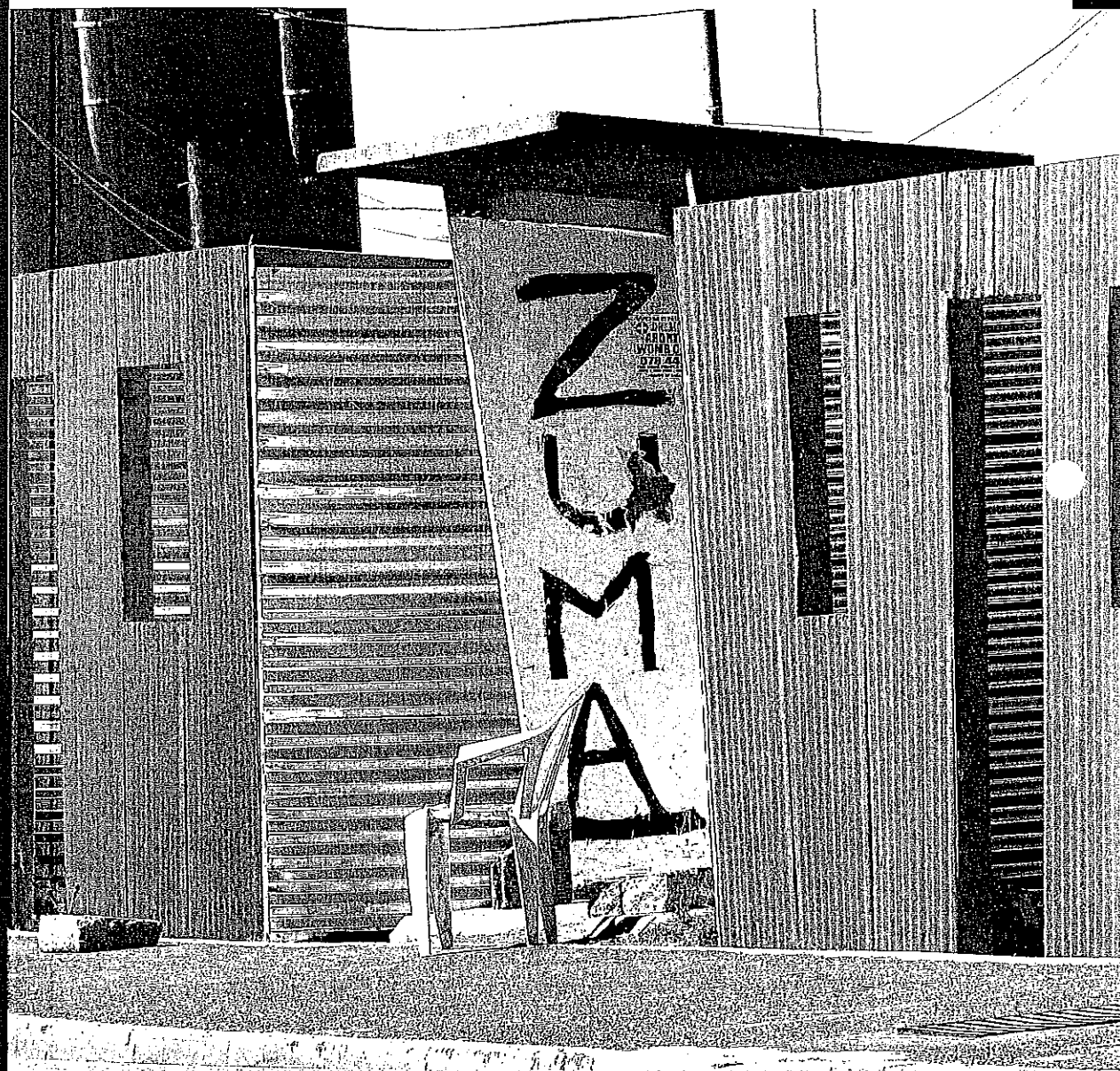


NEW SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW 4



EDITED BY GILBERT M KHADIAGALA, PRISHANI NAIDOO,
DEVAN PILLAY AND ROGER SOUTHALL.

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Death and the modern black lesbian

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'Those who are directly identified with same-sex desire most often end up dead; if they manage to survive it is on such compromised terms that it makes death seem attractive.'

