

**Black feminist intellectual activism: A transformative pedagogy at a South
African university**

by

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DECLARATIONS

I, Mary Margaret Philome Hames, hereby declare that ‘Black feminist intellectual activism: A transformative pedagogy at a South African university’ is my own original work and has not been submitted in whole or in part for a degree to any other university. I have duly referenced and acknowledged all the consulted and quoted published and unpublished material and online publications.

Signature:

Signed by candidate

Date: 31 March 2016

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents Dorothy and Ismail Hames and my two grandmothers Magrieta Damon and Miriam Hames.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation engages with critical pedagogic theories and activism from a black feminist perspective. The central argument is that education is not only confined to the formal classroom but also takes place in the most unlikely places outside the classroom. This work is premised on the educational philosophies of liberation, embodiment and freedom of the oppressed and the marginalised.

The qualitative research is largely presented as ethnographical research, with the researcher located as both participant in the evolvment of the two educational programmes and as writer of this dissertation. Both educational programmes deal with performance and performativity and aim to give voice to the marginalised bodies and lives in the university environment. The research demonstrates how two marginalised groups claim space on campus through performativity involving the body and voice. In the Edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, young black women, via representation of word and body, transform the performance space into one in which the misogynistic and racist gaze is transformed.

This feminist theatre is intrinsically related to the feminist political work of reclamation of the black female body, which became invisible and objectified for abuse under colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy. The various feminist elements and processes involved in creating feminist text and theatre are discussed. The praxis involved in these processes is then theorised in terms of critical pedagogy as black feminist intellectual activism.

In the case of the lesbian, gay and transgender programme, Loud ENUF, the bodies and voices are used differently in the public campus domain to challenge homophobia. This programme is used to raise awareness about sex, sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity. This programme is intensely political and challenges ambiguous understandings regarding the notion of equality in South Africa post-1994.

Both programmes compel the viewers and spectators to participate in a feminist pedagogic process towards self-liberation by being provocative and public. For both these groups, the liberal rights discourse is not enough, and through developing a specific black feminist pedagogy suited to the post-1994 South African context and needs, the groups engage the campus community to become a more inclusive space for *all* its citizens. The narrative shows that the young people consistently refuse to be victims and are advocates and agents for transformation.

The argument made is that critical black feminist pedagogy outside the classroom, viewed as black intellectual feminist activism, is as valid a knowledge of feminism and transformation as is the knowledge created and taught in the classroom.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	Academic Development Centre
AGI	African Gender Institute
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CACE	Centre for Adult and Continuing Adult Education
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CNE	Christian National Education
EPU	Education Policy Unit
GEU	Gender Equity Unit
GPAC	Gender Policy Action Committee
HBI	Historically Black Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HWI	Historically White Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
LGTBI	Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Intersex
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SSRC	Soweto Students' Representative Council
UCT	University of Cape Town

UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VAW	Violence against Women
WGS	Women's and Gender Studies

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The dissertation reintroduces critical literacy discourse and identity politics from the margins of the neoliberal South African academy. It uses black feminist and ‘education for liberation’ theories as the premise to disrupt and challenge the centre from outside the classroom through writing, performing and protest politics. The dissertation provides explicit examples in the form of text and narratives of why, how, where and when intersections of gender identity and race challenge the normative spaces by using the insider/outsider positioning. I am arguing that the importance of black feminist politics, as forwarded by writers such as bell hooks, emphasise that these educational spaces can be transformed by non-normative methods of teaching. This type of research unequivocally argues for the validity of the margins as spaces in which important teaching and learning can take place in order to speak and act against the insidiousness of current formal teaching and learning to assimilate and to reproduce for the neoliberal market economy. This research also strongly argues for the recognition of agency and deliberately moves away from recent research that is premised on the pathologies of being poor, black, violated and diseased. I start with a critical reflection of the post-1994 South African environment of higher learning.

Important priorities in the building of a post-apartheid higher education system were firstly, to ensure equitable access based on race and gender and secondly, to implement policies and legislation for overhauling the apartheid era’s educational philosophy and planning. The legal and policy framework compelled universities to rewrite mission statements and introduce institutional and transformational forums and employment-equity committees¹ to ensure equity with regard to race and gender in their staff and student profiles.

1. From 1997 onwards, the higher education environment has been infiltrated by a plethora of policy documents produced by the South African Department of Higher Education and the Council of Higher Education. Among the most important of these are: *The Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education*; the findings of the Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team (2000); and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001).

My research draws attention to the limitations of the efforts to transform the higher education system through policy and legislative imperatives as well as conventional forms of teaching and learning. The dissertation explores the possibilities and challenges that exist in a post-apartheid South Africa university to build human dignity, inclusion and social justice. I argue that particular forms of teaching and learning outside the classroom can substantively work to realise the principles of the democratic values as set out in the policy and legal framework. The critical black² feminist pedagogy, the theory of education that I am concerned with in this study, is a self-reflective discourse shaped by practical and experiential learning. The critical thinking of black feminist pedagogues, such as hooks (1989, 1994) and Collins (2000) have largely influenced my approach to practical and experiential teaching and learning paradigms. Other influential educational philosophers that profoundly affected this research are, among others, Apple (1985); Giroux (1981); Gramsci (2000); Fanon (1963, 1967); Freire (1970). These educational philosophers helped me to understand the importance of alternative teaching and learning methodologies in working towards ‘just’ human relationships between all members of society.

The key question underpinning this research is: What does it mean to ‘teach and learn’ gender justice, liberation and dignity within the space and context of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) after decades of systematic dehumanisation under apartheid? My study will deal with two programmes located at the Gender Equity Unit. One is an educational drama, and the other is a programme on sexual orientation and gender identities as examples of feminist pedagogical methodologies that have been applied to the teaching of dignity and gender justice at UWC. The discussion will further show how difficult it is to work against longstanding modes of prejudice and exclusion, namely sexism, racism, ableism and gender discrimination, especially when numerous other urgent issues compete for limited human and financial resources.

This study will demonstrate the challenges of these radical approaches of teaching and learning, particularly in the face of the current disjuncture between social justice concerns

2. My interpretation of ‘black’ collapses the former apartheid race classification of African, coloured and Indian. This is a political choice I am making to unify these three ‘non-white’, apartheid-categorised race groups as ‘black’

and neoliberal market ideologies that define the post-apartheid South African socio-political and educational landscape. The introductory chapter defines my thinking over the years, which is embedded in the work I perform at the Gender Equity Unit (GEU) at UWC that focuses on the restoration of human dignity, identity and social justice. Throughout this dissertation, I identify and emphasise the intersectionality of race, gender, class, sexuality and sexual orientation, language and physical activity in claiming spaces that remains hostile to women, non-heteronormative genders and persons living with disabilities. This research is about ‘belonging’, and it unpacks the sense of belonging and exclusion in the historical or current, real or imagined and cerebral or corporeal contexts. This work concentrates on the lived experiences of young, black women and men students at a very specific moment in history (post-1994), in a particular country (South Africa) and at a particular university, UWC. This dissertation combines all the above-mentioned elements in its argument for critical feminist pedagogies to be developed from outside the classroom to teach and express the body in authentic, self-defining terms. It uses this argument to assert that sexuality, identity and belonging form part of the individual’s process of sense-making to become part of an inclusive campus citizenship. The research also shows how ‘slippery’ and ‘elusive’ the notions of academic and campus citizenship can be, notions to which I am returning later in the chapter.

This introductory chapter will continue to clarify my understanding of transformation, specifically at UWC and more generally in South African universities. Part of this discussion will focus on the history of the Gender Equity Unit and the role that it has played in the broader transformation context at UWC. The introductory chapter also maps out certain key understandings of radical pedagogy with reference to UWC. I believe that UWC is a meaningful site for this feminist study because the university is well known for its opposition to apartheid. It was the first South African Historical Black Institution (HBI) to institutionalise a gender equity unit in the form of the GEU and a Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) programme to effect gender transformation significantly ahead of the post-apartheid, South African progressive legal framework.

At present, the previous energy associated with the apartheid struggle has dissipated, and my study concentrates on analysing the impact that a small, under-resourced unit can make in the context of institutional transformation.

1.2 KEY CONCEPTUAL FACTORS AND CONCEPTS

In this study, I discuss the use of black feminist intellectual activism embedded in feminist pedagogical practices outside the formal classroom as an effective theoretical approach to encourage the process of becoming and being a university citizen in genuinely equitable terms. I particularly focus on the types of alternative education practices that should increasingly take place in the university's 'informal spaces' and during 'difficult' or 'conflict' situations, such as committee meetings or disciplinary enquiries. I am frequently confronted by my own choices regarding how to teach about justice and dignity within the university environment. In my work as Director of the GEU, I often become the 'repository' of knowledge concerning the exclusion shared by people who are routinely excluded from becoming part of the normative campus citizenship. The question for me as well as for the university and higher education environment I serve is: How does one teach 'belonging' in the university since a sense of belonging comes with citizenship?

I herewithpresent an insider's account of two programmes created and implemented by the GEU as tools for transformation through a commitment to critical feminist pedagogy. The one programme is an educational drama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, which speaks out against sexism and violence against women and in particular, the invisibility of black women. The other programme is an awareness-raising programme, Loud Enuf, which takes action against homophobia and heteronormative discrimination. In analysing and discussing these programmes, I will argue that now, more than ever, UWC needs to remain committed to alternative pedagogies in order to see the implementation of progressive equality policies becoming a lived reality within its borders.

In the course of this dissertation, I will reflect on the intersections between ableism, gender, gender identity, race, sexuality, sexual orientation, among other issues, and the incredible

opportunities provided by alternative feminist pedagogies to reinvent space and to explore and implement innovative ways to teach and learn about social justice and human rights. The claiming of space is, therefore, a recurrent theme throughout this dissertation in the re-imagining of the meaning and different spaces occupied by bodily beings.

In this section, I examine key contextualising, conceptual factors and concepts that inform the theoretical arguments made in this dissertation for black feminist intellectual activism as an important pedagogical approach for effective transformation in higher education institutions. Some of the key factors that contextualise and conceptualise this study are presented in the next section in an attempt to understand better the socio-political terrain of the higher education environment in which I locate my study and to present a theoretical argument for a black feminist intellectual activist approach to pedagogy within tertiary institutions.

1.2.1 Radical education philosophy in South Africa

The promulgation of the *Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959* is often regarded as a watershed moment that established ethnic and racially segregated universities in South Africa, officially establishing apartheid tertiary education in the country. Ironically, some of these separated institutions became key ‘sites of resistance’ and increasingly, the ‘enemies’ of the oppressive state, its functionaries and its ideologies (Anderson, 2002; Badat, 1999). This Act criminalised black people who tried to enrol in established white universities without the permission of the Minister of Home Affairs (Christie, 2000; Jansen, 1991; Kallaway, 1984; Pampallis, 1991). Education is never a neutral concept, which the apartheid government well understood when it took direct control over the higher educational environment to implement its apartheid ideology in a systematic fashion. In this move, the apartheid government directly determined university governance structures, such as councils, who could study where and when, the appointment of staff and what the curricula should entail (Bunting, 2006:40).

The calculated attempt of the apartheid regime excluded students and staff not legally classified as white from entering the existing white universities (Cloete et al., 2006). The establishment of ethnic universities by the then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr H.F.

Verwoerd, to ‘resolve’ the problem was precisely designed so that ‘races should not mix’, as the following words by Verwoerd in 1953 evidence:

There is no place for the non-white in the European community above certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors were open. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. (Dreijmanis, 1988:31)

As early as 1945, when the National Party (NP) first came to power, the aim of education to serve the labour interests of whites, as Verwoerd articulated, was already a foregone conclusion, and this is observed in the following words of NP politician, J.N. le Roux: “We should not give the Natives any academic education. If we do, who is going to do the manual labour in the community?” (Christie, 2000:12). From the beginning, there was resistance to this idea from within the universities themselves, even if the resistance by certain historically white institutions (HWIs) was only symbolic (Christie, 2000:232). The absence of militant action at this stage in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa saw apartheid education being duly implemented. In 1976, the Soweto Students Representative Council passed the following decision: “We shall reject the whole system of Bantu³ education whose aim is to reduce us, mentally and physically, into ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’” (Christie, 2000:12). This saw the beginning of militant action by black students in both the tertiary and school sectors in South Africa.

In the wake of what became known as The Soweto Uprising, there was also the realisation locally in progressive education circles that education does not necessarily have to occur in the official classroom but can take place anywhere at any time. Thus, began the experimentation with and the introduction of alternative pedagogical methods to mitigate the effects of the deadening and counterproductive apartheid education system that disempowered the majority of South African students — an alternative measure that was also closely associated with the official anti-apartheid struggle taking place in the country at the time (Ndlovu, 2006:317). The notion of ‘people’s education’ was introduced through the

3. During apartheid, the unequal education system established by the regime comprised a segregated and hierarchical structure for different racially classified groups in which there were fifteen different education departments (Christie, 2000:11).

provision of “alternative education programmes in after-school and community curricula” (Jansen & Middlewood, 2003:53). Freire’s (1970) concept of “education for liberation”, developed in the 1960s, was particularly useful in revolutionising and radicalising pedagogical approaches from within and outside education institutions. In the 1980s, the People’s Education Movement was formed in South Africa. The notion of ‘people’s education’ stressed the importance of a ‘people’s history’ and was conducive to unlocking critical thinking (Kallaway, 1992:59). The popularity of the notion ‘people’s education’ was embedded in the firm belief that oppressed people’s struggles and experiences are important for their own liberation and freedom from oppression; it served as an antithesis to the principles of the apartheid education system that consistently dehumanised people (Gerwel, 1987). In a relatively short period, a variety of educational and training material developed to assist universities, civil society and workers, especially members of the trade unions, in understanding their rights as workers, learning about democracy and critically pinpointing the evils of the oppressive apartheid state (Muhammed, 1996). The book, *The right to learn*, became an iconic publication in this regard and provided valuable insights into critical issues promoted by ‘people’s education’ in the 1980s (Christie, 2000).

Alternative education in South Africa during this time went by many other names, namely, ‘worker’s education’, ‘liberatory education’, ‘popular education’ and ‘education for transformation’, among others; all were heavily influenced by Freire’s (1970) concept of a “pedagogy of the oppressed” (Alexander, 1988:23). Proponents of ‘alternative education’ argued for its use in significant and different ways, for example, labour education to educate management structures and capitalists as well as to educate trade unions and workers about labour issues and rights, and literacy programmes for adults to inform about rights and to transform social conditions (Christie, 2000:264).

During the period of 1987 to 1988, a National Education Crisis Committee was established as part of the ‘people’s education’ project; its members were academics based at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and UWC (Kallaway, 1992). In the 1980s, the successor to the National Education Crisis Committee, namely, the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), launched the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) to investigate and redress issues of equality and democratic policy-making as options for education in the

anticipated post-apartheid South Africa (Kallaway, 1992:67, 73). The NEPI project completed its investigation in 1992 and represented its recommendations in the form of 12 reports to the National Commission on Higher Education. The NEPI recommendations became the foundation of education policy formulation in the new democratic dispensation post-1994.

According to Robinson and Meerkotter (2003), some members of the Faculty of Education at UWC were centrally involved in the ‘people’s education’ project. In 1991, a decision was taken to redirect the struggle for democratic education away from the streets and into the classroom and to turn the educator into a “transformative intellectual” (Robinson & Meerkotter, 2003:451-453). The experience and lessons learnt during the apartheid struggle in the alternative education sector not only influenced the conceptualisation of the current national policy framework but also had a profound effect on the politics of education, the ethos and the creation of learning and training centres for teachers, research institutions and education units at UWC.

1.2.2 Democracy, higher education and neoliberalism in South Africa

As an important step to grow the democracy, the newly elected democratic government in 1994 was immediately faced with the daunting task of transforming the higher education environment that was fraught with the apartheid history of racial divisions and skewed resource allocation. For instance, Walters (2006:8) notes: “The challenge for the democratic government has been to recreate the education and training system, virtually, in totality”. The question regarding the meaning of higher education in post-1994 South Africa thus became most important: How could a severely fragmented system be fixed while the same system was simultaneously allowed to continue with the least interruption? Transformation has indeed proved to be a mammoth task.

During 1994 to 2003, the higher education policy framework was marked by attempts to transform the shape, size and institutional culture of education institutions. In the apartheid past, laws were passed to create separate education systems, and the first order of business in

the education domain post-1994 was thus to promulgate counter or transformative laws to integrate the higher education environment into one unitary system. The major challenge was, and continues to be, the attempt to transform all the formerly segregated institutions into one integrated higher education system that functions optimally. It must be noted that debates with regard to transformation of the higher education system started long before the introduction of the new democracy, as discussion in the previous subsection indicated. Recommendations from NEPI were included in the plethora of post-1994 policies, such as education Green Papers and White Papers for parliament, higher education acts and commissioned reports for parliament. The most relevant to this discussion are the National Commission on Higher Education (1996); the Education White Paper 3 (1997); the *Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997*; and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001). These documents, together with the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996*, compel the state and its organs to guide and effect transformation in the higher education environment.

Democracy in South Africa came about through a protracted negotiated settlement that took almost six years until the final democratic constitution was passed in 1996. There were highly polarised pressures on the education system in the interim period leading up to political transformation. One was the issue of equitable access and redress for the marginalised and dispossessed, and another was the entry into the highly competitive global education enterprise (Singh, 2001; Walters, 2006). These tensions between seemingly binary positions are expressed by different stakeholders. Former executive chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and thereafter, rector of the University of South Africa (Unisa), argued that “the policy approach had to be both about dealing with the legacy of the past and yet shaping and preparing South African universities to embrace the future in a global world” (Pityana, 2004:2). In a speech, former South African President Mbeki expressed the ideological conflicts that arose between claims to human rights as enshrined in the 1996 Constitution and the imperatives of the liberal market into which the country (and academy) had moved since the inception of democracy:

Despite the legacy of the past, despite the socio-economic deprivation suffered by many students, despite the inadequate schooling some have, and despite the costs of erasing apartheid through mergers, incorporations and other forms of transformation, all of

which we must address, our universities must compete with the best in the world. (Mbeki, 2005)

Although intellectuals have agreed in principle that local universities become global players, they have nonetheless cautioned against the trend to be globally competitive and ranked in the absence of considering local institution needs, particularly in the African context. For example, Badat (2013) argues:

Instead of universities being obsessed with global rankings, they should rather create instruments that genuinely serve educational and social purposes; that contribute to improvement, innovation and development in universities and that facilitate informed choices and judgements on the basis of robust social science and appropriate methodologies. (Badat: 2013:203)

The new policy environment also brought about a new language for surveillance and measures for monitoring transformation. This language included terminology such as ‘quality assurance and control’, ‘audit’, ‘access’, ‘retention and throughput’, ‘inclusion and exclusion’, ‘dropouts’ and ‘success rates’. However, these quantitative measures, which mostly have the appearance of a technocratic language associated with accountability in terms of governance and administration, do not take into clear consideration the complexities of the social conditions, the multiple identities of campus citizens and the different teaching and learning processes within tertiary institutions. And, the question remains: What does democratisation of education mean?

According to Singh:

[D]emocratic and economically stable societies require a complex range of general and specialised competencies where philosophers and poets are as critical to human development as engineers and accountants. It is in the common interest for societies to be able to draw on a comprehensive spread of capacities from the educational citizenry in the fashioning of a humane world that can support the pursuit of wisdom through intellectual speculation and artistic creativity as much as the pursuit of knowledge and efficiency for economic well-being. (Singh, 2001:12)

Similarly, Badat (2013) argues that it is imperative that universities give attention to both its continuities as well as discontinuities, providing the continuities do not serve as impediments for the new generation of scholars, workers and students. According to Badat (2013):

[Universities should strive] to build new academic cultures, and, more widely, new institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity — whether these be related to class or gender, national, linguistic, religious or sexual orientation or are epistemological or methodological. (Badat, 2013:306-307)

He is adamant that the university, despite its many other functions, remains committed to critical scholarship, knowledge production and teaching and exercises accountability to the community of tax payers (Badat, 2013).

These debates, including the debates mentioned above, differentiate between critical scholarship, knowledge production and the building of new academic cultures but pay little attention to roll-out. Who is responsible for the education regarding citizenship in the democratic South Africa? Who is ultimately responsible for transforming the living, learning and teaching university environment into an inclusive space? How do these critical debates influence access to citizenship in the higher education environment? How do we give recognition and include the diverse bodies that enter the university with the dignity they deserve?

1.2.3 Becoming a university citizen

One of the key questions underpinning the research trajectory in this dissertation is: What does it take to become a university citizen? Academic culture, with its strong hierarchical nature, tends to privilege certain people and bodies above others. Equitable access, therefore, can be perceived differently. According to Machingambi (2011:15), debates on access to higher education are “premised on the moral high ground that education is a basic human right that empowers the socially and economically marginalised and vulnerable groups in different communities”. The Bill of Rights enshrined in the South African Constitution

“affirms democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom” (Act No. 108 of 1996). These values have indeed been replicated in the higher education policy framework. However, access to higher education cannot only be understood within the obligation and language of rights but is also implicated in the equally important notion of responsibility to enact in real terms the meaning of humanness in everyday living. The ensuing question is: Where and how to teach human dignity, equality and freedom?

An essential role of higher education in South Africa post-1994 is, therefore, to consolidate democracy and social justice. For instance, the policy document guiding the shape and size of the higher education environment emphasises the following:

Higher education has a vital role to play in producing knowledge, generating the socially committed graduates and providing various services for *enabling this country to pursue social equity, justice and higher standards for living for all* and contributing to the revitalisation of the African continent. (Council on Higher Education, 2000:24)
[Own emphasis]

The discourse in this policy document reflects the moment after liberation from apartheid and the expectations of higher education to “defend and advance democracy”, “promote good citizenship”, “foster open and critical intellectual debate”, “contribute to a vibrant and engaged civil society”, and “enhance equity and social justice” (Council on Higher Education, 2000:25). This is an immense task to fulfil. First and foremost, to be able to educate students to ‘become good citizens’, it is imperative that ‘good citizenship’ be fermented and reflected within the academic institution itself. In other words, the institution must be able to transform *itself* into a democratic environment *before* it can attempt to influence the social spaces beyond its borders in any realistic way. However, with fixed curricula for professional and career education and training, how does citizenship or civil education conform to this? Furthermore, what are the criteria for becoming a university citizen?

For Arthur (2005), the idea that universities have a civic role to play has become pure rhetoric with the increase of regulatory frameworks and financial constraints. He argues that there is no obligation to incorporate citizen education within students' formal education courses if it is not directly quantifiable (Arthur, 2005:2). The academic environment is filled with many role players who all claim "academic citizenship" in various ways (Morley & Walsh, 1995). Many opportunities exist through which people can 'become' part of this particular citizenry. However, the academy has many ways of excluding people from its 'inner circle' that are unrelated to the lack or the possession of academic excellence.

In the academic environment, one is invariably taught how to become the ideal citizen through the institution's rules and regulations. This begins from the moment of application to become a student or staff member until graduation and/or expulsion, dismissal, resignation or retirement. In the process of 'becoming' an academic citizen, different pedagogies are consistently applied to 'the university citizen' to teach the policies, rules, regulations and protocols that determine academic access or access to certain privileges, success, identity, social justice and human rights, as well as access to certain sports codes, academic programmes, information and committee structures. The education process ultimately teaches 'its citizens' a language and the meaning of academic belonging or exclusion (Arthur, 2005:2). These teaching and learning opportunities are formally called staff induction and development, leadership training and student orientation. There are many rewards as well as punitive measures built into the institutional system, including passing versus failing, promotion versus non-promotion, throughput versus exclusion and the granting or withholding of scholarships, research grants, sabbaticals, job evaluations and assessments (Arthur & Bohlin, 2005; McFarlane, 2007; Morley, 1999; Morley & Walsh, 1995)

The classroom is, therefore, not the only place where academic citizenship is taught. Education such as that described above continuously takes place in formal and informal settings, in committee meetings, at workshops, when socialising in the cafeteria, on sports fields, in residences, in senates and councils, over dinners, during university events, in disciplinary hearings and at awareness-raising events. University education sometimes overlaps with the functionary purposes of the institution or with the criteria for a specific

portfolio. Certain positions in the hierarchy have more privileges than others; hence, inequality is built into the system.

Morley (2003) draws attention to the power hidden in the semantics of the word “quality” in the notion of “quality control” and how, in its acquisition of discursive orthodoxy, the term is loaded with material and symbolic consequences. She also writes at length how micro politics and so-called “collegiality” determine terms of exclusion or inclusion within the academy (Morley, 2003:viii, 107). The question posed is: How is it possible to exercise quality control over pedagogies that transform human beings from within? A possible answer is feminist education because “feminist process acts as both politics and self-care” (Morley & Walsh, 1995:1).

Therefore, underpinning this dissertation is also the notion of ‘belonging’. “Belonging assumes boundaries of belonging and it is both exclusive as well as inclusive” (Yuval-Davis, 2010:266). According to Yuval-Davis (2010:268), the sense of belonging is embedded in identity politics, which, for the purposes of this dissertation, helps immensely in explaining how inclusion as well as exclusion in the ‘academic’ community occurs, depending on the “particular social positioning of people, in particular times and in particular spaces within the grids of social power”.

A deeply meaningful feminist connection between ‘belonging’ and ‘home’ exists, which I refer to in detail in chapters four, five and six, but for the introductory purposes of this chapter, I will discuss it briefly. Mohanty (2003:128) argues that “home” does not necessarily constitute “a comfortable, stable, inherited, and familiar space but instead it is an imaginative, politically charged space in which familiarity and sense of affection and commitment lay in shared collective analysis of social injustice, as well as a vision of radical transformation”. That it is defined in Mohanty’s (2003) terms as a predominantly imaginative space suggests that the reality of ‘home’ is still fraught with oppressions, exclusions, marginalisation and power contestations. Thus, ‘home’ is an appropriate metaphor to apply to the broader South African society as well as in the university context. In both these macro and the micro contexts, questions of access and belonging have a long history of denial and exclusion, given

South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid. The competing meanings of the concepts of 'home' and 'belonging' and the fact that UWC is, as are all other South African universities with the entrenchment of democracy, compelled to move and has indeed begun moving away from being an ethnic place that accommodates only one, specific race group, makes it crucial to examine how this particular university understands its new democratic home.

Stanley (1990) points out the complexity of the academic environment, arguing that there is both a pedagogical process as well as a hierarchical organisational structure involved in the production of knowledge and published academic outputs. Stanley (1990:5) observes that there are 'necessary workers' throughout faculties and departments, including secretaries, academics, cleaners, and in fact, all the people responsible for the smooth running of the institution. The value of the knowledge possessed by these 'necessary workers' more often than not is only recognised when they are positioned as objects of academic research. Yet these 'invisible workers' keep the academic 'machine' working during and after formal teaching hours. These 'invisible workers' determine and interpret the rules and protocols of campus citizenship, the knowledge of which often becomes the subject of the Masters and Doctoral studies of others. This observation is particularly important in terms of how I locate myself within this study. Both my personal and work lives contribute to shaping my understanding of campus citizenship. The nature of my work requires me to engage with a range of feminist pedagogies to educate people on campus about the intrinsic link between their citizenship on campus and feminist notions of embodiment, as well as the substantive nature of their bodily rights and their human and constitutional rights as students and workers, among other issues. In such work, there is always a consciousness that all the bodies at UWC have specific knowledge and experiences, which compels questions and the finding of solutions regarding how to unlock and share this knowledge and experience with dignity and respect.

1.3 SITE OF THIS FEMINIST STUDY: THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

In the following sections, the geographical location of UWC, which inadvertently became a site of struggle against racial oppression, is discussed. I also discuss how feminists at the university mobilised to establish a feminist space, the GEU, at a time in the university's and the country's history when the struggle against apartheid was not in any way focusing on women's and gender issues.

1.3.1 Geo-political location and apartheid architecture of UWC

Based on its oppressive philosophy of race and racism, the geographical locations of HBIs reflect the divide and rule of the socio-economic agenda of the apartheid state. Black institutions were either located in 'separate, ethnically created homelands' or, as in the case of UWC, located at great distances from vital amenities and activities associated with an urban university. The University of the Western Cape is positioned on the periphery of industrial activity and is close to the 'coloured' and certain black townships that acted as both 'feeder' to apartheid's industries and as residential communities for its labourers (Hames, Beja & Kgosimemele, 2005). The University of the Western Cape was consciously designed to be a 'coloured educational homeland'. Initially, the only tertiary institutions for technical training, the Peninsula Technikon that catered for 'coloured' students in the Western Cape region and one of the teacher training institutions for 'coloureds', the Bellville Teacher's Training College, were located directly adjacent to the university, creating the distinctive sense of a 'black or coloured education township'. Historically under apartheid, certain technical professions were reserved for whites only. Thus, the 'black education industry' has largely remained intact well into the 21st century, which is precisely the situation that policy in the higher education environment post-1994 is aimed at transforming.

The University of the Western Cape was specifically created for people in South Africa classified as 'coloured' via the promulgation of the *Extension of University Act, No. 45 of 1959*. In a review of the reconstructed history of the university celebrating fifty years of

existence in a book titled, *Becoming UWC: Reflections, pathways and unmaking apartheid's legacy*, Jacobs (2012) reflects on the location of UWC:

UWC's location is significant. It is situated on the outskirts of Cape Town, close to the airport and a series of impoverished townships bordering an industrial area that is hard to reach, even by public transport. That contrasts sharply with the surroundings of the two major universities in the area, the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University, both with extensive resources with roots in whites-only education. Slurs abound for UWC based on racial and regional distinctions: for example 'Colouredstan' and the 'bush'. These have turned into badges of honour, but UWC is still synonymous with 'lack and burden', though the university's national role is political, social, and economic life is assured. (Jacobs, 2012:1)

The University of the Western Cape is at present a medium-sized university with approximately 20 000 students and a staff complement of almost two thousand. The majority of the student population is black ('coloured', Indian and black African). Approximately 5 000 students live on campus in its residences, with the majority of these students being women. Overall, women constitute 60% of the student population. In the last ten years, massive building infrastructure improvements have taken place, and public and private partnerships with the university have flourished.⁴ Recently, more residences have been built to increase the student housing capacity on campus.

The above improvements may be regarded as an attempt to incorporate UWC into the Cape Town urban centre. Indeed, older lecture halls have been upgraded for use of new technology methods and equipment in the classroom space. Yet, as Jacobs (2012) stated above and as this study will proceed to discuss, this 'urban' university continues to bear the negative aspects of apartheid architecture and city planning and continues to experience many of the same challenges related to its distant physical location from the city's amenities as it did in the past. The University of the Western Cape is still surrounded by historically 'coloured townships', industrial areas and a shipping yard, evidencing the larger post-1994 South

4. New buildings such as lecture halls, laboratories and residences in partnership with public (government) and private institutions and philanthropies have been built over the last ten years.

African reality of the difficulty of physically changing the apartheid architecture of racial separateness, with racial integration of space still largely following a pattern of black, middle-class, upward mobility in white spaces. Thus, the social domain and integration of UWC students and staff members to reflect a democratic ethos remain sources of great concern. The separation between students living on campus in residences and those who commute from home or private residences daily is one such example. The classroom is often the only place for students to interact among themselves or with teaching staff. During the day, certain spaces on campus are occupied by different groups of students. The specificity in occupation of physical social spaces is a visible indicator of the division into groups according to sex, gender, race, class and sexual orientation.

The large percentage of students dependent on public transport includes the many who must take multiple taxis or trains to and from campus. Taxi violence is a regular occurrence on the Cape Flats, and reports to the GEU from staff and student public-transport commuters indicate a range of traumatic experiences on a daily basis in this regard. Students travel using public transport from as far as Darling (76 km), Atlantis (53 km) and Malmesbury (68 km) along the Cape West Coast and from Wellington (72 km) and Worcester (111 km) in the north to attend classes. Commuters must use public transport at odd or dangerous hours, such as early in the morning from 04:00 and after 19:00 at night because of the distances involved: times that are statistically linked by the police to peak criminal activity in South Africa, including sexual and physical assault, murder and theft. Public transport commuters from the above outlying areas, as well as those from the closer inner suburbs and peripheral townships, are affected by violence in this regard. Students from the relatively close Mitchells Plain, one of the largest residential areas in the Cape Peninsula, must take three taxis to reach the UWC campus. Students report assault, robbery and harassment as ‘normal’ occurrences in taxis and on trains. Such students often report to the GEU of being harassed or robbed of all their possessions, including money, text books, items of clothing, cellular phones and laptops, thus adding to their economic burden.

The University of the Western Cape is the only educational institution in the Cape Town region that offers undergraduate degrees after normal academic hours, which affords older, working adults the opportunity to undertake fulltime studies after working hours. These

students also face physical safety concerns linked to public transport because they are required to travel to UWC after normal working hours and on weekends when public transport is irregular. Due to this, tests and examinations are often conducted on Saturdays. The library is open until midnight from Monday to Thursday, until 17:00 on Saturdays and until 17:00 on Sundays during examination times. As a measure to address these serious concerns for student safety, the university has made available an overnight study hall attached to the library for the students on a twenty-four-hour, seven-days-a-week basis. Yet, the structural problems facilitating the experience of violence by UWC students remain a fact of their daily and intrinsic experience of being a student at this institution. The above discussion relating to the geographical location and architecture of UWC is vital in understanding the intersectionalities involved in examining the different identities relating to race, gender and class on campus.

In the following section, the ‘space’ called UWC as a ‘site of struggle’ and as a ‘home of the left’ is discussed.

1.3.2 A ‘home of the intellectual left’ within a history of ‘people’s education’

The University of the Western Cape is well known for its struggle against apartheid. It was originally referred to in the derogatory terms of ‘Bush College’ or ‘Bush’ in the 1960s, terms that persist up to this day. However, the terms may be used both ways, especially when students use the terms proudly in association with its history of radical resistance against apartheid. In the 1970s, UWC became known as the ‘University of the Working Class’, a play on its abbreviation that also emphasises its connectedness to the black, predominantly working-class communities it served (Koen, 2007:78, 84). Subsequently, as its struggle identity became increasingly established, it became known as the ‘people’s university’ and in the 1980s, as a ‘home of the intellectual left’. Currently, it is referred to as “a place of quality, a place to grow: from hope to action through knowledge” (Ravjee, et al., 2010:26). It is the close relationships that UWC forged with the communities it served (the people and the workers) and the connections it made between the intellectual left and the activists during the 1980s and early 1990s that gave it institutional credibility as a ‘struggle university’ or ‘people’s university’ (Anderson, 2002; Koen, 2007; Buchler, 2007).

Regarding its embracing of left politics and left intellectualism, UWC became one of the leading HBIs, embracing and promoting the notion of ‘people’s education’ (Anderson, 2002; Koen, 2007). ‘People’s education’ found particular resonance at three centres in the Education Faculty of the university, namely the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) founded in 1985, the Academic Development centre (AD) established in 1990 and a Writing Centre established in 1994 to assist students with their writing. It is important to note that all three initiatives were spearheaded by adult women staff members at the university.

The early feminist pedagogical practices and experiences at CACE were recorded by the founder and first director, Shirley Walters, and her colleague, Liz Mackenzie (Mackenzie, 1992; Walters, 1996). Since 1991, the erstwhile conservative Faculty of Education has adopted a more progressive model of teaching and has introduced, among other features, ‘action research’ methods that take into consideration people’s lived realities and existing knowledge in research and knowledge production. The influence of the teaching theories of progressive Northern American and British educators found fruitful ground among the more liberal thinkers and activists within the Education Faculty at UWC (Robinson & Meerkotter, 2003). By making pedagogy relevant to the experiences of ordinary people and thus defying the low limits and prescriptions envisaged for this university by apartheid education, UWC began to create a ‘people’s university’. The AD centre has been particularly alert to the creation of dialogue between students and educators, with its work serving as an example of the continuous value and practice of ‘people’s education’ well into the democracy. The AD centre has also begun to publish articles on their research and experiences and has established a publication specifically for this purpose, *AD Dialogues*.

It was accepted that the dialogical research took into account the experiences of students inside and outside the academy. Listening to their ‘voices’ and documenting their experiences was considered as essential to the process of identifying critical areas for pedagogical, curricula, and assessment reforms at UWC. (Anderson, 2002:96-97)

In the 1980s, the institutional climate of UWC opened up to several transformative interventions. Up to this day, UWC still houses the Workers' College, Ditsela.⁵

1.3.3 UWC, women, race and space

The mid-1980s also saw the unprecedented move on campus of feminists approaching the rector at the time, Jakes Gerwel, and demanding treatment, benefits and privileges equal to those of men on campus. They subsequently formed a Women's Commission and drew up a list of demands⁶ in this regard, one of which was for the establishment of a unit dedicated to ensuring that women-sensitive policies be developed at UWC. In 1993, the GEU was thus formally established.

All women in the academy under the patriarchal system of apartheid were generally positioned as 'other', and because apartheid was also a racist system, black women were made even more marginal and invisible in this regard. Indeed, as this study consistently argues, black women were, and continually remain, positioned within the academy to serve the apartheid-created machinery and educational institutions mainly as administrators, 'domestic workers cum cleaners'. Ironically, in 2000, a sculpture of a black domestic worker with a broom in one hand and the hand of her presumed son who is holding up an academic diploma in the other was erected on the campus grounds to celebrate the post-apartheid transformation of UWC. The sculpture, created by well-known local artist, David Hlongwane, provoked debate, among other actions, regarding the meaning of legacy, the stereotyping of mothering and motherhood and the stereotyping of the image of black women from the past into the present. Some interpreted the sculpture as perpetuating gender stereotypes of women as servile and inferior, while others uncritically regarded it as a celebration of the ethos of UWC. A strong dissident voice from within the campus placed emphasis on the non-critical rendering of the image of black women and the non-recognition of her role within the institution and society in all aspects of South African life. It condemned unreservedly the placing of the statue in the following terms: "the statue depicts women as servants and stepping stones to a man's success" (Witz, 2012:172-173).

5. The first Worker's College was started at the university in 1991.

6. See discussion on policy formulation in the section regarding the GEU later in this chapter.

The University of the Western Cape was not, and is still not, a place where women's bodies in their totality are welcome. Indeed, this may be evidenced in the example of the statue of 'celebration' discussed above, which clearly endorses misogyny and the marginalisation of black women on campus. When UWC opened its doors in 1960, only five of the first intake of students were women. In its first four decades, pregnant staff members were not allowed tenure or the opportunity to attain professorship, and women did not receive the same financial and academic benefits and privileges as male academics. In fact, according to recent university regulations and policy, pregnant students and newly appointed women staff members are still discriminated against with regard to work benefits. A host of other exclusionary policies designed and implemented at the time denied women becoming fully fledged academic citizens (Hames et al., 2005; Kadalie, 2006). It is in this context of work benefits and rights equity that feminists at UWC first sought recourse against sexism and gender inequality by contesting policy design and implementation in favour of gender mainstreaming.

Apartheid surveillance techniques and university policies, combined with Calvinist patriarchal values and norms, subjugated women in the above-mentioned and other ways, converting them into 'non-campus citizens' or marginalised citizens. Moreover, certain professional career-training areas deliberately excluded women. For example, although the former Faculty of Theology boasted an attached residence for students training to become church ministers, women were neither housed there nor did the faculty ordain them as Dutch Reform Church ministers. As a further example, certain sports codes such as rugby, soccer and cricket were not accessible to women athletes and while in the wake of UWC women's protests, these sports codes became open to women students, inequities in resource allocation for male and female sportspersons still exist. Instead, at the time, practices that objectified women for consumption by the male gaze, such as annual beauty pageants, were the norm. The academy by default of its patriarchal culture and through its heterosexist practices condoned the extreme 'feminisation' and sexual objectification of women in its space. It was concern at this exclusion of women, which prevented them from being fully fledged academic citizens that led to the institutionalisation of the GEU by early feminists at UWC.

1.3.4 UWC feminism, gender and the Gender Equity Unit (GEU)

It is often said that “South African feminism was born at the University of the Western Cape” (Walters, 1999). Rhoda Kadalie (quoted in Salo, 2005), the first Gender Equity Officer on campus, noted that the institutional culture at UWC was not particularly supportive of women and, in fact, during class boycotts during anti-apartheid protests on campus, women students were often beaten up. According to Kadalie in Salo (2005:115-116), it is only because feminists at UWC were brave enough to demand retribution that the university was one of the first universities in the country to develop a sexual harassment policy. Kadalie (quoted in Salo, 2005:115-116) also shares that undergraduate classes began to be used to raise gender-awareness among UWC students with workshops and seminars as tools to promote feminism and gender consciousness. Kadalie (quoted in Salo, 2005:119) ascribes the success of infusing feminism and gender into the mainstream academic programme at UWC to the connection between fundamental activism taking place on campus by its feminists and theory being taught in the classroom. Kadalie (quoted in Salo, 2005:119) points to the accessibility of the Women’s and Gender Studies Winter School programmes for women outside the academy as an example of this.

It is acknowledged that the feminist-oriented policies of UWC were ahead of their time. However, since the promulgation of national legislation, the university has lost this feminist pioneering advantage and has adapted its once progressive policies to the minimum requirements of the law.

In the context of early feminist action within UWC, the Manpower Committee at UWC was renamed the Human Resources Committee. The Women’s Commission monitored the implementation of its recommendations, challenging sexist practices at the university. Some of the first gains for women were: the best maternity benefits for women anywhere in the country, with five months fully paid leave and seven days paternity leave for men; married women could now qualify for a housing subsidy; chief vigilante duties could now be carried out by women — a task previously assigned to men only; and an educare centre for children of all staff members was established (Kadalie, 2006:6). Women students formed an

awareness group, *Kopanang*, under the auspices of the GEU and collectively challenged patriarchal attitudes, structures and sexism among the student body (Hames et al., 2005:157).

On 3 March 1992, the Gender Policy was approved by the UWC Senate, and the GEU was officially instituted by the same in 1993. Subsequently, the first Gender Equity Officer, Rhoda Kadalie, was appointed and “provided with research and administrative support and given access to all university committee structures, as well as to statistical data” (Walker, 1997:48). A governance body, the Gender Policy Action Committee (GPAC) and a Senate-Council Committee was established to which the Gender Equity Officer and a researcher on gender issues at the university reported on a quarterly basis.

During the first phase of the gender equity portfolio, the Gender Equity Officer and researcher were primarily responsible for policy development with regard to women’s and gender issues. Within the first two years, the research focused on the formulation of a Sexual Harassment Policy, the establishment of an Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee and the development of a Non-Sexist Language and Gender Policy. Other research resulted in the construction of the first race and gender profile of all staff at the university, a first at UWC.

The GEU conducted a Special Features Programme that included a range of activities such as theatre, dance and drama that focused on issues around sexual harassment, sexuality and interpersonal violence. Networks were established through international exchange programmes, in particular with the Women’s Studies Centre at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and the University of Missouri in the United States. A Resource Centre was established, and booklets and pamphlets on sexual harassment in English and Xhosa as well as a Directory of Women’s Organisations in the Western Cape and a Quarterly Women’s Bulletin were published. The GEU has been responsible for the introduction of two degree programmes in Women’s and Gender Studies — a BA Honours and an MPhil degree. It is well known that the GEU has been involved in feminist education on and beyond the campus since its inception in 1993.

The first five years were marked by establishing the GEU's identity and reputation, both as a campus and as a national and international women's and gender institution. In this period, emphasis was placed on policy development and awareness-raising with regard to women's discrimination and oppression at the domestic and workplace levels. The work was extremely progressive, and the Gender Equity Officer became well sought-after as an intellectual feminist activist. During this period, many local, regional and international networks were also being established and many, as with the GEU, are still intact twenty years on. Among them are gender centres in Utrecht, Missouri, the South African Development Countries (SADC) and the African Gender Institute (AGI) at UCT.

