] "Sex", *Stevenson.info,* Stevenson, 21 April 2016, Web. Accessed 01 August 2017.

not only those who were there that night, but those who like me, were absent for the actual performance.

This approach signals some of the interventions which have been made in theorizing on performance. In a challenge to Peggy Phelan's claim about the ontology of performance,[16] that as soon as it becomes reproduced according to the mandates of documentation it becomes something else, scholars have argued that in fact performance can be rehearsed through a variety of media and bodies.[17] Amelia Jones makes the argument that performance can indeed be experienced through documentation;[18] I find this relevant in two separate discussions of performances in chapter 2 and 3. The one is of FAKA's audiovisual exhibition titled, '#WaitLorraine: A Wemmer-Pan African Introduction into #SiyakakaFeminism' performed at the Hazard Art Gallery in Johannesburg (2016), and the other is of a video work which they released online titled 'From a Distance'.[19] Both of these were mediated through the YouTube screen; and I show in these chapters how the performances remapped not only the diegetic surrounding, but also the space which the viewer occupies.

Even after listing in detail to what FAKA is involved in, and how they penetrate the public scene, I find it difficult to articulate who and what FAKA is. Moreover, they do not make it easy for one to elucidate that kind of knowledge, and it is for this reason that I think research of this nature is important for queer African scholarship. They challenge our assumptions about space as readily knowable, by refusing to be transparent when it comes to answering the question of what or who they are, thereby disabusing themselves from the demands of an object of

[16] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
[17] See: Amelia Jones, " 'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation', *Art Journal* 56.4 (1997), pp. 11-18; Fred Moten, *In The Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (London and Durham: Duke University Press,2003).
[18] Ibid Jones.
[19] See: Buyani Duma, 'From a Distance', YouTube 2016 https://youtu.be/2doHNuXe534 Accessed in May 2018.

analysis. Such a refusal can generate new and imaginative forms of knowing and thinking about black queer subjectivity/enunciative assemblages[20] in queer African studies.

Having spoken about the above it is important to recognize how there is risk involved in expressions of pleasure. Even though we might like to fully rid ourselves of the edifice of violence, to speak of pleasure in the context of bodies which have been rendered safe to violate is inadvertently to consider danger. The following project is crucial because, from the standpoint of one who is black and queer and is part of a community of fierce persons, it also seeks to recognize the labour and risk involved when our bodies are put on the line.

Theoretical Framework

I situate my research project within performance studies. As José Esteban Muñoz suggests:

> 'It has become somewhat axiomatic within the field of performance studies that the act only exists during its actual duration. I have been making a case for a hermeneutics of residue that looks to understand the wake of performance. What is left? What remains? Ephemera remains.'[21]

The above quote is useful especially as I continue to encounter the afterlife of FAKA's Stevenson performance, but also as I engage some of their other work. According to Muñoz it is important that we think of ephemera as a 'trace, the remains, the things that are left hanging in the air like a rumour.'[22] In the introduction, he makes a case for evidence as ephemera in ways that challenge the way we think tangible and rigorous evidence is meant to look like. Muñoz's thoughts concerning evidence resonate with Macharia's thoughts about the archive and method: that the queer African archive is characterised by gaps and missing narratives,[23] thinking with evidence as ephemera then becomes an opportunity to linger in those gaps.

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[20] See: Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*: *Movement, Affect Sensation*, (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).
[21] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009) p.71.
[22] Ibid p.65.
[23] Keguro Macharia, 'Archive and Method in Queer African Studies' *Agenda* 103 (2015) pp 140-146.

I am also animated by the idea of thinking about gesture as a conceptual framework for this project since, as Muñoz states, 'gesture atomizes movement.'[24] To focus on gesture, according to Muñoz, is to think specifically about 'physical acts which are understood as gesture, such as the tilt of an ankle in very high heels, the swish of a hand that pats a face with imaginary makeup, and so many more precise acts.'[25] In addition to these literal meanings of gesture Juana María Rodríguez in *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures and Other Latina Longings*[26] forces us to think metaphorically, in an amorous nature: to think about gesture as making possible 'another kind of sexual future…This gesture is a kind of touching, a way of sensing what might flow between us…sexual in the queerest of ways, meant to inspire intense feeling rather than reproduction…'[27] Moreover where for Muñoz gestures are merely utopian, for the future, Rodríguez posits that 'histories of movement can become ossified in our gestures.'[28] When I think about gesture, FAKA's "Uyang'khumbula"[29] video comes to mind, because of the ways various gestures are presented in the dance moves; I am interested in how the gesture is cartographic in a lot of ways. Here, I draw from even my own personal experience of the wilted wrist, or the limp wrist, and having to answer questions of which way the world faces when people wanted to find out whether I was gay/queer or not: if it were facing up with the hand cupped, it was presumed one was straight, if it were down the limp wrist would be an indication of a queer orientation to the world. I am interested in how those pasts are made public by FAKA and how futures are constructed for black queer existence.

Another conceptual tool I work with, and this specifically relates to my title, draws from Bibi Bakare-Yusuf's article titled "Fabricating Identities: survival and the imagination in Jamaican

[24] Muñoz Ibid p. 67.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Juana María Rodríguez, *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures and Other Latina Longings* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
[27] Ibid p.1.
[28] Ibid p.5.
[29] Buyani Duma, 'FAKA- Uyang'Khumbula', YouTube (online video), https://youtu.be/xHCN8bynfF0 accessed: 05 May 2018.

dancehall culture"[30]. In fact, Bakare-Yusuf could be said to be a map or guideline which informs this project: to emphasize the associations which fabricating has with constructing, inventiveness, and imagination. It is also a way to attend to Desire Marea and Fela Gucci's sartorial strategies, self-styling choices which I consider through my development of the notion of the 'stitch'.

Appearing as a motif in Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger*[31] and also in the work of Laurice Taitz[32], 'those stitches' in the novella, are a testament to survival, and at the same time are a reminder of violence on the body. They privilege the immediate experience of Marechera's narrator in the township. The stitch, by serving discontinuity, also ruptures canonical historical narratives: a trace of memory which insists on the present. Those stitches are about re-mapping. Invoked in the image of the stitch, is the fact of black queers wrestling with only being hyper visible through violence in contemporary imaginaries, but also as a way of experiencing pleasure. I consider the active and gerund form of the sign, in order to explore embodied affective relations which reveal the event-ness of space and time; I thus shift from locating a 'stitch' to consider processes and modes of operation in 'un/stitching.' The slash here, signifies a slicing, or ripping of one set of conceptual relations and attaching them to another; and it is an exploration of processes which undo, but also those which produce, generate or interweave a different set of relations. The slash throughout the rest of this report may be thought in relation to Gilles Delueze's concept of the fold.[33] The scission which it signifies figures the reverberation on both sides between the work of undoing and the act of stitching; moreover it is also about tracing a continuous relation between interiority and exteriority. Here the various inflections of the latter, are in a series of curved moments and folds, marked by an elasticity and fluidity, and not as

[30] Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, 'Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall Culture', *Fashion Theory* 10.3 (2006) pp.1-24.
[31] Dambudzo Marechera, "The House of Hunger" in *The House of Hunger* (Essex: Heinemann, 1978).
[32] Laurice Taitz, 'Knocking on the Door of the House of Hunger: Fracturing Narratives and Disordering Identity', in Flora Veit-Wild and Anthony Channels (eds) *Emerging Perspectives of Dambudzo Marechera* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1999) pp.23-42.
[33] Giles Deleuze, Jonathan Strauss (trans), 'The Fold', *Yale French studies* 80, Baroque Topographies: Literature/History/Philosophy (1991), pp.227-247.

separable parts; the surface is then merely the other side of that which is interior. In this way, and as Muñoz theorizes elsewhere, surface is approached *as* depth.[34] Consequently, a relational sense of how bodies and surfaces interact, is enabled.[35] This also transforms the surface, making it a tool of 'multisensory perception.'[36]

Most of the above takes from Brian Massumi's conception of the 'autonomy of affect'.[37] In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi seeks to explore the connection between movement and sensation. By theorizing the difference between affect and emotion, he is able to point to the qualitative difference of affect, that it is synesthetic, 'implying the participation of the senses in each other: the measure of a living thing's potential interactions is its ability to transform the effects of one sensory mode into those of another.'[38] Affect in this model, is that which denotes a two-sidedness between: 'one side in the virtual (the autonomy of relation), the other in the actual (functional limitation).'[39] He goes on to posit that the autonomy of affect, 'is its participation in the virtual.'[40]

'Location Matter[s]' and a Note on Method[41]

Mama's reflections concerning feminist African intellectual communities, inform how I conducted this research, a research for activism was the basis for my own methodological approach.[42] In addition to that, my research is inspired by Mupotsa's provocation: 'I want to again find the language for a rage-inspired feminist research, revelling in the body/mind

[34] José Esteban Muñoz 'Introduction: From Surface to Depth, Between Psychoanalysis and Affect", *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 19.2 (2009), pp.123-129.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*: *Movement, Affect Sensation*, (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).
[38] Ibid p.35.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Keguro Macharia, 'On being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 22.2 (2016) p. 184.
[42] Amina Mama, ' What Does it Mean to Do Feminist Research in African Context', *Feminist Review* 2011 e4e20.

reactions of my thinking self, because I do not know any other way to cope with the brick walls that are standing in my way."[43] The preceding inform my own ethic, which I also read in line with Massumi's approach to the mind and body: seen as 'two levels recapitulating the same image/expression event in different but parallel ways, ascending by degrees to the concrete from the incorporeal, holding to the same absent centre [sic] of a now spectral- and potentialized-encounter.'[44] Massumi reads Baruch Spinoza's descriptions of mind and body, for how they converge with Henri Bergson's theories of virtuality and movement.[45] Additionally, the continuous relation assumed between bodies and surfaces, informs a reading of the image, not as something shot within a specific freeze-frame, or grid; rather the continuous relation which is formed becomes the expression of an event which is underway as spatio-temporal coordinates are remapped, or emerge[46] from variation to variation.

This then brings me to the queer assemblages mentioned above, proposed by Puar, as a method. Here, the event expressions/images which black queer is immersed in, construct a field of relation between viewer and the object, such that a different set of interpretive strategies is required for both the reading and writing of black queer. In the second chapter, 'Black Femmes in the Garden', I explore the ways in which FAKA is able to make the interior/private/intimate fold over into public scenes of sociality. My reading of a performance video art work, first published on YouTube is thus mindful of the YouTube screen as the interface which I, as a located viewer/audience with my own subjective set of memories and experiences bring to my interpretation of the artwork. This method recalls Joan Scott's notion of the evidence of experience.[47] My own locatedness extends to other texts and objects which FAKA utilizes in their works. In some respects the only way to engage their work is through textual performance.

[43] Danai S Mupotsa and Lennon Mhishi, 'This Little Rage of Poetry/Researching Gender and Sexuality' *Feminist Africa* 11 (December 2008) pp.97-107.
[44] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*: *Movement, Affect Sensation*, (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 32.
[45] Ibid.
[46] For a detail account of the specific use of this word, please see Ibid.
[47] Joan W. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience' *Critical Inquiry* 17.4 (Summer 1991), pp.773-797.

The use of a slash, reference to a tweet, or the ways in which I defamiliarize forms of address, becomes a way of touching, of folding, fingering and rubbing up against a work; a way of participating in the utopian world which black queers on the continent are forging bit by bit.

Reflecting on 'the local' as a place which foregrounds the lived experiences and struggles of ordinary people, Noor Nieftagodien speaks about how during the 1970s and 1980s it virtually became synonymous with the place of the working class, the modern township, the slums, and municipal locations of apartheid.[48] This is important for me since how I read the local is pertinent to an understanding of black queer practices, particularly the eccentric and imaginative uses of time and space, as Judith Halberstam would say.[49] Indeed, apartheid marked and 'affected bodies through the relations of time and space.'[50] Bearing that in mind Mupotsa, drawing from Elaine Salo's provocation that we question whether the identities of people who reside within a particular place are actually 'anchored within that space', she proposes that we read the local as:

> 'a figure in itself, fluid and unfixed because of the ways in which it works within the tensions of home/travel, [between] Johannesburg and the geographies of its excess'[51]

Mupotsa's proposition is resonant with theorizing of assemblages. As Jasbir Puar highlights, assemblage -in the awkward translation of the term first applied by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's work- 'is not the French word assemblage, but actually Agencement, a term which means design, layout, organization, arrangement, and relations- the focus being not on content but relations, relations of patterns.'[52] Puar undertakes a survey of this term's translation to finally conclude that assemblage leans more to collection, combination, assembling- in this

[48] Noor Nieftagodien, "The place of 'the local' in History Workshop's Local History", *African Studies* 69.1 (2010) pp. 41-61.
[49] Judith Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies and Subcultural Lives* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005).
[50] Danai Mupotsa, 'Against Love?' in *White Weddings*. 2014, (Dissertation completed in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of the Witwatersrand).
[51] Ibid.
[52] Jasbir Puar, " ' I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess': Intersectionality, Assemblage, and Affective P

way she shows an interest not in what they are, but what they do. It is because of this that this report sustains a theoretical investment in (queer) assemblages.

Mindful of my investment in performance studies in theorizing in this research report's conceptual framework, it is worth re-echoing Nicole Fleetwood's summation of the convergence between visual and performance studies; that they emphasize 'the importance of the interpreter or audience to make sense of meaning in a given cultural event, process or object.'[53] I mention this to highlight the importance of location, especially when it comes to engagement with the operation of specific signs: particularly blackness and/or black and queerness and/or queer, here and now. This is relevant especially as we work towards engaging the praxis and institutional apparatus that is black and queer.[54] Part of what this demands is a rehearsal of scenes or daily rituals haunted by the presence/absence of regimes of violence: systemic, epistemic, physical, spectacular. Fleetwood draws attention to the oft cited extract from the work of Frantz Fanon that she describes as the Fanonian moment.[55] The well analysed moment when the narrator is identified by a white boy travelling with his mother stating, 'Look, a Negro!' Fleetwood reads various interpretations of the extract with a desire to shift the lens to frame another take:

> one in which *a* [sic] black woman looks at Fanon being looked at and hailed by the precocious white child with speaking privileges to demand his mother's attention, who directs her gaze, and who announces to her and the public at large to consider the curious and frightening specimen in their field of vision. The move is from mere observation of the peculiar Negro to the construction of an audience and a performer of difference. Not only does the child demand the right to frame the black body through a

[53] Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality and Blackness* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011) p.21.
[54] The idea of "queer as institutional apparatus", is taken from Robert Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man: Essays* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001).
[55] Ibid Fleetwood. Also see: Frantz Fanon, Charles Lam Markmann (trans.) *Black Skins, White Masks* (Northampton: Pluto Press, 2008) pp.82-108.

> cultural script of fear and danger, he also demands that something be done about that figuration.'[56]

Fleetwood approaches this way of reading by first querying the implications of rehearsing the Fanonian moment as *the* primal scene for black subject formation which results in, through mechanisms of hailing and trauma, the facticity of blackness.[57] I recall Desire Marea's own autobiographical utterance in an article titled 'On visibility and the illusion of the Safe Space'[58] especially as we hone in on the rehearsal of scenes of subjection. Marea begins by describing their rural hometown in Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN): 'You know a story is going to be lit if it begins somewhere in the majestic hills that go on forever, where the houses look like they were carefully picked by that auntie who only sprinkles three grains of sugar into her bucket of scone-shaped sadness; somewhere in rural KZN- where I grew up.'[59] To which she proceeds to poetically articulate the ways in which whiteness played itself out through hierarchical class differences among the kinds of houses playmates lived in and how that, coupled with not being recognised in their own home because of the way they inhabited their body, gave rise to feelings of spatial exclusion. After moving to Johannesburg, Marea writes that they would rather 'risk physical violence [by] being visible in a dangerous city than to endure the violence that scars you in places you cannot see within the very walls that were built on love, where you couldn't exist freely.'[60]

I am particularly drawn to a description of violent attacks described by Marea which: 'range from a disapproving glance from a stranger, refusal of entry from a taxi driver on the way to work, to a whole street screaming and shouting in your direction as they did to Vusi and I last week Saturday on Eloff Street.'[61] This particular scene is brought to mind, when I read Judith

[56] Ibid Fleetwood p.27-28.
[57] Ibid p.23.
[58] Desire Marea, 'On visibility and the illusion of the Safe Space', *between10and5: The Creative Showcase* 22 September 2016 www.10and5.com (Accessed March 2018).
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.*[62] In a discussion of inaugural scenes in subject formation, Butler refers to a social scene proffered by Louis Althusser wherein a subject is hailed; a police officer, representative of the law, says 'Hey you there!' to a passer-by, whose turning back figures a turning back on oneself, and thus a submission to the law.[63] In this theory of interpellation, for the process of subjectivation to be in effect one ought to first submit to an external authority by conceding to guilt: that submission is the condition of possibility for the subject's formation.[64] While there is no indication in Desire Marea's narrative of the specific directionality from which the hailing- the shouting and the screaming- came at them on Eloff Street, I am animated by the impulse to outrun, and I conjecture that as an indication of a refusal to be recognised within the terms which confer guilt in order to 'be'. However, the context in which this occurs, where Marea and Vusi's hecklers are not officers of the law, needs to be noted. Especially as this undermines Althusser's theory that the subject is formed through a passionate attachment to the 'reprimanding recognition of the state.'[65]The rehearsal of this scene reveals an array of issues, among which is the insufficiency of the law to even 'call' out to a figure of difference that they may become/ recognised as 'black queer'. Especially if we assume that law here refers to the Constitutional provisions which ostensibly protect persons of various sexualities. I explore this in depth below.

It also recalls a discomfort similar to that which Reid-Pharr, as I mention earlier, has about being referred to as a black queer: 'that I am being politely hailed as a nigger and as a faggot.'[66] Macharia cites the preceding quote to speak about the ways in which deracination and abjection have been fetishized in mainstream queer studies; with the resultant effect being

[62] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
[63] Ibid p.112.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Robert Reid-Pharr, 'Tearing the Goat's Flesh' in *Black Gay Man: Essays* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001) p. 103.

various demands in theory to un-belong.[67] I state this in order to further situate my own located-ness within black queer, by suggesting that those demands, which presumably celebrate unbelonging (as radical, disruptive) are not present in the kind of space that Desire Marea and Fela Gucci fashion, hence the persistent need for belonging. Moreover, even as Macharia draws from Reid-Pharr, the deracinating power of 'black queer' implicit in Reid-Pharr's account- a North American based scholar, remains inaccessible to Macharia who is based in Nairobi.[68]

This quandary illustrates the geohistories I mention above. If for instance, I were to trace a genealogy for FAKA I would include Brenda Fassie, Lebo Mathosa and Thembi Seete; as well as a series of objects adorned by their aunts and grandmothers. Scenes and meanings inhered in opulence would have to be mindful of the ways in which the material experiences and discursive practices, within specific contexts, have impressed upon the work which black queer does here. This would appear inimical to a project which forges a relationality to the North Atlantic, or better yet, the envisioning of an African world; instead it actually advances an interest Macharia describes as a 'tracking [of] the dissonant intimacies that emerge as black figures encounter each other...the uses and failures of blackness to create shared ground…'[69] He concludes this thought with the sentence I draw from in this subheading, one worth repeating: location matters.

Being cognisant of these geohistories also demands a reckoning with the experiential modalities inhered as scenes and rituals are rehearsed. Such an embodied relational approach recalls Bakare-Yusuf's revisiting of the phenomenological aspects of the above scene given by Fanon, by re-examining the incontestability granted privilege of a scopic regime in which the

[67] Keguro Macharia, 'On being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 22.2 (2016) p. 184.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid. 186.

now-black-subject experiences a paralysis.[70] She reconfigures the polemic model of looking and being looked at, the gaze versus an oppositional gaze, by exploring the slippages which fold into each other in these fields of vision.[71] This relational paradigm, is figured through a model Bakare-Yusuf calls an antiphonal continuum; herein a playful "female rebuff" is placed at one extreme end and is in a continuous relation to the oppositional gaze, which is on the other end.[72] The "female rebuff" describes a non-objectifying gaze that 'allows itself visual play with the other.'[73] This model of the gaze is in a continuous relation to the other extreme, wherein the subject is compelled to either acquiesce to the dominant 'eye of power or to resist through an oppositional gaze.'[74] The sonic valences of call-and-response inhered in the notion of the antiphonies of the gaze is worth highlighting, as it underscores the interfacing of the sense of sight and sound. I mention this because it reinforces the assumption that knowledge is situated in the body and its conditionings; a point emphasized by Bakare-Yusuf. Out of a mimetic engagement with the immediate context around it, 'the body composes its own motile narrative which allows it to interact or dialogue with the world as an agent *in* [sic] and *of* [sic] history.'[75]

Key to Bakare-Yusuf's formulation is a theorizing of the black diaspora, as an embodied experience that is registered in specific utterances, emotions, memories, gestures and habits.[76] The intervention made by her is in accounting for the relation embodiment has to theoretical perspectives on black diasporic identity.[77] One that is not too dissimilar from the one made by Gopinath, in a practice she calls queer diasporas.[78] Where Bakare-Yusuf intervenes through a focalizing of sexual, gendered and racial difference, Gopinath complicates the implicit

[70] Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, *In The Sea of Memory: Embodiment and Agency in the Black Diaspora* Dissertation completed in fulfilment of the degree in Doctors of Philosophy (Warwick, 2000) p.250-251.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid p.25.
[77] Ibid p.26.
[78] Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

assumption that the site of "origin" stands in a hierarchical relation to the diasporic site.[79] She also divests queer theorizing from its inherent masculinist male-homosocial assumptions; thereby compelling us to consider how queer femininities perform intimacy and experience pleasure, and also how they collapse the public-private divide.[80] I read both Gopinath and Bakare-Yusuf's formulations of black and queer diaspora(s) as complementing one another. Despite however an inability to access the sense of deracination, or uprootedness inhered in being a diasporic subject, I find resonances particularly with the communities and cultures which diaspora is able to circulate on the African continent.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the popular music cultures which circulate between global and local sites, produced by diaspora. Gopinath calls these, the communities of sound: which emerge as a result of the relation between "home" and the diaspora.[81] She also reveals some of the foundational assumptions of gendered and sexual ideologies which inform theorizing of the workings of diaspora and globalization.[82] Writing that in these formulations, diaspora as it takes shape through:

> '… musical forms, is still imagined through an oedipal narrative and a patrilineal genealogy that connects one generation of immigrant men to their second-generation offspring, or through a revolutionary politics that connects men to each other but at the expense of women and alternative forms of masculinity.'[83]

Although alternative visions of community and culture are promised by the Asian Underground music scene Gopinath discusses in Bhangra, the music producers fail to realize these spaces. Indeed, scenes which rehearse an alternate site of belonging and community, are

[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid p.55.
[82] Ibid p. 58.
[83] Ibid.