(Heather Love 2007:1)

Another lesbian rape and murder, read a beaded newspaper headline in the latest exhibition on black lesbian lives by photographer Zanele Muholi (2012). Its reference was to the Eastern Cape born Noxolo Nogwaza, a 24-year-old mother of two, who had been brutally murdered in KwaThema outside Johannesburg in April 2011. At her funeral, an old male family member cried out: 'We are disappearing because of crime and violence. We are disappearing because of jealousy. We will be non-existent because of battering.' Noxolo's name joined the list of many young black lesbian, gay and transgender people murdered because of their sexual or gender nonconformity.¹ Mourning such deaths had become ordinary as people's lives were cut short because of who they were.

In their recent publication, *What's in a Name? Language, Identity and the Politics of Resistance*, the One in Nine Campaign states: 'When people in other parts of the world hear about lesbians in South Africa through the media, almost the only thing they are likely to learn is that butch, black soccer-playing lesbians in townships are raped, and sometimes killed, by black men who wish to "correct" them ...' (2013:1). A recent international media report read: 'Being a lesbian in South Africa can be a death sentence' (Thurley 2012). This is the popular representation of black lesbians in South Africa today, in both public discourse and academic texts. In light of twenty years of democracy and the inclusion of sexual minorities in the Constitution, it is of concern that such representation still prevails.

Black lesbian life in South Africa (and on the African continent) has become synonymous with rape and even death. Death, as opposed to life, has received much attention in relation to the black lesbian body. It is an unwanted site, a body constantly rejected, excluded, marked as 'ungodly, unAfrican' or even not 'properly' woman, and it is no surprise that black lesbians' relationship to death has been so close. Heather Love (2007:4) argues that because of the rejection, social exclusion and historical 'impossibility' of same-sex desire, people in same sex relationships often feel attracted to the idea of death.

IDENTITY IN THE TIME OF POLITICS

To understand the category 'black lesbian' in relation to South Africa requires an interrogation of the concept of identity on the one hand, and issues of gay and lesbian politics on the other. Identity is a problematic concept that has undergone much critique and scrutiny. Even defining the term is quite ambitious. When the concept is placed next to gay and lesbian or sexual politics, a wilder figure emerges. The tendency, particularly in scholarship on Africa, is to write lesbian as a same-sex (behaviour) issue, thus taking away the focus on identity. Important though behaviour may be, it is not sufficient to explain the injustices that people experience because of their personhood.

Although the notion of identity may be insufficient and can be ambiguous or have contradictory meanings (Cooper and Broobaker 2005), making use of it in the context of black lesbian life in South Africa is necessarily political. The problem of identity is a distinctively modern discourse. Evident in the social changes of modernity is the way in which identity invokes the problem of 'reflexivity' – which in turn is brought by the problems of self-recognition and recognition by others (Calhoun 1994). Another way of thinking about identity would be to consider what Giddens (1991) suggests to be the notion of how one has become that person and where they are going to have a sense of who they are. For many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that narrative is interrupted by various political and structural forces, including violence and death.

Although theoretically contested, identity remains useful in daily talk, activism and other discourses in various ways. This is not to say that identity is stable or coherent; on the contrary, even within different identity groups there are differing ideas of the usefulness of identity as a concept. Current struggles of identity politics include the pursuit of recognition, legitimacy (and sometimes power), not merely (individual) expression or autonomy. Pursuing these goals is political because it requires others (groups, organisations, the state) to pay attention and to respond to those who refuse to allow their identities to be reduced or displaced. For many people who take on lesbian, transgender, gay, or bisexual identity labels, these struggles remain. At the same time, we should remain seriously self-critical about our invocations of essence and identity (Calhoun 1994).

In South Africa, gay politics is crucial in understanding ideas of lesbian and gay identity formation. Identity animates itself in a number of problematic ways, which further narrow the way that black lesbians are seen. The black lesbian category (and identity)

did not arise out of a vacuum. A series of political struggles within the gay and lesbian movement in South Africa have given rise to what currently appears as a 'fixed' notion of identity – to illustrate this, a return to the beginnings of this movement is necessary to reveal the stark divisions and fractures that characterise current gay politics and identity politics today.