The second phase (1999–2004) of the GEU was more complex, which can be ascribed to a variety of factors such as the acquisition of a progressive women and gender-sensitive legal framework in post-1994 South Africa. The GEU, together with community-based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), trade unions and a variety of other civil society organisations countrywide, was involved in shaping some of the progressive women and gender-sensitive laws in existence in the country. Since 1996, a vast 'gender machinery' has been established and has become a strong and powerful force in the country. This 'gender machinery', together with a supportive court environment with the Constitutional, Family and Equality courts, has created legal acknowledgement of sexual rights and sexual orientation. For example, university policies in this period were reviewed to adhere to the legal requirements of new laws with regard to sexual harassment and parental leave vis-à-vis the progressive and new interpretation of the notion of family.

The above factors also greatly affected the third phase of the GEU. Firstly, the legal rights and framework did not necessarily or automatically translate into substantive social and human rights redress within the academy. Staff members and students primarily involved in raising awareness of injustices, discrimination and violence against women on campus during the first and second phases of the GEU's existence had in the interim left UWC for various reasons. Students, a transient group, had completed their studies and many progressive staff members found employment within the new democratic government structures, moved into the private sector or 'progressed' to HWIs of higher learning, the latter of which were now

compelled by law to transform their staff profiles with regard to race and gender.⁷ In this process, UWC lost a major part of its collective institutional memory. Moreover, the GEU was under constant threat of closure because university authorities tended to regard ‘gender’, the unit and its work as no longer relevant now that the new democratic dispensation had attained extensive legal transformation. However, as this dissertation constantly argues, the issue of implementation of good policies is still a key issue at UWC, as indeed everywhere else in the country.

1.3.5 Post-1994 shifts and the GEU as a site of resistance

The immediate post-1994 moment affected the university deeply. Via the ‘poaching’ mentioned above, UWC experienced a massive loss of highly qualified personnel, with the staff exodus having a ripple effect on a number of initiatives on campus. However, there was now the advantage of a closer relationship between the university and the state. Certain niche research areas were developed on campus to service the new democratic state in terms of skills and policy development. For example, the Education Policy Unit (EPU) engaged in quantitative research projects regarding gender in higher education, throughput and retention studies. A newly established School of Government educated a new cadre of government workers, and the GEU advised different government departments on the development of gender and sexual harassment policies. Initially, the GEU, in partnership with the AGI at UCT, hosted a series of extra-curricular winter schools to provide education and training to civil society and government officials with regard to feminism and gender mainstreaming. Thus, popular gender education came to play a major role in the first phase of the existence of the GEU. A Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) programme was institutionalised, and feminism and gender awareness were added to a number of mainstream academic courses, such as Sociology and Anthropology, Languages and Literature, Adult Education, Economics, Community Law, Education Policy Unit and Labour Studies (Salo, 2005:120).

7. A number of senior staff members were called to serve in the Government of National Unity (GNU), and the then rector, Jakes Gerwel, became the personal assistant to the first black president, Nelson Mandela. The first Minister of Higher Education was a former professor in the Faculty of Education. The first Gender Equity Officer, Rhoda Kadalie, was called upon to join the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). Many ‘left wing’ academics joined the first democratic parliament and other governance structures.

However, the loss of institutional memory allowed conservative attitudes to re-enter the campus space, with departmental reviews soon accusing spaces within the university that remained progressively alert to ongoing transformation needs of ‘mission drifting’. Lewis (2009:214) argues that feminist teaching is increasingly compromised and has less to do with students’ political and personal growth and more to do with equipping the students with tools for applied or analytical gender analysis that is more applicable to technocratic development careers. It was, for instance, recommended that the GEU be closed and some of the programmes incorporated into various other departments to ‘enhance’ the programmatic work of these departments and other programmes dispensed with entirely (GEU Review Report, 2010). In fact, a number of progressive institutes have either merged or closed down. For instance, the AD centre was closed down, CACE and the EPU were incorporated into a new Institute for Post School Studies, and the WGS programme became a separate department. These progressive centres that had conducted excellent research on women and gender in higher education hence came to be regarded as outdated and made redundant.

These developments and the recommendations for the closure of the GEU in 2010 have led to renewed efforts in defining the space as a site of resistance and returning to a ‘beyond compliance’ ethos. It is within this context of the GEU’s political positioning within UWC that this dissertation formulates its arguments regarding the university space being continually positioned as a site of resistance by the adoption of alternative pedagogies by the oppressed to free themselves of their experiences of oppression and discrimination.

Black feminists have theorised about ‘space’ and ‘resistance’ from a number of different perspectives. For instance, hooks (1994) has used the classroom “space to resist” dominant hegemony in the United States’ academic environment, writing specifically about “teaching to transgress”. Mohanty (1991b) has written about feminist scholarship and colonial discourses in her essay, “Under Western Eyes”, arguing that descriptive categories appropriating universalistic terminologies such as “Third World women” assume that all women are subjected to similar experiences of oppression and subjugation and are inherently flawed. According to Mohanty (1991b), throughout history, different women with diverse experiences in different cultural settings have used ‘various spaces’ and methods to resist and

challenge. There can, therefore, be no ‘common’ or ‘universal’ “Third World woman” (Mohanty, 1991b:51-74).

Lewis similarly argues about the fragility of “white feminists dominance in the academic domain” when their perceptions and “authoritative interpretations of the colonized, the underclass, the dominated in South Africa” are challenged by interpretations offered by black women (Lewis, 1993:538). Lewis (1993:538) shows how various black women have claimed voice and space in the hostile South African academic environment. On the African continent, many feminists have also written with concern about the scholarship and voice within the context of the African academy from the perspective of African feminisms, thus also claiming their respective ‘spaces’ within it (Mama, 2011; McFadden, 2010).

A recent study on ‘throughput’ at three South African higher education institutions concluded that dominant cultural constructs (race, class, gender and sexual orientation) shape broader campus relationships (Council on Higher Education, 2010a:174). This notion is explicitly reflected in the UWC experience, as was pointed out very early on by leadership at the university. As Gerwel (1990), a previous vice-chancellor, noted:

[UWC] recognises the structured nature of social, political and economic advantage and disadvantage in South African society and it therefore *locates itself as an educational agency serving forces of social change and transformation*. The University attempts to take seriously its relationship with the ‘community’ and the manner in which that relationship influences teaching, learning and research in the University. (Gerwel, 1990:7) [Own emphasis]

1.4 ORGANISATION OF DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

This dissertation comprises seven chapters. The outlay of chapters is as follows:

Chapter One introduces the thought process to the study and provides the background to the rationale for the research. In particular, it describes how and why UWC moved from a university established for ‘coloured people’ to a ‘site of resistance’ that challenged the

oppressive apartheid state. This chapter describes the historical background and pedagogical ethos of UWC. It offers insight into the commitment of UWC to make the lives and learning experiences of the oppressed visible by actively embracing the ethos of 'education for liberation' and instituting 'action research' as opposition to Christian National Education. The chapter introduces the Gender Equity Unit as a feminist space, which continued with the transformative feminist education practices outside the classroom that were started by units such as the Centre for Continuing Adult Education. Chapter 1 introduces black feminist thought as one of the primary pedagogies used at the GEU to raise awareness about social justice, visibility and inclusion.

Chapter Two analyses the theoretical approaches of the respective critical, liberatory and radical pedagogies. It especially focuses on the theories of Freire and the critique that it has drawn from feminist pedagogues. It explains why feminists found Freire's approach both welcoming and disconcerting. The chapter points to the difference in the understanding of liberatory pedagogy for white and black feminists and locates the GEU's attraction to particular black feminists' theoretical and practical interpretations thereof. This chapter provides the theoretical background and insight to the choices made by the GEU for introducing its programmatic work as black feminist liberatory pedagogy.

Chapter Three frames the methodological approaches in the analysis of the two programmes in the research narrative. It explains why the research was undertaken as a PhD project and why it is regarded as practice-led research. It forwards the difficulty in presenting non-conventional methodologies within the framework of conservative research practices and the creation of messy texts when writing against the 'normative' grain. It also touches on the history of action research, an established research practice at UWC, to challenge existing oppressive research paradigms, and it firmly positions feminist ethnographical research as a central tenet. It positions the researcher as central in the unfolding research of the two programmes under discussion. This chapter describes the methods applied in the construction and interpretation of data.

Chapter Four contextualises the first programme under discussion, *Reclaiming the P...Word*. It provides theories regarding the feminist text and analyses the history and the language in the text of the theatre production. The chapter provides insight into the danger and provocativeness of writing feminist texts and connects this liberatory expressiveness with the type of critical pedagogy needed in the post-1994 South Africa. It shows why it was possible to create and explore this type of feminist pedagogical practice outside the formal classroom at UWC. It, therefore, connects the history, the geographical location and the teaching practices in chapters one and two with the demography of the particular student studying at this university.

Chapter Five continues to unpack elements constituting feminist theatre. Chapter Five contextualises the meaning and the impact of the performances and performativity on the audience. It shows a deep connection between the notions of ‘theatre of the oppressed’ and ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’. It points to the didactical principles of the feminist self, embodying and embodiment. This chapter concentrates on the experiences gained by the cast and the impact that the process of writing and the act of performance made upon them. The chapter also introduces the masculine and the apartheid history of the venues. It demonstrates how black performers have historically been excluded from these performance spaces in South Africa and how these young women, without formal training, claim these spaces with confidence.

Chapter Six discusses the programme, *Loud Enuf*, and refers to the concerns pertaining to inclusive campus citizenship. This chapter argues for inclusive sexual citizenship on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. It shows how students connect national, civil, group and individual struggles with campus politics. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates how students create opportunities to raise awareness and how they teach antidiscrimination. The chapter describes practices of ‘pride’ and ‘coming out’ on campus and in civil society as examples of self-esteem and embodiment.

Chapter Seven concludes and makes sense of the particular pedagogical theorisation and its application in this dissertation. It reiterates the importance of speaking truth to power and reflects on the creation of ‘new’ knowledge through ‘non-academic’ programmes.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORISING FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In this chapter, I present the reasons why the programmatic work of the Gender Equity Unit focused on the reviving of liberatory and critical pedagogies to highlight the endemic violence against women on and off our South African campuses. I also reflect on the connection between the notions of action research, ‘people’s education’ and the impact that their history had in the reintroduction of liberatory practices at the GEU. In the process, I review theories of critical pedagogies, specifically those engaged with feminism. The methodologies and tools that have been applied in this research are discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

The GEU works within the realm of eradicating the systemic violence against women on campus and the dismantling of all types of gender discrimination and prejudice. The paradox is that the GEU works with issues of embodiment from a feminist perspective, and the conundrum is that it is located within the neoliberal education project where issues concerning the humanities are starting to play a far lesser role than that of science, technology and the economy. I refer to the neoliberal university in a subsequent section.

The GEU works with people who are consistently confronted and struggle with issues concerning gendered, sexualised and racialised violence usually connected to nationality, gender, language and class formations. Sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and xenophobia are regularly silenced in the higher education environment and when reported, the complainants are often accused of bringing the institution into disrepute. The irony is that the GEU was established to investigate, highlight and offer solutions to discrimination and violence against women in the academy outside the presence of a legal and policy framework (Solomons, 1989; Walters, 1999; Kadalie, 2006). In a sense, the current programmatic work returns to a position of embodiment that is not necessarily answerable to formal legal rights.

The programmes are concerned with esteem building and liberation of the self. The programmes further lay claim to a sense of belonging and claiming space in the academy through intellectual activism. This type of activism, in turn, creates opportunities for new theoretical approaches and understanding.

In Chapter One, I have referred to the first ‘gender-sensitive’ policies at UWC that included a Gender Policy, a Sexual Harassment Policy and a Non-Sexist Language Policy. In retrospect, one could draw the inference that all three policies were created in a hostile and discriminatory environment towards women. And one could question, therefore, the seemingly ‘progressive’ nature thereof. Yet, within a particular historical moment, the only way to claim recognition, justice and space was to create policies within a negative context. The programmes under discussion in chapters four, five and six of this research aim to turn this negativity into positivity with their focus on agency and how this agency raises awareness through practising a feminist pedagogy of liberation.

Violence against women (VAW) in institutions of higher learning has been extensively written about in research papers, theses, journal articles and the public media (Bennett, 2002; Sass, 2005; Bennett, 2009; Hames, 2009; City Press, 2013). The violence is particularly gendered, racialised and classed and is silenced within our institutions of higher learning. The question is which of the pedagogical methodologies are best suited to raise awareness, teach and learn whilst simultaneously building agency, solidarity and networks inside and outside the academy. The GEU decided to use awareness-raising programmes, such as educational drama productions, seminars, films, workshops and other public platforms, to educate outside the formal classroom.

The first question under review concerns the meaning and value of critical pedagogy, and the second refers to the debates in critical feminist pedagogy that are concerned with the lived, racial, bodily and gendered experiences of the individual *outside* the formal university classroom. The existing theoretical literature on feminist pedagogy largely covers the pedagogical process inside the classroom that shapes and is shaped by curricula. I am interested, however, in education processes that take place outside the classroom within the

higher education environment to help adapt and complement formal pedagogy in a practical way to include the contexts, lived experiences and embodiment process as presented outside and inside the classroom. My aim is to deconstruct the notion that whatever takes place outside the classroom is merely activism and not necessarily intellectual. I, therefore, subscribe to the notion of intellectual activism that transcends the artificial binaries of activism versus intellectualism. In my research, I theorise praxis as an example of radical pedagogical possibility.

Radical pedagogies, according to McGettigan (1992), may be interpreted in many different ways. For some, their value lies in exposing the process by which political dynamics are played out in the institution and manifested in policies and practices; for others their value is centred on the principle of education being oriented towards radical social transformation (McGettigan, 1992).

Gore (1993) argues that the concept of radical pedagogies originates from the disciplines in which they are located. She uses notions of feminist pedagogy often located in Women's Studies and ideas of critical pedagogy that are primarily used in schools of Education as examples (Gore, 1993). According to Gore (1993:6-8), this fragmentation of origin may be the result of disciplinary isolation, lack of alliances or even the lack of substantial mutual engagement with work across disciplines. Thus, for her, pedagogy implies both instructional practices and social vision (Gore, 1993:6-8). Both Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and radical feminist pedagogies are underpinning this research.

2.2 PROBLEMATISING FREIREAN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Freire understood education as “the practice of freedom” (Freire, 1970:63). His educational philosophy is premised on the fact that class positioning determines the respective identities of the oppressor and the oppressed. He was influenced by Marx’s class analysis and believed that inequalities and injustices in society are closely tied with capitalism. Freire (1970:130-133) argues that the dominant elite had the power to manipulate and anaesthetise the oppressed to prevent them by any means necessary from thinking critically and finding concrete solutions for their problems. He argued for a dialectic teaching methodology (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) states that the transformational value of education lies in the fact that it is constantly remade through praxis. According to Freire (1970:64-65), students should be involved in problem-solving education, and attention should be paid to constant reflection on the self, which subsequently leads to their liberation.

Freire (1970) argues that the function of pedagogy of the oppressed is twofold. Firstly, because it is humanistic and liberatory, its objective is to transform the consciousness of the individual and secondly, once the envisioned transformation is achieved “the pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes the pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation” (Freire, 1970:36). Moreover, “if the dichotomy between teaching and learning results in the refusal of the one that teaches to learn from the one that’s being taught, it grows from an ideology of domination” (Freire, 1970:114). Thus, according to Rossatto (2005:131), Freirean-oriented critical pedagogy “challenges and legitimizes the lived experiences of teacher and students and empowers them as agents of social change”. Taylor (1993:63) notes that Freire’s notion of liberatory education was influenced by other radical intellectuals such as Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon.

For Freire (1970), the pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument through which the oppressed can make the critical discovery that both they and the oppressors are manifestations of dehumanisations. However, he argues that the oppressor can never be the liberator and that the onus rests on the oppressed to liberate themselves (Freire, 1970:63). It is, therefore, essential that continuous dialogue takes place with the oppressed regarding the action they can take in accordance with their historical conditions (Freire, 1970:63).

Moreover, the choice of action should come from the oppressed after deep reflection to avoid populist sloganeering and manipulation (Freire, 1970:63). Thus, according to Freire (1970:53), it should always be remembered that “[t]he interest of the oppressor is not to change the conditions of the oppression, but to keep the oppressed in a subordinate position”.

2.2.1 Dialectic and egalitarian

It is only through dialogue that humans can express and name the world, but true dialogue cannot exist in the absence of critical thinking (Freire, 1970:73). However, dialogue should not become merely a “feel good” exercise; the “sharing of experiences must always be understood within social praxis that entails both reflection and political action” (Freire, 1970:10). Even though Freire’s methodology was practised outside the classroom, his theory was found equally useful inside the formal classroom. In the analysis of the Freirean theory, Giroux argues that: “[d]ialectical thought points to the relationship that exists between knowledge, power and domination” (Giroux, 2009:34). The dialectical relationship allows the educator to see the classroom not merely as a place of indoctrination, socialisation or a site of instruction but also as a cultural terrain where student empowerment and transformation take place (McLaren, 2009:62).

Feminist educators, generally, find resonance with the liberatory language and the underlying philosophy of the pedagogy of the oppressed, yet they also raise concerns with the sexist language and underlying philosophy of exclusion of women. Gore (1993) argues that in spite of the fact that Freire’s location was in a particularly patriarchal and class culture and that he generally neglected gender issues, his work was largely embraced within the feminist discourse. The argument she forwards is that Freire’s connection to the embodiment of ‘Third World’ identities and politics is congruent with the general social vision of feminist pedagogies, namely the “liberation of women and minorities” (Gore, 1993:22). In an imaginary conversation, hooks (1994:45-58) also relates how Freire’s concept of “education as a practice of freedom” provided her with the political language to articulate pedagogic theory on the decolonisation of the mind. However, Freire’s approach until then was gender-blind (hooks, 1994:45-58).

Critical pedagogy's long and interesting history focuses on the transformation of schools in order to open up possibilities to practise and embrace the ideal of social justice. The language underpinning critical pedagogy engages terminology such as 'emancipation', 'transformation', 'education as practice of freedom', 'pedagogy of the oppressed', 'radical pedagogy' and 'education for liberation'. The terminology indicates the intention to democratise the practice of education and moving it from positivism and structuralism towards participative education (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2009:2; Freire, 1970:62; Gore, 1993:6). The proponents of critical pedagogy argue that traditional schooling perpetuates and reproduces existing societal inequalities and hegemonies and maintain that critical pedagogy challenges the status quo in addressing concerns such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, cultural power and equity, concerns that are usually marginalised in mainstream education (Giroux, 1992:147; Valle, 2002:161-168; hooks, 2009:135-141).

There are "diverse philosophical principles that underpin critical pedagogy and these include intellectual traditions that sought to explore the relationship between human beings, schooling, and society, through a variety of epistemological, political, economic, cultural, ideological, ethical, historical, aesthetic, as well as methodological point of reference" (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2009:9). Gore (1993) pinpoints two strands in critical pedagogy; the first strand concentrates on the instruction, with its main proponents being Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, and the second strand deals with the broad social and educational vision, with Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren as some of the main advocates. According to Giroux (2009), critical pedagogy refers both to a "school of thought" and a "process of critique". Thus, "any theory should be able to confront the distinction between the world it examines and portrays and the world as it actually exists" (Giroux, 2009:27).

Critical pedagogy provides the philosophy that undergirds education processes that enable the raising of consciousness regarding injustice and liberation. It is not a philosophy that advocates doing or taking action *for* or *on behalf* of the oppressed, but requires initiation *by* the oppressed. While critical pedagogy may be viewed as a revolutionary education process, it should not be expected that the oppressive situation or the oppressor will simply change overnight. In reality, the journey of transformation and liberation is a protracted process of unlearning and relearning identity and notions of self, agency and freedom.

2.2.2 Feminist critique

One of the most stinging critiques against critical pedagogy was made by Ellsworth (1994:309) who argues that through experience, she came to the conclusion that “certain key assumptions about critical education such as ‘empowerment’, ‘student voice’, ‘dialogue’, and even the term ‘critical’ constitute repressive myths”. She is concerned that other diversities are “silenced” in the name of liberatory pedagogy (Ellsworth, 1994:301). Ellsworth (1994) provides concrete examples that show the critical pedagogy theoretical framework as lacking the impetus for her in thinking through and planning classroom practices. She found it abstract and could only surmise that the term ‘critical’ concealed the real agendas of the writers because in the absence of the practical impetus to illuminate its theory, Ellsworth (1994:302) has to *assume* these writers were antiracist, antisexist, anti-elitist, anti-heterosexist, et cetera and thus, share her particular political consciousness.

Ellsworth (1994:311), in taking issue with the fact that proponents of critical pedagogy do not define its operational challenges, also criticises the language it uses as so philosophical and abstract that it is necessary to “work through” and “out of the” abstract terminology. She, however, acknowledges that speaking from within a white, middleclass position as someone who has socially constructed and has legitimate institutional power, most likely locates her critique as lodged within her own positionality (Ellsworth, 1994). Ellsworth (1994) admits to finding it difficult to allow students to “gain their voice”, which evidences a degree of “pedagogical distance” in her stance that is directly related to her racial and class positioning. Her observation that:

White women, men and women of colour, impoverished people, and people with disabilities, gay men and lesbian women are not silenced in the same sense implied by the literature on critical pedagogy. They are just not talking in their ‘authentic voices’ is nonetheless useful. (Ellsworth, 1994:307)

Thus, while critical pedagogy gives educators the opportunity to critique existing education theories and philosophies, it is up to the latter to operationalise it from an abstract form into

practice. Despite Ellsworth's (1994) critique, Freire's philosophy remains valuable in that he observes that the oppressed should first turn to reflexivity and then act upon the knowledge gained regarding the nature of the oppression and identity of the oppressor (Freire, 1970:36). Education should be a practice of freedom and "as such people develop the power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (Freire, 1970:63-64). Education is not objective or value free. Education either reinforces existing ideologies and prejudices, or it is applied as a tool for change or transformation.

2.2.3 The hidden curriculum

Critical pedagogues suggest that there is always a hidden agenda behind positivist pedagogy. In this section, I particularly examine what meaning the hidden curriculum has for women in the academy. For feminists, the main aim of the 'hidden curriculum' is the perpetuation and reproduction of existing inequalities and inequities (Lynch, 1989:xi). For instance, the presence of certain factors that hindered the appointment of women in the British academy included age restrictions, no assistance with childcare or access to jobs and no funding for women who have interrupted their careers (Acker, 1993:151). These 1990 research findings at two British universities remain valid for current conditions at academic institutions globally and locally. The argument is, therefore, that by omission of women's experiences, institutions of learning continue to produce and legitimate 'partial knowledge' (Minnich, 2005). Women's contribution to the production of knowledge is, therefore, silenced or minimised. Sexism continues to manifest itself in a variety of ways in the academy.

Oakley (1972, 1984) and Delphy (1993) conclude that through the process of socialisation and gender stereotyping, the hidden curriculum is nothing more than the reinforcing of patriarchy. According to the authors, home is the primary place where gender and sex roles are shaped, and these are reinforced at school and the workplace (Oakley, 1972, 1984; Delphy, 1993). There is, therefore, a continuous perpetuation of inequities and inequalities and the compromise of bodily integrity and dignity. The academy is a microcosm of society.

The power and dominance that men still hold in the academy is often displayed in terms of the continuing sexual harassment, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women. The 'silence' and the demonisation and stereotyping of women with regard to sexual harassment are symptomatic of the hidden curriculum. Sexist language is another indication of the pervasiveness of patriarchy, and Mama (2002:4) shows how the use of 'phallic language' in the academy with reference to 'soft' social sciences and 'hard' natural sciences emphasises the sexist nature of the institutions. When women advocate for gender-sensitive language, they become the recipients of macho jokes and jibes (Mama, 2002:4).

Furthermore, women often endure having their formal responsibilities compounded by hidden work such as institutional housekeeping and administrative roles, which precludes them from spending time to reflect, read and conduct research (Mama, 2002:5). The stereotyping of the submissive women and the division of labour are thus continued in the academy as earlier research shows (Oakley, 1972, 1984).

Another definition of the hidden curriculum is "everything that a learner learns above and beyond the official or planned curriculum." (Murphy, Mufti & Kossem, 2009:164). In this regard, Acker (2001) notes some of the humiliating experiences that certain doctoral students had to endure because their worldview did not correspond with that of the supervisor or university graduate committee. Consequently, the students are often pressurised to "shape their work and personality to match the dominant ethic of the institution" (Acker, 2001:61-77). Moreover, there are further "unintended outcomes" associated with this such as sexism in the classroom that endorses the power of men over women, boys over girls, which in turn, leads to the different subject choices according to gender (McLaren, 2009:76).

For Apple (1985:40), the 'hidden curriculum' is focused on the embodying of ideological commitments in creating subservient and dependent citizens. As noticed in the above statements, the power modalities within the hidden curriculum are exercised in numerous ways. In Chapter One, reference is made to the case of Bantu Education under the apartheid regime where the hidden curriculum for all black students was, among other things, intended

to produce subservience to the white master. For the white student, it was to reinforce the supremacy of whiteness (Williams, 2001).

The link between class and the hidden curriculum is made clear by Bourdieu (1984) when he refers to the concept 'habitus'. He argues that because of the socialisation and worldview, the middle-class university student has an unfair advantage compared with the working class student (Bourdieu, 1984). Middle-class, educated parents know from experience how the institution works and have the capital to send their children to college (Bourdieu, 1984:179). Similarly, Jansen (2009) added the race factor when he tracked how apartheid and discriminatory education domestication and socialisation have been reinforced and internalised in white South African culture. He calls it "knowledge in the blood" (Jansen, 2009). This theorisation is equally applicable to the privilege and advantage that men still have of institutional knowledge and procedures. In the conclusion of this chapter, some of the strategies that have been implemented at UWC to address the privileged positioning of men are mentioned.

In the following section, I briefly discuss the pedagogy and research methodologies of the 1980s and 1990s that were applied in the Education Faculty at UWC in an effort to build transformative educators, critical thinkers and solidarity in the university and beyond. These liberatory and critical pedagogies of Paolo Freire and feminists were extensively applied in the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE). These educational practices were ultimately applied in the programmatic work of the GEU.

2.2.4 Action research and critical pedagogies at UWC

The process described in this research is participative, inclusive and accessible to a community much broader than UWC. This type of action research was already well established in the Education Faculty by the 1990s. At the GEU, this tradition is continued, and the education process is mainly focused on those who are consistently marginalised and discriminated against within the living, learning, teaching and working environment. The educational process is also aimed at those who are responsible for the perpetuation of

prejudice and discrimination. A third group who indirectly benefits from this process is the extended circle of family, friends and acquaintances of the GEU's programme participants who are not necessarily directly part of the formal and informal education processes of the university. The last group of people are invited as participative spectators or audience members in public spaces where the participants 'perform' their sexual choices, identities or speak out against the violence perpetrated against them.

The teaching and learning at the GEU take place through extracurricular interventions and activities, yet they affect both the formal and informal academic project. Liberatory education is already deeply embedded in the classroom practices in the pedagogical methodologies of 'people's education' and action research in the Education Faculty at UWC (Davidhoff, Julie, Meerkotter & Robinson, 1993; Fataar, 2001; Robinson & Meerkotter, 2003). Feminist action research at UWC is also grounded in the Centre for Continuing Adult Education (CACE) and the Division for Life-Long Learning (DLL) and formed the basis for the initial raising of gender awareness at the GEU (Walters, 1996; Wolpe, 1994). Because of UWC's long history of close involvement with its community, it was referred to as the University of the Working Class and the People's University.

In the first chapter, I contextualised the institutionalisation of liberatory pedagogy in the South African academy and in particular, at UWC under apartheid. Education for liberation was the antithesis for Christian National Education (CNE), which was the only theoretical model allowed in teacher education for decades (Suransky-Dekker, 1998:18). Teacher training at UWC during the 1970s was dominated by Fundamental Pedagogics that did not allow for the ability to develop reflective practices or discussion beyond the classroom (Robinson & Vergnani, 2001:70). Another view was that the "teacher was merely the depositor of knowledge that was contained in the officially approved textbooks" (Williams, 2001:33). Others were of the opinion that these pedagogic principles were deeply entrenched within white supremacy and authoritarianism, which encouraged the notion of white privileged citizenship (Kallaway, 1986; Williams, 2001).

Globally, progressive educators found in Freire's (1970) philosophical pedagogy of the oppressed an antidote to oppressive class-based education. In South Africa, the idea of 'education as a site of struggle' played an important role in the fight for political liberation (Kallaway, 1984; Gwala, 1988, James & Simons, 1989). The 1970s and 1980s earmarked the 'insurrection and resistance against apartheid', and the educational institutions became militant sites of struggles (Badat, 1999; Fataar, 2001). "Educational resistance", argues Fataar (2001:14), "led to radical alternative educational vision. People's Education has its genesis in the resistance culture that characterised black education since the 1950s".

Van den Berg (1991:92) argued that in order to break the stranglehold of Fundamental Pedagogics in the Education Faculty, bold steps were needed and in 1987, a People's Education Conference was organised at UWC by the faculty and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). A master's degree in the area of action research was instituted as a manner to build links with the community and to educate transformative teachers and critical thinkers. The thinking was that action research could be the powerful tool needed to free South African teachers from the shackles of their socialisation (Van den Berg & Meerkotter, 1996).

As mentioned in Chapter One, at various moments in the history of South African higher education, advances were made by black and other progressive academics to deflect the racist impact of CNE, but attention was seldom paid to the inherent sexist, albeit homophobic and gendered overtones of the teaching curriculum. An interesting, rare volume, *Knowledge and power in South Africa*, published in 1999 to address the question of alternative means by which black, South African, higher education teachers could re-present the experience and analysis of oppression through their respective disciplines, provided a distinct pedagogical alternative at higher education level to CNE (Jansen, 1991:vii). This book was also one of the first academic works that referred to pre-1994 gender issues (Jansen, 1991:vii). At UWC, the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education addressed the issue of raising gender awareness and applied Freire's (1970) methodology to teach the module. However, 'people's education' and other liberatory theories and pedagogies fell into disrepute soon after the advent of the first democratic election in 1994. Another type of social engineering took place with the implementation of new policies and laws that regulated the education environment.

While the initial higher education policy and legal framework reflected the ideals of a progressive democracy, the neoliberal market and donor research demands soon established ways of research and teaching.

2.2.5 Liberatory education and the neoliberal university

Historically, universities were seen as sites for intellectual growth, and there were claims of the transferral of knowledge through teaching and learning and the production of new knowledge through research and publishing. However, increasingly, there are voices of discontent regarding the corporatisation of the institutions of higher learning as the following discussion shows. Underlying this critique is whether it is possible for the market-oriented university to play a liberatory role or not. In South Africa, the ‘sites of struggle’ developed into corporate enterprises.

The ethos underpinning liberation was once closely linked to the humanities. Currently, articles abound regarding how humanities have ‘less credibility than the high-tech knowledge production and are easily undermined’ (Zeleza, 2002:64; Weinberg & Graham-Smith, 2012:77; Higgins, 2013). What does it mean for women in the academy?

Zeleza (2002) notes that although women’s access to higher education has significantly increased, staff numbers in the male-dominated disciplines have not necessarily been ‘feminised’. He points out that ‘universities are not particularly seen as a social or public good, or as a human right, but as an economic investment’ (Zeleza, 2002:66; Barnes, 2007).

Others argue that private firms and international financial institutions are now the key players and that their influence on educational policies is maintained through “persistent circulation of ideas, provision of and promises to fund reforms that move in desired directions that leaves little space left for contestatory and liberatory thought” (Stromquist, 2002:1).

In the creation of the post-apartheid academy, the search for and the teaching of social justice and bodily rights form the premise of the arguments for legal equality and equity of access and in the South African context, there are also calls for the redistribution of justice and the claiming of institutionalised “equal rights” (Badat, 2010:6). Some are of the opinion that “[e]quality in education can only be achieved when the deeply integrated relationship between education and the economic, political, socio-cultural and affective systems in society is understood” (Lynch & Baker 2005:132).

The fact is that current South African education has become slave to the neoliberal market and donor-driven demands. Regarding this, Mbembe (2012:8) notes that “reform since 1994 has aimed to transform universities either into appendices of the corporate world or mere ‘factories’ as the service sector of the economy”.

In the discussion above, it was pointed out that the market-oriented university continues to negate women’s embodied knowledge. The following discussion examines the genealogy of feminist pedagogy.

2.3 MAPPING FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

It is important for me to locate feminist pedagogy within the particular realm in which I work. Even though there is some common understanding about feminist pedagogy, there are, however, many diverse approaches to its operationalising within the broader academic environment. Feminist pedagogy has a particular interest in the “impact of social and cultural norms and political forces on women’s lives and bodies and the possibilities of resistance of women against these oppressions and marginalisation” (Weitz, 2011:228). For others, feminist pedagogy is to “contextualise and critique how feminist ideas and theories have been transformed, incorporated, erased or occluded” (David & Clegg, 2008:484).

Feminist educator, Jacqui Alexander argues that pedagogies could be understood in multiple ways:

[S]omething given, as in handed, revealed; as in breaking through, transgressing, and disrupting, displacing, inverting inherited concepts and practices, those psychic, analytic and organizational methodologies we deploy to know what we believe we know as to make different conversations and solidarities possible; as both epistemic and ontological project bound to our beingness ... (Alexander, 2005:7)

In the theoretical framing of this work it was important to reread and reinterpret past and present feminist theorisations in order to understand current manifestations of 'new' knowledge creation. This is especially valid in the feminist teaching of space, belonging and embodiment in an environment where 'otherness' is constantly recreated. Feminist pedagogy foregrounds particular innovative methodologies to record the lived experiences of women's ways of knowing, such as the creation of safe spaces, small discussion groups and encouraging reflective practices through journaling (English, 2009: 113). However, it is pointed out by certain feminist pedagogues 'that most classes within the academy adhere to traditional, authoritarian ideals of education' (Gerald, McEvoy & Whitfield, 2004:62).

Hartsock (1998) argues that political education started in small groups at the start of the women's movement to raise consciousness about the importance of women's personal experience and served as an analysis for political, social and economic transformation. Women began to ask questions about their self-worth in relation to economic issues, class construction and heterosexuality within the patriarchy (Hartsock, 1998:18-20). These consciousness-raising groups of the mid-1960s had a profound impact on feminist thought and, in my view, the shaping of feminist educational theorising.

Feminist theory ... validates difference, challenges universal claims to truth and seeks to create social transformation in a world of shifting and uncertain meanings. In education, these profound shifts are evident on two levels of practice, as excluded and formerly silenced groups challenge dominant approaches to learning and to definitions of knowledge; and second, at the level of theory, as modernist claims to universal truths are called into question. (Weiler, 1991:449-450)

Broadly, critical feminist education is about transformation, social justice and the inclusion of all marginalised groups, but for the purpose of this discussion, it concentrates on the position of women in society and the higher education environment in particular.

It is further said that

[W]here feminism was rather rowdy and activist, it is now matured. It has embraced human rights discourse, and human rights discourse in turn has fully incorporated women's demands for equality, not just in the individualist sense but also to include women's collective economic and social rights. (McRobbie, 2009:123)

According to Weber (2010:128), "Feminist pedagogy takes as a central tenet that pedagogical practices that celebrate and/or instantiate ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, gender, age, and disability differences".

This human rights discourse has always been an essential part of feminist education. But what makes critical feminist pedagogy different from other forms of critical pedagogy? Feminism, after all, proposes fundamental change both to people and organisations, and although feminist pedagogy shares common goals with other traditional educational models, it offers more promise in achieving these goals (MacDermid et al., 1992:31).

The following defines feminist pedagogy from an epistemic perspective:

Once we take our places in schools and universities (in the role of student, teacher, or administrator) we are forced continually to struggle for the legitimacy of girls' and women's ways of learning. Thus, feminist pedagogy is distinguished from other teaching strategies by making women's experiences central in the production of knowledge. (MacDonald, 2002:117)

A complementary definition offered is that in

[F]eminist education one can find issues to bring to the classroom from the everyday world of one's own life, community, or local area, making authentic points of connection between academic study and our (and our students') everyday lives. (Crawley et al., 2008:7)

The above discussion suggests that there is more happening in the educational process than the mere transference of knowledge from a 'knower' to a 'student'. According to Stake (2006:199), "[t]he goals of higher education are not limited solely to the imparting of knowledge and preparation of careers but extend also to the development of student's social values and attitudes". However, as Butler (1993:ix) suggests, higher education institutions are more often than not guilty of effecting disembodiment of their citizens when they "write against it" or forget "the body" comes in genders.

Crawley (2008), also links the body and the question of citizenship:

The goal of feminist pedagogy is to become deeply involved — as researchers, teachers, and students — engaging ideas, not for the exam or for the scholarly publication, but in order to become critical, concerned citizens. (Crawley et al., 2008:8)

Critical feminist pedagogy's argument for a post-positivist vision has opened up possibilities for voice, freedom and the search for egalitarianism. Contemporary debates regarding women and the academy started as early as 1979 when Rich (1979) described the admission of '*the woman*' into the academy as follows:

But when a woman is admitted to higher education – particularly graduate school – it is often made to sound as if she enters as a sexually neutral world of 'disinterested' and 'universal' perspectives. It is assumed that coeducation means the equal education, side by side, of women and men. Nothing could be further from the truth; and nothing could more effectively seal a woman's sense of her secondary value in a man-centered world than her experience as a 'privileged' woman in the university – if she knows how to interpret what she lives daily. (Rich, 1979:134)

It is within this alien world that women have had to craft a place for themselves and name their experiences and knowledge as well as find spaces to teach about them. Given the escalating numbers of women who entered the higher education environment since the 1980s, the possibilities to teach and share women's experiences and knowledge have multiplied. The academy simultaneously affords feminists time for reflection and opportunities to theorise and publish in order to build a formidable volume of feminist theory. It is in this space that, as Lather (1992:130-131) states, feminists can position themselves either against or within the discourses of the fathers and develop their own practices of self-interrogation and critique of more situated and embodied discourses about pedagogy.

Feminist theory and pedagogy have a deep interest in the location of power and the parallel issue of the subjugation of women. Even in this instance, pedagogy is closely associated with the classroom, with awareness-raising and other teaching praxis beyond these walls rarely acknowledged in academic spaces. Feminist theory in essence critiques "man as the knower", "man as the sole producer of knowledge" and challenges the notion of "man and his world" and the assumption that "knowledge is objective"; in fact, feminists claim that women do theory (Grosz, 1993; Flax, 1993; Frye, 1993). Patriarchy is identified by mainstream Northern feminists as the main source of *all* oppressions. There is always the risk that women's voices are deliberately not heard because the female voice by (patriarchal) definition is that voice you can ignore (Snitow, 1990:13) Flax (1993) characterises feminist theory as the understanding that there is a power differential between men and women and that women's oppression evolved (or evolves) and changed (or changes) over time. Feminist theory is thus about how the different forms of oppression relate to each other and methods of application to overcome them (Flax, 1993:82).

Therefore, as observed by Alcoff and Potter (1993:4), if feminism is to overcome this state of multiple oppressions, it is necessary that it addresses all forms of domination because "women fill the ranks of every category of oppressed people". However, it is a fact that once feminist theories are formalised in the academy, they become subject to masculine rigours of knowledge construction and dissemination. Even as early as 1985, feminist intellectuals were

voicing discomfort about feminist activism and the women's movement being co-opted and conformed by academia. This saw the end of feminist activism and the women's movement. De Lauretis (1986) argues in this regard:

At a time when the women's movement is being both integrated and quietly suffocated within the institutions, when feminist critique is partially accommodated within some academic disciplines and emarginated otherwise, when feminism is nudged into the pockets of the economy with one hand, and of the intelligentsia with the other, it seems important and even crucial to assess the intellectual and political role of feminist studies in the production, reproduction and transformation of social discourses and knowledges. (De Lauretis, 1986:2)

De Lauretis's (1993:83) argument remains valid and is underscored by Flax's questions, which she cites: "Why didn't the oppression of women disappear?" and "Have women's studies programmes merely become intellectual exercises?"

Given the above criticisms, it is thus necessary to reflect on the introduction of departments for women's and gender studies into the academic project. When one considers the arguments of De Lauretis (1993), Flax (1993) and Kenway and Modra (1992), it is debatable whether the significance of power and gender in these educational settings is truly understood or not. As Kenway and Modra (1992:138-139) maintain, it is not the intention of the classroom to make "gentle genuflections" to feminisms or for feminists to think that the sole purpose of these studies is to "raise consciousness" about the inequalities and the oppression of women. Rather, the spectrum of feminisms must continue to challenge the education system, which remains complicit in the oppression and subjugation of women and must envision a world that is full of different possibilities. Feminist pedagogy should not only challenge existing inequities and discriminatory practices but must also bring about tangible transformation in the lives of the people and institutions in which they are located.

The questions remain for Kenway and Modra: "What constitutes feminist pedagogy and what makes it truly *different from other radical and critical pedagogies*?" (Kenway & Modra,

1992). Debating the different interpretations of what a feminist pedagogy should look like, often offers critical insight into the sometimes “sloppiness” of the definition and the lack of rigour in upholding standards of evaluation (Kenway & Modra, 1992).

For Luke and Gore (1992), feminist pedagogy is much more than just entering the classroom with the noble purpose and vision to liberate, empower, give voice to the marginalised and take issue with the triplet “class, race and gender”. It is also about the source of struggle for a variety of embodied differences among students and teachers in the classroom (Luke & Gore, 1992:4). Gore (1993:xii), for instance, argues that pedagogy is integral to all learning and all knowledge production activities.

The aforementioned discussion introduces key Northern feminist ideas regarding feminist education. I will now discuss the meaning of pedagogy outside the classroom, which forms the main theoretical ground for my work in developing the theoretical framework for embodiment and campus citizenship as contained in the GEU programmes. Northern feminists criticise critical pedagogy as theorised by men making men’s experience the axis. Similarly post-colonial feminists criticise post-structuralist theory for failing to understand and include black and post-colonial experiences in its theorising. The latter critique must be seen as crucially arising from both the personal location and the embodiment of the post-colonial feminist in education processes of self-reflection and reflexivity and must give critical attention to external structural factors ignored in the first-world context in which post-structuralism is produced.

Equally important is the emphasis on history and the socio-economic context, presented, for example, in the following feminist value: “Feminist pedagogy, like feminism itself, is apolitical project and like all feminist projects, feminist interventions in education have been determined by the historical, economic and political contexts in which women have lived (Weiler, 2001:67). It is exactly this knowledge — or its absence — of the historical, racial, economic, political, identity and geographical contexts that irk black and lesbian feminists who rightly feel their exclusion from the hegemonic theorisation of white heterosexual feminists (hooks, 1994; Smith, 2000, Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983).

Therefore, the question is to whom does the feminist project belong. Weiler (2001:72-73) admits that white feminists speak predominantly from the position of white middle-class privilege, the recognition of which allows her to grasp some of the frustration felt by black feminists when they object to the assumptions of universal feminist truths. It is in this context of separate realities of existence that hooks (2000:1) observes that she cannot identify with Friedan's (1963) iconic feminist work *The Feminine Mystique* because the conditions described in this work exclude black women's experiences.

According to hooks (2000:1), Friedan's (1963) famous phrase, "the problem that has no name", focuses on the "plight of a select group of college-educated, middle- and upper-class, married, white women — housewives bored with leisure, with the home, with children, with buying products, who wanted more out of life". For hooks and other black feminists, this kind of myopic feminism is not inclusive of the narratives of women of colour who, in many instances, are working *outside* their own homes and often *in* the homes of the white feminist. Hooks (1994:101) thus writes: "black women have come away from encounters with white women in the servant-served relationship feeling confident that the two groups are radically different and share no common language".

Thus, while post-structuralism and postmodern theories afford previously suppressed and ignored voices an opportunity to be heard in white, first-world, middle-class conditions, black and post-colonial feminists, by lieu of their exclusion from this location, make compelling arguments in aid of a different kind of pedagogy that is more inclusive and radical to assert and accomplish their own freedom.