'notoriously difficult to document, archive and preserve…'[84] Drawing from the idea of the ephemera of queer life, from Muñoz, Gopinath observes the difficulty of preserving instances of queer diasporic practice. However, she implies that this difficulty attests to the inability of standard representations of the public culture of the diaspora to reckon with these fleeting cultural practices and memories that 'are lost in relation to the space of heteronormativity.'[85]

The theoretical purchase of queer ephemera lies in its ability to allow scholars in performance theorizing to track the 'different erotic and affective possibilities' opened up by various queer forms.[86] Moreover, it is important to be mindful of how different 'locations produce their own highly particular forms of resistance to and accommodation with dominant culture.'[87] Through her account of a particular scene in which a female Sufi devotional singer, Abida Parveen, performed to an audience in New York City's Central Park (1999), while South Asian Muslim men danced arm in arm; Gopinath rehearses a scene that sanctioned homosociality/homoeroticism from the traditional Qawaali space.[88] She concludes that gay men in the audience 'were able to exploit the "traditional" forms of homoeroticism that lie embedded within a Sufi mystical tradition in order to articulate for themselves a specifically gay male diasporic subjectivity.'[89] For her, this ultimately demonstrates the production of a 'queer audiotopia', wherein a queer sonic landscape and community of sound is constructed; one 'that remapped Central Park into a space of a queer public culture, the locus of gay male diasporic desire and pleasure.'[90]

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid Gopinath as she draws from José Muñoz, "Gesture, Ephemera, Queer Feeling"
[86] Ibid p. 59.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

This idea of the queer audiotopia is an extension of Josh Kun's notion of the audiotopia.[91] Kun draws from the heterotopia developed by Michel Foucault, defining audiotopias as 'sonic spaces of affective utopian longings where several sites normally deemed incompatible are brought together not only in the space of a particular piece of music itself, but in the production of social space and mapping of geographical space that music makes possible.'[92] Queer audiotopia's are quite suggestive when considering 'the ways in which music produces queer sociability, belonging, and identification.'[93]

I am interested particularly in the scenes which play out in this manner especially when taking into account the sonic diaspora which translate and direct dancehall culture. In a critical review of Carolyn Cooper's *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large*;[94] Bakare-Yusuf problematizes the privileging of the local voice over the foreign one in decoding dancehall culture.[95] According to her reading of Cooper, the 'native occupies a privileged space as the arbiter or mediator of a "truthful" interpretation of dancehall culture."[96] The analysis which informs her critique however, foregrounds moments which exist outside of language, 'in the production of culture, without disregarding the discursive effect on cultural activities'.[97] In this way, we are compelled to reckon with the embodied, and thus experiential, responses to the ways in which alternative audiotopias inhered in dancehall culture, configure space.

Julian Henriques' articulation of the experiential modalities described above offers us a way to access sonic diaspora.[98] He opens with the assumption that migrations of peoples carry feelings, trafficking the 'airwaves as signifiers of youth tribes and nations; they tour with DJs and

[91] Ibid p. 42. Also See Josh Kun, 'Rock's *Reconquista*'.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid p. 60.
[94] Carolyn Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large*.
[95] Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, 'Clashing Interpretations in Jamaican Dancehall Culture', *small axe* 21 (2006) pp.161-173.
[96] Ibid p.162.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Julian Henriques, 'Sonic Diaspora, Vibrations and Rhythm: Thinking through the sounding of the Jamaican dancehall session' *African and Black Diaspora* 1.2 (2008) p.215-236.

sound systems; are exchanged as peer-to-peer MP3 downloads; and shuffle the musical associations and feelings of our personal play-lists.'[99] I would add that these traffic flows also include blog posts, online reviews, Spotify, YouTube, SoundCloud and iTunes. Henriques then proceeds to define sonic diaspora, as that which consists of infectious rhythms which travel and amass a global following; these sonic diaspora are grounded entirely on feeling, taste or the vibes of sound 'rather than an inherited predisposition or cultural knowledge.'[100] Henriques' model points to the movement of sound as an affect, 'not only mechanically as an auditory vibration, or physically as the circulation of a recording…' rather sound also moves 'people to feel that they have a connection with other people and other places.'[101] This is validated, it is suggested by Henriques, through the diffusion of vibrations.[102]

However, prior to an appreciation of the diffusion of vibrations, there must be an engagement with the material aspects which involve the ways 'the apparatus of Jamaican sound systems function as broadcast medium for the music and as a source of DVDs and other commercial products.'[103] One way to approximate this, is through an engagement with the open-air all-night Jamaican dancehall sessions; Henriques shows how dancehall in Jamaica developed in tandem with the sound systems, which perform the role of transmission.[104] Moving beyond how flows and circulations help us understand diaspora, Henriques posits that in thinking through vibrations we must 'disabuse ourselves of the commonplace assumption that sound is a thing. It is not; it is an activity, performance or auditory vibration.'[105] He concludes by theorizing vibration as always starting with movement, as creating a rhythmic field which shapes, through the energetic transmission of affect, black diasporic identities.[106] In addition to these sounding

[99] Ibid p.215.
[100] Ibid. p.216.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid p.217
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid. p220.
[106] Ibid.

transmissions, it is worth noting how sartorial practices by women also participate within global currents and flows between Africa and its diaspora.

Bakare-Yusuf explores the embodied practices in dancehall culture and argues for how fashion and ornate objects are used by Black women to fabricate space for themselves.[107] She notes how the material circumstances which dancehall women live under- 'of crossfire, acid attacks, rape, spousal abuse, sole caregiver and negation' - are responded to with a fearless imagination to ensure survival.[108] This is also a response to the class, race and gender and sexual violence, informed by ideas of hegemonic morality.[109] More related to my engagement of location, Bakare-Yusuf shows that 'dancehall style reveals deep-cross-cultural and historical connections with a hybrid array of cultural elements.'[110] She further illustrates this by describing 'the age of transactional flows of bodies, information, goods, mass media and images,' which informs a 'cultural eclecticism'.[111] I am interested in how this textured transmission circulates alongside the vibrational frequencies, discussed above. The energetic fields emerging from these flows further informs the motility, and kinetic aspects which not only traffic affect, memories, and gestures, forms of dress and pageantry across sites; but also operate in the making of queer audiotopias.

This trafficking of sound, might bring us closer to the creation of shared ground, especially if we consider how dancehall culture is resonant in the work of Boom Shaka and by extension, kwaito; we might even relate this to other music forms and practices which converge and intersect with experiences from the different parts of the African world. Scholars have highlighted how as a musical form, kwaito-which I refer to above, has resonances with house

[107] Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, 'Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall Culture', *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* 10.4 (2006) pp. 461-483.
[108] Ibid. p.477.
[109] Ibid. p.480.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid. p.478

and dancehall music from the North Atlantic.[112] Indeed Boom Shaka's early performances, draw from the embodied practices, as Bakare-Yusuf shows, that emerged between the late 1980s to the end of the 1990s. In a discussion of Lebo Mathosa and her gendered performances both during her time as a member of Boom Shaka and even during her solo career, Thuli Msezane confirms the influence of reggae and dancehall in their music.[113]

The relation which exists between Africa and its diaspora, is not to be understood within a one-way causal relation wherein popular forms from the West are simply taken up by subjects on the continent. Rather we might read this as suggestive of the traces, which do not fall within the mandates of the archive, signalling various intimacies and dissonances with experiences which black subjects experience elsewhere. .

The labour that goes into undermining constructions of a respectable femininity is indicative of Desire Marea and Fela Gucci's situatedness in a black femme performance.[114] Therefore, FAKA's embodied practice, or what Xavier Livermon would call a sexual dissidence,[115] might also be said to be deeply attuned to the affective, vibrational frequencies, and sartorial strategies which Bakare-Yusuf highlights. Lastly, Henriques argues that the energetic transmission of bodies, how they are shaped by the vibrations, or replicators and their vehicles, are all mutually dependant on each other;[116] 'kinetic energy or movement is dependent on the materials or objects of its medium of expression. Movement cannot be expressed without matter…'[117] Location matters. This kinetic energy might even be expressed in the duo's music sound, ancestral-gospel-gqom, an assemblage of different genres and cosmologies, which

[112] See Gavin Steingo, *Kwaito's Promise: Music and the Aesthetics of Freedom in South Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
[113] Thuli Msezane,' Lebo Mathosa: Genre as a Compass for Gender Performance' (Paper Presented at AfriFems at UCKAR 2018).
[114] Lisa Duggan and Kathleen McHugh, ''Fem (me) Manifesto', *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8(2), p.154.
[115] Ibid Livermon note 105.
[116] Ibid Julian Henriques p.236.
[117] Ibid.

informs FAKA's sounding. In what follows, I briefly elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of this relation, in order to address the work that assemblages do in The House of FAKA..

Chapter Outline

The following chapters then might be approached as a series of exhibitions in a room, or a museum. The latter draws from George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum*[118] wherein different chapters may be approached as a series of venues or scenes. The first chapter, "Shebeleza: Assembling a Black Queer Here and 'Now' " was actually inspired by a lecture given by Ferguson, on 'The Diasporas of Queer Black Art'[119]. In this lecture, Ferguson invites the audience to an imaginative exercise, a scene is constructed of a bookshop which specialises in collecting black queer diasporic works. Similarly, in the first chapter, I imagine entering the House of FAKA, an exercise which has its own protocols, and specificities- attuned to the ways in which local theorizing on the continent gives expression to black queer experience. The second chapter 'Black Femmes in the Garden', proceeds with the metaphor of a location, or House, that has an outdoor. Here, I look at FAKA's display of public same-sex sexual performances, in their video work, *From a Distance*. I explore the video's relation to Brenda Fassie's rendition of the Bette Midler hit single, in order to think about black queer citational strategies, and the tracing of a black queer genealogy. In the last chapter, 'Un/Stitchting Glamour and the Grotesque with #Siyakaka' I approach the textural dimensions evoked in 'Fabricating Pleasure, Fabricating Black Queer Experience'; here I offer an extensive review of theorizing on spectacle in southern Africa, and explore the material dimensions of glamour and the grotesque. Particularly I look at how the affect disgust operates in our understandings of anality, and acts deemed pleasant or unpleasant. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I reflect on some of the

[118] George C. Wolfe, *The Colored Museum* (New York: Grove Press, 1985).
[119] Boston University, Roderick Ferguson 'The Diasporas of Queer Black Art', Boston University's 6th Annual Eve Sedgwick Memorial Lecture published on YouTube 24 March 2016 https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=xLGHu1HDidc&t=1s accessed: January 2017.

questions which appear briefly in the preceding chapters: questions of shame, family, belonging. In a counterintuitive vein, I offer a brief reading of FAKA's video *Uyang'khumbula*, to consider how various flows of desire, geographical coordinates, the risk of recognition, and memory are involved in how a black queer experience is convoked in the music video.

In a manner that calls attention to participation and the performative dimensions, here and throughout the rest of this report I incorporate stencils, modes of address, and rubrics from other textual contexts and place them here in a manner that situates you, me and our engagement with FAKA.[120] Here I have attached a rubric, which first appeared as a Twitter thread on my account. It is meant to operate as a vehicle which transmits a relation between you as the reader and myself; particularly within and against the strictures of the academe. Strictures which trouble Macharia in "On Being Area-Studied: A litany of Complaint", a scholar who publishes most of his thinking on queerness and Africa on a blog titled, Gukira.[121]

As an ethical and political response to the academic gatekeeping which demands that one ought to publish in conversations which will exist behind a paywall, in order to be legitimized as a scholar,[122] I have therefore attached a rubric, which will require your active participation and response based off of your engagement with the text. Feel free to add comments and thoughts; the hope is that there be a productive conversation between you-the reader, and the thoughts I have curated here. Moreover, and this is in line with my writing practice, one which I glean from Massumi, where writing is a pleasant exercise, the resultant effect is then the incorporation of play.[123] This illustrates a number of things, among which is the 'play' of relations; which illumines the performative elements of everyday practices. This recalls Stuart Hall's idea that cultural

[120] In this reagard see Della Pollock, 'Writing Performance' in Peggy Phelan & Jill Lane *Ends of Performance* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998) pp. 73- 103 and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, " Teaching 'Experimental Critical Writing", in Peggy Phelan & Jill Lane *Ends of Performance* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998) pp. 104- 115.
[121] Keguro Macharia, "On Being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint', *GLQ* 22.2 (2016) p.1.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid Massumi p.18.

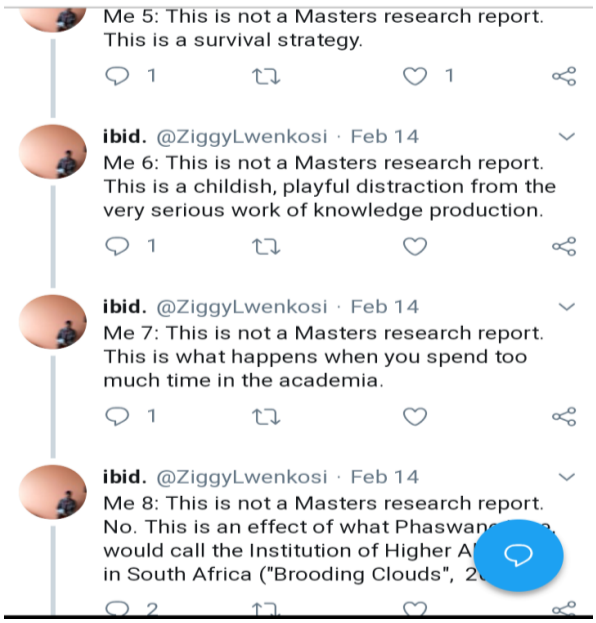
concepts of identity are subject to a 'play' of history, culture and power.[124] The writing, or reading, enacted in this paper is committed to exemplification, since as Massumi suggests, 'exemplification activates detail.'[125] I begin in the next chapter, with a dexterous portrait of the House of FAKA, in this chapter I look closely at what black queer does in contemporary reckonings on the continent and the ways in which this brings us to an understanding of the workings of a black queer artistic practice invested in world-making. Because of the dexterity and because of ways in which performance owes no commitment to any one method or disciplinary mandate, I incorporate play- so that the intense relation that the body has to itself as it reads the reading/writing herein, may open us up to contingency and ways of knowing and experiencing black queer, which are not within the realm of language.

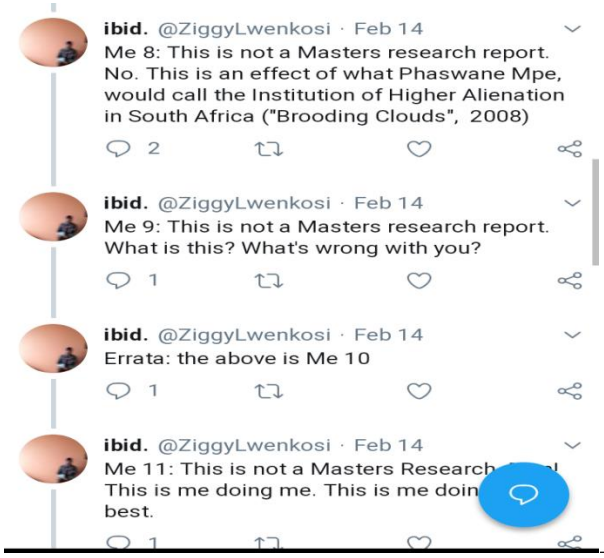
[124] Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', *Framework* no.36, 1996 pp.222-237.
[125] Ibid Massumi.

The following rubric/thread:






Me 5: This is not a Masters research report. This is a survival strategy.
1
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 6: This is not a Masters research report. This is a childish, playful distraction from the very serious work of knowledge production.
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 7: This is not a Masters research report. This is what happens when you spend too much time in the academia.
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 8: This is not a Masters research report.
2


ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 8: This is not a Masters research report. No. This is an effect of what Phaswane Mpe, would call the Institution of Higher Alienation in South Africa ("Brooding Clouds", 2008)
2
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 9: This is not a Masters research report. What is this? What's wrong with you?
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Errata: the above is Me 10
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 11: This is not a Masters Research
This is me doing me. This is me doin
best.

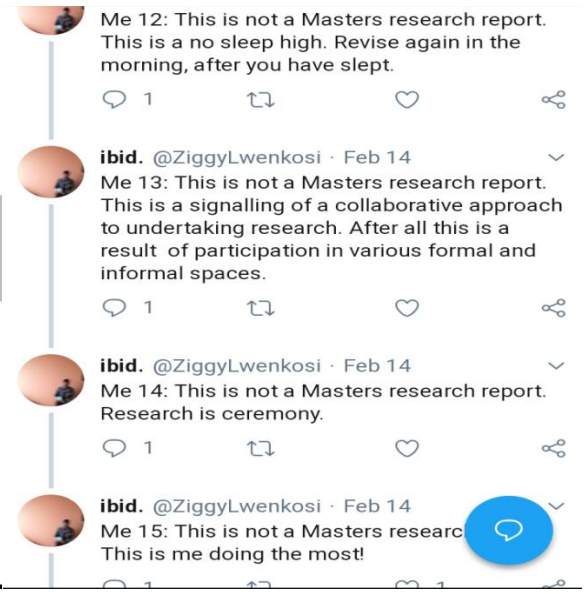

Me 12: This is not a Masters research report. This is a no sleep high. Revise again in the morning, after you have slept.
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 13: This is not a Masters research report. This is a signalling of a collaborative approach to undertaking research. After all this is a result of participation in various formal and informal spaces.
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 14: This is not a Masters research report. Research is ceremony.
1
ibid. @ZiggyLwenkosi · Feb 14
Me 15: This is not a Masters researc
This is me doing the most!



Figure 1: A Rubric/Thread

Shebeleza: Assemblage, Black Queer Here and "Now"

> "The tyranny of time, the tyranny of place…The muck, the smell of it, the fever and the fight, the cycles of decay and survival…And 'the sounds begin again'. I want daytime, I want place, I want a sense of history."
>
> -Es'kia Mphahlele, *Afrika My Music*
>
> "Andiz' funi eziz'Boom Shaka"
>
> - Nelson Mandela

This chapter is about the work that 'black queer' does for FAKA. The above quotes frame my discussion of how the House of FAKA- Desire Marea and Fela Gucci- compel us to grapple with notions of belonging within and beyond nationalist paradigms. Es'kia Mphahlele's most repeated/ and revisited phrase throughout his exilic autobiography, *Afrika My Music*,[126] captures a haunting sense of placelessness and the painful yearning for his ancestral home, in South Africa. Although, home here is also referred to with a sense of irony. Embedded within the refrain, are memories, nostalgia and even terrors of the night which shape, as he states, his responses to life.[127] The persistent desire for place and time, for our wanderer,[128] expresses a need for social and physical commitment within cultural arenas and fields which in South Africa during apartheid, were inhibited. I rub this alongside, Nelson Mandela's alleged repudiation of the kwaito band Boom Shaka which translated means, 'I don't want these Boom Shaka'. Part of the humour stems from the quote's apocryphal nature, and that it demystifies a statesman who is arguably said to have been the major "unifying figure" of the post-Cold War era;[129] Mandela typifies here, with the unusual reference to "these Boom Shaka", reprimand from older people who often disapprove of performances and modes of self-fashioning by young people. It also instantiates his father figure status in the national family. Thus participating in what Grace

[126] Es'kia Mphahlele, *Afrika My Music: An Autobiography 1957-1983* (Braamfontein, Ravan Press, 1984).
[127] Ibid p.12.
[128] Ibid p.10-12.
[129] Litheko Modisane, Christpher Ouma, Victoria J Collis-Buthelezi, "Introduction: Black Studies, South Africa and the Mythology of Mandela", *Black Scholar* 47.2 (2017) pp1-6.

Musila, writing in the context of a phallocentric Kenyan state calls, the 'mainstreaming of an "elder" masculinity.'[130]

Lebo Mathosa, Thembi Seete, Junior Sokhela and Theo Nhlengethwa- of which Boom Shaka was comprised, were highly influential and popular among the youth, however the group generated some controversy. They were viewed as unruly and vulgar mainly because of dance routines and song lyrics thought to be too sexual and inappropriate. Seete and Mathosa, the two women of the group were criticized for how they dressed and were hypersexualized. Adding to the group's controversy was their dance version of the national anthem "Nkosi Sikelela", a gesture which the general public at the time thought to be disrespectful.[131] How Mandela's remark also demonstrates the overall attitude with which kwaito was received is an aspect I explore below, for now it is important that I draw attention to the fact that 'eziz'Boom Shaka' implicitly referred to a performance of femininity that displayed what M. Jacqui Alexander would term, erotic autonomy.[132] 'Andiz' Funi eziz'Boom Shaka' is ludicrous, but not ludicrous; it exemplifies the policing of the ways in which bodies dance, dress and desire.

My use of Mandela's remark also signals Desire Marea's own personal memory of being at family gatherings as a child who was a big fan of Boom Shaka.[133] Whenever a hit song came on, Desire would dance: 'shaka boom!' sway the hips like Mathosa and Seete among uncles, brothers and cousins in the family. A quip would be made, relaying Mandela's words, much to everyone else's laughter, and to the then young Buyani Duma's own humiliation. Perhaps every other time Duma gestured in ways which appeared feminine, or was even present among family members wherein the aspiration of rigid masculinity existed, this statement would be mentioned.

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[130] Grace Musila, 'The Phallocracies and gynocratic transgressions: Gender, State and power in Kenyan Public Life", *Africa Insight* 39.1 (June 2009) pp.45.
[131] Maud Blose, 'Pornographic objectification of women through kwaito lyrics" Agenda 26.3 (2012) pp 50-60. Thuli Msezane, 'Lebo Mathosa: Genre as a Compass for Gender Performance', (Paper Presented at UCKAR, Afrifems Conference 2018, Grahamstown).
[132] Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).
[133] See Creative Mornings HQ, 'Desire Marea, Siyakaka: A Healing Manifesto' *YouTube* .

