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“Our Approach is Feminist”: Feminist Action Transcending Feminist Narratives at Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

By R. T. Goredema¹

GRDRUM001

Abstract

Discourses of division have seeped into the way the feminist movement thinks about feminist activism. Broadly, the initial research problem was to find out what the discord in feminist theory meant for feminist action. Because sexual violence is one of the key issues South African feminisms seek to address, Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust was used as a case study for this research. Formed in 1976, Rape Crisis, provides support for rape survivors, and runs public education programmes on issues around gender-based violence. Using interviews with members and past members of Rape Crisis, analysis of selected (public and internal) organisational documents, I put together a case study of this organisation, in order to find out what lessons it can lend to feminist movement.

In Rape Crisis, I found an organisation with a complex relationship with its members. The women of Rape Crisis appeared to take on the identity of the organisation, so that separating them from the organisational structures did not seem an appropriate way to analyse the organisation's identity. Instead, a framework provided by H el ene Joff e (1999) was used. Joff e (1999) uses an analysis of cross-cultural responses to the risk of HIV/AIDS, to argue that to protect the integrity of one's individual identity, and the safety from risk offered by that identity, one imagines an 'other', outside of themselves on which to project the risk (Joff e, 1999). The difference of the 'other' is dependent on their not belonging to the same ingroup as the self. This group difference allows for the 'other' to be imagined as completely separate from the self and the 'other' becomes the site on which perceived risk is projected (Joff e, 1999). Rape Crisis's identity functions in this way, but with slightly more complicated layers. At the first level, it absorbs survivors into its identity (which is an

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enmeshment of individual women and the organisation) but splits the survivors into their stories without risk factors, and the risk factors contained in their stories. Once this split is complete, the risk factors are then projected onto an array of 'others' - the criminal justice system, men, and feminism itself. The othering of feminism indicates that Rape Crisis has not found in the movement in which it is based the words to explain its identity as an organisation made up of its people. Rape Crisis's identity teaches us that without the words with which to speak of feminist action, feminism runs the risk of alienating the very women who constitute the movement. It is my contention that there is a need to construct thought on feminist activism that recognises the complex nature of feminist engagement. Acknowledging the deeply personal nature of feminist engagement will mean acknowledging that our engagements, like our selves, are imperfect. It is a challenge that feminist movement, in whatever form or wave it comes, is more than equal to.

University of Cape Town

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GRDRUM001

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Diversity Studies**

Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

2010

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date:

University of Cape Town

Abstract

Discourses of division have seeped into the way the feminist movement thinks about feminist activism. Broadly, the initial research problem was to find out what the discord in feminist theory meant for feminist action. Because sexual violence is one of the key issues South African feminisms seek to address, Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust was used as a case study for this research. Formed in 1976, Rape Crisis, provides support for rape survivors, and runs public education programmes on issues around gender-based violence. Using interviews with members and past members of Rape Crisis, analysis of selected (public and internal) organisational documents, I put together a case study of this organisation, in order to find out what lessons it can lend to feminist movement. In Rape Crisis, I found an organisation with a complex relationship with its members. The women of Rape Crisis appeared to take on the identity of the organisation, so that separating them from the organisational structures did not seem an appropriate way to analyse the organisation's identity. Instead, a framework provided by H el ene Joffe (1999) was used. Joffe (1999) uses an analysis of cross-cultural responses to the risk of HIV/AIDS, to argue that to protect the integrity of one's individual identity, and the safety from risk offered by that identity, one imagines an 'other' outside of themselves on which to project the risk (Joffe, 1999). The difference of the 'other' is dependent on their not belonging to the same ingroup as the self. This group difference allows for the 'other' to be imagined as completely separate from the self and the 'other' becomes the site on which perceived risk is projected (Joffe, 1999). Rape Crisis's identity functions in this way, but with slightly more complicated layers. At the first level, it absorbs survivors into its identity (which is an enmeshment of individual women and the organisation) but splits the survivors into their stories without risk factors, and the risk factors contained in their stories. Once this split is complete, the risk factors are then projected onto an array of 'others' - the criminal justice system, men, and feminism itself. The othering of feminism indicates that Rape Crisis has not found in the movement in which it is based the words to explain its identity as an organisation made up of its people. Rape Crisis's identity teaches us that without the words with which to speak of feminist action, feminism runs the risk of alienating the very women who constitute the movement. It is my contention that there is a need to construct thought on feminist activism that recognises the complex nature of feminist engagement. Acknowledging the deeply personal nature of feminist engagement will mean acknowledging that our engagements, like our selves, are imperfect. It is a challenge that feminist movement, in whatever form or wave it comes, is more than equal to.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the support of several individuals and a few organisations who helped make this research possible. I owe thanks to the various funders who made this research possible: the Harry Oppenheimer Institute, K. W. Johnstone scholarships, and the University of Cape Town.

I'd like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Melissa Steyn for who she is in the world, and within academia, and for her guidance, never-ending patience, endless extensions (always given without any judgment) and understanding throughout this process. Thank you for always supervising the whole human being, and not just the student! I'd also like to thank the staff and students at the Diversity Studies Unit at UCT for all their support, in every form in which it came. Thanks also to my boss and mentor, Dr. Zimitri Erasmus for teaching me that just fifteen minutes of rest helps and for understanding when my job needed to come second.

I'd also like to thank my Masters Research support group for the Saturday afternoons spent poring over each other's research. I could not have done this without the knowledge you all gave me that I was not on this (often lonely) journey alone.

To Emma and Morgan ó thank you for the wonderful world you introduced me to through BAST, and for being a part of that world!

I'd like to thank my wonderful friends and families for your constant presence in the face of my absences while I worked on this research. My parents and siblings for supporting me unconditionally during this process, even though it has gone on longer than they expected; my second family, the Görgenses, for opening up your hearts and your home to me; Tristan Görgens, for knowing I could do this, even when I didn't (and telling me so), and for letting me talk at him for hours about this research; Graeme Hoddinott for his help during the very

early stages, when I needed someone to remind me, at regular intervals, what the research question was, and for being the first person I told when it was done; and Leanne Johansson for being, and for her amazing editing skills!

To the women of Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust who have opened their hearts and their lives to me and reaffirmed my belief in the power of feminism, thank you, from the depths of my being!

This research is for you, and for the women you serve.

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Contents

I Context

1. Introduction	12
1.1. The personal: why I am doing this research	12
1.2. The research site: (Sexual violence and Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust)	13
1.3. This research: problem statement	15
1.4. Rationale for this research	17
1.5. Structure of this dissertation	17
2. Narrating feminisms	20
2.1. Introduction	20
2.2. A brief overview of feminisms: contents and discontents	20
2.2.1. Contents: first and second waves	22
2.2.2. Discontents: third wave	23
2.2.3. The other third wave: Postcolonial Feminisms	23
2.3. Feminist action/activism	24
2.3.1. Personal vs. Political	24
2.3.2. Defending the political	25
2.3.3. Exploring the personal	30
2.3.4. Complicating the split: personal/political?	31
2.3.5. Complicating the split: Postcolonial, African feminist action	33
2.4. Conclusion	36
3. Ways of knowing feminist action	37
3.1. Introduction	37
3.2. Feminist Epistemology: Women's experiences as/and knowledge	37

3.3.	Researching Rape Crisis	38
3.3.1.	Gaining/access to Rape Crisis: too much of a good thing	39
3.3.2.	Research participants	41
3.3.3.	Data collection	43
	Interviews	43
	Critical ethnography	44
	Rape Crisis's identity in print	45
3.3.4.	Data analysis	45
	Using grounded theory as a starting point	46
	On discourse analysis	47
	Writing as method	48
	A note on theory creation	49
3.4.	Power and method: reflexive considerations	50
3.5.	Conclusion	51

II Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

4.	Introducing Rape Crisis	53
4.1.	Introduction	53
4.2.	Origins	53
4.3.	Rape Crisis today: structures and operations	54
4.4.	Rape Crisis today: members	56
4.4.1.	A (feminist) culture of social responsibility	56
4.4.2.	The personal and the political for the women of Rape Crisis	58
4.5.	Introducing Rape Crisis as an enmeshed organisation	60
4.6.	Conclusion	62
5.	Enmeshed feminist activism/action at Rape Crisis	64
5.1.	Introduction	64
5.2.	Freirean pedagogy: Education as social change	64

5.3. Therapy as activism	66
5.3.1. Issues of space, proximity	66
5.3.2. Boundaries: defining selves and traumas	67
5.4. Making enemies and identities	70
5.4.1. Rape	71
5.4.2. The Criminal Justice System and the risk of secondary trauma	72
5.4.3. The Masculine Mystique: men and Rape Crisis	74
Men as actual perpetrators	74
Reclaiming the "man hater" label	76
Men as "absent" for some	77
5.4.4. Feminism as other:	
the devil we know, who does not know us	79
The spectre of academic feminism	80
Creating silences: race and class tensions at Rape Crisis	83
Volunteerism	83
Geography	85
Othering feminism or escaping the narrative?	86
5.5. Conclusion	89

III Closure, or W(h)ither feminism?

6. Conclusion: Implications of this for feminism?	92
6.1. Summary	92
6.2. Complicating the split	82
6.3. Implications for feminisms: Addressing ourselves	93
6.3.1. Implications for South African feminisms:	
An area for further research	94
7. Bibliography	97

IV Appendices

I.	Appendix A: Rape by numbers, or why Rape Crisis exists	109
II.	Appendix B: Joining Rape Crisis	111
III.	Appendix C: Interview Schedules	118
IV.	Appendix D: Complete List of Rape Crisis Documentation used in analysis	120
V.	Appendix E: An example of the coding process	121

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Some ideas I write about are not completely formed; others still need to be thought out. All are risky in that words, like actions, have consequences which I cannot completely foresee. These are notes, written from the frontline of learning by doing.

Yvette Abrahams

*I am never one thing or the other-
at night I am everything I fear
tears and sorrows
black windows and muffled screams
in the morning I am all I want to be
wild rain and open laughter
bare footprints and invisible seams
always without breath or definition-I claim every dawn
for yesterday is simply what I was
and tomorrow
even that will be gone*

Staceyann Chin, "CrossFireø"

I
Context

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1. Introduction

1.1. The personal: why I am doing this research

I am a feminist. The journey I have travelled to be able to make this very political, very personal assertion has been both long and short. It seems now that I have *always* been a feminist ó I can hardly remember a time when I wasn't committed to the 'sisterhood'. It has been a painful and joyous journey; both arduous and the easiest thing I have done in my (as yet, short) life. Feminisms have been a salvation of sorts. Engaging with the works of feminist authors, artists, poets whose works, lives and life-worlds showed me that there was more out there than my ultra-conservative, Christian boarding school upbringing had (mis)led me to believe.

Over the last few years (spent mostly within academia), I have been grappling with what it means to be actively aware of the ways in which the personal and political are inexplicably intertwined. These questions led me to Basic Approaches to Social Trauma (BAST). This organisation was founded by two women who were involved in volunteer work at Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust and were interested in developing theoretical tools to assist the work of Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust, and similar organisations working with women survivors of trauma. My work with BAST introduced me to the network of people who believed in feminisms as I did, and were out in the world confronting issues I had thus far only read about at university.

A few months after my work with BAST, I was searching for a thesis topic. Previous research projects had taken me into the world of women who choose not to become mothers, teenagers grappling with the beginnings of their gendered identities and the world of a disabled mother. The overarching, unintentional theme in my research has been a search for the *enactment* of feminisms. This has been a running theme in my own feminist journey: I am concerned with how to live a life that defies and defeats patriarchy. BAST introduced me to people who enacted this through their service to women who survive the worst manifestations of patriarchy. At the suggestion of my BAST colleagues, I began exploring research options that would illuminate this enactment of feminisms, some of the challenges

faced by people working against gender-based violence, and the lessons this work could offer the feminist movement.

1.2. The research site: (Sexual violence and) Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

There are a myriad of reasons why I chose Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust (Rape Crisis¹) a case study. I will outline only the most salient here. Whilst there are many organisations in the Western Cape and South Africa working against gender-based violence, Rape Crisis is one of the few that explicitly labels itself as feminist. Their 2008-9 annual report² declares our approach is feminist and their website says:

In that the work of counselling [rape survivors] assumes women's right to self-definition and to control over our own lives, it is feminist. It is also feminist in its commitment to complete social equality and in its recognition of the need to learn everything possible about the way both privilege and discrimination have distorted and shaped out ideas and lives.

¹ It is necessary at this point to explain why I am choosing to abbreviate Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust as 'Rape Crisis', rather than as 'RCCTT' or 'RC', or any other acronym. Around the same time that I noticed I was transcribing the word 'rape' with a capital 'R', I noticed that I had not (save for one interview with M, where I was so nervous and put out that I ended up reading from my interview schedule – but more on that in the interviews discussion paper) abbreviated Rape Crisis, in my speech or in my transcribing. This might partly be because of my partial tendency towards what Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) naturalised transcription (that is, capturing things exactly the way the speaker says them – although I must say that my tendency towards denaturalised transcription is somewhat stronger), but I think it was also an important political decision. One of the things that came up in my interviews was Rape Crisis's struggle around their name. I can understand this – it came up for me many, many times when I had to explain what exactly Rape Crisis was. Even now, when I have been at Rape Crisis for what feels like ages (in reality a few short months) I experience a little bit of anxiety and I've noticed that I add a postscript-like disclaimer every time I say 'Rape Crisis' – as in, "Oh, I'm doing my thesis with Rape Crisis (brief pause) they're an organisation based in Cape Town". The upshot of it is that people don't like the word 'Crisis' and they like the word 'Rape' even less. They would rather an organisation that is dealing with rape be called something uplifting. I can understand that impulse in funders, I do it myself often, to make people I speak to, and myself, feel more comfortable. Rape is ugly. But by the same token, it needs to be spoken about. There is indeed a serious rape crisis in Cape Town, and it seems somehow unjust that it remain silent. Part of the problem is the silence. And so Rape Crisis's name is a clear political shout to all who can hear: we have a serious problem, and we need to fight it. So I realised that I had unconsciously chosen to respect this, and also, on a deep level, to commit to the fight against gender-based violence (and not GBV, mind you) and name Rape Crisis. I have decided that in the body of my thesis, there will be no 'RC', just Rape Crisis, as it is.

² For a complete list of Rape Crisis documents used as data, please see Appendix D.

This makes Rape Crisis an ideal site for studying the enactment of feminisms.

In addition, the issue of sexual violence against women is the apex of the complex transformation crisis in which South Africa finds itself (Hassim, 2009; Motsei, 2007). Mmatshilo Motsei (2007) and Shireen Hassim (2009) both use the rape trial of Jacob Zuma to position sexual violence as a particularly ugly symptom of deep systemic problems facing the country as it negotiates the transition from its violent past into its uncertain future. For Hassim (2009), the Zuma trial represents a dramatisation of some of the worst aspects of a society in transition and demonstrates the deep structural and cultural factors that block true transformation of gender dynamics. Motsei (2007, p. 9) says

For a nation emerging from a protracted war that required the numbing of the soul and hardening of the heart to achieve political liberation, an awakening of the spirit embedded in the ancient African philosophy of *phela ke phele* (live and let live) is one of the greatest challenges for leaders and the nation as a whole. Indeed, one of the most important questions facing us is: can the revival and reintegration of this principle into our lives solve the current state of moral decay?

This moral decay has turned South Africa's transition into a violent one. The pressures of concomitant social, cultural, political and economic transformation, and the difficulties of managing growing material inequality, play themselves out on South African streets, in South African homes, and, on the bodies of the most vulnerable South Africans (Motsei, 2007). A recent study commissioned by the Medical Research Council (MRC) of South Africa reveals that one in four South African men admit to having committed rape (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle, 2009). One in two of those who admitted to having committed rape also admitted that they had more than one victim (*ibid.*). Jewkes *et al.* (2009) also suggest that trauma (linked to societal and economic factors) plays a significant role in determining a tendency towards sexual violence. The MRC study also links sexual violence to the spread of HIV, and to continued social problems (Jewkes *et al.*, 2009). Sexual violence against women is thus one of the main issues around which feminist activists in South Africa organise. In short, to be a feminist in this country means engaging with violence against women. Rape Crisis is at the forefront of this 'civil war' in which South African feminist

activists are soldiers. It serves thus, as an (quintessential) example of feminist action in the South African context.³

Rape Crisis is also a personal choice. Firstly, I am a feminist. Secondly, I am a survivor of sexual violence. In short, I am a feminist because feminisms engagement with gender-based violence (as a political, economic, cultural phenomenon, and not just about men's sexual appetite, or their inherent pathology etc.) has provided me with a framework through which I can make meaning out of what happened to me, and what continues to happen to women everywhere. For me, that is the most powerful work of feminisms and the vision that Rape Crisis has committed to operationalising and realising. As such, they are my choice as a research site.

Choosing Rape Crisis as a research site, however, does not imply that Rape Crisis speaks for all South African feminists, nor am I placing the complete burden of South African feminist responsibility onto Rape Crisis. Rather, I am suggesting that Rape Crisis can provide a useful window through which to explore some aspects of feminist engagement in South Africa.

1.3. This research: problem statement

Hassim's (2009) assessment of the Zuma trial concludes (amongst other things) that there is a rift between the women of South Africa: feminisms and their projects are seen as elite and as distant from ordinary women's lives. My own research explores this gap in another form: this research began from a deep disenchantment with academic feminism - its inability to offer guidelines for enacting the principles it described in journal articles and books. Thus in initial stages, my aim was to examine the effects of the inaccessibility of academic feminist debates to feminist action (as exemplified by organisations like Rape Crisis). I also wished to explore the possible lessons that feminist activism could offer academic feminisms, or new

³ I must stress at this point, however, that this dissertation is not about sexual and gender-based violence in South Africa. Rather, it is asking questions of and about the women who use feminisms as a philosophy to organise against such violence.

perspectives it could introduce to academic debates. Initially therefore, my research aimed to look at *how ideological heterogeneity impact on contemporary feminist practice, with specific attention to (a) the 'wave' framing of feminist historiography, and (b) practice in organisational contexts where feminists must act together?*

Delving further into feminist action - through my Rape Crisis interviews, and my engagement with other case studies - I realised that the feminist movement, academic or otherwise, is not easily characterised. It is not simply 'academic' or 'activist', 'second wave' or 'third wave', 'personal' or 'political'. Thus, instead of analysing the relationship between 'academic' and 'activist', this dissertation expanded to an analysis of an instance of feminist action. It aims to re-imagine feminist narratives in ways that escape the trap of 'either-or' and introduce nuanced narratives of the feminist movement.

In its current form, this research examines *how women at Rape Crisis embody and live the crises of feminisms – through their personal lives, and the places where their personal lives and Rape Crisis intersect*. Using data collected through interviews with ten women who have worked, or currently work, with Rape Crisis, this dissertation explores *how, through feminist action, Rape Crisis (through its members) transcends the personal-political binary and enacts feminisms that combine the personal and political into a distinct, separate entity*. Instead of treating the personal and the political as separate entities, Rape Crisis women, through their lives and work, live a bricolaged existence which is both simultaneously.⁴ Binaries and mutually exclusive categories are contested in this feminist engagement such that differences between schools of thought and historical moments in the movement are downplayed. This dissertation uses Rape Crises to demonstrate how the enactment and *enmeshed* nature of feminisms might be the key to imagining such a narrative.

⁴ *Bricolage* is a term used within cultural studies to describe the act of pulling together cultural artefacts from several disparate meaning systems to construct new meaning systems (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery & Fiske, 2006). For the purposes of this paper, bricolage will be used to describe combinations that cannot be described in terms of the factors they combine, but that are not 'neat' enough to be called syntheses (see Kaufmann, 1978).

1.4. Rationale for this research

Ultimately, this research is *exploratory* in nature: it is based on an initial, informed assessment of the relationship between theory and praxis within the feminist movement, and aims to explore this relationship by observing a particular instance of feminist praxis. Like Yvette Abrahams (2001, p. 71), 'I have done the thinking and theorising. Now, I am trying to see if my theories are correct.' And 'correct' within the context of this research will mean whether or not the theories have some relationship to practice. While this dissertation may not evoke a 'narrative revolution' within feminist movements, I hope it will introduce a different way of thinking about feminist movements. I wish to introduce narratives of feminisms that do not reproduce separate categories (e.g. waves) but recognise the complexity of feminist movements. Hopefully this work will add to the conversation already taking place within feminist movement about the lessons that feminist praxis can lend to theory.

In addition to this, this research will add to the conversation taking place amongst feminist activists working in South Africa. According to Hassimø (2009) assessment of what the Zuma rape trial means, the rifts in the women's movement have weakened it. It is my contention that there is a need to address some of these rifts, and my research aims to add to the works of many who are already doing so.

Finally, it is my hope that this research will be of use to Rape Crisis. Although this study is not strictly evaluative, it is my hope that it can offer insights that will be useful to the strategic and operational functioning of the organisation.

1.5. Structure of this dissertation

The next chapter will chart my research journey through literature. A brief history of feminisms, and the narratives that have developed *about* feminisms, is followed by a discussion of the literature on feminist action/activism and the shape of this debate. It ends by looking at more recent, local, postcolonial and African voices emerging from these debates

and the move towards a narrative of feminisms ó and feminist narratives ó that move beyond divisions and towards feminist movements that forge a unity that acknowledges complexities of living feminims.

The third chapter presents the research methodology. I begin by outlining the principles of feminist social research that informed my methodological choices. I then detail my research journey, and relationship with Rape Crisis, explaining how participants were selected, interview schedule developed, data collected, analyses and packaged into this document.

In Chapter Four, I describe the research site, Rape Crisis, including a history of Rape Crisis, and a description of Rape Crisis's operational structure and activities. I also discuss the sense of social responsibility that informs Rape Crisis members' activist engagement at the organisation. Within these stories of social responsibility are embedded examples of how the women of Rape Crisis live their political commitments in their personal lives. The chapter ends with an introduction of Rape Crisis as an enmeshed organisation. Given the finding that the women of Rape Crisis live their activism, the chapter posits that their activism at Rape Crisis is also lived. Exploring the discursive functions of Freirean pedagogy and therapy, and drawing on Kleinian theory, this position is explored further in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six concludes by arguing that Rape Crisis organisational identity illuminates the gaps in feminist narratives of feminist action. If feminist movements are to address the challenges of patriarchy, therefore, they must acknowledge the complex nature of its identities and encourage narratives of feminisms that address such complexities.

This dissertation incorporates my reflexive considerations at every step. At points, it does not read like a traditional 'academic' text, but given its personal-political argument, I have chosen to treat even the reflective and personal as part of this academic matter. Ann Oakley (1981, p. 58), in her discussion of feminist research says,

A feminist methodology of social science requires that this rationale of research be described and discussed not only in feminist research but in social science in general. It requires, further, that the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias ó it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.

My research process was fulfilling, enriching, painful, educational and, as most life lessons go, anything but hygienic and is presented as such in this dissertation.

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2. Narrating feminisms

2.1. Introduction

In presenting my conceptual framework, I begin with an overview of contemporary feminist thought to contextualise the 'traditional' narratives of feminisms. I then review debates around feminist action and conclude by examining what debates within feminisms mean for the way in which we think of the movement, and how these debates could be resolved.