2.3.1 Black feminist pedagogy

"To imply that all women suffer the same oppression simply because we are women is to lose sight of the many varied tools of patriarchy" (Lorde, 1984:66). [Own emphasis]

Admitting to and writing about the insidiousness of patriarchy, racism and the ever-present discriminatory practices in South African society is difficult, and exploring the academy's rehearsal of these is even more difficult due to the current discourse of reconciliation and nation-building as reflected in the language of the higher education policy framework. Therefore, in re-reading and re-interpreting the South African struggle narrative, the consistency of black women's struggles against passbooks and beer halls and their defiance in moving into cities to work or live with or within close proximity to their partners, one must see the first signs of a local feminist movement. Women then were struggling for freedom in more than one way. Women crossed borders in many different ways. Their important struggles echo that of radical black feminists in different geographical spaces around the globe. It is important to note in this regard that the academy provided and continues to provide the space for such initial activism to be translated into theory.

In her critique regarding critical pedagogy, Ellsworth (1989) states that it is usually the voice of the white, Christian, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied man or pedagogue that is hegemonic. Black feminists, on the other hand, critique the authoritative role of white feminists, referring to the fact that *they* (black feminists) in turn, become invisible, that their contributions to feminism are often regarded as standpoint theories or activism and not real intellectual or philosophical work. It is "routinely ignored, discredited or simply absorbed or marginalised in existing dominant paradigms" (Collins, 2000:270). Collins (2000:270) argues that although standpoint theory is partial and situated knowledge, it remains important provided it is supportive of other existing partial perspectives.

While many black feminist theories claim to be based on the 'real experiences' of women, questions about the authenticity of such claims persist. The question of who represents the 'real' black woman's experiences is crucial. Just as black feminist writers question the inherent colonising of the black woman subject by white feminists, black feminists such as Sudbury (1998) and Reynolds (2002) challenge the hegemony of black feminist theorists in a similar regard and state that US authors seem to dominate the discourse. These concerns are valuable, yet Northern feminists such as hooks, Lorde and Collins have laid the important foundation for the black intellectual feminist. Moreover, black feminist theorists such as Spivak, Mohanty, Alexander and Mirza have insisted on the theoretical necessity of reflecting

on geographical positionalities as ‘colonialised’ and ‘post-colonialised’ bodies and minds, and such multi-vocal and rich bodies of work create vital opportunities.

The political choice of the term ‘black’ as central to this research needs to recognise that the term has in different times and locations undergone much contestation. It is often interpreted differently within the same country and within the broader political, historical and global context. As researcher, I argue that my interpretation of the term has to do with my particular political consciousness and interpretation as to who constitutes the oppressed, marginalised, dehumanised and disembodied person. I remain aware of the global debates and the various influences of globalisation, transnationalism, solidarity and the political-economy in the shaping of the world into developed, developing and under-developed spaces and the subsequent limitations these terms entail. In South Africa, the ‘umbrella’ term ‘black’ includes the groups that were previously legally imposed upon in terms of exclusionary racial categorisation, namely ‘African’, ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’. The inclusive term ‘black’ makes perfect sense because it helps to distinguish continuously the constant oppression of particular bodies in the ‘post-apartheid’ context, pointing to the ironies inherent in that latter description. In my work, the term ‘black’ consistently includes the historically excluded and marginalised.

Hooks points out that it was black women in the United States and elsewhere who demanded that the feminist movement rethink its construction of female identity to become inclusive of all the complexities and experiences of women other than the dominant white, middle-class image of itself (hooks, 1989). Many other feminist thinkers have commented that much of feminism originated within the context of class bigotry and privilege. Hooks (1989:6) reminds that black women have always been ““talking back”, but they were, and are, not always heard and their voices not always respected. In noting that white feminists come from a very specific class and educational background and that they tend to speak from a very particular vantage point, hooks (1995) argues that the revolutionary feminist movement is not the property of white women. Furthermore, the continuous attempt to silence the voices and appropriate black women’s work in an effort to enhance the feminist movement is a wilful lack of recognition of black women by white women and has placed and kept black women on the margins of the feminist movement (hooks, 1995:269-70). However, Collins

importantly points out that *silence should not be interpreted as submission* (Collins, 2000:98).

In her essay, *Pedagogy and political commitment: A comment*, hooks (1989) observes that education has lost its revolutionary and liberatory edge and has become a tool for assimilation into the culture of the oppressor. She tells of education institutions in which she felt excluded by white men and white women and rather bonded and identified “with workers, with black women who labored as maids, as secretaries ... With them I felt at home” (hooks, 1989:100). This statement exposes the invisible presence of the black woman domestic worker in academic institutions and echoes the contradictory interpretations surrounding her presence in the statue of the domestic worker on the square of the UWC campus, as discussed in Chapter One. Despite major differences between South African history and that of the United States of America, there are similarities in the experiences of oppression of black women’s value in the academic space, and these narratives relate to the particular intersectional history of racism and sexism.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance for feminist pedagogical practice in its totality to be vigilantly political, especially in a country such as South Africa where the majority of black students are first generation university students, and the greater percentage of the teaching staff still comprises white men. This situation, according to Blair (1995:248), perpetuates the teaching and research of whites, often male, dominating the teaching ethos, with the result that black researchers remain largely invisible, while the white researcher constantly assumes the ‘authoritative voice’ on issues of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’. Regarding this, Walters and Manicom (1996:5) observe that white visibility in South Africa is the “*blatant legacy of the educational privileges that the apartheid system bestowed on whites in South Africa and the consequent networks that developed*”. [Own emphasis]

There has always existed a measure of discomfort among critical black feminists that mainstream feminism, both within and outside the academy, has a tendency to exclude or patronise black feminist thought and experience. This issue has been raised by hooks (1995), Lorde (1984) and Collins (2000), among others. However, vigilance should be exercised in

subscribing such criticism to only certain representations of black feminism because there are many different experiences, different geographical locations and numerous positions within black feminism. Mohanty (1991) advises taking into consideration that even some middle-class, urban African and Asians scholars are guilty of codifying working-class histories and cultures as “Other” (Mohanty, 1991). Mohanty (1991) ascribes this to the global hegemonic presence of white Western scholarship that frames the research processes, including the production, publication, distribution and consumption of information and ideas. This framework presupposes a certain stereotype and considers women, especially those outside of the ‘civilised West’ as ‘powerless’, ‘exploited’, ‘sexually harassed’ or otherwise ‘violated’ (Mohanty, 1991; Collins, 2000). This construction of the average third-world woman generalises, makes gross assumptions and borders on reductionism.

As black feminists began to occupy academic spaces as teachers in the global North, they began to challenge the continuous ‘boxing’ into certain identifiable categories and stereotypes. Henderson et al. (2010:29) refer to the “mammy-sapphire continuum” that spills over into the academic confines, which often evidences lack of respect for prominent black women scholars and intellectuals in that public recognition of their status is framed by other professional tropes, for instance, poet, novelist, performer but not intellectual.

The crux of black feminist and standpoint theories is that, as with other liberatory theories, their importance is located in a critical oppositional paradigm. Firstly, this opposition is directed at white Northern feminism, which is identified as excluding the collective lived and work experiences of black women in theoretical conceptualisation and understanding of mainstream patriarchy. Secondly, the opposition is directed at the overall knowledge framework since the intellectual contributions of black feminists, with the exception of a few canonised authors, are consistently ignored. Even academically, consecrated black feminist intellectuals point out that ‘blacks and lesbians’ are excluded from existing Northern feminist discourses. However, as Sudbury (1998) cautions, black women’s movements and organisations have historically also been guilty of excluding the concerns of black lesbians. Moreover, argues hooks (1999:13), white feminists often make black women the ‘objects’ of their privileged discourse, and in silently complying with such positioning, black women become complicit as ‘objects’ and remain unequal and inferior.

There is no such thing as “apolitical scholarship” states Mohanty (1991:53). It is within this tradition of a deep political consciousness that black feminist theory developed its radical agenda. Black feminists, according to Sudbury (1998:27), have for some time claimed their right to speak for themselves. Many black intellectuals refer to the metaphoric ‘outsider within’ syndrome, an ambivalent term that promises transformative value but also excludes isolates and subordinates (Collins, 2000; Henderson et al., 2010; Lorde, 1984; Spivak, 1993; Sudbury, 1998).

Taylor (2001:18), writing about the valuable contributions black feminists have made to the history of feminism in the United States, notes that these contributions are often written out of standard textbook. For instance, the names of many black women have been excluded from narratives about the abolitionist and the civil rights movements (Taylor, 2001:18). Similar omissions in the narratives of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa is apparent in post-1994 historical texts in which men predominate as the heroes, while very few names of women are alluded to and their contributions are glossed over. Abrahams (2007:426) argues in this regard that the “academic discourse held no place for our brains, only for our bodies”. A number of books and online projects are currently addressing this omission (Gasa, 2007; <http://www.sahistory.org.za>).

One of the serious objections to mainstream feminist approaches, especially as they are represented in academic contexts, pertains to the dichotomy of theory and praxis. Hooks (1989) warns about the danger of separating the “theoretical” from the “experiential”.

Collins (2000) reinforces this argument, calling for a dialogue between theory and activism. This argument suggests that the academy consistently reinforces perceptions about the divide between theory and praxis by placing vast emphasis on who produces, who theorises, who teaches and who is seen to be mainly responsible for action and contrasts these positions with that of the ‘inferior’ recipient of such knowledge. Thus, labels of the ‘intellectual’ and ‘activist’ have become entrenched as academic binaries. This is a sign that academic

feminists have accepted the notion of academic elitism and the bureaucratic, masculine hierarchy that ascribes value and meaning to the work of all those within its borders.

Originally, the academy was seen by feminists as a space for Women's Studies, a space that would give academic legitimacy to women's concerns. But by the beginning of the 21st century, Women's Studies and Gender Studies have largely become firmly entrenched within the "corporate university", as described by Mohanty (2003:173). In South Africa, such departments are constantly under threat of being closed down. Moreover, the more established such departments become, the more they appropriate the characteristics of the 'malestream' academy and lose their radical and liberatory edge and appeal. I, therefore, agree with hooks (1989:36) when she claims that "*the radical, subversive potential of feminist scholarship and feminist theory in particular is undermined by the traditional structures of domination*". [Own emphasis]

In addition, lesbian feminists are consistently excluded from both black and white feminists' works. Sudbury (1998) makes specific mention of homophobia in the black community as an exclusionary factor that black lesbian feminists have to deal with. Regarding this, Villaverde (2008), Lorde (2001) and Collins (2000) note that black and other marginalised communities are not necessarily always radical and inclusive and tend to write lesbian and non-gender conformists out of the narratives of the oppressed. Hooks (1989), however, cautions that the black community, as with any other community, is not monolithic and that different reactions or levels of acceptance of homosexual lifestyles exist within it. I flag the issue here and discuss in Chapter Six the concerns pertaining to sexual orientation and homophobia in the South African higher education environment. However, I mention it here as part of the self-reflexivity that I am engaged with in this writing process. Considering the exclusionary element in the feminist writing discussed thus far, and with regard to my own location as a black feminist lesbian writer, it has become important for me to remember constantly that feminist theorising and pedagogies include *all* people and issues consistently positioned on the margins of campus life and society.

A number of African feminists explore liberatory pedagogies as educative tools in the academy. They may not call it feminist pedagogies but have used the gender rubric to research, teach and introduce curricula pertaining to inequalities in the broader society and to examine sexism, marginalisation and violence in the academy. Diaw (2007), for instance, examines the possibilities for gender activism at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar in Senegal in an effort to introduce social justice and gender equality into the curricula. Odejide (2002) describes the important research conducted by the Women's Research and Documentation Centre at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and reflects on the collaboration with various professional women, women's religious groups and non-government organisations. Odijide (2002:101) notes that the centre does not strictly operate in the same way as an academic department but more as a civil society organisation, which points to a more dialectic and engaged relationship with a broader community of women. Others who interrogate the politics of women's access to African higher education institutions include Kwesiga (2002), Oyewunmi (2002) and Okeke (2004).

Feminists such as Sylvia Tamale, Mansah Prah, Pumla Dineo Gqola and Dorothy Aken'ova have given a more in-depth analysis of their feminist pedagogical practices in the edited work titled *African sexualities: A reader* (Tamale, 2011a). Prah (2011) regards the teaching of sexuality as a political act and shares her feminist methods in raising consciousness in an effort to change the worldview of students. South African black feminist, Gqola (2011), theorises black lesbianism in the work of photo activist Zanele Muholi.. Aken'ova (2011) theorises visual representation of a black woman's body in her feminist method of using a graphic poster of a stretched vagina to teach about sexual rights. Perhaps one of the most prolific writers regarding feminist research and education is Amina Mama, who established the *Feminist Africa* journal at the African Gender Institute (AGI), which serves as a vehicle for African feminist activist and intellectual writing. There are a number of feminists who are involved in groundbreaking research and feminist education and praxis. Among them are Charmaine Perreira, Shireen Essof and Patricia MacFadden.

2.4 CONCLUSION

I am not the only person at UWC who is concerned with the use of alternative feminist pedagogies. Shirley Walters and Anna-Marie Wolpe have been conducting and reporting on feminist research since the mid-1990s. More recently, research has been done regarding participatory learning and privilege by Bozalek (2011), and research focusing on voice and agency in the linguistics department has been carried out by Dyers, Williams and Barthus (2012). However, I do not engage with their particular research in this dissertation because my focus is the black feminist pedagogical methodology used in two programmes located at the GEU that focus on education *outside* the classroom in awareness-raising of sexuality, gender, sexual orientation and embodiment.

This research concerns the pedagogical possibility of developing alternative ways to teach about sex, sexuality, gender and, in particular, about the violence that is perpetrated against women and non-heterosexual conformed people in order to show that there are different ways of being. The challenge is not to perpetuate a discourse of victimhood in drawing attention to the endemic violence against women and non-heterosexual people in South Africa. The challenge is to show that while structural inequities persist in the transitioning democracy, simultaneous ways must be found for those excluded to express self-agency and claim their rightful space and embodiment as citizens. My physical, historical and political location and my thinking and approach to pedagogical praxis are thus particularly influenced by black and post-colonial feminisms. My engagement with critical and feminist pedagogies takes place outside the confines of the formal classroom and in the spaces where the university — and the broader community — live, work, create and socialise.

Thus, in the neoliberal present context, higher education institutions need an engaged educational process to shift existing paradigms and commitment to *truly* transform the environment. Educating the UWC campus community about inclusivity and diversity does not feature as a priority in the market-oriented university. Moreover, teaching and learning about gender, race, disability and anti-prejudice are regarded as difficult undertakings. It is important not to perpetuate stereotypes and perceptions. The type of education that takes place in these ‘non-academic’ and peripheral spaces is aimed to make the institution more

inclusive, non-prejudicial and non-discriminatory. The legal and policy framework prescribe inclusivity, non-discrimination and diversity, but the education about *how* to transform the institutions is neglected. Moreover, the ‘policy-thick’ higher education environment serves as a barrier rather than a liberatory tool.

The academy is not an easy space to negotiate, yet the very same prejudices and discriminations experienced in broader society are experienced within its ‘academic borders’. It is, therefore, not possible to deal with gender identity, women’s rights and sexual rights within large classes filled with conservatism, righteousness or prejudice, especially if the formal curriculum is above all about fulfilling the needs of the market with regard to education transfer. To recall hooks (1994), it thus becomes crucially important that ‘non-academic’ spaces remain prime sites for the creation of non-hegemonic knowledge and transgression,

The South African higher education context was historically shaped by a certain type of non-formal education such as the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) that was active on many black campuses in the 1970s and which was influenced via political consciousness-raising (Biko, 2004). Key radical events such as the Soweto Student Uprising in 1976 and the education boycotts in the 1980s also greatly affected the march towards democracy (Badat, 1999). It is through such informal methods of consciousness-raising and teaching that the sense of and commitment to social justice and societal transformation were and still need to be realised. The success of engaging with these knowledge forms in a democratic manner is largely dependent on peer education. This process of learning thus forms a stark contrast to the dominant method of ‘knowledge transfer’, that is, memorising and rote learning that configure the idea of learning and knowledge in many of the academic disciplines. This dominant method is supported by the specific hierarchical structuring within academic institutions in which academic success is acknowledged, evaluated and rewarded.

The Gender Equity Unit continues to conduct its programmatic work within the original understanding of liberatory pedagogy and ‘people’s education’. The action research with regard to its various programmes came about because of the bureaucratic imperatives for the

funding of the unit. The GEU was compelled by the university authorities to provide empirical evidence of the impact that the programmes had on the university population. In hindsight, it provided a chronological record of how women's struggles in the South African academy developed from a place of 'emancipation' to a place where they struggled to survive in a competitive market environment.

Chapters four, five and six provide insights into how the teaching of embodiment has become the vehicle for raising awareness pertaining to social justice and the eradication of sexism, violence against women, homophobia and transphobia.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

For feminist researchers, the issues that concern methodology broadly and feminist methodology in particular, have always involved debates regarding questions of researcher positionality, the interests animating the research and the generation of approaches to the research design that is capable of simultaneously recognising epistemological oppressions and transforming them. In this chapter, I highlight some of the most salient debates as the introduction before I present my particular choice of methodologies and the methods to actualise these.

In the late 1980s, Harding probed the question of whether a feminist methodology exists or not and if so, does it complement or disrupt traditional positivist research methodologies? For Harding, this form was not a simple case of taking women into account, but it required a totally different form of theoretical approach to the analysis of women's lives and experiences. Her theorisation of a 'women's standpoint' sees women's gendered subordination as offering access to invisibilised, marginal and complex knowledges about the shapes of 'oppression' and the strategic negotiation with power and, therefore, shifting partial and layered. In order to create these experiences 'as theory', 'women's experiences' needed to become the focus of analytic exploration, not as a way of representing 'new facts' but as a way of reading networks of oppression and understanding resistances to them with specific economic and political environments.

Thus, the different types of questions that underpin feminist research methodologies ultimately include questions about making women the centre as well as who will, in due course, benefit from the research (Harding, 1987a; Smith, 1987; Hartsock, 1998; Dankoski, 2000). Such centring raises a number of issues relevant to my own methodological approach. My research involves the presentation of work that sought to realise the principles of black

feminist pedagogies in the context of a South African university setting. This work entailed centring the experiences of those engaged within the projects because these could illuminate the possibilities of ‘education’ beyond the lecture theatre. Given that each project involved multiple players, micro-events and processes, much time and many different forms of documentation, it was vital for me to develop a methodological approach deep enough to acknowledge the complexity of my research task but sufficiently honest to ensure rigour and transparency.

Perhaps the most important methodological questions I asked were: Why did I want to conduct this type of research and what value would the research contribute to women’s and feminist knowledge? Is the primary aim of my research to gain a PhD or do I truly believe that the work done at the GEU empowers people and transforms their lives through realisation of specific theoretical and pedagogical principles? Did the programmes and, ultimately, the research bring personal change and awareness about the self for the participants, the university community and me? What impact did the programmatic approach have on institutional transformation? What effect did it have on the broader society outside the campus confines? Could I call this research feminist? And finally: Why do I regard this work as black feminist research and what are the methodological implications of this?

The previous chapters broadly weave the connections between the research questions and situate the work of a small ‘non-academic’ unit within the nexus of the knowledge-producing machine. In the previous chapters, I traced the research attempts in the form of action research and ‘people’s education’ that precluded the current programmes at the GEU and that were introduced to transform the research and teaching methodologies at this educational institution. I consider that the ‘liberatory’ education was mainly aimed at the eradication of racism and the impact of Christian National Education and that it did not address the many manifestations of women and gender oppression.

In the first two chapters, I omitted critique on the initiators and subsequent owners of these ‘liberatory projects and knowledge’ at UWC. For instance, I have neglected to mention that the knowledge creators and owners were all white and middle class — Meerkotter, Van den

Berg, Walters and Wolpe — and the projects could, therefore, be perceived as paternalistic and imposed upon the ‘oppressed and marginalised communities’. The initiators were firmly positioned within a paradigm of whiteness and privilege, as observed by Walters and Manicom (1996). The feminist question of who owns the knowledge is of particular relevance. The concern is, therefore, whether the GEU programmes were fundamentally different from the previous liberatory projects found in the Faculty of Education or not, and if so, in which way. The University of the Western Cape primarily remains a university for black students, and women students constitute the majority of the student population (Hames Beja, Kgosimemele, 2005; Ravjee, Hames, Ludwig & Barnes, 2010). It is important to frame the research within a racially and gendered framed epistemological and ontological paradigm. I specifically frame the questions within the broader feminist discourses in order to avoid ambiguity in forwarding my particular truth.

Firstly, no set curriculum determined the content of the programmes under discussion, which were solely started to raise awareness about the endemic violence and prejudice against women, lesbian and gay people on and off the UWC campus. The intention was to link life and lived experiences on campus with life and lived experiences in the broader society. Both groups of people were subjected to epistemic violence and discrimination outside and inside the academy. Institutional research, departmental reports, graduate theses, journal articles, book chapters and media reports abound with information on gender-based discrimination and violence against women on campus (Solomons, 1989; Hames et al., 2005; Sass, 2005; Barnes, 2007; Ravjee et al., 2010). These research findings invariably showed the privilege of access to the academy for different gendered categories of people. In the previous chapter, I quoted Bourdieu’s (1980, 1984) notion of habitus and his argument of prior institutional and procedural knowledge being equally applicable to women, persons living with disabilities, homosexual and gender non-conforming people. Also applicable is Rich’s (1979) apt description of women’s entrance into the hostile university environment.

Secondly, units such as CACE made the university environment ripe for innovative feminist teaching and research methodologies. This made it possible for people who would never have had the opportunity to access university education to study at an institution of higher education (Walters & Manicom, 1996; Walters, 1996). Thirdly, the absence of a theatre and

drama department and the lack of a formal lesbian and gay organisation afforded the opportunity to experiment with pedagogies on a variety of platforms in meaningful ways (Barnes, 2007; Hames, 2007d).

Taking the above into consideration, Chapter Three explores the tools and strategies that were engaged to empower collaboratively participants as campus citizens and to establish meaningful connections to critical knowledge-making in and beyond the academy. In this chapter, I discuss the tools that were employed and record the intellectual and political journey of the participants and spectators in the respective programmes under discussion.

3.1.1 The Gender Equity Unit (GEU)

The work of the Gender Equity Unit is located on the cusp of both the academic and the administrative domain of the university. For years, I have struggled with whether I should obtain academic recognition for the work or think of it as activist work. I have, therefore, unwittingly bought into the binaries of activist versus intellectual work. Writing this study has forced me to combine intellectual activism with conventional academic theorising and in so doing, created new theory.

However, in this process, I may have inadvertently reinforced the very binaries to which feminists have been objecting (Minnich, 2005; Nagar & Swarr, 2010; Nagar, 2014). An example is that the programmatic work I am engaged in has already found expression as academic knowledge in conference papers, academic articles and book chapters and has thus also become part of the formal curricula in various ways, not only on the UWC campus but also elsewhere. By so doing, I capitulated to a system of classifying and individualising knowledge-making vis-a-vis the collaborative process of feminist knowledge creation. This raised my awareness to the constant ‘othering’ and ‘hierarchisation’ of knowledge in the academy (Bennett, 2008:2; Nagar, 2014:3).

For these reasons, I had to find a way of presenting complex, iterative and dynamic interpersonal processes as ‘research’, retrospectively shaping many years of thought and work into a format through which the work’s theoretical power could be illuminated. I deliberated for a long time on the particular qualitative methods that would most suit and assist me in substantiating my arguments for having conceptualised and implemented the respective GEU programmes that I discuss in this research, as well as the reasons for identifying them as valuable *feminist* pedagogical tools. I struggled with the notion of a separate chapter for methodology. The debates surrounding the inclusion of a methodology chapter are not novel, as the following observation suggests: “PhD’s in literature but also in other arts and humanities disciplines do not require a method/ology section — something that is absolutely commonplace, not to say *de rigueur*, in other subjects” (Griffin, 2011:92).

In order to obtain a PhD, I had to, therefore, utilise supportive texts in addition to the creative programmatic materials to explain sufficiently the research processes involved in giving weight to these cultural programmes. It is in this sense that I have borrowed the following terms, namely, Griffin’s (2011:93) “practice-based research” and Bell’s (2009:260) “practice-led research”. Thus, locating my own research within ‘theory’, as Kershaw (2009:106) reminds, is precisely because “the doctorate is most commonly the highest-rank university diploma awarded for *original* research internationally”. Moreover, Bell (2009:260) argues, “practice-led research” includes “aspects of the creative process that are often ill-defined, less tangible, often intuitive and don’t lend themselves to analysis”. For me, this dissertation and its methodologies undoubtedly exemplify ‘practice-led research’.

The period of time that the two programmes explored in this dissertation are presented as research comprises six years. In order to theorise the work, it was necessary to be selective about which aspects of these programmes to analyse. The demands of presenting a programme through which the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, sought to realise core black feminist theoretical principles concerning the meaning of the body differed from the demands of analysing anti-homophobic work on campus. I discuss my approach to researching these separate ‘practices’ in the chapters in which I detail each work itself, that is, chapters four, five and six. In the following section, I explore my approach and the choices I

made to theorise the programmes into pedagogy designed to aid the transformation of UWC into a 'home' for all its campus citizens.

Due to my personal involvement in both programmes and because I consider myself a site of feminism in this regard, I present the programmes as representations of ethnographic action-research projects, which has the advantage of fostering critical self-reflection and reflexivity. Integral to this research project is a determination to focus mainly on the reasons why both the GEU programmes I discuss have become popular feminist pedagogical tools in the attempt to make feminism more accessible to a much broader audience.

My decision to write this dissertation, the act of writing about these programmes and the final written product invariably constitutes numerous acts of resistance. I claim that over the years, both programmes have produced all types of empirical, cultural, social and anecdotal evidence that bear witness to the creation of 'new' theoretical knowledge in South Africa and offer different ways of experiencing the lived realities of young, black people at a particular South African university at a particular moment in its history. It is not often that the lived creative and activist lives of students outside the classroom are diligently captured. Chapters four, five and six not only describe and analyse the content and some of the events that took place but also refer specifically to how different participants offer resistance to social injustices and discrimination by means of diverse feminist strategies from multiple sites, spaces or location of the self. In the beginning, I positioned myself as an active participant in each programme, but as the programmes became more sustainable and mature, I repositioned myself as more of an observer.

In this chapter, I subdivide discussion on the research methodology into the following sections: non-conventional but academic practices, action research, ethnography, data relating to *Reclaiming the P...Word* and the methods and data relating to the Loud Enuf programme.

3.2 NON-CONVENTIONAL BUT ACADEMIC PRACTICES

I am cognisant of the fact that much overlapping occurs between the sections below but in this regard, suggest that writing a dissertation such as this with the non-conventional but academic notions and practices of ‘messy texts’ and self-reflexivity, allows for specific theoretical arguments to emerge.

3.2.1 ‘Messy texts’

The concept of ‘messy texts’ necessitates some discussion and understanding. Marcus (2007:1129) refers to the strategies of oppositional writing as the creation of ‘messy texts’. I regard the writing of this dissertation as the unravelling and sense-making process of my ‘messy text’. ‘Messy texts’ according to Marcus (2007), are open-ended and refuse theoretical closure.

Throughout the process of my writing, I could not find one particular theoretical framework that perfectly fit my research project and, therefore, borrowed strands of thought from various discourses to corroborate my research methodology. In my ‘messy text’, I explore the reasons for initially wanting to write about the work done at the GEU. Clarifying my motives for viewing this knowledge as being possibly of interest to others is a very significant part of the *feminism* of this dissertation. Having, over the years, gained insight into the unfolding and shifting of events, as well as the students’ interest in the programmes and the GEU in general, it is important to me to connect the politics of feminist struggles and gender identity with the politics of institutional culture. In particular, the institution at which I am based, UWC, can benefit from this valuable aspect of continuity from the academic documentation of the knowledge processes and spaces that this work has created. Thus, in the process, it is imperative that I interrogated and reflected on my own personal shifts, struggles and growth over time.

3.2.2 Reflexivity

Earlier, I referred to my own personal struggle and critiques of the ways in which academic research is legitimised. Wolf (1996:1) argues that the ethical, academic, personal and political dilemmas of situated feminist ethnographical research cause distress and challenge the integrity of the process at all times. Farganis (1994) and Wolf (1996) stress how white feminists have had to deal with their own situatedness in relation to the ‘other’. It is important to refer to white feminist theorists in this regard because they still dominate knowledge production in the higher education environment, a hegemony which the GEU programmes consistently contest. Black feminist standpoint theory plays a particularly important role in confronting the continuous ‘othering’ that occurs in the academy. Current academic research makes black subjects hypervisible in studies that concentrate primarily on violence, disease and poverty. Instead, through the programmatic work of the GEU, I focus on the agency of black women, applying hooks (1989:5) notions and methods of “back talk” and “talking back”.

I constantly reflect upon how I still experience sexism, race and racism, homophobia, class and classism, ability and disability, power and disempowerment, the social role of language and personal and academic politics affecting both student and worker at UWC in the post-1994 moment. The creation of the programmes is, therefore, deeply embedded in my personal experiences and attempts to understand how these discriminatory practices collectively affect my life as well as the lives of others who are socially, structurally and politically marginalised within the academic environment.

Throughout the process, I have constantly reminded myself that ‘any gaze is always filtered through the lenses’ of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. I am deeply aware that “there [are] no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of — and between — the observer and the observed” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:29). In the process of engaging with these programmes, I have also found the roles of observer, the observed and the participant to be often blurred and interchangeable, depending on which action or perceived non-action is taking place at a specific moment. These roles are never fixed and, therefore, are always fluid.

Reflexive ethnography is defined as “turning back on oneself” (Davies, 2008). This ‘turning back’ takes place in the form of cultural critique and has moral and political implications. The process of self-reference takes place throughout the different phases of the research process (Davies, 2008:4-5). The danger with this type of positioning is that it emphasises the subjectivity of the researcher and invariably influences the product (Davies, 2008). The process of self-reflection has made me ‘turn back’ on myself and my experiences. Reflexivity questions one’s assumptions of how we know and claim to know our social world, as well as how knowledge is produced and the roles that power, identity and positionality play (Day, 2012).

Davies (2008:4) argues that the “issues of reflexivity are particularly salient for ethnographic research in which the involvement of the researcher in the society and culture of those being studied is particularly close”. It has been indeed extremely difficult for me to pinpoint my particular intimacy and closeness with the participants in these programmes without making use of anecdotes since closeness is almost impossible to record through conventional research methods. For me, intimacy with the participants has meant, among other things, reflecting on the building of long-lasting friendships and collaborative projects over a sustained period. Feminist research depicts the researcher as a person who would normally develop social relationships with the people studied (Reinharz & Davidmann, 1992:240).

3.3 ACTION RESEARCH

This qualitative study is largely based on action research that has taken place over a period of six years. “Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work. The key questions asked in action research are ‘What am I doing? What do I need to improve? How do I improve it?’” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:7). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) further state:

One of the implicit values of action research is that the researcher has the opportunity to tell other people about her or his work. Firstly, *how* innovative practices have been developed and secondly, how these ideas about practice are brand new, irrespective of

the fact that other people's ideas may have been adopted or incorporated into the work. The fact remains that *the work is an original contribution*. And this gives other people the opportunity to either adopt or incorporate the ideas if they wish. (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:48) [Own emphasis]

My understanding of action research, therefore, includes both the elements of activism and the didactic because the researcher as well as the participants go through the education process for liberation. Regarding this, Fonow and Cook (1991:6) state that “the aim of feminist research is liberation”.

My action research questions entail the following: What difference did the programmes make in the lives of the participants, myself and in some instances, the spectators? What processes did I follow to ensure that the teaching and learning environment was safe? What processes did I put in place to deal with personal trauma and societal violence and hatred? How did I deal with tensions and conflict in the process? What did we all learn from the participative process? What did I learn from the research process? How did I deal with the different power dimensions between me and the participants and among the participants?

Part of the continuing evaluation of the research process is self-reflection, feedback from the various sources and presentation of oral and written knowledge and information emanating from the research project. This is dealt with in the remainder of the chapter.

In the next section, I write about the process of reflexivity in terms of my autoethnographical choices. However, I have also been very wary of becoming a ‘native informer’ whose ultimate worth is seen as divulging the intimate experiences regarding the working, living, loving and learning lives of my university community. It has, therefore, been of the utmost importance to me that I remain ethically accountable to this community at all times.

There exists very little distinction between insider research and the ethical issues pertaining to the research, especially when one wants both to “gain a higher degree and simultaneously contribute to organisational and personal change and improvement” (Smyth & Holian, 2008:33).

3.4 ETHNOGRAPHY OR ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Smith (1987) suggests the following:

[T]he notion of ethnography commits to the exploration, description, and analysis of a complex of relations that are [*sic*] not conceived in the abstract but serves as the entry point of some particular person or persons whose everyday world of working is organised thereby. (Smith, 1987:160)

For Smith (1990:13), ethnomethodology implies that “the researcher is an active participant in constructing the events she is treating as data”.

This PhD research project is a reflection of part of my everyday working life over a specific period. Davies (2008:30) observes in this regard “that a research topic is nearly always a combination of personal factors, disciplinary culture, and external forces in the broader political, social and economic climate”.

3.4.1 Feminist ethnography

Smith (1987:8) argues that it is important for feminist discourse in its creation and production to be relevant to woman’s specific experiences and to fill those gaps that deliberately exclude these experiences from research language and analyses. Considering this feminist ethical imperative, I have intentionally created and implemented programmes at the GEU that are primarily shaped around the lived experiences and memories of black women and other marginalised peoples and in the instance of the Loud Enuf programme, non-heterosexual people. In creating such programmes, I have aimed to break institutional silences through use

of the body, word and action and considered my own position, interpretation and narration of events as essential to the process. In both programmes, I wanted to create narratives that are not embedded in the prevalent narratives of black women and victimhood or other marginalised people. This is because in the course of my GEU work in the academy, I find the issue of black women students' lives as intellectual activists and shapers of their own destiny to be seldom addressed in the 'knowledge machine'.

Feminist researchers are particularly concerned with the representation of power dynamics in the research process. The prevalent questions in this regard are: Whose knowledge is being favoured? Whose voices are being heard? Whose experiences count? Much has been written about the importance of standpoint theory, and it is argued that feminist ethnographic research is "informed by standpoint epistemologies that begin analyses from women's diverse social locations" (Naples & Sachs, 2000:199). Considering this, I was thus challenged and determined to insert the origins of the diverse social locations and experiences of the cast of *Reclaiming the P...Word*, members of the Loud Enuf programme and myself, into the social narrative of the university via these programmes.

3.4.2 Autoethnography

My personal experience in both the GEU programmes under discussion in this dissertation is accounted for in the autobiographical detail I provide, as well as in some of the autoethnographical experiences of the participants, audience members and spectators, which is presented in the form of feedback comments. Their experiences in and with the programmes are linked to mine. It has been noted elsewhere in this regard that "autoethnography explores one's own experience along with that of other members of the group" (Allbon, 2012:62). In the process, I grappled with the reasons for wanting to convert the GEU programmatic work into a research project and especially if this would ultimately be interpreted as a case of self-praising. I am acutely aware how easy it is for accusations of 'blowing my own trumpet' to stem from writing the GEU programmes into a PhD dissertation since this could colour perceptions of what constitutes 'authentic academic research'. I thus turned to the existing literature and found the following argument helpful in making the decision to pursue a PhD on the GEU work: "Inside researchers very often choose

their research project as a result of several years of experience of working with the issues” (Drake & Heath, 2008:129).

However, the caution is against “pre-existing assumptions about the outcomes on the basis of experience as a practitioner” (Drake & Heath, 2008:129). I have been occupying the position of Head of the GEU for longer than twelve years. It is, therefore, not surprising that I also felt the urgency of recording the work that is being done at the unit. I have been responsible for conceptualising and shaping the work and programmes of the unit and continue to shape its vision, direction and leadership.

Insider-research projects reveal the ethical dilemma of being both the insider and outsider. The insider/outsider is one of the most debated phenomena in ethnographic research (Collins, 1991, 2000; Farganis, 1994; Naples & Sachs, 2000). Naples (2003:49) does not see the insider/outsider dichotomy as fixed but rather as fluid, arguing that the researcher is never totally inside or outside the “community”, and this research relationship is constantly negotiated and renegotiated.

However, understanding my positionality has allowed me to give context to my voice as researcher. I have had to deal with the various factors that make me an insider as well as those that give me an outsider status. My insider status is supported by my position as black, woman, lesbian and Head of the GEU, as well as my academic status, ability to speak, read and write English and Afrikaans and my access to university resources, hierarchies and committee structures. My outsider status is determined by my age, status in the academic hierarchy, my institutional memory and my inability to speak, read or write any of the official languages besides English and Afrikaans. More often than not, my historical racial classification as ‘coloured’ and my middle-class position contributes to my ‘outsiderness’.

As an insider, I had to analyse my feelings and emotions and place them into context within the broader framework and aims with which I was working at the time with each programme. Throughout the writing of this dissertation, the subjectivity with which I have approached the

research is tangible. Through writing about personal feelings and emotions, one explores the deeply intimate aspects of human relations and by so doing, the integration of private and social experience takes place (Emerson, Fritz & Shaw, 2007:361). I was at times deeply touched and very emotionally involved in the lived experiences of the participants and have written below in this regard:

On many days there was no real rehearsal, because the cast used the space to share their experiences of the different forms of violence perpetrated against themselves or women close to them. For some of them it was the first time that they had ever shared these painful experiences with anyone. There were occasions on which we could only hold and comfort each other. These were emotional times. (Hames, 2007b:98)

Upon reflection, I realised that I have experienced profound moments of loneliness and despair in the process of conceptualising the programmes. At other times, I have felt immensely proud of the achievements of these programmes in collaboration with the other participants. I am keenly aware that these programmes that I describe in my PhD would never have come into existence or continued to run if it were not for the participants who shared and still share the same urgency to see social justice prevail.

In both programmes, there is an underlying, directed aim to act against prejudice and violence and to avoid adopting the perpetual victim mentality in which black women and other marginalised people are all too often framed. As the Gender Equity Officer at UWC, I often have to deal with the pain caused by discrimination, prejudice to students and staff members, and this encouraged the establishment of the Loud Enuf programme. I remain unapologetically involved in driving issues of self-esteem, community-building, human dignity, anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-prejudice, anti-sexism and anti-ableism on the campus.

Perceptions about race form an integral part of the content in both programmes. Although I stress the notion that ‘black’ is a political issue, I had not really taken into consideration how apartheid racial classifications remain in the post-1994 democracy. To explain the latter

point, when the GEU established the edudrama project in 2006, I was often confronted with the question of why there were more ‘coloured’ women in the cast compared with the other black groups on campus. As time passed, the question changed to why there were more ‘African’ cast members. Therefore, I realised that even with the best intentions one cannot disregard the impact of race and racism in higher education institutions and must constantly interrogate the issue, need or perception being expressed in any query raised about race and racism. It is, therefore, important that I problematise race and class in this dissertation.

The issue of racial profiling and classification has been probed in previous UWC research projects (Ravjee et al., 2010; Koen & Roux, 1995). Yet, in spite of this and my own political stance with regard to race, I have had to deal with, and still continue to deal with, the complexities that exist within UWC and the broader community in which I live, socialise and work. In addition, I have had to deal constantly with the pervasiveness of apartheid baggage in this regard. People come to the learning and teaching environment with all types of prejudices, which is why I designed the awareness-raising programmes in the first instance. I have had to understand why people are so often vested in continuing to claim their identity in relation to the arbitrary apartheid race classification of the past. As Alkon (2011:131) states: “Reflexive analysis highlights the effects of racialization — the socially constructed processes of racial identity formation”.

Another issue that I have had to deal with concerns language. In the South African context, language is often an indicator of race, class, ethnicity, nationality and geographical region. English has become the preferred medium of instruction at UWC, and in the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, English is used as the dominant language of the performance, which opened up complexities in the use, understanding and interpretation of certain local phrases and words that can be termed Afrikaaps, the particular Cape Flats dialect spoken locally.

The edudrama drew attention to the endemic violence in the country. Part of the narrative was used to draw attention to local, regional and national perpetrations of violence against women. Universities in particular can be very violent spaces. Thus, my ‘insiderness’ as

producer of the edudrama Head of the GEU has helped me gain very intimate knowledge about the personal struggles of women survivors of violence against women. With the institutionalisation of Loud Enuf, the personal accounts of violence relating to transgender, transsexual and other gender non-conformed students have become part of the larger research project.

The autoethnographical approach I took has led to introspection and reflexivity about the layered nature of my multiple identities and how their intersections at various moments either connect with or rupture the multiple identities of the participants in the programmes. I have become acutely aware of how all our identities shifted during the research period. As the insider researcher, I could ‘stage’ the socio-political experiences of certain marginalised groups on campus and in the broader society. That is, I was able to provide the institutional platform for this as the staff member responsible for awareness-raising and education about transformation at the university. Yet, I have had to be careful and not overplay my role as facilitator in order not to drown the various voices and bodies for whom I provided the platform.

3.4.3 Performance ethnography

There are many different interpretations of performance ethnography but for the purpose of this discussion, I apply it as a methodology, firstly to describe the creative act and process in theatre in the edudrama and secondly to describe the performance of gender and sexuality in the Loud Enuf programme. The different ways in which performance ethnography can be approached is based on how one draws a distinction between text, production and performance since all of these can be regarded as interpretations (Hamilton, 2001). I have made use of all three in my analyses of performance ethnography.

Performance ethnography allowed me to have full and privileged access as a participant/observer to the experiences of the writers, performers, the performances and the immediate expectations and responses of the audience before and after the performances. I refer to this as privileged access because I had access to information as it was being created

and to which I would not otherwise have had if it were not for my insider positionality within the programmes and the research process itself. This is important because it means that I did not have to rely exclusively on memory or interviewing processes to gain information but had access to direct experience as well as the variety of aide-mémoire tools used by the participants and audience members.

The ethical issues in this process proved to be less complicated because the performances were public events. However, I observed that there are certain protocols attached to the relationship between researcher as participant/observer, the cast and the audience as participants, which differed from the protocols usually involved in interviews and focus-group research methodologies. Both the theatre production and the public performances of Loud Enuf were carefully planned and undertaken with this need in mind from the beginning.

Nevertheless, memory has played an essential role in the collection and interpretation of data because the programmes were not primarily staged as ‘research projects’ in the conventional academic sense. The programmes were designed to address specific transformation concerns at a particular historic juncture in the lives of the citizens of UWC. In this regard, the edudrama addresses sexism and violence against women, and the Loud Enuf programme addresses homophobia and transphobia.

At each theatre performance, photographs were taken and video recordings were made. These recordings and photographs as well as the posters and programmes made for the performances are valuable socio- and political aids in the memory process. These memory aids assist in highlighting the particular socio-cultural moments in academic life, that is, the space and time outside the formal classroom. These aids add mnemonic value in the remembering process. It has been argued that “memory is explicitly concerned with the relationship between the past, present and future, as remembering is the activity which enables us to meditate and navigate these temporal arenas and forge links between them” (Keightley, 2010:62). Because the edudrama has evolved over a number of years, the large numbers of diverse participants involved and the faces in the photographs and the names on

the programmes assist in providing a historical collage of memories, events and incidents. The students and staff members who initially assisted in the formation and establishment of Loud Enuf have left UWC and to a certain extent, I have had to rely on memory in the reconstruction of the history of the programme.