In this chapter, I attempt to wander through a location which refuses to establish itself in ways which are knowable and transparent. I take a tour of the House of FAKA. I argue that black queer here is an invitation to engage configurations of time and space which grapple with nation, and the need for belonging. FAKA only leaves a few traces, renewing our attachments to popular icons like Boom Shaka who did not convey the nation's ideals at the height of its newness.

In their introduction to a special issue on "Black Studies, South Africa and the Mythology of Mandela", Litheko Modisane, Victoria Collis-Buthelezi and Christopher Ouma assert that the legacy of Mandela continues to shape what is possible in post-apartheid South Africa.[134] They also argue that any consideration or engagement with the meanings of blackness in contemporary studies of South Africa requires attending to the mythology of Mandela.[135] Proceeding from this, I engage the performative nature of black queer as it applies to FAKA's location and narration; my interest is in the workings of this appellation especially since the duo draws from a compendium of performers and subcultures which point to the necessity of thinking through a praxis which exceeds national space time.

For instance, the use of the phrase the 'House of FAKA' signals a link to the black gay drag ball scene in Harlem during the 1970s-80s. E Patrick Johnson, drawing from José Esteban Muñoz, shows how the use of 'house' as opposed to 'home'- for black gay men and drag performers who organised community in New York at the time, is a form of disidentification.[136] This is a process which accounts for the ways identity is enacted by marginal subjects who 'must work with/resist the conditions of (im)possibility that dominant culture generates';[137] in this case,

[134] Victoria Collis-Buthelezi, Christopher Ouma & Litheko Modisane, 'Introduction: Black Studies, South Africa and the Mythology of Mandela, *Black Scholar* 47. 2 After Madiba: Black Studies in South Africa (2017)pp.1-6.
[135] Ibid.
[136] E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003) p.83-84.
[137] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis an London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

the sentiments and attachments a 'home' connotes, that it is *the* true site of belonging, are mapped onto the 'house', a space which is denied of all notions of comfort and warmth. Johnson places importance on how houses are a site where sexual identity is affirmed and also where it is in process, my approach moves slightly away from representational paradigms, and I grapple with the ways in which FAKA produces experience through varied engagements with space and time. Although Desire and Fela signal a relation to drag ball houses, this is not to be understood as a simple borrowing of lexicon from black gay cultures in the U.S, nor does my reading work within a one-way causal relation. In tracing the genealogy of FAKA, it is possible that the moment of encounter between the House of FAKA and the House of Labeija or the House of Ninja[138] for example, points to what Macharia terms the 'geohistories of location.'[139] A term which takes into account temporal and spatial genealogies and implies an embodied approach wherein particular bodies are involved in the production of space that is not transparent, and time is neither linear nor progressive. To think with geohistories is to reckon with the demands which certain subjects place upon theories and concepts which have their own historical meanings and contexts.[140]

FAKA then, by drawing from U.S subcultures, invite us to lean in on the question of geohistories contested and generated in the creation of shared ground. Khwezi Mkhize is relevant when it comes to grappling with notions of belonging within South Africa's regime of citizenship by highlighting the problem of temporality.[141] Mkhize troubles the liberal categories which informed belonging and traces its embodied quality prior to the apartheid period, thus revealing 'colonial techniques of disciplining the black body.'[142] Moreover, he demonstrates the utility of thinking through multiple and disjointed time, and shows simultaneity between

[138] Leading performers in Livingstone (1992)>
[139] Keguro Macharia, 'On Being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 22.2 (2016) pp.184-189.
[140] Ibid
[141] Khwezi Mkhize, "The Violence of Belonging", *Black Scholar* 47.2 (2017) p. 24.
[142] Ibid.

different contexts early on in modernity that trouble the legibility of the nation-state.[143] FAKA's use of the body, draws our attention to how embodiment is important in the making and creating of configurations of space and time; black queer here moves beyond representative categories and becomes a praxis of remembering and producing that which operates outside the tyranny of time and place. Shebeleza then is the heuristic I employ as I grapple with the motility of 'black queer' in the House of FAKA, a scene for remembering and accessing an archive which bypasses the nation, whilst at once being an imaginative search/yearning for belonging.

The sounds begin again…

Shebeleza and the Sounds of the South

I now turn to a discussion of the first part of my title, shebeleza, a term which refuses to settle within the preserve of the written document. It is the title of the second track to Boom Shaka's 1996 record, *It's Our Game.*[144] For the band it is a celebration of South Africa's jazz pioneers; a slow dancehall beat which is later infused with electronic synth chords plays as Mathosa sings the hook 'siyaShebeleza' making way for Junior Sokhela who raps his experience of music he grew up listening to and the influence this has had on him as a musician. Shebeleza is something the band does in Mathosa's call, as the rest of the band responds 'siyabashebeleza' suggesting that it is done for 'them': an array of jazz singers who are praised by name who are then mentioned. It expresses a filial attachment through the speech act: to shebeleza Miriam Makeba, to shebeleza Letta Mbulu, or Hugh Masekela, suggesting an obligation, in praise of, a continuity, to pay tribute to, to honour, to celebrate, to shebeleza.

The significance of this song, and my mentioning it here, can only be appreciated once the attitude with which kwaito was received during its emergence, and Boom Shaka's own place within the genre is briefly elaborated. This popular dance music genre was produced for and by

[143] Ibid See the discussion on Sol Plaatjie's *Mhudi* p.31.
[144] Boom Shaka, *It's Our Game* [1996]

black youth living in the country's townships; it was used to express desires and experiences in ways that were demotic/hedonistic. Its emergence was concurrent with the developments which ushered South Africa's first democratically elected government in 1994.[145] In acknowledging the genre's fixation with the pleasures of the black body, Bhekizizwe Peterson notes how it also posed an 'unwelcome image of post-1994 South Africa.'[146] It sparked public debate on a number of issues: from being blamed for acts of social deviancy and criminality, to even lyrical content that was openly misogynistic.[147] Maud Blose, for instance emphasizes the centrality of sex and women's sexuality in the genre, noting the scarcity of women in the industry who had control over production, and who were often relegated to singing supporting hooks in songs.[148] However, Boom Shaka navigated these tensions quite significantly, for example Thuli Msezane notes the fact that both the men and women in the band performed verses interchangeably and calls attention to how Mathosa and Seete were more prominent. [149] Indeed scholars have suggested that we read their sexual expression as demonstrating erotic autonomy.[150] In fact the media outcry over the dance version of *Nkosi' Sikelela* which I refer to above was because of the 'provocative pictures of the half-naked Boom Shaka singing something as respected as the national anthem.'[151]

Moreover, it is likely that, based on the period which Bakare-Yusuf highlights, displays of erotic autonomy in these dancehall sessions were operating in tandem with the ways in which Seete and Mathosa were deploying sexual performance. Moreover, the material realities which faced lower class kwaito and dancehall cultures, is indicative of the parallels which inform how we read the conditions of possibility for the intersection, and thus transmission, of affect and

[145] Angela Impey, 'Resurrecting the flesh? Reflections on women in kwaito' ,*Agenda* 16.49 (2001) pp.44-50.
[146] Bhekizizwe Peterson, "Kwaito, 'dawgs' and the antimonies of hustling", *African Identities* 1.2 (2003) p.198.
[147] Ibid and Maud Blose, 'Pornographic objectification of women through kwaito lyrics" *Agenda* 26.3 (2012) pp 50-60.
[148] Ibid. p56.
[149] Thuli Msezane, 'Lebo Mathosa: Genre as a Compass for Gender Performance', (Paper Presented at UCKAR, Afrifems Conference 2018, Grahamstown).
[150] Ibid note 11.
[151] Ibid Blose p.55.

modes of adornment. As Msezane puts it, these parallels 'reveal both the cross-fertilisation that occurs between transnational terrains that reference each other and the need for liberated forms of expression for black youth within the genres.'[152]

Bakare-Yusuf argues that such practice by dancehall women 'exposes femininity as a performative and generative construction.' [153] Indeed, scholars have in various ways explored the highly performative dimensions of gender and sexuality in post-1994 South Africa.[154] Gavin Steingo also notes that Boom Shaka comprised not only displays of erotic autonomy by Seete and Mathosa, but also the presence of the first public transgendered person; Theo Nhlengethwa, who was actually assigned the gender woman at birth.[155] Also, Mathosa was very public about her bisexuality.[156] Detailing the significance of this is beyond the scope of this project. However, it is important to say, as Steingo highlights that if Boom Shaka's first hit single "It's about Time" is 'canonized as one of the first kwaito songs, then it is fair to say that kwaito is always already queer…' Or in the very least that queer audiotopias are imbricated in kwaito's emergence

This brings me to another more well-known rendition of the song, 'Shebeleza'. The late Joe Mafela was approached by Gallo in 1995, a recording company, to produce an album/record for the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament which was to be hosted in South Africa.[157] The title track to Mafela's first album, "Shebeleza", became the theme song of the tournament and has a recognisable mbaqanga sound: a popular form derived from the kwela and marabi styles, placing it within the umbrella of 'township jazz' or African Jazz. The label

[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid Bakare-Yusuf ' Fabricating Identities', p473.
[154] See: Loren Kruger, *The Drama of South Africa: Plays, Pageants and Publics Since 1910* (London and New York: Routledge , 1999), Desiree Lewis, 'Gendered Spectacle: New Terrains of Struggle in South Africa', *Sida Studies* 24 (2009), pp.127-137.
[155] Gavin Steingo, *Kwaito's Promise: Music and the Aesthetics of Freedom in South Africa* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2016) p. 83-87.
[156] Ibid and also see Xavier Livermon, 'Queer(y)ing Freedom: Black Queer Visibilities in Postapartheid South Africa' *GLQ* 18.2-3 (2012) pp. 297-323.
[157] Joe Mafela interview with Pearl Modiade on *Zaziwa* , ' Zaziwa Season 3 JOE MAFELA.' *Youtube.*[Youtube Citation]

mbaqanga is said to have been in circulation since the mid-1950s, and the audience was mostly comprised of working-class black migrant workers who were jazz enthusiasts.[158] An electric bass and an upbeat tempo which comprises of antiphonal lyrical arrangements, between the lead and back-up singers characterises this form.[159] The call-and-response style is present in "shebeleza" wherein the repeated reference to the cascading Congo River (Zaire Congo!) is sung throughout by Mafela and baritone back-ups, this is accompanied by a trumpet. It is worth mentioning that discussions of mbaqanga often refer to the correspondence between costume, body movement, gesture and rhythm which existed between live performers and the audience.[160] How the river flows in the morning and the evening, in this song is also romanticised, leading one to infer that to shebeleza here is to flow in pleasure. This is further supported by the fact that the music video for the song features a clip from the AFCON opening ceremony performance by Mafela and in other shots which fade into each other he is: dancing at a wedding, doing the electric slide at various other sites with young children, and is even singing on a boat with rowers on a dam/river.[161]

In my experience of asking peers and colleagues what the term means, answers often come in the way of gestures that imitate a bird gliding in the air, or hands will wave in a manner that can be likened to the movement of water or even a snake. Shebeleza raises feelings of pleasure, to be in flow, giving rise to sensations that communicate comfort as though bodies can confidently extend themselves in space.

Although this emphasis on pleasure is present when one focuses on meanings inhered in the term shebeleza- as shown in Mafela's music video and the song's nostalgic reference to the river, it is also important to note how Mafela's version sonically and thematically resonates with

[158] David B. Coplan, " Sounds of the 'Third Way': Identity and the African Renaissance in Contemporary African Popular Traditional Music", *Black Music Research Journal* 21.1 (Spring , 2001) pp. 107-124.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Joe Mafela, Shebeleza video

traditions/ practices of struggle. According to Mafela the song refers to the anti-colonial liberation struggle of Zaire, what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, and this can be heard in how the song's call-and-response structure is similar to many struggle songs.[162] This shows how the song's performance is embedded within the practice of struggle and protest memory on the continent. It is also worth noting that it was sung during the #RhodesMustFall protests in 2015 by students,[163] and it thus falls within a genealogy of varied mediums of resistance, traced by Vuyani Pambo, known as umzabalazo.[164] In a discussion of how umzabalazo is mediated in democratic South Africa, Pambo makes the compelling argument that the continued performance of struggle songs by the national party, African National Congress (ANC), at government events suggests an entrapment.[165] The kind of nostalgia produced by the singing of struggle songs by the now ruling national party reveals an inability to truly reckon with loss and even the shortcomings in the present. Pambo thus asserts that umzabalazo has 'become the totem of the mythological rainbow nation, and totems by their nature…defy reason or a comprehensible logic.'[166] I extend this to my own engagement with Mafela's version insofar as it formed part of, in the arena of sport at least, the country's re-entry into the international scene. Moreover, the use of nostalgia is to further affirm the rainbow nation's ideals.

Bearing the above in mind, shebeleza might be engaged as a kind of heuristic which grants access to memories of struggle, and an archive of cultural forms and genres which inform current(s) pleasurable flow. The latter is more pronounced in Boom Shaka's interpretation, and I draw attention to it because it demonstrates the process of recognition at play as they make

[162] Joe Mafela interview with Pearl Modiade on YouTube see: Zaziwa, 'Zaziwa Season 3 JOE MAFELA' published 4 April 2016, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=IwQOUGxBtQo&t=106s accessed January 2018.
[163] A video of this can be accessed at Youtube Rhodes Must Fall, 'Rhodes Must Fall Ep1' published 22 March 2015, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=COACECJx_0k accessed January 2018.
[164] Vuyani Pambo, 'The Limits of Fallism: A Critical Reflection on the Medium of Protest in Democratic South Africa' Long Essay for qualification of an Honours Qualification at Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Univeristy, 2016.
[165] Ibid p.12.
[166] Ibid p13.

space for themselves in the nation, a prevalent theme in their repertoire during that era.[167] Here the naming of previous artists is firstly an expression of the group's genealogy, secondly this act may also be a way in which the artists reveal their own claim to a fraught relationship to the nation as an entity- after all the jazz pioneers which they mention were unwelcome by the apartheid government. To state that is to draw attention to how the mandates of nationhood have an embodied quality to them, in line with Mkhize's suggestion, and is not to be read as giving primacy to the apartheid period as he cautions.[168] On a slightly related note, another of Boom Shaka's controversial songs, 'Kwere Kwere' which appears on their first self-titled album, explores the wounded area of xenophobia, through a song that is titled after a slur often directed at other continental Africans who live in the country; in this way we see Mkhize's insight about the embodied nature of belonging in post-1994 South Africa.[169] Moreover, we see the failure of interpellative strategies of hailing, since, as Robert Reid-Pharr states, subjectivities are formed from the basest of insults- an issue I explore below.[170] In the democratic period, displays of erotic autonomy from particular femininities were also unwelcome: 'andizi funi ezizBoom Shaka'.

Embodiment is crucial because of its experiential nature, and specifically as it relates to uk'shebeleza as a communication which draws from gestures, features, habits, dances that account for a variety of affective forces. Shebeleza then is that which approximates this motility; for FAKA, shebeleza might be said to name the tracing of an affective genealogy, to borrow

[167] Think of for instance their famous songs, 'It's about Time' and 'Thobela'. The song 'Thobela', which precedes 'Shebeleza' in the album *It's Our Game* means hello or/ we see you, ends off with a series of 'greetings' in a sense to musical pioneers, and even the statesman Nelson Mandela!
[168] Khwezi Mkhize, 'The Violence of Belonging', *Black Scholar* 47.2 (2017) pp.25-26.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Robert Reid-Phar, *Black Gay Man: Essays* (New York and London: NYU Press, 2001).

from Gayatri Gopinath,[171] which allows for a grappling with pleasure, nostalgia and the violence of belonging in nation.

To the extent to which uk'shebeleza is an act of remembering, I find myself straddling along two domains. The first is how, with its association to Boom Shaka, shebeleza is a conduit through which clandestine countermemories,[172] images and figures are accessed when FAKA infiltrates the scene. Secondly, because shebeleza recalls a notable moment in the post-apartheid archive with Joe Mafela's AFCON theme song, it is then a reckoning with an array of texts in that archive which legitimate and affirm the ideals of the nation-state, post-1994. These moments and texts all work to organize a seamless narrative of unity in the national consciousness. Among these would be the inclusion and recognition of same-sex sexual practices in the Constitution; scholars have suggested that such acts of inclusion reinforce a narrative of modernity. That countries with legislation of this nature are deemed more modern.[173] In this way queer lives/homosexuals appear to fold into the temporal logics of the nation state, its linear telos, and are in fact granted futurity. The question however remains: what of a queer cultural duo such as FAKA, who renew images and individuals that were unwelcome in the new nation? How might we take seriously FAKA's efforts to construct spaces of black queer belonging, when it appears that the nation-state recognises various sexualities? Shebeleza is how I enter and read the House of FAKA, to think through the persistent need for black queer belonging.

[171] Gayatri Gopinath, " 'Who's Your Daddy?' Queer Diasporic Framings of the Region" in Vivek Bald, Miabi Chatterji (eds.), *The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of U.S Power* (City, Orient BlackSwan, Year), pp274-300.

[172] See: Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005, here Gopinath draws the idea of 'clandestine countermemories' from Joseph Roach, also see, Roach, *Cities of the Dead*

[173] Keguro Macharia,' Queer Kenya in law and policy' in Sokari Ekine &Hakima Abbas, *Queer African Reader* (Dakar: Pambazuka Press, 2013), Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

Law and State Recognition

Joel Modiri, in an examination of the meaning and progress of post-1994 constitutional democracy in South Africa, opens with a reference to Lewis Nkosi's essay, 'The republic of letters after the Mandela republic.'[174] Here, Nkosi associates the period that 'is temporally described as "post"-apartheid or symbolically as the "Mandela republic" with the "failure of South Africa to function as a unitary nation".'[175] This is linked to the fact that literature from South Africa is 'held hostage by apartheid' a view which 'remains a presence, a shadow of unpunished wickedness and inequality ignored.'[176] Ultimately, Modiri surmises that Nkosi reads:

> 'post-1994 South Africa or the "Mandela republic" as a time and a place in which the past has not only shaped but continues to *exert pressure* [sic] on the present….in this way he has rendered as a literary problem that is not only common to all disciplines, including law and jurisprudence, but that characterises the entire social life of the putatively 'new' South Africa, in both public and private as well as material and symbolic guises.'[177]

Attending to Modiri's critical inquiry affords us the ability to reflect 'on the fundamental (dis)continuity between the historical fact of colonial conquest and settler-colonialism in South Africa and the aims and vision of a constitution made in the image of Western liberal democracy.'[178] So, what does black queer do?

The 1996 Constitution, a significant document in the democratic dispensation, heralds a new nation which is founded on the values of non-racialism and non-sexism. Section 9(3) of the Bill of Rights expressly prohibits unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation: a statute which would be internationally recognised since South Africa, at the time, was among a few countries with legislation protecting lesbian and gay rights. Drawing from Pumla Dineo

[174] Joel M. Modiri, 'Conquest and constitutionalism: first thoughts on an alternative jurisprudence', *South African Journal of Human Rights* 10 (2018) also see, Lewis Nkosi, 'The republic of letters after the Mandela republic' in L Stiebel & M Chapman (eds) *Writing Home: Lewis Nkosi on South African Writing* (2016) p.240.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid p. 3.
[178] Ibid.

Gqola, one could say that the Constitution was indeed an aspirational document for it only projected 'an image of ourselves as it would be if we were our best selves';[179] the reality however is that even in post-apartheid era majority of the population, black, continues to experience various forms of violence because they are black. Moreover, black women, trans, same-sex desiring individuals are more vulnerable to experiencing violence. It is interesting then to note the salience of 'black queer' in recent years: a term, I argue, which circumvents non-racialism and sexual orientation. If the call made by Mupotsa for queer African scholarship to think outside spatiotemporal framings of the nation is to be taken seriously,[180] then it is worth considering how the insistence on 'black queer' here and now affords a departure from, and a challenge to, meanings inhered in official discourses.

That being said however my aim is not to valorise black queer as a resolute ideal for subjects living in post-apartheid South Africa; I am mindful of how queer has been/can be complicit with normative investments of nation-states and capital, here I am indebted to theorising in queer of colour critique.[181]

In addition to that, it is important to recognise how queer can be regulatory, as part of what Puar terms homonationalism,[182] a term which captures what happens when homosexual subjects who achieve national recognition and inclusion collude with the nation's normative investments. Puar further explains that "this brand of homosexuality operates as a regulatory script not only of normative gayness, queerness, or homosexuality, but also of the racial and national norms that reinforce these sexual subjects."[183] The point at which homonationalism conjoins with national heterosexuality, in the United States context, is the strengthening of a narrative Puar terms 'U.S sexual exceptionalism', which is 'the successful management of the life

[179] Pumla Dineo Gqola, *Rape a South African Nightmare* (Johannesburg: MF Books Joburg, 2015).
[180] Danai Mupotsa, '*Queer African Reader:* An Encounter." *Feminist Africa* 19 (2014), 113-120.
[181] Ibid Ferguson, (2004).
[182] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).
[183] Ibid.

of a people.'[184] I am struck by how exceptionalism, according to this frame, is not used to signal a break with historical trajectories nor is it about a claim to the nation's newness, rather it is about communicating excellent nationalism. In the case of post-apartheid South Africa, I argue that a particular kind of exceptionalism characterizes how the nation imagines itself because of the recognition homosexuals received through the 1996 Constitution.

Furthermore, Neville Hoad has drawn attention to how since the decriminalisation of same-sex practices through an Equality clause, which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of 'sexual orientation', the cases before the court were of same-sex couples.[185] If one follows that alongside Elizabeth Povinelli's thoughts on the couple unit- that it is 'a key transfer point between, on the one hand, liberal imaginaries of contractual economics, politics and sociality and, on the other, liberal forms of power in the contemporary world'[186]- then it can be inferred that discourse emanating from sexual orientation may in fact be complicit with nationalist formations which seek to reproduce the family unit.