2.2. A brief overview of feminisms: contents and discontents

Feminism⁵ has been largely regarded to from within and without - as a divided movement (Dietz, 2003; Pollit, 2009). Seismic shifts in feminist scholarship have assumedly challenged the very basis of the movement. Feminist theory to influenced by poststructuralist and postmodern traditions - has brought to feminism several different *feminisms* which challenge the integrity and unity of the movement (see Butler & Scott, 1992; Benjamin, 1995; hooks, 2000a; Abrahams, 2001). It has also challenged the basis of the sisterhood to the female subject/ivity to and claimed, ironically, it is a construction of the movement (see Riley, 1988; Butler, 1990; Dietz, 2003). Feminist theory has accused the movement of doing women a disservice by not paying attention to the nuance of women's experiences (see Spivak, 1988; Benjamin, 1995). Feminist theory, therefore, has complicated the neat politics of the feminist social movement. The general historiography of the movement thus charts it as embattled and at odds.

2.2.1. Contents: 'first and second waves'

It is difficult to say when exactly feminism became feminism. Nancy Love (2006, p. 471) writes that,

[F]eminism is often portrayed as the product of the 1960s, but it has a longer, richer history. Indeed, it is difficult to find a time or place when women were not struggling to improve their condition.

⁵ Broadly speaking, the shift from understanding feminism as feminisms is a recent one. In this chapter, when referring to earlier feminism, I will use the term feminism.

Nevertheless, Nancy Love (2006) estimates that the understanding of feminism as a formal force has its origins in the eighteenth century liberal efforts of women like Mary Wollstonecraft and Abigail Adams who lobbied the state for the recognition of women's status as citizens. The tone of this feminism was not particularly revolutionary. In an essay advocating women's rights, Wollstonecraft (1792, republished in Love, 2006, p. 481, 482) concedes that

There are many follies in some degree peculiar to women & sins against reason of commission as well as of omission & but all flowing from ignorance or prejudice. Ignorance and the mistaken cunning that Nature sharpens in weak heads as a principle of self-preservation, render women very fond of dress, and produce all the vanity which such fondness may naturally be expected to generate.

In short, she presents women as weak of mind, heart and body but society allows for this weakness to develop & by preventing women from sharpening their wits through work, and other full-citizen activities. Thus, women remain weak, and are a debt to their societies (Wollstonecraft, 1792, republished in Love, 2006). The solution to this is to allow women to take part in society as full citizens; their natural weakness will thus be socialised out of them, allowing them to contribute to society, be better companions and raise better children (*ibid.*). Early feminism was thus about getting women acknowledged, legally, as people.

Following these early movements, Betty Friedan began to tentatively redefine feminism around the 1960s and 1970s. Friedan's (1968, republished in Love, 2006) feminism demanded (and did not politely ask, as Wollstonecraft's generation did) that women be allowed to pursue lives that did not automatically include marriage and parenthood. Friedan's (in)famous book, *The Feminine Mystique*, named the problem which had no name: college-educated women were bored using their minds to maintain households and raise children. They wanted more, and more was equal access to the workplace, and to the same power men possessed. The tone of the Friedanist movement differed from earlier feminism; it blatantly refused to concede any difference between the sexes and demanded freedom from women's natural role. Theirs was a revolution. It was not, however, completely unique: even as Friedan rejected the natural weakness Wollstonecraft ascribes to women, she argued for the same things: equal access to work, and to resources. This is significant in that it points to how far women had come by the sixties, but how little they had travelled after all.

From Wollstonecraft's work in the eighteenth century to the position papers of the Feminist Majority Foundation, the feminists' most immediate medium is the written word. Their theoretical work has been informed by their experiences. However, post 1970s, *feminisms* became more sophisticated as some sisters began to complicate the representations of their experiences, and therefore complicate *feminism* as it had existed until that point.

Much (some would argue *all* (see Essof, 2001)) of 'formal' feminism until the late 1970s, originated from a white, Western, middle class cadre of women. Other women were present within feminist writing and lobbying, but they were mostly 'victims' for whom the core cadre had to fight (hooks, 2000a; Mohanty, 1991). The failure of this core cadre to interrogate their own positionalities was criticised as the reason behind their disregard for the particularities of 'other' women (gay women, black women, non-American women, old women, etc.). Some writers claimed that this 'blind spot' in early feminism was a political move: if the core cadre did not name blackness, gayness and so on, they would not pose too radical a threat to the patriarchal power base, and would be rewarded with jobs and the political offices (hooks, 2000a).

2.2.2. Discontents: 'third wave'

Following this criticism, some have focused on the development of 'local' feminisms. These feminisms, in defying a 'master narrative' of feminism, defy a single definition. There are basic principles that are common to all of them, however. These feminisms recognise the intersectionality of identities; that 'woman' is one of the many social identities (which include race, class, sexuality, culture, history, ethnicity etc.) that shape our positions in the world. Feminist thought needs to consider women in terms of all of their complex identities (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). These feminisms also recognise the importance of place: Chandra Mohanty (1991), for example, argues for feminisms that are rooted within their particular geographical locales. She also argues for unity between feminisms to enable a political movement that ultimately is a widespread revolution. In addition, difference is welcomed as part of feminism, rather than being minimised in the pursuit of a uniting identity category.

Others, more radically and problematically, have demanded reworking the feminist project altogether. The core cadre, in defining the feminist movement also defined a particular womanhood (Butler, 1990). It is this womanhood (white, Western middle class, married with children womanhood) that feminism speaks for, and in so doing, disrespects other women (Butler, 1990). Also, in creating this womanhood, feminism reproduces the gender identities that lie at the core of the problem (Moore, 1994). In naming and defining womanhood, feminism emphasises what ought to be recognised and redefined as innocuous categories (Butler, 1990). It is only through the recognition of gender as a meaningless signifier that gender justice can be achieved, Butler (1990) argues.

2.2.3. The 'other' third wave: Postcolonial Feminisms

A tradition that does not fit as easily with the Western-dominated waves I have narrated above is the postcolonial feminist tradition. Postcolonial feminisms are those feminisms that are emerging from the geographical, ideological and social spaces that are under-, un- and mis-represented in mainstream feminist tradition, *and* thinking about mainstream feminist tradition (Suleri, 1992). African feminisms are an example of such feminisms (*ibid.*). In the case of Africa, these feminisms have been born of frustration with the continued representation of African women's stories as (1) unitary and homogenous and as (2) stories of victims with very little to no agency (Mikell, 1995). Although it is impossible to speak of African feminisms as one homogenous, undifferentiated mass movement, given the heterogeneous nature of the continent (and to do so would be to repeat the errors of the feminist tradition that preceded postcolonial feminisms) (Lewis, 2001), there are a few factors that are common to African feminisms. This is to say that although African feminisms are born of a resistance to traditional, largely-Western-based, they are not merely reactions and have substantive content (*ibid.*). Firstly, considerations of *intersectionality* loom large in African feminisms (Hendricks & Lewis, 1994). This means that African feminisms recognise the multiple political factors (race and class included) that shape women's positionalities, and the factors that are peculiar to postcolonial contexts. Secondly, related to the continued awareness of intersectionality, African feminisms are aware of the way in which the peculiar positionalities and lived experiences created by the various political factors that shape (all) women's lives have a bearing on how we experience the

world, and how we engage with and write about the world (Arndt, 2000). Thus African feminisms do not claim to be able to speak for women's realities that they have not lived. This means that, thirdly, all African feminisms and all African feminist knowledges are based in *lived experience* and are grounded in what women know from their lives.

2.3. Feminist action/activism

The following review charts the conversation about feminist engagement.⁶ Debates within feminist thought have implications for feminist action. The discussion below explores which is the most effective mode of feminist action: formal engagement (using existing power structures) or informal engagement (challenging existing power structures). The discussion replicates the struggle between the second wave's globalising tendencies and the third wave's call for small-scale, contextual local feminisms.

2.3.1. Personal vs. political

Theresa Man Ling Lee (2007) discusses the relationship between the personal and the political in feminist theory. The slogan "the personal is political", coined in 1968 by Carol Hanisch, has been the defining war cry of feminism. For Lee (*ibid.*) the slogan was meant to alert women to the fact that, for example, giving birth was not just giving birth; and getting married was not just getting married. It challenges the traditional Western divide between public life and private, individual life (Lee, 2007). An important part of this process is *consciousness-raising*. According to Rosen (2000, cited in Lee, 2007, p. 165), Kathie Sarachild first used this term to describe "the process by which women in small groups could explore the political aspects of personal life". The association between politicisation (of private life) and emancipation was at the basis of second wave feminism's consciousness-raising work. In addition, second wave feminism encouraged civic engagement, through liberal democratic political frameworks (Lee, 2007). Organisations such as the United States National Organisation for Women (NOW) and the FMF choose to engage with women's

⁶ Literature on feminist action is largely case-study based. In the tradition of writing on feminist activism, I am basing my review of thought on feminist activism on case study literature.

issues by lobbying and/or participating in existing, official power structures (*ibid.*). Lee (2007, p. 164) asks 'if feminism is civic engagement, are feminist activists in fact consolidating rather than undermining the public-private divide?' The assumptions that civic engagement leads to greater emancipation sidesteps the more difficult task of collapsing the boundaries between what is considered private and public (Lee, 2007). This creates lethargy around the greater feminist mission of engaging with deeper structural issues around gender, and women's identities. It also serves, Lee (2007) says, to narrow the level at which women can engage. Young women feel liberated 'enough' and cannot see themselves lobbying, or running for office (Lee, 2007). The more difficult task of unmasking insidious oppression has its basis in how people think about gender: in spite of civic feminist activism, women must still fly to get to places men can walk to. An activism that engages with this truth must work to broaden its definition of politicisation, (Lee, 2007). It is problematic to define the political as the civic sector alone; politics has to do with identifying the broader structures at play in one's private life (Lee, 2007).

Lee's (2007) discussion thus looks at the feminist debate through personal-political lens: she characterises the split in modes of feminist engagement as being about a split in conceptions of the personal and the political which undermines the feminist project of explicating the inextricable link between these spheres of life.

2.3.2. Defending the political

There are some, however, who defend feminism's engagement with formal structures. Ann Marshall (2002) disagrees with Lee's characterisation of formal, political feminist engagement as ineffectual in achieving transformation. Contra Lee, Marshall (*ibid.*) argues that feminism has *not* always been synonymous with political participation: feminists have never been taken seriously by political theorists. In her study of feminist activists who lobby to have women elected into American public office, she argues that this form of feminist activism has been 'largely invisible' (Marshall, 2002, p. 707) to political participation theorists. According to her review of the field, political participation uses mainly survey data to look at the factors that influence individual participation in electoral and formal politics.

Political action is seen as the purview of the individual (*ibid.*). Scholarship that focuses on social movement, or activism, treats political action as separate from and outside its definition of activism (*ibid.*). This is because, says Marshall (2002, p. 709), this research has different underlying assumptions about the nature of the political:

For instance, Bookman and Morgení discuss political empowerment as the spectrum of political activity ranging from acts of individual resistance to mass political mobilisations that challenge basic power relations in our society.

In short, theorists who examine activism do not characterise political action as activism (Marshall, 2002). In addition the two schools use different data, with the former focusing on ethnographic data, and the latter on survey data. The result of this gap, Marshall (2002) writes, is that women's activism, which, she argues, is neither one nor the other but is both simultaneously - gets ignored. Emerging research on women as political actors fills this silence (Marshall, 2002). It focuses on the roles women play as voters, and as organisers within political parties, and how this is defined by these women as their form of activism (*ibid.*).

Drawing on this work, Marshall (2002) investigates the efforts of a chapter of the American National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). The NWPC is an organisation founded in 1971, with the intention of harnessing the vast political power represented by women (Burrell, 1971 cited in Marshall, 2002, p. 712). The NWPC mission statement contained a feminist commitment to combating sexism and gender inequality by placing women in political office (Marshall, 2002). Whilst local chapters follow the broad framework provided by the national organisation, they are also driven by the particular issues of their communities (*ibid.*). Marshall (2002) conducted interviews and participant observation with members of the local NWPC. From this work, she suggests three insights on the nature of activism, and the relationship between formal politics and activism. Firstly, it is not always the case (as Lee assumes) that women's personal lives are removed from formal politics: the journeys that NWPC members took to arrive at the decision to involve themselves in this kind of feminism were intensely personal (Marshall, 2002). Secondly, the organisational infrastructure of the NWPC is such that typical divisions between formal politics and activism are easily transgressed (*ibid.*). The NWPC is part of a larger, loosely-structured movement for social change. Of significance is that way in which Marshall's interviewees regard the NWPC as a

refuge. In spite of its official make-up, therefore, the NWPC interweaves formal and informal structures. Thirdly, Marshall (2002) demonstrates, by charting the methods NWPC women use to effect change in formal politics – lobbying for certain candidates, liaising with community organisers, mobilising female voters, opening up lines of communication between community organisers and political offices – the way in which the NWPC is involved in both formal politics, and community activism. She concludes that the line between formal politics and community activism is not neat (Marshall, 2002). Although the feminist movement has largely articulated its objectives outside of formal politics, it can work within this framework without compromising its commitment to structural change (*ibid.*).

Ku (2008) agrees with Marshall. Exploration feminist engagement in formal politics, Yenlin Ku (2008) examines the process that established the ‘Regulations Governing the Protection of Women’s Rights’ in China. Ku (2008, p. 176) says that ‘in most studies, feminist activists have been characterised as outsiders and ideological opponents to the state’. She quotes Ferguson (1984 cited in Ku, 2008, p. 176) as stating that ‘efforts to propose bureaucracies from within bureaucracies, using bureaucratic resources and language, are eventually absorbed and rendered harmless’. Nevertheless, feminists continue to work from within the state, and many theorists continue to defend this decision (Ku, 2008). This kind of feminism, termed ‘state feminism’, only works for organisations that have the capacity to institutionalise new equality demands, and exist in societies that have wide networks of feminist organisations challenging the gender status quo (Mazur & Stetson, 1995 cited in Ku, 2008). With this in mind, Ku (2008) examines the policy intervention strategies of Taiwanese feminists. Women civil servants from thirteen government departments were trained in gender issues, and were tasked with producing a set of regulations for the protection of women’s rights in their region (Ku, 2008). Lobbying techniques and consciousness-raising workshops were garnered support to pass the regulations (*ibid.*). Ultimately, the regulations were collaborations between women civil servants and feminist scholars (*ibid.*). Its success points to the healthy relationship feminist scholarship and activism have, Ku (2008) says. She also argues that the success of the regulations depended largely on the political will of women working within the state. Thus state feminism can only be successful on the condition that strong networks of feminists are involved. In addition to this Lyons (2008), states that success of state feminism is also predicated on informal

alliances between feminists and policy-makers. That is to say those personal commitments to feminism, as well as informal ties are the keys to successful state feminism.

In both Ku and Marshall's cases, feminists' political engagement of occurred in local settings, speaking to particular contexts. Whilst both argue that 'state feminism' serve to empower women as a group, both acknowledge a focus on context and not on globalising politics as the key to feminist success. Lyons (2008) argues that such work demonstrates that civic engagement does not necessarily mean an abandonment of local activist goals. In addition, both Ku's and Marshall's works suggest that even civic engagement comes from a deep personal commitment to feminist values. Liss, Crawford and Popp (2004) echo this: in surveying the attitudes of two hundred and fifteen female college students, they found that the most important predictor of whether or not one becomes engaged in collective feminist action is the existence of a personal identification with the values of the feminist movement (Liss *et al.*, 2004).

But what are some of the costs of formal, civic, or state feminism? Roth (2004) explores the poor conditions under which such feminists work. She argues that attempting to practice feminism in what she terms 'extra-feminist' settings can be difficult, although it is not impossible (Roth, 2004). Her study is an attempt to explore the conditions under which it is difficult, and the conditions under which it is possible. Roth (2004, p. 151) hypothesises the following:

	Relatively institutionalised	Relatively non-institutionalised
Feminist-unfriendly	Marginalisation	Exit costs
Feminist-friendly	Feminist fading	Compartmentalisation

Table 1: Challenges for feminists in extra-feminist organisations/institutions

Roth (2004) defines institutionalisation as a function of whether or not an organisation is situated in an extra-institutional setting (that is an oppositional setting), its formality levels and how old the organisation is. 'Friendliness' to feminism is about how open an organisation is to feminism (Roth, 2004). The more open an organisation, the better able feminists will be to organise from within it. This openness exists along a continuum, Roth

(2004) says "The level of institutionalisation will not always correlate positively with the level of friendliness: marginalisation and fading can occur in settings that are relatively less institutionalised (Roth, 2004). Marginalisation is the process through which feminists in organisations become 'others' (*ibid.*). For example, women organising within trade unions have often been shut out of policy meetings, or had their agendas relegated to 'sub' status, outside the main agendas (Gelb, 1989, cited in Roth, 2004). Marginalisation may result in the eventual disappearance of women's issues (Izraeli, 1990, cited in Roth, 2004). Relatively highly-institutionalised settings that are also feminist-friendly 'create the opportunity for the stabilisation of a feminist agenda, but at some cost' (Roth, 2004, p. 154). One of these costs is fading, which occurs when the organisation's resident feminists gradually lose their connections to the feminist movement (Roth, 2004). She uses the example of Australian 'femocrats' (feminists who worked as bureaucrats within the Australian labour government) who began as strongly linked with community feminism, but slowly 'lost touch' with it (Eisenstein, 1996, cited in Roth, 2004). Roth (2004, p. 155) says

The day-to-day experiences of actually doing the job exacerbated the accountability problem; femocrats had to participate in closed-doors decision-making processes typical of bureaucracies and at odds with the participatory and democratic ethic of movements. In short, femocrats in the feminist-friendly Australian state found themselves within institutions where relationships were formalised and lines of accountability were clear; in contrast, the ties and accountability to an outside and weakening social movement were not formalised, and thus likely to be subordinated in practice.

In relatively non-institutionalised, feminist-friendly spaces may run the risk of compartmentalisation: women's issues are delegated to the feminist members of the organisation (Roth, 2004). The organisation accepts feminist ideals, but cannot integrate these ideals in its 'mainstream' because of the lack of numbers amongst feminists in the organisation (*ibid.*). Compartmentalisation can result in the most work and responsibility being given to those with the least power and resources (*ibid.*). Non-institutionalised, feminist-unfriendly settings may mean feminists may have to exit (*ibid.*). Exiting comes with costs, however. Loyalty issues may arise, for example: the younger feminist liberationists in the US grappled with what the transfer of the skills they had learnt from within the movement they were exiting would ultimately mean for the success of that movement (Freeman, 1973, cited in Roth, 2004). What then can be done by feminists working in extra-feminist settings (such as formal politics)? For one thing, such feminists can recognise that the story of extra-feminist feminism is not all about challenges. 'Even in hostile circumstances, feminists have been able to make various degrees of headway in advancing their issues, and they have been

able to promote a feminist agenda by asserting that they brought a unique and crucial element of political analysis to the table, writes Roth (2004, p. 161). Measures of 'success' need to take into account the undeniable fact that 'success' in extra-feminist settings is limited (Roth, 2004). That being said, Roth (2004) points out that less institutionalised organisations seem to provide feminists with more power and leeway, even when there are challenges. Nevertheless, feminist action in institutional settings, no matter how loose, might always be limited as institutions reserve the right to determine what kind of space is and how much space is will be provided (*ibid.*). Roth (2004, p. 163) says

Whatever the limits, it would seem to be the case that feminist activists in extra-feminist settings must be vigilant in their insistence on the right to have a feminist politics in those settings.

This means that extra-feminist feminism is an ongoing, unstable project that must constantly be defined, and asserted (Roth, 2004). This, according to Roth (2004), makes it difficult but not impossible.

2.3.3. Exploring the personal

But what of feminist activism that is not primarily enacted through formal politics? What is the alternative to the modes of engagement outlined by Marshall, Ku and Roth? In this section, I look at examples of such alternatives, debates engendered by this third wave, and what is philosophically at stake in holding fast to non-political engagement.

Sowards and Renegar (2004) present a picture of what the 'political' when extended to include other spheres of life beyond formal politics can mean for feminism; they examine feminist engagement in inter- (and not extra) feminist settings. They argue that consciousness-raising within feminism has shifted to accommodate the changing relationship of feminist philosophy to the world, especially the evolving need for the link to personal life and structural injustice. The challenges of the 'post-feminism myth' (the idea that feminism's wars have been won and fought, and that there is no use for feminism in contemporary society) have forced feminists to become more creative in revealing inequalities that still exist. Another challenge is the perceived inaccessibility of second wave feminism, that is, its narrow definition of feminism and predominantly white, Western,

middle class origins. Sowards and Renegar (*ibid.*) credit the third wave with the rhetorical response to these challenges that is transforming the nature of feminism. Recognising the need to be diverse and to create a philosophy to which people can relate, the third wave has responded by using personal stories to create feminist theories (Sowards & Renegar, 2004). Sowards and Renegar (2004, p. 542) say,

personal testimony can connect the lives of individuals who share the same set of circumstances or reveal personal thoughts and secretive moments to others. Similar stories allow readers to explore diverse feminist perspectives that may not be available to them within their immediate circle of family or friends.

New consciousness-raising also occurs in new settings, such as the classroom (Sowards & Renegar, 2004). Women's studies are popular on campuses and feminists are using this as an opportunity to raise feminist awareness in students (*ibid.*). Feminism is no longer confined to the written word, but is also to be found in popular media, such as television shows, and music lyrics, such as those of Alanis Morissette (*ibid.*). In addition, feminism is expanding its audiences. Sowards and Renegar (2004) also pinpoint an important change in new consciousness-raising methods: instead of providing women with set theory, new consciousness-raising allows contributions to feminism from the people it speaks for. Most importantly, it does not define feminist action narrowly, but opens up new avenues for feminist expression.

2.3.4. Complicating the split: personal/political?

Beyond empirical research that looks at either one engagement or the other, new research suggests that feminist action is not as easily 'political' or 'personal' as is suggested by earlier works.⁷

Ervin (2006) complicates the neat distinction between second wave (formal politics) and third wave feminist engagement. She writes about teaching feminist activism (which is one of the methods Sowards and Renegar point to as an example of the third wave evolution). Ervin's (2006) experiences blur the distinction of the formal and the informal, and it is hard to say

⁷ I suggest the term 'personal/political' because a complication of the personal-political binary necessitates a new term that represents both.

where her particular engagement falls. Teaching feminism has always been a contested field: some view it as teachers imposing their particular political standpoints on students; others view it as retaining an important link between scholarship and movement (Ervin, 2006). Some theorists who are in favour of activism being taught in university classrooms caution against potential depoliticisation in such settings (Baumgardener and Richards, cited in Ervin, 2006). With this in mind, Ervin (2006) set out to teach her 'Introduction to Women's Studies' course. Her course included both reading and writing assignments as well as practical exercises, such as analysing the discourses in teen romance books (Ervin, 2006). Ervin (2006) engaged her students in dialogue about engagement strategies, and their varied effectiveness. On reflection, she points out that teaching activism of the transgressive kind without undermining or diminishing some of the radicalism is almost impossible (Ervin, 2006). In addition, Ervin (2006) suggests that activist teachers will be open to the resistance of students, some of whom may not be ready to face the political implications of such courses. Students may use the suspicion and critical skills such courses teach to criticise the ideas offered in the courses (Ervin, 2006). Ervin's documentation of her teaching experiences complicate the notion of feminist engagement being split into two main categories: she demonstrates the way in which the formal (university environment) can be a site for informal, radical engagement.