Throughout the research process, I have had to reflect on the risk of being accused of nursing narcissistic interpretations of the programmes' processes, products and impact. However, there is no doubt in my mind that the performances were created because of the occurrence of events at specific post-1994 moments, with the feedback from both audience and participants indicating how important these 'out-of-the-classroom' education experiences are. Chapter Five presents indicators of the impact of the edudrama. In this regard, I concur with Jones (2002) who argues as follows:

Performance offers a new authenticity, based on body knowledge, on what audiences and performers share together, on what they mutually construct. As a form of cultural exchange, performance ethnography encourages everyone present to feel themselves as both familiar and strange, to see the truths and the gaps in their cross cultural embodiments. (Jones, 2002:14)

3.5 DATA FOR *RECLAIMING THE P...WORD*

Below, I present the various data resources used to theorise the programmes towards the specific aims of this dissertation.

3.5.1 Performance text and the script for *Reclaiming the P...Word*

Performance texts consist of various components that enable multiple voices and experiences to become tangible in the present (Conquergood, 1985:10). According to Denzin (1997:95), in the case of ethnographic theatre, the dramatic performance is the place and space where the text, the performers, the performances and the audiences come together.

The performance text starts with the script. The script was produced by a collective or ensemble. The various written pieces (or monologues), one dialogue, a theme song and a poem were written by individuals and arranged into a script format. Although the 2010 script (attached to this dissertation as Appendix One) forms the basis of the textual analysis that I will provide in the following chapters, I note the various editions of the script and its organic growth over the years. The text or script and the interpretation thereof were and still are in a continuous process of evolving. Cast members changed (and continue to change) annually, sometimes from performance to performance, and each cast member interprets the text differently. The various directors have had (and continue to have) artistic freedom to interpret the script in keeping with the specific emphases they place on performance in their role as director.

Ultimately, the script evolved in 2010 has proved to be the most used, with four new monologues added to the original 2006 script and one monologue adapted and almost rewritten by various new performers. This occurred for two reasons. Firstly, one of the cast members withdrew from the process and did not want her monologue to be used any longer and secondly, because the quality of the writing varied, various rewriting phases occurred with regard to some of the pieces, all which resulted in a more well-rounded script in 2010. However, great care was taken not to interfere with the essence of the text too much and to maintain the integrity and originality of the ideas, language registers and tone of the original script's monologues.

From the second cast onwards, cast members obviously did not possess exactly the same lived experiences relating to the content or language registers as those of the original cast members. However, because new members were so eager to interpret the same script in a different way, very few new pieces were added to the original script. A decision was taken that allowed and enabled new cast members to change the text of particular pieces if they had difficulty with it or were not comfortable with the way the content was presented and if this proved to be a stumbling block in performing the piece effectively. By 2010, three new pieces were added to the original 2006 script.

3.5.2 Photographs

As part of my data collection, I used photographs taken at various performances since the photograph collection constitutes an important historical and visual record. This has also helped me to associate the faces of the participants with the names in the programmes. Each photograph represents a specific moment in the lifespan of the performance and forms part of the history of venues, places and spaces in which each performance of the edudrama occurred. It also provides a visual record of the *fact* that a performance took place.

Photographs objectify and they turn an event or person into something that can be possessed. They are regarded as transparent accounts of reality. It is didactic and invites an active response. (Sontag, 2003:81)

For instance, during the initial process of creating *Reclaiming the P...Word*, theatre techniques and writing workshops were conducted to show writers and cast members how the narrative could be used to ‘stage’ issues of embodiment and embodying. These workshops emphasised the importance of self-expression and claiming of voice through dialogue and monologues, poetry and song. In addition, the workshops enabled the sharing of personal experiences and stories to raise awareness and educate the participants, the campus community and the audience members about violence against women and reclaiming the self and the body. I also conducted workshops on ‘body mapping’ and with the permission of the participants, photographed their body maps while they were in the process of drawing them. During discussions after this activity, the participants shared and interpreted their respective recreation of their bodies in their maps.

During my own writing process for this dissertation, the photographs offered me the opportunity to engage in the type of reflexivity that provided particular insight into the creative styles and processes used by the women cast members involved in the process at the time. For me, the photographs came to provide visual depth to the research. Moreover, during performances, the still photograph captures and ‘freezes’ a specific historical moment on stage, often capturing in the frame the expressions on the faces of both members of the cast and the audience as seen through the lens of the photographer. This moment, while it can never be repeated, is always open to interpretation. Another reason I began to keep

photographic records is related to the transient nature of students and student life. I felt the need to have records of the participants, the events and the performances in which they ‘took action’. Such photographs also provided me the opportunity to present each cast member with a visual record of her contribution to the awareness-raising and transformation processes that she had involved herself in for the benefit of herself and others. The photograph thus also became a gift to show gratitude to the participants for volunteering because participants never received remuneration for their efforts of sharing their experiences and voice with others.

The first photographs of the cast were used to create posters to market the production. The posters have served as a chronological aid to help me keep record of who performed when and where in the course of the edudrama because the date(s) and venues of the performances are printed on them. The posters also provided possibilities for alternative narratives of the participants. At one stage, the posters appeared throughout Cape Town as marketing tools for the performances, providing greater visibility of the cast members. “Photography has immense descriptive potential in ethnographic studies” (Ball & Smith, 2007:303).

Photographs do not simply portray reality, especially with the current available technology for enhancing, cutting or cropping visual representations, but they provide narratives by the framing of subjects. Ball and Smith (2007:305) remind that it is not the camera that takes photographs but the aim and manipulation of the person behind the lens, arguing that there are “viewer-centred factors” involved in the making of the image product itself that include the viewer’s “cultural and personal knowledge” and the subsequent “visual literacy” possibilities of the image.

Various photographers were involved in taking photographs at the different performances. In campus productions, student photographers volunteered while at mainstream theatres, professional photographers with proper equipment to incorporate different angles and theatre lighting were engaged. In both instances, the authenticity of the production came through even if the quality of the photographs differed. Although I briefed the photographer about the performance process and usually allowed the photographer to attend a dress rehearsal so that knowledge about the play could be garnered beforehand, the photograph as the product

largely rested with the interpretation of the photographer. All the photographs represented the perspective of the photographer, which means that I had to re-interpret the performance or its captured moment by interpreting the knowledge contained in the photograph, that is, the knowledge as seen through the lens or eye of the photographer. This proved to be an interesting exercise in reflection since I could never anticipate in any way on what the photographer would focus. I, therefore, built my own narrative about the people in the photographs, the spaces and the places in which they were located in the image and the context portrayed in it. This provided additional reasons for the performance and its art. Although I have not used the photographs as part of my research analysis, I have used the photograph collection as part of a memory aid in the writing of this dissertation.

Halberstam (2000:xv) describes how Esther Newton managed to insert herself as ethnographer in the narrative: “She includes pictures of herself with her informants and these photo documents place her within rather than outside the frame of analysis”. The photographers often took photographs of me on stage as part of the performance, as well as after the performance as the facilitator of dialogues with audience members, and of me as a participant in the protest march, the latter in connection with the Loud ENUF programme. The photograph archive portrays my intimate positioning within the research narrative.

Photographs that focus on the audience as part of the production have proved to be a significant historical aid in the reflection and analysis of who attended the performances, who responded to the message(s) of the production and how they responded. There is a permanent photograph installation of the play at the GEU office. The photographs are also used in poster presentations at symposia and colloquia. In addition, images and conversations with audiences have been captured in video recordings before and after some of the productions during question and answer sessions.

3.5.3 Feedback or indicators of impact

3.5.3.1 *Newspaper reviews*

Reviews appeared in *Cue*, the official newspaper of the National Arts Festival, the Khanya College newsletter, the official UWC campus newsletter, as well as the GEU's newsletter, *Imbewu*.

3.5.3.2 *Audience*

Feedback from the various audiences took place in different forms and formats. Audience members provided written feedback in notebooks, via email and instant cellular messages, as well as verbal feedback via telephone conversations. Interviews were conducted with audience members in discussion sessions after the shows (occasionally before), some of which formed part of the video recordings of the performances. Certain discussion sessions with student audience members after performances at UWC were also captured on video.

3.5.3.3 *Interviews with cast members*

I did not design structured questionnaires for the various cast members to obtain information with regard to the impact of the production and their participation in the performance. Instead, I very often conducted open-ended, informal interviews with some members to ascertain the value of the process for them. Some preferred to give feedback in writing.

Some members, without being asked, voluntarily shared their experiences of participation in the programme. I kept notes of some of the interviews. Cast members gave feedback by email and verbally during meetings. The minutes of some of these meetings with the cast members offer valuable insight into the process.

3.5.3.4 *Journaling*

The cast members were asked to keep journals of their experiences, and some gave permission for me to use this information for purposes of my dissertation.

3.5.3.5 *UWC formal class assignments*

The influence of the performances on curricula of the English 323: 3rd year majors, Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) 212 and 312 (South African Gender, Politics and Culture and Gender and Embodiment) was reflected in the assignments written by students in these courses for formal evaluation. Copies of these assignments were provided to me on request to the various lecturers teaching these courses. The cast was also invited to the English major classes, students who had viewed the performances beforehand. In these sessions, cast members shared their experience with regard to the writing and performance process and responded to specific questions posed by the students. Students sometimes presented their research projects on the performance in their WGS classes, which I was invited to attend. These presentation events also provided a forum for the mutual posing and answering of questions regarding reception, interpretation and production and performance issues.

3.5.3.6 *Personal communications*

Letters of support for the programme were received from the director of Audience Development, Artscape and prominent local artists such as Malika Ndlovu.

3.5.3.7 *DVD recordings of the various performances*

As previously mentioned, recordings were made at various performances, which I found extremely valuable as sources for keeping records, especially with regard to adaption of the play for different audiences, venues and needs. These recordings capture extremely powerful moments of feminism in action and have proved to be influential feminist teaching tools, especially the audience expectations and responses that were recorded as part of the production. The recordings serve as records of the global impact of the production. The DVD

recordings made it possible for the message to ‘travel’ and ‘cross borders’ in ways that the actual physical production could not.

However, recordings can never replace or capture the experience of a live performance with the emotions and physical action that go with it. The DVD-ROM can be instantly played back, it eliminates the interpretive gap between the live event and the resultant footage. According to Garret (2010: 526) “capture small gestures, expressions and moments which remind us of something intangible, something that may have slipped from memory otherwise”.

3.6 THE LOUD ENUF PROGRAMME

The trajectory of data collection for the Loud Enuf programme was different to that of the edudrama. Prior to the programme being formally established and institutionalised, two interventions were taken in the 2006 Anti-Homophobia Awareness Week to raise awareness regarding the issues of homophobia on campus. One was the Saturday morning Anti-Homophobia Event at the UWC Library Auditorium in 1999 in which former and current students, staff members and activists from the broader community came together and shared their experiences about homophobia. At that time, a number of UWC students, who felt comfortable with their sexual orientation despite the institutional culture being extremely hostile and homophobic, participated prominently in the event. I present this information mainly from notes taken by me during and after the event. This data is hence based on personal memory.

While some of the information regarding this programme was indeed formally captured by means of notes, minutes of meetings and other media formats, most of the information for the research in this dissertation is recalled through memory. Memory plays a large and important part in the reconstruction of the events. Hence, while there is ample ephemeral data to substantiate the existence of the edudrama, much of the Loud Enuf programme data on sexuality and sexual orientation is embedded in the ‘intimate’ conversations and confidential ‘coming-out confessions’ of staff members and students. This admittedly points to the

subjective nature of the ‘research’ aspect of this programme as presented in this dissertation since it is read primarily through my interpretation of the events. Due to feminist ethics, I have not made use of any of the personal communications that took place between me and the participants of this programme. This is why Chapter Six is largely descriptive. ‘Coming out’ as a lesbian or gay person at UWC in the early 21st century remains a highly risky and personal affair despite the enabling legal framework, and my position as Director of the GEU and Gender Equity Officer at UWC compels me to observe the ethic of confidence in this regard.

Some of the key data-gathering methods used in the Loud Enuf programme did conform to conventional research methods, such as the survey and questionnaire data-collecting methods deployed on campus. Photographic images also formed part of the more public collection of ‘evidence’. The programme utilises film, public debate, protest marches, workshops on identity and sexual orientation, networking with similar organisations, social media, seminars and talks, among others, to raise awareness with regard to sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender fluidity on campus. I, therefore, had the opportunity to approach the research programme from multiple sites. Visual data combined with survey reports and text made the chronological data collection easier and laid the foundation for action-research study.

3.6.1 Surveys

In 2005, after a number of women students informed staff at the GEU that they were being threatened and harassed because they were lesbians, a survey was conducted to establish the degree of homophobia, in particular lesbiphobia, on campus. In 2006, the first campus-wide awareness event against homo-prejudice took place. A local NGO, The Triangle Project, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2006, and the GEU partnered with this organisation, the oldest LGBTBIQ organisation in the country, to host this awareness week. Several other stakeholders, such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), the African Gender Institute (AGI), Good Hope Metropolitan Community Church, Inclusive and Affirmative Ministries, Inner Circle and Gender Dynamix as well as individuals, made the success of this event possible.

Miner-Rubino et al. (2007:199:200) argue that the “quantitative research method can be a very effective tool to conduct feminist research”. According to them, “the survey is consistent with the feminist philosophies and goals to understand social phenomena” (Miner-Rubino et al, 2007:199-200). They claim that such “research is reliable, valid, respectful, ethical and honest and that it usually emphasizes social change with regard to marginalized social groups” (Miner-Rubino et al, 2007:199-200). The GEU staff members found that the survey method for our research on homophobia and safety on the UWC campus provided us with the necessary tools to gain information while at the same time, maintaining the privacy and dignity of the participants. The anonymous questionnaire of the survey meant that participants could share meaningful experiences about their personal and campus lives without fear of intimidation.

The survey conducted in 2005 was aimed at assessing the institutional culture of UWC and its position pertaining to non-heteronormativity. The survey was commissioned by the GEU and was conducted by Yvette Abrahams under the title: *Why stop now just when we are winning? Meeting the needs of lesbian and bi-sexual women on UWC campus.*

In 2010, a second UWC climate survey was conducted to establish the degree of inclusivity and non-discrimination in the living, learning and teaching environment and in the policies and campus space for non-heteronormative people. This second survey was a collaborative effort between the GEU and the Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) Department on campus. The official survey was titled: *UWC LGBTQ Climate Survey*. I was the principal researcher in the survey, and a student from the WGS was the student researcher. The research team constituted one woman student from the WGS, one woman volunteer located at the GEU and two male students. All the survey researchers self-identified as lesbian and gay people. The purpose of the survey was to gather and document the experiences and perceptions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students at UWC. This was in order for the GEU to identify and develop safe spaces and to raise awareness and advocate for relevant non-discriminatory policies and safe teaching, learning, living and social environments on campus.

Several training sessions and report-back meetings were held with the young research team, with me as the facilitator. The minutes form part of the data informing the current dissertation. The researchers were inducted in feminist research methodology and the ethical treatment of the participants. We had regular debriefing feedback sessions since they, as homosexual students, could identify with the participants. The survey was part of the liberatory education process for all involved. It demonstrated the fragmentation of the campus into spaces for specific social and cultural groups. The data analysis provided information on how students and staff negotiate their homosexuality in the heteronormative campus environment and helped the Loud Enuf programme leaders to plan future awareness campaigns and information sessions.

Chapter Six provides a descriptive narrative of certain outcomes of both the research surveys and describes the subsequent annual antihomophobia programmes.

CHAPTER FOUR

A FEMINIST TEXT, LANGUAGE AND EMBODIMENT FOR THE EDUDRAMA

“There is no guaranteed relationship between telling one’s story and being healed by telling it” (Schultz, 2008:5).

4.1 THE CONTEXT

The analysis of the educational drama, *Reclaiming the P... Word*, (hereafter referred to as *The P... Word*) is written over two consecutive chapters. In this chapter, I provide the background to the performance and the analysis of the play as a feminist text. In this regard, I discuss socio-political and historical factors linked to the use of misogynistic language in South African society, especially regarding the local slang term, ‘*poes*’. I focus on the deliberate incorporation of colloquialisms into the text and this unconventional language becoming an important connection with the wider socio-political environment post-1994. I also look at the concepts and processes used in the creation of a feminist counter discourse in the play, especially the deliberate use of racial and sexual identities as radicalising agents for institutional transformation. I further argue performance art to be an invaluable tool in assisting with the reinstatement of dignity, inclusivity, human rights and social justice for those who are consistently marginalised, in this case black women in South Africa post-apartheid, and analyse in depth a few of the monologues in the script in terms of language and embodiment in this regard.

Since its inception, many versions of the script for *The P... Word* have evolved, one of which appears in Appendix One of this dissertation⁸. This script from 2010 marks a certain maturation of the creation process and product, as is discussed in this chapter. Chapter Four contains all the pieces analysed and in these analyses, I critically examine how the play’s

8. Each year, the cast members have artistic freedom to change the text or add new content to the script. Thus, the script evolves constantly, depending on the different lived experiences of the participants.

dramatic performance has been engaged as a feminist teaching tool outside the classroom context. I make use of textual analysis to revisit, reshape and reclaim language and to understand its use as well as the deeply political meanings attached to words and local expressions. I argue that very often, words and language have connotations in specific contexts and spaces and that these spaces have the 'power' to either sanitise or neutralise words, terminology and expressions and in some instances, even tamper with existing ideologies.

According to McGregor (2003), "discourse analysis challenges us to see our words as having meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition and it does not matter whether they are written, oral or sign language". She continues that we should never again speak, read or hear others' words without being conscious of the underlying, hidden meaning of the words (McGregor, 2003). It is with this crucial observation regarding the meaning of language as intrinsically related to historical, social and political circumstances that I will unpack the choice of the title for the play, *Reclaiming the P... Word*. Through further analysis of the language in the text, I will also show how UWC students' narration forms a feminist socio-political consciousness, which powerfully challenges the patriarchal violence against women and girl children in South Africa.

Grosz (1995) suggests that in order to determine whether the text is feminist or not, the following crucial questions need to be asked:

What makes a text feminist or feminine? What criteria are applied to establish whether the text and language used is distinguishing it from the patriarchal and phallogentric mainstream within which we locate it and where it finds its context? (Grosz, 1995:10)

According to Grosz (1995):

Any text can be read from a feminist perspective because a feminist point of view entails the bringing out of the text's alignment with, participation in, and subversion of patriarchal norms. (Grosz, 1995:16)

Grosz (1995) continues:

[A] text is ... explosive, dangerous, liable, with unpredictable consequences. Texts, like concepts, do things, make things, perform actions, create connections, bring about new alignments. They are events — situated in social, institutional, and conceptual space. (Grosz, 1995:126)

In selecting the monologues from the play for discussion, I purposefully make the connection with feminisation of the political, social, institutional spaces and events in accordance with the feminist perspective. The particular situatedness of the writers of the selected texts underpins the use of the language, imagery and remembering discourse in the descriptions and constructions of the various types of violence spoken about and challenged in the play. Throughout *The P... Word*, and hence the discussion in this chapter, there is an ever-present awareness of the intersection of location, body, race, gender, class and language.

The discussion in this chapter is broadly divided into three different sections. In the first section, I contextualise the feminist ideology behind the play and locate the origin of its title. In the second section, I identify the feminist writing and performance art in the play. In the third section, I analyse the feminism in the content of selected monologues in the text.

4.2 NAMING THE INCONCEIVABLE IN FEMINIST TERMS

“One of the UWC managers said, when told about the name of this production:

‘So I guess the P is not for poetry’” (Bosman, 2006).

The first language issue I want to discuss is the term ‘p... word’, in particular, the abbreviation ‘p’. The abbreviation ‘p’ stands for the Afrikaans term, ‘*poes*’, which is the translation of the English word, vagina. It is recognisably a term of obscenity or a swear word in both the English and Afrikaans languages. After much deliberation regarding the name of

the production, I decided on a title that is locally identifiable and easily understood in all eleven official South African languages while at the same time, grabs and holds the attention of the potential viewer. Although the initial writing of *Reclaiming the P...Word* was a collective process of black feminist deliberations, the task rested on me to devise a title for the production that would be both informative and imaginative. During the writing sessions, I proposed and the group agreed to use the term ‘*poes*’ as the central theme for writing the pieces. We wanted potential viewers to reflect on the various meanings of the abbreviation ‘p’ in order to pique their curiosity so much that they would want to watch the performance. The title, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, also announces the feminist aim to take back, to talk back, to reclaim what was taken away or is being taken away from women.

In deliberately obscuring or silencing part of the term ‘*poes*’, the word and the title became loaded with meanings and ambiguities, even raising curiosity and resistance, as may be seen in the comment made by the male UWC university manager cited in the stance above. The cast was often asked to refrain from using the noun during interviews on ‘family’ radio stations. Instead of hindering, this kind of censorship led to the creative use of the letter ‘p’ in the marketing material of the play. Because the title piqued curiosity among prospective audience members wanting to know the meaning of the letter ‘p’, the cast playfully retorted with a challenge: “If you really want to know, come and watch the performance.”

Baderoon (2011:222) points out that the use of the ellipsis in ‘p... word’ opens up a productive ambiguity. The play on this truncation on posters and in programmes for the play by use of adjectives and nouns, such as “political”, “pleasure”, “pain”, “prolific”, “poetic”, “poignant”, “perceptive”, “pleasurable”, “provocative”, “powerful”, “punchy” and “propelling”, widens the possibility of the ‘p’ and produces for it “a degree of semantic dexterity” (Baderoon, 2011:222). ‘*Poes*’ is a local term used as a derogatory or swear word, a profanity specifically aimed at women’s genitalia. The feminist reclamation project is immediately announced in the claiming of the empty or absent space *between* the letters in the physical spelling of the misogynistic word itself. The feminist technique of counter-claim regarding the very essence of the black woman’s body that is closed down by the violent patriarchal gaze and voice may be seen as working through *silence*, that is, via the silence in the space between the letters. The decidedly oppositional feminist politics, powerfully

annexing and creative in the use of ‘silence’, can hardly be underestimated. This gentler, truthful and dignified feminist use of language and silence is never allowed to be confused with the patriarchal misogynistic use and violent energy of ‘*poes*’.

There is a long history attached to the use of the word ‘*poes*’ in South Africa. It has been pointed out that “[b]lack women’s essence is often defined in terms of their genitalia” (Marshall, 1996:10). In the following monologue, a piece that was subsequently written in response to the telling charge by the UWC university manager that the ‘p’ could not possibly stand for poetry, Bosman (2010) retorts as follows:

And why not Poes poetry – seeing as I am taking it back, reclaiming it?

I find it utterly pronounceable POES.

Powerful, palace, pit, paradisaical Poes.

Is it not poetically poesable?

Provocative, playful, pleasurable Poes?

Perky, perfect, proactive Poes?

Punchy, perceptive, poetic Poes?

(Bosman, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The subversive turning of the term and the connotations attached to it through the spoken, written and performed ‘*poes*’ word is the crux of the re-embodiment project of the play, with its intensely and intentionally focused gaze on the body and voice of the black South African woman who is still excluded from the national space post-1994.

To further illustrate South African society’s complicity with the public display of misogyny and use of the term ‘*poes*’ in public spaces, three examples are provided below. The first relates to the 1995 failure of South Africa to win the bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games. The white, male-dominated media presented the headline and captioned cartoon in a local daily newspaper, “Athens se ma se ...”



(Source: *The Sowetan*, 1997)

When South Africa won the bid to host the Soccer World Cup, the same cartoon re-appeared in *The Sowetan* in 1997 to compensate readers for the former disappointment of losing the Olympics bid a few years earlier. Johns' (2004) article in *The Sowetan* reported that the female Cape Town Mayor at the time, Nomaindia Mfeketo, drew laughter from the audience by observing: "In typical Cape Flats slang our disappointment was captured by [then *Argus* cartoonist] Zapiro with a cartoon captioned 'Athens se ma se ...' the last word you all remember". The narrative and performance of complicity that unfolded here clearly show the intersection of gender, race and class. Zapiro, the cartoonist, is a white, middle-class man and Mfeketo, the mayor, a black, middle-class woman who at that stage occupied the prime political position as representative of the ruling political party in Cape Town. Both referred to the derogatory Cape Flats slang 'Jou ma se @*#&' using the reference to the profanity as in 'Jou ma se ...' translated into 'Your mother's ...' to theatrically unlock amusement and entertainment. The Cape Flats is devoid of 'whiteness' and the term '*poes*' is clearly signalled as not to be associated with the civilisation of 'whiteness'.

It is indeed sad to note that national competitive sport requires the humorous denigration of the black woman's body and is also thus promoted by a black woman regarded as one of the 'struggle stalwarts'⁹. This example is often used in GEU feminist awareness-raising workshops to illustrate the collusion and complicity of women in their own oppression. Similarly, the white cartoonist's cavalier use of the image of a drunk, toothless, 'coloured' man to express his prejudices against black women is also telling. Moreover, the word '*poes*', having never been written or uttered aloud in these instances but depicted in the cartoon and in Mfeketo's reference by inference in the public space, reveals shocking calculation and awareness of the term 'misogynistic ideology beyond humour'. Recalling McGregor's (2003) earlier observation of the hidden meaning of words and Baderoon's (2011) analysis above of the abbreviation 'p', these incidents are indicative of the shamefulness and silence surrounding women's 'private' parts and the violence with which women must live on a daily basis, both of which are 'open secrets' and thus acceptable in South African society. In these media and public gestures by white, male producers of knowledge and news and the black, ruling elite's production of liberated identity and national progress is the noticeable focus of performance spectacle centred on the black woman's body.

The third incident occurred in a public court when a black advocate swore at a white High Court judge, saying: "*Jou ma se poes ...*" (SAPA, 2011a). This time, '*poes*' was publicly articulated by the speaker and was heard by both the person at whom it was directed and the broader audience in the court and subsequently, by the South African public when it was widely reported in the media. Again, the media took advantage of the opportunity. However, in spite of being admonished by the relevant structures for the profanities used, the advocate was cleared of all allegations of professional misconduct on the grounds of a medical condition (SAPA, 2011b). The Cape Bar Council found that his "condition made him lack the capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct" (SAPA, 2011c). This incident occurred in a public court, the highest of legal spaces that is supposed to uphold the Constitution with its progressive and inclusive equality clause relating to non-discrimination against women. Both the behaviour of a 'learned' black man and the outcome of the decision

9. Mfeketo was an important figure in anti-apartheid politics and the Women's Movement in the Western Cape during the 1980s and early 1990s.

by an 'educated' group of people are telling in terms of the complicity apparent in the current politics of exclusion happening in South Africa post-apartheid.

Why do people, including highly placed public officials and figures, use this word with such impunity? And why do audiences or readers consistently laugh when they hear or read the word? Is it because it is a familiar expression that is funny or do they paradoxically experience embarrassment and discomfort when confronted by it? Lara (1998:35) contends that "language is more than just a tool for communication ... [it is] an important part of reality construction". It is precisely to these obvious (the three examples presented) and latent (the objecting counter discourse to the language of violence) forms of 'reality construction' that *The P...Word* responds. The above incidents and the other numerous daily examples that black women experience formed a crucial rationale for creating the play and shaped its feminist discourse and choices from the beginning. The title of the play and it's the language emanate from a space of deep feminist reflection that is related to the very specific context and connotation of the term '*poes*' in South Africa.

In many instances, no or little provocation is needed for the term to be used as an expletive, and it can be directed at and used by both women and men, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of certain monologues of the play later in this chapter. '*Poes*' is an integral part of everyday South African speech and in essence, remains a misogynistic reference to women's genitalia, specifically black women post-1994 and "is always an obscene and abusive mode of address that expresses rage, disgust or aggression" (Baderoon, 2011:223). As the discussion unfolds, I will show how *The P...Word* re-politicises and reclaims the term through its writing and performance. At this point, however, it is vital to deliberate further on the mechanisms through which violence against black women remains a current reality in South Africa.

Violence against women has a long and specific history in South Africa, as has been mentioned, with South African men, both black and white, frequently taking proprietorship of woman's bodies, especially black women's bodies, in violent ways. Popular culture often depicts women as sexual objects and commodities. In the US context, this is similarly

illustrated by bell hooks' feminist analysis of the Spike Lee debut film, *She's Gotta Have It*, in which hooks raises concerns about the sexist and racist stereotyping of black women as sexual deviants and passive recipients of violence (hooks, 1989). Hooks highlights the rape of the main character, Nola Darling, during which the rapist asks her, "Whose pussy is this?" and to which she responds, "Yours" (hooks, 1989). Nola Darling is portrayed as passively submitting to male violence, domination and patriarchy, which, according to hooks (1989:139, 141), "undermines the progressive radical potential of this film".

Feminists have often argued in favour of the power of the speaking subject, which disrupts abusive misogynistic discourse by breaking the silence about the violence enacted on the female body (Kitch, 1987:67). However, to grasp the extent of this feminist power, it is important to identify the ways of breaking patriarchal structures that construct walls and silences around women's bodies. The endemic violence against black women in South Africa informed from the beginning, the conceptualising of *The P...Word* in these terms. The examples I present below show how the discourse of violence against women gave impetus to the design and content of the monologues in the play.

In her book, *Black Sexual Politics*, Collins (2005) refers to the sexual harassment case lodged by Anita Hill against US Supreme Court judge, Clarence Thomas, in 1991. Collins (2005) opines that the outcome was a travesty of justice, with the race card clearly having been used by Thomas at the cost of addressing sexist violence. Collins (2005) points to the fact that "as rape victims, black women always carried the less important burden of gender". In her analysis of the case, Thomas's opportunistic equation of the public lynching of black men in US history and his supposed modern-day, "high-tech lynching" in public as his defence, Collins (2005) observes that sexual harassment and the rape of women are often private acts with no witnesses. She is clear: "Black women were raped, yet their pain and suffering remained largely invisible. Whereas lynching was public spectacle, rape signalled private humiliation" (Collins 2005:214-217).

The use of the above 'race-card' mechanism by men, specifically black men, to elude censure for sexual violence they perpetrate finds significant comparison in South Africa in the well-

publicised, local rape narrative of the Jacob Zuma trial. In this instance, a “64-year old man stood on trial after being accused of raping the 31-year old daughter of a family friend and national liberation comrade — who even during her gruelling cross-examination called him *umalume* (uncle)” (Ratele, 2006:49). Both Thomas and Zuma are ‘public personas’ who were accused of acts of violence against black women. Both the complainants, Hill and Khwezi, decided to make the ‘private’ degradation and dehumanisation ‘public’.

As with Thomas, Zuma was found not guilty. The lens of critical discourse analysis applied to both narratives from different continents and countries provides insight into the continual violence against black women as ‘legitimate’.

While I do not offer a full or detailed analysis of the Zuma trial, the issue I want to emphasise is the important aspect of performances inside and outside the court, which together with the outcome of the Zuma rape trial, contributed immensely to the shaping of *The P...Word* and to which the opening monologue refers. The play begins with the first performer mentioning three events that marred the important 2006 national celebrations marking key historical moments in the anti-apartheid struggle. The first event was the accusation of the rape of an HIV positive woman by the then Deputy President of South Africa, the second citizen of this country. The survivor had to subsequently ‘disappear’ into exile and is now living without citizenship in a foreign country. The second incident refers to the accusation against a South African ambassador abroad of 21 accounts of sexual harassment. The third incident refers to the accusation of sexual harassment against the then Chief Whip of the African National Congress (ANC) in parliament by a young woman who had been employed as his personal assistant. These dramatic events in the public sphere were motivating factors in the production of *The P...Word*.

Twice in his article on the proceedings of the Zuma rape trial, Ratele (2006) refers to the trial as being theatrical:

The theatre around that particular case, including the intimidation of the plaintiff by the declared supporters of Zuma ... [Ratele notes:] What is of concern is the public psycho-

political theatre and what this tells us about sexualities, gender and, in particular, masculinities in contemporary South Africa. (Ratele, 2006:49)

The trial encapsulated the intrigue of theatre, its danger and its exposure of the intersection of the political, the sexual and the violent. Moloi (2006) also describes the theatrical atmosphere outside the court on the day of the verdict:

On that day, police officers were present in large numbers, and scores of people were dancing, chanting and singing outside the court building. All eyes were on Judge van der Merwe who was about to read his judgement in the case of the State v. Jacob Zuma. (Moloi, 2006:25)

Throughout the trial, there were different role players, protesters against Zuma and supporters of Zuma, with many standoffs taking place between the two opposing groups, sometimes bordering on violence. Both inside and outside the court, there was an atmosphere of drama loaded with suspense. Even on the UWC campus, some women students wore T-shirts emblazoned with the image of Zuma and slogans reading '100% Zuma' and '100% Zulu Boy'. As feminists, GEU staff members were concerned at the obvious complicity with violence against women and thus, the first scene in the play became the subsequent means of addressing this situation. Due to the fact that Zuma was accused of allegedly raping the daughter of a friend and the use of intimidating mob politics in the course of the trial, issues of 'morality' and injustice pertaining to the woman accuser were foregrounded, and these were central themes in this monologue.

The above example shows the interlinking of the socio-political with the shaping of campus subjectivities, especially demonstrating that public and political support for public and political figures is a reality on campuses. It was in this atmosphere of oppressive violence against black women supported by some black women students that the need for education with regard to feminist embodiment and dignity came to be conceptualised in the edudrama. Another reason for the play being created relates to the continual sexual violence on South African higher learning campuses, beginning with UWC. Of particular interest is that

violence against black women students does not receive due attention and is not treated with the same urgency as violence against their white woman counterparts. In this current context, the higher education environment can be fairly accused of continuing with the perpetuation of misogyny against black women.

In an earlier opinion piece, I discussed the marked difference in ways that society, the media and the higher education environment treated the murders of four young, women students on different campuses (Hames, 2009:40). The murder of two white women students developed into national angst; in one case, both the then President and the former President of South Africa poured out public sympathy and support for the families of the victims, yet the murders of two black women students by their respective former boyfriends hardly made the national papers (Hames, 2009:40).

I am not undermining the fact that white women students were killed or underestimating the terrible tragedy of these crimes but making the distinction between inclusion and exclusion in national memory based on race. Years after the white women students were killed¹⁰, their stories still make the headlines, while the deaths of the black women students have been long forgotten. It is, therefore, important to remind that remembrance of these incidents is a significant gesture for inclusion. It is an essential feminist obligation that the history of inequality and exclusion never be forgotten and the need to exercise vigilance against violence on higher learning education campuses in order to eradicate it in the future be undertaken. Writing and performing *The P...Word* asserts 'hidden' memories to the consciousness and conscience of the campus community and by extension, the national space, and is an important awareness-raising tool regarding violence against women. The ever-present threat of violence against women on campuses of higher learning and in the general South African space made us decide to use statistics in the play. For example:

10. In 2004, a young white woman student, Leigh Matthews, was kidnapped and murdered. In subsequent years, a television documentary was made and the Leigh Matthews Stress and Trauma Centre established at the University of Johannesburg. The body of Inge Lotz, a University of Stellenbosch student, was found in her flat. The case continues, a television documentary was made, a book was written and a Facebook page and website in support is maintained. Nothing is heard about any follow-up regarding the murders of the black women students.

In August 2008, National Women's month, 21-year-old Lithemba Jama was killed by her boyfriend in her residence room at the University of the Western Cape. She was stabbed 26 times. The irony of this young black woman's death was that she was killed in a residence named after Ruth First, one of the stalwarts in the struggle against apartheid, who was killed by a letter bomb at the Edward Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique on 17 August 1982. At the memorial service of Lithemba Jama, we promised that we would keep her memory alive as a reminder that universities are not yet the safe spaces we desire them to be. (*The P...Word*, 2010: n.p.) (See Appendix One)

4.3 CREATING A FEMINIST LANGUAGE

Because our bodies have been stolen, brutalised, or numbed, it is difficult to speak from/through them. Seal your lips, woman! When she transforms silence into language, a woman transgresses. (Anzaldúa, 1990 in Keating, 2009:132)

In the light of the history of oppression and domination linked to language use in South Africa, we remained careful of the register(s) in which the script was written. The main language used was English, although this was not the first language for the majority of the script writers. English is the language of instruction and the common language in which *The P...Word* creators and cast communicated with each other from the beginning. We also kept the language of the text plain in order to facilitate memorising by the performers, all of whom had no previous experience on stage. When other languages were used in the script, they were usually kept to a minimum, words or phrases for example, and these were accompanied by immediate repetition of the translated words and phrases.

Language is an important feminist concern. Hooks (1989) cautions that feminists should not patronise the people with whom they seek solidarity. Hence, we decided to make use of ordinary street language and real life experiences to enable the targeted audience to identify with the characters and become integrated into the play. Audiences often participate loudly

when they recognise the experiences being related and the language being used as connected to their own lived experiences and themselves. As Anzaldúa (1990) reminds:

When we, the objects become the subjects, and look at and analyse our own experiences, a danger arises that we may look through the master's gaze, speak through his tongue, use his methodology. (Anzaldúa, 1990 in Keating, 2009:134)

Anzaldúa's (1990) comment in Keating (2009) can also be related to the Zapiro cartoon discussed earlier, which reflects how the master manipulates the stereotype (in this case for humour) and in the process, adds to the misogyny. To produce a non-dominating language, free of the "master's gaze" (Anzaldúa, 1990) in Keating (2009), it was, therefore, crucial to bear in mind that the purpose of the production was to speak out against the violence against women. As such, the play is not conceived for sophisticated theatre goers but is primarily meant to be performed for student audiences at the UWC as an awareness-raising tool.

The text uses the local 'Afrikaaps', a mixture of Afrikaans and English that forms a spoken dialect on the Cape Flats and its surroundings in the Western Cape. The use of this 'mixed' form of English-Afrikaans is to give conscious expression to the indignation of being excluded from the South African identity. In addition, the use of Afrikaaps signals the historical exclusion of this language from the formal South African language home and hence, its use in the play being an act of retrieval. By association, the naming of the self and the subjects' (black women of the Cape Flats) act of exposing the violence they experience in Afrikaaps, links the experiencing subject of sexualised violence (black women) to the historicised violence of language. This is a significant association to make because one of the aims of this black feminist intellectual activist edudrama is to draw attention to the historicised nature of sexual violence against black women, which in post-1994 South Africa is rarely mentioned.

The majority of the initial writers and cast members of *The P...Word* were from the Cape Flats, and their written and performed words reflect their direct experiences of violence, both in terms of body and language. The language of *The P...Word* is, moreover, linked to the

geographical space within which UWC is situated, the Northern suburbs, where Afrikaans has historically been the dominant language of the black working class. Afrikaans was also the medium of instruction at UWC during apartheid. It is spoken on the streets, in places of commerce, in communities, at taxi ranks and in taxis. For these reasons, most of the initial monologues were written in Afrikaans or Afrikaaps. In 2009, Sivuyiswe ‘Ntombi’ Wonci, a UWC student, added a monologue written in Xhosa and English, “Love and Acceptance”, a piece about HIV and AIDS. *The P...Word* thus became representative of the three official languages in the Western Cape Province, namely Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

Students at UWC are generally not privileged with access to mainstream theatre productions, except for the English major students who are taken to the theatre as part of their studies. In addition, many UWC student productions, which are produced by students of the English Department or exchange students from the North, are short lived and often do not continue beyond the first performance. At the time of writing, *The P...Word* has been running for seven years, with students requesting to be part of the cast or production a year in advance. The play has become a sought-after production at UWC student and staff festivals and events. It has opened up many opportunities for students to write their own stories, whether autobiographical or imaginative, in prose, song and poetry formats. The play affords them opportunities to write and perform on campus on a regular basis and at various off-campus venues, as is discussed in Chapter Five. The writers and performers, as well as the performance of women’s words, have become travellers and border crossers in more ways than one.

4.3.1 Writing women’s words

Discourse on the logic of language:

The mother then put her fingers into her child’s mouth – gently forcing it open;
She touches her tongue to the child’s tongue, and holding the tiny mouth open,
She blows into it — hard. She was blowing words — her words, her mother’s words.
Those of her mother’s mother, and all mothers before — into her daughter’s mouth.
(Philip, 1995:272)

Language, in whatever form, is the basis of communication, while teaching is in essence, part of performativity; thus, with drama and teaching, performativity occurs both in the theatre and the lecture hall. A person's first language is often referred to as the 'mother tongue', as Philip's (1995:272) evocative observations above show. The feminine is the primary site of the language act, being infinitesimally linked to the mother's body and the patriarchal line. However, Joseph (1995:7) cautions against the reductive use of the feminine or language in gendered narratives because narratives that the nation-state deploy reduced gendered language to shape notions and identities of belonging and disempowerment. According to Joseph (1995:7), very often, feminine terms are given to inanimate objects, such as 'sister university', 'mother ship', 'motherland' or as in reference to language, 'mother tongue'.

For a long time, violence and deceit have been the central theme in classical theatre dramas. Aston (1995) provides a vivid feminist analysis of the misogyny in historic Greek theatre. One such example is the dramatisation of the rape and silencing of Philomele in the play *The Love of the Nightingale* whose tongue is cut out by her rapist. However, the feminist interpretation of the narrative in terms of recuperation of the pain and act of violation is that Philomele and her sister, Procne, take revenge (Aston, 1995:18). This kind of empowerment is demonstrated in the writings of *The P...Word* monologues. Although many of the monologues and dialogues start with memories of painful experiences, they end triumphantly with the women subject having transcended her disempowerment. The crafting of the monologues, dialogues and song deliberately applies feminist theatre methodologies in this regard.

As the play evolved over the last seven years, different bodies, voices and sexualities have claimed place within the performance space. From the beginning, the performers consisted of diverse women from diverse backgrounds. Although the writers are black women and are attached to UWC, they occupy different spaces and locations as staff, students and the wider community. Students are in different years of study in different faculties. There are differences in age, in marital status, in lived and life experiences, in ablebodiedness and disabilities, in spoken languages, in class backgrounds and in religious beliefs. Some have children in different age groups and some are heterosexual while others self-identify as

bisexual and lesbian. Many other differences have been added over the years as different bodies and voices join and add new content to the production.

It has been an important aim from the start that these diverse bodies be seen and voices heard. In this regard, Rich (1986) urges that women speak from “a place of location”. By doing this, women refuse the discussion about themselves continuing as before and thus, the silence of subjection is broken (Rich, 1986:214). When Rich identified her place of location as a white, Jewish woman from the West, she demystified the perception, and as Probyn (1990:177) points out “not anyone could speak for one Woman”. *The P...Word* also had to struggle with the age-old feminist conundrum of who speaks on whose behalf (Lewis, 1993).

This question is probed by Spivak (1995) when she asks, “Can the subaltern speak?” In the context of the play, this question remains crucially relevant in the decision to include only black women in the project. Spivak (1995:25, 28) argues that “in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, thus the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow”. Applying her argument to the South African political, economic and social historiography, it is obvious that the black woman only becomes hyper-visible when negative connotations are attached to her, as much of the current research on violence and disease evidence. (See the discussion in this regard in Chapter Six). In all other aspects, for example, in terms of her agency, creative abilities, capacity for experiencing pleasure and contributing intellectually and physically to the building of herself, community and society, she remains “in shadow”. Rich (1986) and Spivak (1995) both address the displacement and negation of the positioning of women and are profoundly concerned with the ‘location’ from which women can speak and become visible.

For the subaltern to speak, there is a need for words and a specific language. For “[l]anguage is more than we want it to mean. Whoever defines the code or the context”, according to De Lauretis (1984:4), “has control and all answers which accept that context abdicate the possibility of redefining it”. Hooks (1990:146) concurs with this notion, writing that “our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance and a place of struggle”. In the previous section, I discussed how language and words take on different meanings and

inflections, depending on the different contexts and spaces the speakers occupy at a particular moment. Language and location in feminist writing is a deliberately crafted and combined engagement.