Through the circuits of non-racialism and sexual orientation discourses, moral orders or normativities- as Hoad would say- are interpolated into the present as aspirational ideals. This would then account for the paradox that has confronted sexuality scholars in post-apartheid South Africa: that black bodies are imagined as straight, and queer bodies are imagined as white. This dilemma has been explained by Mupotsa, who argues that the politico-legislative framework of race and difference is a historical process of sexualisation.[187] Indeed South Africa is a case in point when one considers how the 1927 Immorality Act criminalised sex between whites and Africans. The normative investment of this legislation is further highlighted by Mupotsa, who draws our attention to the final section of the Act, which states that illicit carnal intercourse, for

[184] Ibid.
[185] Neville Hoad, 'Queer Customs Against The Law', *Research in African Literatures,* 47. 2 (Summer 2016) pp. 1-20.
[186] Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham and London : Duke University Press, 2006).
[187] Danai Mupotsa, 'Proper Sex', (Unpublished working paper).

'natives', was all but that which was outside the bounds of husband and wife.[188] This and similar laws enacted during apartheid would appear to assuage the state's fears of miscegenation, as that is what the Immorality Act primarily sought to control. By taking for granted the impossibility/unthinkability of sexual activity occurring among people of the same sex, this law would inadvertently legitimate the heterosexual black couple, and confer 'good sex' practice as that which is within marriage for procreative purposes.

With regards to sodomy laws it must be remembered that the amendment to the Immorality Act came about because of a case which came before the court about a party which was hosted in the white suburb of Forest Town that was raided by police. Glen Elder, who refers to this case, draws our attention to how the report for the Act documents how the incident was 'a threat to the moral basis of the populace.'[189] I want to highlight another part of the report he cites, and that is the mentioning of 'queers':

> '….The older members of the queers derive pleasure in getting attractive young men dressed as female. The latter then performs a vulgar 'striptease', this satisfying the onlookers sexually…A queer is 'just ripe' for homosexuality from the age of 18 years. His 'life span' is approximately to the age of 30. After that he is 'over his youth'… The facts embodied herein were obtained by discussing the matter with queers, as well as from persons who associate with the latter without practicing the cult.'[190]

The word 'queer' in this report is used to refer to bodies who were found at a party dressed in ways that confounded the state's logic about what clothes belongs to which bodies: bodies read as male were not to find pleasure and communicate desire in clothing meant for females. The inherent fear here is that practices which confounded heteropatriarchal state machinery, would

[188] Ibid.
[189] Glen Elder, 'Of Moffies, Kaffirs and Perverts: Male Homosexuality and the Discourse of Moral Order in the Apartheid State', in David Bell & Gill Valentine *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) pp.50-58.
[190] Ibid.

undermine the moral basis of the society, they would also be conferred a cult like status. Moreover, although the phrases 'life span' and 'over his youth' pejoratively- and falsely- function as euphemisms for sex practices by male homosexuals, the queer figure is nonetheless coded as that which does not inhabit the ideal script of longevity, and is thus not incorporated into the nation's idea of itself. In many ways then, I agree with Hoad that the romantic notion of the outlaw status of queer is not reflected in the imaginary which informs 'sexual orientation'[191], since here the couple unit circumscribes queer within neoliberal imaginaries vested in the nation, reproducing family/kinship-ties, and whiteness.

However, the question remains as to how 'black queer' departs from meanings inhered in official discourse. I posit that it functions as a refusal of the black-or-homosexual binary; based off of the sites and cites which appear in FAKA's work, there is a clear subversion of moral orders which have been transfigured into the ideals of a new nation.

Moreover, the Law is not the only purveyor of meaning, although Isabel Hofmeyr writes in the context of port cites in her exploration of material histories in relation to intellectual property, customs and the colonial copyright, her inquiry highlights the 'contending tides of meaning'.[192] Hofmeyr explores how customs officers of borderline cases had to take into account a variety of factors when deciding whether objects could be imported or even pass into their territory; various strategies of definition were deployed to exclude or include certain objects and/or bodies.[193] Among the definitional dilemmas presented were questions of whether a substance was butter or margarine, '[could] medicinal herbs be classified as tea? Were soup squares the same as stock? … Was there any difference between poppy seed for culinary use?

[191] Hoad (2016).
[192] Isabel Hofmeyr, 'Colonial Copyright, Customs, and Port Cities: Material Histories and Intellectual Property', *Comparative Literature* 70.3 (2018), pp.264-276.
[193] Ibid p.268

Fabric proved particularly tricky as officials debated whether a particular bolt of cloth should be entered as printed tartan or gingham with swatches included.'[194]

Hofmeyr goes on to detail how fabric posed a particular kind of challenge, 'since officers sought to establish the difference between shawls, shawling, tablecloths, tabling, woven curtain, printed handkerchiefs, wrappers, scarves and loincloths- and this before considering local or regional terms like selampores or kadungas.'[195] Yet, however precise and detailed the definitions were, 'they were overrun by tides of language leaving the tariff book itself as the final ontological rampart.'[196] In the face of these 'contending tides of meaning , officials were driven to the object themselves- sniffing, tasting, and feeling the items in front of them in an attempt to classify them accurately. They checked thread counts in fabric, opened cartons to verify the weight of items, and tested alcohol to see whether its label matched its content.'[197] This is significant as it has implications for where and how far back we trace affective forces, and the ways in which a sensorium also informs tides of meaning. What interpretive strategies would be involved in the importation of a Henry James paperback novel, or a text by Peter Abrahams? Not only does this confirm the fact that histories do become ossified in gestures, bodies, objects in the present- thereby calling for a consideration of the ways in which objects/subjects are apprehended and perceived, apart from signifactory classifications and distinctions. As Hofmeyr suggests, such a method has become 'an influential way of proceeding transnational logistical, and assemblage histories and involves setting up an analytical proscenium arch over a point through which a variety of mobilities are channelled, and where questions of value are created.'[198] Bearing the

[194] Ibid p.268, as cited from Details from Director of Customs 76 (butter/margarine); 85 (medicinal herbs; 82 (soup squares); 74 (poppy seed); 81 1032/06 (gingham).
[195] Ibid p. 269, as cited from debates about fabric which frequent the Customs and Excise (DEA) archive and Director of Customs (DCU) archives. See especially Director of Customs 81, 1031/06 and 1032/06.
[196] Ibid p. 269.
[197] Ibid p. 269, as cited from Director of Customs (fabric count); Collector of Customs CKN 3/3 (weighing); Attorney General 1504 (spirits).
[198] Ibid Hofmeyr p. 265.

aforementioned in mind then, an attention to the archive and histories which are convoked in the black queer practice which FAKA is involved in needs to be explored.

Queer and the trouble with antinormativity[199]

I find Puar's method of queer assemblage quite useful, since it emphasises what 'assemblages do.'[200] Particularly the events which they deterritorialize and/or reterritorialize. Drawing from Massumi, event is defined not simply as a discrete set of activities; instead it is the folding of dimensions of time into and out of each other, an occurrence which is "a result of the 'conversion of surface distance into intensity [which] is also the conversion of the materiality of the body into an event.'[201] The theorizing undertaken by Massumi, which is about the intensification of affect, is important as it probes into the possible 'affective conditions necessary for the event-space to unfold.'[202] My approach to the House of FAKA, then is concerned and reads for an unfolding of the event-space; one which metaphorically takes from the designs/rooms/streets of the pageantry of dancehall, house music, the drag house and the fashion house which convoke the House of FAKA.

The making of shared ground then, consists or enacts the previous processes. Moreover, and in line with the assertions made by Massumi, the ground is anything but stable, or even transparent: 'The ground is full of movement, as full as the air is with weather, just at different rhythm from most perceptible movements occurring with it…the ground is anything but

[199] Annamarie Jagose, 'The Trouble with Antinormativity', 26.1 (2015) *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, pp26-47.
[200] Ibid
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid Puar.

stable… It is a dynamic unity of continual folding, uplift, and subsidence.'[203] Katherine McKittrick would emphasise the fact that the ground is not transparent, and that the ground is demonic.[204] Drawing from discourses in geography in particular, McKittrick looks at the ways in which we can depart from ideas of space as settled, knowable and transparent. In the introduction to her book, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, McKittrick writes: 'Geography's discursive attachment to stasis and physicality, the idea that space "just is" and that space and place are merely containers for human complexities and social relations, is terribly seductive.'[205] Her use of the word demonic, takes from mathematical and programming discourses wherein demonic [daemonic] denotes the unknowability of a term or function; but of course deeply embedded in the word's usage is a subversion of the moral politico-philosophical framework which has informed the figuration of black women. I take this and apply it to the black femme duo.

Moreover, and still within the purview of theoretical insights which have taken on scientific terms,[206] I complement Puar's method of a queer assemblage with Michelle Wright's notion of the "now", which I first encounter in *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*.[207] In this text Wright proposes a theory of blackness which, cognisant of its location and narration, can be read through a notion drawn from quantum physics, which she calls epiphenomenality. Or what, mindful of the sonic movements which I evoke in this chapter, can also be referred to as the polyrhythms. She argues for how Blackness operates as 'a construct (implicitly or explicitly defined as a shared set of physical and behavioural characteristics) and phenomenological (imagined through individual perceptions in various ways, depending on the

[203] Brian Massumi, *Parable for the Virtual* p.8.
[204] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
[205] Ibid.
[206] Here the use of scientific concepts is not just for metaphorical effect, but in fact is involved in the production of the world, see: Brian Massumi Ibid *Parables of the Virtual*, p. 20.
[207] Michelle Wright, *The Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*, (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

context)'[208]; this is important since both notions of blackness comprise of space and time, or what is referred to as "spacetime". *Epiphenomenal time*, or the "now" then is the nexus through which, as she states:

> '…the past, the present and future are always interpreted. [She] capitalize[s] [her] use of the term from its formal philosophical definition, in which the epiphenomenal is not in itself causal but nonetheless correlates with causal phenomena. In *Physics of Blackness*, "Epiphenomenal" time denotes the current moment, a moment that is *not* directly borne out of another…Epiphenomenal time does not preclude any and all causality: only a *direct* or *linear* causality. In other words, the current moment, or the "now", can certainly correlate with other moments, but one cannot argue that it is already the effect of a specific, previous moment.'[209]

I compliment this with Mupotsa's reading of how the image is at once able to operate as a reconfiguration of space and an assessment of time.[210] I therefore read, here and throughout the rest of this chapter the convergence of a multiplicity of objects with multiple spatio-temporalities which collapse the past, present and future; an occurrence which specifically characterises what Wright calls, the epiphenomenal nature of blackness.[211] In this occurrence I have illustrated an embodied practice that is black queer, here and now, within a queer African context, as it relates to theorizing in the North Atlantic.

The resultant formation implicitly suggests entropy in a masculinist historical time. This ultimately entails an engagement with the salience of investments in linearity, progress time and notions of modernity. In this way, one is able to engage the regulatory scripts which inform the construction of particular categories and identities. These regulatory scripts might be called norms, which are involved in logics of reproduction. In a critique of the acquired self-transparency of the term queer, Annamarie Jagose underscores what she calls the 'trouble with

[208] Ibid p. 4.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Mupotsa, 'Look at Me Passing for Human' in *White Weddings*, (Dissertation completed in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of the Witwatersrand, 2014) p. 140.
[211] Ibid Wright p.4

antinormativity.'[212] Here she troubles "queer's" associations with antinormativity, and epistemological framings which figure 'the primacy of queer's opposition to normativity.'[213] In this way she also implicitly suggests, or rather invites consideration of, the fact that the insistence and preoccupation with what queer meant in the early 1990's in North America is the reason for regimes of construction which fix identities. [214] In this way she echoes thoughts put forth by Zethu Matebeni and Thabo Msibi in a special issue of *Agenda*. Their introduction, titled 'Vocabularies of the non-normative'[215] troubles the ways by which identity categories are made pronounceable, illustrative through the (un)translatability of the LGBT[Q] acronym; one that is 'used often unquestionably, by many whose sexual and gender identities are at odds with the "norm".' [216] Matebeni and Msibi assert that we 'exercise new ways of listening to how people speak of themselves and bring meaning to their existence',[217] an approach which is also attuned to how gestures, silences and habits also figure in this process. When we do this we destabilize the normative standards that are used to limit how 'we [sic] speak and name ourselves.'[218] But do we really? To what extent is queer imagined as that which follows the mandates and strategies of the law? These are the questions which inform a strategic deployment of destabilization, which bring us closer to a vision proposed by Matebeni and Msibi from the work of Alexander: 'the vocabularies of rights and truth could be made to disrupt dominant regimes, particularly when the claimants are not the ones imagined to formulate the operating discourses of power.'[219] It is in this way that I proceed to engage the investments of the law and state recognition which, are circumvented by the black queer practice FAKA is engaged in.

[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid. p.26
[214] Ibid.
[215] Zethu Matebeni and Thabo Msibi, 'Vocabularies of the non-normative', *Agenda* 29.1 (2015) pp. 3-9.
[216] Ibid p.3.
[217] Ibid. p. 5
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid. p5.

Enter the Black Femme….

As part of a black queer femme erotic archive, FAKA draws influence from black women whose femininity was not within the post-apartheid trope of what Gqola terms, 'the new South African woman':[220] an aspirational figure who gains airplay in the public, demonstrating upward class mobility, and a regulatory marker for what it means to be a black modern woman who 'has it all'. Instead the women that FAKA express attachment to: Thembi Seete, Lebo Mathosa and Brenda Fassie, occupied a more wayward role in the South African public. Gqola surveys the literature which illustrates the figure of the 'new woman', and notes that in tandem, the New South African Woman (NSAW) 'marks a departure from earlier conceptions of women's status in colonial and apartheid legislation. The NSAW exists in an ambivalent relationship to historical femininities: simultaneously challenging and re-inscribing them.'[221] At the same time Gqola shows how, this figure is cast as consumable, drawing from Dorothy Driver, to highlight the appearance of Black women in South African magazines- an event that was always political.[222] Driver 'demonstrates the manner in which celebrity women- and women who rose to publicity after appearing on the cover of *Drum* in the 1950s- embodied an urban, sophisticated, independent Black femininity that challenged hegemonic apartheid constructions of Black women as out of place in the urban realm.'[223] At the same time presentations of the female 'rehearsed patriarchal expectation.'[224] The woman in presentations of the NSAW, embodies economic progress, consumer status, and achievement as a mode of self-assertion. Gqola concludes that the NSAW is 'local and globally mobile, which relies on recognition in

[220] Pumla Dineo Gqola, 'A peculiar place for a feminist? The New South African women, *True Love* magazine and Lebo(gang) Mashile', *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 12.2 (2016) pp119-136.
[221] Ibid Gqola,p. 122.
[222] Ibid, also see Dorothy Driver, '*Drum* magazine (1959-99) and the Spatial Configurations of Gender' in Kate Darian-Smith, Liz Gunner, and Sarah Nuttall (eds.) *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*, (London: Routledge, 1996).
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.

order to enable both fantasy and belonging.'[225] However, as intimated above the women which FAKA allow us to remember do challenge the constructions of a respectable women, the exclusions which those women received from the mainstream demonstrate, again what Mkhize calls the violence of belonging.[226]

If anything, Desire Marea and Fela Gucci in part call to mind another genealogy, traced by Dina Ligaga, in her figuration of the 'good-time girl'.[227] The women whom they draw from occupied waywardness within the public imagination at the time, a waywardness which can be associated with this figure. As a product of modernity and urbanity, this highly eroticized figure 'is young, educated, beautiful, wild…likes to party'.[228] Ligaga further notes that within discourses of the African popular imaginary she is stereotypically positioned as someone who is willing to grab the attention of men for money and is punished for her immoral behaviour; usually appearing in didactic, cautionary tales in popular media in order to issue warnings about punishment and death. Ligaga recuperates this figure as someone who actually embraces eroticism, disavowing the roles of domesticity and conventional femininity. I place the figure described by Ligaga in a (dis)continuous relation to the NSAW. Further, FAKA's departure from scripts of respectability inhered in the NSAW, can be seen in their own repudiation of the persona they call Lorraine. Ready? Read:

> We all know that girl. We grew up being terrorised by the thick-as-slice-of-bread layer of Rama that her polony sandwiches instilled while we reassembled the overturned remnants of our grated polony sandwiches before her gaze, head bowed in shame hoping she didn't notice. She represents somewhat of an oppressive aspiration that can only be pursued through the suspension of self. She is an imaginary policing construct and she

[225] Ibid p. 134.
[226] Ibid Mkhize (2017).
[227] Dina Ligaga, "Mapping emerging constructions of good time girls in Kenyan popular media", *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 26.3 (2014) pp249-261.
[228] Ibid.

needs to wait as we use the undesirable debris of polony and breadcrumbs to re-imagine the many ways our sandwich can exist… '[229]

-**FAKA**

FAKA's challenge to the regulatory script imposed by 'the new South African woman' is captured in their #WaitLorraine. I read Lorraine as an incipient manifestation of 'the new South African woman' with all the attendant orders and logics that would seek to police them. Through an embrace of 'femme opulence', Desire and Fela shebeleza the good-time girl tapping into what Rodríguez rightly terms, an erotic archive:[230] setting into motion feelings of intense pleasure which cut across the divisions between past and present.

The good-time girl is somewhat of an anomaly, and is perhaps unwelcome in post-apartheid South Africa because they present a problem for a preferred image of the forward looking and future-oriented subject. Unlike the new South African woman, the good-time girl frustrates the nation's progress and in so doing, shows a different temporal relation to the narrative of modernity, one that ultimately casts her as regressive to the nation-state's imperatives. Similarly, black queer subjects are marked as backward.

I draw the above from Heather Love's reading of backwardness in 19th and 20th Century American novels,[231] and relate it to my own reading of the situatedness of black queers in South Africa currently. 'The idea of modernity-', writes Love 'with its suggestions of progress, rationality and technological advance- is intimately bound with backwardness.'[232] She goes on to suggest that the concept of modernity relies on the construction of excluded, superseded and

[229] Desire Marea, Fela Gucci in conversation with Layla Leiman, 'Young South Africa: FAKA, Redefining Representations of Black Queer Identity', *between 10 and 5* (online Blog). https://10and5.com/2015/06/29/young-south-africa-faka-your-representation-of-black-queer-identity/ Accessed June 2018.
[230] Juana María Rodríguez,' Gesture and Utterance: Fragments from a Butch-Femme Archive' in George E. Harggerty and Molly McGarry (eds), *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).
[231] Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[232] Ibid p. 5.

denigrated others, usually: 'sexual and gender deviants but also women, colonized people, the nonwhite[sic], the disabled, the poor, and criminals …marked as inferior by means of the allegation of backwardness.'[233] It is important to be mindful however that FAKA's relentless attachment to pop-icons, who represent the good-time girl figure, is an indicator of how backwardness can have the status of a lived reality in queer lives. This is to say that conferring 'backward' onto a queer subject, or even onto the good-time girl, ought not to be simply understood within ideological currents which serve homophobia.

Love goes on to imply that to the degree that backward subjects are deemed to be lagging on the trail of progress, they are then viewed as history's backward children:[234] hence the good-time girl who is unable to advance into the time of development, as opposed to the celebrated figure of the new South African woman, who affirms the nation-state ideal. However, the aspirational figure's ability to function as regulatory relies on a notion of the good time girl similar to the one I have described, which is to say that both images are endorsed by the nation in order for its investment in modernity to be sustained.

Yet that is just one perspective and reading of modernity, which may in fact highlight the ways in which the making of citizens is a contradictory process. From the vantage point of the formerly colonized, queers and the good-time girls are viewed as the corrupting, demoralizing effects of modernity. Graeme Reid for instance has found how in South Africa's black townships queer individuals are seen to be a 'fashionable' post-apartheid phenomenon.[235] To some degree, the homophobic discourse of 'homosexuality is un-African' also relies on this perspective. One thing is clear though, that there exists an ambivalent relation to modernity wherein the black queer figure vacillates between being viewed either as a corrupting effect of modernity on the

[233] Ibid. p 6.
[234] Ibid p. 7.
[235] Graeme Reid, "'It Is Just a Fashion!' Linking Homosexuality and 'Modernity' in South Africa", *Etnofoo*r 16.2 (2003) pp.7-25.

one end, or is seen as backward. Nonetheless, in both narratives, belonging is not conferred onto black queers.

FAKA's depiction of Lorraine results from what I, drawing from Love, read as a series of backward-turning performances. It nuances a coming of age in the democratic era, thus situating itself as an experience in the life of what is considered to be the 'bornfree' generation: a growing population born after, or even shortly before, the demise of formalised apartheid. Insofar as it is a memory, it is immediately recognisable to the black bornfree who received their primary education in the country's newly integrated schools. It specifically concerns the life of the black pupil who, coming from a poor household attended a former model-C school away from their hometown, or township. The scene of the lunchbreak is where this individual opens up their lunch tin among peers who come from more affluent households. At the moment when they compare what the other has for lunch, this pupil may be confronted with- or perhaps even anticipate- derisive laughter or an awkward stare because either their sandwiches do not have some of the choicest spreads, or are not neatly cut into small triangular shapes with the crusts removed. It is haunting because it surfaces a difficult, somewhat underrepresented, experience with a backward feeling, shame.

The prevailing accounts of black students being stultified in the integrated classroom are usually recitations of how a name was mispronounced by a white teacher, or how they had to deal with racist hair policies. In my experience, when the above scenario is ever mentioned in black social circles, laughter is usually the mechanism through which we as bornfrees distance ourselves from the 'head bowed in shame'. Moreover, the affective force of it lies in the close relation between this character and Lorraine. The bornfree candidate who fails to approximate a set of values, or accumulate and exhibit wealth- like Lorraine -knows, intimately, that aspirational discourse can be oppressive, since its progressive apparatus constantly leaves one feeling

backward. FAKA also turns their back on investments which shape a 'bornfree'. In an effort to not be subsumed by the telos of progress, they turn back.