Further complicating the second/third wave divide is Berkowitz (2003) who looks at the Women in Black movement. The Women in Black movement began as a response of some concerned Jewish women from various nations to the Israel-Palestine conflict (Berkowitz, 2003). Berkowitz (2003) poses the question of whether or not the Women in Black can stand as an example for global feminism that escapes the tendency for global feminist movements to essentialise women and their experiences. In order to answer this, Berkowitz (*ibid.*) suggests a focus on the underlying discourse used by the Women in Black. According to feminist standpoint theory, an analysis of language allows access into the positions informing feminist action, as standpoints are not static and pre-discursive (Berkowitz, 2003). Critical rhetorical analysis of language examines the relationship between language use and power (*ibid.*). Berkowitz (2003) uses both these theoretical frameworks as the foundation for her analysis of Women in Black. Through the analysis of Women in Black's flyers and interviews with participating members, Berkowitz (2003) concludes that if a traditional understanding of

success is imposed, then the Women in Black's success as a global feminist movement is undetermined. However, amongst Jewish constituents, the organisation has raised awareness about the nuances of the conflict and how it affects women, and on an international level, they have been able to encourage women to form their own protest groups (Berkowitz, 2003). Whilst the Women in Black are successful in globalising their dissent without essentialising the experiences of the women they are concerned for, Berkowitz (2003) finds that dominant ideologies are powerful and hard to undermine. Berkowitz (*ibid.*) suggests that even though the locations that the Women in Black speak from are present in their language, they are capable of speaking about and for different locations without being oppressive. Berkowitz (2003, P. 98) says,

Feminist scholars and activists need not be afraid of speaking for others and with others in non-essentialising ways. 'Ultimately the possibility of speaking for others determines feminism's political effectiveness (Darling-Wolf, 1998, p. 417)' particularly when we do it in a manner that recognises that we speak from our own historical and cultural contexts.

In demonstrating this, Berkowitz (2003) says, Women in Black provide a model for feminist engagement at a local and international level. Berkowitz (2003) thus challenges the implication that a movement can only be local (third wave) or global (second wave) but never both at once.

2.3.5. Complicating the split: Postcolonial, African feminist action

It is my contention that, to a certain extent, the characteristics of African feminisms I outlined in 2.2.3 also complicate the split between personal and political that is espoused in traditional, 'mainstream' narratives of feminisms. Mama (in Salo & Mama, 2001) makes the argument that feminisms in African contexts that are struggling with economic and social inequality, as they transition into autonomous democracies, feminisms on all fronts, 'formal' and otherwise are developing at the same pace and need each other. In other words, African feminisms cannot easily separate formal engagement from activism.

Hassim (2004) argues that the transition to democracy in South Africa has meant fundamental changes in organisations that constitute the country's civil society. Where such organisations were formerly positioned in opposition to the (Apartheid) state, the post-

Apartheid state is an ally, and engagements with this state are collaborative. The women's movement in South Africa has a historical alliance with the entities that constitute the current state. In post-Apartheid South Africa, one of the lasting consequences of the transitional period was the emphasis of women's organisations on the issue of inclusion, and a slow marginalisation of the politics of transformation (Hassim, 2004, p. 10). Women's movements in South Africa, because of their role and historical ties to the post-Apartheid state, are faced with the difficult task of incorporating both *inclusionary* and *transformative* tactics into their *modus operandi*. They are both formal in that they collaborate and cooperate with state, and assist actively in building the nation state they took part in fighting for, and they are also radical in that they actively wish to transform the roots of the expressions of patriarchy that still plague South African society (Hassim, 2004).

What then does the movement look like in terms of feminist action? De Nobrega (2009) explores this by looking at the movement's approach to domestic violence. Using an analysis of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 (DVA), de Nobrega explores the relationship between feminist movement and state apparatuses in South Africa. The relationship formed between the movement and the current state is behind the movement's mixture of inclusionary and transformative approaches to the issues facing women, such as gender-based violence (Hassim, 2006 in de Nobrega, 2009). For domestic violence, in particular, this has meant approaching the issue using bureaucratic, legislative state apparatuses, the result being the DVA. De Nobrega (2009) argues that such approaches though they may seem the most useful in addressing such issues may depoliticise issues specifically related to gender relations. De Nobrega (2009, p. 46) says,

The DVA was one of the few acts in the 1990s which specifically addressed an aspect of gender-based violence (GBV). Once the act was passed, the monitoring of its implementation (by civil society and the state) took on an almost exclusive formal and bureaucratic framework, in which less and less attention was paid to the political nature of domestic violence and its role in maintaining gendered relations of power. [...]The dominance of liberal approaches to democracy, however, does mean that the primacy of legislation and the disproportionate emphasis on its potential impact results in less focus on deeper structural issues related to power and identity. Gender equality and eradicating GBV have become technical concerns requiring technical solutions, rather than political

ones. This discourse has limited potential to be transformatory, as it does not challenge the intersection of power and multiple identities which form the basis of domestic violence. Discourses become entrenched in institutional and organisational practices as the conventional mode of reasoning, and impose a self-reinforcing rationality that gives precedence to a particular conception of knowledge.

Thus whilst South African feminist movement is poised to complicate the split between personal and political engagement - because of its unique relationship to state institutions - the agenda of feminist movement is still not at the forefront of any purely formal engagement. De Nobrega's (2009) paper does not take into account the nuance of feminist action in South Africa. It is my contention that feminist action in South Africa position in a civil society that has a complex relationship with the state (Hassim, 2006), the nature of feminist action is itself complex. Whilst part of feminist activism involves lobbying and working with the state to reform state institutions, feminist activism in South Africa also involves engagement with the underlying ideological structures that inform issues facing women. Jane Bennett's (2007) review of feminist activism against gender-based violence since 1987 reveals a complex movement that engages on many levels. Bennett (2007) argues that feminist activism engages on several levels with gender-based violence, from lobbying for legal reform to engaging with the discursive roots of existing gender structures that continue to perpetuate an environment in which gender-based violence can occur.

South Africa, as a postcolonial site of feminist thought and action, embodies the complex factors that make it difficult to engage, as feminists, on either personal or political platforms, and that make describing and characterising the feminist movement as simply one or the other problematic. In order to view feminist action as it is, it is necessary to escape the binaries imposed by the traditional narratives of feminisms and look to the experiences of women like the women Berkowitz (2003) and Bennett (2007) describe. For postcolonial contexts, it is necessary to explore the experiences of feminist activists *outside* of the personal-political binary in order to add to the feminist movements that resist intellectual colonisation by Western and Northern feminisms (Salo & Mama, 2001).

2.4. Conclusion

When sifting through these examples of women around the world participating in and claiming feminism – whether through their music or through campaigning for female candidates – one recognises that in feminist action (much like with feminisms, and women) nothing about fixed except its complex nature. Formal engagement does not necessarily mean distance from a strong informal, personal relationship with feminisms. Despite this, all literature seems to indicate that formal engagement dilutes the truly transformative quality of the feminist engagement. The radical response to this is to resist the temptation to organise within structures, and avoid falling into the trap of ‘master narrative’ feminism. ‘Local’ feminisms that are concerned with organising to challenge structures have emerged as part of this radical response. Yet, some theorists have suggested that it is possible to engage in both modes of action (formal and informal) simultaneously, and that the (battle) line drawn between the second and third wave, and competing interpretations of the slogan ‘the personal is political’ is an artificial one. If it really is artificial, it suggests that the traditional delineation within the movement between the feminist ‘waves’ might need rethinking. It’s not so much that the waves do not exist. Says Katha Pollit (2009)

There is a generational struggle going on – it’s over power. For twenty years, young feminists have complained that older women have kept a lock on organizational feminism. Robin Morgan famously told young women who protested that her generation wasn’t passing the torch to “get your own damned torch. I’m still using mine.” So, tired of being assistants and tokens, they did. Branding themselves as a wave was part of it. By staking their claim on youth, they branded older feminists as, well, old.

The disagreement between waves has more to do with power than is recognised by both activists and academics within the feminist movement. Pollit (*ibid.*) suggests that the actual content of the waves indicates commonalities, and framing them as separate is detrimental to any transformation of gender orders. Ultimately, then, the contribution of an investigation of feminist action – that reveals) less difference, more complexity and commonality – can have serious implications for the movement as a whole, and yield answers to its questions about its identity/ies. For a postcolonial site such as South Africa, such an investigation could serve the postcolonial African feminist project of creating feminisms that speak to the lived experiences of African women.

3. Ways of knowing feminist action

3.1. Introduction

The following chapter will explore in more detail my own research narrative. In the first section I will give a picture of the philosophical framework that informed the nature of this research, and my data collection and analysis methods. I will then tell the story of my relationship with my research site, Rape Crisis, including the details of how I gained access and how I ended up becoming a member of the organisation and how this complicated my research journey. Finally I will give details about how I collected data and the methods I used to analyse it.

3.2. Feminist Epistemology: women's experiences as/and knowledge

Letherby (2003) makes the point that although there has been a proliferation of works on feminist research, these works are not the 'how-to' manuals that other research methods tomes are. It is not necessarily true to say that feminism takes issue with the research *techniques* employed in the social sciences, it is the *epistemological assumptions* informing these techniques that feminist researchers have been intent on working to reform (at least) and refute (at most) (Lather, 2004). That is to say that feminist research writing has focused on some of the debates around the nature of knowing and knowledge and the nature of the researcher's relationship to knowing and knowledge (Letherby, 2003). Feminist researchers recognise the relationship of epistemology to ontology or the assumptions made about the world which the researcher is trying to know (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 1999). For postmodern feminist researchers, the worlds (which research is trying to know) do not exist outside of human experience (*ibid.*). Our world and human reality consists *primarily* of human experience, whether or not that experience is created through interaction with other units (human or otherwise) in our lives. As such, knowing our world must involve the investigation of subjective human experience (*ibid.*). However, because researchers are themselves part of the world, and through their investigation are creating a reality (through their shared experience with and of the researched), feminist researchers also emphasise that knowledge should not be viewed as a static, direct representation of the world (Oakley, 1981). Instead the act of knowing, and of creating knowledge is in itself a part of the experience that forms our reality. Knowledge cannot be assumed to be an objective, *outside*

representation of reality, but a dynamic part of that reality. The upshot of this is that knowledge has very real effects on our reality (Eagle *et al.*, 1999). And knowledge that is created solely by men and from men's experiences serves to perpetuate a patriarchal world order (*ibid.*). Feminist researchers thus put forward that knowledge that does not take women's experiences seriously is incomplete (at best) and harmful to women (at worst) (*ibid.*; Letherby, 2003).

As part of this realisation of knowledge as dynamic, feminists assert that knowledges, because they are not static and do not exist outside of lived realities, should therefore be used to have *positive* effects on realities (Lather, 2004). Patti Lather (2004), for example, advocates critical inquiry, in which we use research to know the world, and to *change* it for the better. Lather (2004, p. 208) argues

Critical inquiry views both method's techniques for gathering empirical evidence's and methodology's the theory of knowledge and the interpretive framework that guide a particular research project's as inescapably tied to issues of power. Methods are assumed to be politically charged [...]

For feminist knowledge-creation, this entails constructing knowledge that is conscious of existing power relationships (between social groups, and between researchers and the groups they research) and the structures that uphold them, and that is geared towards transformative action (Lather, 2004). Feminist research is thus conscious of the importance of women's lived experiences as a foundation for knowledges, and of the necessity of creating transformative knowledges.

3.3. Researching Rape Crisis

Because I subscribe to this feminist epistemology (and ontology), my investigation of Rape Crisis was not an organisational analysis, looking at the organisation as an entity that was separate from the experiences of its members. The experiences of Rape Crisis members and my own experience as a Rape Crisis member were my primary entry point into the life of the organisation and its feminist engagement.

3.3.1. Gaining/access to Rape Crisis: too much of a good thing

My initial idea for this research project was to conduct a critical ethnographic study. I negotiated *formal* access in two stages. The initial stage involved asking for access from the organisation. During the initial stages of the research, when I initially conceptualised my fieldwork as primarily organisational, I had asked for permission to be a part of the organisation as a volunteer intern and conduct interviews with individuals involved in the organisation. However, as my involvement with the organisation shifted in ways I had not foreseen⁸, I had to tread carefully so as not to abuse my dual role as fieldworker and Rape Crisis member (see Murphy, Spiegel & Kinmonth, 1992). I thus limited my use of organisational material to only official material that anyone who is not a member can easily access. With regards to interviews with individuals, such access was negotiated with the individual. It was made clear that the focus of my investigation was on their individual experiences at Rape Crisis, and that I was not taking the interview data as 'official' organisational material. It is important to note, however, that when accessing an organisational community through the stories of individuals, it becomes tricky to separate out the two (Sixsmith, Boneham & Goldring, 2003). However the point that Sixsmith et al. (2003) make is that it is important to note when accessing communities and the individuals who constitute them that the relationship between the two is often an entangled one and one must be cognisant of this when using individual data to gain insight into a community.

One of the more critical concerns that came up as a result of my extensive access was the ethics of what I could reveal and what I could use for my research. Rape Crisis's Internal Training Course (ITC) is an intense experience which almost always fosters strong personal relationships between the trainees. In true feminist pedagogical style (and in the tradition of the consciousness-raising of the Friedan era), much of the course is designed around trainees' personal experiences as women and what we were bringing to the organisation in terms of

⁸ I planned to gain access via an unpaid internship and conduct interviews whilst I was immersed in the field, Rape Crisis. On Morgan's advice, however, I put my name down for Rape Crisis's famous Internal Training Course (ITC). After submitting an electronic application and going through two rounds of interviewing, I was selected to take part in the course and train as a volunteer counsellor. This meant that I ended up spending a significant amount of time at Rape Crisis and around Rape Crisis members (which I had planned on) as a trainee (which I had not bargained on).

our emotional and any other resources. As such, I know a lot of deeply personal things about fellow trainees, and they know the same kinds of things about me. To betray promises I made to myself and to the women who took the course with me (and were not participants in my research) is not an option. Thus to protect the personal content of the ITC, much of my description of my experiences in the course will draw mostly on "official" course material, and not on any of the content specific to the experiences I shared with fellow trainees who I took the course with. I might draw on my own personal journey of becoming a Rape Crisis member, but in order to respect the course and the women who took it with me, I cannot and will not reveal anything more than that were the course is concerned.

In order to organise my data for the purposes of the argument made in this dissertation (and to minimise my sense of being overwhelmed), particular sets of my Rape Crisis experience will be used as data. The interviews I conducted are the most straightforward and (in some ways) unlimited data. Rape Crisis's public profile is another data set: this includes Rape Crisis's information that is accessible to most members of the public, that is, their website, their position documents, and their annual reports and so on.⁹ By limiting my data to include only these sets of my Rape Crisis experience, I was able to somewhat manage my data and organise it to fit into the scope of this dissertation. The data sets that I picked also limit this dissertation to drawing on parts of my Rape Crisis experience that do not infringe on the privacy of the members I interact with in the organisation, or disrespect the incredible generosity the women of Rape Crisis have shown me by letting me into their lives and into the organisation.

⁹ So as to not confuse data and literature, I have not referenced these documents formally in the text. Instead, I refer by name to the documents I am citing at certain points in the dissertation, and have provided complete list of Rape Crisis documents used in Appendix D.

3.3.2. Research participants

In order to stay within the boundaries I set for myself as to what counted as data, the primary criteria I used when deciding on my sample was that research participants¹⁰ could not be anyone who I was training with. Another key consideration was that I needed to speak to women who represented as much of the Rape Crisis experience as possible. As such, I spoke to women from all three offices (Athlone, Khayelitsha and Observatory); women who were part of the initial group of women who founded the organisation; women who had been a part of the organisation more recently but had left; and women who are currently members of the organisation. Below are tables with the profiles of the women I interviewed, according to the key sampling considerations:

¹⁰ In her reflection on her interviews, Oakley (1981) writes about how her interviews often went beyond the rather rigid boundaries laid out by traditional interviewing conventions. She cautions against viewing the interviews as the formations of friendships though: instead, she says, “these signs of interviewees’ involvement indicated their acceptance of the goals of the research project rather than any desire to feel themselves participating in a personal relationship with me” (Oakley, 1981, p. 46). This conceptualisation of interviewees as buying into the political premise of a research project is a radical one for me. I have heard of research ‘participants’, which I have always assumed is a post-modern, radical turn against that hated term ‘research subjects’. I have also heard of informants who are, rather than being people from whom we gather data, are people who give us information (as the name suggests) about particular (research) contexts. The terms ‘respondent’ and ‘interviewee’ represent the most politically neutral of identities for the people formerly known as subjects: whilst they do not cast the people one interviews or surveys as passive subjects, these terms do not confer as much agency as the terms ‘participant’ and ‘informant’. In my dealing with my transcripts, and my research, I have interchangeably called the women I interviewed ‘participants’, ‘informants’ and ‘respondents’. I toyed with the idea (at my boyfriend’s suggestion) of calling them informants, because of the information they were giving me about Rape Crisis but as I read Oakley’s (1981) piece I realised that there were places in my interviews where they were participants: they bought into the political principles behind my research (broadly, feminism) and on that level were participating as agents. At some points, they were respondents, responding to questions about feminism, and how it works in their lives. So my interviewees are not one of the labels but all of them it seems. Just as Oakley (1981) found it impossible to adhere to the traditional conventions for social science interviewing, I find it difficult to characterise the women I spoke to as just one thing in the context of my interviews with them. I intend to speak of them, interchangeably, as all of the above labels (except, of course, as subjects).

Athlone	Khayelitsha	Observatory
2	1	7

Table 2: Interviewee profile by office

Founding member	Part of Rape Crisis in the last five years but left	Part of Rape Crisis for the last five years and currently a member
1	2	7

Table 3: Interviewee profile by time spent at Rape Crisis

–Raceø matters. South Africa has in the last fifteen years been emerging from a system of racial classification that governed and organised legal, social, political and economic life for the people of this country (Erasmus, 2007; Motsei, 2007). Formal apartheid is gone, the previously banned African National Congress has just begun a fourth term in power, –raceø no longer formally determines the trajectory of oneø life. In spite of this, the effects of centuries-long formalised racism are being felt (and might be felt for a long time to come (Motsei, 2007)) and, informally, –raceø still says a great deal about the opportunities one has access to in this country. –Raceø is not a biological category but years of having it treated as such (and having different –racesø treated as separate species) have turned it into a political and social reality and this has widespread implications for the lives of South Africans. Rape Crisis is no exception, and, as shall become evident in following chapters, –raceø matters at Rape Crisis. For this reason, it was necessary for me to interview members from at least the main –raceø groups represented in Cape Town. These classifications are based on the racial groupings entrenched through Apartheid classification systems (Erasmus, 2007).

Black	White	Coloured
3	4	3

Table 4: Interviewee profile by ‘race’

The complex specifications for my sample (–raceø office and time period) meant that my sampling had to be purposive: this means that each participant was selected carefully because of the perspective they were likely to bring to the project (Durrheim, 1999).

3.3.3. Data collection

Interviews

The primary data collection technique was interviewing. My interviews were open-ended. Whilst I drew up a detailed interview schedule based on my research question (see Appendix C), within the interviews themselves, I allowed my participants responses to guide the direction of the interview. I am not implying that the open-ended nature of my interviews made them conversations, however. Whilst I allowed the interview content to emerge from what came up in my participants responses, there was a definite framework shaping our exchanges. Thus my interviews were not pseudo-conversations (see Oakley, 1981) but rather limited (or targeted, or guided) exchanges that give me some insight into particular moments in these women's feminism, and activism (Hollway and Jefferson, 2001).

It is necessary to explain the narrative approach to interviewing. Narrative interviewing involves asking participants for their *whole* story, as opposed to specific parts of their story (Elliot, 2005). Narratives are the stories which people tell about themselves or about parts of themselves (Frank, 1995; Elliot, 2005). Narratives are an organising tool with which we pull together the disparate events in our lives to form a whole that gives meaning and import to such events (*ibid.*). Because feminism is based on the principle that political awareness and action stems from one's personal story, narratives were very important in my investigation of the feminism of the Rape Crisis women I interviewed. The first set of questions used for each interviews thus attempted to tease out the key tenets of each woman's personal narrative, and how her feminism framed her narrative (see Appendix C).

Because I was conducting these interviews as I became a member of Rape Crisis, I had the interesting experience of being present as both a researcher and a fellow member as I conducted my interviews. This becomes significant if one considers Devault's (1990) argument about the limits of language when it comes to investigating women's experiences. Devault (1990) suggests that as a woman and specifically as a woman speaking to other women and traditional interview conventions, with respect to their dependence of words as a way of accessing women's life worlds, fail me (and other women researchers). She uses

feminist thinking on the way in which language essentially fails to do justice to women's stories. Devault (1990, p. 97) says,

If words often do not quite fit, then women who want to talk of their experiences must "translate," either saying things that are not quite right, or working at using the language in non-standard ways. To some extent, this kind of problem must exist for everyone: language can never fit perfectly with individual experience. My claim, however, is that the problems of what we might call linguistic incongruence must be greater for some groups than for others. Research on gender differences in speech provides some support for this claim, suggesting that, in at least some contexts, women face particular difficulties of speech.

Devault (1990) makes the case, however, that women are not passive victims of language's failure to capture their experiences: even though it restricts the ways in which we describe our lives and our experiences, we find ways to use language, even when it is at its most tyrannical. If viewed from this lens, the development of a shared Rape Crisis language with my participants was a response to the limitations of language with respect to adequately describing and voicing women's lives. The interviews thus constitute a negotiated negotiation (so to speak) of language: if looked at from Devault's perspective my interviews are me and my interviewees using a less than ideal medium to discuss their life worlds, their identities but negotiating our way through this medium using some of the shared assumptions we carry as feminists, and Rape Crisis members.

Critical ethnography

My involvement in Rape Crisis as I became a member undoubtedly became a part of my research experience. I approached the use of my own experiences in the field from a critical ethnographic perspective. Critical ethnography holds the same epistemological premise that feminist researchers hold: the act of knowing reality changes the reality we are trying to know. It is the performance of a critical, political worldview (Madison, 2005). Therefore being a part of Rape Crisis whilst trying to understand the organisation and its feminist engagement with sexual violence in Cape Town is an essential part of my research. Throughout this research journey, I have kept (though not entirely faithfully) a research journal. I must stress, however, that this journal was not a detailed field journal: rather it was a personal notebook in which I wrote down anything I felt was worth writing down, from my fears about the likelihood of ever completing this thesis to bits of advice from my supervisor.

Excerpts of this journal have been included as part of my data in order to give a fuller picture of my time at Rape Crisis and the outcomes of my research there.

Rape Crisis's identity in print

Rape Crisis official literature is a key part of my investigation into the organisation. In order to provide a historical and social context for my study, I have drawn on the literature provided in Rape Crisis documents. There is a necessary distinction that must be drawn between the two types of documents I have used to provide some context. The first set of documents I have used are the documents included in Rape Crisis's public profile. These are documents that Rape Crisis widely distributes and that are (for the most part) readily available to members of the public who want to get an initial idea of what Rape Crisis is, and what they do. The majority of these documents are available on the organisation's website, and through the organisation's marketing staff. The second set of documents is comprised of documents that I had access to in my capacity as a Rape Crisis member. These include Rape Crisis's official organisational history, selected policy documents and some of the material that informs Rape Crisis's practice in their different projects. Rather than conducting a separate analysis of the Rape Crisis texts, I have used this literature to consolidate my analysis.