In this regard, De Lauretis (1984) warns:

There must be a willingness to begin an argument and so redefine the context, displace the metaphors, and make up new ones. The argument is also a confrontation, a struggle, a political intervention in institutions and in the practices of everyday life. That confrontation is itself discursive in nature in the sense that language and metaphors are always embedded in practices, in real life, where meaning ultimately resides – is implicit in one of the first metaphors of feminism: the personal is political. (De Lauretis, 1984:4)

The first effective tool is thus the will to write and the second, the ability to write and express oneself. As Anzaldúa (1983) notes:

Writing is dangerous because we are afraid of what the writing reveals: the fears, the angers, the strengths of a woman under triple or quadruple oppression. Yet in that very act lies our survival because a woman who writes has power. And a woman with power is feared. (Anzaldúa, 1983:171)

Davies and Gannon (2006:75) further observe that “feminist writing searches for methods to disrupt the hold that binaries and dichotomies have on thought and identity”. These methods draw not only on rational argument but also on poetic writing, on fiction, on music and on performing arts (Davies & Gannon, 2006:75). These arguments all find resonance in the approach and resulting language of *The P...Word*. In order to fulfil the play’s aim of raising awareness on the subject of violence against women and the invisibility of black women in this regard, a variety of forms were included, namely, the poetic, the satirical and the comedic in combination with music. While English is the primary language used in the production, the Afrikaans term ‘*poes*’ is the crucial deconstructive element or signifier that serves to

eradicate ambiguities or misunderstandings linked to the language of communication with the audience. For, “writing itself is a site of theorizing” (Davies & Gannon, 2006:88).

4.3.2 Writing *The P...Word* script

From the beginning, the idea was that the writing of the script would be a collective act, an ensemble, and that there would be no individual author. The initial group believed, as does Howard (2004:221), that writing as a collective process leads to discovery of not only the self but also of others. The collective process helped us to understand from the beginning that our experiences were not as isolated as first thought. The collective process assisted with women’s community building. Because no one in the group possessed skills in script writing, the process of composing the first script was slow, experimental and took four months during 2006 to complete. The collective writing process was valuable because, to use Smith’s (2000:37) argument, in this process, we could deal with our own insecurities as blossoming cultural writers since “apartheid did not only work its magic on our bodies, but also on our minds”. Smith (2000:37) reminds that much of “the realities of black women in South Africa had been mediated, analysed and published by white women academics”. Here, therefore, was a group of black women who did not have to bow to academic conventions to write about their lives and lived experiences in a supportive environment with other black women. We were involved in ‘claiming’ cultural processes and in the representation of black women in black women’s cultural theorisation.

The original outcome was not a conventional, single narrative script but a number of monologues and one dialogue. Later, these pieces were shaped and placed in sequence to form a script. The group always kept its focus on the statistics of violence against black women and girl children as reported in the media while also reflecting on how media reports are written. Thus, these statistics became a part of the script. In the four months of script preparation, members of the group shared personal stories and experiences related to sexual violence. After a number of postponements of the first performance due to the group having to find its way in the new space of theatre and dramatic performance, the production was eventually staged in September 2006 as part of the Learning Cape Festival and the Life-Long Learning Indaba Conference at UWC (Hames, 2007c:97).

The script used for this performance had eight monologues, one dialogue and one song and presented a set of statistics on violence against women. All the pieces were embedded within South African black women's experiences. (The next section of this chapter discusses how these pieces reflect the systemic disembodiment of black women over the last three centuries in South Africa.) The opening scene of the performance set the tone and atmosphere for the rest of the production and took the form of a voice speaking from behind the curtains, which informed the audience of the horrendous statistics and acts of violence perpetrated against women and girl children. The presentation of these statistics was eventually changed and narrated from the stage by a performer in full view of the audience. The second scene reflected the violence perpetrated by leading political figures in South Africa, among them, the alleged rape of an HIV and AIDS positive woman by the then second citizen of the country. The challenge was then posed to the audience to partake in various actions to reclaim the body and the self that are being violated in the South African space.

4.3.3 The feminist writing process

Remembering and writing have always formed the epicentre of feminist analysis and methodologies and within these practices, women find and use their voices. The remembering and writing processes are focused on gaining ownership of women's identities. Thus, writing becomes a site where knowledge and political consciousness is effectively produced, as pointed out by Mohanty (1991:34-35). Lorde (1984:43) cautions that women's silences will not protect them and that women should speak out against racism and all manifestations of sexism. She urges black women to reclaim and take ownership of language to speak out, which is immensely powerful, and stresses the importance of *black* women, the most historically marginalised of identities, in the writing endeavour (Lorde, 1984:43). This injunction is echoed by Hammonds (1997:177-178): "black feminist theorists are engaged in reclaiming the maimed, immortal black female body [that] can be and is still being used by others to discredit them as producers of knowledge and as speaking subjects". Regarding this, Smith (2000:xii) comments further that writing for her "became synonymous with power, the power to shape reality and to share this reality with others". To deny this reality is to silence the authentic and powerful voice that Lorde (1984:43) mentions above.

Black women are also rendered invisible when their writing is not taken seriously or not properly acknowledged. Spivak (1995:28) bemoans the fact that while the subaltern is an embodied female, she is not allowed to speak for herself or to write her own historiography. The black woman is, therefore, seldom seen as an intellectual being and knowledge producer. For both Lorde, 1984 and Spivak, 1995, the key to empowerment lies in the ability to speak and write, thereby accessing the language to freedom from oppression and marginalisation. According to Mirza (2009:63), if the black woman does not find her “voice”, she will forever be represented as “without agency, without self-determination, a passive victim, waiting to be inscribed with meaning by those who wish to gaze upon her and name her. She is an object, not the subject of her story”. In order to debunk these misrepresentations and hegemonic subjectivities, the staff and students at the GEU involved in producing the script for *The P...Word* consciously embarked on a *feminist process* of writing and performing about the self in order to shift stereotypical perceptions and bring to consciousness the self-empowerment involved in writing. This involved the whole group. This thinking and process echoed Mohanty’s (1991b:34) belief that in writing, the very practice of remembering and rewriting leads to the formation of politicised consciousness and self-identity. Thus, *The P...Word* strongly integrated politicised consciousness and self-identity in its writing process.

The creation process of *The P...Word* established and still preserves the ‘space’ in which the intellectual, the imaginative, the spiritual and often, the violated can participate. Fanon (1967) aptly calls this the “decolonialised space”. This is furthermore a space with strategic separation from the dominant spaces of academic writing so that participants can think and write outside the “inherited prisms and concepts” of the formal academic project (Dei & Simmons, 2010:9). Members of *The P...Word* found and continue to find this elusive space outside the set curriculum, beyond the classroom and in their own creativity valuable; this is a space to think, to write and to challenge the stereotypes that are foisted on black women in other spaces. A performance space was found and consciously structured on feminist principles as well as on Freirian principles of dialectic teaching and learning so that teaching, learning and creativity could take place in its own time and rhythm (Freire, 1970:69). The fact that the space was free from any notion of the commodification of education or theatre is important. Here, students, free of being tested about what they learn

and know, can make their own decisions regarding what to share in safety, with dignity and respect accorded to the self. The creation of a dedicated cultural space to reflect, to recall, to challenge and to heal cannot be underestimated in the social endeavour to reclaim and restore the self to dignity.

All experiences shared in this space are regarded as of equal importance and done so with the utmost respect and dignity. An academic staff member who was also one of the original writers and a cast member noted that for her, this was an opportunity to think differently about teaching: “To be able to work with students on a different level is rewarding. It is a different way of teaching. It makes me to think about a different way of teaching” (Lewis, 2010). For her, the process of composing the script was a true example of ‘engaged pedagogy’. This resonates with Chomsky’s (2000:28) observation that “true learning takes place when students are invited to discover for themselves the nature of democracy and its functioning”. In this instance, *The P...Word* became a learning engagement in which black women found the space to claim their democratic rights to freedom, movement and association — all the things taken away from the incarcerated prisoner identified as guilty and marked to serve punishment.

Hooks (1994) argues that when education is the practice of freedom, it is not only the students who confess their freedom but also the teacher, who is *expected* to be equally open. According to her, this truly constitutes ‘engaged pedagogy’ (hooks, 1994:21). The fact that the student is not the only participant in the learning process but the educator or facilitator is also as much a part of this dialectical experience was very much a conscious point that I, as Director of the GEU, and other academic staff members working with the students on *The P...Word* have had to bear in mind constantly. The roles for both teacher and student are continually shifting, and the process of education becomes cyclical. It would be short-sighted to think that young women come to the university to exercise their intellectual freedom as a separate part of themselves. Given the opportunity, as their participation in the play showed, engaged experience allows them to become involved with themselves and their society on a holistic level as human beings. This experience enormously benefits the campus and the wider community.

It was in keeping with the concept of ‘engaged pedagogy’ that the original performance script was created. This practice continues to produce new material. I would like to dwell a little more on the details of the physical writing process. As part of my auto-ethnographic journey, I had to release the perceived institutional power that I had and share with the group through orality and writing about my personal self. I took part in all the processes, such as the games, the rehearsal exercises and the writing and reading-back sessions with the other group members. I became a student in the process of creation along with all the other participants.

Most of the pieces were written by the original cast members who were asked to produce different pieces of original writing based on the theme of the play: violence against women and girl children and the invisibility of black women and girls in South Africa. They were then asked to read their creative efforts to the group. Honest and positively framed critique, that is, challenges pointed out with possible solutions proffered, were forwarded by the group whose members helped each other to shape each piece into coherent and powerful monologues. Writing skills among the group members were uneven, so the exercise deliberately concentrated on the content and not the grammar or structure. This, especially, was to keep the space free of the censoring voice and presence of whiteness and patriarchy that continue to identify blacks, and black women in particular, as being deficient in writing and knowledge capacity. From the beginning, the idea of a collective work was stressed in the process of creating each piece and consequently, the whole script.

Group members were encouraged to support each other and to feel unhindered in using their respective and collective imaginations. While some preferred to write their own pieces, others did not write at all but were willing to perform the written pieces of the others. Participants were aware that they would all receive and provide mutual feedback on all the pieces; hence, assurance was given that no stressful demands, testing or judgemental pressure would form part of the creative, collective writing process. English was not the first language of communication for everybody, so it was encouraged for group members to write as they think. There was no prescribed format, and no specific theme was identified apart from the broad theme of violence against women and the invisibility of black women. The only

stipulations made regarding the writing were that a positive or triumphant end should inform the tone of each piece and that the pieces should be creative and accessible for the performance. The writing of the script was, without doubt, the most intense period as group members shared highly emotional experiences with each other. There were many times when all we could do was hold on to each other and cry; no writing exercise or rehearsal took place. The space had become so intimate, almost sacred, that it was as if in the violating space of South Africa, only such a sacred space among women could enable us to share our life stories and lived experiences and to capture these in writing.

Moletsane (2000:61) observes that writing affords the opportunity to speak about the unspeakable and to make visible voices and emotions that have been previously brutalised and silenced. As the above discussion shows, not only did the group pay attention to the finished written product or message but also to the message to the self in the writing process to prevent the acts of brutality and silencing from reoccurring in the writing. The initial batch of monologues submitted to the group for mutual feedback included many stories of sexual abuse, incest, rape and daily experiences of violation and harassment when using public transport. Although these pieces covered almost all black women's lived experiences, they were written from the point of view of each woman's individual experience. Other pieces were included to this original script as new cast members joined with new stories to tell, resulting in some of the older pieces being dropped, adapted or rewritten in keeping with what the current group involved as cast members and producers felt was relevant.

4.4 FEMINIST EMBODIMENT IN SELECTED MONOLOGUES OF *THE P...WORD*

In this section, I will return to the issue of the framing statistics of violence against women and the invisibility of black women and girl children in South Africa, which I introduced above in describing the script writing process. As previously mentioned, the performance opens with a woman sitting on the stage, introducing the audience to the 'statistical' reasons why the play is being performed. Props are minimal. One significant prop used as a process for feminist engagement is the mirror — as women enter the performance space a small mirror is handed to them without explanation. Both the opening scene and the use of minimal

props are aimed at taking the audience out of their comfort zone and introducing them to the world of the black women of *The P...Word*. The women in the audience are particularly recognised as sharing an identity as survivors in the history of oppression and violence in the country. The focus subsequently moves from the politics of the nation-state to the politics of the person. During the performance, the women are asked to produce the mirror handed to them as they entered and to look at themselves in it.

At every performance, the first monologue is often adapted to address the targeted audience and likewise, the statistical information. Historical knowledge is presented depending on the occasion or event, for instance, marking National Women's Month or the Sixteen Days of Activism against Violence against Women or commemorating National or International Antihomophobia and Anti-transphobia month. The point of constancy in the first monologue is a commentary and a critique regarding the national political space and the use of the mirror prop to entrench the idea of the interactiveness of the performance. The idea is to foreground immediately the feminist language of the play, that is, that the personal is political and that the very body and person of the woman sitting in the audience is directly implicated in the subject matter. The performances call for the *collective* action against violence against women and girl children. The set calls for an intimate relationship of sharing, rights and inclusion among the women on the stage and the women in the audience. The men audience members are compelled to act as witnesses to the claiming of women's space. This is not to affect a sense of 'cheekiness' by women but to impress on men and women the desire, need and right for women to meet and independently consolidate their space and well-being. The statistics pertaining to violence against women in the country are also shared in between the different monologues, the strategy being not to allow the audience to retreat into a comfort zone at any point, even while being enlightened and entertained through dramatised pedagogy..

In 2007, the second year of *Reclaiming the P...Word* and after a very long summer holiday, a newly assembled cast felt that a sense of historical grounding was lacking in the first script. After much deliberation, we felt that a specific didactical moment was needed for the audience to be introduced to the history of South African women's struggles. Thus, an

historical piece, which I wrote, was added. As noted in the following extract, it deals with the archetypal images of black women with the advent of colonialism in South Africa's history:

Legends of the Poes

And then the wind calls: Krotoa, Krotoa, Krotoa ...

'My name is Krotoa and you can hear my soul calling in the still of the night or howling when the South East blows

I was a child playing on the beach, hopping skipping and digging for seafood when the big boats came

I could speak many languages like Portuguese and Dutch but my clicking mother tongue was beautiful

Then they took away my language

Then they took away my name and called me Eve

I was still so young 10, 11 or maybe 12

Then they took my childhood and innocence away

Then they took my children away

Then they took my freedom away and banished me to Robben Island

I died young'

And then the wind howls: Sara, Sarah, Saartjie

'My name is Sara Baartman and you can hear my soul calling in the still of the night or

howling when the South East blows

They kidnapped me and paraded me in a cage on the British and European continents as a sex freak

They called me the Hottentot Venus

Staring and poking at my genitals

They took away my dignity, my humanity, my spirit

And when I died young

Of loneliness and heartache in a foreign country

They cut out my vagina and brain and pickled them

They said for scientific reasons

Thanks Diana Ferrus for bringing my body home after 200 years'

And this winter the South-Easter continues to scream:

Of the rapes, the violence against women, the femicide of today
And the leaves fall
And the rain pours
And the trunks sway and break like the broken bodies of these women
The list of women's names gets longer ...
Now the wind howls my name, your name. (*Cast members say their names*)
(Hames, 2007) (See Appendix One)
(Mary Hames, *The P...Word*, 2010: n.p.)

The piece deals with the origins and historicity of violence against indigenous women over the centuries in South Africa. The famous South-Easter wind that is a feature of the Cape Peninsula, which was given the name 'Cape of Storms' by European sailors who were often shipwrecked on its shores, is an important metaphorical element used to narrate the dehumanisation of Krotoa and Sara Baartman. Yet the wind, used as a metaphor in this case, is not about a European narrative but of black women who were abused in the course of European history in the space. Many historians, (e.g. Abrahams, 1996; Coullie et al., 2006; Crais & Sculley, 2009; Wells, 1998) have attempted to reconstruct the lives of Krotoa and Sara Baartman, which lent impetus to my decision to present them through the eyes of a black feminist. However, historical, creative and academic constructions of their lives depend on who writes. For example, Abrahams (1996) refers to the fact that Krotoa was very young when Jan van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape of Storms, and because Krotoa worked in his household and only returned to her family occasionally, this could indicate that she might have been kidnapped and raped by him. In contrast, Wells (1998) gives Krotoa a strange kind of agency despite her youth and prefers to call her by the name given to her by the settlers, Eva. Coetzee (1997) notes that the Afrikaner poets, artists and actors began to claim Krotoa as the "Mother of the Afrikaner nation", designating to her an image of a tamed African who acquiesced to Europeaness. I interpreted her history in *The P...Word* in similar terms to Abrahams (1996) because in my view, there can be no romanticising of the misogyny, violence and power dimensions involved in the colonising project underway in the Cape at the time. In my opinion, there can never have been a relationship of equality or agency for the black woman subject in this historical period, given the history of her servitude to the white master.

The stories of Krotoa and Sara Baartman are painful and are well documented and reconstructed in works that reinterpreted their history (Abrahams, 1996; Holmes, 2002; Crais & Scully, 2009). This piece conveys that Sara was taken from her country and paraded in England and Europe as a sex freak. When she died, her brain and genitals were removed by scientist, George Cuvier, pickled in jars and displayed in the Musee de L’Homme in Paris. A poem about these atrocities, written by a UWC colleague, Ferrus (1998), *A poem for Sarah Baartman*, was read by a French politician who was moved by the injustice of these acts and at his instigation, her body was returned to South Africa in 2002 (Ferrus, 1998). At the end of *The P...Word* piece, Ferrus is thanked for her feminist writing of reclamation, which resulted in some justice for Baartman being attained, albeit centuries after her tragic life and death. In my piece, she is called Sara, Sarah, Saartjie, denoting all the different forms that her name takes depending on the writer. Sara’s indigenous name is not known. Saartjie is the Afrikaans diminutive for Sara and Sarah. In *The P...Word* rehearsals, we discussed the different constructions of Sarah from “Hottentot Venus” to black sister and beloved black women icon, the latter being considered because she reminds of the terrible violence against black women that began with the advent of European colonisation in South Africa and which still continues as the current context evidences. Many of the women participants who join the edudrama project, request specifically to perform this piece, indicating that this history is still a very emotional, living memory for black South African women.

The next piece I analyse is lighter in tone, written from a youthful perspective. As previously mentioned, the conscious decision was taken not to wallow in the negativity of the stories of violation but to create triumphant endings in order to inspire the making of new history, a history that does not shutter itself in notions of black women as servers of their infinite pain but as creators of new destinies. The monologue, “I hate boys; Why must I have a vagina?”, tells the story of a young woman who practised shaving her pubic hair to please the men in her life until she realised her dislike of the practice and recognised that she must love her own body. The following is an extract that presents the moment of self-revelation and triumph in which she reclaims her body:

But then I got to the point where I just felt — you know what, *FUCK IT!* Why do I have to impress someone else in order for me to feel more like a woman?
That’s bullshit! I wasted so much of my time wanting to be loved, so much time

looking that I forgot I was carrying the answer with me all this time. How could I want respect when I didn't respect myself enough to say, '*NO, I'm not going to change for you*' How could I want love, when I didn't love myself enough to say, '*NO, I refuse to shave, to make it bare for you!*' What I should have said was: '*Why don't you get yourself a poes and shave it? Then tell me how it feels!* If you don't like what you see down there, you can hit the fucking road Frank, Dave, Siphon or whatever your name is! Because you see — me, I love my vagina, its folds and its hair! THIS IS A LIBERATED POES!!!'

(The performer simultaneously punches the air with a power fist)

(Carmen Hartzenberg, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The text describes the young woman practising the shaving of her pubic hair for the first time in conformity with her mother's specific ideas about bodies and femininity. Nowhere in the text does the term 'feminist' appear, yet this writing is a powerful example of a feminist text. This is a piece about self-respect and finding oneself. At the end of her performance, the performer raises her fist in a 'black power' salute to claim her embodied liberation.

Another monologue deals with black women's experiences of violence while using public transport. The complexities regarding the use of the Kombi taxis as a necessary mode of public transport by a large section of the South African population must be mentioned before looking specifically at the piece. The taxi industry, as it is known, is the most common form of public transport, especially for poor, black commuters. According to a report by the International Labour Organization, there are approximately 127 000 minibus taxis in operation all over the country, with only approximately 2% of its employees being women¹¹ (Barret, 2003:1-2).

11. These statistics are relevant for the time in which the play was written. Currently, a countrywide effort is being undertaken by the state to downsize this industry and to place a larger share of the public transport industry in state hands by provision of state-run buses. This has already come into effect, albeit on a rather small scale in certain provinces, including the Western Cape. However, the major commuting routes of such endeavours still pertain to the well-built, middle-class (mainly formerly white) suburbs and city centres and do not include outlying areas and townships where the majority of poor and black South Africans live. In addition, violence on other forms of public transport such as the state-run rail system also evidences a trend of violence

The history of the taxi industry, aimed especially at black commuters, began in the apartheid era during the 1980s and became popular for a variety of reasons. These include: the offering of late night services; routes to and from out-of-the-way areas; and picking-up and dropping-off services for commuters from their doorstep. The reasonable or affordable fares and frequent, convenient stops made along routes, some at the specific request of commuters, reduced valuable time spent by public-transport users in long queues at bus and train stations, and this made the taxi industry almost indispensable (Sekhonyane & Dugard, 2004:14). The taxi industry is privately owned by black business entrepreneurs and with its increase in popularity, it has become rife with 'taxi wars' and violent conflict for 'turf' and 'routes' over the years, which received attention from government and local authorities because of the large numbers of injuries and loss of life ensuing from these conflicts. While 'commissions of inquiry' such as the Goldstone Commission have been appointed to investigate the reasons and possible solutions for the violence surrounding the taxi industry, violence flares up often (Dugard, 2001:3). Sexual violence experienced by women commuters in taxis and at taxi ranks is widely reported in the media but has been totally ignored by such commissions and in a sense, has been a normative occurrence for poor, black women for a long time.

It is only since 2011 that there has been focus on the violence perpetrated against women at taxi ranks, and mostly because women's rights NGOs have organised this. In 2008, the country was greatly disturbed by one such incident of sexual violence against women commuters, which brought attention to the recurrent violence against women at taxi ranks and in taxis. The incident also highlighted how patriarchy continues to place women at risk in public spaces (Makoni, 2011). The particular incident occurred at Johannesburg's largest and busiest taxi rank, Noordhoek, in which four black women were stripped naked, paraded in public and digitally assaulted by a group of men. It was reported that this act of violence occurred because the women were wearing miniskirts. Members of Parliament did respond strongly against this incident and vowed to stop this kind of violence. The incident also provoked the South African Police to acknowledge that for a long time, it had been known to them that women commuters experience personal violence from taxi drivers but in their

against commuters, including robbery and physical assault by gang members and sexual assault and harassment of women and girls.

defence, no official complaint was ever lodged prior to this incident (SAPA, 2008). However, despite such official assurances by the police and politicians, a similar act of sexual violence occurred in December 2011. In this incident, two black teenage girls were chased by a group of men at a taxi rank and sexually harassed while the drivers recorded their distress on cellular phones for personal distribution.

These sordid facts foreground the context within which the monologue, “Taxi Queen”, was conceived and written. Although the piece was first penned and performed in 2006, it was almost prophetic in its description of the violence that took place against the women mentioned above two years later. Additionally, after every performance, women from the audience shared similar experiences as Kombi taxi commuters, and in the years subsequent to the writing of this piece, different cast members also shared their similar experiences at rehearsal workshops. In an earlier study on sexual harassment by Skoch (2010), researchers referred to the perils involved for women students using these taxis. The phenomenon of the ‘taxi queen’ is described, in which taxi drivers or their assistants select a young girl from the passengers to sit in the front seat to operate the vehicle’s stereo in exchange for free rides for the day. The act often also involves the use of alcohol and performing sexual favours for the driver and/or assistant. The term ‘taxi queen’ is thus used in a derogatory sense to identify these young women (Skoch, 2010). Kombi taxis are usually overloaded (in Cape Town and elsewhere), and the driver will not pull away until the taxi is full, according to his judgement. The driver is assisted by a ‘*guardjie*’ or ‘*gaatjie*’, the Afrikaaps diminutive for ‘guard’, whose duty ironically is to protect the passengers, in addition to collecting fares from the passengers while the taxi is in motion.

In *The P... Word*’s “Taxi Queen”, the audience is taken on a typical taxi ride in Cape Town by a black women cast member:

It starts with the hooter ...

Toet, toet, toet. I hear it calling my royal pussy like the trumpet that blows for the queen, *Toet, toet, toet.*

(Wahseema Roberts, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The language above cleverly associates ‘*toet*’ (pronounced toot), the local Afrikaaps slang term for vagina and the royal queen, with the sound of the taxi hooter hailing possible passengers. The monologue is performed at a slow, deliberate pace to reflect the different phases of degradation that the woman commuter must endure, introducing the audience to every step of the violation that takes place on the journey. It plays on the helplessness of the woman commuter who is squeezed between the driver and one of the passengers in the front seat. The woman is deliberately placed in this position (location) so that she can be sexually harassed with the misconception that she has been crowned as ‘queen’ of the day. This resonates with Skoch’s (2010) finding that “drivers or their assistants routinely select a pretty school girl — some as young as twelve years old — who would be their ‘queen’ for the day”.

The ‘dress code’ of women commuters is also policed by the self-appointed ‘taxi kings’. Mkhwanazi (2008a) makes the interesting observation of the taxi drivers’ self-righteous attitudes and claims that wearing miniskirts is “not in their culture”. Misogyny and violence against women are thus ironically “dressed” in the “culture of men” (Mkhwanazi, 2008a). She argues that issues of culture, clothing and dress arose in the post-1994 context as an overt, publicly expressed phenomenon during the Jacob Zuma rape trial (Mkhwanazi, 2008a). In the trial, the then second citizen of the country explained and excused his sexual behaviour towards the complainant as his reading of her sexual invitation to him by her being dressed in a ‘kanga’. A kanga is a large, often cotton, single-piece cloth wrap that is usually draped and knotted at the chest to cover the torso and thighs; the kanga is a widely used item of clothing by women and girls all over Africa at home and outdoors (Motsei, 2007; Mkhwanazi, 2008a). In the misbehaviour of the taxi drivers involved in the 2008 taxi incident, the issue of women’s attire linked to the sexual violence they experienced appeared again, with the drivers accusing the victims of wearing ‘miniskirts’. If the following lines regarding women’s clothes in “Taxi Queen” eerily pre-empt the incidents at the taxi ranks mentioned above, the writer in 2006 in the aftermath of the Zuma rape trial correctly read the foreseeable impact of the trial’s revelations on local male public discourse and the impact on South African women’s bodies:

While the man next to me is sitting so close that he can take a look at my cleavage under the white T-shirt I am wearing.

The passenger next to me gets out, I get out, and my pants lower just beneath my crack.
The driver is staring and wants to eat. I am out of his kingdom, and I am safe ...

(Original idea by Wahseema Roberts, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The monologue is deliberate in its reference to the ownership of certain spaces, for instance, when the writer or performer speaks of “my royal pussy”, indicating that her body is her space, her property and in the concluding line of the monologue (see below) when she speaks of “my *toet* palace”. These references and claims to personal ownership of the body contrasts with reference in the above extract in which the taxi driver’s unwelcome gaze at her buttocks makes her body “his kingdom”. “Kingdom” carries connotations of status, size, ownership, citizenship and nationhood, all invariably masculine in context. This differentiation in ownership links with the discourse of the private versus the public and what is permissible in these spaces. The audience, therefore, makes the connection that taxi driving is the work of men with the sexual implication in the following words of the monologue: “Wouldn’t he just love to take my *toet, toet, toet* for a ride in his VW Kombi?” This utterance reinforces the point that taxis often are restricted and sexualised spaces (Bryant & Livholts, 2007:37).

As the ride continues, a scene of ‘simulated sex’ is presented with the driver’s shifting of the taxi’s gears:

Now we begin to drive really fast and I have the gear lever between my legs because that is the only way I could actually fit my voluptuous ass into that small piece of an uncomfortable tin of a taxi. The driver changes the gears ... 1st gear — away; 2nd gear — in my *toet*; 3rd gear — away; 4th gear — in my *toet*, the driver’s penis screaming: “Up, up and away!”

Oh God ... I hate this simulated sex bullshit! So the *gaatjie* still wants my money, like I’m paying him a service charge for torture of the *toet*, VAT included. If that is not enough, he calls me “mummy girl” — like I could be either of the two. He gives my change, holding onto my hand soooo seductively. Meanwhile, his hands are like crocodile *fucking* Dundee that scratched in a pants full of old, hard, dry semen.

(Wahseema Roberts, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

Although this harassment takes place in various phases throughout the drive, the woman passenger in the monologue refuses to give in or submit to the driver's sexual overtures, shouting loudly to him when she disembarks:

Asshole, you can never have a piece of my royal *toet*, and this may be your kingdom, but I am in control of my body and I'd rather pay than give you a free ride in my *toet* palace ... *I AM MY OWN TAXI QUEEN*.

(Wahseema Roberts, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

In these concluding lines, the writer builds to a climax of her agency and strength, claiming her dignity after the dehumanising experience to which all the other passengers were made to submit in 'silence'. The other passengers are deliberately alluded to as the 'silent' spectators in her ordeal. A similar kind of silence is noted by the media reports among the commuters and bystanders when the women wearing miniskirts were violently accosted at the public taxi rank in 2008. Even worse, the voices of other women that were raised about these incidents came from a 'place of judgement'. For example, the women hawkers at the taxi rank verbally supported the male drivers who were shouting, "Let's teach them a lesson". Why did these women support the male perpetrators? Were they also afraid of being attacked? How do we address this display of public complicity by women bystanders? What about the terror of the women who are being attacked?

Another monologue explores what it means to be a black lesbian woman in contemporary South Africa, with its constitutional guarantee for the non-discrimination against sexual orientation. The monologue, "See in Me", (discussed below) is reminiscent of the following words by Lorde (1984:41-42): "Because I am woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself — a Black woman warrior poet doing my work — come to ask you, are you doing yours?". Nonetheless, as Anzaldúa (2009:132) noted earlier, Lorde (1984:42) is acutely aware of the danger of "transforming the silence into language and action as an act of self-revelation". However, Lorde (1984:42), with her daughter's encouragement when told of her mother's dilemma, is freed by her daughter's words: "Tell them about how you're never really a whole person if you remain silent ...". The poem, See in

me, in the spirit of Lorde (1984), took up the challenge to break this particular silence in 2008 in *The P...Word*.

The organic nature of *The P...Word* to add pieces throughout the lifetime of the play, in which women continue to be the crafters of their own stories and not to serve merely as performers of the words and experiences of others, is a crucial aspect of the play's feminism.

The P...Word was never specifically aimed at a lesbian audience. However, its subversive intention and feminist structure has always allowed for the possibility of bringing out the lesbian voice, especially considering that the university environment and broader society remain so homophobic. Of particular noteworthiness in regard to this poem is its effect on the audience, which I explore in the following chapter. For now, I wish to discuss the content of the poem and the particular issues regarding black lesbians in South Africa that the poem confronts.

The P...Word has had a popular lesbian audience following from the beginning. Davy (1986:43) observes with regard to lesbian performance that the construction of the spectator is important because "lesbian performance pushes at the boundaries of representation itself". It was, therefore, particularly important that the poem make the lesbian visible both as performer and spectator, ensuring Davy's (1986) additional point below:

The lesbian as the spectator whose desire lies outside the fundamental model or underpinnings of sexual difference. She is positioned outside of male ideology. When the lesbian performer uses her desire for other lesbians as the driving force in her work, her representation of herself for others like herself becomes a model played out in time, with people, and in space of self-sufficient system that drops the male subject and sexual difference from the address.(Davy, 1986:47-48)

The poem below was written at a workshop conducted by the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW) in 2008 to develop young, black, lesbian feminist leaders. The FEW is the

first South African organisation that was established in Johannesburg specifically to provide a safe space for black lesbian women. The poem was first performed as part of the cultural evening at the above workshop, and the entire text is presented below:

See in me the black woman who can make a change
Not the woman who causes trouble
See in me the positive mind I have
Not the negative mind you think I have
See in me the lesbian, feminist, activist
Not the wanna be 'man' type
See in me the woman who loves women
Not the evil of this country
See in me the leader of tomorrow
See in me the power I have by only speaking my mind
About the hate-crimes, torture, rape and murders of lesbians
See in me the actions I have done and yet to do
See me as a woman
See me as a lesbian and a proud one at that.
(Makone, 2008) (See Appendix One)
(Mavis Makone, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.)

The poem is important for various reasons. To repeat Lorde's (1984) observation, one reason is that it is important that "a black lesbian woman does her work", her activist work. The theme of the workshop during which the poem was written and performed was to develop activist leadership, especially in the face of the current hostile climate towards black lesbians in South Africa. The poem is particularly valid in the light of the following statistics shared with the audience in the play:

In 2006, Zoliswa Nkonyana from Khayalitsha was murdered because she was a lesbian.

In June 2007, Simagele Nhlapo, a proud lesbian and member of a support group for Women Living with HIV run by Positive Women's Network was found raped and killed. Her two-year-old baby girl was also raped and killed and both her tiny legs were broken.

On Sunday 8 July 2007, Sizakele Sigasa and her friend Salome Moosa were brutally raped and killed in Meadowlands, Soweto. Sizakele was found with her hands tied with her underpants and her ankles tied together with her shoelaces — she had three bullet wounds in her collarbone. She worked for Positive Women’s Network.

(*The P...Word*, 2010, n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The poem, “See in me”, is written in the format of performance poetry and expresses the lived experiences in the ‘legitimate’ voice of the performer. No editing was done to the poet’s writing to allow the voice and passion of the young poet to come through independently. The written piece was given to *The P...Word* as a gift, and this additionally gave young, black, lesbian women not affiliated to UWC a voice and space within the play. The poem also raises the crucial political question of inclusivity; its inclusion in *The P...Word* fosters hope of addressing the problem of homophobia on the UWC campus and enabling students to feel more comfortable to speak out against the violence against lesbians in particular. (I deal with the political question of inclusivity and the issue of homophobia at UWC in detail in Chapter Six.)

Recalling Rich’s (1986) notion of “location” in feminist writing, the poem importantly speaks out against the violence against black lesbians, particularly from the insider position of a black lesbian who has first-hand insight into this form of violence. Mohanty (2003:11) observes: “not all women do and cannot speak from a location of white, Western, middle-class privilege”. A place on the map (Soweto, South Africa) is, after all, also a locatable place in history. Location, in the context of the poem, also refers to the fact that the poet has ‘crossed the bridge’ from the metaphorical place of ‘black lesbian victimhood’ to that of self-identified, ‘lesbian feminist activist’.

In the remaining analysis of the poem, I am acutely aware of the fact that: “[b]lack lesbians are doubly vulnerable to gender-based violence firstly as women (and the statistics show the endemic proportions of violence against Black women) and as lesbians in homophobic contexts and cultures in which sexual violence is a popular weapon” (Mkhize, Bennett,

Reddy & Moletsane, 2010:26). However, in the poem, the poet (Makone, 2008) refuses to become a victim and repudiates the victim narrative by urging the audience to: “See in me the power that I have by only speaking my mind”. The strength of the poems lies in the fact that while much of the recent portrayals of lesbians in creative work is about the violence perpetrated against them, this poem focuses on ‘owning power and agency’. It was from this specific location of being a young, black, lesbian feminist activist living in Soweto in post-1994 South Africa that this performance poem was written to speak out against “the hate-crimes, torture, rape and murders of lesbians”. The poet (Makone, 2008) speaks directly and urgently about agency, power and voice in the poem. Makone (2008) further urges the listener to “see” differently, to see beyond the stereotype of lesbians as “wannabe man type” and to see her as a “woman who loves women”.

Since first being written, the poem has travelled across South Africa and various continents and still shares the urgency of the message with various audiences. It forms a stark counterpoint to the statistics in *The P...Word* and reminds that young, black, lesbian women are taking action against atrocities perpetrated against them. *The P...Word*, as one of the mediums of this poem to promote the message of lesbian feminist activism, achieves by enabling the message and the voice that carries it to cross the bridge of the contested ‘borderlands’ between activism and intellectualism. The “borderlands genre”, as Salvidar-Hull (1999:3) reminds, “continually refuses stasis”. This shifting status of genre allows for consciousness-raising inside and beyond the confines of the academic environment. This poem does not attempt to overtly teach about tolerance but compels the spectator to ‘see’ differently. The message of agency is not embedded in satire or humour, as with many of the other monologues in *The P...Word*, but is spoken directly as ‘struggle slogan’, using the word as a powerful tool to display the agency of the black, lesbian feminist and activist.

In another monologue, “Premium Poes”, the spirit of ‘talking back’ comes to the fore. The writer conveys the message that there is nothing wrong with being or choosing to be a ‘virgin’ and that she has control over her own body and takes her own decisions about when, where and with whom she chooses to have sex or whether she even wants to have sex. The piece makes use of fantastically clever word play, as the few stanzas below show:

Just to inform you, the only giving up will occur
when I'm secure that the language is pure,
and even more so that every part of me is sure
Now don't get me wrong, I'm not prissy or pompous,
but my pussy needs fluent talk
Passionate, poetic, articulate conversation.
Soulful words, powerful chatter,
An art of rhetoric consisting of mutual respect
because these lips don't speak to just anyone
These lips are not to be shouted or imposed upon
they come with assurance you know
natural lubricant, a poised predicament, a tight little slit.
I'm talking about premium *poes*,
top of the range not to be exchanged
with vulgar language to only satisfy him and his thing.
No, no profanities are allowed to speak with her
no jabbing conversation that is short-lived and lacking in content.
the words have to be well spent, eloquent, well expressed.
Now I know and I have heard that the initial conversation is not that enticing,
not even inviting,
Awkward, unstable even a bit painful.
But I'd choose a lover who would understand,
He'd approach me with a murmur, a whisper
Listening to the quivers of my body's rhythms.
His voice would be sensual and smooth,
No babbling or sentence that are misconstrued.
He'd prove himself a cunning linguist
await my call, my indication
That I am pleased with his stimulation.
Yes, it may be mindful fantasy
but the reality is I've got standards
this *cutchie* has standards and this is our speech ...
No I am not full of shit just because I won't give it up
And no I am not a self-righteous bitch who thinks purity

Gives moral security
And no I am not going to die with my virginity.
And frankly I don't give a damn
if you call me a hag and say I can't get a man
it's a choice ... a choice of quality,
because not any Tom, DICK, or Harry
is going to infiltrate the sanctity of my *punani*.
so if you feel that you have to do too much talking to get to her
get to walking sir,
because her and I are fine without you.
(Roche Kester, *The P...Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

This monologue, written and added in 2010, evidences the continuous tradition of *The P...Word* to establish black feminist intellectual activism through the processes of engaged feminist pedagogy. "Premium *Poes*" thus importantly talks back to backlash and upsurge of existing notions of the 'over-sexualisation' and 'objectification' of the black woman's body and confronts the location of the black women in the historicised position of shame and infantilisation. This monologue defies peer pressure and the perceptions that exist that black women are always sexually available. The writer and performer tell the audience that the decision of when and where and with whom they will have sex is up to them. This is a very important piece in light of the discourse around virginity testing and the promotion of ABC in the HIV and AIDS campaign. This piece is not about disease, nor is it about the imposing of perceived cultural practices. In fact, it is about the self and the choices that women are making for themselves.

The intelligent play on words such as "cunning linguist" connects with issues of oral sex and pleasure for women, which Lewis focuses on in her 2006 monologue:

My vagina ... my honey pot ... has reached a stage where she is into pure, pristine, pussy-like pleasure. Pleasure, my sisters. My *pussy*, my *cunt*, my *poes*, my *doos* wants to feel it all. Oral sex on demand ... that's her new slogan.
(Desiree Lewis, *The P...Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

Both monologues, focusing on sexual pleasure and desire of black women and crafted in eloquent poetry, not only enable viewers to experience the pleasure of the language of sex by black women but also present the writers' respective engagements with becoming self-defining subjects through experiencing *their* respective sexual pleasure. As hooks (1989:12) observes with regard to transformation of the self through the writing act:

[S]peaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject. Only as subjects can we speak. As objects, we remain voiceless – our beings defined and interpreted by others. (hooks, 1989:12)

The monologue used to conclude the performance effectively interrogates the private versus the public and draws together the play and all that occurred in it by returning in a sense, to beginnings where the racist patriarchal language of '*poes*' originates historically and socially. Throughout the performance, the actress performing the concluding piece, "My Misunderstood, Over-used, Undefined Poes", sits among the audience members. It is truly a powerful and significant moment when she jumps up and walks up to the stage, shouting louder and louder as she advances: "*Jou Ma se Poes!*" The audience is often initially uncertain if this is someone heckling the performers or if she is part of the play.

Baderoon (2011) writes the following about this scene:

'*Jou ma se poes*' is shouted loudly and slowly from behind the audience. At first, I could not see who was speaking, and it was unclear if this was part of the play or if someone had walked in from the street and was shouting this far-from-uncommon interjection at the audience. Then I saw the speaker as she entered from behind the audience and walked among us, winding her way to the front of the room that acts as the stage, continuing to shout the phrase several times, in various registers. (Baderoon, 2011:224)

There are a number of things that may have contributed to Baderoon's above-mentioned confusion. First is the issue of the audience's familiarity with and the local use of the term

'*poes*', which I discussed earlier in the chapter. Second, her confusion could be related to the location of the venue in which she viewed the play. This particular performance took place in a Lutheran church hall that has been converted into a theatre, in the entrance of which many local 'homeless people' sleep and are often observed to cause a commotion. Not far from this theatre is another performance venue, called *Jou Ma se Comedy Club*. There is, therefore, the interesting environmental dimension that could have influenced her initial impression. She, like the rest of the audience, soon realises that 'the heckler' is part of the performance and that they are being heckled. This is a very Brechtian (Willett, 1959) method of unsettling the audience with violent noise and gestures and is indeed, a poignant diadactic method.

This scene again raises the issue of the ease with which local people in general use the word '*poes*'. The title of this final monologue indicates this sentiment by returning us to the initial question about the misogyny inherent in the often-used term and which finds physical reality in black women's bodies. But this time, the audience is returned to that issue with the insight of a new black feminist intellectual activist language that has argued against and reclaimed the term. In this monologue, the question is posed to the audience: "Does it grab your attention or are you one of those that pretend that you did not hear it? *JOU MA SE POES!*" (Dawn Bosman, *The P...Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One). The performer goes on to indicate the common use of the term in the townships, on the streets and again in the public minibus taxi. The metaphoric implication is that the term '*poes*' has wheels and is travelling all the time. In fact, '*poes*' has become commodified. Examples of this include its use in the above-mentioned performance venue, *Jou Ma se Comedy Club*, its use by a chain restaurant on its menu billboard, *Jou Ma se Kos* and when it is emblazoned as a legend on T-shirts, *Jou Ma se stasie*. Although the term may sound and look innocent and funny in these contexts, the deeply embedded misogynistic message is still buried in these slogans, as was earlier discussed with the Zapiro cartoon.

The monologue below reinforces this message and the continuous challenge to dislodge this misogyny by addressing the rampant historically and socially constructed violence against black women that still configures post-apartheid society:

Women, men, children, some can't even speak yet. They all use it.

You are a *poes*

You look like a *poes*

You act like a *poes*.

(Dawn Bosman, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

There are several evident elements of distress in the above stanza. Firstly, the writer indicates that anybody is capable of using the misogynistic term, irrespective of gender or age. It is particularly distressing that little children, not yet fully competent in language use, are able to grasp the term's aggressive and violent meaning, even if they do not apprehend it as a noun indicating a woman's vagina. Where does it come from? What is its genealogy? Even in the absence of knowing the answers to these questions, people are able to use it indiscriminately as a noun, applying it to effect different derogatory meanings, dependent on who is using it, at whom it is directed and in what context. The rhetorical question is also: How does one act like a *poes*? Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007:505) remind us: "Language is embedded in cultural contexts". But cultural contexts are created by the language it uses. So insidious, virulent and almost ever-escaping is the term that the character in the monologue reveals that she could not even find the word '*poes*' in standard English dictionaries, such as the *Collins Dictionary* or *Oxford Dictionary*. Rather, she found it in the *Afrikaans Verklarende Dictionary* or the HAT as it is known. The historical specificity of the origin of this term in South Africa may not be missed in this fact — the term of aggression, degradation and violence is linked to the event of Dutch colonialism and apartheid in the country. Furthermore, in terms of the gendered dynamic of this historicisation, the writer and performer of the monologue goes on to unravel this term for the audience and educate them about the implications of this social history:

'*Poes*' means a woman's shy part

Now think about it people — a woman's shy part on the street,

Worst of all in the taxis.