Although the performance reckons with being marked as a regressive subject, backward-turning is not regression. The reassembling of the sandwich and the debris, is an imagining of a different mode of existence: backward-turning thus anticipates a future. The backward-turn's imaginative utility lies in the fact that it affords the femme duo access into an erotic archive which to quote Rodríguez, has been 'peopled with mothers and aunts, neighbours, classmates, and lovers who have conveyed the feminine in culturally specific ways.'[236] As I have stated, FAKA's archive also includes the good-time girl pop icons. If the backward-turn is only part of an assembling of a future, it is then only a gesture and as Rodríguez states, gestures are 'always partial, incomplete…they never fully establish the interpretative closure of an action…' [237] The scholar goes on to argue that since gestures only suggest, their suggestion functions as a form of seduction. The seductive potential of the backward-turn is evoked when backward-turning is viewed as a bodily posture that accentuates an erogenous zone, the back, the posterior.

Their official cover art (Figure 2 below) for their single 'Isende Lendlela'[238], released in September 2017 best exemplifies this gesture. In this image Fela Gucci and Desire Marea stand completely naked on a ladder in what appears to be, based off of the bricks and debris which surrounds them, a construction site. They are situated in front of a wall on the other side of which we can see the branches of two trees: perhaps this is the House of FAKA. Though both their bodies are slightly angled away from the camera revealing their backsides, their faces are turned toward it. Both of them have makeup on, large earrings hang from their necks, and they are both donning platinum blonde wigs- an immediate association is made here with Lebo Mathosa.

[236] Rodríguez (2007).
[237] Ibid.
[238] FAKA, 'Isende Lendlela' ft. Surreal Sessions, *Amaqhawe* (Album), 2016.

This image collates multiple spatiotemporal readings and thus invokes Puar's assertion of approaching queerness as an assemblage. The combination of organic and inorganic forces in assemblage according to Puar,[239] can be seen here in the image's incorporation of trees and naked bodies who cohere around a central object: a performance which inflects the Adam and Eve renaissance painting. The reproductive imperative of sex inhered in that painting, through the exhibition of frontal parts is undermined. They turn away from future making premised on a heteronormative logic. The backward posture evinces an alternative sexual future, one which privileges intensity of pleasure as the reason for sex: the invitation is made through, and by, the bottom.

Taking into account the portrait as a form historically utilised in constructions of personhood, the faces turned toward the camera signal a demand for recognition. Through Deleuze and Guattari's reading of assemblage as a collection of multiplicities, Puar concludes her assertion of such an approach to queerness since it '…allows for becoming beyond, or without being.'[240] It is no surprise then that this image evades reading for fixity, linearity or straightforward coherence.

[239] Puar (2007).
[240] Jasbir Puar, (2007).



Figure 2: Cover Art for 'Isende Lendela'. Photography by Nick Widmer

Backward-turning is an experience which moves across personal and collective memory; it undermines the notion of a progressive, or new subject- in this case the bornfree. Since the back, the bum, the bottom, is also an erogenous zone, I envisage an erotic exercise and FAKA allows for such an imagining of erotic possibility; the practice of uk'shebeleza is further reinforced.

Assemblage allows for me to read the House of FAKA for the ways in which it bypasses fixity, completion, permeance and linearity. The backward-turn, evinced through narration and even their images/expression events, could in fact signal the collapsing of a future and past into a moment: the "now".

The Sounds Begin Again…

It is important to be mindful of how FAKA's establishment in 2015 coincides with #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements which occurred in 2015-2016. Although these protests directly challenged institutional practices in universities which alienate black students, the event- led mostly by South Africa's bornfrees- saw to a heightened public deliberation of black experience in post-apartheid South Africa. Moshibudi Motimele for instance, highlights the intimate (intergenerational) relationship forged between black students and black workers in all spheres of the university's structures during this time.[241] Motimele shows how the thematic reliance on the family, wherein students were referred to as 'our children' by the staff, enabled a rupturing of neoliberal time.[242] Also, gamEdze and gamEdze stage a crucial dialogue about various politics which flooded the scenes and media about the meanings of blackness.[243] gamEdze unpacks the ways in which the university is 'focused in large part on regulating and policing the way people move through time-space.'[244] Although the conversation between gamEdze and gamEdze focuses on Afropessimism and its inability to truly reckon with what Black people are able create together here; the shutdown of the university as gamEdze concludes, became a space where they could create, learn and tell stories.[245]

In light of this, it is worth attending to the place of performance, visuality and blackness during the FMF protests. Same Mdluli's 'Space is the Place and Place is the Time: Refiguring the Black Female Body as a Political Site in Performance'[246] is useful not only because of the ways in which it records how the student protests moved outside of the confines of the institution; but

[241] Moshibudi Motimele, 'The Rupture of Neoliberal Time as the Foundation for Epistemologies' *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118.1 (January 2019) pp. 205-214.
[242] Ibid p.207-211.
[243] gamEdze and gamEdze, 'Anxiety, Afropessimism, and the University Shutdown', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118.1 (January 2019) pp. 215-225.
[244] Ibid p. 215.
[245] Ibid p.224.
[246] Same Mdluli, 'Space is the Place and Place is the Time: Refiguring the Black Female Body as a Political Site in Performance', in Jay Pather & Catherine Boulle (eds.) *Acts of Transgression: Contemporary Live Art in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2019) pp.169-189.

also because central to her argument is the ways in which the black female body emerges, through unscripted live performance, as a figure that assess space and experience.[247] Although Mdluli's concern is primarily with the ways in which performance is utilised by black women in order to defuse violence, what I find interesting is how the live performances discussed are in conversation with a variety of media which are amplifying blackness at the time: social media, radio, film and television performance, and music. As Collis-Buthelezi suggests, the unrest on various university campuses in recent years is also a 'sign of larger questions around what freedom means and what it looks like 20 [odd] years after democracy.'[248]

In making a case for Black Studies in South Africa, Collis-Buthelezi proposes an approach to the lived realities of South Africans, 'cognizant of the past as well as other "nows" of blackness'[249] This approach, would bring together various sites across the country, within and outside the university, in which Black studies scholarship is being read and theorized.[250] One such site which exemplifies this, I suggest, is the House of FAKA. Further, Collis-Buthelezi employs Wright's notion of epiphenomenal time in order to undo the 'presumptions of linear temporality(ies) that continue to dominate the humanities and social sciences, but specifically Black Studies scholarship (largely in the US) as well as other critiques of the field.'[251]

As I conclude this chapter I am left with the sense that the time-space compression/explosion, which black queer generates for FAKA, diagnoses a linearfeedback loop which take us back to the beginning. Massumi unpacks the ways in which dimensions of time fold into each other through feedback, feed-forward and recursivity.[252] These three processes,

[247] Ibid 171.
[248] Victoria J. Collis-Buthelezi, 'The Case for Black Studies in South Africa' *The Black Scholar* 47.2 (2017) pp.7-21.
[249] Ibid p. 17.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid. Also see Wright (2015) p4-5.
[252] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*: *Movement, Affect Sensation*, (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2002) p.15.

also convert distance into intensity.[253] This serves the argument that the 'field of emergence of experience has to be thought of as a space-time continuum, as an ontogenetic dimension prior to the separating-out of space and time.'[254] In this way, linear time like position-gridded space, would then be 'emergent qualities of the event of the world's self-relating.'[255] This forms part of the theorizing by Massumi about sensation, or the feeling of having a feeling, wherein the body and its sensory surfaces relay between the corporeal and incorporeal dimensions.[256]

In many ways this takes us back not only to the event described by Fleetwood, of the black woman who looks at Fanon being looked at, as referred to above, but moving beyond perception, toward sensation, we become aware of the feeling of feeling the event enunciated by the white boy. This is what shebeleza rehearses about black queer here and "now". As we proceed to the next chapter, we are mindful of how FAKA's emergence coincides with the student movements; this and various other spectacular events post-1994 South Africa are indicative of the disappointment black people have about what it means to exist here. However, in a departure from the FMF and RMF protests, FAKA's mission, seeks to transcend what they deem to be a 'queer activist rhetoric.'[257] This comment is illustrative of how we cannot simply read for a direct causal relation between the student movement and FAKA; what it suggests is that there was an intense reckoning with what blackness (and even queerness) meant for the bornfree in post-apartheid South Africa. FAKA's mission in the first instance is not about simply disrupting and rupturing, however attachments to sociality and belonging inform their intentions to build a spiritual home for black queers.

[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Fela Gucci and Desire Marea in Alyssa Klein "South African Performance Artists FAKA On Their 'Gqom-Gospel Lamentation for Dick' " Web blog post *okayafrica.* 10 November 2015 Web. Accessed 18 February 2018.

Now imagine that as we move through the site, onto another venue, we come across a large poster, or maybe you see this on a mat, which re-echoes the words of Hazel Kimani:

> 'For the queer, the trans, the non-conforming, the female and the black, /For those who have been alienated by mainstream culture,/For those who are constantly harassed by patriarchy and suffer at the hands of capitalism,/For copper-coloured Afro wigs, golden chokers, torn stockings and moving freely despite Lorraine's side-eye, /there is FAKA.'[258]

[258] Hazel Kimani, "FAKA – Building a Spiritual Home', *Bubblegum Club* (2017) https://bubblegumclub.co.za/features/faka-building-spiritual-home/amp/ Accessed: June 2018.

Black Femmes in the Garden: Aesthetic Form, Sensorium and World-Making in *From a Distance*

> "Because [the black femme] often is invisible (but nonetheless present), when she becomes visible, her appearance stops us, offers us time in which we can work to perceive something different or differently."
>
> -Kara Keeling, *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, The Black Femme and the Image of Common Sense*

The main concern of the previous chapter was the performative force of the appellation 'black queer' as it relates to the location and narration of the House of FAKA in the space and time of nationhood. In this chapter I examine a video performance titled *From a Distance*[259] to explore how alternate visions of sociality are constructed/surfaced by the black queer duo. Kara Keeling's thoughts in the quote above frame my discussion of affective forces generated and relations which are freed up in performances by the black femme duo. I thus attend to the aesthetic dimensions of the video work in order to show how embodied experience is implicated in queer world-making strategies. Since the video was initially released on YouTube, the screen interface is understood to be the relational surface wherein affect traffics between the viewer and the performers.

The impulse to explore how aesthetic form underwrites queer world-building proceeds from Macharia's provocations regarding research about African lives in cultural studies.[260] According to him cultural objects, texts and artefacts which deal with queer subjectivity on the continent are usually attended to in a manner that privileges the content of the works over

[259] Buyani Duma, 'From a Distance', YouTube 2016 https://youtu.be/2doHNuXe534 Accessed in May 2018.
[260] Keguro Macharia, '5 Reflections on Trans* & Taxonomy (with Neo Musangi)' *Critical Arts* 30.4 (2016), pp. 495- 506.

form;[261] thereby giving little or no consideration to questions of pleasure and desire. In a discussion of Neo Musangi's photography and other visual forms of queer representation he makes a case for an approach to African cultural production which takes seriously its aesthetic dimensions.[262] He argues that insisting on the capacity for Musangi's art to 'elicit pleasure, desire, joy…is to reckon with forms of queer world building.'[263]

Indeed, there has been a growing interest within contemporary queer studies scholarship on aesthetic form. Kadji Amin, Amber Jamilla Musser and Roy Pérez's introduction to an *ASAP/Journal* special issue titled 'Queer Form: Aesthetics, Race and the Violences of the Social'[264] highlights the world-making capacity of aesthetic form among queer artists. They argue that aesthetic innovation and manipulation are '… the very *substance* of many of these artists' engagement with legacies of social violence.'[265] Form is defined expansively as that which takes into account formal structure, artistic techniques and the plasticity of medium, as it offers engagement with affective and sensuous modes of meaning-making. The notion of 'queer form' is presented in order to challenge the idea that form is merely something to be transgressed or resisted in 'the quest for a greater queer freedom.' Rather, form might best be understood as that which '*informs queerness* [sic], and queerness…as a series of *relations* to form, relations not limited to binary and adversarial models of resistance and opposition.'[266] I find their contribution useful insofar as it emphasizes the world-making capacity of aesthetic forms and criticism: foregrounding the affective and sensuous relations produced between artists/performers, works of art and their audience.

Drawing attention to aesthetics as a mode of knowledge production in this manner supports my interest in the movements of pleasure and desire in FAKA's video. Reading the

[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid p.504.
[264] Kadji Amin, Amber Jamilla Musser and Roy Pérez, 'Queer Form: Aesthetics, Race and the Violences of the Social', *ASAP/Journal* 2.2 (2016).
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid p.228;

video work as an assemblage, enables an engagement with how desire reorganises relations fixed upon the black queer body, assumptions about private and public space, and relations to form. Moreover, Keeling's articulation of the black femme, that she makes us perceive something different or differently, necessitates a model of embodied affect: thereby enabling a consideration of how erotic desire appeals to and impacts a desiring audience. In this way the black femme offers what Keeling calls a 'line of flight',[267] a phrase borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari when they describe the rearranging effects or creative potential of assemblages. Defined as 'complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities and territories that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning,' assemblages might appear as a diagram or a 'map of destiny'.[268] Queer world-making strategies, or queer form, thus serves the creation of assemblages.

Amin, Musser and Pérez also rightly state that world-making falls prey to critique in contemporary queer thinking when it is perceived as historically unmoored, often appearing idealistic and facile. Of course queer African scholarly and artistic work on representation has been careful not to frame world-making strategies from the continent within idealistic paradigms. Even as Macharia decries the scholarly methods used when approaching African lives, his call for a reckoning with queer world-making is mindful of, and addresses, colonialist inscriptions about Africa. In fact Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi notes how imaginative work in film and literature on queer representations 'revivify and intersect with historical debates that are more overtly entangled with cultural politics about Africa, Africans, and (self) representation.'[269] It is for this reason that assemblage finds relevance in FAKA's videos.

[267] Kara Keeling, *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, The Black Femme and the Image of Common Sense* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007), p29.
[268] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).
[269] Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi, 'Queer Prolepsis and the Sexual Commons: An Introduction', *Research in African Literatures* 47.2 (Summer 2016), viii.

This imaginative work contributes to the making of what Osinubi terms a 'queer prolepsis'[270]. A term which indicates both an indeterminate geography and the imagining of a queer future, characteristics which connote and anticipate a queer world. The garden then, as I will show in this chapter, is the scene which FAKA occupies as black femme figures. It highlights both the discursive terrain by which the African subject and Africa have been inscribed and/or exoticised, but is also the scene for the queer prolepsis, an alternative utopic vision in strategies for freedom.

Secondly, my analysis is informed by Puar's elaboration of queerness as an assemblage that is 'spatially and temporally contingent'.[271] Such an approach underpins an investment in disentangling the relations between affect and representation. According to Puar, affective analysis is more useful because it exceeds the limits of identity and visibility politics, and is able to surface 'queernesses that are unknown or cogently knowable, that are in the midst of becoming, that do not immediately and visibly signal themselves as insurgent, oppositional or transcendent.'[272] Here, we go beyond questions of meaning and signification, but are forced to reckon with what is generated.[273] The black femme figure compels a reading within this vein, where processes of perception, understood here as an embodied experience, attunes us to these other queernesses, or ways of knowing.

FAKA's habituation of black femme is also crucial, since femme is a performance which exceeds the frame of identity: further reinforcing affective analysis. It is a performance of pleasure and play whose inscription, according to Lisa Duggan and Kathleen McHugh, poses a fundamental challenge to fixity and categorical analysis. [274] They write:

[270] Ibid.
[271] Puar (2007) p. 204.
[272] Puar Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Lisa Duggan and Kathleen McHugh, ''Fem (me) Manifesto', *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8.2 (1996), p.154.

> It diminishes a fem(me), all fem(me)s, to talk about a "fem(me)" identity in itself. How could that be? Fem(me) is neither an ideal nor a category. She makes a scene, an entrance, an appearance—she steals the show (she is the show) of difference, but she cannot be fixed as a certain effect "in itself."[275]

Rodriguez further complicates our understanding and proceeds with the assumption that: 'sexual acts [and] sexualized bodies have no meaning outside those we assign them.'[276] Which is to say that the sexual experiences and embodiments are, 'not reducible to a heteronormative set of correlating attributes.'[277] Although the above scholars articulate femme within a butch-femme lesbian sociality, the designation is not circumscribed within culturally specific terms for sexualized gender subject positions and is thus taken up by FAKA. Moreover, their parenthetical reference in the above description is an indication of a relational approach to the fem(me), who undermines forms of knowing at a distance, instead requiring performative engagement which privileges immediacy.

A scene I call the Garden is incorporated in FAKA's assemblages. It is a scene where desire attaches itself, and a way for me to consider some of the territories of same-sex sexual performance. Moreover, the screen interface or surface through which the performances are mediated further affects the body's sensory apparatus, inviting us to attend to the 'spatial, temporal and corporeal convergences and rearrangements' characteristic to assemblage. [278]

Surface Strategies in the Video Work

The provocations raised by Macharia about valuing beauty, pleasure and play when approaching the visual works of queer African artists is in fact consonant with the scholarly

[275] Ibid p. 154.
[276] Juana María Rodríguez, 'Gesture and Utterance: Fragments from a Butch-Femme Archive' in in George E Haggerty, Molly McGarry (eds). *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) pp. 282-292.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Puar ibid.

attention given to Zanele Muholi's images; Gabeba Baderoon, Zethu Matebeni, Pumla Gqola and Kylie Thomas have all in varied ways allowed for us to imagine how the images appeal to erotic desire.[279] FAKA's performance in *From a Distance* first appeared on YouTube, a fact worth mentioning because it would seem that FAKA's video does not fall within the purview of traditional art, because of a circulation which appears to be for popular consumption. However, as Nomusa Makhubu has argued, the assumption that works that utilise a televisual aesthetic (such as the music video) are inferior limits the ways in which African creative practices are evaluated.[280] Moreover, drawing from Karin Barber, Makhubu shows how the interplay between television and performance art, makes clear-cut distinctions between art and popular culture complex.[281] Even though her argument addresses how art history as a discipline relates to Nollywood video-films, it is relevant to how I interact with FAKA's low-budget video, which utilises the video-camera as a technology. Also, her suggestion that performance is mediated through video tapes, television and film screens, is relevant since she allows us to begin thinking about the African subject 'performing in space and time or whose performance creates space and time.'[282]

This brings me to a discussion of the surface strategy or aesthetic which informs my interaction with FAKA's video performance. As Uri McMillan suggests- drawing from art history discourses which use the term "surfacism" or "surface aesthetics"- the surface, can be explored 'as an artistic medium, as a performance practice, and as a form of embodied perception for

[279] Gabeba Baderoon, 'The Ghost in the House: Women, Race, and Domesticity in South Africa' *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 1.2 (September 2014), pp 173-188; Kylie Thomas, 'Zanele Muholi's Intimate Archive: photography and post-apartheid lesbian lives' in Sokari Ekine and Hakima Abbas (eds.) *Queer African Reader* (Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2013) pp.354-371; Pumla Dineo Gqola, 'Through Zanele Muholi's eyes: re/imagining ways of seeing Black Lesbians', in Sylivia Tamale (ed) *African Sexualities: A Reader* (Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2011) pp.622-629; Zethu Matebeni, 'Intimacy, Queerness, Race', *Cultural Studies* 27.3 (2013) pp.404-417.

[280] Nomusa Makhubu, 'Art by another name: meditated performance art and temporality in early Nollywood Film', *Critical African Studies* (2017) p.3.

[281] Ibid. Also see Karin Barber, 'Popular Reactions to t (Makhubu)he Petro-Naira', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20.3 (1982) pp431-450.

[282] Ibid

pondering alternative visions of the social.[283] The surface which is defined as the 'outermost boundary of an object', undermines scholarly inquiry in the humanities which plumbs 'objects of study for deeper meanings, to look beyond the mere surface and probe deeper in order to reveal what they *really* [sic] mean.'[284] McMillan joins scholars such as Muñoz in theorizing surface *as* depth and as relational.[285] This understanding of surface draws from Deleuze's concept of the fold,[286] which counters the binary differentiation between surface and depth; here body and matter is understood as a series of "curved moments" and folds, marked by an elasticity and fluidity, and not as separable parts.[287] McMillan quotes Muñoz and argues that 'the fold…disrupts prototypical accounts of subject-formation, since it "permits one to see the inside as merely the other side of the outside or surface.'"[288] Adopting this perspective, 'enables a relational sense of how surfaces and bodies interact' and also allows us to think of the surface as an instrument of 'multisensory perception.'[289] Of course this is confirmed by Makhubu, who states that a multi-sensorial experience is fundamental to African performance practice. Similar to Makhubu, I also take up these insights of surface as depth and argue that the low-budget video, which might be seen lacking in depth, forces us to rethink our assumptions about art forms which are attended to for their complexity and aesthetic choices.

The 'kitsch' depictions of landscape for instance, demonstrate FAKA's play with picaresque and exotic typologies, and may signal what Baderoon calls ambiguous visibility.[290] But also the use of 'kitsch' in itself could be said to be a surface strategy. Often used in popular art forms, Baderoon states that 'kitsch brings a frisson of pleasurable recognition that works to

[283] Uri McMillan, 'Introduction: skin, surface, sensorium', *Women &Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 28.1 (2018), p. 1.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid p.2. Also see: José Esteban Muñoz, "Introduction: From Surface to Depth, Between Psychoanalysis and Affect", *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 19.2 (2009), pp.123-129.
[286] Gilles Deleuze and Jonathan Strauss, 'The Fold', *Yale French Studies* 80 (1991), pp. 227-247.
[287] Ibid. p.230-231.
[288] Ibid note 14 and 16.
[289] Ibid note 14 p. 2
[290] Gabeba Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014)

circumvent critique, a sentimental and reassuring set of visual tropes that requires no further thought….the satisfying immediacy of kitsch images asks no questions and closes the distance of critique.'[291] This foreclosure of distance, through the use of kitsch is an invitation to consider questions of relationality, opacity and indirection in FAKA's performances.

Moreover, they revel within what Kara Keeling terms 'subaltern common senses', by employing strategies immanent to histories of black performance in photography and video.[292] Lastly, I draw from Matebeni and Baderoon who both attend to the spatial underpinnings of erotic desire in queer visual practice. Each scholar respectively engages Zanele Muholi's series and debunks the private/public binary when it comes to same-sex sexual performance; the scene for my own inquiry still marks a slippage in such demarcations. One might say, following Xavier Livermon that the sexual dissidence of black queers, who bring same-sex sexual performance into the public arena is at play here. The line of flight then occurs at this scene, since desire undoes the zones of identity and experience.