3.3.4. Data analysis

Organising my data into this the argument made in this thesis was a difficult process. At the beginning of the analysis I was faced with what seemed like reams worth of transcripts, endless journal entries and Rape Crisis literature. The process of qualitative analysis is essentially a process of extracting the significant from information gathered through interaction with the researched field (Hollway & Jefferson, 2001). What is 'significant' is determined by the theoretical lens one is using to look at the data, and the question one is trying to answer (*ibid.*). But what does this look like in practice, and more specifically, what did this look like for my research?

Using grounded theory as a starting point

Hollway and Jefferson (2001, p. 68) write that, "Faced with a mass of unstructured data, the urge of any researcher is understandably to break these down using some kind of system. The most common system is the code and retrieve system". This was a key starting point for me. The process of coding comes from the grounded theory tradition. The basic principle of grounded theory is that theory (or at the very least theory that comes from empirical work) needs to be *grounded* in the data from which it comes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 cited in Tesch, 1992).¹¹ Thus an analysis that uses grounded theory entails various readings of the data (Tesch, 1992). In a sense, this kind of analysis is a reduction of the data into fewer units. At the start of the analysis, one has hundreds (or more) pages of data, and by the end, these pages are highlighted and flagged and grouped into concrete groups of related data. And so it was with my data.

There are, however, variations of the grounded theory method. For my research, I used the worked example by de Wet and Erasmus (2005). De Wet and Erasmus (*ibid.*) address the question of rigour within the social sciences; their aim is to demonstrate systematic qualitative data analysis. The clarity they provide about steps taken in their use of grounded theory was helpful and informed my own analysis process. The first step was a close reading of the data (de Wet & Erasmus, 2005). This meant reading my transcripts and making initial notes on points of interest, and noting points that might form key parts of my argument. During the transcription process, I was primarily concerned with completion, and while I *noticed* some of the interesting aspects of my interviews, I did not *note* anything. Thus coming back to my transcripts and noting the things I had noticed before was an illuminating

¹¹ I feel it is necessary to explain here that my use of grounded theory methods does not come from an acceptance of the epistemological premises of grounded theory. Grounded theory is widely criticised for its inherent assumption that theory can emerge purely from the data, without any interference from the researcher's assumptions. However, using grounded theory methods do not mean that I am accepting this assumption, or abdicating my own assumptions! I approach grounded theory from a feminist epistemology. As I highlighted earlier in this chapter, feminist researchers do not discard the *methods* of modern social sciences. Rather, we use these methods from a different understanding of the worlds we are researching and of knowledge. Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) demonstrate how grounded theory conducted from three different epistemological standpoints produces different research products. It is thus possible to remain true to my feminist epistemology whilst using grounded theory.

experience. The next step was first-level coding (*ibid.*). This means that I re-read the transcripts *as well as* the initial notes I had taken in order to discover initial relationships between different parts of the transcripts and group related sections into distinct and, at this stage, labelled codes. The next step was the creation of fine second level codes. Second level codes are the more specific codes that fall under the first level codes (Wengraf, 2001). So, for example, "activism" was one of my first level codes and "therapy as activism" was a second level code that fell underneath the "activism" code. De Wet and Erasmus (2005) state that second level coding involves drawing on the theoretical framework and research questions informing the research to identify more complex patterns (within patterns) and relationships within the data. This level of coding thus involves applying the theory to the data, as opposed to merely identifying and describing broad relationships within the data (de Wet & Erasmus, 2005). The next step, according to de Wet and Erasmus (2005) worked example, is to generate clusters of findings from the groupings of fine codes created. A cluster of findings is basically a conclusion drawn from the relationship pattern identified between codes. In order to draw conclusions from these relationship patterns I used a form of discourse analysis which I will explain below.

On Discourse Analysis

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p. 154) define discourse analysis as "the act of showing how certain discourses are deployed to achieve particular effects in specific contexts". Discourses are speech acts that inform ideologies, or overarching philosophies that organise our subjectivities (Durrheim, 1997). In other words, this method of analysis (or, rather, this collection of analysis methods) is driven by the understanding that discourse/s inform social orders that place people into social positions, and this in turn, influences social relationships (*ibid.*). Discourse thus arranges the social interactions that make up our reality/ies. This arrangement process is not arbitrary, however. Usually, the social relationships that result from discourse are also ordered according to particular power dynamics (Foucault, 1980). Discourses thus contribute to ideologies that serve particular groups and particular power relations (*ibid.*).

In my search for a how-to manual for feminist discourse analysis, I found Carmen Seibold's (2006) work on women's experiences of midlife and menopause. Seibold (2006) wrote the article in a response to a call for a(n) worked example of discourse analysis for nursing studies. She conducted interviews and collected the journal entries of twenty such women, and began her analysis using grounded theory. Although Seibold's (2006) use of both grounded theory and discourse analysis was accidental and not intentional, as mine was, the combination of both these analysis methods in her study made her study a key text when I was planning my own analysis. Like Seibold (2006), my discourse analysis was informed by Potter and Wetherall (1987). For Potter and Wetherall (*ibid.*), discourse provides a mechanism for the definition of and characterisation of the 'self' or the 'subject'. People use particular speech acts to characterise themselves, and these speech acts are key to the positions people occupy within the social order and the power relationships upheld by these positioning (Potter & Wetherall, 1987). The next step after having identified my clusters of findings using grounded theory, was to examine the major discourses running through these clusters (Seibold, 2006). Based on Potter and Wetherall's (1987) characterisation, *(a) how the women of Rape Crisis positioned themselves as feminists within the context of Rape Crisis; (b) how they positioned themselves as Rape Crisis members within the context of their broader society; (c) how Rape Crisis positions itself through its members as a feminist organisation, and the implications for feminism that can be read from these positioning patterns.*

Writing as method

Madison begins her chapter on writing as a part of the (research-based) performance of critical social theory with this quote from Anne Lamott (1998, cited in Madison, 2005, p. 181):

For me and most of the other writers I know, writing is not rapturous. In fact, the only way I can get anything written at all is to write really, really shitty first drafts...

I can relate to this sentiment. Getting into the mindset where I could sit with my endless notes, mind maps and outlines has been quite a journey (and a battle that I have not quite won). So when I found the chapter in Madison's (2005) book that not only shared other stories of the difficulties of synthesising months (and, for other unlucky souls, years) of data

collection and analysis into something written, but also spoke about writing as a method (like any other, that one must struggle with until they can find something that works), I was somewhat encouraged. I am including this account of my writing method, because it has formed a part of this research process, and is just as important an account as the accounts of data collection and analysis.

Madison (2005, p. 193) says,

Performative writing emphasizes the relational dynamic between writer and reader in a spirit of caring about the dialogic and communicative quality of the connection. This does not mean that the performative writer must repress his or her own unique voice or soul to appease the reader. Nor does it mean that the performative writer *only* writes *for* the reader, or that every word or idea is focused on what the reader might think, but we do not fixate on our own individuality either. Performative writing as a relational act means that we do not write purely as individuals.

This acknowledgement of others in my writing process has aided an acknowledgement of my own self - in as much as I am mining the words of my participants for constructions of their Rape Crisis selves, I must acknowledge that I am also constructing my own -self through this dissertation. That acknowledgement has taken the form of a dissertation written in a reflexive style. Throughout the process of writing this dissertation I have attempted to be as honest about my research journey as possible. In addition to acknowledging others and self, performative writing does not merely represent but also enacts (Madison, 2005). For my writing, this means that I have maintained a keen awareness of how the process of my research and my writing has been an enactment of my feminism. As I stated in my proposal, I am approaching the end (before the next beginning) of my academic career and I fully intended this research to embody the soul-searching that has come with that end: this dissertation thus is a performance of my search for feminism that lies beyond the academy, and a search of new ways to be a feminist (that is, ways that are not only tied to my university).

A note on theory creation

I am hesitant to proclaim that this dissertation (limited as it is in its scope) is theory. Whilst grounded theory's aim is to create theory from data (de Wet & Erasmus, 2004), this

dissertation is attempting to suggest a new way of creating theory as suggested by a case study of feminist activism. My aim in this research paper is to show how feminist activism defies the frameworks of thinking about such action that we, as a movement, have long held without question.

3.4. Power and method: reflexive considerations

Whilst this dissertation will contain considerations of self within this work, it is necessary to give special attention to issues around power in the process of conducting this research. For the most part, my interaction with the field and the women within it was mediated by my position as a Rape Crisis member.¹² I am a young, black, middle-class, university educated woman, all of which played a role in my interaction with the field. I am hesitant to make the assumption that my class position (and concomitant *habitus*¹³) intimidated any of the participants who occupied different class positions. But it is fair to say that my body, my use of language, the fact that I was engaging with many of these women as a university-based researcher represents a particular class position and this put me in a position of relative power in my interactions with the working class women in the field. In all my interactions with participants, I remained cognisant of the potential for my class position to influence power dynamics and I paid careful attention to adhering to the ethical principles of **autonomy** (that is, respecting the individual and/or institutional autonomy of the research participants at all stages of the research process), **nonmaleficence** (that is, ensuring that I did no harm to participants) and **beneficence** (that is, making sure that my research would serve the field ó in this case, Rape Crisis ó in some way¹⁴) (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). Whilst these considerations do not mean that my class position and the power it afforded me was

¹² And being a newer Rape Crisis member than all the women I interviewed, and being a 'rookie' within the field meant that more often than not, it is I who felt that I was the relative 'subordinate'. My lack of the knowledge of operations and the organisation's past meant that a good deal of my interaction with the field involved me learning about the organisation.

¹³ Habitus being the ways of being that are a result of how my class positions me in societal structures (Yates, 1989).

¹⁴ More specifically, I intend to share my findings with the organisation in the form of discussion documents. I also intend to share my research in other forms should Rape Crisis ask me to. For example, I recently gave a talk to a group of visiting students who were interested in hearing about the history and operational functioning of the organisation.

eliminated, they ensure that I was ó and am ó constantly aware of the structural and social factors that colour my interactions and, most importantly, my interpretation of the field.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has explained the epistemological assumptions that inform my methods. From a feminist understanding of worlds and of ways of knowing worlds, I used methods (namely interviewing, and looking at Rape Crisis internal and public literature) that would help me record the experiences of the women of Rape Crisis. To organise my data, I employed grounded theory, and to analyse it, I used Potter and Wetherall's version of discourse analysis. These methods have been carefully chosen with a view to later contributing to feminist ways of knowing feminist activism.

University of Cape Town

II
Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

University of Cape Town

4. Introducing Rape Crisis

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a description of the context and history of Rape Crisis, and the structures put in place to work within this context. Drawing on interview data, I will discuss the women of Rape Crisis. I will argue that whilst the structure of Rape Crisis, and its history, form the endoskeleton of the organisation, the women of the organisation are *the body* of the organisation and Rape Crisis is sustained by the women who (wo)man¹⁵ it.

4.2. Origins

Rape Crisis was started by Anne Maynes, a Capetonian. After being gang raped in 1973, Maynes found herself struggling to recover from the attack, with very little resources available to her. Maynes found some comfort in a book published in the United States and given to her by a friend. In *Rape – the first sourcebook for women*, Maynes found a text that could help explain what she was going through, and answers to the questions she had about what had happened to her. The realisation that she was not alone awakened in Maynes a desire to reach out to other women in her position. In 1975, she travelled to New York to tour the Rape Crisis centres that her book had told her about, and to meet the New York Radical Feminists behind the book and centres. During that visit, Maynes soaked up as much knowledge as she could, she read, spoke to people, and attended a United Nations conference in Mexico City commemorating the International Women's Year. Although she is not explicit about what feminism meant to her before, after this journey, she felt that she had learnt so much about feminism and women's issues in such a short time. She returned to Cape Town, and once again felt isolated. Maynes did not know any feminists in her city, let alone anyone who was interested in working with issues around rape. She was not deterred, and determined to do something, she recruited help. Through a women's centre, Maynes found women who were interested in starting a Rape Crisis centre. The group's first move was to begin a *de facto* awareness campaign. They began distributing flyers based on some

¹⁵ Whilst I recognise that the word 'man' is not necessarily sexist in and of itself, the word has come to symbolise certain social structures that privilege the male experience as normative. For this reason, I use the term '(wo)man'.

of the material Maynes had been introduced to whilst in New York and Mexico. Shortly after they began this campaign, they began to get calls from rape survivors. As is the way with such initiatives, the women realised that in order to reach more survivors, they needed funding, and in order to get funding, they needed to formalise their organisation. Since they were mainly offering services to survivors, their first choice was to formalise the counselling service they offered. Thus, the Rape Crisis Internal Training Course was born. One of the women involved designed a counselling training course, and this became one of the flagship projects of Rape Crisis. At this point Rape Crisis had begun to attract some attention, and more volunteers, including student volunteers from the University of Cape Town (UCT). As South Africa became more and more troubled, the newly formalised Rape Crisis began a tentative relationship with the United Democratic Front (UDF). In addition to this partnership, Rape Crisis became a resource centre for women who wanted to form Rape Crisis centres around the country. Rape Crisis also became involved in national conferences with other organisations working with women and gender-based violence. Maynes ends her story thus

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust is the oldest surviving of those organisations founded around that time which is still in existence, including New York, London and Toronto. I believe that the work done by the other organisations has changed society and the social services to such an extent that their specialised work is no longer necessary. Hopefully this will happen in South Africa one day. Meanwhile, may the work done by Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust go from strength to strength.

4.3. Rape Crisis today: structures and operations

The Rape Crisis of today carries the legacy of Anne Maynes and the other women involved in starting the organisation. It is, however, a very different organisation to the Rape Crisis of the mid-seventies. The formalisation of Rape Crisis happened over a steady period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. In 1999, the organisation registered as a trust.¹⁶ The following diagram summarises the current structure of Rape Crisis:

¹⁶ A legal label that formalises the management of the organisation's assets.

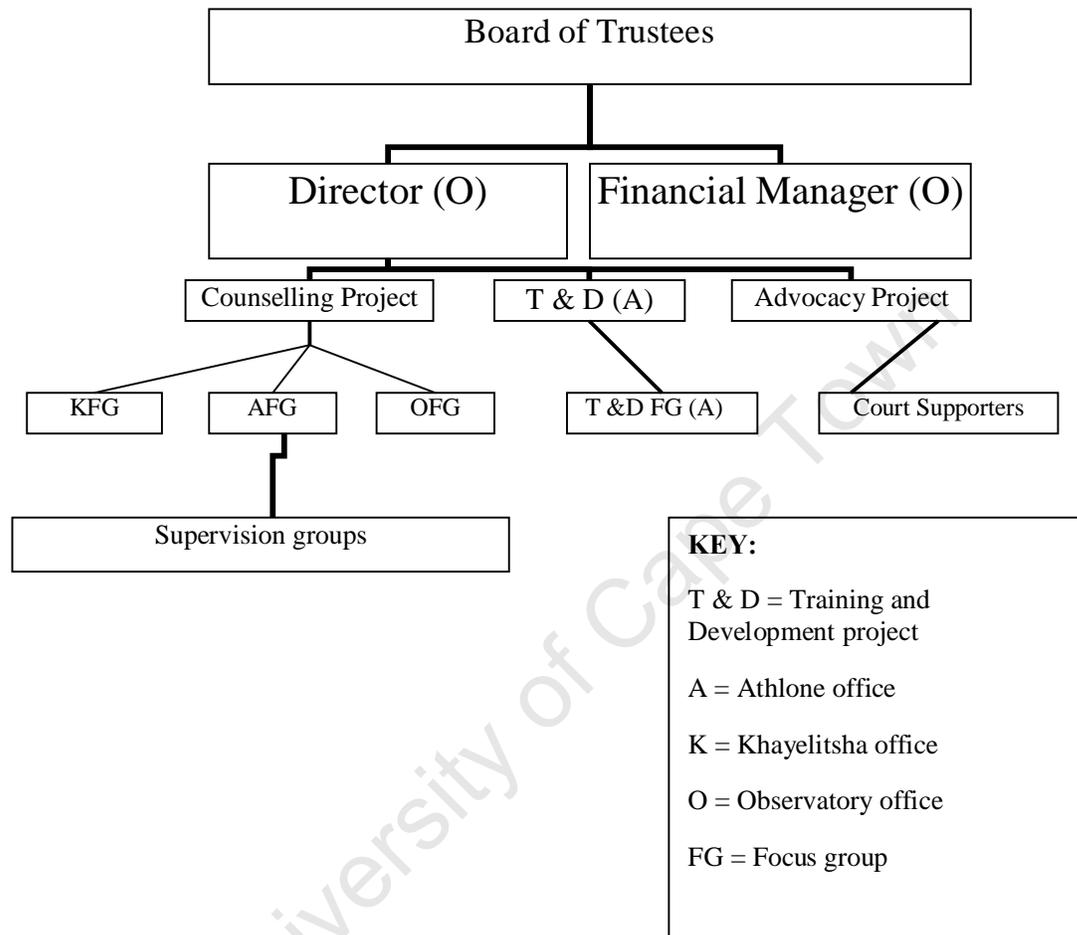


Figure 1: Structure and operations of Rape Crisis

The organisation is organised around three main projects. The **counselling project** offers free, short-term counselling services for rape survivors over the age of fourteen. Counselling happens at all three offices, and each office has a counselling co-ordinator and its own set of counselling volunteers. Within the counselling volunteers there are several *ad hoc supervision groups* (spaces within which counsellors can discuss cases and get assistance). The **training and development project** offers training to groups on gender-based violence issues from rape to sexual harassment. This project and its volunteers are based at the Athlone office. The **advocacy project** offers assistance to rape survivors as

their cases move through the criminal justice system. This assistance is in the form of court support (a system where Rape Crisis volunteers stationed at various courts talk rape survivors through trial procedures) and pre-trial consultations. The advocacy project produces research that contributes into input into state-level discussions on gender-based violence.¹⁷ Each project has a **piece worker**, a temporary staff member responsible for the administrative tasks involved in the project.

4.4. Rape Crisis today: members

4.4.1. (A feminist) culture of social responsibility

One of the questions I asked my participants was, inevitably, "What is feminism?" In some cases, I got direct, borderline academic answers. For example, E told me

[...] when I talk about feminism, it really is, like a ó it's a very complex thing, it's about women in relationship to power, and when I say women, they're not identified solely by their gender, but it's their point of departure for looking at how, uh, people's um, options, ideas, uh, access to stuff is either limited or enabled by their gender in collaboration with race, sexuality, class, all of those things, so ja.

For many of these women, though, their enactment of feminism is tied to a greater personal culture of social responsibility. Most of these women began the story of their activism by telling me about other ways in which they were involved in their communities. B, for example, told me

I'm a community person, you know, that's why I got involved in Rape Crisis, because, um, growing up in my community, I saw such a lot of stuff [...] so ja. So that's why the feminist thing, and women, children ó it's my passion.

The women of Rape Crisis thus frame their involvement in feminism ó and at Rape Crisis ó as part of a bigger context of social involvement. A useful way of explaining this link between general activism at Rape Crisis and social awareness is provided by Doug McAdam's (1994) work. McAdam (*ibid.*) suggests a framework of analysis that looks at social movements as *cultures*. Instead of viewing them as either purely structural

¹⁷ The most recent success of this advocacy project is the passing into law of the revolutionary Sexual Offences Act No. 32 of 2007: this Act contains a definition of rape that includes male victims; all forms of sexual penetration, including oral sex; and that addresses the vulnerabilities of particular groups (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2007).

organizations, or as expressions of pathology and irrationality, they should be seen as important cultural expressions. If the involvement of these women at Rape Crisis is seen as part of a broader trend of social awareness, then their feminist activism can be seen as a particular expression of a more general culture of social responsibility.

The shaping of cultural expressions depends on key factors that McAdam (1994) identifies. In order for a social movement to develop, it must offer opportunities for cultural expansion (McAdam, 1994). He identifies four kinds of cultural expansion. The first is the realization of the existence of *ideological and/or cultural contradictions*. An example of this is J's realization that "there were injustices and I started realising that the people who were giving me the information to grow as a person, and even as a little person umí I realised that they weren't giving me the right information". The next kind of expansion is the experience of *sudden[ly] imposed grievances*. L provides us with an interesting example of this. Here she talks about what I came to know as her "defensive feminism":

I am a feminist when it's necessary to be a feminist. I'm a feminist when it's necessary [í] I think it's not necessary when people do not have an issue with ó with who you are as a person. If people um deal with people and not necessarily genders and sex, then feminism is not necessary. But the minute you ó you get people as ag, ja, it's a woman, ag, you know, um, and then feminism is necessary and that's why we have so many feminists um around in the world, it's because of thatí

L's moment of cultural expansion (expressing her social awareness through feminism) occurs when people treat her differently because she is a woman. For her, this is an unfair set of events - one that triggers her particular feminism. *Dramatisations of system vulnerability* also encourage cultural expansion: when A returned from her trip overseas, she was immediately confronted with the violent effects and the weaknesses of apartheid. She says

Then in 1976, I decided to come back, and I came back about three weeks before Soweto erupted, and that was it for me and that's when I joined the anti-apartheid struggle, and that was ó ja, so that was the journey that I went. And then I became, when I was back here, in the late 70s, I became part of the women's movement that started at UCT campus [í]

Lastly, McAdam (1994) says the *availability of master frames* is important for cultural expansion to occur. E demonstrates this clearly. She told me how some of the books her parents had had lying around and the material she encountered in Sociology classes at university provided her with the master narratives that enabled her cultural expression:

[í]so having those ideas kind of in the background for me as my teenage stuff, like getting to university [...] started putting all of that stuff that was there in the background into concrete theory, into, um, into words and into language for me in a way that was really useful, and really, from that point in time, all the courses that I took had to do with gender, gender-related stuff, gender-related history, uh, [...] and then I got to the end of my university career, registered for an Honours Gender Studies through UNISA, and was like, well this is all very well to think about it, but it doesn't - you can't have it as an intellectual idea, you actually need to *do* something [í]

Read from the framework provided by McAdam (1994), the women of Rape Crisis come to this work from moments of cultural expansion.

The central premise of McAdam's (1994) framework is that political movement cannot be separated from considerations of cultural development. For him, an analysis of the structural processes that prompt the development of social movements need to include an analysis of the processes of interpretation and meaning assignment that also take place (McAdam, 1994). As such, political movement cannot be separate from personal process.

4.4.2. The personal and political for the women of Rape Crisis

The phrase 'the personal is political' has become something of a truism for (and of) the feminist movement. The principle of explicitly taking from one's personal life a political message and simultaneously recognising that the distinction should be transgressed was a radical one when first proposed (Lee, 2007). It is commonplace now, and feminists take for granted that we understand what it means. I posit that the example of the women of Rape Crisis can open up a new way of understanding the phrase.

A common motif in the stories of the women I spoke to was very personal feminist activist stories. I remember, after my interview with C, telling my partner how completely awed I was by these women's stories of resilience in situations that were unimaginable to me. What struck me as I was reading C's transcript was that her story of personal resilience was a direct response to my questions about feminism. In this excerpt of our interview, I ask C about her feminism, and she answers by telling me about the stigma she faces following her very difficult, life-changing decision to divorce her abusive husband fourteen years ago:

R: Ok. Um...and do you identify as, as a feminist?