In its existence, the gay movement has changed its face over time but its core principles have remained the same. On the one hand, there are characteristics of the legacies of an apartheid regime that are unwavering. On the other, questions arise about the nature of the gay movement itself and the rights it has advanced over time. Within the movement, white gays remain the main beneficiaries of post-apartheid laws whereas black gays – and lesbians especially – continue to receive harsh penalties. That this has remained unchanged in this democratic moment is startling.

FROM GAY POLITICS TO GAY RIGHTS

During apartheid, the first signs of a gay movement appeared under the Legal Reform Fund set up in 1966 to oppose anti-homosexual legislation in the form of the Immorality Amendment Bill. The fund was set up as direct action following a police raid at a party in Forest Town, one of Johannesburg's affluent suburbs; money raised by the fund would go towards legal representation established to investigate the proposed Bill. What was rather curious about the Forest Town party were the events after the arrest of many of Johannesburg's middle and upper class white gays which have come to symbolise the fractured state of gay, as well as lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) politics in South Africa today. The Legal Reform Movement (LRM), set up through the fund, was careful not to align itself with black anti-apartheid movements of the time, as it feared antagonising the state (Gevisser and Cameron 1995). These were already the telling signs of where gay politics of the time would go.

By 1982 a national organisation, GASA (Gay Association of South Africa), was formed, differing from the LRM only in name. Its mission statement was: 'A nonmilitant, nonpolitical answer to gay needs' (Croucher 2002:318). It was clear from its name that the agenda of the organisation was specifically pro-gay (Epprecht 2012), unlike the unapologetic Law Reform Movement. It soon linked up with an initiative in Cape Town, as well as other smaller groups in other parts of the country. GASA, which addressed the psychosocial needs of white gays and lesbians, had an explicit policy of being 'apolitical'. This was a very crucial time in South Africa as apartheid was at its most volatile and aggressive and anti-apartheid groups were working hard at overthrowing the government. It is odd to imagine that gay groups were choosing to remain outside politics.

Operating in a tense political climate, GASA's mainly white middle-class gay male members were forced to deal with their political conservatism when Simon Nkoli, a black gay man and anti-apartheid activist from the township, as well as other black gays and lesbians, joined in 1983. Because of its 'political' stance and refusal not to 'antagonise'

the state, GASA could not respond to Nkoli's needs and requests at the time he was imprisoned (while in prison, arrested for treason, Nkoli had asked GASA to assist him with his case). Some have suggested that GASA was patriarchal (Cock 2003) and 'apartheid-friendly' in the ways in which it imposed upon its members to change their behaviour; 'play it straight, keep a low profile, and ... not give offence' (Lutnick 1998:21). This strategy was a political stance to benefit white gay interests (Gevisser 1995).

The early 1990s, characterised particularly by black gay and lesbian visibility, saw gay and racial liberation march hand in hand. This was exemplified by the first pride march in Johannesburg. At the core of that march, organised by GLOW (the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand), a predominantly black gay and lesbian organisation formed in the late 1980s, was the idea for pride to be a visual symbol for gay and racial liberation. And this was carried out in the speech made by Simon Nkoli at the pride march in 1990. Bev Ditsie (2006:19) recounts it as follows: 'I am black and I am gay. I cannot separate the two parts of me into secondary or primary struggles ... So when I fight for my freedom I must fight against both oppressors.'

GLOW's successes and ideologies were short-lived. By 1994, when the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) campaigned for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the new constitution that was being drafted, gay politics had returned to GASA's ideology in pursuing white people's interests (Gevisser 1995:36). At the same time, although there had been a rise of black politics championed by GLOW prior to GASA, this soon receded. Oswin (2007) argues that the coalition, by virtue of being a coalition and thus an umbrella body of between twenty and seventy-five organisations, managed to create an idea that a community and a unified nonracial lesbian and gay movement existed. This, however, was not the case. As Gunkel (2010:71) argues, the NCGLE's strategy 'played down' class and racial differences and presented an idea that all gay people were similar and had similar interests. This was clear in the NCGLE's approach of focusing on a single issue that would supposedly change the lives of all gay people.

By 1996, sexual orientation was included in the equality clause in the Bill of Rights. Already at that time there was some dissent. Certain Christian leaders saw the clause as 'undemocratic' (Cock 2003). For gays and lesbians the Constitution created an impression of unity' (Craven 2011:52) but many recognised the existing fractures within the lesbian and gay movement which would be played out by the infamous 'shopping list', a litigation strategy that started with decriminalisation of sodomy and ended with legal recognition of same-sex marriage in 2006 (Berger 2008:18). The NCGLE, which by then had changed to the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project (LGEPE), championed many of the legal battles.