The Garden as Scene

Taking into account the extent to which FAKA's performances in outdoor terrains are examples of 'sex in public', I argue that the black femme duo (re)constructs the garden as a scene for the zoning, or intensifying of desire. It is a scene of proper fantasy and expectation that promises the fulfilment of the love. For Lauren Berlant, desire and love is crucial in the making of utopias.[293] She distinguishes desire from love, where desire describes a state of attachment to 'something or someone and the cloud of possibility that is generated by the gap between an object's specificity and the needs and promises projected onto it.'[294]

[291] Ibid. pp.3-4.
[292] Keeling (2007).
[293] Lauren Berlant, *Desire/Love* (Brooklyn, NY: Pinctum Books, 2012).
[294] Ibid. pp.7-9.

Love on the other hand is the:

> '…embracing dream in which desire is reciprocated: rather than being isolating, love provides an image of an expanded self, the normative version of which is the two-as-one intimacy of the couple form. In the idealized image of their relation, desire will lead to love, which will make a world for desire's endurance.'[295]

My reading of the garden as a scene which FAKA (re)constructs however owes more to Mupotsa's engagement with desire/love as it relates to attachments to freedom in post-apartheid South Africa.[296] According to her, Lauren Berlant's summation of desire/love is founded upon the fact that image production 'layers fantasy with processes of subjectivation and identification.'[297] This then further informs her reading of weddings and wedding photographs as the scene where desire and love meet, and where the two-as-one intimate attachment is staged between the bride and groom. 'These images' Mupotsa writes, 'are instances that call us to enunciate ourselves and our "identity" as a "traditional identity" that is naturally constituted, unitary and coherent.'[298] To speak of a two-as-one intimate attachment in wedding images, is to also signal the creation story set in the Garden of Eden, a beginning, found in the opening pages of the Book of Genesis. The scene has been reproduced throughout the ages in various paintings, and has been integral to the shaping/naturalizing of discrete identity categories, as well as modes of sexual and racial difference. I highlight the Edenic narrative, the making of utopias, and proceed from Mupotsa to consider attachments to freedom and the narratives of a beginning, and what FAKA signal about subaltern common senses.

My interest is in how the scene is involved in the structuring of a beginning. The concept of 'beginnings' is also crucial to how we think of visual practices on the continent, and in South Africa in particular. This insight is gleaned from Baderoon's study of images documenting

[295] Ibid.
[296] Danai Mupotsa, 'The promise of happiness: desire, attachment and freedom in post/apartheid South Africa', *Critical Arts* 29.2 (2015), pp.183-198.
[297] Ibid. 187.
[298] Ibid.

Muslims in South Africa's archive.[299] She draws our attention to the concept of 'beginnings', first theorised by Edward Said, who makes a distinction between *origins* and *beginnings*.[300] Here, the former derives its authority from being 'divine, mythical and privileged' and the latter are 'secular and humanly produced.'[301] Mindful of the events of slavery and colonialism in shaping social and economic relations in the country, Baderoon suggests that South Africa's relationship to Islam, as it is mediated across visual practices as far back as18th Century, is a *beginning*. This is crucial to how I engage the territorial aspects of FAKA's performance, and the series of beginnings that it intersects with, and reframes in the video. The distinction between origins and beginnings, according Said, collapses in FAKA's case, especially as their 'Ancestral-Gospel-Gqom' sound is a negotiation of the divine, spiritual elements or inheritances of Thato Ramaisa and Buyani Duma; which informs the avatars/ personas Desire Marea and Fela Gucci. I will show how the sonic and thematic elements within the genre, 'Ancestral-Gospel Gqom' are in fact modulated in the video.

From a Distance

The video opens with an image of the planet earth, which centres the African continent. Above and below the earth is a caption "Lord is…. Watching Us" which transitions into an earth zoom effect. At 0:09 seconds we see the map of a barren landscape, comprised of trees and sloping terrain. Fades to white and the title 'From a Distance' appears, the video then cuts to a long shot depicting a flat rock surface surrounded by trees. While we watch a shirtless character in purple bell bottoms and a copper afro wig from behind, slowly sashaying to the edge of the rock, we hear the only lyric sung repeatedly throughout the video: 'pipi'. She turns around, crosses a leg in a coy manner while raising her hands to reach for a branch. A bright orange silk

[299] Gabeba Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014)
[300] Ibid p.6-7.
[301] Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) as quoted by Baderoon Ibid.

bow hangs from the neck. The various poses communicate vulnerability and sensuality. Her movements also immediately evoke old outdoor photos of family members, portraits I have deemed awkward and funny since the individual in the frame stands in an ambiguous bodily posture at once directly facing the camera whilst artfully leaning into/interacting with props in their garden (see Figure 3 below). These images are bewildering because individuals are in a modelling pose whilst the backdrop and camera quality betray the performance of highly aestheticized leisure. I digress.

As 'pipi' continues this time with more harmonious notes added, our character in the video is walking up a rocky hillside-"koppie" populated by low-branching trees and dry shrubs, as though she is looking for something, she turns and faces us and dances, a smaller rectangular frame appears on the screen showing another character wearing a tan coloured skirt over brown bell bottoms (Figure 4 below). As the video continues, choral tenors flow from low rumbling baritones as the repetitious song becomes more complex with different adjoining sounds. All the while various frames are unfolding: Desire and Fela dance a little in separate frames, respectively interacting with their immediate surroundings, stealing a glance at the camera every now and then. They then have the camera in their hands at various angles, orbs of sunlight glaze the screen as they lick their lips, pout and play with their afros, as though luring the viewer (see Figure 5). Echoing howls and guttural noise introduce the final sequence taken from a low angle, which now includes both of them on that flat rock surface: a dancefloor for voguing, for bodies that spin and twirl, hips swishing this way and that way, they bend over, and they are up again, arms in the air, snapping to a tune; multiple frames appear making the screen unfold in an Origami-like manner (see Figures 6 and 7 below); multiple Desires and Felas move through and within the all these frames. As the sound dies down leaving only the howling and the staccato glottal expressions, the femme duo lock steps toward the camera, and in a playful manner we see their legs turn unexpectedly as they quickly sashay away.



Figure 3: Fela Gucci leans artfully into the tree branch in *From a Distance*



Figure 3: Still from 'From a Distance' by FAKA



Figure 4: Screens unfold on the screen in FAKA's 'From a Distance'



Figure 5: Sashay Away! Still from FAKA's 'From a Distance'

I am left with a mixture of feelings and emotions at the end; laughter marks a joyous occasion for Desire and Fela, whilst the haunting sounds continue to linger at the end. This may be explained by the fact that the video is a tribute to Brenda Fassie's live concert rendition of the

Julie Gold composition- made famous by Bette Midler in 1990.[302] *Brenda: Live at the State Theatre* which was recorded/held on 11 March 1996 was significant because it was among the first few events for black popular music and audiences to be hosted at the State Theatre, a space which was previously, according to some commentators, a "bastion of Afrikaner 'high culture' ".[303] During 'From a Distance' Fassie broke away from the song's lyrical structure only leaving the refrain "Lord is Watching Us" as she compelled the audience to reckon with her personal struggles and triumphs. By way of improvisation, Fassie breaks into dance, sings a well-known Sunday School Song, and wails only to switch back into play, inciting humour. This resembles a scene described by McMillan in the work of American artist Simone Leigh, where we witness an archetypal display of a black woman's 'vexing despair'.[304] Leigh's *Breakdown*,[305] a visual performance wherein opera singer Alicia Hall-Moran with skilled virtuosity and improvisation sings her downward spiral.[306] McMillan points out how at one point, Hall-Moran confesses 'I have been performing all my life', it is a performance McMillan describes as physically and emotionally exhausting, one that leaves us as 'the viewers equally drained by its intensity, its sheer volume, and its affective weight.'[307]

The same affective labour is undergone by the audience or viewer that is awed/beguiled by Fassie's theatrics. Although the performance can be accessed on YouTube,[308] even writing about it is difficult because it many presents the challenge performance presents to writing, one

[302] For Fassie's Rendition see: zuluboys, "Brenda Fassie: From a Distance (Live in Concert)" , Online video clip. YouTube. Youtube, 24 October 2010. Web: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CTIBKBm_L8 25 July 2018. Bette Midler, "From a Distance" *Some People's Lives*. Written by: Julie Gold, Prod Arif Mardin, 1990.
[303] Lara Allen, 'Chocolate Ice Cream Tests & Other Tough Loves' in Bongani Madondo (ed) *I'm Not Your Weekend Special: Portraits on the Life+Style & Politics of Brenda Fassie* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2014).
[304] McMillan (2016).
[305] Simone Leigh, *Breakdown* can be accessed on Vimeo at https://vimeo.com/34002478 Accessed 10 February 2019.
[306] McMillan (2016).
[307] Ibid p. 216.
[308] Ibid zuluboys (2010) see note 312.

that forces us to discover ways in which utterances can become performative, or what Phelan speaks of as writing towards disappearance.[309]

Aime Cesaire writes:

> 'And our gestures, idiotic and mad, trying to bring back the golden showers of privileged moments, the umbilical cord redrawn in its frail splendour, the bread and wine of complicity, the bread, the wine, the blood of a true wedding.'[310]

It is in this vein that I approach FAKA's appraisal of Fassie's performance as *raw*, or *fully present*; terms which escape the document/ary mandates of representation. This performance becomes a site for us to witness, most poignantly what cultural commentators have observed as Fassie's ability to collapse the private/public divide.[311] FAKA's appraisal of Brenda being her most raw during this performance can be attributed to the enigmatic ways in which she induces bewilderment and fascination: an exclamatory 'hallelujah' at the end of a crescendo follows from with the gut-wrenching 'haibo yini na?' -a statement which rhetorically signals intense distress. However she ends the performance in a childlike playful manner, singing a well -known Sunday school song during a pious performance on her knees wherein playful incomprehensible gestures of prayer are motioned.

Fassie is remembered for being her most raw and vulnerable on stage, having experienced the loss of her lover Poppie Sihlahla, a lesbian affair which was met with reproach from the tabloids and media, but also having being in the media for alleged suicide attempts and her frequent visits to rehabilitation centres. The Brenda of this period is one who had lost favour with the public, had experienced intense loss, loneliness and rejection, however her performance of 'From a Distance' may in fact be read as a testament of her own survival. It is worth

[309] Phelan (1993) p.148.
[310] Aime Cesaire, *Return to my Native Land*
[311] See Njabulo Ndebele, 'Still thinking about MaBrrr' in Bongani Madondo (ed.) *I'm Not Your Weekend Special: Portraits on the Life+Style & Politics of Brenda Fassie* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2014).

mentioning that 'From a Distance' circulated as a pop-gospel anthem in the early '90s especially as it was the lead single which established Rebecca Malope's career as a gospel artist in 1992. Commentators have highlighted the role played by gospel early during South Africa's democracy. Moreover, it is important to mention how 'From a Distance' operates as a gospel song, since it was the anthem that established Rebecca Malope early on in the pop-gospel music scene. It is relevant insofar as we come to understand how gospel is modulated in this video.

FAKA have in an interview about their performance stated how Fassie, her struggles and triumph's enable 'a way of being black and queer that we never thought could exist with such human grace.'[312]This is an important fact to mention as commentators suggest, the gospel genre was pivotal in announcing the country's democratic transition.

The video's YouTube description terms the performance as a 'Gqom-Gospel Lamentation for Dick', which of course signal FAKA's multi-modal aesthetic choices which I will address in a moment. This is relevant insofar as we come to understand how gospel is modulated in this video. Brenda, who had previously even released a gospel themed track titled 'Soon and Very Soon' in her performance of 'From a Distance' may in fact be asking us to reckon with the disillusionment with freedom. This year also marks the death of her lover Poppy (surname), a lesbian affair which was scandalized by the media. FAKA make tribute to Fassie's performance because of how vulnerability at that point became a powerful statement, or testimony. Despite the words not mattering anymore for Brenda during that performance, the audience's screams and celebration of her spontaneous reaching of notes, and pirouettes, her play in that performance leave us with charged forces which exceed the limits of language and description. That is the performance that FAKA pay homage to, in their own mix of wordless,

[312] Lion Summerbell, 'FAKA Channel the Spirit of Brenda Fassie in this Raw and Unadorned Gqom-Gospel Performance' Web Blog Post, *Between 10 and 5: The Creative Showcase*, 10and5.com ,11 November 2015. Web. Accessed: 18 July 2018.

playful interpretation of gospel and gqom. Wherein the upbeat hollow drum sound heard in taxis across Durban, nightclubs is given new meaning and interpretation.

Gqom- taking its name from the hollow noise a bass drum makes- is an upbeat sound compiled from computer software such as FruityLoops, , it is also minimal and 'variously filled with vocal samples, instruments, reverb and synths.'[313] The intense staccato drum beats which characterise the gqom sound usually heard in street bashes and clubs is taken up in FAKA's video. However, the manner in which it is taken up speaks to gqom's variability as a sound; we might in fact take into account the use of minimal electronic sounds and bodily movements and dancing which registers nightlife/nightclub culture.

The establishing sequence of an earth zoom from space gives the sense of an omniscient viewer and is a direct reference to the lyrical content of the original song: a god watching from a distance. The African continent is given primacy in a technique conventionally used in documentary films, the effect of which immediately indexes the cartographic strategies of imperialist projects. Moreover, the natural settings which our characters occupy resonate with colonialist depictions of unoccupied landscapes; such inscriptions are what Gayatri Spivak terms a 'worlding' and the making of objects that are knowable. However, our characters occupy the setting in a manner that falls both within and outside of the rubric of 'primitivism' found in the colonial archive, which according to Paul S. Landau, was part of the making of a 'distance' or a 'difference' between the European and the knowable other.[314] The femme characters herein however trouble the gendered and sexualized meanings, and thus reimagine the making of difference.

[313] Sabo Kpade, 'Is South Africa's Gqom music taking over Nigerian Pop?'
[314] Paul S. Landau, ' An Amazing Distance: Pictures and People in Africa', in Paul S Landau &Deborah D. Kaspin (eds.), *Images and Empire: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), pp 1-40.

Un / Stitching Glamour and the Grotesque with #Siyakaka

This chapter is about the convergence of glamour and the grotesque, and the resulting indistinctness between the two in FAKA's artistic practice. The presence and use of spectacle - the warp and woof of the respective signs, images and objects which characterise these seemingly disparate entities- affords relational engagement that circumvents the imperative which insists on making things *mean*. This is to say that understandings of glamour and the grotesque are reworked, or reoriented away from limits and/or constraints pertaining to each. Rita Barnard for instance, suggests that to write about the grotesque in postcolonial Africa is to 'enter into a lively debate about power, aesthetics and the circulation of signs…'[315] What if, however, the grotesque were approached in/ for the ways which exceed the limits of language? In a similar vein, is it possible that as a technology which produces a quality of allure and charm, glamour's captivating effect- of blurring the boundary between person and thing as Nigel Thrift posits-[316] is reworked by forces which undermine a priori ontological demands/claims which distinguish between person and thing? I thus argue that glamour and the grotesque are intertwined and are reworked, by forces of blackness and queerness.

Mindful of this then I first discuss the theorisation of spectacle in African cultural theory. Then I proceed to a undertake what Renu Bora and Eve Sedgwick call a textural reading,[317] in order to expound on the idea of 'stitching', as a way to approximate the affective forces which are invoked in Siyakaka- a term whose 'loose' translation I will withhold at this point. Following this is an engagement with FAKA's audiovisual exhibition titled "#WaitLorraine: A Wemmer-Pan African Introduction into #SiyakakaFeminism" which was performed at The Hazard Art

[315] Rita Barnard, 'On Laughter, the grotesque, and the South African transition: Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying*', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* (Summer 2004) pp.
[316] Nigel Thrift, 'Understanding the Material Practices of Glamour' in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) pp. 289-308.
[317] Renu Bora, "Outing Texture" in Eve Sedgwick (ed), *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997) pp.94-127. Eve Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003).

Gallery in Johannesburg (2016). Here, I tease out the ways in which African queer cultural production and/as theorising is able to invest the scene or ritual of spectacle with embodied memories, affective traces of black queer becoming.

Reflecting on spectacle

The theorizing on spectacle, particularly during post-transitional South Africa, has been given much critical attention within literary and cultural studies. Desiree Lewis explores the performative/performance modalities which draw from, or even create, rituals and scenes of spectacle. '[318] In this way she broadens the field of theorization, largely attributed to Ndebele's 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary',[319] by exploring gendered dynamics/dimensions in the unfurling of 'everyday processes of identity construction and subjectivity.'[320] Early on in her argument she makes the case of groups or individuals who 'enlist their bodies as powerful signifiers of resistance to oppression.'[321] Insofar as Ndebele dedicates a considerate portion of his essay on spectacle as it relates to literary production that may be categorised as 'resistance' or 'protest literature',[322] Lewis too shows that spectacle can be used as a site of resistance. Yet she extends the conversation, by reworking the assumption that thought precedes and guides action, thereby foregrounding the ways in which the body in itself occupies and moves in space outside of the terms of the Cartesian binary.[323] Lewis departs from some of the presumptions inherent in Ndebele's analytic engagement of a range of selected stories, most apparent when he gives an appraisal of stories considered to have literary merit:[324] a dualistic analytic structure is applied distinguishing the mind from the body, interiority and exteriority. Here to rediscover the

[318] Desiree Lewis, 'Gendered Spectacle: New Terrains of Struggle in South Africa', *Sida Studies* 24 (2009), pp.127-137.
[319] Njabulo S. Ndebele, 'The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: New Writings in South Africa' in Njabulo S. Ndebele *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa- Zulu Natal Press, 1991) p. 31- 54.
[320] Ibid. note 4 p127.
[321] Ibid note 4 p. 127.
[322] Ibid note 5 p. 41.
[323] Ibid note 4 p135.
[324] Ibid note 5. p. 46.

ordinary is to inhabit a 'sober rationality…the forcing of attention on necessary detail….result[ing] in a significant growth of consciousness.'[325]

Yet Ndebele's repeated use of the 'ritual of spectacle' and the ways in which this method becomes 'ritualised' in public culture, deserves some consideration. It is possible for us to conjecture that this may be attendant to the discursive regimes which inform conceptions of the African subject; the incorporation of the short story for instance, 'Mamlambo' is indicative of a reflexive engagement with local forms, such as the folk traditions.[326] I am particularly animated by the repeated use of the term 'ritual' as it invokes discursive strategies of the discipline of anthropology which Michel-Rolph Trouillot highlights in his exploration of the poetics and politics of otherness.[327] Trouillot's main contention is that anthropology is an inherent part of the geographical imagination of the West. Furthermore, he points that as a discipline it emerged as - and ultimately occupied- a compartment within a wider symbolic field which he calls, the Savage Slot.[328] This thematic is underwritten by the centrality of the West/North Atlantic in the narrating of history, and even consigning the rest of the world to ahistoricity; following this is, of course, the idea of a linear telos along which one could either progress or regress.[329] This is the reason for my engagement with the notion of 'ritual', especially as Danai Mupotsa challenges the atemporal fixing,[330] or baggage if you will, implicit in the term's circulation: that it situates the African subject in some atavistic past.

I am also drawn to the use of the term ritual because of what it owes to the salience of what Peterson notes as indigenous dramatic traditions found in performance. Peterson suggests that the understanding of the body as a performative tool is something that African students

[325] Ibid note 5 p. 46.
[326] Ibid note 5 p. 50
[327] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Antropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness' in *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) pp. 7-28.
[328] Ibid p. 9.
[329] Ibid. p. 12.
[330] Danai Mupotsa, 'Proper Sex' (Unpublished Working paper).

who would train in missionary schools were already adept to.[331] Writing specifically about the Zulu community, Peterson describes the primacy of song and dance in social life highlighting its significance: rites of passage, rituals such as those of marriage, reaching puberty and so forth.[332] Often in this compendium of events, "the boundaries between the different genres were blurred as performers, moved by their own sense of drama or the 'theatrical', sought to operate within the multi-dimensionality of indigenous dramatic traditions."[333] It is within this multidimensionality, wherein we can even further explore what H.I.E Dhlomo theorizes in 'Drama and the African'[334] as the operation of religious or even magical ritual.[335] I take time to unpack this word because of the inherent incantatory performances found in siyakaka (ukukaka to be precise), but to also give thought to the presence of a ritual aesthetic in FAKA's work.

Moreover, and in parlance with the effect of the gendered body as a performative tool, glamour's associations with 'magic' and 'charm' needs to be attended to as it forms part of this ritual aesthetic- especially as a vehicle of spectacle.[336] As Carol Dyhouse observes, glamour is associated with 'artifice and with performance, and [it] is generally seen as constituting a form of sophisticated- and often sexual- allure.'[337] Of course, the context which Dyhouse explores, is about the emergence of glamour in American cinema between 1930's- 1950s, particularly during the interwar period.[338] In South Africa, especially during the 1950's, we need to be mindful of how glamour's emergence coincides with the buttressing of apartheid laws, following the Nationalist government's accession in 1948 with D.F Malan as president. Following this was the institutionalization of the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts, as well as the Mixed

[331] Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2000) pp 77-78.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid p.78.
[334] H.I.E Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', *English in Africa* 4(2) 1977 pp.3-8.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Nigel Thrift, 'Understanding the Material Practices of Glamour' in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) pp. 289-308.
[337] Carol Dyhouse, *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2010), p. 1.
[338] Ibid. Elspeth H. Brown, "Queering Glamour In Interwar Fashion Photography: The 'Amorous Regard of George Platt Lynnes", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 23.3 (2017) pp289-326.

Marriages, Immorality and Bantu Education Acts. It was during this period, as detailed by Nakedi Ribane that Kwela, a musical form developed in townships flourished, noted for its characteristic pennywhistle rhythm.[339]

According to Ribane, beauty queens and femme fatales emerge out of a social milieu wherein spontaneous kwela sessions, or jazz and blues sessions, were performed in shebeens.[340] These became inventive sites wherein self-made artists would do portraits of musicians and take pictures. Dolly Rathebe is said to have been one of the more popular figures to emerge from this culture, especially as she was featured on the cover of *Drum* magazine.[341] Through a detailing of Rathebe's vocal talents, her physique, and 'intriguing love life', Ribane narrates the making of local stardom: Rathebe's appearance in two films (where she is a singing lead) of the time, *African Jim*[342] and *The Magic Garden*,[343] and the emphasis on her style, speak to articulations of glamour.[344] It is important to remember that glamour's workings here, are interwoven/embedded within political realities in which black subjects did not form a part of the citizenship machinery.