C: Um...yes. There's nothing wrong with a feminist, and uh (long pause) uh, uh, um, I know sometimes there, when you, uh, when you are divorced, it get attached to something, your divorce, especially when, um, when you got friends, when you were married, you had a lot of friends that were married, but then that's all of a sudden that changed because now people see you as a divorced woman, and you're actually a threat to your friends and a *lot* of people's when you're sitting in a circle, and a lot of people immediately if you say you are divorced, and they got husbands or boyfriends, then you are actually a threat to them.

The same thing happened with B. I asked her about her feminist identity and she told me the story of how she stood up to her father, at great cost:

R: (Laughter). Ok, and what is feminism for you, what does being a feminist mean to you, for you?

B: Ok. For me, umí I forgot to tell you this's I have, I'm one of ten children, I've got seven brothers [...] so my father, he believed that men do not work in the house. You know, women shouldn't have to be educated, my father was like very well educated, he was a minister, he was a pastor, you know, so he believed that, and, well we always had this argument about why my brothers couldn't do the washing up, couldn't sweep and's you know, we had to work and then being in the family, as a child, you allow it, until a certain time, you know, I was like fourteen, fifteen and I just rebelled, I said, this is nonsense, I'm not gonna do it, and the way my father ran the church, actually, you know, um, only men on the board, no women, men is allowed to do this, and bla bla bla, you know, those type of things [...] My father actually chucked me out of the church. He said to me, I don't want you to put your foot in the church anymore, you're my daughter, you're a disgrace to me, bla bla bla, so we had a *huge* argument, a *huge* fight, and that was the final year, I was in matric, and I could remember that it was very tough, he wouldn't speak to me, you know, for the whole year, and next year, I should've got money from him to go study further, and he refused to help me. So it was very bad, very very bad. [í]

I should explain that in linking their feminism to their personal lives, C and B were not alone. *All* of the women I interviewed did this. What makes C and B unique is the *direct* response to my question about feminism with a story of personal resilience against a male figure in their lives. What is interesting is that, for both women, this did not have the feel of a subject-change: they were telling me about feminism by demonstrating how they *lived it*.

In this way the women of Rape Crisis are examples of what Lee (2007) argues. Lee's (2007) position is that the discursive distinction between the personal and political should not exist, given that feminism is based on the principle that you cannot have the one without the other. When I ask B about her feminist politics, and she starts talking about standing up to her father, it demonstrates her understanding of these as the same. Having two separate words to

talk about them surely gives the deceptive impression that they are separate. Foster and Matheson (1995) use this premise to explain their concept of *double relative deprivation*. The concept of *relative deprivation* is one that is used by social psychologists to explain collective action (Foster & Matheson, 1995): collective action is explained by an awareness of deprivation; deprivation pushes one into action. Previous arguments have explained action by pinpointing either *egoistic relative deprivation* (the realisation through others' deprivation that one is also deprived) or *collective relative deprivation* (the realisation that one's social group is deprived) (*ibid.*). Foster and Matheson (1995) interviewed young Canadian women involved in a Women's Movement and found that rather than using just one end of the relative deprivation scale to explain these women's activism, their activism was better understood as a combination of both, spurred on by both egoistic and collective relative deprivation. Translated into feminist-speak, Foster and Matheson (*ibid.*) are suggesting a *bricolage* of the personal and the political to understand what drives women into feminist activism. The responses of C and B to my questions about feminism are a discursive performance of this bricolage, or of the personal/political.

This lived transcendence of the personal-political divide is evidenced in the way in which the women of Rape Crisis are enmeshed with their organisation. In the following section, I discuss how the women of Rape Crisis *are* Rape Crisis, so that there isn't a personal and a political, but a synthesis that is manifested in the organisation.

4.5. Introducing Rape Crisis as an enmeshed organisation

It became clear from the interviews I did that Rape Crisis is, in the truest sense, its members. The organisation's foundation is built on the experiences of the women who (wo)man it. The most salient example can be found in Rape Crisis's Internal Training Course. Employing a combination of feminist and Freirean principles, the course is experiential and uses women's experiences as the basis from which to teach counselling and training skills. All of the women I spoke to described the experience of doing the course as a defining moment during their time at Rape Crisis. L told me that,

For me, through the Rape Crisis course, at the end, if I can give one sentence, I think I can say that, I am who I am and I'm proud of it, you know[...] I mean I went to facilitate a course in Kenya, for example, on sexual and gender-based violence, and I could recall things that I did in Rape Crisis course, you know, I could talk about something that worked around Rape Crisis, that's why I will be forever in debt for Rape Crisis, because of that training course, because it wasn't just a training for, um, for the other people, it was [inaudible].

C had a similar experience:

[A]nd then I started my course in 2006...uh, went to personal growth course, which...they actually ask a lot of me, I know you went to personal growth yourself, but in that course, I actually discovered myself. Actually, uh, uh, uh, need to open up a little bit more, talked about my divorce more, talked about my life experiences, and, uh, the personal growth course did *a lot* to me, I learned a lot there [...]

The course sets a foundation for an engagement with the organisation in which one's experiences become the very heart of their involvement with Rape Crisis. The skills one will use in their work with the organisation are learnt through an exploration of one's personal experiences and identities.

This means that for many of these women, their engagements with Rape Crisis are usually long, complex, and for some, never-ending. For, L, who has left Rape Crisis, the organisation is *õso never overõ*. She told me how she carries her Rape Crisis experiences, particularly her training and the connections she made with women she trained with, to other avenues of her life. She even spoke about possibly rejoining Rape Crisis. For women who are still at Rape Crisis, their complex relationships with Rape Crisis manifest themselves in how they are literally seen as the organisation even when they are not *workingõ*. When I asked M about how people react to the fact that she works for Rape Crisis, she told me:

You normally get a recoil, followed by moments of silence, and then a heartfelt story about how the person was raped and so on, or my most recent experience was with this person who was like, well, how do you know if it's a real rape, like where someone gets beaten up, or something, cos if the girl gets drunk and goes around with someone, and sits on their couch, then she *õ* you know, she's asking for it, which is also quite *õ* but a lot of reaction and, uh, reactionary and defensiveness, and sudden feeling that they can tell you anything, whether you're on duty or not, so *õ* let me tell you the horrors of my life cos you already know some horrible stuff.

B also spoke about how she never has a day off from Rape Crisis:

Yes! Actually, you walk in the supermarket, you know, and they just like, [in a whisper] can I talk to you quickly, and then they tell you about a niece, or you know, a nephew that was sexually abused, and they haven't gone for counselling, so you know, all these type of things, but, ja. It could be also, ja ó very on you, but...

But the Rape Crisis identity is not merely a burden to carry. The personal investment of members in Rape Crisis is evident in the ways in which members take changes in the organisation personally. For instance, there was a period in the organisation's history when Rape Crisis dropped the overt mention of feminism from its public profile. M reacted to this badly:

I'm not that kind of girl. Um, if you're dealing with sexual violence and you take feminism out of it, how are you ever going to fix it? It's not possible.

For M, Rape Crisis is so much a part of her identity that her reaction to the removal of feminism is to state vehemently that she is 'not that kind of girl'.

Rape Crisis is thus an *enmeshed* organisation in the way in which its members' personal identities are intertwined and inseparable from the organisation.¹⁸ When members leave the organisation, they carry it with them, it is literally imprinted on their bodies, so that when people see them ó in the supermarket, like B ó they see Rape Crisis, or a space to which they can bring stories of sexual violence. The enmeshment of Rape Crisis further complicates the split between the personal and the political: the political manifestation, Rape Crisis, is literally mapped onto the bodies and personal identities of Rape Crisis women.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced Rape Crisis. The women's stories of joining Rape Crisis reveal that involvement in Rape Crisis can be seen as a cultural expression of a greater, more general social commitment. Viewing involvement in Rape Crisis as a cultural expression aids us in introducing a way of looking at a relationship between the personal and political that places the two as inseparable. The women I interviewed all shared stories of personal

¹⁸ The concept of *enmeshment* is one I have borrowed from family studies, a branch of psychology. It is a term used to describe a family whose individual identities are tied to other members of the family (Barber & Buehler, 1996).

strength that demonstrated political action within the personal realm. This interconnectedness of the personal and political is also expressed in the way the women of Rape Crisis carry the identity of the organisation with their own.

University of Cape Town

5. Enmeshed feminist activism/action at Rape Crisis

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I spent some time establishing the concept of the *personalitical*, (which I introduced in Chapter Three) which describes a state that is beyond the personal and the political, but is an understanding of the two as inexplicable concepts. But what does such an understanding mean for feminist activism? In this chapter, I will provide a detailed picture, using the case of Rape Crisis, of what an enmeshed feminist engagement looks like.

5.2. Freirean pedagogy: Education as social change

For Paulo Freire (2007) knowledge is comprised of a critical engagement with the fabric of one's existence. An education is one that acknowledges this as the nature of knowledge and allows (wo)man's engagement with the world to form the basis of any curriculum; massification focuses on standardisation and attends to the individual as a blank slate (Freire, 2007). Such an education is the only way true social change can be brought about: if an education involves critical engagement with one's life, and one's (social) environment, it opens the way for critical action (*ibid.*).

The Freirean concepts of knowledge and education influence Rape Crisis's approach to pedagogy. The organisation engages with its community, and with gender-based violence, from a feminist standpoint. In order to teach feminisms to the women who come to Rape Crisis, the organisation conceptualises feminisms not as existing outside the women's experiences but (rightly as my interviews with B and C demonstrate) as being based in the women's experiences. The ITC (in which feminisms are introduced) therefore uses very little theoretical material but draws on lived experiences. The first part of the ITC is titled 'personal growth' and explores one's personal history, issues around socialisation, and one's identity as a woman, and as whatever else one might be within the particular contexts she navigates. This then leads into a discussion of the work of Rape Crisis. The problem of rape, the way in which Rape Crisis chooses to approach it (in terms of how they define rape,

and strategise to help survivors), and then, finally, the operational details of what Rape Crisis does.

Rape Crisis's Freirean overtones do not stop there, however. Education is a core part of the work Rape Crisis does, beyond its recruitment of members. It is overtly present as a strategy in Rape Crisis's training and development project. It is also a key strategy for the advocacy project. Advocacy is about equipping rape survivors with knowledge about the criminal justice system and how their rape case will be handled within the system. And although this is not explicitly stated, education plays a key part in Rape Crisis's counselling project. The counselling dossier says

“Counselling” began as survivor-to-survivor communication about the realities of sexual violence. The “knowledge” thus established between women about what did happen for many of us [...] formed both the ground from which to fight rape more effectively in the courts and on the streets and also broke the silence to which survivors had been condemned.

Similarly, A told me

[...] but the thing is that the theory behind our saying that you had to counselling is that your experience, your knowledge about rape had to come from the survivors of rape, and that had to inform your public education programme.

The basis of Rape Crisis's central project is thus *education*. In order to add to the understanding of sexual violence and critically engage with the social problem of rape, Rape Crisis puts itself in rooms with women who have survived rape and talks to them about it. In addition to the counselling space doubling as a knowledge-gathering space, it is also a space in which knowledge is *shared*. Ultimately, Rape Crisis provides what it calls feminist counselling. The governing principle is that their particular brand of counselling is aimed at *empowering* survivors to use the resources available to them ó or to access new resources ó to integrate the trauma they have been through into their narratives. Part of this process involves sharing information with survivors that will help them to cope. The counselling dossier tells volunteer counsellors that

As someone who's learned about things such as Rape Trauma Syndrome in the training (and elsewhere), you do have information that could be invaluable to someone. Don't hesitate to tell her what you know if you think, after hearing her, that it would be useful.

Why is this Freirean approach to knowledge and education important? It is my contention that Rape Crisis's approach to the person's experience and engagement with the world as key to the foundation of a critical engagement with the problem of rape is a key effect of the *enmeshed* nature of the organisation. Because the organisation exists within the experiences of the women who come to it, it follows that the organisation's engagement with its community and the particular problem it focuses on is based in the engagement of its members with the community and the problem.

5.3. Therapy as activism

Feminist therapy is at the centre of Rape Crisis's engagement with rape as a social problem. Feminism and therapy are not immediately reconcilable: in some cases, therapeutic spaces follow a medical model in which a 'problem' is diagnosed by an expert and the expert prescribes something to solve the problem (Brown, 2006). A feminist approach to therapy arises out of a tradition that is critical of this model (Rader & Gilbert, 2005). Instead of approaching the therapeutic space as one in which an expert helps a victim, it uses the therapeutic space to 'empower both women and men by highlighting issues of gender socialization and the extent to which rigid gender roles hinder client growth in the personal and professional realms [...]ö (*ibid.*, p. 427). Rape Crisis uses this framework to create spaces in which survivors of rape can begin to understand their traumas within the context of a gendered, patriarchal society. I argue that the enmeshed nature of Rape Crisis necessitates that therapy is a primary mode of engagement with rape for the organisation.

5.3.1. Issues of space, proximity

Some of the women I interviewed confessed to having felt uncomfortable at the idea of counselling. J said

And I chose the [training and development] route because the counselling just seemed too heavy for me, I wasn't ready for it, I was like phew, no I don't wanna know this sort of thing, not interested, it took me a couple of years to go into counselling [...] the counselling can be quite draining.

E confessed that when she first joined Rape Crisis, she chose to train as part of the training and development project because 'I was probably too scared to counselö. I also had (and

still have) the same fears about counselling. Whilst training and development (and to an extent, advocacy) allows one to engage with rape in more conventional activist settings, counselling brings the reality of rape in the form of survivors' stories, literally, into the chair across from one in a counselling room. As I contemplated becoming a Rape Crisis counsellor, I wrote this in my research journal

[...] what I suspect will be the most difficult to face is the prospect that I will see client after client. Knowing that the world won't change in a year or two. It'll be hard to keep believing in good, in humanity, when faced with evidence of just how ugly people can be to each other. It'll be hard to know my limits, the limits of the counselling office. It'll be hard to see how I'm changing anything, I think. But, then again if I give up, I don't help someone whose life has been torpedoed by rape change their corner of the world...

But however scary the prospect of counselling is, E, J and I, like so many of the women I spoke to, all end up sitting in the counselling room, listening to the stories we didn't think we could deal with. Part of the process of being a member of Rape Crisis involves this process, the process of coming into close proximity with the nature of the social problem. Earlier, I spoke about how the basis of one's engagement with Rape Crisis facilitates the process of becoming Rape Crisis. This process is furthered in the counselling space in which the counsellor comes face to face, as an individual within the Rape Crisis setting, with the problem Rape Crisis exists to face. The counselling space is necessary for the facilitation of Rape Crisis's enmeshed identity (and by extension, the continuation of the organisation) because it brings the counsellor into close physical, emotional proximity with rape, re-emphasising the work they are there to do.

5.3.2. Boundaries: defining selves and traumas

But in as much as therapy creates the counselling space that facilitates the further enmeshment of the organisation and the Rape Crisis member, counselling offers a particular discourse that acts as a safety valve that allows for the enmeshment to continue without threatening the individual identities of Rape Crisis members.

I was struck by how salient the discourse of *boundaries* is at Rape Crisis. In my own experiences as a trainee counsellor, I was advised over and over again to watch my *boundaries*. In one particularly frustrating experience, I found myself receiving a lecture

from a more experienced member after a session with one of my clients about boundaries.¹⁹ In training, in supervision, in debriefing, boundaries stood out as an important Rape Crisis role. C told me

When you counsel, you listen to her [] don't make it your problem, that is your boundary, your first boundary. And you need to set it to see to yourself and say to yourself, that is her walk, that is her space, I need to help her walking that road, step by step [...] I learnt how to set my boundaries is not to take on the clients, uh role.

And in my interview with J, she told me the story of what can happen if one does not watch those boundaries within the counselling space:

Um, I was sitting with a client in a room, and I had just bought my daughter a denim skirt. And she was telling me about the first time she'd ever been raped, um, I think she was eleven which is the age my daughter was as well, she was wearing a denim skirt, and this guy lifted this denim skirt and whatever and it started feeling very overwhelming for me, and I got very confused with her story, I finished the session, I walked into [Rape Crisis member]'s office and I said, somebody's just vomited in my head. I don't know what's my story, I don't know what's the client's story, I don't know what's going on anymore, I was confused.

The effect of not policing the boundaries between the self and whatever trauma one's clients bring into the counselling space is that it eventually takes an emotional toll.

The concept of boundaries is one that Rape Crisis has gleaned from psychology. Mainstream psychology is couched in a strong ethic of individualism: the individual is the unit of study in psychology and he or she is seen as a self-contained, self-determining entity that operates within an external reality (Lovlie, 1992). In order to have something to study (and to be classed as a discipline in its own right, separate from sociology and philosophy), psychology needs the self (*ibid.*). Boundaries are a psychological construct that (amongst other things) police the lines between the selves involved in a therapeutic relationship (Brown, 1994). And whilst Rape Crisis uses feminist therapy which is borne out of criticisms of mainstream psychology (see Rader & Gilbert, 2005) boundaries are still a critical part of therapy at Rape Crisis. Because Rape Crisis is predicated on the experiences

¹⁹ This event was particularly distressing for me because it came after a hectic morning in which I was unceremoniously dumped by one client (over the phone) and I had to deal with another regular client directly after that phone call. I felt, after that morning, that the narrative of 'boundaries' had become *my* narrative within the organisation. I was Rumbi, who struggled with boundaries and with separating myself out from my clients.

of the women who (wo)man the organisation, it requires, at some point, something to draw discursive lines between the women of the organisation and the organisation itself. This is the function of boundaries at Rape Crisis. They allow for the discursive separation between the women of Rape Crisis, and the organisation that they are.

This discursive separation is necessary because the problem that Rape Crisis exists to confront (rape) is a deeply violent, personal violation, and in listening to stories of rape trauma, Rape Crisis members run the real risk of experiencing vicarious trauma. Jø experience is one of a few stories of vicarious traumas I heard during my interviews. B told me how she experienced headaches as she prepared to work with one of her clients. M described a breakdown she experienced when her first client turned out to be presenting with schizophrenic symptoms. The discourse of boundaries is necessary to protect Rape Crisis from the trauma it seeks to address. It allows Rape Crisis members to discursively construct selves that exist outside of the traumas they encounter on a daily basis in order to enable them to continue to encounter such traumas productively.

The discourse of boundaries also serves Rape Crisis in that it allows the organisation to set realisable goals for itself. Rape Crisis operates out of Cape Town, a city in which the growing informal economy has created a cycle of poverty in which several generations become trapped (de Swart, Puoane, Chopra & du Toit, 2005). This means that Rape Crisis is often faced with women who are not just rape survivors, but are also mothers struggling to feed and house themselves and/or their children. The discourse of boundaries allows Rape Crisis to draw discursive lines around the problems of their clients, and translate these into goals that the organisation can channel its resources into meeting. The counselling dossier advises the volunteer counsellor to

[b]e clear about what we can offer her. Thereø such a thing as misguided helpfulness, where you want to offer more than is realistic. Rape Crisis is a contained space, and itø to both your advantage and the woman to understand where the boundaries are.

These boundaries are set out in Rape Crisisø Counselling Criteria, a document that specifies who the organisation will take on as a client and when they will refer someone on.

Boundaries thus serve to contain Rape Crisis: they protect Rape Crisis from taking on the trauma it wishes to address, and they define exactly *what* trauma Rape Crisis can address.

Therapy thus functions in two ways: it facilitates the enmeshment of the Rape Crisis member and the organisation by putting the member in a contained physical space and in close proximity to rape. Therapy also provides discursive space from the trauma, however. The discourse of boundaries, borrowed from mainstream psychology, allows the delineation of Rape Crisis (members) from the trauma it is trying to address and also helps define which of the many traumas that make up life in Cape Town that Rape Crisis exists to address. Therapy thus shapes the nature and scope of Rape Crisis as an embodied organisation.

5.4. Making enemies and identities

In her examination of human responses to risk, Hélène Joffe (1999) draws on Kleinian theory to explain how the outgroup, or 'the other' is created. 'The other' is a response to the risk society. Because of the pluralisation of the media through which people can learn about the world, risk feels closer than it has ever felt before (which is not to say that risk has increased) (Joffe, 1999). The media brings reports of natural disasters, international terrorism, and economic crises into people's living rooms, in their e-mail inboxes, on their phones at greater speed, with greater regularity (Joffe, 1999). A 'risk society' is thus created. Joffe (1999) identifies three possible responses to living in such a society and in her argument, she focuses on the 'not me' response, and how protection from perceived risk is conferred through the projection of risk onto 'the other' (Joffe, 1999). Using an analysis of cross-cultural responses to the risk of HIV/AIDS, Joffe (1999) argues that 'othering' is essentially a function of self-protection. To protect the integrity of one's individual identity, and the safety from risk offered by that identity, one imagines an 'other' outside of themselves on which to project the risk (Joffe, 1999). The imagining of the hinges on one's belonging to an ingroup: an individual 'other' whilst he or she is different from the self, is not substantial enough for complete projection and protection (Joffe, 1999). Thus the difference of the 'other' is dependent on their not belonging to the same ingroup as the self (Joffe, 1999). This group difference allows for the 'other' to be imagined as completely

separate from the self (Joffe, 1999). Thus distanced, the *other* becomes the site on which perceived risk is projected (Joffe, 1999).

I posit that this othering mechanism is a key component in the enmeshment of Rape Crisis with its members. Rape Crisis brings the women who make up the organisation in close physical proximity to the risk of rape (through the stories of survivors who come to the organisation). The women of Rape Crisis *ó* and Rape Crisis itself *ó* exist and serve in a risk society, and a protective response is necessary. However, the risk society in which Rape Crisis lives is more complex than the society that Joffe (1999) describes. For whilst the risk is presented in the survivors, Rape Crisis must take on the survivors and their stories, and therefore swallow the risk whole, as opposed to simply splitting it off and projecting it. Thus instead of the ingroup/outgroup splitting processes Joffe (1999) describes, within Rape Crisis, there are two levels of splitting that take place. At the first level, Rape Crisis absorbs survivors into its identity (which, as I have argued above is an enmeshment of individual women and the organisation) but splits the survivors into their stories *without* risk factors, and the risk factors contained in their stories. Once this split is complete, the risk factors are then projected onto an array of *others*. Below I identify these others, and the risk factors they carry.

5.4.1. Rape

There is no *one* definition of rape (Rose, 1977). There are different schools of thought, even within feminisms, on what rape is. And Rape Crisis has chosen to adopt this particular definition:

Rape is an act of power and control: sex is the medium to achieve it. Rape only begins with the physical act, during which every part of the individual is concentrated on surviving. After the assault, the struggle to comprehend and understand what has happened begins. Its meaning floods over the survivor who has to find a way to return to their bodies, their lives and regain a sense of self.