Although suggested as a poverty-alleviation strategy (Oswin 2007), the question of same-sex marriage was in reality directed at accessing benefits. It was to protect the economic interests of mainly white gay couples. Black gays and lesbians were made to believe that same-sex marriage promoted values of extended familial and community support. The LGEPE's strategy on marriage and, similarly, same-sex marriage, begs to be problematised. It is very odd and worrying that in a country like South Africa, where the

state is responsible for alleviating poverty and gross inequalities, gays and lesbians would seek marriage as a solution to these social ills.

Oswin (2007:650), following Spivak in Danus and Jonsson (1993), calls the ICBP's stance a 'politics of strategic essentialism'. She argues that the lobbying efforts deployed to advance constitutional gains have been a 'deliberately conservative approach that has been characterised as elitist, unrepresentative, and male dominated'. On the one hand this strategy created a constitution that would protect the rights of lesbians and gay people in South Africa. On the other, it created the category 'poor, black gay or lesbian, central to this chapter.

PRIDE AND POLITICS

Perhaps the most interesting period in gay and lesbian politics in South Africa is post-2000. It is at this point that the wild dramatisation of 'poor, black lesbians and gays' becomes the spectacle that is 'gay' South Africa today. Since the early 2000s, two narratives have emerged to symbolise the experiences of gay and lesbian people in South Africa. One takes shape through the visual display of gay and lesbian pride marches throughout the major towns and cities of the country. The other (which is dealt with below) is the representation of the black lesbian as the perpetual victim of male sexual violence and murder. At times both are staged simultaneously, causing outbreaks of anger and racist claims within what is believed to be the gay and lesbian 'community'.

Epprecht (2012:223) argues that the 'spirit of gay liberation and pride' (taking place on African soil) is as pioneered in the West. While many may agree with Epprecht, particularly his reference to Western gay assimilation, the earlier gay and lesbian movement in South Africa suggests the contrary. There are significant moments that Epprecht misses in South African gay politics. The role that GLOW played in South Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s (as discussed above) was precisely in answer to the question of being gay, black, and African within nationalist politics. This was unprecedented on African soil – no country on the continent had managed to put black African identity next to gay politics. GLOW linked gay politics to national liberation and the overthrow of racial domination. However, that was intercepted quite quickly within the South African gay and lesbian movement that subsequently formed, concealing identity and political differences. What happened to the project of black politics and nationalist politics within the gay 'movement' is the drama that remained unknown until it unfolded after 1994.

Many have accused Western cultural imperialism for its imposition of strong identitarian readings of the 'essentialist' terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' (Alman 1996; D'Ermitio 1992; Massad 2007). These terms have been adopted and utilised outside European and American borders, sometimes problematically. In South Africa, the terms gay and lesbian have existed since, and as a result of, the gay movement. This is not to say that other forms of existence and expressions have not existed; studies have shown that same-sex social and sexual life in some parts of the country have existed without being labelled gay

or lesbian (Morgan and Wieringa 2005; Murray and Roscoe 1998) or with identity labels being rejected completely. At the same time, for political reasons, labels have been called upon to access or fight for certain gains.

In a globalised world it is shallow to suggest that cultural artefacts, icons, ideas and languages do not circulate and are not attractive to the rest of the world. More interesting than the circulation of sexual identities globally, it is the manifestation and meaning of sexual identities in society and in social relations that begs attention. The best place to locate sexual identity and relations is in the staging and performance of gay pride. Although initially meant as a form of protest against the apartheid regime, gay pride marches (sometimes called 'parades' or 'mardi gras') have turned towards celebrating gay people's achievements in democratic South Africa.

Every year, these pride marches exhibit the stark inequalities existing within gay and lesbian groups as well as in the country as a whole. The history of gay and lesbian pride marches goes back to 1991, having started in the streets of downtown Johannesburg with only about 800 people. Just over twenty years later almost 20 000 people took part in the pride march in the affluent northern suburb of Rosebank. The Johannesburg gay and lesbian pride march has simultaneously reinvented itself while remaining a constant reflection of a splintered rainbow nation. This notion of a rainbow nation, while celebrated for displaying the diversity in South Africa today, is something of an illusion. Gopla (2001) argues that even though symbolic, the rainbow nation hides difference, political struggles and the sociocultural histories of the South African body politic. The rainbow flag, carried and flown religiously at every annual gay and lesbian pride march, works as a constant reminder of this illusion.