If anything, what the African's proximity to extractive economies demonstrates, is the complicated relationship we have to the object vs. subject (human vs. nonhuman) binary. As Achille Mbembe asserts, 'the African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a *negative interpretation* [sic].'[345] By which he means that the African is never seen as being capable of possessing things. Or, in the event that they are, those things or attributes are deemed as being of 'lesser value, little

[339] Nakedi Ribane, *Beauty…A Black Perspective* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press, 2006), pp.42-43.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Donald Swanson (dir.), *African Jim* (1949)
[343] Donald Swanson (dir.), *The Magic Garden* (a.k.a *Pennywhistle Blues* 1951).
[344] Ibid.
[345] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, (Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001) p. 1.

importance, and poor quality.'[346] In his opening remarks in, *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe asserts that:

> ' …discourse on Africa is almost always deployed in the framework (or on the fringes) of a meta-text about the *animal* [sic]- to be exact, about the *beast*[sic]: its experience, its world, and its spectacle. In this meta-text, the life of Africans unfolds under two signs….First is the sign of the strange and the monstrous-of what, even as it opens an appealing depth before us, is constantly eluding and escaping us. Attempts are made to discover its status, and to do so the first requirement is, apparently, *to abandon our world of meaning*; is not Africa to be understood for what it is, an entity with its peculiar feature that of shared roots with absolute brutality, sexual license, and death?'[347] (emphasis added)

The above illustrates my contention against the insistence that everything, even experience, must be made to reside within signification. Take for instance how the other sign Mbembe highlights is that of intimacy. In another extensive quotation from Mbembe:

> "It is assumed that, although the African [sic] possesses a self-referring structure that makes him or her close to 'being human,' he or she belongs, up to that point, to a world we cannot penetrate. At bottom, he/she is familiar to us. We can give an account of him/her in the same way we can understand the psychic life of the *beast*. We can even, through a process of domestication and training, bring the African to where he or she can enjoy a fully human life. In this perspective, Africa is essentially, for us, an object of experimentation.'[348]

[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid. p. 1-2.
[348] Ibid. p. 2.

Beyond the fact of Mbembe's repeated use of the singular in the referent 'the African', and if we move past the insistence on the sign, something is to be gleaned from attending to the intimate relation (sometimes a conflation) which 'the African' has to 'the object'.

It is because of the above bifurcation between object and subject, human and non-human, that there needs to be a revaluation of glamour as it relates to the African context. Nigel Thrift for instance, posits that this form of allure which blurs the boundary between person and thing, is deeply involved in the ways in which capitalism is currently worlding.[349] The captivation produced by certain "Micronesian cultures where, for example bodies do not exist as autonomous entities but have the capacity to act directly upon one another: persons are 'fractal' , able to incorporate other parts of others (Bramford 2007)."[350] For him the blurred boundary that is produced by glamour is analogous to subjectivities which are figured through an ethnographic gaze: that form of allure which is similar to what Mbembe asserts about the African. I argue that such a reading draws from Marxist and Freudian interpretations concerning the commodity fetish, ultimately revealing the attendant limitations to Marxist and psychoanalytic disciplines, particularly concerning sexualities and matters of race.[351]

This can be seen in how coastal trading spots between Africans and Euro-Americans, became the originating site of ideas around the fetish in West Africa during the 16th and 17th Centuries.[352] Wyatt MacGaffey notes how 'fetishism embodied the problem of the non-universality and social constructedness of value.'[353] To illustrate the point, MacGaffey shows how Euro-Americans deemed African religious beliefs, as irrational, and regarded their relationship

[349] Nigel Thrift, 'Understanding the Material Practices of Glamour', in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) p. 291.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Wyatt MacGaffey, 'African Objects and the Idea of Fetish', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 25 (Spring, 1994) pp. 123-131.
[352] Ibid. p.123.
[353] Ibid.

with fetish objects- which are tools to interpret various contingent orders- as an obsession with 'trifles'.[354]

Additionally, an economy of a Manichean allegory consequently informed the ideological relation which the West had with colonized Africans. Following Trouillot's idea of the savage slot, we might say that the thematic undercurrent of the Manichean allegory, according to Abdul JanMohamed, operated in the making of racial difference in colonialist literature. Ultimately this was involved in fabricating the West's moral superiority;[355] the surplus morality which is accumulated by the colonizer is further invested in the denigration of the native. JanMohamed makes the assertion that the fundamental motive of colonialism was to reduce the native to exchange-value;[356] this is central at both the material and discursive level.

The fetishistic representation of the native's moral inferiority: that they are evil and (as) dark, enabled the European to construct their own idea of a superior morality.[357] This also demonstrates the social constructedness of value, in that although gold was valued by Africans, it was exchanged with early European travellers for articles which they- the Europeans- thought worthless.[358] I assert that this marks a tangential relation between the continental African and diasporic black subjects. Particularly how for instance it has informed North Atlantic intellectuals who make analyses through the logic of a middle passage epistemology:[359] a recuperative strategy which relates to the continent as the motherland. This is not to be complicit with a nostalgic backward glance toward a precolonial history; one that would ostensibly celebrate a close relation between the black and a decadence David Marriott calls, '*bling bling*'.[360]

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[354] Ibid.
[355] Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (Autumn, 1985) pp.59-87.
[356] Ibid. 68.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Ibid. note 37 (MacGaffey) p. 123.
[359] Michelle Wright, *The Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*, (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
[360] David Marriot, " On Decadence: *Bling Bling*" *e-flux journal* #79 (February 2017), 1-12.

Marriot writes that blackness is often 'construed as a *desiring* [sic] in whose meaning excess, or luxury, signifies a sociocultural impoverishment that is morally bankrupt.'[361] For him, black is a being that is '…both useless and endlessly driven by consummation: *bling bling* [sic].'[362] The positive or even indifferent affective response toward the imbrication of blackness and decadence overlooks a tangential feature African subjects- or if you will the collective unconscious on the continent, has. I argue that the affective relationship that African subjects have to raw materials is one of loss, one of pain.

However, Marriott explores a racially derived notion of decadence understood to be operating within a certain moral politico-philosophical economy. This is crucial as it further correlates with the constructing of a Manichean allegory. His argument is that decadence relies on a 'perverse association of blackness with excess upon which is founded on an entire analysis of culture.'[363] To illustrate this point he goes on to explore four motifs which support his configuration: 'pleasure, profligacy, waste and excess.'[364] Here he questions the inclination that whites have to process, or recategorize blackness as a faecal-object. Ultimately concluding that such associations of blackness and shit derive 'from a politics of disgust that views blackness as a shameful, dirty incongruity irreconcilable with the categories of moral and social hygiene.'[365] He asks quite strikingly: "How 'smelly' is blackness as a metaphor? How 'clean' is race as a concept? And does the very ability to ask that question manifest an irreconcilable imbalance between the categories of race and pollution?"[366]

By drawing attention to the racial connotations inhered in decadence, I have moved into the qualitative affective forces of disgust which circulate as a part of glamour's underbelly: the grotesque. I argue that the grotesque and the obscene are categories wherein affective impulses

[361] Ibid.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid.

which produce a sense of aversion, such as disgust operate. Mikhail Bakhtin maintains that the utility of the grotesque is in how as a form of parody, it can be used as a means of resistance against, and as a refuge from, officialdom.[367] It is used by ordinary people in order to reveal how arbitrary and vulnerable the dominant culture is, by reducing it into an object of ridicule.[368] Mbembe extends this analytic in his exploration of the postcolony, arguing that the grotesque and the obscene are not just in the province of ordinary people's lives, but is also used by state power during moments and locations when it has to dramatise its own magnificence; it also appears 'in the actual materials used in the ceremonial displays through which it makes manifest its majesty and…[in] a specific manner in which it offers these , as spectacles, for its subjects to watch.'[369]

Indeed, a point that I make about the centrality of spectacle attendant to glamour and the grotesque is in how the former proffers the viewer/audience into an ideal that can never be reached. Although the latter on the other hand, also has the effect of creating an audience, the set of aversive affects produced, disgust being but one of them, show how the grotesque and obscene utilise spectacle differently. These seemingly disparate categories are intimately related, and in excess can exchange requisite affective responses, thereby reconfiguring the grotesque and glamour from within. This is to say that glamour can indeed produce disgust, embarrassment, humiliation and indignation, and that what appears to be grotesque, can be utilised to assert an already existing (pre-existing) set of relations which stimulate pleasure, interest, joy, laughter and intrigue.

Moving away from a deconstructive analytic, I briefly examine the working of the affect disgust; especially as it relates to the signs of anality and buttocks which circulate within the convivial relation which Mbembe figures in the postcolony, between the *commandant* and the

[367][367] Mikhail Bakhtin
[368] Mikhail Bakhtin,
[369] Achille Mbembe, 'Provisional Notes on the Postcolony', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 62.1 (1992), p4.

people.[370] In a response to his text, *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe speaks about how the postcolony's 'patriarchal traditions of power are founded upon an originary repression.'[371] This central figure of repression is, for him of course, the anus. He traces a symbolic genealogy of the effect of the anus which was considered an object of aversion, contrasted with the buttocks 'whose beauty, eminence, and curves are gladly sung by poets and musicians.'[372] He describes how the prominent gourdlike shapes (and name), are reason why buttocks were identified with capability and capacity. 'Large buttocks serve as signifiers of plenty.'[373] He then goes on to describe the anus which is identified as the:

> "…accursed organ and the sign par excellence of abjection. Its potency derives from its supposed dangerosity [sic] and esoteric nature. In most instances, the anal is akin to the nocturnal. It represents not only a potential zone of entrapment, but also the principle of bodily anarchy- a horrifying anomaly. As a universal symbol of defecation and excrement, it is, shady and comical, emprisoned [sic] in a kind of stupid obstinacy. Now, in indigenous imaginaries, the 'wholly other' equally represents one of the figures of occult power to devour, manducation (Geschiere 1997) [sic]."[374]

He makes the cautionary assertion that same sex practices are not reducible to anality, however he argues that the 'degradation and disgust with which anality is made the object of public discourse' corresponds with the recurrent appearance of the anus 'on the scene of the symptom, in a variety of fantasmatic shapes.'[375] Mbembe then proceeds to consider the function of anality in various male fantasies, to which he concludes that homosexuality and same-sex practice 'belong to a very deep stratification of the sexual unconscious of African societies.'[376]

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[370] See Mbembe speaks about the breach in prohibitions, and the taboo, Ibid. p.11.
[371] Achille Mbembe, 'On the Postcolony: a brief response to the critics', *African Identities*, 4.2 (2006) p.166.
[372] Ibid 167.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid. and as quoted by Mbembe, Peter Greschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997).
[375] Ibid p.167.
[376] Ibid.

I suggest that a different engagement with anality be taken. Not because Mbembe's absolute dismissal of same -sex practices is underpinned by a psychoanalytic tradition which delimits the very productive effects of desire. However in order to attune to an affective sense which thinks outside of the semiotics of power, we need to engage with the category of desire as a positive force of production. Mbembe's assertion that the postcolony can be viewed as an impossible sign, borrowing from Butler (in this vein suggesting that the psychic life of power 'originates from, and rests on, power's desire for an infinite erection') stems from a psychoanalytic tradition wherein desire is deemed as 'negative, a hole, an unfillable absence.'[377] Desire in this tradition, as Elizabeth Grosz surmises, 'is the excess or residue left unsatisfied through the gratification of need or instinct, and left unspoken by the articulation of demand.'[378] She goes on to review a tradition which views desire as a positive force of production; this tradition is occupied by Spinoza, Nietzsche, Foucault and Deleuze. In this formulation desire is no longer 'identified with a purely psychical and signifying relation, but is a force or energy which creates links between objects, which makes things, forges alliances, produces connections.'[379] In this approach desire functions at the sub-human, biological level; 'it may also function at the level of the subject, insofar as the subject desires the expansion or maximisation of its power; and at a supra-human level, where the human subject is merely one small part of a larger assemblage or collectivity.'[380] My approach to that notion is primarily in the implicit assumption that desire is 'linked directly and without mediation to power and resistance.'[381] In relation to siyakaka's ritual amalgamation of glamour and the grotesque, I need to think outside the analytic which foregrounds the workings of the drive. Instead it is more useful to consider how affects possibly have a multiplicity of responses, some autotelic and others moving through varying

[377] Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1989), p. xvi.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid.

degrees, as Silvan Tomkins, in a reading given by Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank, would suggest.[382] Tomkins' understanding of an affect system, is in the concomitant:

> "…distinguishing in the first place between an affect system and a drive system that it analogically amplifies is that, unlike the drives (e.g., to breathe, to eat), 'Any affect may have any 'any object.' This is the basic source of complexity of human motivation and behaviour [sic]."[383]

This is because Tomkins' basic set of affects include, shame, interest, surprise, joy, anger, fear, distress, disgust, and in his later writing contempt. "Shame shares a similarity to disgust in that 'it operates only after interest and enjoyment has been activated, and inhibits either one or both.' "[384] He goes on further to assert:

> " The innate activator of shame is the incomplete reduction of interest or joy. Hence any barrier to further exploration which partially reduces interest … will activate the lowering of the head and eyes in shame and reduce further exploration or self-exposure…Such a barrier might be because one is suddenly looked at by one who is strange, or because one wishes to look at or commune with another person but suddenly cannot because he [sic] is strange, or one expected him [sic] to be familiar but he [sic] suddenly appears unfamiliar, or one started to smile but found one was smiling at a stranger."[385]

It is for this reason that attention to the affective force of disgust is necessary for an understanding of glamour and the grotesque in siyakaka. Particularly for the ways in which it is able to reorient a set of affective responses (such as repulsion instead of attraction) to the grotesque. The above quote from Tomkins illustrates the performativity of disgust, in how it is

[382] Eve Sedgwick (written with Adam Frank), *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 99-101.
[383] Ibid p. 99.
[384] Ibid p.97.
[385] Ibid.

able to manufacture strangers. Disgust undoes the boundary, or the making of the distinction between the subject and object (the stranger).[386]

This formulation is taken from Ahmed, who emphasizes the embodied experience of disgust, as bodies recoil from their proximity to that which is identified or made to be disgusting. For Ahmed this proximity is felt as 'nakedness or as an exposure on the skin surface.'[387] Ultimately the fear of contamination provokes a pulling back, or pulling away since the presence of the 'disgusting object' may feel like an offence to bodily space. This response, Ahmed argues, keeps the object at the centre of attention, 'as a centring which attributes the affect of sickness to the very quality of the object.'[388] In this way, disgust then becomes an inherent characteristic of the object, one which threatens a quality which sets the subject apart. In addition to the apartness which the subject works to maintain is a hierarchical distance from that which is lowly. Ahmed illustrates:

> 'Lower regions of the body- that which is below- are clearly associated both with sexuality and with 'the waste' that is literally expelled by the body. It is not that what is low is necessarily disgusting, nor is sexuality necessarily disgusting. Lowness becomes associated with the lower regions of the body as it becomes associated with other bodies and other spaces. The spatial distinction of 'above' from 'below' functions metaphorically to separate one body from another, as well as to differentiate between higher and lower bodies, or more or less advanced bodies. As a result, disgust at 'that which is below' *through which 'aboveness' and 'belowness' become properties of particular bodies, objects and spaces.*'[389] (emphasis added)

[386] Sara Ahmed, 'The Performativity of Disgust' in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.82- 100.
[387] Ibid .p83.
[388] Ibid p.86.
[389] Ibid. p.89.

Following this, Ahmed discusses how the sign of 'disgust' is able to bind or stick to bodies. She argues that economies of disgust are involved in the shaping of bodies; in the event that the body of another is made an object of disgust, 'then the body *becomes* [sic] sticky.'[390] She argues that such bodies become 'blockages' (stopping the word from acquiring new value) in the economy of disgust: slowing down the movement between objects, since other objects and signs stick to them. She then concludes that this is "how bodies become fetish objects:…feelings of disgust stick more to some bodies than others, such that they become disgusting, as if their presence is what makes us 'sick.'"[391]

The centrality of disgust in the making of communities which disavow nonconforming sex practice and sexualities produces an exaggerated response such that the spectacle of the grotesque is a scene or ritual which serves the interests of officialdom. Ahmed supports this argument in highlighting that the speech act, or performance of disgust is not simply an address made by the subject to itself, rather it creates an audience '…whose shared witnessing of the disgusting thing is required for the affect to have an effect.'[392] This demand for witness proves, as Ahmed states, that the speech act 'That's disgusting!' generates more than just a subject and an object; in addition it generates a community, who are bound together by a shared 'condemnation of a disgusting object or event.'[393]

Of course there is scholarship on the continent which explores the affective dimensions of the spectacular, such as is found in the work of Helene Strauss.[394] For her, South Africa's post-transitional period is marked by two spectacular public affects, that of promise and disappointment. The latter reflects the disillusioned responses of ordinary people, witnessed in multiple protests, which also became spectacular scenes of state violence. Strauss' intervention in

[390] Ibid.
[391] Ibid. 92.
[392] Ibid p.94.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Helene Strauss, 'Spectacles of Promise and Disappointment: Political Emotion and Quotidian Aesthetics in Video Installations by Berni Searle and Zanele Muholi, *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 15.4 (2014) pp.471-495.

the theorising on spectacle moves away from a scene of spectacle as that of state, racial and gendered violence. Rather through her articulation of promise, she argues that the investments in reconciliation, futurity, and sentiments of belonging, generated a spectacle which precedes the varying forms characterised by disappointment.[395] Yet, I question the usefulness of her understanding of an affect response: as a pulsating, which has not reached the level of consciousness.[396] This is because affect is then engaged as something which is on its way to becoming intelligible within the regimes of signification, and thus operates in a semiotic field. I wonder whether it takes into account how some signs are more adept to attaching to certain objects over others, as opposed to a causal relation which implicitly suggest a one way exterior-interior movement. In her discussion about conspicuous consumption she argues, through the work of Deborah Posel, that goals of liberation are marked in proportion with how much consumer display is afforded individuals. I argue that instead of reading the 'politics of enrichment' which is produced in post-apartheid South Africa as a result of new freedoms afforded to blacks, we note that blackness is more vulnerable to the labels of waste and disgust. This can be seen in a statement of disapproval expressed at the spectacular exhibition of 'wasteful affluence.'[397]

On a more related note, the spectacle made out of rendering certain bodies and/organs on the continent as inherently disgusting can be seen not only in strategies to discipline the bodies of black women,[398] but also in response to homosexual sex practice. This is not to centre a male-homosexual sex practice; rather it calls to attention to the disgust associated with sex acts which involve the anus. A recent manifestation of this can be seen in the infamous 'Eat Da Poo Poo' video.[399] In this video Ugandan pastor Martin Ssempa, is seen using (blurred) pornographic

[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid p.476.
[398] See: Desiree Lewis, Pumla Dineo Gqola, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf,
[399] IstenKarikasOstora, 'What Obama wants in USA, people of Uganda don't wants: homosexuals eat da poo poo' [sic], Online Video Clip, YouTube. YouTube, Published 17 June 2013 Web, accessed: 25 July 2017.

images of gay sex acts in various public sermons against homosexuality. In a particular moment, after Ssempa has asked children to be escorted out for a 'parental guidance moment' which involves him displaying images which depict fisting. He brings the laptop closer to one of the pastors, who then dramatically pull away; in this event we see how disgust creates community, and how it is spectacularized in order to further violence against black queers. Here we can see the moralization of an aversive rhetoric (that's disgusting!). In what follows, I explore the effect of this video in detail, in a context wherein black queers on the continent are un/stitching existing discourse, narratives and textures for themselves.