But the women of Rape Crisis know this is not the only definition. J expressed her frustration with the limits of the above definition:

[...] For instance, rape, I don't agree that rape is purely an act of violence, I get angry when feminists ignore the erotic component to rape. And there *is* an erotic component *ó*

[...] It's sexual, ja. Otherwise the rapist would just beat the victim, or survivor. There wouldn't be an erotic component, and there is very much so [...]
However, rape is constructed and understood in a particular way at Rape Crisis. It is constructed as being about power, and has having particular social, behavioural, physical and emotional effects.²⁰

This is important to note because from my interviews, it became clear that Rape Crisis is regarded as an expert in the field of sexual violence. Whether this is by their design or whether or not it is imposed upon them from outside is not clear. But I remember how struck I was when B told me that if a restorative justice project wants to connect a survivor with a perpetrator who wishes to apologise, they call on Rape Crisis for permission to contact the survivor. Rape Crisis is regarded, then, as something of a gatekeeper in the field. The danger in this is that people who want to understand rape, and its effects, will take the knowledge of the gatekeeper as the *only* knowledge. This could block dialogue between different (not necessarily competing) knowledges about rape, including knowledges that take into account rape's erotic component. Thus I am naming rape as an enemy that Rape Crisis has defined in a particular way to enable the work they do, and I am doing this so that other, possibly helpful, ways of naming rape will not be obscured and ignored. In addition, naming rape as a constructed enemy will allow the knowledge of Rape Crisis on rape to never be complete or closed, and to keep drawing from women who survive rape.

5.4.2. The Criminal Justice System and the risk of secondary trauma

Rape Crisis has a contentious, ambivalent relationship with the criminal justice system (CJS). Rape Crisis essentially was formed because of the system's inability to adequately understand and provide for the needs of survivors. The counselling dossier tells us that

[...] historically, no one except those who'd experienced sexual violence seemed to have the faintest idea how to understand women's experience. Without such understanding, those who came into contact with survivors deepened the abuse they'd experienced through disbelief, trivialisation, and sheer stupidity.

²⁰ The effects are specifically defined as Rape Trauma Syndrome, a collection of 'symptoms' that Rape Crisis uses to help name and normalise the effects of trauma for its clients.

The risk factor identified by the organisation as belonging to the CJS is that of secondary trauma. ITC material defines secondary trauma thus:

Reporting rape to the police or testifying about it in court exposes the complainant to impersonal, bureaucratic and institutional processes that prioritise the case and not the person, requires the victim to remember and recount the terror of the traumatic event and even to confront the perpetrator who inflicted that terror. This is called secondary trauma because it is an additional traumatic experience to the primary trauma of the rape experience itself.

But even as Rape Crisis (absolutely justifiably) rails against the ineptitude and violence the CJS inflicts on already victimised survivors, there is evidence of co-operation with the CJS. In this excerpt of my interview with L, a policewoman, we discuss the relationship between Rape Crisis and the police:

[...] I am a policewoman in the capacity of a volunteer for Rape Crisis. So there's nothing in that you can bullshit me about, about the organisation, or the police because I know it. And I know, I know what Rape Crisis gets from police, and I know what the police gets from Rape Crisis, so, um, nobody can fool me. So, I was nice to almost like um be in that capacity, because I know also the challenges of Rape Crisis, and the challenges of the police. It was good, it was actually a good experience for me.

R: How is Rape Crisis's relationship with the police, do you know?

L: From our side, it is good, you know, I mean all the stuff that we do in the office with regards to dealing with um, domestic violence, or gender-based violence or those kinds of things, they we always deal with Rape Crisis, you know, Rape Crisis is part of the stakeholders, you know, because there are so many things we can't do without [them].

B, who works for the advocacy project as a court supporter, intimated the same kind of co-operative relationship between Rape Crisis and the courts:

R: And, um, how do how are court supporters received by the court? Are you welcomed?

B: Hell, yes, we're very welcomed! [...] They actually prefer it, because they, they had a turnover of their conviction rate once we [...] came in. Because it makes, it prepares people for court, it makes them comfortable when they see that there's someone there that will also that will protect them, someone there that will support them.

What is key here is that this complex, nuanced relationship with the CJS only became evident during my interviews with Rape Crisis members. Rape Crisis's documentation, and the ITC material all pointed to a deep suspicion of the CJS. There appears, then, to be an 'official' discourse in the literature that indicates the splitting off of the risk of secondary trauma onto the CJS. The exclusion of nuance in the official discourse points to a splitting process: splitting is a mechanism closely related to our internal psychic processes when we are

children, and therefore does not involve or include nuance and/or contradiction (Joffe, 1999). In order to split off the risk of secondary trauma, Rape Crisis needs to narrate it away by focusing on the points of contention with the CJS. This is not to suggest that the CJS does not fail rape survivors, or that Rape Crisis does not have valid grievances with the CJS. I am pointing to the way in which this relationship with the CJS facilitates the absorption of survivors and their stories into Rape Crisis's identity, with minimal risk to the organisation and its members.

5.4.3. The Masculine Mystique: men and Rape Crisis

There is another other who eases the absorption of survivor experiences into Rape Crisis's identity. In my very first interview, E spoke about how she was against the idea of men joining the organisation, when the idea was first brought up. This was echoed in almost every subsequent interview I did. J said

We were talking about allowing men into the organisation, um, I didn't feel Rape Crisis was ready for that, or I wasn't ready for it, um, and I also was worried about the sort of men who'd be drawn to it like we know what men are drawn to coaching, gymnastics, schools, you know, we know what happens, um, so I was quite anti having men coming into the organisation.

At the time of the interview with J, I remember actively agreeing with her assertion about what men are drawn to organisations like Rape Crisis. After transcribing this part of our interview, I found myself questioning my immediate agreement with J. I still agree with J, and as a Rape Crisis member who has experienced the powerful all-woman space created in the organisation, I am also anti allowing men into the organisation. But my agreement with this sentiment alerted me to the complex relationship Rape Crisis has with men, and how men are the absent other that facilitate an enmeshed Rape Crisis identity.

Men as actual perpetrators

Statistics tell us that more often than not, sex offenders are male. This is true at Rape Crisis. But for Rape Crisis, this is truth long before the survivor who has been raped by a man brings her life and her story to the organisation. For a lot of the women I spoke to, their journey as feminists, and to and within Rape Crisis began from a place of deep victimisation at the hands

of a man. C told me the story of her emotionally and financially abusive husband; B told me of her authoritarian father, who threw her out of her church; A followed an abusive man to Durban; E was raped; M abused, and the list goes on. For some of the women I spoke to, the decision to come to Rape Crisis was directly influenced by this, but for others, the link between their survival stories and their Rape Crisis identities was only apparent in retrospect. E said

I mean, uh, I think I sent out my CV to everything that remotely interested me [...] when I applied to Rape Crisis and I got accepted, I was like ok, cool, that's where I'm meant to be. And I do think, though, in retrospect that at the time I would never have said it that my personal experiences played quite a big role in actually taking me there, ja.

My story is similar to E's in this respect. When I started this research, I was looking at feminist activism in a broad sense: I originally planned to look at Rape Crisis as well as a host of other organisations. But several factors (some of which I outlined in chapters one and three) led me to ultimately limit my research to Rape Crisis. One of the more important factors is that at the root of my feminist engagement is the visceral memory of having been sexually abused by a man. This memory has very few words attached to it; it has very little coherent, chronological content. Feminisms helped me make sense of this trauma and integrate it into my life so that it becomes a part of who I am without overwhelming my being. But the fact remains that part of the foundation of my feminist identity that all I do in the name of that identity that lies in what happened to me at the hands of a man. Rape Crisis is much the same. The women of Rape Crisis come to the organisation as part of the journeys they begin after having been hurt by men. Rape Crisis (and feminism) functions as a space in which the women of Rape Crisis can explore identities that acknowledge, personally, and in the safety of a group that understands, what happened to them, and the anger and pain they live with because of it. This is not to say that Rape Crisis stunts these women's recovery; if anything, Rape Crisis facilitates a reintegration that includes awareness of what happened (which in a lot of these women manifests itself in their being able to talk about their trauma freely, in everyday terms, within the walls of Rape Crisis).

The effect of this is that there is a constant awareness of men as perpetrators at the very foundation of Rape Crisis, in the memories and identities of the members of the organisation.

Before Rape Crisis even begins its engagement with current perpetrators, it already carries the visceral memory and knowledge of men as perpetrators, through its members' stories.

Reclaiming the 'man hater' label

If any work is being done on the idea of men as universal perpetrators, it is not done verbally. For the women of Rape Crisis, a discussion of including men in the organisation (in any way) would necessitate an acknowledgement of the foundational role the 'men as perpetrators' narrative plays in their feminisms and their feminist engagement at Rape Crisis. And although there is nothing wrong with admitting this, it lays the women open to the threat of being reduced to 'man haters'. The label 'man hater' is a slur that has long been used as part of the backlash against feminists (Anderson, Kanner & Elsayegh, 2009). 'Man haters' is more or less in the same league as calling feminists 'bra-burners' or assuming that we do not shave our legs (or armpits or any other female body part that is universally considered unattractive if it isn't plucked or waxed regularly), or that we are all lesbians. Feminist objections to these stereotypes is not because they are untrue or wrong (many women will not shave their legs or armpits because they interpret those acts as contributing to the limiting of the definition of beauty for women; and some women who are feminists are also lesbians and *vice versa*), it is because of the reductionism inherent in the act of labelling. Calling a feminist a 'man hater' taps into the very real pain that informs a lot of women's - including the women of Rape Crisis - involvement in the movement. Feminisms are in movement against patriarchy, and part of that movement involves naming and dealing with the pain caused by patriarchy, and in some cases, that means naming and dealing with the pain suffered at the hands of men. Labelling a feminist a 'man hater' thus taps into a truth, but *reduces* a movement that is about healing and establishing worlds where men, women, and *all* gender groups can live free of patriarchy, to a negative one, bent on revenge.

It is not surprising then that at Rape Crisis, there is scant verbal acknowledgement of the anger at (some) men that fuels these women's commitment to a world free from patriarchy (especially the very violent kind that they encounter). It is my belief that the women of Rape Crisis cannot engage with this anger and pain for fear of opening themselves up to unhelpful

reductionism and labelling. But the result of this is patchy, barely frank and incomplete engagement with the idea of including men into the organisation which, in turn, results in men remaining outside the organisation, even when they are in it. This is not to say that Rape Crisis is not trying; B is right when she characterises Rape Crisis's relationship to men as 'a work in progress', but I am arguing that there will not be much progress unless there is honest dialogue about men at Rape Crisis lies in reclaiming the 'man hater' label and admitting that men have hurt the women of Rape Crisis (and therefore have hurt Rape Crisis), and that there is an enduring pain that the organisation will always associate with men.

Men as absent, for some

This characterisation of men as perpetrators – which is, of course, cemented and reinforced by the fact of male perpetrators who continue to send survivors to Rape Crisis, and necessitate the continued existence of the organisation – results in, and is fed by, the physical absence of men. I remarked, in my first interview, which was with E, that I had not seen a man at Rape Crisis in my time there. Men are, for the most part, physically absent from Rape Crisis's spaces. When they are present, it is clear that they are present as outsiders, as visitors. The absence of men at Rape Crisis creates a situation where men are a mystical, unknown entity. The remaining reference point for the women of Rape Crisis – survivors and members, and members who are survivors – is of the negative experience at the hands of a man that has led them to Rape Crisis. This excerpt from my interview with B illustrates this:

[...] I have had a personal experience of a client coming in and seeing a male sitting here and she screamed! She just screamed, because this man looks exactly like the man, the perpetrator. Especially if your client hasn't been, um, has been withdrawn and not seeing really men, really, you know, seeing men sitting here – they have, you can have the resemblance of the sur- you know, one of the perps, so ja.

This story struck me because it made me think of how the physical absence of men at Rape Crisis means that sometimes the only man in the building is the notion of man as a perpetrator. And it is this 'universal perpetrator' who is then read off of the body of the rare male presence in the organisation. So whether or not there was a real resemblance between the man who raped B's client, and the man she encountered at Rape Crisis, she will have seen her attacker regardless. The physical absence of men in the Rape Crisis feeds the image of the universal perpetrator, and the effect is that *all* knowledge of men gradually becomes

reduced to this. In the absence of a positive physical male presence, the last, most brutal physical encounter with a man becomes the overriding definition of masculinity for Rape Crisis clients and members.

For some Rape Crisis members, this absence extends to their lives outside of the walls of Rape Crisis. The reality of Rape Crisis, however, is that in the same way that it carries the traumas of its members and clients, it carries its city's peculiarities. Cape Town is a divided city racially, socially and economically (de Swart *et al.*, 2005). The communities that Rape Crisis draws from and serves are diverse and divided, and Rape Crisis has members from the broad spectrum of Cape Town life. The absence of men appears to be something that is the purview of those who belong to Cape Town's more privileged communities. E told me that

But then again I have the liberty and a whole bunch of other levels of support around me for me to be able to say that [she is anti men joining the organisation]. Um, I have ó I did have quite a big problem with the, with the um, move towards including men ó I can absolutely see the logic of it, but because I can see the logic of it doesn't mean I agree with it.

L, who also had a problem with men joining the organisation, agrees:

[...] but I also understood why they wanted to involve men to get the message to men across better, and [inaudible] women, so I could understand ó I was a bit disappointed in the beginning, but I could understand absolutely where they getting to, and why they had to do that...

Both E (who is white) and L (who is coloured) live relatively comfortable middle class lives. Both women are single, and can afford to have men in their lives as a choice, and on terms that they have an equal say in. B, on the other hand, comes from one of Cape Town's poorest communities, and has experienced the presence of men as an economic necessity and (very often) a non-negotiable reality. She says

[...] growing up in my community, I saw such a lot of stuff, and women, how their power's taken away from them, because it's controlled by men all the time. [...]

Even so, men are a reality in B's world, and she is one of the few members of Rape Crisis who agrees to counsel male survivors of rape. But even when men are included in this capacity, they are still not really a part of the organisation. B described her difficulties in dealing with male survivors:

They're a bit, they're a bit aggressive, um I mean, from my one experience, the one, just the one guy he used to stand up and just walk straight to me [during counselling sessions], and then turns around and it *freaks me out!*

B does not live a life that allows her the social and economic capital to extend the absence of males she experiences at Rape Crisis to other parts of her life. Faced with this dissonance, then, she is one of the few who tries to include men into the organisation, and to bring her Rape Crisis identity and her identity outside of Rape Crisis (which includes men as a non-negotiable reality) together. She has little success though. Ultimately, on the issue of men at Rape Crisis, B says, 'it's a work in, a work in progress, it is.'

Men exist as mystical others for Rape Crisis. They are the perpetrators that necessitate the existence of Rape Crisis and the presence of many of the women I spoke to within the organisation. Their physical absence allows for their construction as unknown, except for their identities as perpetrators. The silence about this construction stems, I believe, from an anxiety about the possible reduction of Rape Crisis to 'man haters'. However, honesty about the pain men have caused the women of Rape Crisis is necessary if the organisation is to move past the universal perpetrator label and include men. And it is necessary to include men because they cannot be completely othered by all Rape Crisis members. The absence of men is a luxury afforded by members of Rape Crisis who belong to certain class groups, and some of Rape Crisis's members are struggling with the dissonance that results from holding their Rape Crisis identity, which does not include men, and their identities which include men as a non-negotiable part of life. Ultimately, men are that complicated other, the one who cannot be dismissed as all bad and allow a neat ingroup identity to form. With regards to this other, and its relationship to Rape Crisis's enmeshed, embodied identity, it is, indeed, 'a work in progress', and the organisation and its members are trying to move beyond simple splitting and negotiate integration.

5.4.4. Feminism as other: the devil we know, who does not know us

The mother of all the others, metaphorically and literally speaking, is feminism. I came to this research topic from a sense of deep disillusionment with the forms of feminism I was engaging with in the academic environment that has been the site of most of my feminist

engagement. Feminists traditionally have a complicated relationship with our movement (hooks, 2000b; Pollit, 2009). As summed up exactly why in our interview:

And the thing is that that what's so difficult about feminism, is that your battlefield is in your deepest emotional relationships, that's where the battlefield lies. And that's what's so difficult about it.

As I argued earlier in this dissertation, feminism is not just a movement in the sense that it is a commitment to broader structural change; for many feminists it lies at the core of what we consider to be our selves. And so it is with the women of Rape Crisis. In this section, I will discuss the discursive strategies that the women of Rape Crisis use to negotiate their difficult relationship to feminism, and why othering feminism discursively serves Rape Crisis.

The spectre of academic feminism

There is a general consensus amongst feminist academics that feminisms began primarily as social movement (see Fraser, 1989; Farganis, 1994; Hirschman & Di Stefano, 1996; Love, 2006). Feminism is thus interminably, inextricably linked to the world ó it cannot claim any degree of abstraction. It is also linked to the social with the particular aim of *transforming* the social. Feminist theory is thus a means to a certain end. In spite of this relationship of feminist theory to political cause, there is an undeniable rift between feminist activism, and its academic counterpart (Wiegman, 2002). Feminist theory has brought to feminism several different feminisms which challenge the integrity and unity of the sisterhood and its movement (see hooks, 2000a). Feminist theory has also audaciously challenged the very basis of the sisterhood ó the female subjectivity ó and claimed it is, (ironically, unfortunately) essentially, a construction of the movement (see Butler, 1990). Feminist theory has accused the movement (and itself, in some places) of doing women a disservice (see Spivak, 1988). Feminist theory has complicated the identities of feminist social movement. These seismic shifts and debates within academic feminism have created some suspicion within feminist activist circles, including within and amongst the women at Rape Crisis. J told me:

I sometimes get worried when people become too academic [...] because we do lose people on the ground. You know, we can sit around in these lovely little air-conditioned workshop rooms as academics and discuss, you know, poverty and shame, poor women, you know, ad nauseum and not actually doing anything, and then produce articles that are written for who?

In some instances, these suspicions and worries were expressed as out and out hostility:

[...] on a very general level, this is academia for me, mostly, but the kind of intellectual wanking that people get into ó the kind of get stuck up the arse of theory! That to me has no relevance, but it's so involved in itself that (laughter) that it, I don't see how it would make a difference in people's lives to pursue that chain of thought [...] I think that if we lived in a just and amazing world where, you know, people had equal access to stuff all the time, I would be like, please, go ahead, intellectualise to the nth degree, but seeing what life is like for people, and experiencing that for myself as well, I have you know (laughter) really. E

Rape Crisis women discursively distance academic feminism from their *real* engagement with women's stories and lives. And this discursive distancing is not done by the women who have not engaged directly with academic feminism. What was interesting was that the women I spoke to who admitted to have come to feminism primarily through university courses, and research they did were the ones who distanced academic feminism from real, effective feminist practice. This discursive separation between the academic and the real also shows up as a separation between work done 'on the ground' and work done in front of a computer. A and I had this exchange in our interview:

A: See that's a very interesting thing because if you ask a lot of academics, and they will call themselves activists, you see ó

R: Sitting in front of a computer!

A: Ja! And I don't. But the thing is ó and I call myself a lifelong activist ó what does that mean, what does that mean? For me, it means that I am still going out there, I'm still a part of grassroots organisations, I'm still [inaudible], still strategising [...] And I'm saying but where is your knowledge production coming from, where does your knowledge come from? Does it come from your peers, or does it come from the ground? [...] And that for me is the whole thing about academics and! you know that sort of work, because the thing is that also ó you know, academics have very strong voices, and those voices would drown out the voices of people from the ground.

This splitting off of the concept of distance, of being out of touch, and the projection of this quality onto academic feminism is clearly part of the trend of othering. But what does the discursive othering of academic feminism do for Rape Crisis? It is my contention that the women of Rape Crisis's deepest fears about feminism's ability to deal with the complex context they are operating within are what are being expelled in this part of the splitting process. Rape Crisis emerged from Western feminism: Anne Maynes inherited the idea from the American feminists, and much of the literature informing early strategies at Rape Crisis was Western. A, who was one of the founding members, told me:

[...] and then from the 80s onwards, we started seeing a lot more books, coming out around feminism so increasingly our knowledge was enhanced by literature [...] But it was all northern, uh, I mean and legitimately we were accused of being bourgeois so, because we had the bourgeois feminist tradition from the North [...]

It is telling that the women who expressed ambivalence and hostility towards academic feminism are all from middle class backgrounds, and are well-versed in academic feminism themselves. They are well aware of the arguments within feminism about the potentially colonising effects of imposed feminism (see Spivak, 1988; hooks, 2000a & 2000b). They are also well aware of some of the accusations levelled against them by their compatriots who do not come from middle class backgrounds, and who did not have prior knowledge of academic feminism before coming to Rape Crisis. B, for instance, blamed the inability of Rape Crisis to deal effectively with men as a reality (for many of its members) on feminism. 'It's all about feminism', she told me, when I asked her what she thought the problem was with having men in the organisation. L told me that she believed that you can take feminism too far and that she is only a feminist when it's necessary:

[...] for me feminism can, you can really take it out of proportion, you can say one or two things about it, it depends on where you are with it.

There was an overwhelming ambivalence in the black and coloured women (who were all from Cape Town's poorer communities) I spoke to when it came to feminism. I noticed when I was transcribing those interviews that it took me twice the amount of time to get to the topic of feminism in those interviews than it did in my interviews with the white, middle class women. In my interview with C, a black woman from a poor community, I also expressed my anxiety by distancing myself from that other feminism, the academic kind:

C: Why are you doing the research?

R: Oh! Um, because I've for a long time I personally identified as a feminist, and with feminist and I (long pause) my main experience of feminism is through what I'm studying, and I'm, I'm kind of sick of it because it doesn't it doesn't seem like it's doing anything, you know, it doesn't make a difference for me to be reading all this stuff and feel like I'm not changing the world so I thought I'd go out and find women who were (laughter) changing the world, and I speak to them! That's what it's about that's why I do

C: It's not affecting you as a person, or is it?

R: Ja, not so I feel like a lot of the feminism that I know is (long pause) people writing, and people interviewing people and they're not so I thought I would go and interview women, and write about women who are actually doing something in the world, and hopefully I could use that to say to feminists who just (laughter) sit in front of their computers and say, look at this!

C: There's more out there!

R: This is what women are doing! Because a lot of feminism, and a lot of feminist theory is people fighting with each other, and how feminists fight with each other all the time, and I thought I wanted to find something, a space where women are actually overcoming some of those difficulties and are doing something, and not just thinking about doing something, or writing about doing something. Ja.

The discursive othering of academic feminism allows me, and the middle class women of Rape Crisis, to deal with our latent anxiety over the colonising potential of feminism.

Creating silences: race and class tensions at Rape Crisis

But this splitting off of the potential colonising aspects of feminism (onto academic feminism) allows for silences around certain realities within the organisation. As I mentioned before, class and race matter in South Africa, in Cape Town, and at Rape Crisis. It is no accident that the majority of the middle class members of the organisation are white, and most of the lower to working class members are not. Rape Crisis, like most institutions in South Africa, carries the legacy of the country it serves. And this came up, loudly, clearly in various themes my interviews.

Volunteerism

One of the themes that arose was that of volunteerism. One interview into my fieldwork, E told me about sessional payments, the courtesy R29 a session Rape Crisis gives to its volunteers for their trouble. A few interviews later, I heard from B how women at the Khayelitsha office went on strike in 2008 because, in a period of serious financial difficulty, sessional payments stopped:

I think the funding was one of the biggest challenge because...Khayelitsha branch, *all* of the volunteers...actually striked [...] Is it last year, or the year before, there was no funding for no, for none of the [inaudible], so then we weren't paid, we did the counselling, we weren't paid, cos some of often, the money, some of the volunteers *lived* on that money, they, you know, it was really a source of income, you know, it *shouldn't* be, but, it was. And then they, uh, uh, um...they decided to strike, you know, we're not doing anything for free [...]