Ongoing challenges, including racial tensions within organising committees and numerous protests by groups of black lesbians demanding recognition and support for the injustices in their lives, have led to the closure of the nonprofit organisation that runs Johannesburg Pride. For many years, stark racial divisions and demarcations have symbolised Johannesburg Pride. It took place in the affluent suburb of Rosebank and Pride participants were secured by a fence erected to control access. This was read by many black gays and lesbians as a way of enforcing that the fenced area belonged to those who could pay the cover charge (read as white gays) and thus support the commercial activities provided. Every year, many black participants would gather outside the fence in direct protest and defiance of the demarcations of space. In one year, a group of anarchists stood outside the Pride fence in Rosebank wearing t-shirts on which was printed 'equality for all – terms and conditions apply'.

These forms of protest illustrate the tensions that have always existed in lesbian and gay politics over the years. As one journalist pointed out, 'What transpired [at the Johannesburg Pride in 2012] also served to reveal the deep malady of racism in South Africa' (Schurte 2012). A number of Black Pride participants have criticised the way Pride marches have turned out in South Africa. Speaking about Cape Town Pride, Vanessa Ludwig, argues: 'Gay and lesbian people have not been part of eradicating racial domination. Many gay and lesbian people have been and continue to be part of the system that

maintains the geographical apartheid that is in Cape Town today... (Ludwig interview 21 February 2013). Similarly, Khwezilomso Mbandazayo, who was among the people staging a protest stated: 'Johannesburg Pride did not take seriously some of the issues affecting black lesbians in the townships. In particular, Pride has become a commercial venture benefiting only a few. The politics of resistance and change have taken a back seat, that Pride is now just a party, a parade' (Mbandazayo interview 21 February 2013).

Current gay politics can no longer continue avoiding structural inequalities and the forms of oppression and racism that exist in South African society. One of the challenges that local gay politics faces is the increasing demand for global ideals of gay or queer consumerism. The results of a commercialised and consumer-driven Pride have meant that other pressing local issues take a back seat. In Cape Town (as in Johannesburg), the Pride march is organised to fit Western consumerism and thus the needs of international tourists, who are mainly white Euro-American gay men. The image portrayed of gay pride in South Africa is a version of what Joseph Massad (2007:160) calls the 'gay international' and Dennis Altman's (1996) notion of 'global gay', which internationalises homosexuality based on certain forms of cultural and social identity.

It has been argued that globalisation, consumerism and commercialisation tend to normalise gay and lesbian people for the global market (Gibson-Graham 2001). When this happens, local politics and resistance shift from a form of 'radicality' to a politics of 'palatability' (Oswin 2007) that serves the global gay image. Current gay politics in South Africa has resulted in a polarised image of the white gay/lesbian on the one hand and the black gay/lesbian on the other. Both have become, in different ways, commodified global figures. The former is a highly desirable image reproduced, coveted anywhere in the world by other 'queer consumers' (Altman 1996) and representing excess. Unlike the 'hipster lesbian' portrayed and sought after, as Altman says, by mainstream and gay media, the butch/masculine black lesbian represents an undesirable, valueless commodity that disappears as quickly as it appears. Viewing black lesbians in this way leaves no room to interrogate issues of masculinities, femininities or varied genders in female bodies. Most problematically, it allows black lesbians to be seen only in relation to violence and death.

VICTORY TO VICTIM

Cameron (1995:93) argues that the 'traditional attitude of intolerance towards gay sexual conduct seems to be deeply ingrained in our legal history'. Prior to the 1996 South African Constitution, laws governing sexuality prohibited any form of sexual contact between people of the same sex. Such contact was regarded as 'unnatural', and outlawed. Society responded accordingly and stigmatised those involved in such acts, branding them as criminals and giving them parish status. This has meant that legal struggles are closely related to social struggles and the two inevitably affect one another.