(Dawn Bosman, *The P... Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One)

The monologue goes on to reveal how '*poes*' is used on the streets and in the taxis: the *gaattjie*'s calling to the waiting commuters, "Parow, Elsies, Cape Town! Hallo girl *ga dji saam*? What? Are you coming? No? *Jou poes!*" (Original idea by Dawn Bosman, *The*

P...Word, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One). In the analysis of this piece, and recollecting the misogyny enacted and spoken back to in “Taxi Queen”, the audience is forced once again to confront the huge problem of violence against black women in this country. They are reminded that while the play as a black feminist intellectual activist intervention has opened up and articulated the language for interrogating this form of violence and exclusion, it remains the *collective political and social responsibility of all* to eradicate this form of violence by proper inclusion of black women as equal citizens in the country. Social transformation is not only about the victims but also the dominant system that is upheld for the many by the many, either out of sheer ignorance or wilful design. If it has been the right and the responsibility of the black feminist to bring this issue out of silence into public view, it will always remain an indictment on the now-knowing public if something radical is not done by the social collective to right the situation. The monologue pointedly ends with a final statement to the South African people, as if in a courtroom in which the audience has been the victim, perpetrator, judge and jury all at once: “And on that note people, I rest my poetically corrected *poes*” (Dawn Bosman, *The P...Word*, 2010:n.p.) (See Appendix One).

This chapter started by asking what makes a text feminist. I have used extracts from *The P...Word* to show how in the context of black feminist intellectual activism, the drama text challenges the dominant patriarchal nature and phallogentric language and space in which the performance was conceptualised, written and performed. I have argued that through its inclusiveness of those who have been historically, politically and socially excluded, the text directly addresses its taboo subjects of violence and the denigrated black woman’s body, sometimes with unpredictably, powerfully positive consequences.

The use of language is carefully crafted to insert what and who has been historically excluded and why, and it does so by the intrinsic inclusion of the black female activist voice and body in the language and representation of the self. The language is constantly focused on allowing the black female subject to enact through her writing, speaking and performance: her presence on stage in full witness of a public audience, her self-identification and her process of reclamation — of becoming.

Because *The P...Word* has such universal, feminist appeal, as the next chapter will show, its message transcends the boundaries of race, class, gender and nationality. There is indeed a universal message for women to speak out against the violence perpetrated against them, even though the context and voices of the women are specifically located as South African, black, feminist, intellectual activists. In this chapter, I have made the connection with how international events show similarities with misogyny in the South African context and how feminists deal with such situations in their specific locations while all the time creating a voice and platform through language to empower not just themselves but other women in other spaces.

I conclude this chapter by observing that the text and performance of the play is subversive and challenging to patriarchal discourse and is indeed feminist. In the next chapter, I will discuss the feminist processes involved in the continuing creation of the performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECLAIMING THE P...WORD AS FEMINIST THEATRE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter does not attempt to offer an in-depth analysis or critique of feminist theatre but reflects on the feminist processes that led to the creation of the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*. While I provided analyses of certain content of the play in Chapter Four, in this chapter, I focus on the various aspects of theatre and performance in the play. I look especially at the diverse notions of theatre, informing the play for its performance aspect, in particular, the play as protest theatre, as feminist theatre, as critical theatre and as popular pedagogical theatre. I also investigate the socio-political and educational impact of the play on members of the cast and audience, in particular the spaces or locations in which *The P...Word* has been performed and received. I present various sources indicating impact, which provide a sense of the interaction with performance spaces, audiences and cast that has formed a crucial aspect of the process of evolving the play.

In addition, the impact of the play as a feminist educational tool outside and inside the classroom is studied. I make use of interviews, programme information, photographs taken during performances, feedback from audiences before and after performances, which was captured on video or presented in writing and on cellular phones, and assignments regarding the play that were written by university students in various academic departments. From the beginning of *The P...Word* edudrama project, it was important to keep a record of the aspects of the various phases in order to evaluate how the play's feminist knowledge and aims were transferred to raise awareness. This was done to theorise this specific, contextualised feminist tool in the form of the edudrama in the South African space, particularly on the UWC campus. This record keeping has also served as an invaluable creative aid through the years that the play has been running, allowing me to evaluate each performance to ensure that performances do not result in reinforcing the notion of black women's victimhood or further contribute to the stereotypes of *the* hyper-sexualised black woman.

According to Reinhartz (1992), specific research methodologies may be applied to make sense of women's experiences, methods which are often combined with research that utilises more traditional methods. These tools include innovative applications, such as consciousness-raising methods, group diaries, dramatic role-play, genealogy and network tracing, conversation and dialogue, use of intuition or writing creatively, study of unplanned personal experience, structured conceptualisation and photography (Reinhartz, 1992). All these elements, including the production of digital recordings in the form of DVDs, the keeping of personal journals and the convening of workshops, which included body-mapping exercises for the cast members, formed an historical record of the creation and evolution of *The P...Word* as a feminist teaching tool with theory based on local South African, black feminist intellectual activism.

In this section, I argue that the creative processes leading up to the eventual production and performance are firmly grounded in feminist values and principles. I argue further that the production is steeped in the tradition of various notions of leftist theatre, including protest theatre, feminist theatre, critical theatre and popular pedagogical theatre. I will start by discussing the origins of protest theatre in South Africa as the background to my main argument that *The P...Word* is in essence, a feminist protest edudrama.

5.1.1 P...Word as protest theatre

The edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, was conceived as both a protest action against the endemic violence perpetrated against women in post-1994 South Africa and as a form of liberatory pedagogy to raise awareness about this issue, in particular, the rampant violence and invisibility of black women and girls. The play format thus has two key-defining elements: one, its insurgent nature and the other, its didactical aim. In reflecting on the creation of this edudrama, it is important to understand the impetus to define it as protest theatre post-1994. Is it still relevant in a post-1994 democratic South Africa, with one of the most progressive 'women-sensitive' legal and policy frameworks in the world, to discuss the need for and to create protest theatre focusing on women's embodiment?

Sesiu (2004) describes the trajectory of South African protest theatre as follows: “[T]his type of theatre has been categorised in many compartments, namely apartheid theatre, theatre of liberation, protest theatre and township theatre”.

The educational purpose of protest theatre has specific historical links in South Africa. It was developed as an art form by the politically disenfranchised during the apartheid era to make the apartheid atrocities against black people visible and was thus used as a tool to drive social change (Loots, 1997:142). The struggle against apartheid was primarily against racism and racial oppression, and Loots (1997) points out that while protest theatre became a powerful political voice in this struggle, it largely negated gender issues:

Gender issues for black South African women, at best, became womanist issues where the common oppression of being black in South Africa was placed as the primary concern for struggle resulting in a decided lack of interrogation of sexist attitudes within ‘the struggle’ itself and indeed, the wider patriarchal oppression of women. (Loots, 1997:144)

The absence of addressing women’s issues as part of the apartheid struggle narrative was reflected in the absence of women’s voices in protest theatre. Even when women appeared on stage, they occupied a subordinate or marginal role to the hegemonic masculine heroic and revolutionary narrative. Black women in popular culture were more often than not portrayed as the “maid” or “nanny”, the result being the prevalent stereotype as “mammy” (nanny or surrogate mother) figure, which may still be seen to persist in white liberal discourse post-1994 (Gqola, 2004a). This situation arose despite the fact that black women exercised vital protest action against apartheid laws and regulations, which has been recorded as early as 1913 when black women organised a protest against pass laws (Walker, 1991:22-32).

However, Loots (1997) continues:

[T]here are a few examples of protest theatre produced, directed and workshopped by women about women under apartheid of which ‘You Strike The Woman, You Strike the Rock’ is the best known. And for the first time in the history of protest theatre it

was shown how race, class and gender intersect in South African theatrical and performance history. (Loots, 1977:145)

Earlier in Chapter One, I discussed the continuous conflation of race and gender in post-1994 legislation, which ignores the intersecting nature of oppressions and marginalisations experienced by black women as a group. Underiner (2000:1294-1295) observes that “[c]ontemporary theatre and performance art have done much to render visible the sociocultural operations that produce categories like gender and sexuality”. While Underiner (2000:1294-1295) specifically mentions gender and sexuality, I add the categories of race and class, especially since she specifically addresses the consequence of white privilege. For me, the intersections of all four categories are systematically addressed in *The P...Word*, which will become clear as my argument unfolds in this chapter.

In the next section, I argue that feminist theatre is protest theatre by making the connection between feminist pedagogy and theatre. In this regard, I present concrete examples showing the impact of the edudrama on the educational processes of both the participants and the audience.

5.1.2 The P...Word as feminist theatre

Women have been traditionally excluded from public performance spaces, and South Africa is not an anomaly in this regard. Case (1988:8) recommends paying close attention to the cultural codes that prevail in the context when the mother-wife binary becomes paramount to the regulation of sex lives of women, resulting in the divide between the public and the private. The public domain is defined in terms of political membership, which is exclusively reserved for men, while the domestic and private domain is defined as belonging to women (Case, 1988:8). In light of this constructed gender binary, performance as an act of transgression holds immense currency for feminists. As Hart (1989) observes:

The theatre is the sphere most removed from the confines of domesticity, thus woman who ventures to be heard in this space takes a greater risk than the woman poet or

novelist, but it may also offer her greater potential for effecting social change. (Hart, 1989:2)

Universities are microcosms of society, and prevailing cultural codes outside the university space are applicable to the privileged 'space' called the academy. (I discuss academic space at length in chapters one, two and six.) Thus, creating an exclusive space for women performers, especially *black* women performers, in *The P...Word* was not an easy task because of the patriarchal cultural codes dominating the socio-political and educational environment, as well as the rhetoric of reconciliation that has dominated the South African landscape post-1994. As mentioned in Chapter Four, since its inception, the project has often received negative censure from various sections at UWC, in particular, the criticism that men are excluded from participating as writers and cast members; many cannot comprehend the idea of the creation of a women-only space. However, the fact that only women perform, produce and direct the play does not automatically render it a feminist production. Other criteria make the performance and space feminist.

Feminist theatre must evidence the following five elements:

Firstly, a period for conducting research where the group members interrogate their own feminist beliefs. Secondly, the perception that the play has a feminist message; thirdly, the collaboration of the audience when the feminist message is performed; fourthly, the act of performing as a means of persuading the actresses of their feminist beliefs and fifthly, the fact that both performers and audience may be persuaded of feminist ideas in a post-performance discussion. (Natalle, 1985:14-15)

In Chapter Four, I discussed in detail the feminist thinking and collaboration that led to the decision to write and perform *The P...Word*, as well as the women-writing process and feminist content of the monologues. I will now extend the notion of feminist theatre in *The P...Word* with specific reference to Natalle's (1985) above-identified criteria, as well as other elements that shaped the edudrama's notion of theatre. Feminist theatre borrows heavily from Boal's (2008) notion of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), as has feminists borrowed from

Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1970). Thus, it was felt in creating *The P...Word* that combining these two notions of theatre and pedagogy would make a powerful intervention to aid the liberation of the marginalised and excluded black woman in the context of major violence against women and girl children post-1994 South Africa. Thus, I discuss below feminist theatre as critical theatre to unpack how this is achieved in *The P...Word*.

5.1.3 The P...Word as critical theatre

I observed in Chapter Two that although feminist educators find the ideology of critical pedagogy appealing, they often struggle with the application of the theory. Howard (2004) notes in this regard that when critical pedagogy is combined with interactive performance practice, the combination eases the transition from theory to praxis. According to Howard (2004:218), “[the] combination creates a learning environment or community that empowers participants, generates critical understanding, and promotes transformation”. For Howard (2008), Boal's (2008) philosophy of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) and his subsequent development of theatre techniques and exercises in support of his philosophy thus become important tools to bridge the gap between feminist theory and praxis.

According to Boal (2008:xxi-xxiii), “all theatre is necessarily political and therefore a very efficient weapon and all the reason why one should fight for it”. *The P...Word* relies heavily on Boal's (2008) theatre techniques to connect with the self, especially because the latter links to the play's feminist maxim that “the personal is political”. In this regard, Boal's (2008:92-100) philosophy of politicising the “self” in theatre has proven valuable. Boal (2008:100) believes that the “human body is the main source of sound and movement”. For him, it is important that “individuals should know her/his own body and control it to make it more expressive and through doing that she/he could transform from object into subject, from witness into protagonist, from spectator into actor” (Boal, 2008:100).

In this regard, Boal (2008:102) identifies four fundamental principles in theatre making. The first is “Knowing the Body”, which means that through a series of exercises, the actor realises

the body's limitations and possibilities and how to rehabilitate it if need be (Boal, 2008). The second principle is "Making the Body Expressive" through games and abandoning the habitual forms of expression (Boal, 2008). In the project, *The P...Word*, we interpreted this to mean customising the language and game forms for greater accessibility by multilingual cast members, students with different abilities and women from different parts of the African continent. The third principle, "The Theatre as Language", means that the theatre is never a finished product but is always living and present and can constantly be augmented (Boal, 2008). We took the latter to mean an open-ended script and performance that is continually shaped by changing participants and events in the social arena that are seen as relevant and requiring cogent feminist response. The fourth principle is "Theatre as Discourse", whereby the spectator-actor relationship creates "spectacles" in order to discuss and transcend certain themes or actions (Boal, 2008). Before embarking on the writing process of *The P...Word*, the writers and cast familiarised themselves with and applied the above principles in an attempt to orient, prepare and know the self. This process also facilitated the growth of trust, communication and community within the group of women participants.

Engagement with the principles of Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) as set out by Boal (2008) fostered in the group an orientation towards theatre that Schaedler (2010) describes as being "not about the performance itself but the process of using drama, the techniques and exercises, that can open up a world of possibilities to educate". This was initially (and continues to be) a very important perspective to realise within each group member and the group as a whole because none of us had any prior experience in drama or theatre¹². The group underwent four months of intensive workshops in 2006, comprising group-building sessions, conversations and rehearsals, before the first performance of *The P...Word* was staged. However, as Schaedler (2010:147) rightly cautions, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is not a single, magical tool that solves all problems. The processes it encourages help create awareness in individuals that it is possible for them to analyse challenges within themselves and the project that they are creatively engaged in and to identify and work towards probable solutions (Schaedler, 2010:147).

12. The first director, a Swedish drama exchange student, was the only member of the group with any reasonable knowledge of compiling the technical side of the production. However, she knew nothing about feminism or the South African context.

For the participants of *The P...Word*, the initial production process was the pedagogical experience with regard to liberation of the self — *themselves*. Grotowski (1968) observes that theatre is unique because the act of performance is in itself an act of transgression. According to him, television and film do not provide actors with the opportunity to physically engage with the spectators, whereas in theatre, actors can move into the audience to obtain an immediate reaction from them (Grotowski, 1968:15). This immediacy and intimacy with the audience contributes to the success of theatre. A major reason for conceptualising *The P...Word* edudrama was as an alternative to classroom practice or workshops to raise awareness about the endemic violence against women on and off the UWC campus with the use of a more participative medium. (See Chapter Six for a comprehensive discussion on the limitations of the classroom space with regard to education practice that focuses on another GEU awareness-raising project, Loud Enuf, which tackles the issue of homophobia on campus).

The production was not meant to continue beyond perhaps two performances because it is time-consuming, expensive, stressful and emotionally draining as well as being a completely new education tool. However, the play resulted in being one of GEU's best feminist educational tools with which to teach the intersections of race, class, gender, (dis)ability, sexuality and sexual orientation, citizenship and a range of other identity issues, reaching a wider audience beyond the UWC campus than had initially been anticipated. In reflecting on the creative process and development of the edudrama, the experiences of Lee and De Finney (2004) in using popular theatre for the exploration of identity and belonging among racialised minority girls are informative. Their experimentation with popular theatre to explore notions of intersectionality through storytelling, body art and journaling in establishing creative and safe spaces on campus echoes *The P...Word's* own processes in many respects (Lee & De Finney, 2004:99).

The P...Word positions its educational operating space differently from that of formal academia in that it creates a learning space primarily outside the classroom after normal academic teaching hours, over weekends and during university holidays and is open to non-registered and UWC-employed women staff as well as women from the broader Cape Town

communities. The project is open to women irrespective of their course of study or status of work. The only proviso is that the writers and performers are black women. In the initial process of establishing the play, as the producer, I had to organise what may seem trivial needs — accommodation, rehearsal and performing venues, food, beverages and transport for group members not resident on campus. I also had to liaise with concerned parents of younger cast members when necessary, especially regarding night rehearsals and performances. Because public transport after hours and over weekends is extremely hazardous, I drove students to their homes after such rehearsals and performances. I also had to build extensive networks with people in the local theatre industry who had knowledge, skills and experience in theatre production and techniques. This was a daunting task for a novice.

As a feminist educator, I observed in the process that each women participant came to the process with her own prior bodily knowledge and experiences, and through *The P...Word's* exercises, games, artwork and storytelling processes, these created a new place of belonging and sharing within the learning circle. In the beginning, as initiator of the project, I knew almost nothing about theatre as pedagogy but with commitment and a process of sharing, the group, in which I also participated as a member, and I collectively embarked on a learning curve. As the producer, I continually had to struggle with the following questions: Was it possible to assemble an all-woman cast of amateur actors in an experimental project with such serious educational and social aims? Could the group create a believable and authentic plot and production? How could I, as Director of GEU and producer of the play, manage an experiment with a new teaching form and method when I have no theatre background and knowledge? This forced me to research theatre practice and its educational value.

5.1.4 The P...Word as popular pedagogical theatre

While the play has elements of Brecht's (1964) didactical theatre, a point I will return to briefly, it is also concerned with submitting the actors and audience to the feminist method of deep listening to create understanding for and empathy with the cause, that is, to act against the violence perpetrated against South African black women and girls. To iterate the discussion presented in Chapter Four, the monologues, dialogue and poem in the script

developed thus far use both elements of seriousness and comedy to carry this message to the audience. The script contains a great deal of autobiographical material as presented by the various authors. The text is essentially feminist, with a decidedly post-colonial feminist inflection, focusing on the systemic physical and representative violation, the objectification and the hyper-sexualisation and sensationalising of the black woman's body. The text traces the historical processes that led to black women's bodies becoming subjected to scientific, anthropological, psychological and medical research, as well as objectification and "othering". A monologue refers to the historical characters Krotoa and Sara Baartman in this regard, making the link with current experiences of the violence among black South African women. This is discussed in more detail below. (See also the discussion in Chapter Four.) For the play to achieve its feminist aim of promoting reclamation of the black woman's body, the text must and does make this important historical and social connection between the colonial, apartheid past and post-1994, democratic South Africa.

Central to the production is the application of feminist pedagogical concepts that challenge the existing stereotypes within male-centric society such as those relating to woman's place and body within society. The emphasis is also on the process of reclamation via the use of celebratory and triumphalist women's language to deny any further stereotyping of women as helpless victims and to assert the image of a woman as a warrior and activist for her own and society's liberation. The play was originally conceptualised to challenge young women and men students at UWC to interrogate their own prejudices, biases, sexist attitudes and behaviours that they bring to the campus space. We wanted them to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as campus citizens. However, it soon became clear that the play had the potential to trouble the patriarchal space far beyond the borders of the university.

The currency or relevance of the play is also an important feminist pedagogical element. In challenging perceptions about culture, gender identities, sexual orientation, femininities and masculinities, the play constantly locates itself in the context of the real and the popular by making use of current media headlines and reports on relevant issues to keep itself updated and relevant. Other national concerns, such as taxi violence, negative behaviour, attitudes and actions of highly placed political figures, unreliable police statistics on violence against

women and shocking research findings regarding femicide and violence against women provide the necessary information for constant evolvement of the text.

While *The P...Word* project addresses many complex issues integral to gender, race and racism, class and classism, disability and ableism as well as sexism, sexual orientation, sexuality and gender identity, the development process was not pre-planned in any fixed sense nor taught through formal drama classes or formal classroom lectures. It rather evolved over time as participants matured intellectually and began to question their own awareness of disembodiment, feminism and sexism. There were other role players apart from the initial group of women who formed the writer and cast base and as with the former, these women were not preselected for participation in the project but joined the production team as volunteers. These participants were mostly from the GEU staff and student base and took responsibility for the venues, marketing, invitations, filming and recording, photography and sound and lighting for the performances. They were, and continue to be, essential to the success of the performance. They, as with the cast, joined for various reasons, as the individual interviews and comments regarding performances presented later in this chapter will show. However, it must be noted that all *The P...Word* project members show solidarity with its feminist aims and view their participation in it as an important aspect of self-agency towards attainment of these aims.

Performance art as an educational tool to liberate the body and mind and to subvert dominant power relations in conventional teaching and learning practices is not a neutral art form. In *The P...Word*, black women challenge existing perceptions of themselves as silent and helpless victims of violence, as diseased, as less valuable than other human beings and as unaware of their situation, and this is a huge political undertaking.

It is my firm view that students are ultimately responsible for and capable of creating their own liberation. This argument is based on experience with *The P...Word* and echoes Freire's notion of cultural action, which implies the necessary use of systematic and deliberate action to liberate human beings from violence and oppression (Freire, 1970 :160). *The P...Word's* journey of liberation for the performers and audience members is part of the long history of

struggle that black women have been waging in South Africa to subvert oppressive power and power relations. This struggle has been pointed out earlier as often not being sufficiently recognised or appreciated and is focussed on in the play's first monologue. Marshall (1996:27) writes in this regard that the works of black women artists, writers and film-makers defy stereotypes, thereby celebrating black woman power. According to Marshall (1996:27), "[t]hey use art to change our identities as victims of oppression so that we actively resist our subordination". Art is seen as both a liberatory form of work and a subversive tool in the war against oppression. It is *deliberately* used for the teaching and learning experience and in so doing, challenges conventional didactic and pedagogical practices (Naidus, 2009).

In order to rethink current dominant pedagogical practices, according to hooks (1994:4), one has to understand "the difference between education as the practice of freedom and education that merely strives to reinforce domination". *The P...Word*, in the above terms, *practises* freedom and *celebrates* black women's power through its creative writing and performance aspects. Participants are free to enter or leave the process at any time. They learn to take action and find ways to embark on the search for self-definition, free of subordination and marginalisation because we all experience oppression differently. During the process, each individual shapes their own understanding of power and liberation.

5.2 ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE IN *THE P...WORD*

I make frequent reference to the notion of power in this dissertation, which makes it necessary for me to deconstruct the meaning of the term in the different contexts used. For a black woman, especially currently in South Africa, her absence of power lies strangely enough not in the invisibility but in the hyper visibility of her body in the portrayal of it as diseased, violated and over-sexualised, more especially but not solely in the media, which consequently places her in the position of research object. It is easier to see the black woman as a perpetual victim in need of being 'saved' and 'protected', for example, when she is classed in the category of 'the most vulnerable in society'. As pointed out above, in the context of not fully acknowledging her historical activism and current activist work efforts, a black woman remains the eternal child and is consistently infantilised.

The notion and image of black women as ‘the most vulnerable group in society’ is usually accompanied by the other group identified as vulnerable, children, and this ensures her infantilised status as widespread in South Africa. This is often repeated in the media, academic papers, research findings and government policy documents. This kind of homogenisation of black women is particularly problematic in post-1994 South Africa where continuous shifts occur in class, identity and national formation and where a legal framework exists that promotes ‘equality for all’. It was, therefore, crucial that the director and cast of *The P...Word* be able to channel this particular understanding of feminist politics. However, since no one at GEU or within its network was available at the time, a professor from the English Department at UWC recommended a Norwegian exchange student known to her for her experience in theatre. The only drawback was that the student was not familiar with either feminist analysis and praxis or the South African context. Nonetheless, she participated with enthusiasm and proved to be effective in guiding the various performance aspects of the play to meet our envisaged goal of feminist performance and theatre.

5.2.1 Directing

The first director of the production was thus the exchange student from Norway, who was also white. This was the first and only time a white woman has directly been involved in the creative process of the play. Since then, cast members have in the main taken charge of the production, and only twice has the play been directed by women with no direct history with the edudrama. Thus, education of the student cast continues to include skills for transformation from performer to facilitator and/or director. While the first director had some knowledge of theatre techniques, which were learnt as a drama student in Norway, she had no experience of directing a theatre performance. Thus, together with the cast, she learnt the intricacies of creating a theatre production. She was also neither a feminist nor a South African; thus, as a white women student from the North, the cast taught her about feminism in general and black feminism in particular. It was in this context of experimentation by women that *The P...Word's* feminist perspective and the performance methods evolved over the four months of preparation before the first performance was staged. Fortunately, given the challenges of feminism and the South African knowledge of the director, the first cast consisted of senior Women’s and Gender Studies (GWS) students, a professor teaching in that department, another staff member from the Gender Equity Unit and the Gender Officer

of UWC. Thus, throughout the education process that took place with the first director, there were intense moments on both sides of learning and unlearning perceptions regarding whiteness, blackness, women, power, prejudice and paternalism.

The director used Boalian (2008) principles to teach the cast about theatre and drama. She also invited other visiting academics with extensive knowledge in mainstream and community theatre to provide group and individual theatre-training sessions with cast members. Through a series of Tai Chi exercises, cast members learned how to ‘deep listen’ to the body. A voluntary voice trainer gave voice training to cast members and taught techniques for voice projection, protection of the throat and proper breathing techniques for performance. These were also valuable lessons in confidence and self-esteem building for individual cast members and the group as a whole. The notions of ‘giving voice’ and ‘gaining voice’ took on many different meanings!

The white woman director was not allowed to add to the script and mainly concentrated on teaching the writers and cast members about theatre techniques and performing. She also helped to raise money so that we could perform at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown for the first time in 2007. To me, this experience served as a powerful example of the rich relationship that can be formed between Western and black women, especially when each honestly share and accept each other’s agendas, knowledge, skills and limitations. The claiming of a black women’s feminist space with complete understanding of the power issues at stake on both sides proved to be enriching for all and proved to hold valuable future lessons for black feminists themselves regarding class, privilege or other aspects of difference in location among women where feminist work is concerned.

Since 2008, *The P...Word* has been directed by young black women. One director was a former theatre and drama graduate of UCT, and all the others were students of UWC. The production remains a training ground for predominantly UWC students to develop skills in experiential, feminist and educational theatre. The Boalian techniques have become an integral part of the performance.

5.2.2 The cast

The University of the Western Cape does not have a formal or academic drama and theatre programme and, therefore, no readily available student group of trained or trainee actors for performances conceived within the campus. In 2006, when the GEU first began to conceive the idea of edudrama to build awareness on campus due to the rampant incidence of violence against women and girl children and the invisibility of black women and girl children in South Africa, it looked externally for productions in this regard. At first, I tried to procure the rights to stage the internationally acclaimed US play *The Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler but was unsuccessful (Ensler, 1996). A decision was then taken to use local stories of black South African women's experiences of violence perpetrated against them, experiences lodged within our own bodies, to write and produce a 'home-grown' stage play. This decision opened up the opportunity for UWC students to gain the full experience of working with and through the body (described earlier in this chapter) to develop as writers, performers, vocalists and musicians. The decision also gave us the opportunity to build an integrated community of intergenerational campus women as well as to establish links with the wider Cape Town communities. These goals have proved to be important strategies in building solidarity among local women, addressing the rampant violence in South African society in an authentic effort to support each other in claiming back our bodies. Thus, instead of being mere consumers as viewers of an already finished play to raise awareness in this regard, the project expanded into a black, South African, feminist intellectual activist project. This provided the means of experimenting with and theorising alternative feminist pedagogy and didactic methods within the university framework, as does this dissertation.

Although I am the Head of the GEU and producer of the play, from the beginning, I have also been part of the learning process that has taken shape with regard to this experimental feminist pedagogy. I have been part of the cast as a writer and performer and have participated in every rehearsal activity. I was, therefore, a facilitator and a learner at the same time and although the situation was never truly 'equal', it was closer to the Freirean notion of the 'dialectic' teacher-learner relationship than is conventional pedagogy. In Chapter One, I made mention that both Gramsci (2000) and Freire (1970) were acutely aware of the importance of dialectical power relations in the process and political work of the oppressed

seeking liberation. Through the play's rehearsal process, this particular connection became clear since the valuable feminist work could only be internalised through process and praxis (Gramsci, 1929-1935; Freire, 1970). During this process, my role and positionality as the main resource for theoretical feminist knowledge and lived experience grew.

The GEU advertised the project on campus by means of posters, inviting interested black women students and staff members to join in the writing and production of a play that would primarily focus on critiquing and raising awareness of violence against women and the reclaiming of the black female body. Of the prospective writers from the staff and student body who responded favourably to the request, no one had ever written for the stage before or had ever performed in a properly equipped theatre¹³. Some of the initial respondents found the body exercises and Boalian techniques being used in the writing process ludicrous and left the project after a few sessions. However, those who persisted with the creative experimental process were rewarded with producing an authentic 'home-grown' script and through the techniques, embodied for themselves a new kind of feminism through and with their own body as well as with the collective group body. In the process, they became feminist writers and performers and gained intimate, non-mediated experience of writing and gaining voice, important feminist activist processes that were discussed in Chapter Four.

The first cast consisted of 11 members. Two were staff members, one was a community member, the pianist who wrote the play's theme song, 'I am a Woman', and the rest were UWC students. As the production gained popularity with its first few performances, more UWC students and students from the adjacent Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) joined the cast. Since its inception in 2006, more than 150 woman students have volunteered for *The P... Word* project in some way¹⁴.

13. Only two of the original cast members had limited experience in other student productions, but none of us had any theatre training or had ever performed outside the campus or in a mainstream, fully equipped theatre. This was a truly experimental theatre experience.

14. One cast member, who was not a student and who worked at Robben Island, slept over on the Cape mainland on rehearsal and performance nights, taking the boat back to work on the island the following morning.

The P...Word is a volunteer project, and cast members do not receive remuneration for writing, rehearsals, performances or other contributions. Thus, in a continuing and moving act of solidarity against violence against women, black students, staff members at UWC and CPUT, women from the wider community and one white woman, the play's first director, have over the years made many intellectual, creative and practical contributions as writers, producers, directors, technicians, musicians and performers. All of this has made *The P...Word* a success, and sustaining it as a longer term project than was initially conceived became possible. Thus, in the show of this type of women's solidarity for self-empowerment and empowerment of others, the play may be seen to be an invaluable tool for women to find their voice, feet, vision and healing through performance art and music.

But what does this really mean? As a feminist production, *The P...Word's* journey through which women travel in the writing, rehearsals, directing, production and other support processes is a combination of emotional, intellectual and physical elements in which the whole body, intellect, spirit and imagination of the black woman is made visible. As a 'rite of passage' in black feminist activism, the project has, from the beginning, led individuals and the group — primarily black women — on an intense and inclusive journey of self-reflection, self-discovery and respect for self and each other. It has compelled the recognition and celebration of difference, the embracing of sexualities and sexual orientation and the dignified sharing of fears and joys experienced by women of all ages inside and outside the South African academy.

Foremost, in the aim and process of creation is the notion that each person, beginning with the self, be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. *The P...Word* experience challenges the individual at the level of being both a member of the academy and of society to think about the various ways in which women's bodies and knowledge are continuously being subjugated and violated in post-1994 South Africa.

In an attempt to gauge cast members' feelings and their evaluation regarding their participation in the project, its various creative process and eventual production, I ask each member to write a short autobiography that will appear in each performance programme. The

following are a selection of views, which have been extracted from various performance programmes over the years:

I am a 22-year-old honours student from Mitchells Plain. Family has always been my first love and so has theatre. *Reclaiming the P... Word* has offered me the space to grow as a woman and become more conscious about my rights in South Africa. Knowing that we are in this fight together is comforting. This has been the best process I have ever gotten myself in. Thank you. (A.J. Castle)

My name is Juliana and being personally affected by violence, I decided to open about it in the form of arts. *Reclaiming the P... Word* gave me the space, seeing that not many talk about sexual abuse. It gave me an opportunity to encourage those many women. Going to the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown will ensure intervention on a large scale and hopefully encourage those to express their struggle through performing arts. (Juliana Davids)

Doing these stats in the play has made me realise that these women and children are not just statistics but are people, daughters, mothers and sisters, they are also human beings as well as members of this country and their rights, and safety and freedom have been violated. These horrible stories that happen daily in our communities are just highlighting the fact to me as a black woman that we might be living in a country that has democracy but black women still have a long way to go before they can celebrate their freedom in this country. (Portia Gqobuza)

As the above extracts reveal, the *process* is consistently identified by cast members as the meaningful intellectual and activist experience, with the play being the product. Neelands (2004:48) is informative with regard to the element of process in the edudrama project, observing that the drama neither teaches nor is it powerful, but it is what we do with drama that determines the pedagogical actions. It is thus necessary to raise and discuss further critical questions about the philosophical underpinnings of the processes regarding performativity in *The P... Word* and their outcomes.

5.3 NOTIONS OF SPACE AND LOCATION IN *THE P...WORD'S* THEATRE

5.3.1 The venue

The central theme of the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, plays on the feminist thinking of 'reclaiming', 'talking back' or 'recovering possession of that, that has been lost'. While I have discussed this notion to some extent earlier in Chapter Four, the question here is: What is being reclaimed and from whom? In the logic of this particular play, the intention is to 'reclaim' the body and to assert or re-insert the liberated self in spaces hitherto occupied and controlled by patriarchal and masculine bodies, structures and language. There are indeed many manifestations of 'space', as was discussed in Chapter Four, in relation to 'women's space' and 'feminine space'. The following discussion unpacks the different spaces that shape the continuous learning of the body and the self in feminist terms. Geographical and physical space or locale plays an important role in the shaping of the play's monologues. The monologues were conceptualised and written in the now defunct Theology Faculty at UWC, which until it became defunct in 1999, only ordained men as ministers for the Dutch Reformed Mission Church. An exterior wall of this building still evidences the patriarchal and masculine identification of the space as a sacred heterotopia for men. The politics and irony linked to *The P...Word's* taking over and utilising this space is thus hard to miss.

With regard to geographical meaning and cultural space pertaining to issues of exclusion, access and inclusion, it is necessary to provide some brief background information about performance venues on campus and around Cape Town in general. The University of the Western Cape has no theatre complex even though it is surrounded by institutions in the wider Cape Town region that are well equipped with modern theatres. Arts and Culture has never been offered as part of the formal UWC curriculum. I discuss in depth the politics of space and location in Chapter Six with regard to the notion of the academic or educational space where teaching and learning is exchanged or transferred between teacher and student. However, here, I would like to dwell on the issue of socio-political architecture and its link to apartheid. Two main theatres in Cape Town lend their respective origins to apartheid notions of culture. The Artscape Theatre Centre in the Cape Town city centre, originally called the Nico Malan Theatre Complex, was historically named after the former National Party (NP)

administrator of the Western Cape, Nicholas Malan. 'The Nico' opened its doors in 1971, and the theatre was designed to serve mainly the white Afrikaner community. In 1999, its name was changed to the Artscape Theatre Centre to signal the reorientation of its arts and cultural space in terms of democratic values post-1994.

The Baxter Theatre, situated in the Southern Suburbs on the old Main Road that connects the city centre to the outlying suburbs on the southern part of the Cape peninsula, opened its doors in 1977. It was named after a former Cape Town mayor who left a special endowment to UCT for the building of a theatre that would serve as an alternative to the Afrikaans Nico Malan Theatre Complex. The Baxter was meant to serve mainly the white liberal English-speaking community. The Baxter was also strictly governed by apartheid legislation regarding performers and audiences permitted to inhabit its space. The University of Cape Town also has three other theatres, the Little Theatre, the Intimate Theatre and the Arena, all which are located on its Hiddingh Campus in the city centre where its Drama and Fine Arts departments are situated. The Nico and the Baxter mainly produced mainstream theatre for white audiences during apartheid and continue to produce such mainstream theatre post-1994, with the difference now being that black performers and audiences may also use the space. The UCT student theatre venues were and still are used for student productions before and post-1994, offering a wider fare of alternative theatre, mostly in terms of alternative Western theatre productions. The point to note here is that formally defined theatre and cultural spaces in the greater Cape Town region do not have a history of catering for black, feminist or protest theatre forms, nor do they currently attempt to do so, which leaves the gap wide open for UWC productions to address.

Given the history of UWC as a struggle or people's university (see discussion in Chapter One), it is, therefore, not strange that theatre production developed on the campus would more than likely be associated with protest theatre than 'mainstream productions'. Also, as discussed in Chapter One, UWC's close proximity to the so-called coloured communities has resulted in strong historical connections to the communities that it serves, mainly, but not solely in terms of providing an education for its predominantly coloured student population, training them for careers as professionals.

In addition, the involvement in the production since its inception of black women students from the neighbouring CPUT is a keen recognition of the commonalities and good relations shared between the two institutions. The enthusiasm for participation in the edudrama, as discussed earlier, indicates the need for young, black women at HBIs to have access to social, artistic and cultural spaces that foster their intellectual engagement with being black. This is because they are still excluded from historically white cultural spaces, as the discussion above of theatre access in the Cape Town region shows. From the beginning, *The P... Word* had on its agenda a conscious commitment to create opportunities for students outside the classroom to exercise their creativity, critical self and social awareness. It was also committed to not delimiting the socio-cultural space it was creating through its feminist theatre by excluding black women from the neighbouring CPUT and surrounding black communities.

That neither UWC nor CPUT nor the surrounding black communities have formal theatre spaces is an intrinsically practical black feminist concern that the play seeks to address. Post-1994, the former white mainstream theatre spaces are in theory, open to all black women to use. However, given the fact that the performances mainly happen at night and most of these women do not have access to private means of transport and rely on the dangerous public transport systems, many are unable to attend these theatres either as audience members or as performers. Thus, large numbers of young, black women students, who are incredibly talented, creative and searching for opportunities to be voluntarily creative, remain excluded. Thus, the question of inclusion, as discussed above, is a highly political and philosophical one for the black feminist edudrama, *Reclaiming the P... Word*.

Moreover, even institutions with career opportunities for arts and culture embed themselves in a narrow academic framework (as will be further discussed in Chapter Six) that does not allow for educational and cultural experimentation for rights attainment and self-empowerment beyond the classroom banking method of knowledge and learning. For young, black women on campus, *The P... Word*, in essence, has thus become representative of the

thinking, creative and outspoken black women who can exist in and make an impact on South African society.

A classroom in the old Theology Building was converted into a performance space but lacked theatre lighting and a sound system. A sewing machine was borrowed from the mother of one of the cast members to sew purchased black material into black curtains that were hung to cover fully all four walls, creating a theatrical black box and subsequently inspiring the name of the venue, 'The Black Box'. The production team borrowed portable theatre lights and colour gel sheets from the Drama Department at UCT. Plastic chairs for the audience were arranged around a low portable stage. A candle and a bag of sex toys completed the props for the play's first performance. Indeed, the lack of proper theatre equipment did not serve as a deterrent, as attested to by local feminist academics, Teresa Barnes and Amina Mama, who attended the production:

[S]peaking the pain and finding happiness can both be lodged in one's body makes a small space like the converted lecture room in an old building at the fringes of the University of the Western Cape into a fleetingly liberated zone. (Barnes & Mama, 2007:4)

This makeshift theatre in a true sense fit Grotowski's (1968) notion and description of "poor theatre". "Poor Theatre is where there is no need for make-up, costume, a stage, lighting or sound effects and where the performance itself is an act of resistance" (Grotowski, 1968:19). The first time the edudrama played at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 2007, it was included as an item on the "Fringe" and staged in the Masonic Hall that had historically belonged to the European settler Freemasons. The "Fringe" indicates a 'margin' space in the festival and identifies performances held there as not having 'mainstream' status. The irony of this venue, as with the above-mentioned UWC Theology Building that served the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and in which *The P...Word* found its campus home, is its associated history with the Freemason movement that is deeply embedded in patriarchal notions of religious morality and established as a bastion of sexual and racial apartheid. The conceptualisation and performances of this black feminist play in the defunct Theology Building classroom, The Black Box, and the performances in the Masonic Hall at the oldest

arts festival in South Africa can, therefore, be read as psychological and symbolic victories for black women. When women — the black women performers and the black and white women audience members — entered these masculine spaces in their numbers, their mere presence challenged the historical and existing patriarchal norms and values associated with these spaces. In fact, they transgressed these spaces by questioning possession of the physical geography, identification and custodianship of morality regarding race, gender and sexual orientation of the human bodies and selves.

Geographically, racially, economically and socially, the picturesque Grahamstown continues to be a divided space, with the majority of black people remaining on the fringe, called the ‘township’ or the ‘location’ in the apartheid past. The linguistic meaning of ‘location’ is not lost here. In the South African context, the term ‘location’ refers to the ‘other’ place where black people live apart from ‘civilisation’ and the ‘centre’.

When *The P...Word* performed a second time at the National Arts Festival in 2010, it was included as part of the ‘mainstream’ performances and played at the Settler’s Monument. In Grahamstown, the performance, and thus the space, travelled or progressed “from margin to centre” (hooks, 2000). Immediately, the question arises: To whom does this new ‘centre’ now belong? The following description of the origins and history of the venue gives some indication of an answer. The 1820 Settlers National Monument is described as:

[A] commemorative building which serves as a centre for creative thought and activity ... The monument attributes the importance of the English language and culture in South Africa. Today its use extends past this, especially during the Grahamstown National Arts Festival when the venue hosts concerts, theatrical dances and theatrical productions”. (<http://www.southafrica.net/za/en/articles/entry/article-southafrica.net-1820-settlers-monument>)

The white settlers in Grahamstown offered a solution to the unemployment crisis in Britain at the time. Locally, the purpose for their settlement was that they formed a human buffer to keep the indigenous Xhosa people from moving southwards towards the Cape region.

Therefore, the Settler Monument ‘space’ is loaded with a violent and oppressive colonial history and symbolism. There is no doubt that the monument serves to preserve white colonial history and the English language. While illegitimate histories of domination cannot be erased from geographical spaces, the possibility still exists for histories that have been silenced to be reclaimed within them, as was experienced with performing *The P...Word* there.

The Black Box has since been used for other purposes at UWC, and rehearsal space thus continues to pose a problem for *The P...Word*. Weather permitting, the cast often rehearses outside in the open, or otherwise in the small office space of the GEU. Moreover, certain hostility towards the performance has been observed on campus, evidenced by the removal of *The P... Word* advertising posters immediately after a performance, while posters of other campus events remain in campus spaces long after the events have occurred. The play’s posters are also not featured in UWC’s official, permanent display cabinet for guests to view, a display that is supposed to impart the values and ethos of the institution and its culture. At a meeting with a senior male manager after he had seen the performance, he queried why students would want to identify with the play since it was a ‘lesbian’ production. This was presumably because of the inclusion of a poem by a black lesbian writer as well as my own identity as a black lesbian. This indicates that the university space is not free of sexism and discrimination even though its official policies and documents identify and value inclusivity as a key democratic value it pursues.

Duncan (1996a:1) argues the need for the “re-politicization of geographical concepts as space, places, the local and the global, sites of resistance, cartography, fieldwork, the transgression of boundaries, and the public/private division of space”. In the process of developing the play in 2006, it became increasingly clear that the play itself transformed into a site of resistance and transgression, not only for women (actors and audience members) but also for persons with disabilities and lesbians. The fact that the physical space of UWC is not neutral, value-free or inclusive (as discussed above and later in more depth in Chapter Six) denotes Duncan’s (1996:1) argument for the re-politicisation of spaces as extremely valid.