For the most part, the women I spoke to, including B, condemned the idea of, as E put it, 'using the volunteer space like a job space'. But for the most part, the women who wholly condemned this idea were the women from the Observatory office, which has the reputation

for being the 'white' office (which I have interpreted as meaning that it is the middle class office). C, who used to be based at the Athlone office, but was piece working in the Observatory office condemned it in no uncertain terms, making sure to discursively distance herself from 'them':

[I] yes, it is difficult for *them* that's depending on *ó* the, the money that's, they need to earn at Rape Crisis but, uhí for *me* it wasn't about the money, it was aboutí my clients out there.

Does this mean that 'they' are less committed to the organisation than those who can go without sessional payments? I posit that perhaps the issue is not commitment, or who is a better volunteer, but is about what volunteering means within the context of Rape Crisis. It is understood by the general scholarship that volunteering does not mean one thing across various contexts (Wilson & Musick, 1997; Wilson, 2000; Bussell & Forbes, 2001). Whilst altruism is commonly regarded as the motivation for volunteer work, volunteer work also offers people a chance to improve their capital. According to Bussell and Forbes (2001, p. 249)

[...] volunteering provides employment to the unemployed and one-third of the sample in Anderson and Moore's study of volunteers in Canada volunteered in order to occupy spare time. Volunteering is sometimes seen to enable the volunteer to develop skills which may be useful in a future career or to help obtain employment, gain academic credits, or even aid career advancement.

My own experiences as a volunteer echo this: as an undergraduate student, volunteering gave me invaluable experience in the development sector, and as a Rape Crisis volunteer, I gained access to the research site I am doing my Masters research project on. Volunteers volunteer out of the goodness of their heart but part of that is the expectation that we will gain something from our giving. On campus, posters encouraging students to volunteer proudly offer us an experience that will be 'good for [our] CV[s]'. Why then should the women of Rape Crisis be expected to give without the expectation of receiving? The class context out of which some of Rape Crisis's volunteers comes means that, for them, their expectations of the volunteering experience are that they will gain economic assistance of some kind. The context out of which I come from means that I expect experience in feminist activism. The difference, then, lies in class, and it struck me that a view of volunteering as completely divorced from any consideration of economic remuneration (however small it may be) is a luxury that only the middle class members of the organisation can afford.

Geography

In addition to disagreements around volunteering, class and race differences are expressed in the divisions between the different offices. In my interviews, I encountered the narrative around the splits between the offices. E said:

[...] and there was definitely like, Observatory was the first office, and Khayelitsha and Athlone were set up as satellite offices [...] Um, I'm not quite sure about timing about how the offices came about, but it was kind of a need, like a lot of the stuff, of how can you white people sit here in these offices when actually we need this stuff where we are as well, and then that same kind of um, well-intentioned white people coming in and telling us how to do things, uh, dynamic happened where there was, there was a lot of questioning around you're here you've got the power, the money sits with you, you tell us what we can and can't pay for, and that's actually, you know, why should it be that way, especially post-94 right, why should it be that way, why aren't we all involved in this.

And B told me this:

Because at the volunteer meeting, you will see the fights between the races. You'll see the fights between the different, um...the different, uh...branches. Like Observatory, Khaya and Athlone, you will see that, you will feel the tension. Hopefully, it is something of the past, but...

R: (Laughter.) So, is there a racial split that way, that Observatory is the white branch, Khayelitsha is the black one, Athlone is the coloured [...] cos ja, you're at the white branch, if you're ó they're biggest thing is that the director shouldn't sit here. Because it always have been like this, that the director's at the Obs office.

R: The centre of power.

B: Ja. So, the offices shouldn't be saying that this is the headquarters. The offices should be the same.

R: Ok!

B: You know, that type of thing. So, uh...it's a big thing.

R: Is Obs the headquarters...kind of?

B: Ja, I would say that, I would definitely say that. Because people, you know, this is where the ó this is where you'll find your financial manager, your director, financial manager, you'll find the, um, the PA, um...and that is why people think this is the headquarters.

R: And the AGM happens here, board meeting here.

B: You know. That kind of thing is here. And we've been telling them over the years that you guys are creating this thing yourselves, and then for, uh, for two years, they tried to have the director at the ó at the Athlone office, and then everybody's saying that nobody said that she should be there, why didn't she try Khayelitsha, you know? ö

Where which office is, matters. As I argued above, Cape Town is an extremely divided city (de Swart, *et al.*, 2005). The divisions between the offices are thus expressions of the class and race differences that are mapped onto the areas the offices occupy.

The reason I am pointing out, using geography and volunteerism, how race and class are played out at Rape Crisis, is because I want to put it to the reader that the latent anxiety that is expelled and projected onto academic feminism could be more helpful if it was kept in the organisation, and transformed from its latent state. If some of these anxieties around the imposition of particular class groups' worldviews were discussed, perhaps the race and class issues that Rape Crisis carries (by virtue of being an organisation operating in South Africa) could be dealt with through dialogue. Instead, the othering of feminism facilitates a silence, and denialism. Because the middle class members of the organisation expel their anxieties, they do not *fully* recognise the race and class issues that plague their organisation. So whilst, they acknowledge the issues verbally, there does not seem to be any action around this. In one breath, E acknowledged the legacy of apartheid-created racial and class dynamics, and proclaimed them as 'made up':

Um, I think a lot of it was made up. And I do at the same time I think there were fundamental issues with particular people in the organisation, with very strong stances as well, a lot of whom have moved on [...] (Emphasis added.)

So whilst she acknowledges the very real history behind the geographical tensions within the organisation, she *prefaces* this acknowledgement by declaring a lot of it 'made up', and pinning the tension to a few individuals. It is key to emphasize that I am not passing judgment on the middle class, or the white, middle class women of Rape Crisis. I am rather pointing out how the projection of certain risk factors onto academic feminism can be dangerous for the organisation's ability to confront its very real, very South African race and class tensions.

Othering feminism or escaping the narrative?

The othering of academic feminism is part of a broader trend of ambivalence and/or hostility towards feminism within Rape Crisis. In my interviews with E and M, we explored how Rape Crisis has struggled with its feminist identity. E told me

Um, but you know, I think, I don't know, not that I do again, I wasn't there so I couldn't tell you exactly what the impact was, um, but an organisation also has to grow, it has to change, you can't keep things the same forever, but it's interesting as well, I see it as part of a move almost out of a, what I would characterise as a US 70s feminist, radical space, into a more mainstream space, I don't know if that quite makes sense?

Rape Crisis has, according to some of my interviewees, moved from a more radical overt feminist approach to a toned-down version of their feminist roots. Some, like M, are angry about this. Some of the other women I spoke to, though, begrudgingly accept this. E told me that

[...] Rape Crisis has become a lot less feminist and a lot more, um. Well, maybe the feminism has changed as well!

Others, like J, encouraged the move away from overt feminism:

But I think feminism needs to take a step back and with regard to Rape Crisis, it takes a secondary stance, because the important thing is dealing with rape survivors, in South Africa, um, in Cape Town, with limited volunteers, and quite a big number of rape survivors trying to get through the doors of Rape Crisis. So feminism is not the main focus, its main focus is rape [...] You also don't have to be a feminist when you come onto the course, and you don't have to leave a feminist. It's very much respected that, you know, this a little bit about feminism, uh! you know, you can take it, you can leave it, ja. Swallow what you want, spit the rest out, it's up to you.

What, then, to make of this organisation that in its annual report proclaims that our approach is feminist but tempers its feminism with funders, with clients and on its website? In the previous section, I argued that feminism's Western roots, and particularly Rape Crisis's links to Western feminism, can be interpreted as the cause of some of the class divisions in the organisations. This, I argued, means that often academic feminism becomes the other, the scapegoat on which Western feminism's ills are projected and blamed. I want to complicate this argument somewhat and suggest that the ambivalent relationship Rape Crisis has developed with (all, not just academic) feminism might be because the narrative of the movement (that is, the discourses that shape our understanding of feminisms) does not accommodate for Rape Crisis's complex identity.

Binaries and lines are what feminisms rail against, but they are also traps that we may fall into in our efforts against patriarchy (Braidotti, 2005). First of all, there is the notion of waves. Feminisms have long characterised itself in terms of chronological-ideological waves (Pollit, 2009). Even though theorists like Pollit (2009) bemoan the technical inaccuracies of

the 'wave narrative' I posit that the waves are less about chronological accuracy, and more about providing feminists with a framework within which to think about their identities. The women of Rape Crisis also subscribe to the traditional understanding of feminism as occurring in waves. E said

[...] I have it that feminisms grew out of women getting a voice in spaces that the voice wasn't heard before, um, and if you track, the traditional history starting from stuff around the suffragette movement, and moving into the 60s and the more radical wave of stuff and starting to introduce issues of colour, and other sources of 'o like sexuality, all of those things, so for me, when I talk about feminism, it really is, like a 'o it's a very complex thing, it's about women in relationship' to power, and when I say women, they're not identified solely by their gender, but it's their point of departure for looking at how, uh, people's um, options, ideas, uh, access to stuff is either limited or enabled by their gender in collaboration with race, sexuality, class, all of those things, so ja.

In addition to the wave narrative, feminism is also plagued by the debate around whether or not to be feminist requires a united force. The rise of intersectionality theory, and the growing awareness of the ways in which women's experiences of patriarchy are dependent on our contexts has led to the rethinking of the assumption that in order to stand against patriarchy, we need to have commonalities that define us 'o 'women' 'o as a distinct, unified group. Braidotti (2005) argues that in a post-modern world, where there is no one truth, and no one theory or philosophy can proclaim (without having to face down veritable challenges) to speak for and of all people, new master narratives are emerging. They are characterised by insidious determinism (for example, holding fast to the power of the market, or to the authority of DNA), and by their ability to turn 'difference' into profit (*ibid.*). Braidotti (2005, p. 177) calls for a feminism that focuses on creating a 'situated epistemology' that focuses on location-specific activism, as opposed to feminist action that focuses on sending representatives (who purport to speak for all women) into existing power structures. So, whilst some feminists still argue for unity in order to ensure the success of the movement, some posit that we can never speak as a unified force in the sense that we have some commonality of experience.

It is my argument that a feminist movement that is caught up in binaries, and lines between waves does not serve the identities of the women of Rape Crisis. The complex negotiations of personal history and organisational allegiance that results in the enmeshment of Rape

Crisis and the lives of the women of Rape Crisis transcends the simplistic cognitive schemes of binaries and lines. Perhaps, then, the othering of feminism that the women of Rape Crisis demonstrate is due to the fact that the traditional narratives of feminism do not fit with their embodiment of Rape Crisis.

Feminism thus represents a complicated other for Rape Crisis. The narratives of feminism, and the undeniable Western roots, do not fit with the complexities of the embodied activism that the women of Rape Crisis practice. The latent anxieties about feminism and its abilities to provide a framework for serving a deeply divided Cape Town are thus projected onto feminism, which is discursively othered in order to enable the identity of Rape Crisis to develop. However this othering process might prevent the organisation from recognising the racial and class tensions that get played out in various ways, and this might prove to be counterproductive.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained what I mean when I talk about Rape Crisis being enmeshed: Rape Crisis is structured such that the organisational identity is carried within the members' identities. There are several processes that facilitate this. The use of a Freirean approach to pedagogy ensures that the basis of the knowledge that members have about the organisation, and the skills they use in the organisation, are all based on the life experiences they bring to the organisation. Therapy is a cornerstone of Rape Crisis's operations. This reliance on therapy allows the organisation discursive tools (individual selves, and the boundaries they come with) to separate out the members and the organisation, and exactly how much the organisation can take on. Therapy essentially allows the members some space from the trauma that they take on as Rape Crisis members; it also allows them to break down the trauma into manageable chunks that the organisation can address with some effect. And then there are the others. In order to facilitate the formation of Rape Crisis's enmeshed identity in a risk society, Rape Crisis has several others on whom it projects risk. The risk of secondary trauma is projected onto the CJS. Rape Crisis also defines the enemy of rape in a particular way, and it is important to never take their knowledge of rape as the only

knowledge of rape there can be. Men, who represent the horror that the women of Rape Crisis must take on on a daily basis, are classed as perpetrators (because most of the men that Rape Crisis members know of *are* perpetrators) and others. Men are a social reality, and for some of Rape Crisis's members – those who come from Cape Town's poorer communities – they cannot be completely expelled from their identities. This is one of the many ways in which Rape Crisis carries the complex identity of its city. And it is this complexity that some aspects of Rape Crisis's feminist roots cannot accommodate. Rape Crisis emerged from a Western feminist tradition, and some of the effects of this are evident in the divisions within the organisation. The latent anxiety carried around feminism is projected onto academic feminism, and, ironically, is one of the others that facilitates the formation of an enmeshed Rape Crisis identity is feminism itself.

University of Cape Town

III
Closure, or W(h)ither feminisms?

University of Cape Town

6. Conclusion: Implications of this for feminisms?

6.1. Summary

This dissertation has used the experiences of the women of Rape Crisis, an organisation fighting gender-based violence in post-Apartheid South Africa to construct a picture of feminist activism. In Rape Crisis I found an organisation with a complex relationship with its members. The women of Rape Crisis appeared to take on the identity of the organisation, so that separating them from the organisational structures did not seem an appropriate way to analyse the organisation's identity. Instead, a framework provided by H el ene Joffe (1999) was used. Joffe (1999) uses an analysis of cross-cultural responses to the risk of HIV/AIDS, to argue that to protect the integrity of one's individual identity, and the safety from risk offered by that identity, one imagines an 'other' outside of themselves on which to project the risk (Joffe, 1999). The difference of the 'other' is dependent on their not belonging to the same ingroup as the self. This group difference allows for the 'other' to be imagined as completely separate from the self and the 'other' becomes the site on which perceived risk is projected (Joffe, 1999). Rape Crisis's identity functions in this way, but with slightly more complicated layers. At the first level, it absorbs survivors into its identity (which is an enmeshment of individual women and the organisation) but splits the survivors into their stories without risk factors, and the risk factors contained in their stories. Once this split is complete, the risk factors are then projected onto an array of 'others' - the criminal justice system, men, and feminism itself. The othering of feminism indicates that Rape Crisis has not found in the movement in which it is based the words to explain its identity as an organisation made up of its people.

6.2. Complicating the split

What are some of the lessons that can be learnt from the nature of feminist activist identity formation at Rape Crisis? Before I begin this chapter, it is necessary to point out that I am not making broad policy recommendations for feminist organisations across the board. I am, instead, arguing for a new way of thinking about feminist activism that might lead to

different ways of *knowing* about such organisations that might, in turn, lead to specific policy recommendations for these organisations.

The case of Rape Crisis deftly complicates the narrative of feminist action as being either one thing or the other. Here is a case of feminist action that at first glance looks like engagement at an organised, political level. But speaking to the women of Rape Crisis reveals an organisation that is entirely constituted by its members. Rape Crisis defies the either/or narrative of feminist action and occupies a space that is neither formal engagement, nor challenging structures but is a synthesis of both.

But what does this mean for feminist activism? I suggest that Rape Crisis, because it is a lived departure from the traditional narrative of feminist action, suggests a lack in the narrative of feminist activism. As I argued above, this manifests itself in Rape Crisis's periodically ambivalent (to hostile) attitude towards feminisms. This ambivalence is a symptom of this disconnect between movement narrative and lived reality. Rape Crisis has not found in the movement in which it is based the *words* to explain its identity as an organisation made up of its people. Without the words with which to speak of feminist action, feminisms run the risk of alienating the very women who constitute the movement.

6.3. Implications for feminisms: Addressing ourselves

How, then, can feminisms avert this? It is my contention that there is a need to construct thought on feminist activism that recognises the complex nature of feminist engagement. As A said in her interview:

And the thing is that that what's so difficult about feminisms, is that your battlefield is in your deepest emotional relationships, that's where the battlefield lies. And that's what's so difficult about it.

And in our hearts, all feminists know this. Just last week I finished reading bell hooks's memoir, *Wounds of Passion*. I recall remarking to my partner how startled I was when I got to the section in which she describes her partner hitting her (see hooks, 1997). It wasn't the violence that startled me, but how in this account of what I consider to be one of the most

powerful feminist lives, there was this: the almost matter-of-fact, casual mention of domestic violence (and not as an early formative part of hooks feminist life, but as something that happened well into her life as a feminist). This incident in hooks's account reminded me that feminisms can never be a complete lesson. There can never be a stage in our lives where we reach completion, or complete actualisation, and have no lessons left to learn. The nature of this movement, of this belief, this culture, and this life is that we will always be negotiating feminist lives within patriarchal structures. The feminist journeys are diverse but they all (I believe) have this in common: they can never be experienced as linear with a starting point and an end. They are dynamic, lived, lifelong journeys that are without endpoints. And often our engagement during our journeys will always take place in the realm of the personal. However we choose to engage as feminists and whatever feminisms we chose to engage from and most of the fight is in our personal lives. And, as I read bell hooks's story last week I was reminded of this. hooks is a powerful, prolific feminist thinker and author, but the seat of her feminisms resides in this *as well as* in the fact that she negotiated a relationship that was, at some points, violent. And feminists know this. The answer to the gap that is experienced by women like the women of Rape Crisis lies in translating that knowledge and that our battlefronts have been and will always be in our deeply personal lives and into how we speak and how we know the nature of our engagement as feminists.

Connecting what happens in our personal lives, and how we negotiate that as feminists might make real the knowledge that feminist engagement is more complex than the traditional narrative would have us understand, and help in creating a narrative that rings true for women like the Rape Crisis women.

6.3.1. Implications for South African feminisms: An area for further research

In addition to the above lessons Rape Crisis offers feminisms in general, the case of Rape Crisis might also stand as an example of feminisms that occur in spaces where the boundaries between personal and political, formal and activist engagement have been blurred because of specific socio-political and historical factors. The South African context is one in which the state is an historic ally, and formal processes are a part of what the

feminist movement struggled for during the Apartheid era. The formal processes thus form an integral part of the personal activism feminist organisation such as Rape Crisis conduct. It is clear that, in addition to there being a need for feminisms to address the complex nature of personal political action, it is necessary for specific attention to be paid to postcolonial settings like South Africa in which the split between what is termed formal, and what is termed activist is complicated even *before* we begin to consider the nature of feminist action and engagement. This is not by any means an unexplored field within African feminist scholarship (see Chapter 2). I am suggesting, however, further exploration of the particular socio-political landscape in which South African feminisms operate that bears in mind the central thesis of this dissertation: that feminist activism is indivisible into its personal and political aspects, and is neither one or the other but a bricolage that contains both.

It seems important to stress at this point that, like everything in the struggle against patriarchy, this will not be easily done and won. For acknowledging the deeply personal nature of feminist engagement will also mean acknowledging that our engagement, like our selves, is imperfect. It means accepting the deep pain from which our feminist engagement stems (along with acknowledging that our feminisms are an attempt to work through that pain and make it work for someone else who has been through what we have). It means accepting and dealing with the fact that, whilst we understand that masculinities must be addressed as men are also victims of patriarchy, a part of our own personal commitment to fighting patriarchy is rooted in the pain we have suffered at the hands of men. It means accepting that, as a movement, we cannot do everything ourselves. We must accept the help of those committed to fighting inequalities of other kinds. It means accepting that our engagement will carry the scars inequalities we have grown up with, taken for granted, and, in some cases, come to see as normal.

I am a feminist, and this research journey has taught me a great deal about how simple and complicated that identity can be. I have learnt ó above all else ó that being a feminist contains the challenge of *lived activism* in which your life will always belong to you, but to the movement, because you *are* the movement. It is a challenge that is not for the faint of

heart, but a challenge I am certain the sisters of my beloved movement are more than equal to.

University of Cape Town

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University of Cape Town

IV
Appendices

University of Cape Town

I. Appendix A: Rape by numbers, or, why Rape Crisis exists

The National Institute of Crime Rehabilitation (NICRO) states that only one in twenty rapes in South Africa is reported (Robertson, 1998). In spite of this estimation that the numbers we know are only five percent of the actuality, the five percent is still frighteningly high. These numbers from the South African Police Service (SAPS) speak for themselves:

Province	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Eastern Cape	6,759	6,066	7,027	7,405	8,960	7,796
Free State	3,839	3,733	3,828	3,983	3,709	3,589
Gauteng	12,576	12,091	11,926	11,923	11,562	11,114
KwaZulu-Natal	9,346	9,489	9,230	9,614	9,731	9,587
Limpopo	4,795	4,472	4,158	4,780	4,416	4,573
Mpumalanga	3,687	3,534	3,714	3,942	3,991	3,871
North West	5,046	5,038	5,004	5,074	5,007	5,065
Northern Cape	1,460	1,472	1,531	1,559	1,405	1,300
Western Cape	6,785	6,530	6,315	6,834	6,145	5,722
RSA Total	54,293	52,425	52,733	55,114	54,926	52,617

Rape in South Africa for the period April to March 2001/2002 to 2006/2007

The study by Jewkes *et al.* (2009, p. 1) reports that the numbers are probably even higher than this. They report that in their study of KwaZulu Natal men

Nearly one in two of the men who raped (46.3%) said they had raped more than one woman or girl. In all, 23.2% of men said they had raped 2-3 women, 8.4% had raped 4-5 women, 7.1% said they had raped 6-10 and 7.7% said they had raped more than

10 women or girls.

In such an environment, the criminal justice system (which faces challenges in the forms of multiple other forms of violent crime) is overwhelmed and is often not equipped to offer the specialised services that are necessary for survivors of rape (Robertson, 1998). The organisational identity of Rape Crisis ó from the time it was formed ó is centred on this: Rape Crisis exists to plug the gaps in the system that is supposed to help rape survivors but cannot.

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II. Appendix B: Joining Rape Crisis

The following is the application form prospective members are required to complete in the volunteer selection process.



Rape Crisis Cape Town



PO Box 46, Observatory, 7935
OBSERVATORY ~ Tel (021) 447 1467, Fax (021) 447 5458 • KHAYELITSHA ~ Tel (021) 361 9228, Fax (021) 361 0529
HEIDEVELD ~ Tel (021) 633 5287, Fax (021) 637 9432
www.rapecrisis.org.za

June 2009

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer member of Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust (RCCTT). Volunteers perform an important role within the organisation, offering their time with no expectation of financial gain as it is not a job offer. Enclosed please find an application form for the 2009 Training Course and an outline of the course. The purpose of this course is to train community members to volunteer for Rape Crisis as Counsellors in the Counselling Program at our Observatory office. Should you live or work closer to our Khayelitsha or Gatesville Offices you may contact them directly as they offer similar courses.

Rape Crisis volunteers need to be over the age of 18 and are required to commit to a minimum of 8 hours of their time per month over a period of one year once they have graduated. The eight hours refers directly to the counselling sessions. In addition to counselling, volunteers are required to attend monthly focus group meetings where volunteers contribute ideas and suggestions and get involved more generally in the work at Rape Crisis. The focus group meeting is held on the second Tuesday of the month from 18H00-20H00. You also need to consider additional time spent in supervision groups as well as ongoing training sessions and other organisational functions.

Due to the traumatic nature of working within the field of rape and the sensitive nature of the material covered in the course, applicants are asked to carefully consider their readiness to deal with these very emotional issues. If you are not sure about what this means for you in particular then please don't hesitate to call Shiralee during office hours (021) 447 1467. Some things to think about are the level of meaningful support available to you, how resolved

your own possible experiences of abuse are and your ability to manage stress. If you believe that this is going to be a busy year for you for example, studying, family or working commitments or any other commitment requiring a lot of your time and emotional energy, we advise that you apply for next years training course so that you are able to commit the required full year of volunteering. Because the course covers an extensive amount of content, participants will be asked to do some reading and writing tasks on your own. We also encourage participants to do some thinking and reading around the issues before the course begins. The course will be presented in English but participants are encouraged to speak in the language they feel most comfortable.