However, what current South African politics of sexual minorities show is the disconnect between legal and social reform, with the latter lagging behind. It is difficult to make

sense of such disparities twenty years after democracy. While there have been many laws advancing the rights and opportunities for gay, lesbian, transgender and intersex people, there have also been strong social attitudes viewing gays and lesbians, mainly, as shameful, and which continue to challenge some of the gains that democratic South Africa has advanced.

For a long time black lesbian life and existence have been portrayed not only as undesirable, but also through the narrative of victimhood and, to a lesser extent, criminality. In this narrative, the black lesbian remains the object that is made to disappear in various ways. One of the first stories to appear of a black lesbian-identified female figure, Gertrude 'Gertie' Williams, published in *Drum* magazine in 1956 and later reprinted in Gevisser and Cameron's *Defiant Desire* (1995) used this notion. Gertie was a coloured cross-dresser who passed as a man at different times in her life and had relationships with women. Outside the questions of her gender ambiguity, and thus her identity as a butch lesbian, Gertie appeared in these texts only as a gangster, a 'lesbian gangster' (Chetty 1995: 128), a criminal – a female figure who could not be seen as a woman.

Similar representations have not been uncommon in contemporary South Africa. The public violence that led to 19-year-old Zoliswa Nkonyane's death became a widely circulated and consumed media event. In the end, very little was known about Zoliswa, except that while she was walking home with a friend, a group of youngsters approached them. They claimed that Zoliswa and her friend wanted to be raped because they were tomboys and living as out lesbians. In the altercation Zoliswa was clubbed, kicked and beaten to death by a group of men in full view of people walking by (Thamm 2006). This kind of public violence works in ways that communicate to black lesbians and non-conforming women that their sexuality and gender can be done away with publicly, in the presence of witnesses. In addition, this is a way in which men not only control women's bodies, but also maintain patriarchal spaces.

The focus on lesbian murders and violations has given the impression that violence towards lesbians is not only 'special' but also that lesbians themselves are 'special victims'. The black lesbian becomes the victim of a form of violence easily deemed 'corrective'. The language used to describe the torments and violations she goes through is made to be palatable, precisely because she is an unwanted figure, a figure deemed to be 'cured' or corrected (Mathebani 2013). Without any form of interrogation, they have stripped her of any other existence but that of a victim of 'corrective rape' and, eventually, murder (Kelly 2009).

The language used to speak about violence towards lesbians has also contributed to the 'special' nature in which violence is portrayed. Lesbians are considered not only 'special' victims, but victims of 'corrective rape'. The concepts 'curative' or 'corrective' rape, now used widely by the media and the public, arise out of lesbian and feminist activist circles in South Africa (Mkhohli 2004; Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy and Moletsane 2010). Mathien (2007:323) defines 'curative' rape, as the 'rape of women perceived of as lesbian by men as an ostensible 'cure' for their (aberrant) sexualities'. Historically, the term had significance for a group of women who found themselves marginalised in various parts of society,

and even within the women's movement, but I do not think the term is currently useful, for lesbians themselves as well as to describe the violence on their bodies. While recognising the difficult past which brought rise to such terminologies, we have to rework the words for current political uses (Love 2007) without alienating or branding the people spoken about.

Recent works have come out strongly criticising the use of this term (Hames 2011; Mhetwa 2011; One in Nine Campaign 2013). The language in which violence is constructed and communicated veils the violent essence of the actual experience. While the term continues to circulate, even within LGBT groups, it perhaps it does more damage than good to those it aims to speak about. In many ways, it takes away the humanity and visibility that many women struggle to attain. By using such language, we become complicit in silencing forms of resistance that black women have shown throughout history. We are, perhaps even consciously, disempowering black lesbians, and ensuring that they remain invisible. Their lives as black women and black lesbians remains only in the domain of experiences of the inhumane – the violated, tortured, humiliated and, finally, dead.

Gibson-Graham (2001:241) suggests different ways in which the victim narrative or victim role, which is 'prescribed by the rape script', can be challenged. The most obvious way would be a refusal to accept the victim role. A number of strategies can be put to use to do that, including 'using speech in unexpected ways, diminishing the power of the perpetrator, and rescripting the effects of the rape on the victim.' In particular, the strategies suggest a change in the representation of rape – to see rape as 'death, an event that is final and lasting in terms of the damage it does to self.'