As mentioned, with time, the performance became a travelling production, with space becoming even more significant as the play began to occupy different activist, intellectual and performance spaces off campus. This has reinforced the Freirean principle that, in some instances, body, space and time are often inseparable and offer moments for invaluable dialectical teaching and learning to occur (Freire, 1970). The discussion that follows evidences this principle.

The P...Word has been invited by a variety of organisations to perform at their venues for their staff or clients. These spaces are as varied as their audiences, with some spaces and audiences making specific requirements. One such example was an invitation from the Stikland Psychiatric Hospital in Bellville to perform the play as part of its programme for the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women in 2008, which is a national, annual, gender awareness-raising event that takes place every December. A large percentage of women patients at the institution are survivors of domestic violence. In this instance, the play was seen as a tool to raise awareness about rights, as well as being a possible therapeutic tool in a space where controlled healing takes place. The hospital is also a space where both perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse are treated. Thus, the invitation was anticipated by the cast as an opportunity to create a moment in which healer, perpetrator, survivor and cast member could collectively learn from the process of 'reclaiming the body and the self'. However, the performance proved to be a moment of acute realisation of the meaning of the Foucauldian concept of panoptic surveillance since the audience members selected by hospital staff for viewing the performance were devoid of serious offenders of violence (Foucault, 1995).

Another performance space in which the edudrama played was at the 25th anniversary celebration of the International Labour Resources Information Group (ILRIG) at Community House, Salt River. Community House is historically a space for activist organisations and trade unions. This invitation proved that the sphere of influence of this type of liberatory education can spread far beyond the confines of the university classroom. This was an opportunity to engage directly with the workers in their activist space.

An invitation by the Sex Workers' Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) to play at a conference the organisation had arranged was a remarkable experience for cast members. The Sex Workers' Education and Advocacy Taskforce advocates for the decriminalisation of adult sex work and addresses the health and human rights abuses of sex workers. The conference for sex workers took place outside Simon's Town in the Western Cape at a holiday seaside resort. It is necessary to contextualise the conference space in which the performance took place. That the conference took place at a holiday resort might give the impression of leisure and in a certain sense downplays the seriousness of the issues at hand. Accessibility to the resort is difficult because there is no public taxi service beyond Fish Hoek. The South African naval base is located at Simon's Town, the last train stop to the picturesque Cape Point, the southernmost point in the Cape Peninsula. The resort thus presents an image of distance, exclusivity, isolation and privacy. The proximity to the naval base, however, ironically contributes to the stereotyping of the sex worker as easily available objects for servicing the sexual needs of naval service men. The conference was attended by sex workers from across the country. After the performance of *The P...Word*, the audience shared that they could relate to the stories because they are often abused by their clients during their work and are unable to take legal recourse. The applause during the performance and the discussions thereafter were informative and educational for both the audience and cast members.

Perhaps the greatest recognition of the feminist activist work done through the edudrama came with participation at the 11th International Conference of the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in November 2008. The theme of the conference was *The Power of Movements*, and the conference was attended by more than 1 500 women from all over the globe, many of whom viewed the performance.

Commitment to the educational, feminist and theatre processes in terms of spreading the message of black women reclaiming their bodies in the face of the continual sexual violence and exclusion they experience is more important than the lack of modern theatre space and equipment. The irony, of course, is that in the broader Cape Town region, there are several well equipped and modern theatres with very specific apartheid histories of exclusion, as

discussed earlier. However, reminds Grotowski (1968:19), “the theatre cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship”. It is in this regard that I proceed to discuss the audience and their various responses to the feminist play.

5.3.2 The audience

The P...Word's main audience remains that of the UWC campus, the space where peer education takes place, particularly for students. After each performance, cast members engage with the audience to receive immediate feedback regarding the impact. Curiosity is often expressed by audience members regarding the ‘use’ of sex toys in the production as well as the use of explicit language. Discussions ensue after each performance about the feminist theatre methodology of using sex toys and explicit language to teach about the ‘body’ and ‘self’ in relation to key feminist notions of pleasure. This is an important part of the sex experience for women who are so rampantly targeted for abuse, and reclamation via the reclaimed use of language that is socially aimed at undermining and disrespecting women extends the understandings among audience members. Thus, this type of direct exchange post-performance is very useful. Often, women audience members contribute their own ideas and stories and share experiences about some of the issues and themes conveyed in the performance.

This post-performance exchange is valuable for both audience and cast members for many reasons. Certain women audience members express interest in becoming involved in the project as volunteers, and the cast gleans valuable information and knowledge in the exchange, which they feedback to the group to enrich future rehearsals and possibly use as themes in future performances.

From the beginning of staging the play’s performance, audiences expanded beyond the confines of the UWC campus borders as cast members started to invite their friends, family members and colleagues to performances. Certain cast members even used the stage to share for the first time with immediate family and friends their often traumatic experiences of

violence. For them, the stage becomes the safe space to break their silence. Often, in the discussion sessions after the performance, such performers are commended for their courage.

An almost cult-like following has developed among students not participating in the play, who have taken to promoting the play as ‘Proudly UDubs’ (Proudly UWC), thereby also showing support and ownership of the production. Over the last seven years, the play has been presented to a variety of audiences from within the campus community as well as specialised audiences, as noted in the discussion above. It has been performed at the AWID international feminist conference, in the mainstream Artscape and Baxter theatres in Cape Town and twice at the National Arts Festival at Grahamstown. Excerpts of the play are often performed in classroom settings or appropriate pieces on request when cast members attend specific community events. This has been part of the play’s continuous awareness-raising programme within and outside UWC.

The play deals with real-life events, mythmaking and historical construction. The continual appeal of the play for audiences lies in the relationship it develops between the social and the physical bodily reality and the poetic, the mythic and the imaginative. Audience interest in the play is intimately connected with the liberating discourse of body politics and embodiment, which in the play is transmitted via a dialectic process with the self and the audience. At certain points, the audience is ‘forced’ or compelled to respond actively to the performer, especially when the women audience members are asked to look into the mirrors handed to them prior to the performance (see below for further discussion of this prop). Such moments are aimed at disrupting the complacency and comfort zones of the audience. No one is left untouched. Audiences often respond viscerally and audibly. On a few occasions, male audience members have engaged in strong vitriolic attacks with cast members in the discussion sessions after the show. Thus, the play may be seen indirectly to challenge the audience to deconstruct their own values and sense of morality. It is also likely that misogynists present in the audience simply remain quiet or walk away. At times, the audience is reluctant to leave after a performance and seem to loiter, waiting for more. On occasion, student audiences shout: “We want more!” Often, audience members appear confused as to where reality ends and mythmaking begins, as evidenced in the questions they pose to the

cast during discussion time. Some of the responses and reactions of audience members will be discussed in greater length later in this chapter.

The first scene draws the audience slowly into the production, with the performer inviting the women in the audience to partake in the play and take their sexuality and bodies back. As women audience members enter the performance venue, they are given a small hand mirror. The performer in the first scene specifically and deliberately invites the women audience members into the play by asking them to look at themselves in the mirror, an action reminiscent of early women's consciousness-raising exercises. As an audience member remarked:

What does *The P...Word* mean to me? I don't know. I came, and they gave me a few things. The mirror and the female condom and the mirror reminded one of decades ago, the earlier days in the feminist movement, having the mirror and consciousness-raising and looking at your own vagina. (Audience member from New Zealand, 2008)

Dolan (2001) illuminates this point further:

Using the hand mirror as a prop to engage the women allows for the breaking down of the proverbial 'fourth wall' between performer and audience. This constitutes one of those moments in the theatre event ... in which the audience or participants feel themselves become part of the whole in an organic, nearly spiritual way. (Dolan, 2001: 473)

The following letter of support from Marlene Le Roux, Director of Audience Development at the Artscape Theatre, provides first-hand insight of the performer-audience relationship in *The P...Word*:

As listener to the various stories presented by the performers, the audience performs a crucial role in the project of storytelling, that of witness. In bearing witness to the teller and her testimony, the audience, in whose presence the story unfolds, completes the contract for the fulfilment of the story. Thus, the sense is created that the audience

shares an equal responsibility to create the new values that the society is striving for and might live by; the dramatic performance is a fertile ground for learning and change which the performers have seeded during the performance and which the audience will in the imagining or re-viewing of themselves bring to fruition. (Le Roux, 2008)

In analysing the diverse audience responses to the play and to some extent, evaluating the impact of message and method, I suggest that the diversity of *The P...Word* experience is generally reflected in audience feedback and especially draw attention to the very personal work entailed in liberating the self and body. Recalling Foucault's (1984) notion of heterotopias is informative in discussing the impact of the play on different audiences collectively as well as individually. The use of a mirror in the opening scene to make the play more interactive, personal and to draw the women audience members into the performative feminist aspect purposefully excludes men so that women may look at themselves, free of the notion of being consumable objects of men. Foucault's (1984) use of the mirror as a metaphor to explain his understanding of heterotopias is evocative:

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolute real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (Foucault, 1984:3)

In accordance with Foucault's (1984) metaphor, the woman audience member gazes at herself in the virtual space on the other side of the glass 'over there' where she is not. She simultaneously occupies both a physical and a virtual space and has a choice regarding how she wishes to experience the performance. In a way, she is invited to be paradoxically both performer (cast member) and audience member. Hence, as with Foucault (1984), the heterotopias may be observed to be a space of otherness and paradox. Below, I explain further how Foucauldian principles of heterotopias link with understanding who the audiences of *The P...Word* are *in performance* to illuminate further understanding of the feminist performative 'spaces' that the play occupies as theatre.

Foucault (1984) broadly identifies two kinds heterotopias, the first being “crisis heterotopias”. Historically, these are spaces occupied by those society perceives to be in a state of crisis and who “have” to be placed in a separate space (Foucault, 1984). These are people in particular moments with whom society does not feel comfortable, including pregnant and menstruating women and virgins to be deflowered in the secret space of the honeymoon. However, over time, as society becomes more accepting or forgetful of heterotopias of crisis, these are replaced by “heterotopias of deviation” or deviance, which include prisons for the guilty criminal offender and psychiatric hospitals for the mentally diseased (Foucault, 1984). Heterotopias of deviance are thus powerful spaces of social exclusion in which society is complicit with the form of officially institutionalising power (Foucault, 1984).

According to Foucault (1984), however, heterotopias are capable of juxtaposing a single, real place into several spaces and sites that are in themselves intrinsically incompatible. Thus, in theatre, the audience can experience several different things in one space, which Foucault (1984) explores explicitly with regard to the stage. On the rectangle of the stage, a whole series of places, events and characters that seemingly have nothing to do with each other can be brought in and brought together (Foucault, 1984:1-6). In another example explaining the principle of paradox and incompatibility of heterotopias, he shows the palpable connection between boats, brothels and colonies (Foucault, 1984:1-6). While this juxtaposition may be an extreme type of heterotopia, it nonetheless illustrates how veiled power discourses may be exposed:

[T]he boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given infinity over the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens. (Foucault, 1984:1-6)

This treasure may be apprehended as the colonised people themselves to be used as labour or sexual objects for the colonial master’s desires. This particular juxtaposition by Foucault ironically also deeply resonates with *The P...Word* since a connection and argument about

the space of heterotopia can be made with Cape Town as a former colony and coastal city and one of the busiest harbours in the country. The city suffers particular notoriety with regard to sex work and use of sex workers, a marginalised group of people made guilty by their performance of sex work for money. The connection with seamen, sex workers and semen can be drawn with the above-mentioned performance of *The P...Word* at the SWEAT conference in Simon's Town. At this particular performance, the women sex workers were introduced to sex toys as a means of sexual pleasure for themselves and in the after-performance discussion, a male sex worker related that he found it disturbing that the women were introduced to sex toys. In his words, we were advocating “[taking] the bread out of their mouths”, alluding to his assumption that for the women sex workers, sex is a means of making money to survive. To this, a woman sex worker tellingly responded that sex toys could enhance the sex in their private lives. “There is a difference between the ‘sex work they perform’ and the sex they experience and enjoy in their private lives”.

In the above exchange, certain assumptions were made about the marginalised woman's body in relation to the male gaze. She is objectified by the work she performs for power, represented in the form of the sailor clients nearby and the male sex worker himself. However, in her retort, the woman recognises her own agency and experience of her body in her private sexual space for her own pleasure and meaning.

At the first and each performance thereafter, a hard-cover manuscript book was circulated among audience members for them to write in their comments after the show. The following is a selection of comments recorded from audience members over the years:

At last! I've been waiting for S. African women to start sharing their own stories. We are unique in many ways and hence our stories will be as well. Well done to the cast and the production team. (Aud 001)

Very powerful! Thank you. (Aud 002)

The P Word has great promise for us women who would like our young women to love themselves more. Your play is a refreshing look at the subject. Good luck. (Aud 003)

Thank you for the brilliant performance and giving me the confidence to say the word “*POES*”, and love it. Thanx again. (Aud 004)

Awesome work! Thanks especially to Juliana sharing her pain, Dawn’s wit & red tie, Mary’s toys, and AJ reclaiming our heritage. From taxi queen to hetero prude: awesome work! Tour everywhere pls. Long overdue!!! (Aud 005)

The show, what can I say, I attended more than 5 shows and keep on getting better and better like a bottle of wine! In short pure brilliance and dedication among the actresses. It is pure brilliance! I love it. (Aud 006)

Some audience members sent instant messages via their cellular phones to cast members:

Wow I can’t get over how amazing 2night was. Thank u so much 4 the wonderful opportunity. Wow it’s my honour, thank u. I love you. Mwa. (Cell 001)

Hey, M –P-word v cool, so many powerful things go’g on – happy b’day 4 tues but u gave us 2nite the gift!!. (Cell 002)

It is such an honour 2b a part of such a movement & activism! And it’s gr8 2b able 2 grow & learn from such phenomenal women. (Cell 003)

At times, I was telephoned by friends and acquaintances early in the morning after a performance, who informed me that they could not sleep because of the impact the play had on them and for some, the memories and feelings it had unlocked.

5.3.3 Stage to classroom

The P...Word has also become a tool and text for teaching and learning in the departments of English Studies, Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies (WGS) at UWC. Student viewing and critically analysing the play as assignments for evaluation form part of the curricula of courses in these departments. The following are extracts from reviews of the play of senior students in the above departments, which they submitted as assignments for evaluation:

When examining the group's ideological framework, it becomes clear that *Reclaiming the P...Word*, besides its clear feminist and activist objectives, can also be described as a cultural group that reflects the spirit of student activists of the 1970s and 1980s where blackness was not defined along ethnic lines, but rather concerning a shared political vision, which in the case of *Reclaiming the P...Word*, would be feminist activism. In the case of *Reclaiming the P...Word*, black women use the performance space as a place for transformation, education, healing and activism by using culture. The script is an unmediated document chronicling black women's experience in present day post-Apartheid South Africa. (Anthropology Student 001)

Some of the professors voluntarily offered their class assignments, and I used them to evaluate the impact of the production on the student audiences. It was important for me to assess whether the theatre was an effective pedagogical tool or not.

[F]or many of the cast members the monologues within the play are accounts of personal experiences endured by the cast members. For many of them it was the first time that they have confronted their own experiences of abuse, violence and harassment. The play has thus become a safe haven for many of these women and a real sense of trust and support had to be established amongst the members of the cast. The cast members of *Reclaiming the P...Word* partake in the play on a voluntary basis, which highlights the long stemming history of activism on the UWC campus. (English Honours Student 002)

Insight into South African theatre right from the beginning. Very impressive how the women addressed their personal stories and made them public. In comparison to the other plays, it was a very different audience. Students, friends, young people, many women who got very involved into the plot and did not hesitate to express their feelings. (Student 003)

Reclaiming the P...Word, however, was much more of a women's liberation, feminist, movement type of play. It was, however, scary at times, this is with reference to the woman who spoke about Robben Island and used it as a metaphor for her own experiences. That particular story seemed extremely personal and I wasn't quite sure if I had the right to actually hear these emotionally gut wrenching stories. I also felt that at any stage I could be chastised for having a penis. (Student 004)

The tone, language and expression of discomfort of the male student regarding the performer should be noted when her monologue makes comparisons between her lived experiences and the national heritage site, Robben Island.

The women who wrote and performed *The P...Word* are examples of what theatre is designed to accomplish. They have taken a topic that is swept under the rug and taboo in most cultures if not all and brought it out in the open. They have exposed abuse against women and have raised awareness about the topic concerning verbal abuse, physical abuse as well as sexual abuse. The eye opening monologues forced the audience to recognize the serious issue of abuse towards women in our country. *Reclaiming the P...Word* forces women to take back their bodies, the very part that defines their femininity. The p word is seen as a swear word in society and is associated with negative, bad and horrific images. It is heard everywhere, from the taxi ranks to the suburbs. The aim of the play is to motivate women that were abused in the past, for instance Saartjie Baartman who has been abused by slave owners and also all the other women who were not lucky enough to survive a senseless act of abuse. (Student 005)

The following piece was written by the student after an interview with a cast member:

After auditioning and landing the part in *Reclaiming the P...Word*, the interviewee said she was ecstatic, as she knew then and there that being part of this play would mean being part of a revolution. 'I was excited yet scared at the same time', she says. As the process began and rehearsals started, the cast members were encouraged to keep a diary or book of some sort to jot down their thoughts and experiences throughout the journey. According to the interviewee, this was the most difficult part. As she says: 'It allows you to start thinking about things you have not thought about in a long time, and facing these issues in your life head on.' She stated that it was an extremely moving and spiritual journey that took course in her life. She also claims that it was almost as if the part found her. The interviewee felt that most of the healing processes took place during rehearsals. She said that: 'being a part of this play was exactly what I needed in order to feel liberated as a woman.' She also stated that there was tremendous support from her fellow cast members to whom she is ever grateful as they made the healing process easier. (Student 006)

From the above extracts from students' assignments, it may be seen that a play by peers in the academy made a noteworthy theoretical impact, with different departments using the edudrama as an example of feminism and a means to address social transformation and learning effectively.

5.4 INDICATIONS OF FEMINIST THEATRE IMPACT IN *THE P...WORD*

The following section presents some of the sources collected over the years that further indicate the impact of feminist performance in the play.

5.4.1 Newspaper reviews

The first 'real' theatre in which *The P...Word* played was at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in 2007, albeit that the performance venue was located on the "Fringe". The University of the Western Cape was an unknown entity in the theatre world at the time, and

none of the cast members had ever been on a professional stage. The success of the show to draw crowds at the festival, therefore, depended entirely upon the media review in the official festival newspaper, *CUE*. As shown below, the review boded well for the play:

A vibrant and commanding production, which forces the audience to hear the stories of women that have experienced some sort of sexual abuse, but who have never been able to speak out. The acting is impeccable. An eye-opening experience. (*Reclaiming the P...Word*, 2007:12)

In 2010, the play was performed as part of the mainstream student productions at the same festival and earned the following media review:

This University of the Western Cape student theatre production is a dynamic combination of activism and theatre ... The simplicity of the setting and structure allow for each story's significance to speak for itself. Any lack of theatrical finesse is more than compensated for by the fact that each performer composed her own monologue ... sometimes because it was a true story and sometimes because she wanted to make a particular statement. Festival management is to be commended for including a production by students who are not necessarily studying drama, but who are using theatre to make important and brave statements about South African society nevertheless. (Edlmann, 2010:12)

Another reviewer comprehended the elliptic 'p' and continued to play with the 'prudish' performance as follows:

Powerful, playful, perceptive, pleasurable — all equally apt, but still not the word that needs reclaiming. The real P word, which has become an insult and a vulgarity, is being taken back by the women of the University of the Western Cape. In it, 12 women discuss the issue of their sexuality with candour — from their trips to the gynaecologist to their most climatic experiences. Perspectives range from sexually liberated to fearful of what's down there. No one holds back. At times, the performance asks that you, literally, hold a mirror to your prudish apprehension and — ahem! — your own you know what. But this is more than just a play. (Gaunt, 2010)

5.4.2 Journaling

As part of the creative process, I give exercise books to the cast members to keep a journal of their experiences. This is also a way of introducing them to the idea of writing as a personal journey. Journaling is a typical feminist tool. For cast members, it is more often than not a novel idea to write down what the process means to them. It is their choice to share their written journals with me. Some did, giving me permission to use them for study evaluation purposes for both the play and my dissertation. Obtaining permission for use of anything written or verbally shared among the project members has always been part of the feminist ethical process of *The P...Word*.

The following are some of the journal entries shared with me:

I could feel myself being Woman 1. Her anxiety, confused, lost but also self-absorbed with herself. That's me.

Reclaiming the P...Word brought up many issues. One of which you faced and tackled head-on.

I kept that secret you only because you promised me that people would hate you and think you were disgusting if they knew. I hated you for that. You let him make you feel ashamed for what he did. I understand that you were scared to tell anyone, I remember how you never wanted to go anywhere alone with him. You should have said something ..., what if he had raped you?

5.4.3 Body mapping

As part of the ongoing creative-writing process involving exercises to get to know the body, I facilitated a workshop on body mapping (see Appendix Two) in early 2010. By 2010, we had been performing the production regularly for four years, more or less using the same script that is appended to this dissertation. The original 2006 cast members had left the university

and as custodian of the project, I continually conducted workshops dedicated to the acquiring of theatre skills grounded in feminist practice.

As an introduction to the first session of the body mapping workshop in 2010, I played Nina Simone's rendition of the song, 'Young, Gifted & Black'. Ten potential cast members attended this workshop, which was held on a Saturday. As part of the processes of feminist ethical practice and theorising values of *The P...Word*, participants were asked to sign a consent form, giving the project permission to use their work for research or display purposes. The women participants outlined each other's bodies on large, body-sized, brown craft paper. In a short discussion, they explained their choice of colours and particular pose or position for outlining. Next, they filled in the outline. The purpose of this exercise was to bring young women 'in touch' with their bodies: to look at their bodies from the outside in. They were also asked to write a poem or letter to this 'woman' they had drawn and afterwards, were invited to share their thoughts, emotions and feelings about the process. The individual art works were discussed after the exercise, and this evoked serious discussion about the body and their creative choices to do with image, colours and words to unlock their bodies or to re-embody themselves (See photographs in Appendix Two). Naidus (2009) refers to this feminist creative method of getting in touch with the body as "socially engaged art".

5.4.4 Photographs

The 'social engagement' aspect of *The P...Word* project has been recorded visually since 2006 in a formidable photograph collection of the play. This is an historical record showing many young, black women being part of the process. The photographs, as well as a similar DVD collection, show different cast members taking ownership of the monologues and interpreting them for performance. For many, the moment of revelation is often when they realise that through performance, they are able to claim their bodies and their social space. Photographs and digital video recordings of shows are given as keepsakes to cast members so that they may have a record and a memory of their performance and valuable contribution to personal and social transformation and change. They often report that they share their teaching moments with their families and friends, screening these recordings for those who

could not attend the live performances in which they participated. The visual gift is a reminder to them that they can and do make history as active participants in pedagogic liberation processes. Facebook has become a popular media to post information about the project and performances and for cast members (present and past) to keep in touch.

5.4.5 Interviews with cast members

I did not conduct formally constructed interviews with cast members as part of my research process but often engaged informally with individual members to assess their views about the efficacy of the project, feminist pedagogy. Because cast members join the programme for many different reasons, and because I often need to encourage some of them to use the process to overcome the personal trauma that they have experienced, I frequently have personal conversations with cast members to assess the impact that the production has on their lives and to query if they require specific or additional support. A few cast members granted me permission to refer to these conversations in my research with the aim of generating further feminist knowledge that may be useful to other women in the future. When granted such permission, I take notes of the discussion while it is in progress and then reshape it into a more formal question and answer format. The following is a transcript of one of the conversations:

Q: Why did you join *The P...Word*?

A: Mary bulldozed me into it. (*Loud laughter*). The truth is that I was just being an ordinary student because it was always just school, library and school. I wanted something to balance me.

Q: How did you find it?

A: It was much unexpected. When I saw it, I liked it. However, I was concerned about the swearing, but then I also knew why it was done. I loved it.

Q: Did it change you?

A: Yes, definitely. *The P...Word* was a risk to me, the swearing, loud, in your face. When I joined it, it opened up other events for me. I feel famous. Am now on Google and Facebook. There are a lot of people who want to see it.

Q: Did it help you?

A: It helped with the jitters, the stage fright. It made me feel confident. Two years ago, I would never have performed in front of people. The people in it are another thing. They are family. You have to be there. You belong there. They are just *rolilala*. Johannesburg was an eye-opener. Everywhere *The P...Word* went, others wanted to be part of it. We're famous. We're stars.

Q: Did your mother like it?

A: She loves it. She watches the Baxter DVD all the time.

Q: How did it help you in the WGS programme?

A: We're famous. We refer back to it all the time. The assignments are always about gender inequalities, and after the DVD was showed in class — we refer back to it, we relate to it. Even the pieces connect with our studies.

Q: Did it help you understand the course work better?

A: Yes, definitely. When you are there, you usually have a lot of stuff to read. *The P...Word is real*. It is lived experience, and it makes things more understandable. It makes you aware of things.

5.5 WIDENING OUR OWN FEMINIST THEATRE LENS IN *THE P...WORD*

In the next section, I pay particular attention to the issue of students living with disabilities and begin by presenting an interview I conducted with one of the cast members living with disabilities. As a precursor to the discussion, I want to mention that two UWC students who are visually impaired challenged me at a lecture I was presenting on the play in 2008 to be more inclusive of people living with disabilities in GEU programmes. My response was that they should work with me to help me and others make the paradigm shift in our attitudes and approaches in this regard. Below is one of the many conversations that we had, and for which I was given permission to record and use because it affected me so profoundly:

I would not have studied Women's and Gender Studies but *The P...Word* was the catalyst to motivate me to take the module. *The P...Word* helped me in gaining

confidence to speak out and speak in public. Women's and Gender Studies was a small foot in the door. I suffer from poor sight and albinism. People stare, and there is a lot of stigma, and I cannot always explain who and what I am. This is especially true in my own community — the Xhosa community — they have not accepted albinism. They believe that we are not really human beings. They believe that when we die we simply disappear. This is not true because my brother died and he was buried. These days they also believe that when they have sex with an albino woman they will be cured of HIV. There is a lot of stigma. Did you see that documentary on albinos in Tanzania?

The P...Word taught me that I can stand up for myself. I can say 'I don't worry what you think.' Before *The P...Word* I would have felt bad. One cannot always change the perception of others. On campus, people don't really say anything. My relationship with the rest of the cast? They were nice. They never looked at us as if we were disabled. We were like family and when I was not part, I felt lost. I always had a circle of caring friends. The tough love method also helped a lot. There was always the attitude of 'you can do it'. In the outside life, we should also prove us. (PW001, 2009)

For this student, re-directing the gaze aimed at her was very important. The student drew attention to the fact that she had previously felt 'invisible' on campus despite the fact that her albinism made her 'stand out'. Her appearance on stage and on *The P...Word* posters changed her presence and visibility on campus and the way her body was seen or not seen. Other students started to engage with her and for the first time, she began to feel part of the UWC campus community.

The challenge presented by the students mentioned above resulted in raising my own awareness about disability, especially when they responded positively to my invitation to join *The P...Word* as cast members. This began an important learning curve for me and the other cast members. The GEU thus became focused on the awareness-raising value slogan, "Nothing for Us without US" of the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA). It reminded us that despite our feminist values and principles, we had still excluded another marginalised group on campus. Because of our broadening focus, a student with a prosthetic leg joined *The P...Word* cast, teaching us another lesson about the number of different disabilities that

challenge students on campus, each offering insights into different ways of being. While *The P...Word* may not be classed as ‘theatre of the disabled’, it is a production that includes women living with disabilities who are also strong, black, feminist intellectual activists.

The issue of disability forced *The P...Word* to rethink its project’s vision of feminist politics, approach and methods to raise awareness about feminism and social justice concerns. What did we learn, besides having to unlearn the way we conducted our workshops, planned our games and exercises, performed our rehearsals, accessed venues and stages and used lighting for performances? The project group experienced numerous pedagogical moments. Firstly, we had to rethink the ways in which we approach and interpret notions of “equality”, ‘discourses of inclusive education’, “mainstreaming”, “integration” and “inclusion” because all these terms negate the logic of ‘difference’ (Goodley, 2007:318). We realised that the social environment and many of the academic programmes at UWC excludes students with disabilities, which limited the latter’s career and socialising opportunities.

A Student Representative Council (SRC) and the Differently Student Association (DASA) exists on campus, but because of the dominant medical and social models that pathologise (Gilman, 1985) disabilities, ‘othering’ of people with disabilities still prevails. The challenge to undo this internalised learning also lies in the liberatory pedagogical model informing *The P...Word*. Fox and Lipkin (2002) are informative in this regard:

[T]raditional theatre usually presented characters with disabilities either as the metaphor for insidiousness or innocence, or as overcomer ... [but] it should not deter one from asking questions about the cultural dialogues that these representations invoke around deviations from bodily normalcy. (Fox & Lipkin, 2002:81)

One of the ways to raise awareness in this regard is the notion that we are all only ‘temporarily able-bodied’. The following observation by Fox and Lipkin (2002) helped with our further understanding:

One can become disabled at any time, and we are all on our way to becoming disabled by virtue of the ageing process; certainly our body-phobic culture includes a wide range

of physical shapes, sizes, and capabilities for which we have little tolerance. (Fox & Lipkin, 2002:83)

Since reconceptualising our notion of feminism as described above, *The P...Word* was invited to perform at the Artscape Theatre in 2008 as part of its month long “Women and Disability” programme for its Women’s Art festival in recognition of National Women’s Day. According to the organisers, the following aim of the festival was intended to be: “The performing arts speak a universal language, which can shape perceptions and change attitudes towards the creation of a united South Africa”. At the above-mentioned AWID international feminist conference in Cape Town, a number of women with disabilities hailed *The P...Word* performance as inclusive feminist production because of the inclusion in the cast of women with disabilities. The feedback presented below from a women audience member evidences appreciation for inclusion of and identification with the cast members living with disabilities:

I liked your show very much. It is a wonderful idea to get these young women to stand up for their puss & I think you found a wonderful balance between comedy and tragedy. The fact that violence against women is rampant all over the world & that every 4 minutes a woman is raped is sad [and] which no human being can really take & think about for more than 10 minutes. So it is a wonderful idea to combine it with comedy. As a disabled woman, I am particularly pleased to see that your group includes women with disabilities. It is so important to ensure that no one is left behind. As a visiting professor at UWC, I am pleased to see that the university I read at has such an inspiring project! Keep on with your good work! (Aud: 2008)

Nair designed *The P...Word*’s programmes at both the Artscape Theatre and AWID performances, in keeping with the theme of education for full liberation, promoted the play loudly as struggle or protest theatre and she wrote:

The doors of learning and culture must truly be opened for all the peoples living in South Africa. During this week, every time *Abafazi* (woman) speaks, sings, signs, wheels her chair on to the space or taps her white cane on our minds and inner eyes, we affirm her perfection as she *is* her lack of nothing in herself. She is a gift of inspiration

and beauty. Her entire being is holding open that door. You are invited to enter with her. (Nair, 2008)

This chapter touched upon various aspects of feminist pedagogical methods and processes informing *The P...Word*. It has, through analysis of various evaluative sources, shown how the play is truly reflective of conscious black feminist intellectual activism to educate the UWC campus community as well as communities beyond the university space. The longevity of the project is indeed an indication of the relevance and effectiveness of the message and method that can speak for women by women in the post-1994 South African democracy. At the time of writing, the play was still drawing full houses on campus and off, with requests for more performances received by the project regularly. However, the difficulty in maintaining a balance between continuing as feminist protest theatre and being drawn into the mainstream theatre space is noted as a challenge not only for the play but also for feminist critical pedagogy in general. In addition, the current rising statistics of violence against women is still a serious reminder that awareness-raising and vigilance are key factors in the struggle for freedom for all women, as well as a reminder of the need for continuous engagement in developing alternative strategies and creating new ones.

While the edudrama offered a platform to speak out against violence against both heterosexual and homosexual women, the next chapter provides particular insight in how lesbian, gay and gender-nonconforming people took action against this particular oppression.

CHAPTER SIX

SEX, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

On my return from the 19th annual *Lesbian Lives Conference: Masquerades* (17-18 February 2012), which was held at the University College of Dublin in Ireland, I reflected on the progressive nature of South Africa's legal framework and compared it with the so-called 'gender-sensitive' laws in other countries. I realised that there is much common ground between Northern Ireland's post-conflict quest for the equality of its homosexual citizens and our own ongoing search for equality despite our 'progressive' constitution. Both countries struggle with persistent discrimination and homophobia against lesbian and gay people. The experience made me rethink the notion of equality as it is applied to South African homosexual citizens and realise how quickly lesbian and gay people have opted to assimilate into the notion of heteronormativity when striving for the 'same' privileges that are the automatic right of those regarded as heterosexual. I argue for the urgency of ensuring that lesbian and gay people retain their political and subversive identities and believe that we must develop pedagogics and strategies of difference rather than ideas about assimilation.

This chapter discusses the teaching methodologies that are applied by the Gender Equity Unit within UWC to raise awareness as to why the politics of homosexual identity still matter. Critical to the process of imagining such methodologies is the importance of feminist pedagogy that specifically engages questions of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation.

The chapter also describes the experiences of some of the lesbian, gay and transgender students at UWC in recent years and discusses the deployment of pedagogical approaches that are applied outside the formal academic project. The academic project rarely appreciates the fundamentally important roles that non-academic spaces within the university context may play in the development and implementation of innovative pedagogical methods that may teach very difficult concepts concerning the complex realities of students' lives. The

chapter further argues that it is often in these marginalised spaces (units on HIV and AIDS, disability and in our case, gender equity) where cutting-edge research and teaching take place.

In her recent work on African sexualities, Tamale (2011b) acknowledges that she has drawn on the workshops she attended at the African Gender Institute (AGI) at the University of Cape Town and the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana to develop participatory sexuality curriculum for law students at Makerere University in Uganda. According to Tamale (2011b:607), inspiration to design legal courses to analyse sexuality came from several workshops she attended with other African feminist scholars to discuss pedagogical and content concerns in women's studies. The link between academic departments, research units and institutes and civil society should not be underestimated, and the workshop described by Tamale (2011b) included the recognition that there is a continuous and symbiotic relationship between academy and civil society. Such relationships may include ideas on the design of curricula and suggestions on particular pedagogical approaches (Middleton, 2000:473).

In the Gender Equity Unit at UWC, a non-academic unit, the socio-economic and political realities of the South African context led us to the imperative to create teaching, learning and social spaces that were safe for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGTBQ) students. Historically, UWC has been at the forefront of the struggle for the elimination of racial apartheid. Since the mid-1980s, feminists have actively driven the struggle against oppression and discrimination of women on campus and have made enormous strides towards the eradication of career and economic inequalities. The University of the Western Cape was one of the first institutions of higher learning to develop and implement a Sexual Harassment Policy that included a section on same-sex harassment. Nationally, post-1994 legislation became 'women-sensitive' and with continuous litigation by lesbian and gay individuals and organisations for their political, bodily and economic rights, the law became more 'gender sensitive', often at great personal cost. The meaning of LGBTQ students and staff was not, however, explored within the university setting until very recently. This chapter examines what prompted the Gender Equity Unit's decision to highlight the hostility of the climate

faced by people on campus living beyond the borders of heteronormativity and the processes of pedagogy and research we developed as part of changing that climate.

6.1.2 Writing '(homo)sexuality'

Shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994, there was an explosion of research publications and other written and visual material to corroborate the existence of homosexuality in South(ern) Africa. As elsewhere on the globe, much of the writing focused on the history of the gay man, with the lesbian very rarely mentioned, as if same-sexuality between women was of no importance. These publications presented the history of same-sex intimate relationships in Africa and South(ern) Africa to prove that homo-eroticism has always been part of African culture. Thereafter, the discourse shifted from the anthropological, psychological and medical gaze to sexual orientation as an essential component in human rights and social justice issues. The now iconic edited work, *Defiant desire: Gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*, by Gevisser and Cameron (1994) reflects on the history and experiences of the gay and lesbian movement in South Africa.

Publications that are more recent are preoccupied with the prevalence of homophobia directed at black lesbians¹⁵ or deal with HIV and AIDS¹⁶ or cover personal 'coming out' autobiographies, biographies and other life stories¹⁷. Current publications differ from the first post-1994 publications in significant ways. These extend beyond the attempt to create a visible homosexual subject by introducing a wider set of questions regarding political organising, the place of the individual autobiography and the meaning of 'culture' and commodification in debates about justice. After 1994, new organisations that focused on

15. An example of this type of research is the edited publication by Nonhlanhla Mkhize, Jane Bennett, Vasu Reddy and Relebohile Moletsane: *The country we want to live in: Hate crimes and homophobia in the lives of black lesbian South Africans*. (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2010). It is based on a round-table discussion hosted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2006.

16. Note the works by Neville Hoad: *African intimacies: Race, homosexuality, and globalization*. (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) and the conference proceedings edited by Vasu Reddy, Theo Sandfort and Laetitia Rispel: *From social silence to social science: Same-sex sexuality, HIV & AIDS and gender in South Africa*. (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2009).

17. For instance, Ruth Morgan and Saskia Wieringa's edited publication, *Tommy boys, lesbian men and ancestral wives: Female same-sex practices in Africa*. (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2006) and Pepe Hendricks's edited *Hijab: Unveiling queer Muslim lives*. (Cape Town: The Inner Circle, 2009).

specific sexualised and racialised identities¹⁸ were formed, which resulted in new careers for some as sexual rights activists.

6.2 YOUTH, SCHOOLING AND SEXUALITY

Posel (2011) refers to the period shortly after 1994 as the era when sexuality became “the site of the right”. Posel (2011:131-132) writes how sexuality has pushed sex into the public arena in ways that was totally unimaginable during the apartheid era and mentions the abundant circulation of movies, magazines and pornography as well as the rise of the sex shop and strip club, among others. The apartheid Publications Board had been zealous in its application of protestant-Calvinistic values and morals in censoring and banning all types of publications or media that remotely referred to sex or sexuality. Sex, after 1994, became a commodity as never before. Media, technology and billboards using hypersexualised imagery have become common, and I would argue, that they have a profound influence on the awakening of sexual interest among young people and children. Posel (2011) points out that for the first time, male and female sexuality are on public display but the statistics, nonetheless, show that female sexuality as a profitable commodity for sexual titillation remains disproportionately high. For instance, images of mainstream interpreted ‘lesbian sex’ are found on cellular and television ‘sex-for-sale’ advertisements.

High school learners and even younger children are exposed to both visual and audio material about sex as never before. Popular culture plays a major role in advancing knowledge of what was previously forbidden subjects. In addition, far from being innocent or positive, local billboards ‘scream’ messages of condomising and safe sex so that no one can remain immune to the instant messaging about sex.

18 Organisations such as the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW) concentrated on the rights of black lesbians, and the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) consists of organisations for lesbians across the African continent.

6.2.1 Our schools are (a)sexual?

Despite the explosion of sexual presentation, the public media remains firmly heterosexual and heteronormative. When legal reform moved the age of consent for gay sexual acts from 19 years to 16 years (the age at which legal consent to heterosexual sex could be given), the public media profiled the concern, especially from education officials:

By implementing such a Bill you are indirectly encouraging the youngsters to get it on at an early age. At 16 one cannot really understand the complexities of having a sexual relationship. Then there is the issue of HIV and AIDS. We are struggling to sensitise children to the pandemic. But we have not really succeeded – and now we are faced with something like this (Maphelo Ntshanga, Principal of Kayamandi High School, Stellenbosch). (Davids, 2006)

And,

It is certainly not upholding the moral standards and value systems that we want to inculcate. We all know that the youth are consenting to sex at an early age. They [lawmakers] are bowing to that pressure by decriminalising it because so many are doing it at an earlier age. I am sure it will involve many problems (Tom Clarke, Principal of Parktown Boys High School, Johannesburg). (Davids, 2006)

The messages suggest that the South African secondary school system is in a state of denial that homosexuality exists within the teaching and learning environment. An example that underscores the prevalence of sexual violence in schools is a report by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2008) in which the NGO, the Community Action Toward a Safe Environment (CASE), reported that violence has become such a part of the children's identities that they play games such as, '*Hit me, hit me. Rape me, rape me*' on the school grounds. The report further stated that in most incidents, the violence in schools is perpetrated against girls by both male teachers and learners. In fact, the report stated that 1 227 female students were victims of sexual assault and that 8.6% were assaulted by teachers. Toilets are regarded as the most dangerous spaces in schools. In its submission to the SAHRC, OUT LGBT Wellbeing, an organisation working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, reported that in a research project they conducted among the youth, gay and lesbian youth informed experiencing high levels of prejudice and discrimination,

resulting in their exclusion, marginalisation and victimisation at schools (South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), 2008:1, 7-9).

Much of the formal research on violence, including sexual violence, in the educational environment has been conducted at schools and not at universities. Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual and Queer (LGTBQ) organisations, such as OUT and the Triangle Project, also work with young lesbian and gay people in schools but in this regard, the Triangle Project reports that in many instances, school principals refuse them access, again evidencing denial of the existence of lesbian and gay teachers and learners in school systems.

Despite the fact that lesbian and gay people, social movements and academics have actively and successfully struggled for the inclusion of the right to sexual orientation in the 1996 South African Constitution, further recognition and acknowledgement of rights takes place via civil rights litigation. The struggle for hate-crime legislation remains on the agenda and meanwhile, discrimination against gay and lesbian people continues in the school system, notwithstanding constitutional guarantees. It would seem that the progressive rights enshrined in the Constitution and in other laws have not extended to include the education environment. Learners, teachers and staff at schools and students in higher education institutions still appear to be on the margins of such rights. The irony is that the South African learning and teaching environment remains the most conservative and untransformed space, even though academic studies and publications have advanced to produce local research and language to demystify sexuality and sexual orientation in the current post-1994 period. What is the relevance of research projects such as those discussed above for citizens of these institutions? Why do they not impact on education institutions? Who is responsible for the implementation and oversight of implementation or awareness-raising of issues of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation and transformation at education institutions? What gains would there be for education institutions if implementation occurred properly within them? These are the next logical questions and steps that much be broached in the school environment.

6.2.2 Transitioning to university

It is important to make the connection between the school learner and the university environment because the homosexual student enters the academy with the experience and realisation of exclusion and discrimination. The transitioning university student simply exchanges one highly sexualised, gendered and oppressive environment for another. Students come to the university with various sexual identities, and it is at this young adult age that they usually experiment more openly with these identities. Years of experience led us at the Gender Equity Unit to believe that the first semester of the university academic year is usually the most challenging time for any first-year student. The heteronormative environment is as confounding for the lesbian or gay student as is the previous school environment. I have noted elsewhere that campus culture and environment is not particularly prepared for or welcoming to the needs of lesbian, gay and transgender people (Hames, 2007d:68). During this period, students transitioning from school to university try to ‘find’ themselves, a ‘finding’ process that includes sexuality.

While the issue of addressing sexual harassment instigated the initial conversation and policy development on sex and sexuality in the higher education environment in the early and mid-1990s, HIV and AIDS soon overtook this issue. The conversation on homosexuality has thus never really commenced, with the exception being if university authorities have to respond to complaints by mainly heterosexual people of harassment from homosexual people.¹⁹ Lesbian and gay people insisted that the equality clause should formally include sexual orientation in the Bill of Rights, but there has been no pressure on the academic institutions that all policies should include a clause pertaining to sexual orientation. The assumption in the academy exists that the policies include same-sex needs. Are university policies in line with the legal changes and have these rights been written explicitly into these policies?