Those applicants who are short-listed for the course will be invited to attend a group interview with fellow short-listed applicants. These interviews are aimed at allowing both applicants and selectors an opportunity to check out each other's expectations of the course. Furthermore applicants will be able to see more realistically what the organisation has to offer volunteers and will allow selectors an added opportunity to get a feel for those applicants being considered for the course. The interviews will take place during June 2009.

Please complete the forms as fully as you can as this is the first step in our selection process. Please return your application form as soon as possible as there are limited places available. Applications will be treated confidentially, and you will hear from us shortly after the closing date, which is listed on the application form. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact us and we look forward to hearing from you.

The Rape Crisis Observatory Training Course Team

Training Course Details

Currently the dates and times are scheduled as follows:

1. Dates:

Day One: 18/07/09

Week One: 20/7, 21/7, 22/7

Week Two: 28/7, 29/7, 30/7

Week Three: 4/8, 5/8, 6/8

Week Four: 11/8, 13/8, 15/8

Week Five: 18/8, 20/8, 22/8

Week Six: 25/8 Dates to be confirmed ó orientation site visits

End Session: 01/9

2. Times and Venues:

Saturday sessions are from 9H00 ó 16H00 at Athlone Office

Weekday sessions are from 9H30 ó 13H00 at Observatory Office

3. Course Content

Personal Growth:

- Introduction to the course
- Socialisation & body image
- Values & diversity
- Sex & sexuality

General Section:

- Rape: political & social

Rape: psychological
Rape: medical & legal

Skills Development:

The counselling relationship
Counselling skills & intervention plans
Boundaries & limit setting
Assessment & referral
Small group facilitation & public speaking
Workshop planning, design & presentations
Care for the caregiver
Course evaluation and Assessment
Orientation site visit to police station, health facility and courts

Assessment

It is important to note that there is an assessment at the end of the Personal Growth Course. The process is in place to understand participant's readiness to proceed on to the rest of the course.

4. Payment

Cost: **R500**

Fee Structure:

Personal Growth = R150.00

Skills Development = R350.00

Fees are payable on the first evening of each course.

CONFIDENTIAL

**APPLICATION FORM
RAPE CRISIS INTERNAL TRAINING COURSE
2009
Observatory Counselling Program**

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Code _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____

Cell phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Occupation: _____

What are your plans for the next two years? (Full time work, student, full time mothering, etc)

First language: _____

Other languages: _____

Will you be able to commit yourself to Rape Crisis work for a minimum of 8 hours per month, for one year?

Do you belong to any other organisations? If yes, please list all: _____

Please give details of any previous training or skills you have that might aid you on this course:

Do you have any medical problems or current emotional stressors you would like us to be aware of? _____

Do you have a driver's license? _____

Do you have your own transport? _____

Do you have a criminal record? _____

If yes, what is it for? _____

Logistical information: Rape Crisis tries to accommodate participants on the training course with any one of the following needs. Please specify which of these apply to you:

- Vegetarian
- Halaal
- Kosher
- Other (Specify): _____

Important to answer:

Are you aware that Rape Crisis is not offering you a job? _____

Background Information:

This information will help us select people for interviews. Please write no more than 3 pages on the following topics:

1. Who you are: the basic facts about your life, for example, where you grew up, your family, your occupation, your current support system and any challenges you might currently be facing in your life.
2. Why would you like to become a counselling volunteer for Rape Crisis?
3. Why you would like to do the counselling training course?
4. What is it that you bring that makes you the person that Rape Crisis is looking for?
5. Without feeling that you have to describe it in detail, refer to a stressful or painful period in your life and write what about the life lessons you learned from it.
6. Please list two (2) contactable references noting that neither of these should be relatives. (Remember, please do not feel that you have to reveal anything personal that you would prefer to keep private and also know that you are not judged on your writing style, and are free to write in the language that is most comfortable for you.)

Returning Forms

Please feel free to return your forms via post to The Counselling Coordinator, Rape Crisis Cape Town, PO Box 46, Observatory, 7935 or fax it to (021) 637- 9432. These applications are kept in a confidential folder and only handled by the coordinators. If you would like an e-mail form please write to: shiralee@rapecrisis.org.za

Closing Date: Please note that the closing date for submitting application forms is **12 June 2009, midday.**

The following is a copy of the consent form I asked interviewees to sign:

17 July, 2009

Dear

I am a Masters student with the Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies at the University of Cape Town. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on a topic entitled "Beyond Waves: Feminist Action Transcending the Narrative of the Feminist Movement". My research focuses on the complex relationship between personal narratives and social action in women who work with feminist organisations, or for feminist causes.

I would like the opportunity to interview you for my research project. This will involve sitting down with (only) me for a minimum of forty-five minutes, and speaking a bit about yourself, and about some of your work with Rape Crisis Cape Town (RCCTT).

I understand that some of the things we may cover in the interview may be of a sensitive nature, and I can assure that should you feel discomfort at any point, you have the right to refuse to answer any questions, or to stop the interview and withdraw your permission for me to use anything you have said. If we conclude the interview and you decide afterwards that you do not wish to be a part of the research, you have every right to contact me (see contact details below) and withdraw your permission for me to use anything you have said. Should we conclude the interview and should you not withdraw your permission for me to use it, you have the right to contact me and request a copy of the transcript of the interview, and (once it is complete) a copy of the final research project.

In addition to this, you may choose a pseudonym that you would like me to use (instead of your real name), and change any details that you feel might give your identity away, in order to protect your anonymity and ensure that everything you tell me remains confidential. In order to protect the identities of anyone else and to ensure that their privacy is protected, you may change any details you feel might give away their identity/ies and assign them pseudonyms as well.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Rumbi Goredema
MPhil candidate
Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies
University of Cape Town

E-mail: rgoredema@gmail.com

Consent Form

I, the undersigned, hereby give Rumbidzai Goredema permission to use the contents of this interview, conducted at

_____ on _____
in her Masters research project.

I have read and understood this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any point during the interview, and that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable laws.

Interviewee

Interviewer

University of Cape Town

III. Appendix C: Interview Schedules

Interview Questions (1)

Personal history (and) feminist history

- Tell me a little bit about yourself (any parts of yourself that you think are relevant or necessary will do).
- How do you identify yourself and why? (That is, what are your personal logos²¹?)
- What is a feminist? What is feminism? (Please give personal definitions here.)
- Do you identify as a feminist?
 - If not, why not? If so, why?
- When did you first encounter what you call feminism?
- Where does feminism fit into your own life story?
 - What personal significance (if any) does feminism have in your life?

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

- Give me a basic description (according to you) of what it is RCCTT does (in broad terms, and specifically).
- What is your current relationship with RCCTT?
- What is (or was) your role at RCCTT?
 - What does your role involve?
 - Did you choose this particular role or was it assigned to you?
- How did you first hear about RCCTT?
- Tell me about the process involved in joining RCCTT (for you specifically, not generally).
 - Did you go through any training? If so, what did it involve?
- Why did you join RCCTT?
- Tell me about your experiences at RCCTT (you do not have to tell me any confidential details, speak as generally as you need to).
- What are some of the most positive experiences and/or lessons you have learnt during your time at RCCTT?
- Did you encounter any difficulties during your RCCTT experience?
 - If so, can you talk about some of them?
 - Did you receive adequate support during difficult periods?
 - Is there anything that could have been done (either by you or by the organisation) to avoid and/or assist you with these?
- Do you feel you were prepared adequately (either through your own life experiences or through the training or both) for your role at RCCTT?
 - If you feel you were prepared, what are the factors that prepared you?
 - If not, what could you or the organisation (or both) have done to better prepare you?
- During your time at RCCTT, what have you seen and/or experienced to as RCCTT's greatest achievement?

²¹ Explain Frankl's notions of logos.

- Does RCCTT contribute to Cape Town communities? How?
- What are some of the challenges RCCTT faces in its attempts to make a difference?
 - What, if anything, can be done about these challenges?
- Do you feel you have achieved what you wanted to during your time at RCCTT?
- Would you count your RCCTT role as one of your personal -logos?
- Has RCCTT impacted your life in anyway?
 - If so, how? If not, why not?
- In the story of your life you told me at the start of the interview, where or how does RCCTT fit in? If it does not fit in, please explain why not.
- RCCTT identifies explicitly as a feminist organisation. Through your experiences at RCCTT have you gained insight into feminism, as it pertains to your life, and to broader structures? If so, what about RCCTT has given you these insights?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Do you have any recommendations for fellow RCCTT volunteers/staff members/trustees I can talk to?

The second version of this document did not include the mention of Frankl's notion of logos, and asked these additional questions:

- In what ways is RCCTT related to feminism?
- What do you think is RCCTT's definition of feminism?
- Do you feel RCCTT lives up to its feminist goals?
 - If so, how?
 - If not, what do you think prevents this?
- Does approaching sexual violence from a feminist perspectives aid RCCTT in its greater goals?

IV. Appendix D: Complete List of Rape Crisis Documentation used in analysis

Documents from website

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. (2010). About Rape. Retrieved from <http://www.rapecrisis.org.za/about-rape/>

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. (2010). About Rape Crisis. Retrieved from <http://www.rapecrisis.org.za/about-rape-crisis/>

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. (2009). Annual Report, 2008-9. Retrieved from <http://www.rapecrisis.org.za/>

Documents from Internal Training Course

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. No date. -Counsellingø Rape Crisis Dossiers. Cape Town: Rape Crisis.

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. No date. -Rapeø Rape Crisis Dossiers. Cape Town: Rape Crisis.

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust. No date. -Violence against Womenø Rape Crisis Dossiers. Cape Town: Rape Crisis.

V. Appendix E: An example of the coding process

Below is an example of the fine-coding process. The following details the cluster of fine codes I grouped under the first level code -Enemiesø

Rape Crisis and masculinity

the masculine mystique; latent anxiety about; hostility towards; mistrust of; as source of divisions; own individual demons with men; men experienced as unknown, scary, aggressive; as a gap in the pedagogy; men as a legitimate threat; men as need, gap; good personal relationships with men to balance out the mystique (?)

øWe were talking about allowing men into the organisation, um, I didnø feel Rape Crisis was ready for that, or I wasnø ready for it, um, and I also was worried about the sort of men whoød be drawn to it like we know what men are drawn to coaching, gymnastics, schools, you know, we know what happens, um, so I was quite anti having men coming into the organisation.ø J

øEven for me personally, at the beginning I thought that, no, that is a nice space for women only, that is a space where we can do what we want, say what we wanted to, andí it was just such a nice, comfortable space for women only, you know, whether youøve been a survivor, or whether you are a volunteer or ó it doesnø matter, itø just a nice girlsøspaceí but I also understood why they wanted to involve men to get the message to men across better, and [inaudible] women, so I could understand ó I was a bit disappointed in the beginning, but I could understand absolutely where they getting to, and why they had to do that...ø L

most of the women tell stories of negative experiences/victimisation with men: Aø abusive relationship, Cø husband, Bø father

physical absence of men at Rape Crisis is key to promoting the mystique
but note Cø description of the good relationship she has with *peripheral* males in her life ó was key in her description

the absence of men as luxury:

øBut then again I have the liberty and a whole bunch of other levels of support around me for me to be able to say that. Um, I have ó I did have quite a big problem with the, with the um, move towards including men ó I can absolutely see the logic of it, but because I can see the logic of it doesnø mean I agree with it. My understanding of the logic of it was we are predominantly wanting men in the training public awareness part of Rape Crisis, because when youøre out there, training people, uh, men listen to men, they donø listen to women and it would be useful to have like allies for people that you, you know, men that men will listen to when youøre saying what youøre saying, um, and I understand the logic of that but I disagree with it, itø kind of like why arenø women good enough, you knowí ø E

The need for positive male relationships (see J):

øí but my father made an open confession, you know, in church, which I thought was very courageous of him, and saying that he needs to change his mindset ó it will take time, it will take time to change because young people are growing up, and theyøre the church of tomorrow and we ó he knows he has to set time, sometime he has to set timeí ø B

B also describes her boyfriend as a øgreat relaxerø

Men as rape victims, as Rape Crisis clients:

öBesides ó it's only me, [Rape Crisis volunteer's name], um, one other counsellor that counsels males. Noone else wants to counsel the males. So we counsel male counsellors ó um, survivors as well, so ja. It's [inaudible] since 2004.

R: Wow. Why do people not want to counselí male victims, I mean I know why I wouldn'tí

B: They're a bit, they're a bití aggressive, umí I mean, from my one experience, the one, just the one guyí he used to stand up and just walk straight to me, and then turns around andí it freaks me out!

R: Ja!

B: Like, you know, he could punch me, he could hit me, or something else. I also think that sometimes males are very intimidating, they are.ö

Hostility towards males blamed on lesbianism ó or links between feminism and lesbianism:

öYou know, I just think that it's all about feminism! And it's all also because our, um, our sexual preferences, you know, some of us ó some ó ja, wasí you know, lesbians and didn't want any males.ö
B

Literally, all men begin to look the same when they're not around:

öSo, ja. And it's just, it's just because it's the norm, and we are so used to this that there's no male here, that when you see a male, you actually get very very cautious. Um, I get upset if males sit here, because if my clients come through ó I actually ask if they can't sit in the, in the garden, because it'sí a shock to some of our clients, even our counsellors don't ó get all oh! if there's a male sitting here, but he's just coming to support his girlfriend or his wife, you know, that type of thing, and we don't see it that way, you know, because our ó I have had a personal experience of a client coming in and seeing a male sitting here and she screamed! She just screamed, because this man looks exactly like the man, the perpetratorí . Especially if your client hasn't been, um, has been withdrawn and not seeing really men, really, you know, seeing men sitting here ó they have, you can have the resemblance of the sur- you know, one of the perps, so ja.ö B

B on men and Rape Crisis: öí it's a work in, a work in progress, it is.ö

Men as actual threat that RC women live in their own lives, and then *relive* through the women RC serves:

öí men lose some of their innocence to you. You know, um, and this is part of the process of healing, but often people who have been raped or whatever will go well it's my fault, and I shouldn't have let him in, and bla bla bla bla, and have all these reasons of why this is an isolated incident and it doesn't happen on a day to day basis, and you work at Rape Crisis, and you see some fifty year old lady who asked some guy to come fix her washing machine and he raped her, and you know, then you start going, hold on, this isn't an isolated incident, this is too much of the norm, this is too much of what's happening, and you get a different perspective on the world, and it's a painful perspective, it's a perspective of men, of peopleí in a very sad way. And it does affect the way that you see people. Um, a lot of people at Rape Crisis will not admit it, but some of them at some stage have been so scared of men, and I worked with, uh, [Rape Crisis member] she had left Rape Crisis when I worked with her, in 2001. She was a social worker and we worked at a place called [organisation for street children] and she had had to leave Rape Crisis, and so please change her name, um, because she was so scared of men. She wouldn't let her male friends into her house anymore, she was becoming terrified of men through her work at Rape Crisis, she was very involved in Rape Crisis, but, um, ja. It got to a point were like a male, like she'd invited people over for dinner, and if one of her male friends got there first, he'd have to wait for one of the females to come, and it was affecting her in her relationships, and I think at some stage many of the counsellors go through that, you know, that fear. And I'm not sure whether it's a healthy fear or it's, when it'sí excessive, ja, because of what you're

hearing. So, in that way, I don't know if you lose yourself, or you just, you see things a bit differently, you know, I suppose. It's about what you expose yourself to. People say, you're so cynical because you wanna sit with paedophiles, and it's true. It's your choice of how much you can expose yourself to. And we can't walk around all of us with blinkers, but you could choose to put them on and carry on. In Afrikaans we say kyk noot, [unclear] (laughter). You can! Ja, so I suppose that, I suppose it gives you a richer but painful view of men. And your safety as a woman.ö J

C on the visceral confusion of trying to engage men, when faced with their evil:

ö...seeing them is making me feel that I'm angry. Why men doing this women? And, uh, why they are why (long pause) uh, uh, when you see them sometimes, you ask yourself, why can't they be decent ó I know there's decent men, but why can't a men approach a woman and ask her for sex, or whatever, but why must you abuse that women, and just taking your own rights to, to, um, overpower this woman and just force to have sex with you, rape her, the way we ó we call it.ö

öIt really ó starts getting to you.ö C

RC women as having experienced violence at the hands of men:
C, A, E, M.

C on why she would have difficulty raising a boy:

öYou know what, I think if I ó if I would've had a son, I think I would've had a lot of difficulties. Especially with a boy...the way the community is nowadays.ö

Feminism as the Enemy

Academic feminism

ambivalent relationship towards; usefulness off; disillusionment with; as a foundation; hostility and mistrust towards; as more versatile than we know

öI got to the end of my university career, registered for an Honours Gender Studies through UNISA, and was like, well this is all very well to think about it, but it doesn't - you can't have it as an intellectual idea, you actually need to do something.ö E

öI sometimes get worried when people become too academic ó just on that question and the question before ó because we do lose people on the ground. You know, we can sit around in these lovely little air-conditioned workshop rooms as academics and discuss, you know, poverty and shame, poor women, you know, ad nauseum and not actually doing anything, and then produce articles that are written for who?ö J

Out and out hostility towards:

öI on a very general level, this is academia for me, mostly, but the kind of intellectual wanking that people get into ó the kind of get stuck up the arse of theory. That to me has no relevance, but it's so involved in itself that (laughter) that it, I don't see how it would make a difference in people's lives to pursue that chain of thought. For itself, and the ability to actually do

that's that's amazing, the fact that we can get up our own asses about ideas is fantastic and I think that if we lived in a just and amazing world where, you know, people had equal access to stuff all the time, I would be like, please, go ahead, intellectualise to the nth degree, but seeing what life is like for people, and experiencing that for myself as well, I have you know (laughter) really.ö E

öí and this was also part of the debate around professionalisation and professionals, there was also quite an antagonistic relationship with academicsí people that wanted to do academic work. There was a lot of suspicion around that.ö A ö NB what does this say of my relationship with RC

öí I mean, that was part of that whole Rape Crisis debate which was, umí that where do you get your understanding about what rape is. You have to get it from the people who've been raped. Because otherwise, you're appropriating that knowledge! And you're colonising knowledge. And that for me is the whole thing about academics andí you know that sort of work, because the thing is that also ö you know, academics have very strong voices, and those voices would drown out the voices of people from the ground.ö A

Divisions between 'the ground' and activists – definition of engagement

Divisions between the real, and other loftier academic writing:

öí my bell hooks ö she wrote this really cool book called Feminism is for Everybody and that ö I mean, that's why ö the academic stuff is great and it's useful, and I do appreciate it and all that stuff, but like Feminism is for Everybody is like my bell hooks touchstone, cos it's just explaining what it is and why it's important, and it's in real terms.ö E

The line in the sand between academics and 'real' engagement:

öA: See that's a very interesting thing because if you ask a lot of academics, and they will call themselves activists, you see ö

R: Sitting in front of a computer!

A: Ja! And I don't. But the thing is ö and I call myself a lifelong activist ö what does that mean, what does that mean? For me, it means that I am still going out there, I'm still a part of grassroots organisations, I'm still [inaudible], still strategisingí ö

öAnd I'm saying but where is your knowledge production coming from, where does your knowledge come from? Does it come from your peers, or does it come from the ground?ö A

“ I mean, that was part of that whole Rape Crisis debate which was, um, that where do you get your understanding about what rape is. You have to get it from the people who’ve been raped. Because otherwise, you’re appropriating that knowledge! And you’re colonising knowledge. And that for me is the whole thing about academics and, you know that sort of work, because the thing is that also, you know, academics have very strong voices, and those voices would drown out the voices of people from the ground.” A

Ambivalence towards feminism

stigma attached to feminism; ambivalence towards feminism; anti-men stance

seen in how defensive some of the participants were about feminism (C and L)

NB Rape Crisis feminism as not measuring up? Linked to theme of embodiment maybe (personal feminism so tied to organisation that when it moves in different direction to members it is seen as not measuring up?)

“ Rape Crisis has become a lot less feminist, and a lot more, um. Well, maybe the feminism has changed as well.” E

Perhaps the ambivalence to academic feminism tied to the essentially (irrevocably?) foreign nature of the academy:

“ increasingly our knowledge was enhanced by literature and by, ja. But it was all northern.” Ö

This ambivalence tastes oddly like 3rd wave feminism :

“...for me feminism can, you can really take it out of proportion, you can say one or two things about it, it depends on where you are with it.” L

Feminism – the traditional waves

M describing enthusiasm (and lack) for supervision:

“So, and that kind of goes in waves here.” M

As an enduring narrative of feminism:

“ I have it that there are feminisms, and I have it that feminisms grew out of women getting a voice in spaces that the voice wasn’t heard before, um, and if you track, the traditional history starting from stuff around the suffragette movement, and moving into the 60s and the more radical wave of stuff and starting to introduce issues of colour, and other sources of (like) sexuality, all of those things.” Ö E

ó my bell hooks ó she wrote this really cool book called Feminism is for Everybody and that ó I mean, that's why ó the academic stuff is great and it's useful, and I do appreciate it and all that stuff, but like Feminism is for Everybody is like my bell hooks touchstone, cos it's just explaining what it is and why it's important, and it's in real terms.ö E

Rape Crisis's secondary trauma discourse; CJS role in this

öwhen it [sexual violence] does happen, there's no secondary traumatisation through the legal system [inaudible] andí ö M

Nuance in relationship with CJS, though:

öR: And, umí how ó how are court supporters received by the court? Are you welcomed?

B: Hell, yes, we're very welcomed! Uh, we don't have any problems when it comes to the prosecutors or the magistrates, we ó uh-uh. They actually prefer it, because they, they had a turnover of their conviction rate once we ó at the adult ó Rape Crisis came in. because it makes, it prepares people for court, it makes them comfortable when they see that there's someone there that will also that will protect them, someone there that will support them. They stand, sometimesí the perp is there, sometimes it's more than one perp and it's very intimidating - knowing that here is someone who cares and supportsí so, ja, there it's very welcome.ö

öWe sitting on the parole board at the moment, we ó we can actually ó our survivors have an input in the parole hearing, the perp coming out on paroleí ö B

öI am a policewomaní in the capacity of a volunteer for Rape Crisis. So there's nothingí um that you can bullshit me about, about the organisation, or the police because I know it. And I know, I know what Rape Crisis getsí from police, and I know what the police gets from Rape Crisis, so, umí nobody can fool me. So, I was nice to almost like um be in that capacity, because I know also the challenges of Rape Crisis, and the challenges of the police. It was good, it was actually a good experience for me.

R: How is Rape Crisis's relationship with the police, do you know?

L: From our side, it is good, you know, I mean all the stuff that we do in the office with regards to dealing withí um, domestic violence, or gender-based violence or those kinds of things, theyí we always deal with Rape Crisis, you know, Rape Crisis is part of the stakeholders, you know, because there are so many things we can't do without Rape Crisis, umí they assist us actually a lot, they took

a lot of our work off so there are many things that we're sharing the bucket with, so to speak so it is,
umí there's a good working relationship between us.ó

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