'OUR LIVES ARE NOT FOR SALE'

Black lesbians themselves have started challenging the victim narrative and the way they have been represented. In November 2008 the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), a Johannesburg-based organisation for black lesbians, bisexual and transgender women, hosted a black lesbian conference entitled 'My life, my story, my terms'. This conference, which launched the Black Lesbian Memory Project, was a direct rejection of the victimhood narrative of black lesbians.

Already at that time, a huge industry had developed around capturing and writing about black bodies, black sexualities and black sexual orientation. The temptation to feed into the stereotypes was felt even among black lesbians. The imperative to change this stereotype lay with the group. The sub-theme of the conference, 'Our stories are not for sale', captured the struggles with the ways in which black lesbian stories and lives had become commodified and 'packaged' for public consumption in many problematic ways. Most important was the resistance to such commodification. One participant, K, shared her experiences of being traumatised and continuously objectified by organisations and the media, who chased after her story of surviving multiple violent rapes. She became the exemplary black lesbian, a stereotype whose identity and subjectivity was stripped from

her. What remained behind, after the journalists and researchers had left with her story, was 'the personal cost of being made into a spectacle.'

Beverly Dintie, who had been at the forefront of gay liberation in the late 1980s with Simon Nkoli argued that although violence and hate crimes have become the 'big issue' it is important that lesbians focus also on other ways of representing themselves. Lesbian narratives are not limited to poverty, shame, violence and death. There are many black lesbians who occupy different positions across class structures and who are not represented by narrow views which do not show the diversity of black lesbian existence in South Africa. In the absence of a narrative that specifically relates to and celebrates black lesbian lives, participants worked towards shaping their representation in different sectors of society, particularly in the media, photography and film. Specifically prioritised was the desire to challenge the victim status that black lesbians are made to occupy in society. The response was to engage with black lesbians about ways of developing and creating an archive of black lesbians that will represent the interests of this group.

In the search for the lesbian victim, what is left behind are the varied experiences of black lesbians in different social settings. When black lesbian life is captured only in relation to victimhood, their female sexuality is made to exist only in the realm of pain and violence. There is no space for love, play, fantasy or pleasure within this narrative, and without these the black lesbian is violated to the extent that she is only treated as dead.

Similar efforts have been carried out by black lesbians in fighting for justice for those who have been murdered. The success of the two cases of black lesbians that have made it to court have shown that lobbying and the advocacy strategies of lesbian groups are working towards challenging the lesbian victim role. Budy Simelane and Zoliswa Nkonyane's cases became successes because of lesbian groups' determination to 'diminish the power of the perpetrator' (Gibson-Graham 2001:241). These struggles continue, and the biggest challenge is to move black lesbians from a place of death to where life is more attractive.

CONCLUSION

Democracy presents us with the power to choose and to create our own narrative about how we become who we are. While we cannot ignore or forget the past that is deeply influenced by the memory of violence and victimhood, particularly among Black South Africans, there are possibilities of moving from this to a present that fashions varied narratives of being. For many black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who have been pursuing recognition, legitimacy, inclusion and acceptance in the face of rejection and violence, creating a new narrative may be an important project to undertake.

Although it seems easy to be enticed by the idea of death, we have to resist and not be complicit with this notion. With democracy comes the possibility of imagining identity through life. Death is not the only attractive option or possibility. The recent People's Pride march in Johannesburg in September 2013 attests to the desire for many LGBT

people to carve new ways of existing. It was at this Pride march that black queers saw not only death, but also life as a possibility. A powerful visual display by a queer organisation, Iranti-org, took all marchers through a walk down 'hate crimes' lane. This was a different protest against hate crimes. Marchers were asked to walk slowly and silently. Volunteers from this organisation held thirty placards with the names and details of murdered LGBT persons. As each marcher walked past a name, they had to remember each victim's life. At the end of this lane, a white banner with the words 'They will never kill us all' flew above the marchers. This was a significant moment for many people who had imagined violent death as the only option for LGBT people.

For many marchers at People's Pride, the display of victims' names next to the possibility of life (or that we will not be all killed) culminated in an emotional realisation that death also has its limits. Perhaps the spirit of this recent march can be maintained for the generations that follow. Like the first march in 1991, which protested against many injustices, people marched in 2013 proudly and as defiant people who claim that 'choice of sexual orientation, choice of work, choice of identities can never, in our world, be a basis for discrimination' (People's Pride 2013). It was a powerful moment that signified that even with death, there is life.

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