Un/Stitching and other Textures

The above video which garnered attention on the internet in 2010, with different versions, parodies and remixes, is actually a clip taken from a documentary titled *Vanguard: Missionaries of Hate*,[400] and aired on a North American television station, Current TV. The sensation around the 'Eat Da Poo Poo' video then needs to be contextualized as being informed by one of two forces which Sokari Ekine highlights as generating discourses on homosexuality on the continent.[401] This includes rhetoric which largely comes from Human Rights activists from the West who perpetuate discourse that Africa is homophobic. The documentary in itself dramatizes a clash between this and the second narrative, which largely comes from evangelical Christian communities: that homosexuality is un-African. I do not wish to undertake an in depth analysis of the workings of these discourses since Ekine already accomplishes this task. Rather I proceed from the call she makes at the end of her essay, about how we need to explore the ways in which queer subjects are constructing their own experience, as the contestation between the aforementioned forces overrides the ways in which they construct their own representation and experience. My engagement with this is by approaching the aesthetic of minor affects, like

[400] *Vanguard: Missionaries of Hate.* Mariana Van Zeller. Current TV 2010.
[401] Sokari Ekine, 'Contesting Narratives of Queer Africa' in Sokari Ekine, Hakima Abbas (eds), *Queer African Reader* (Nairobi: Pambazuka Press, 2013) pp 78-91.

disgust. In doing this I pick up where Sianne Ngai leaves off at the end of *Ugly Feelings*;[402] wherein she suggests that the outer limit and threshold of what she calls ugly feelings, which is also instrumental politically, is disgust.[403]

At the end of the previous section I alluded to the moralization of affects like disgust by the evangelical Christian church. Ekine speaks about how the state then uses the force of morality in order to further its own political interests.[404] The point which Ngai makes is that although the conservative and political right has always moralized disgust as an object that is intolerable (and thus demanding of exclusion even if violent), this does not make it inherently immoral. Rather it is because disgust is *a*moral-'and thus inevitably prone to uglification by moralists- that it is able to ' *block* [sic] sympathetic identification.'[405] Disgust offers a different set of aesthetic and critical possibilities, because of its 'centrifugality, agonism and urgency' among other things.[406] However, Ngai also cautions that it also offers a different set of limitations. Thus bringing us to the conclusion that disgust 'does not so much solve the dilemma of social powerlessness as diagnose it powerfully.' However it does it with such an intense and unambivalent negativity, that it seems to bring us to an outer limit of ugly feelings, 'preparing us for more instrumental or politically efficacious emotions.'[407]

The fear of contamination, which compels an immediate exclusion of the intolerable object, brings us closer to how disgust implicates bodies as much as, or even through, the semiotics of power. It is this interface between materiality and representation which brings us to the idea of texture. Renu Bora develops the idea that to perceive texture is always to already be immersed in a field of 'active narrative hypothesizing, testing, and re-understanding of how

[402] Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Boston, MA: Harvard University press, [year]) p.354.
[403] Ibid. p. 354.
[404] Ibid Ekine p.
[405] Ibid Ngai p.340.
[406] Ibid p.345.
[407] Ibid. p.354

physical properties are acted upon over time.'[408] [S]he also goes on to ask that to perceive this is never only ask 'What it is like? nor [sic] even just How does it impinge on *me*? [sic] Textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did get that way? and [sic] What could I do with it?'[409] Sedgwick then goes on to extrapolate texture's underpinnings, which are found in the sense of touch, saying:

> '…to perceive textures is to know or hypothesize whether a thing will be easy or hard, safe or dangerous to grasp, to stack, to fold, to shred, to climb on, to stretch, to slide, to soak…to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done so before oneself, if only in the making of the textured object'[410]

Bora's essay then proceeds to mark a distinction between two different types, or senses of texture: "texture" with one x and "texxture" which has two x's. Texxture is the kind that 'is dense with offered information about how, substantively, historically, materially, it came into being.'[411] It refers to the "stuffness" of material structure. Texture on the other hand 'signifies the surface resonance or quality of an object or material. That is, its qualities if touched, brushed, stroked, or mapped, would yield certain properties and sensations that can usually be anticipated by looking.'[412]

Speaking of this then Bora proceeds to consider the two modes of fetishism which are afforded by texture. Beginning by exploring how in both psychoanalytic and Marxist thought, the fetish has been 'emblematized by the shine or gleam of light reflected by an object.'[413] The extent

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[408] As quoted by Eve Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003) p. 13. See: Renu Bora, "Outing Texture" in Eve Sedgwick (ed), *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997) pp.94-127.
[409] Ibid. p.13
[410] Eve Sedgewick, *Touching Feeling* (Durham London: Duke University Press, 2003) p. 14.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Renu Bora, "Outing Texture" in Eve Sedgwick (ed), *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997) p. 98.
[413] Ibid p.102.

to which the object reflects this shine or gleam corresponds to its smoothness; as can be seen in its highest condition of possibility, which Jacques Lacan would term the mirror stage (or scene of castration a la Sigmund Freud).[414] I argue that this glimmering quality of smoothness, which is ostensibly linked to texture, is a way to explore deployments of glamour and opulence. That is, texture, is more associated with glamour. Texxture on the hand, can be said to work with objects which appear matte, dull, and thus valueless; the dirt, which Anne McClintock speaks of when she illustrates the fetishisms of soap and dirt,[415] works to make the object more "primitive" or crude. The extent to which this induces the intolerable feelings which demand its exclusion, demonstrates texxture's association with the grotesque.

We can even say that FAKA's blurring of the subject vs. object binary, or even the re-animating of the object, suggests how Desire Marea and Fela Gucci become/employ what Danai Mupotsa and Uri McMillan would call, avatars.[416] McMillan first arrives at a definition of what it is by first employing what he calls objecthood, as a performance based method utilized particularly by black women which disrupts presumptive knowledges of black subjectivity: objecthood rescrambles the dichotomy which exists between objectified bodies and embodied subjects.[417] Avatar production according to McMillan, speaks to forms of impersonation which mediates across 'the spiritual and earthly as well as the abstract and the real'[418]. Moreover the use of these mediums, as well as their attendant meanings, continue to morph;[419] thereby moving in a perpetual becoming. While also retaining the virtual and real mediations which occur in the word, Mupotsa's definition emphasizes the rehearsal of scenes and rituals of becoming.[420] This is important as I will be exploring the ritual aesthetic in the black femme duo's production, below.

[414] Ibid.102-103.
[415] Anne McCklintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge,1995) p.71.
[416] Danai Mupotsa, Becoming Girl-Woman-Bride, *Girlhood Studies* 8.3 (Winter 2015) pp73-87. Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2015).
[417] Ibid McMillan p.9.
[418] Ibid. p. 11.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid note 102 Mupotsa, p. 82.

Although writing in a different context, Mupotsa's gesturing of the avatar's dialectical and the oppositional relation to the ideal image, and also to the relation of the 'girly line of flight', used by Keeling in the figuring of the black femme,[421] echoes my argument in the previous chapter about FAKA's inhabiting of black femme. To emphasize a cautionary note on this analytic frame though, and as McMillan does, it is important to be mindful of the fact that Desire Marea and Fela Gucci do not refer to themselves, or their performances as avatars. Rather, I use this concept as a way to engage the dazzling use of spectacle by the black femme on the continent.

Bora proceeds to unpack modes of affect transfer in texture. By identifying the texture/roughness and the fact that smoothness is contagious; and to suggest that mapping the distinctions in texxture is a more complex task, Bora implies that the diagnosis of ugly feelings and negative affect is difficult, if not impossible. Blackness and queerness however, evoke an immediate response that is easily conductive of the currents of negative affect such as disgust. Because they inhabit the commodity system, we can identify the marking of the commodity fetish which retains little or no trace of manual (social) labour/production processes in them; but that which is deemed valueless and unexchangeable also operates or becomes a fetish. The former, with its associations of smoothness and glamour is readily accessible, and can be seen in FAKA's investment in fashion and scenes of haute couture- which I might add recalls the idea of the fashion house in 'The House of FAKA'.

The centring of the process of fabricating oneself in a manner that binds the representational and the material seem to engage what in Southern African/ African literary and cultural theory is known as the crisis of representation. This crisis is articulated through the notion of the seam or stitch.[422] I first encounter the notion of the stitch, in Marechera's *House of*

[421] Ibid.
[422] Leon de Kock, 'South Africa in the Global Imaginary: An Introduction', Poetics Today 22.2 (Summer 2001) pp.263-297.

Hunger,[423] wherein the narrator of the novella repeatedly uses the image of the stitch. According to Laurice Taitz, the operation of the 'stitch' as a motif in the text, conveys narrative discontinuity, characteristic of modernist writing, and also revealing of the crisis of representation.[424] The narrator's mention of historical events and violent pasts works to 'outstrip attempts to produce a seamless narrative.'[425] Taitz further speaks about violence and how it also serves to interrupt narrative continuity.[426] Stitches -or seams-occur at moments of intersection. The seam, as theorized by Leon de Kock, is about unity and disunity, a site of convergence and difference; where promises of 'unity in diversity' and the rainbow nation, are also met with doubt as these aspirations do not reflect everyday experiences and realities.[427] It is about how South African cultural practice and life refuses simple categorization and linearity in the 'global imaginary'.

'Those stitches', in addition to the factors described by de Kock are a testament to survival, and at the same time are a reminder of violence on the body. They privilege the immediate experience of Marechera's narrator in the township. Indeed, it is also important to reckon with how 'stitches' signal innovation and creativity. Stitches are also about how we make ourselves look 'nice', or how we re-fashion the terms of engagement to suit ourselves; it is from this approach that one can see the smooth space of glamour. This category's association with artifice and allure differs from the matte and dull, texture: a disavowal of the labours, or the raw material or use-value of the object. The valueless object here, however, is unravelled from notions of passivity. Instead by being re-animated, the agentic potential of the ugly feeling of disgust is realized. Blackness and queerness operate in a manner that the texxtural, laboured effects which anarrange narrative temporality and spatiality (how did it get that way? How does it

[423] Dambudzo Marechera, *The House of Hunger* (Essex: Heinemann, 1978).
[424] Laurice Taitz, 'Knocking on the Door of the House of Hunger: Fracturing Narratives and Disordering Identity', in Flora Veit-Wild and Anthony Channels (eds) *Emerging Perspectives of Dambudzo Marechera* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1999) pp.23-42.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Ibid note 108 de Kock.

impinge on me?), are also diagnosed. In this way they can be said to be occupying objecthood as McMillan suggests; thereby confirming many of the relegations I have been alluding to throughout this chapter, about the nonhuman to not-quite-human, shaping of blackness/queerness and Africanness.

Indeed as Fleetwood writes in the context of the black image: that blackness troubles the field of vision by revealing multiple spatiotemporalities.[428] Here lies the crisis, that the fractal identities have been revealed. Instead of regarding this as a problem to be solved, with the hope of seamlessness on the horizon; it is important to truly commit to not being a single-being, as Fred Moten would say.[429] By which I engage this as an un/stitching: the *lysis* marks the splitting, tearing of gerund/ active forces in the shaping or even pathologizing: blackness.[430] Un/stitching implies the undoing of the two textures, or between glamour and the grotesque; it achieves this by engaging the affective attachments to these signs, objects and subjects who have been distorted by blackness and queerness.[431] Which is to say that disgust, can indeed be taken up as an affect that produces or anarranges temporality and spatiality. Now let us imagine that siyakaka.

'It Gets Deep in the Bottom (Of Africa)'[432]

'Make Social Life out of Social Death.'

Artist: DJ Black Coffee ft. Monique Bingham

Album: *The Beginning of the Last*

Year: _____

[428] Nicole Fleetwod, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality and Blackness* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2011) p.
[429] Fred Moten,
[430] Here I am indebted to the work of Fred Moten, 'Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)', *Journal Name*(City: Publication, Year) pp.###.
[431] Ibid.
[432] DJ Black Coffee ft. Monique Bingham, 'Deep in the Bottom (Of Africa)', in *The Beginning of the Last* [Production Company, Year].

Imagine with me an evening spent in one of Johannesburg's art galleries. As you enter the building situated on 24 Albrecht St, Jeppestown with your squad, you see the Bubblegum Club Nights poster detailing tonight's headlining performance: 'Wait Lorraine: A Wemmer-pan-African introduction into Siyakaka Feminism'. A bit about the Bubblegum Club Nights. This event is curated by the Bubblegum Club:

> 'a newly established group of cultural practitioners who, through analysis, curation and design are plugging brands and organisations into Johannesburg's youth culture…The event aims to engage with and showcase work by Johannesburg's new wave of artists, musicians and designers. Specifically those working in between disciplines, who through an unconfined conception of cultural productions are imagining new possibilities for the city.'[433]

Peers and colleagues form part of this milieu, so you are there to support. Dressed in your best Sunday Night outfits: copper rings, high platform shoes, painted nails, blonde wigs, and ragged locks. As you enter the space you see mannequins that are dressed in all kinds of hip clothing, you have not seen elsewhere; there are racks of clothing items which are being sold, there is wine and bumping into old and new acquaintances. As everyone settles down and the lights dim, we all encircle the performers. Fela Gucci and Desire are kneeling across from each other and are covered in leopard print silk gowns. In fact we cannot really tell who is Fela and who is Desire, since they are also wearing wigs and their faces are tucked between their elbows, as they gyrate their bums, to the video playing, projected on a screen. On screen you see the video of Martin Ssempa , while a note is sung in the background, it sounds like a dirge. The beat drops. A poster appears and we hear DJ Lag's cryptic 'ITHUNA (Graveyard)' play in the background, while

[433] As taken from Bubblegum Club Nights Events page on Facebook https://wwww.facebook.com/events/1591221777819262/?ti=cl Accessed: 15 March 2019.

shots from various shows are in a continuous overlay.[434] In this pastiche arrangement, there are scenes from Lebo Mathosa music videos, Boom Shaka's stage performances, and scenes from Brenda Fassie's 'From a Distance' performance. Moreover, there are videos of two public gay femme celebrity figures, Somizi Mhlongo and Koyo Bala, from different segments from one of the country's more popular lifestyle shows. You are in the deep, as by now, Fela and Desire have thrown off their gowns, and dance in the space: wigs swish this and that way. You note that Desire is wearing torn black stockings over white bloomer sized panties; Fela is wearing leopard print leggings. They dance and grind their way to each other. Hands in the air, they break, and Desire goes and pulls in someone from the audience into the circle. Siyakaka.

The above scene completely undoes the overarching narrative of homosexuality in contemporary Africa, and becomes an opportunity to indeed witness as black queer articulates, in the body of the black femme. Bars? No, it is the bass, that takes us deep into an interminable vortex, where there is experimentation, allure, mysticism in the flesh.[435]

The utility of odour perception in approaching Siyakaka

I now turn to the affective force of odour perception that occurs between the sense of smell and vision. This is in support of the argument that I make about Siyakaka, that it assimilates the valences of glamour and the grotesque.

This draws from a study conducted by Simona Manescu, Johanness Frasnelli (et al) wherein they expand on an already existing a field of research which deals with how odour perception can be affected by how we label odours.[436] Particularly, they investigated the 'impact

[434] DJ Lag, 'ITHUNA (Graveyard)
[435] Fred Moten, 'Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)',
[436] S Manescu, Johannes Frasnelli, Franco Lepore and Jelena Djordjevic, ' Now you like me, Now you don't: Impact of Labels on Ordor [sic] Perception', *Chem. Senses* 39, pp167-175, 2014.

of labels on edibility, pleasantness, and intensity ratings as well as on reaction times when detecting labelled odours.'[437]

In many ways the listed categories may be said to operate on a more analog system -as opposed to a binary one -which is teased out by Eve Sedgewick from Silvan Tomkins writings; the link for instance, in how pleasantness, edibility and intensity, has 'to attention, to motivation, to action occur[ing] only through coassembly with an affect system described as encompassing several more, and qualitatively different, possibilities than on/off.'[438] Indeed Manescu and Frasnelli, found that the more positive the label the more likely that a given odour would be deemed more pleasant and edible.[439] In addition to that odours with a positive label yielded a quicker reaction compared with those with a negative label.[440] An indicator of how multiple possibilities which function on a more analog model were assumed, can be found in the effort taken by authors in controlling the experiment; in addition to that the labels "depression", "anxiety", "knowledge of experimental rational", "age", "average intensity ratings", "gender" were included in another set of experiments as a set of variables, however the results remained the same. [441]

[437] Ibid. [Abstract] p. 1
[438] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins (Written with Adam Frank)' in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003) pp 93-121.
[439] Ibid Manescu et al (2014) p173.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Ibid p.172.

Bye Family! A Conclusion

> 'You asked me what family is, and I think of family as…community! I think of the spaces where you don't have to shrink yourself…where you don't have to pretend or to perform. You can fully show up and be vulnerable in silence, completely empty [sic] and that's completely enough. You show up as you are without judgement, without ridicule, without fear or violence, or policing, or containment and you can be there; and you are filled all the way up. So we get to choose our families, we are not limited by biology. We get to make ourselves and we get to make our families.'

Artist: Blood Orange

Song: Family (feat. Janet Mock)

Album: Negro Swan[442]

The question that pertains to how black queer makes space and time is about the necessity of relationality for survival. Its immediate force lies in how the hierarchical mechanisms which sustain broad notions of difference and distance, are collapsed and transfigured. To again echo the words of American transgender social activist Janet Mock, spoken during an interlude on Blood Orange's (Denvanté Hynes) album while 'Charcoal Baby', croons in the background: this is how we make ourselves, this is how we make families. Indeed, FAKA's cultural commitment to narrating their own coming of age in post-transitional South Africa demands a close attention to that which is neither autobiographical, nor abstracted; to that which exceeds the limits of the sign; to that which has been touched by language, or touched by flesh. Either way, FAKA draws attention to a volatile arena where language and relational bodies are never

[442] Blood Orange featuring Janet Mock, 'Family', *Negro Swan* (2018).

random, arbitrary nor neutral entities. In fact we are to partake in the making of this family; the hope is that those who proceed from this process do not have to again unlearn what we had to in order to exist here. This is why FAKA's vested interest in creating a home for black queers, a safe space so to speak, sounds so grand.

Imagine that the early memories of your childhood involved you using your T-shirts as long hair like that of Brooke Logan, Marlena, Taylor- postmodernist soap operas/melodramas you were never allowed to watch, but did anyway. Perhaps this was your first encounter with an intimate ritual which you then re-enacted with a playmate. Now we cut to the scene where you are found out by your guardian or parent, and are humiliated with a spanking or punishment, or emotional blackmail. Alternatively, imagine your first sexual or physical violation, it does not have to be gruesome; it can be the mocking laughter or threat directed at you because you wore your mother's shoes, or the way your wrist hung, or the feminine texture of your voice. It could even be through the mechanisms of elision which render you unthinkable and unimaginable. The femme's creative unfurling is undercut by thematic processes which demand that we shrink ourselves in order to survive: the effect of a white cis-heterosexual citizenship machinery.[443] Turning this on its head, let us remember that the affective response or effect on your own becoming and growth, were the result of very intelligent processes which ensured your survival at that occurrence of that violence/policing.

However, Silvan Tomkins believed that the affect shame, which is what the above response would probably produce, is actually learned as early as infancy.[444] He suggests that shame, '…the pulsations of cathexis around [it] of all things, are what either enable or disenable so basic a function as the ability to be interested in the world.'[445] How vast is this interestedness

[443] M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).
[444] Eve Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy and Performativity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).
[445] Ibid. p. 97.

in the world when all you have ever mastered was a drag performance of what was then deemed appropriate: move away from flamboyant gestures, harden and loosen your body according to your assigned gender, perform a version of yourself that is not you? This is what it means to survive. How do you relax your inner sphincter muscles for what must (interpenetrate?) flow both in and out?

Until my own engagement with FAKA's siyakaka practice, trauma was stored in various parts of my body and psyches either directly onto me or to someone I would regard as family. Elspeth Probyn describes her own experience with night terrors, where she would wake up with her fists clenched, and her feet tensed: she poignantly states, 'shame is a painful thing to write about. It gets into your body. It gets to you.'[446] I cannot recount the many times I hoped for a lucid dream in order to complete this research report, and carrying the burden of expenses incurred for deferring my submission deadline. Depression and anxiety can be costly, to say the least. A sad irony was the oft recurring experience that despite my interest in earnestly writing about pleasure, my head hung and dampened in shame. If we follow Eve Sedgwick, my avoidance tactic might also be said to have been characterised by shame:

> "If, as Tomkins describes it, the lowering of the eyelids, the lowering of the eyes, the hanging of the head is the attitude of shame, it may also be that of reading: reading maps, magazines, novels, comics, and heavy volumes of psychology if not billboards and traffic signs. We (those of us for whom reading was or is a crucial form of interaction with the world) know the force-field creating power of this attitude, the kind of skin that sheer textual attention can weave around a reading body: a noisy bus station or airplane can be excluded from consciousness, an impossible ongoing scene refused, a dull classroom monologue ignored. And none of these is wholly compassed by a certain pernicious

[446] Elspeth Probyn, 'Writing Shame', in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) pp.71—90.

> understanding of reading as escape. Escape from what? The 'real world,' ostensibly, the 'responsibility' of 'acting' or 'performing' in that world."[447]

You want to talk about reading? As an avoidance tactic -even from free-writing, especially as it did not even follow writerly terms mentioned by Octavia Butler in an interview: that writer's block is not the effect of writing too little, but having written too much of what is senseless.[448] I read until I learned to read the written-text as is, until I learned to read outside of the demand to cipher orthographic signs, and paying attention to the kinaesthetic, and to read with bodily impressions made on me. Sedgwick goes on further to state that the reading posture "registers as extroversion at least as much as introversion, as public as it does private: all a reader need to do to transform this 'inner life' experience to an audible performance is begin reading aloud."[449] It might be said that the performative writing here and throughout this report may be engaged in a process of reading aloud.

To hark back briefly to the study on odour perception, the researchers found that odours perceived to be more pleasant and edible, had a more positive effect on overall-wellbeing, including depression and anxiety.[450] Likewise, Sedgwick also points out that without 'positive affect, there can be no shame: only a scene [or ritual] that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush. Similarly, only something you thought might delight or satisfy can disgust. Both of these affects produces bodily knowledges.'[451] I do not imply that the shifting of affective states swings between extreme, absolute polarities; instead I ask, what would it mean to untangle knots of shame with the resultant hope that depression may be translated into anger? This is not because anger is a less complex affect, but because as Audre Lorde says about the

[447] Ibid note 3 p. 114.
[448] Octavia E. Butler, interview
[449] Ibid note 3 p.115.
[450] S Manescu, Johannes Frasnelli, Franco Lepore and Jelena Djordjevic, ' Now you like me, Now you don't: Impact of Labels on Ordor [sic] Perception', *Chem. Senses* 39, (2014) pp167-175.
[451] Ibid note 3 p. 116.

uses of anger,[452] that it is a powerful source of energy, serving progress and change. By extension of the affect, we might come to methodological practices which might be characterised by what Mupotsa in another context calls, rage.[453] The ethics of a politics of rage, is about the 'recovery of sites of intellectual production.'[454] This is underpinned by what she calls, 'the revelling of the body/mind' that is the thinking self.[455]

The questions and provocations which remain however is whether we say bye to family as category, especially, as we found in the first chapter that notions of family are deeply tied to performances to nationhood and national culture. How do you say bye? Through an finding other ways of making an entrance into the private/public. FAKA illustrates this in their 'Uyang'khumbula', where the song is not just about articulating sex acts in one's coming of age, but it becomes a call made by an erotic archive; a call made by those who were never granted a seat at the table- to those who were outcast. Here, memory and citation, become the building blocks for the making of our own belonging here.

This is sexy scholarship. An embodied inquiry into a sensorium, which is black queer. This journey book, reads out loud the sense of touch, sound, sight, and even smell. My own ethic in this enterprise has been to touch my readers in ways which exemplify my calling card: that the deployment of pleasure by black queer, by the black femmes, here, reconfigures our engagements of notions of time and space.

Thank you/ Welcome to our show

[452] Audre Lorde, 'The Uses of Anger', *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9(3) (Fall 1981) pp 7- 10.
[453] Danai Mupotsa with Lennon Mhishi, 'This Little Rage of Poetry/ Researching Gender and Sexuality' *Feminist Africa* 11 (December 2008) pp.98-108.
[454] Ibid p. 104.
[455] Ibid p. 103.



Figure 6: Entrances and Exits

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