Twelve years ago, when the GEU organised its first Open Day for the UWC lesbian and gay community, only one law lecturer was prepared to share his experiences. During preparations for the Anti-Prejudice Awareness Week in 2006, the GEU attempted to partner with a

19. These complaints need a separate study, but they are indicative of the prevalence of homophobia on campuses.

number of UWC departments for support of the event. We approached members of the Student Development Department who informed us: “We know nothing about prejudice reduction”. When we approached the Human Resources Department, we were informed: “There is no problem with gay people because they are so artistic”. These hostile, homophobic and dismissive responses clearly indicate that something in the UWC system was very wrong.

Fuss (1989:97) writes of the decision among political organisers of the lesbian and gay movement to move away from the “notion of gay essence” towards a more discursive discourse. Moreover, she notes that “identity politics” remain important in the building of a cohesive and political community (Fuss, 1989: 97). I argue in favour of this community building and the politicising of identity because of the prejudice and the hate crimes against homosexual and gender non-conformed people on both macro and micro levels in South Africa. The awareness-raising week pursued by the GEU is, therefore, an important pedagogical tool aimed at all UWC citizens to educate and inform themselves about the importance of inclusion of all lived experiences within its academic borders.

6.3 SEX, SEXUALITY AND PEDAGOGY

The question that underpins this section is how we can teach sexuality and sexual orientation as matters of political interest without pathologising homosexuality. How do we connect the activism outside with the theoretical inside? How do we raise consciousness about injustices against black lesbians in a situation when those who teach are mainly white and when research turns those who are being taught into spectacles? What processes do we follow to maintain dignity and ask the difficult questions about being black and being homosexual or transgender?

It is important to have a sound knowledge of the intricacies and nuances that prevail in the South African academic environment. Each of the higher education institutions has unresolved apartheid issues, and all universities remain essentially heteronormative. In order to initiate new pedagogies around lesbian and gay experiences on campus, the GEU chose to

work with the students themselves. By 2012, UWC was the only Historically Black Institution (HBI) with *two* visible and active lesbian and gay organisations, Loud Enuf and Gayla. Gayla is a relatively new, political organisation for cross-dressing, transgender and transsexual students. Loud Enuf has been in existence since 2006 and is one of the GEU's programmes. The majority of the students belonging to these organisations are not Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) students. However, some who become involved in Loud Enuf, progress to enrol in the WGS department. Some of the identified lesbian and gay students from the neighbouring Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) find community within these two organisations and join the GEU's volunteer projects and activities.

Through Loud Enuf, UWC and CPUT lesbian and gay students become involved in the human rights focus of the GEU, attending meetings and rallies within and outside the community. The focus is on building solidarity. As part of the GEU's programme, we raise critical consciousness about sexuality and race through community involvement and discussions. The question of how to do this with integrity is worth exploring. How do we endeavour to create a suitable and confidential learning environment, inside or outside academic forums, that affirms the studying of sexualities beyond individual(istic), postgraduate research and is not limited to academic research projects?

Few people in South Africa have written about the pedagogy and (homo)sexuality. The following section discusses the approaches of two South African academics, Reddy (2001) and Bennett (2006), who both argue for pedagogy that problematises sexuality and sexual orientation²⁰.

For a long time, Reddy has been interested in a pedagogical approach to lesbian and gay studies in the South African academy. He argues that there is an indelible link between

20. While there are others writing on this issue, I have selected these authors because they are part of the minority who have 'come out' as gay and lesbian in the academy. Reddy is a gay person of colour and Bennett is a white lesbian. Both have a history of involvement in the academy and in the lesbian and gay movement. They thus speak from a platform of experience and authenticity.

activism and the academia and that the latter is not a privileged space immune to social change (Reddy, 2001). His knowledge of the history of the lesbian and gay movement in South Africa and his positioning within the academic environment gives him a unique insight into the importance of pedagogies that address the visibility of gay and lesbian people. He, therefore, argues that “queer Studies” should not be restricted to queer scholars but should be interdisciplinary and widely accessible, although he recognises the hostility and homophobia present in the academy (Reddy, 2001:181). He highlights the challenges that lesbian and gay studies will have to face such as the question of institutionalisation and the relation of gay and lesbian communities to the academy (Reddy, 2001). Reddy is aware of the complexities that are involved in the teaching of sex and sexualities outside the medical, psychological and anthropological models and is attuned to the hidden agendas in the heteronormative academic institution. This is something to which I will return in my discussion regarding the institutional culture and arrangements at UWC.

Heterosexual sex and sexuality are discursively discussed and treated as ‘normal’ within the academy, whilst homosexuality is still largely dealt with as ‘abnormal’, as the examples in this chapter will show. Studies regarding homosexuality remain an oddity in the academy and in my own experience, disdainful remarks in academic committee meetings about research on lesbian and gays still abound. Bennett (2006) argues that much of the teaching, training and workshop material on ‘sexuality’ emanates from the NGO sector rather than the academic and she points to the lack of reflexivity on pedagogical practices with regard to sex, sexuality and sexual orientation within the mainstream heteronormative academic environment. Bennett (2006) writes that although seminal work is done outside the academy, the perception prevails that real “education” happens within. I agree with Bennett’s latter assessment that the important transformative and educational work is mainly done outside formal learning environments. Bennett (2006) argues that when it is taught with understanding, empathy and depth of analysis within the academy, it is usually done by feminists or people who have had experience of the NGO environment. Bennett (2006) is of the opinion that it is imperative that sex and sexuality should be taught in the academy and states that “pedagogies of sexualities must prioritise the destabilisation of heteronormativity as a precondition of their integrity”. But like Reddy, she admits that this is easier said than done. (Reddy, 2001; Bennett, 2006:68, 70-71).

Mama (2011:e7) proposes an “activist scholarship” that focuses on the development of a curriculum that is globally informed and locally grounded and that recognises and includes the diverse struggles of women and gender in the region. The consensus (Reddy, 2001; Bennett, 2006; Mama, 2011) is that the artificial divide or binary between praxis/activism and theory/intellectualism should be undone. This is a recurrent view regarding the pedagogy of sex and sexuality.

There are numerous examples of how activism pertaining to sexual rights and consciousness-raising both inside and outside the academy has contributed to the development of training materials within the higher education environment. An excellent example in this regard is the *Southern African higher educational institutions challenging sexual violence/sexual harassment: A handbook of resources*, which is one of the first practical pedagogical examples of how to teach and train about sexuality and sexual violence within Southern African institutions (Bennet, 2002b). This is also an example of how Mama’s (2011) notion of locally grounded has developed into “activist scholarship” and how through these concerted efforts, people across the academic divide could conceptualise a common pedagogy to teach about sexuality and sexual rights. This handbook (Bennet, 2002b), however, is explicitly devoted to teaching about sexual harassment and while this may be important, pedagogies of sexuality should address desire, pleasure and nonconformity.

6.4 PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

6.4.1 Confronting the medical gaze

The sex and sexuality debate remains a difficult one as Bennett and Reddy (2007) show in their research on the teaching of gender, sexuality and sexual orientation across South African campuses of higher learning. Bennett and Reddy (2007) were curious about the connection between the constitutional inclusion of ‘gender equality’ and pedagogical practices in the different academic departments and faculties at institutions of higher learning. Bennett and Reddy (2007:48) were particularly concerned about the “representation of the

‘body’” that is being taught to young doctors, anthropologists, lawyers, cultural critics and economists.

New ways of combining teaching and activism are, in fact, discovered and applied where it is sometimes least expected, as Denny and Mbatani (in Dosekun, 2007) show through their work when they intertwine medical care and compassion for women rape survivors. They point to a very important aspect that is particularly relevant to the concerns of this chapter, namely that the gendered nature of rape needs to be addressed differently by medical practitioners and that male rape survivors are not the responsibility of gynaecologists (Dosekun, 2007:114). Denny and Mbatani (in Dosekun, 2007:114) suggest that “gynaecology is the specialisation on the female reproduction system”, and knowledge of gynaecology is simultaneously knowledge of the way political and cultural meanings regarding women’s bodies come into the medical arena.

6.4.2 Pedagogic distance

At the GEU, we asked: How do we teach young women and men about their (homo)sexuality? Not many university teachers are formally educated in pedagogies of teaching and learning, let alone teaching and learning about sexuality.

The fact is that many UWC students are first-generation university students and a large percentage are commuting daily to campus from townships, outlying towns and peri-urban areas. They *carry* their own daily and lived experiences about sexism, sexuality, racism, ethnicity, nationality, violence, xenophobia, (dis)ability and homophobia *in their bodies* into the classroom and campus spaces. So does the lecturer. Feminist pedagogues teaching sexuality should be alert to what sexualities may enter the classroom in those bodies.

I concur with Bennett (2006) when she writes that “very few of us have learned about sexuality from academic-controlled pedagogic spaces”. Bennett (2006:76) points to the fact that the “admission to these spaces is constrained by rigid, and competitive discourses on the

‘intellect,’ ‘academic merit,’ and where long colonisation of academic space by the elite (in South Africa, white, wealthy men)”remains the same. . Bennett’s (2006) observation contributes to my analysis of ‘pedagogic distance’ because UWC is an institution that was historically designed for a specific race group and continues to be loaded with political innuendos about race, gender and sexuality.

Pedagogic distance is not only present between lecturer and student but also between student and student. Anecdotes by students show how they negotiate situations in the classroom and how vulnerable they often feel when the issue of homosexuality arises. There is much subjective evidence on how homophobia ‘slips out’ during both staff and student conversations and interviews. While there is a certain sensitivity with regard to race, there remains intense hostility towards those who are perceived as homosexual.

6.5 INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Institutional culture is best understood by those who experience it. There are the unspoken ways, the symbols and the various spoken, written and electronic evidence that make up the prevailing culture. In this respect, I find Smith’s (2001) notion of “institutional ethnography”, useful. According to Smith (2001:161), “institutional ethnography is located in people’s experience in the local sites of their bodily being and seeks to discover what can’t be grasped from within that experience, namely, the social relations that are implicit in an organization”. Smith’s (2001) view is that the day-to-day experiences, social interactions and communication say a great deal about the institutional atmosphere and culture.

Jansen (2009:173) writes about “institutional perspective” and states that it is much more than just the accumulation of modules and credit hours but also the *concealed knowledge* within an institution. It is learning about the penalties and strictures for moving beyond or outside the confines of institutionally legitimated knowledge and about the advantages of “slotting in” to the dominant knowledge forms (Jansen, 2009:173). Lesbian and gay lives and studies are the opposite of “slotting in” or “assimilating”; they disrupt the existing.

Although higher education and research institutions may sometimes teach about and conduct research on sex, sexuality and sexual orientation, in reality, very little is ‘formally’ done to improve the social life of homosexual people or improve the inclusion of homosexual orientation in and outside the classroom context. In many instances, there is a disjuncture between the knowledge taught in the classroom and the lived experiences of the students outside those walls.

When Abrahams (2005:10) first conducted a survey on the lives and experiences of lesbian and bisexual women at UWC, she could not find students to share their experiences and eventually resorted to speaking to alumni. This was an indication of the hostile institutional environment that existed thirteen years ago. Women were too scared to identify as lesbian or bisexual, preferring to complete their studies first, and only once they had ‘made it’ in their professional lives, were they more willing to speak about their experiences. The survey by Abrahams (2005:10) led to the development of an annual awareness campus campaign by the GEU against homophobia and anti-homophobia in 2006, which usually lasts one week. The campaign and critical consciousness raising have been so successful that a formal programme, Loud Enuf, was established and is now headed by student representatives. Networks were developed with various organisations (supportive lesbian and gay faith-based organisations, the Triangle Project and Kaleidoscope, the inter-university student organisation for LGTBIQA students). Loud Enuf has become the contact for all lesbian and gay activities on campus. It conducts workshops on sexuality with other civil society organisations and UWC institutions and undertakes important projects to foster the rights of gay and lesbian students on campus. For instance, it lobbied the HIV and AIDS programme at UWC to be more inclusive of the needs of lesbian and gay student populations.

Although Loud Enuf and the GEU have crossed important divides in the institution, the university is in no way free from prejudice or become a ‘home for all’²¹.

21. For example, during a campaign by the HIV and AIDS unit in 2011, the GEU and Loud Enuf distributed a booklet, *The young gay guy's guide to safer gay sex*, as part of the information package provided to students, and subsequently received an email from a woman staff member, complaining about the pornographic filth with which the GEU is contaminating the campus.

6.5.1 Institutional ‘home’

“Home’ is a four-letter word” (Holland, 2005:ix).

Women’s Studies has traditionally been the institutional home for the teaching of sexualities. However, as Reddy (2001) noted, it makes sense to have lesbian and gay (or queer) studies across disciplines. I would argue, disciplines regarding the law, political science and government studies as well as the faculties of medical and health sciences, among others, should have curricula to teach beyond the traditional heteronormative frameworks about sex, sexism and sexualities. While the WGS Department is the institutional home for the formal theory at UWC and the GEU programmes, the GEU has become the physical, activist and grounded theoretical home for lesbian, gay and transgender students to think through the politics of gender, race and sexuality. As a “non-teaching’ department, the GEU has become the activist home for the critical thinker and has designed programmes for all marginalised and politicised concerns (homosexuality, violence against women, disability and poverty). We firmly believe that the GEU is the safest space on campus.

The GEU deals with very complex issues in an ethical way, that is, with the utmost confidentiality and dignity and is committed to address the issue with the necessary effort required. The 1997 White Paper on Higher Education identified the creation of “safe and secure” spaces in tertiary institutions without defining explicitly what this should entail. The GEU has, therefore, rallied the intrinsic feminist interpretation of ‘safe spaces’ to include notions of the whole person (including the body) and the institutional space (including its culture and knowledge production). However, even though we constantly promote and publicise the GEU in these terms within all the spaces on campus, there remains a dismissive or forgetful attitude that may be captured as “I did not know there is a Gender Equity Unit”, a clear indication of resistance to institutional transformation based on inclusive feminist principles.

As feminist staff members, we are aware that ‘home’ is often the most dangerous and dysfunctional place. Our GEU version of ‘home’ is both a cerebral and a physical space where the body and intellect meet. In 2010, we conducted a survey among lesbian and gay students to ascertain whether they felt the university was a safe space and whether they

regarded it as ‘home’ or not. The survey questionnaire was titled “UWC LGBTQ Climate Survey” and was a collaborative project between the GEU and the WGS. The purpose was to gather the experiences and perceptions of LGTBQ students at UWC in order to develop ‘safe spaces on campus, free from prejudice and discrimination’. The analysis of the questionnaires gave us a sense of what students who identified as lesbian and gay thought of UWC. Our sense was that there was an ‘imagined home’ for students, and this home was located within their respective lesbian and gay friendship circle. In this small circle, they could be who they are and not fear the backlash from the rest of the campus community. The research made us aware that there are certain safe spaces on campus where lesbian and gay students gather in numbers, and they ‘own’ these spaces in which they know each other and know that the students who frequent these spaces are also lesbian or gay. Creating their own spaces allowed them to combat isolation, but they were also very vocal about the fact that the university creates official ‘safe spaces’ for them. Among some of these students, there was also the fear of being isolated and for them, a “safe space” did not necessarily mean a “loving environment” but “a place where I would feel protected” from the heteronormative gaze and hate. For this group a “safe space” translates into “a place where I could hide” (UWC LGBTQ Climate Survey, 2010).

Why is the notion of home of such importance to us? For the students, there is a strong need for belonging. They yearn to embrace the university slogan, ‘home away from home’, although this was never meant to include homosexual people. We often hear students say with relief when they enter our offices (incidentally, our offices are located in a *house* on campus) and hear about our work and programmes: “We feel at home”. The GEU provides a space where they can imagine their institutional home and construct it themselves. Home is not always a physical construction but can also be an intellectual or spiritual place.

6.5.2 Spiritual ‘home’

Religion plays a large part in the lives of many students. This can cause much agony in the process of accepting the self. At the end of formal classes and over weekends, the campus ‘comes alive’ with all types of Christian faith and religious-based activities. Soon after Loud Enuf was established, one of the Muslim gay students resigned from the programme because

he was afraid that his fellow Muslim community would ostracise him. One of the main struggles for students is to reconcile their religious upbringing with their sexuality.

There are numerous Christian student organisations on campus; many charismatic organisations preach the link between ‘sexual sin’ and ‘fire and brimstone’, calling homosexuality an abomination. His People²², one of the largest and most influential charismatic organisations, started as a student religious organisation but has grown and has a massive impact on the homophobic messages of its followers. This organisation has a weekly Sunday church service in one of the largest lecture rooms on campus. On 4 August 2006, in anticipation of changes to the Marriage Act, the Department of Religion and Theology, in partnership with the GEU, WGS and the Triangle Project, hosted a conference called “Revisiting Intimacy: The Challenge of Homosexual Relationships to Church and Society”. The main purpose was to unlock vigorous debate between church and society on aspects of inclusiveness, respect for difference and tolerance (Hames, 2007a:65). One Dutch Reformed Church minister stormed out of the conference because he could not ‘accept’ homosexuality as part of the church.

On 9 August 2006, National Women’s Day, a group of UWC students affiliated to one of the Christian student organisations marched on campus holding placards that read among other slogans, “Homosexuality is a sin”. The irony is not lost because that same year, South Africa commemorated the 50th anniversary of the March of Women to Pretoria. For lesbian and gay students, this was a threat to their safety, security and freedom to exercise their sexual choices and rights on campus. One lesbian student took photographs of the march and brought the evidence to the GEU to address formally within the university space. Did this action constitute hate speech? Legal opinion informed us that that action could not be interpreted as hate speech because the right to religious freedom is extremely broad and very difficult to litigate against. We had to resort to a more vigorous campaign with the assistance of supportive religious student organisations, such as the Anglican Student Society. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu was the Chancellor of UWC, and we used his message of support.

22. His People has a very large student following on campus, and its organisational leaders are often in the media, expressing homophobic opinions.

So where and how can students find their ‘spiritual home’ on campus? During our annual awareness weeks against homophobia, we have a standing agreement with lesbian- and gay-inclusive churches to conduct an interfaith service on campus. We have found that most mainstream churches have a very welcoming and inclusive message and that all churches have known lesbian and gay members in their congregations.

The GEU and Loud Enuf have close relationships with three faith-based organisations, the Good Hope Metropolitan Community Church (GHMCC), the Inclusive and Affirmative Ministries (IAM) and the Inner Circle, which is an organisation that services the needs of mainly Muslim LGBT people. These organisations offer assistance by providing spiritual guidance if students need to overcome their internalised fears of spiritual or religious rejection.

6.6 THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

6.6.1 Coming out of the closet

Since 2005, there has been a marked change in the atmosphere on campus, with students championing their right to be sexually active and to love, to learn and to live on campus without fear²³. The confidence in students in their own sexuality has observably grown, especially because certain UWC lecturers have ‘come out’, and now students know their ‘professors’ are ‘just like them’. Students are ‘coming out’ in the classroom and are even coming to campus in drag.

The 2012 Pride March in Somerset Green Point is the third Pride event that the Loud Enuf students attended and this year, they had their own banners, painted their own T-shirts and

23. In 2011, two Loud Enuf members were sitting under a tree close to the GEU offices in a loving embrace when a campus security guard started to harass them. They refused to be intimidated and moved into the GEU with the security guard in tow. The matter was amicably resolved when we pointed out to the guard how we interpreted the incident as homophobic and that we would take action against him.

placards and gyrated to the music as the Beef Cake float passed them. The sounds of Lady Gaga's lyrics in her album, *Born This Way*, bounced off the hot tar:

Don't hide yourself in regret
Just love yourself and you're set
I'm on the right track, baby
I was born this way
No matter gay, straight or bi
Lesbian transgendered life
I'm on the right track, baby
I was born to survive
Don't be a drag, just be a queen, don't be a drag, just be a queen.

(Lady Gaga, 2011)

Lady Gaga's song, 'Born this Way', in her album of the same name, must have been the lesbian and gay anthem for 2011 and especially for the members of Loud ENUF and Gayla at UWC. Thanks to the activist pedagogy of the GEU, and the lesbian, gay and transgender students themselves, there has been a remarkable shift in the confidence of lesbian and gay students on campus. In 2010, some gender questioning students would sit in the student centre dressed in dresses and during 2011, certain gender questioning students would attend their classes in dresses. A lecturer in the WGS Department reported that during student presentations in her Sex and Sexuality class, one of the students was brave enough to come by taxi in drag. In conversation with these students, they were extremely comfortable with themselves.

While dressing in drag on campus may be part of gender performance, it proved that students are claiming important social and geographical spaces on campus. Part of the annual awareness week in 2010 was devoted to a drag show in the Student Centre. It was well attended, and the show was twice repeated in 2011, once during lunch time in the open air. These performances are mainly organised by gay students; lesbian students have yet to organise such a public event for themselves.

6.6.2 Homophobia in the academy

Despite the progress made, campus discourses continue to generate homophobic speech and attacks. *“I have nothing against gays but they should not touch me. They should not enter my space”* (Student during awareness raising workshop: GEU, 2011).

Certain public homophobic incidents occurred at both our neighbouring university campuses²⁴ as well as at our own campus. This has reinforced the resolution to continue with debates and awareness-raising activities with regard to the understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation in order to interrogate the issue of ‘inclusive citizenship’ for lesbian and gay people on campus. More recently, it was reported that some members of Gayla were brutally attacked by fellow students, so we must be ever vigilant for the backlash and consistent prejudice and hatred. The positive aspect of this experience is that the students publicly stood up for their rights, something that was only dreamt of before we institutionalised the awareness campaigns. We are reminded that “any praxis, and pedagogy, is by definition, selective”, and it is our choice to continue advocating for the inclusion of sexual orientation in and outside the formal curricula (Price-Spratten, 2001:63).

The University of the Western Cape is far from the city centre with its lesbian and gay friendly shops, LGTBI NGO’s, inclusive churches, bars, bookshops, clubs and other social networks. It was, therefore, critical to develop a programme that is not part of the formal academic programme because not all university staff teach lesbian and gay studies in the Women’s and Gender Studies Department or cover the lesbian and gay representation in literature in the Languages Department or in the often problematic departments of Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology.

24. In 2010, the University of Stellenbosch hosted their annual “Die Soen in die Laan” (Kiss in the Avenue) event where it is accepted that heterosexual students kiss each other in public as part of a publicity stunt. Two gay students decided to kiss each other and were photographed doing so. The photograph was published in *Die Matie*, the student newspaper, which caused an uproar on campus. The event was subsequently cancelled in 2011. In October 2010 during the Pink Week (gay awareness event) at UCT, the ‘pink closet’, built by students as part of the event’s ‘coming out’ message, was burnt down during the night. In both instances, responses by the respective university authorities were mild.

I started to bring my own personal books, television series and popular films and documentaries to work. In order to make books more accessible to lesbian- and gay-identified students, I tried as far as possible to purchase popular lesbian and gay novels where the main protagonist(s) is black. For instance, the students were introduced to mainly American authors such as Octavia Butler, E. Lynn Harris, Ricc Rollins, Shonia L. Brown, Jewel Gomez, Laurinda D. Brown and Sidi. There is still a dearth of local black lesbian and gay novelists in South Africa. Part of the offerings is one of the first feature films made by a black lesbian, Cheryl Dunye, which is titled *The Watermelon Woman*. All of these films are popular with the lesbian and gay students and have become important teaching material.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The teaching and learning environment in South Africa is full of theoretical paradoxes. The classroom is a powerfully privileged, cerebral space that has the potential to ‘silence’ many in the name of ‘access’ and ‘opportunity’. Within a voluntary learning space that allows for personal development and political awareness, actual education may be generated collectively. It is within the GEU space, I argue, that realistic options for activist and feminist pedagogy have been allowed to thrive, and given this opportunity, marginalised students have created their own university and thus their ‘home’.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 MAKING SENSE OF BLACK FEMINIST INTELLECTUAL ACTIVISM

My dissertation has taken seven years to complete, and the length of time afforded me the opportunity to write from a very different perspective than had originally been intended regarding the creation and impact of the two educational programmes located at the Gender Equity Unit (GEU) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

The first programme under discussion, an educational drama, *Reclaiming the P...Word*, deals primarily with violence against women and the invisibility of black women in this regard and explores the complexities involved in the notions of ‘talking back’ and ‘taking agency’. The second programme under discussion, *Loud Enuf*, deals with the activities addressing sexuality, gender fluidity and sexual orientation on campus. As discussed in the preceding chapters, these programmes emerged from engagement with ideas about pedagogy rooted in black feminist theory as well as various critical theories and philosophies that offer ways to address the self and stimulate civic, political and social engagement.

Analysing these programmes has involved making sense of black feminist thought and the pedagogical and theoretical insights raised by radical popular education and recent critical appraisals of the role of humanities. The extended time allowed me to engage intimately with and describe the action research relating to feminist intellectual activism as I have experienced it with students and staff members at the university and to assess the impact that these programmes have had. My role at the GEU afforded me the opportunity to position myself in relation to students, the administration and other academics in ways that foster my critical insight into different vantage points and academic agendas. This complexity in the writing process was also the result of the continuous evolving process of the programmes themselves; *Reclaiming the P...Word* continues to be produced in new incarnations, and the issue of homophobia and prejudice at UWC remains a key focus of GEU activism through

the Loud Enuf programme. Researching on-going, ‘non-academic’ programmes *as theory* is rare within South African universities, given the pressures of time and the demands of campus culture.

This conclusion synthesises my sense of the vitality and relevance of the programmes in relation to my ongoing preoccupation with engaging in educational activities that contribute to the development of critical literacy (Shor, 1987), not only in students but also in the broader public beyond the university. Critical literacy interrogates and disrupts existing hegemonic knowledge by bringing previously marginalised knowledge to the centre as valid.

A range of socio-political struggles in contemporary South Africa present me and other educators with profound pedagogical challenges. It was important to ensure that while students are engaged with course material, they are also equipped with the tools and insight to make critical sense of the world(s) of which they are a part. The concept for the edudrama first arose as I listened to the verdict of the infamous Zuma trial²⁵ on the radio in my office at the GEU. In that moment of profound despair, I felt that something had to be done by the GEU in solidarity with women in South Africa who are continually subjected to violence and who seem to have no recourse to justice. As a black feminist thinker, I realised that cultural productions on campuses usually have a far wider and immediate reach than do the contact teaching periods in the formal classroom. At this particular time, the post-1994 moment in South African history, women still have to deal profoundly and intensely with increased violence perpetrated against them. This increase in violence includes femicide or intimate partner violence, the rape and killing of black lesbian women, the murder of gay men and transgender people and the spread of xenophobia (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Matthews et al., 2004 People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA)).

I also realised that violence against black women is not treated with the same urgency or on an equal level as violence perpetrated against white women. In an article on violence against

25. On 8 May 2006, the former Deputy President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, was acquitted of raping an HIV-positive woman, the daughter of a close friend. She subsequently left the country for fear of her physical safety under the *nom de plume*, Khwezi. Feminists and gender activists were devastated at the outcome of the trial.

women in the higher education environment, I refer to the fact that violence against black women's bodies receive less or even no attention at all (Hames, 2009). I note that "violence against black bodies became part of the statistics published by researchers and paid for by donors" (Hames, 2009:45). In 2009, content added to the edudrama was informed directly by the killing of young women students at various South African higher education institutions across the country.

My immersion as initiator, writer, artist-creator, participant, producer and observer researcher has offered me the space to entertain a particular type of synthesis and analysis during the action research process. Becoming the observer-researcher provided me the opportunity to distance myself from some of the events and to look at them from the outside into the programmes.

This dissertation research is, for me, the culmination of writing on issues pertaining to marginalisation post-1994 with which I have been engaged for several years as Director of the GEU. I have written a number of articles and delivered papers regarding aspects of the GEU's programmes at both national and international conferences, symposia, colloquia and seminars. These public, intellectual opportunities assisted me in understanding the impact of the work on the programmes themselves and have allowed me to note reception and perceptions of the GEU programmes as experienced by other parties in different institutions, situations, locales, countries and systems far beyond the university at which I am located.

I drew the conclusion that "Loud Enuf may just be the vehicle to revive students' involvement in activism and the pursuance of social justice" (Hames, 2007c:72). In writing about *Reclaiming the P...Word*, I reflected upon the journey of healing that the cast, the audience and I had embarked upon (Hames, 2007c:97, 101). The deep ambiguity I felt about the impact of these programmes on the bigger educational project of the university seemed overwhelming. Moreover, the formal academic research space did not seem to cater for the fact that black feminist intellectual activist knowledge in these programmes needed to be analysed, theorised and tested as 'real' research or pedagogy.

The full impact of black feminist pedagogies lies in destabilising a wide range of entrenched institutional dynamics in the academy as well as offering critical lenses for exploring intersecting power relations. I have come to understand that GEU programmes function as a *realisation* of these pedagogies' strengths and consistently reflect the occurrence of profound pedagogical moments for the programmes' teachers and students. This, in turn, led me to analyse what could be done differently in order to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Both the programmes have now been institutionalised and are recognised and acknowledged far beyond the confines of the university campus. It is interesting to see how individuals, in particular UWC students, confidently take issues forward into their classrooms, residential areas and other social spaces.

7.2 'REDRESS' IN THE ACADEMY

Both the programmes were created as a means of protest pedagogy in 2006 because of the unabating violence against women in general and black lesbian women in particular on South African university campuses. The year 2006 was full of contradictions and opacities for South African society, for it transpired that the post-1994 democracy's progressive Bill of Rights had its fault lines. At the time, its approach, based on universal rights, seemed not to be addressing South African specificities, with the result that continually marginalised individuals and groups still had to resort to litigation to attain their legal rights. In 2006, the South African democratic constitution was poised to celebrate its 10th anniversary, the Soweto Student Uprising had its 30th commemoration, and the memorable anti-apartheid Women's March of 1956 to the Union Buildings in Pretoria was 50 years old.

Indeed, there was much to be celebrated but also, the crucial need to know how far the country had advanced into a state that really cared about all its citizens. The 1996 Constitution with its universal human rights approach held many promises for women, people living with disabilities, gender identities and sexual orientation. The famed 'equality clause' with its deliberate vagueness has been a significant discursive tool for intellectual activists, providing the possibility of interpretation in many different ways. (De Vos, 2000:17).

Similarly, the South African post-1994 higher education laws and policies draw on the constitution's 'equality clause' to address the concerns of redress. But what does 'redress' mean for institutions of higher learning? "Redress", according to Barnes (2005), "became the blanket code word for addressing inequities and inequalities of the apartheid past". According to her, application of the term ranges from "rectifying a wrong" to "reparation" to "restoring equality" to "empowerment", and "each of these variations carries important implications for state policy, institutional action and stakeholder contestation" (Barnes, 2005). In "higher education speak", there are two main types of redress: institutional and social (Barnes, 2005). For Barnes (2005:210), institutional redress refers to the physical infrastructure that relates to the teaching, learning and administration of a particular institution, while social redress refers to funding that is targeted at individual students.

However, 'redress' is not confined to the types of institutional and social transformation to which Barnes refers. Badat (2010), for instance, offers a much broader understanding of 'redress', arguing that "higher education holds the promise of contributing to social justice, development and democratic citizenship". A promise, he notes, unfortunately often ignored by institutions by their very "powerful mechanism of social exclusion and injustice, through both their internal thinking, structures, cultures and practices and their external conditioning by the wider society" (Badat, 2010:19). Badat (2010:19) contends, therefore, that the important "epistemological and ontological issues associated with learning and teaching, curriculum development and pedagogical practice are largely ignored and that social exclusion extends far beyond access and admission". Hence, in Badat's (2010) terms, and in my own understanding, the role of the university is to prepare the student to become a responsible and active citizen.

The above arguments have played a very significant role in my approach and understanding of active and inclusive academic citizenship, as well as how I undertake the raising of awareness outside the formal classroom from within the GEU space at UWC. The fact remains that the university as 'public good' cannot extract itself from society and is simply the microcosm of its context. For a long time, this has been the understanding at UWC with

regard to its role as a university with its associated notions and history of ‘People’s University’, ‘People’s Education’, ‘University of the Working Class’ and ‘University of the Intellectual Left’, as discussed in Chapter One. These historical notions associated with UWC’s identity and role invariably influenced and continue to influence conceptualisation of pedagogic programmes at the GEU.

Institutional culture at the university in the immediate post-1994 era moved away from militancy and open defiance for the apartheid state to a culture of compliance with the minimum requirements of the law, as prescribed by the new democratic state. Barnes (2010:213) notes in this regard that “memories are fading, but long-serving academics at UWC, will still occasionally reminisce about the episodes during the 1980s state of emergencies”. I believe that there is still a need for the work of GEU to continue to interpret democracy as something that one can and has to ‘live out’, participate in and pursue as activists, especially given the persistence of past oppressions and marginalisations into the present.

7.3 REFLECTIONS

I have often been asked what the challenges for the programmes were and what could go wrong. What could go wrong when programmes such as these have, to my knowledge, never been launched at other higher education institutions in the country? As earlier indicated, UWC has no formal theatre, fully equipped or otherwise, and no drama department. No other university has a formalised LGTBIQ programme, inclusive of students *and* staff members. These programmes have been experimental and experiential and have functioned as flagships for inclusion as they were. There is no available blueprint or framework to create an education drama programme with volunteers with no drama or theatre background or training. What, then, are the odds to work with volunteers who have never written a script for a theatre performance but who, in the end, produce creative writing that they consistently adapt and evolve to produce a product that finds connection with diverse audiences and individuals across the spectrum of race, class, gender, sex, nationality and religion?

In both these programmes, there is no comparison with which to measure successes or failures. This is exactly why the notion of Gramsci's (2000) "organic intellectual" and Freire's (1970) notion of developing relevant, context-based praxis in "education for liberation" are so important in this kind of educational work. From the beginning, I have argued for an inclusive campus environment. My argument throughout this dissertation is about experimenting with and developing mechanisms and tools to create an institutional culture that is inclusive and that respects the dignity of the most marginalised at any South African university campus. This is *both the choice and opportunity* for developing innovative intellectual methods that are open at the academic institution in this particular transforming moment in the history of institutions in South Africa. I remind, once again, that for practical and theoretical reasons, the most marginalised (black, lesbian, disabled, woman and poor) must be recognised and defined in this moment. In this regard, I have consistently argued that although the language of liberal democracy is inclusive of the rights of "women, gender, race, sexual orientation and disability"²⁶, among others, the reality of social and institutional exclusion remains intact.

Thus, theorising with regard to social exclusion and attempts for inclusion in this dissertation does not originate or emanate from "some abstract exercise carried out in the academy, it arises from our practice and reflection on that practice, from research into that practice" (Taket, Crisp, Nevill, Lamaro & Barber-Godfrey, 2009:188). Minnich (2005:88) explains the dilemma we are faced with at higher education institutions, arguing that by excluding the majority of humankind from education and the making of knowledge, "the dominant few defined themselves not only as the inclusive kind of human but also as the norm and the ideal". Minnich (2005) argues in terms of her focus, the exclusion of women in general, which she observes as "mankind" made less human. Here in South Africa post-1994, and for the sake of my argument, black women, people living with disabilities, homosexual and gender nonconformed people all constitute the group described by Minnich (2005) as "mankind" made less human. This fact has been extensively argued by black intellectual feminist activists and pedagogues such as Mirza (2009:115), who advises that we should ask

26. The 'equality clause' in Section 9 (3) of the South African 1996 Constitution makes provision for non-discrimination against these social groups.

questions about the “shapes of these worlds and how we, as black women, are implicated through our inclusion, exclusion, choice and participation in reproducing it”.

Spivak (1993) states that depending on one’s particular situation or location, an essentialist or underclass positioning is invariably selected when one wants to attract attention to the politics of exclusion. According to Spivak (1993), in the world of the academy, labels and buzz words play important roles. Spivak (1993:54) is referring to the acquisition of cultural identities such as marginalisation and thus cautions for careful thought to be given about the origins of these labels and identities. Hence, statements such as: “Who is determining the center and who becomes the margin are important in determining the economic principle of identification through separation” (Spivak, 1993:54). The philosophical reasoning of both Spivak (1993) and Mirza (2009) has profoundly influenced my identification of the people being marginalised in the dominant academic centre, post-1994 in South Africa.

This dissertation concerns programmes in *one* academic space, programmes *outside the formal classroom*, which are attempting to make marginalised bodies visible and silenced voices audible, and this is happening in spaces hitherto unheard of. This dissertation is also unapologetically framed within black feminist pedagogy for a variety of reasons, but I draw attention to the pedagogy centred on the programmes’ needs. The University of the Western Cape is primarily populated by young, black, women students, and the GEU programmes are, therefore, linked to the emancipatory ideologies and participatory democracy in larger society in favour of this group. As such, the edudrama has been performed for audiences such as the workers’ organisation against exploitative capitalism, ILRIG and the sex workers’ organisation, SWEAT, which advocates for the decriminalisation of sex work. Cultural activism forms an integral part of the education for liberation. Loud Enuf, the LGTBIQ programme, is extensively networked and partnered with similar organisations and individuals.

In this dissertation, I have written about the prevalence of misogyny, discrimination, sexism and homophobia on campus. How do you mobilise people, especially young people, to claim their space, rights and identity, to speak out against the atrocities committed against them in

places of higher learning when these intensely *hierarchical* spaces are so daunting to those with little, if any, positional power? Was I prepared to pay the personal cost and forfeit the possible benefits of remaining silent?

Through these programmes, I have attempted to direct the gaze of ‘being educated’ to the growth of selfhood in students while simultaneously redirecting the gaze towards the inclusion of difference. For me, as the sole original member of the programmes, the age gap between myself and the students has played a major role, despite my conviction that the principles of black feminist theory encompass the possibility of non-hierarchical, intergenerational processes of learning. In recent years (beyond the moments of programming described in chapters four, five and six), I have become more of an advisor and observer in these programmes than an active participant. In the following section, however, as part of concluding this dissertation, I discuss the insecurities involved in attempts to draw on non-hegemonic pedagogic theories in the academy in order to create ‘living democratic processes of learning’.

7.4 SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

There was a certain sense of discomfort before and during the first performance of the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P...Word* on campus. Never before had that ‘vile word of obscenity’ — ‘*poes*’ — been used on a stage before an unknown audience at the university. What would be the reaction, especially since the word is negatively associated with the ‘private parts’ of black women? What would it mean to stand up in public and talk about the black cunt? We did not know what the response would be. My deepest concern was if *we*, *black women*, would reinforce the negative and the obscene associated with ourselves and our mothers since the beginning of European colonialism on our shores. Yet we were consciously aware that it was time to speak the truth, to ‘power’, to unashamedly use the oppressors’ words that have defiled, violated and intimidated us to create a new language and version of ‘*poes*’, a language of *our freedom* with the capacity to tackle sexism and violence against women defiantly. This was an opportunity to ‘start’ creating a new South Africa through concrete activism, relying on trusted black feminist epistemologies.

Our apprehension with regard to launching radical ideas, ideologies and protest marches can well be understood within the context of complacency and compliance that has permeated South African universities in the post-1994 period. With institutions of higher learning beginning to unravel in the context of competing democratic liberatory aims and neoliberal demands, ten years into democracy was the appropriate time to renew interest in issues that directly affect society, that is, *us*.

As the institution struggled for balance between its pre-1994 unashamed commitment to ‘people’s education’ and its post-2000 shift towards managerialism and increasingly conservative notions of what constitutes ‘excellence’ in research and learning, the complex politics within UWC heightened my trepidation. Firstly, there was the fear of becoming the native-informer, that is, I would be involving myself in a process of sharing intimate knowledge entrusted and shared with me in my role as the Gender Equity Officer at an HBI. After all, despite my positions as the director and a permanent staff member of the GEU, I was part of the oppressed and minority group on campus, being as I am an ‘openly out’, black feminist, lesbian woman. Yet, I reminded myself, this was the same ambiguous locality referred to by Housee (2010:425) when she wrote that her students felt that the “shared gendered, cultural, racialized and religious identities between tutor and student are ‘significant signifiers’ that allow for the dialogic to take place”.

My role as teacher to students was implicated in my soul searching and indeed, it was in this role that the understanding of the choices available to me as a teacher became clear. I refer here to particularly intimate and often painful conversations that took place with UWC students struggling with racism, homophobia and/or sexism, conversations undertaken to generate solid understandings of the notions of both ‘oppression’ and ‘resistance’. My complex role at the GEU provided the opportunity for such conversations to take place. However, sharing these conversations in another form, albeit through transformed dramatic modes of representation with reference to the edudrama, raised ethical questions for me. Did I risk betraying the students in their original sharing by transmuting gleanings from conversations with them into a newly formatted knowledge for public sharing, taking it to the ‘very stage’ as it were? I also feared how the unabashedly intent on speaking aloud the obscene words of perpetrators such as ‘*poes*’ and the personal, painful, powerful, even

forceful language chosen by student participants in the edudrama *with my full cooperation and guidance* would be received and understood by the audience. Would speaking the ‘*poes*’ word be experienced as an act of making *spectacles of ourselves* instead of as an act of liberation — ours and theirs? In other words, how sure could *I* be as Director of the GEU and producer of the edudrama that the audience would not hear the language of self-representation and agency by black women sharing their experiences of abuse as a language promoting the very violence against ourselves, thus deepening our subjugation?

Another ever-present dread was that breaking the silence about the endemic violence, sexism, homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia on campus, *our/my* outspokenness and actions would be interpreted as ‘bringing the university into disrepute’. The possibility existed that we, black women, could become more marginalised than before, especially in the context of a university that post-2000 had begun retreating from its very progressive stance against violence against women now that ‘gender’ had been addressed. This is discussed in Chapter One.

Although it was known among the cast members that internalised sexism, racism, ableism and prejudice is present within the individual, as black feminist theory suggests, their collective commitment to address these ideological oppressions meant, in many ways, embarking into the unknown, which also meant distress and trepidation for each of them at an individual level. The participants and I had embarked upon the most challenging learning curve we had ever experienced. This was not ordinary stage fright or performance anxiety but the terror of sharing stories about intimate, personal violence to our bodies that was not disclosed to others, in some instances, not even to family members, close friends, peers or colleagues. The cast members’ stories were about sexual harassment, incest and rape experienced by themselves and/or those closest to them. Their fear was breaking the silence on the one hand, and on the other, the reaction of those listening to them as they told of their experiences and pain and humiliation to claim their voice. “Fear paralyses you or it can give you super-human strength” (Horsman, 2000:196). We chose the latter option, taking courage from each other, and the more we performed, the more our confidence and self-esteem grew. However, the fear never totally disappeared since the audiences and circumstances always varied, and each performance meant opening up anew.

It was not only the edudrama that presented the opportunity to act and speak out against epistemic violence, but the Loud Enuf programme also became a site of struggle for identity and speaking out against societal and institutional violence. During the week of 17 May 2006, the first awareness-raising week against homophobia and prejudice took place on the UWC campus. I had no idea who would be attending the lunchtime talks and the planned protest march and I, therefore, invited close friends, acquaintances and organisations off campus to attend events during the week. When like-minded individuals on the outside heard of the planned focus week, they contacted me, wanting to be part of the programme. Although some students to whom GEU volunteers handed information pamphlets looked at them and threw them away, the lunchtime sessions were packed with staff members, students and individuals from supportive organisations. For me, the fear was a possible backlash at ‘coming out’ as a lesbian activist on campus in my own right and leading a protest march against homophobia across the central quad and through the packed student centre. The trepidation was real because I had interviewed colleagues on campus for another study on sexual harassment in 2004/2005, and I knew how homophobic some of them were (Hames et al., 2005).

My fear was indeed justified because a senior university manager, invited to present a supportive message at an awareness-raising session on the first day, equated homosexuality with bestiality. Certain students took action at this display of homophobia and at the mid-week protest march, carried posters that talked back: “I am gay, not a goat”. This was the first public sign of thoughtful *student* action, beginning with the self without fear of retribution as well as being an act of shaming the homophobic manager. At that moment, the teaching had begun with fighting against and talking back to prejudice and ignorance. The tide could not be turned back. Despite my fear that homophobia existed both silently and vocally at the top levels of the university, leadership remained live!

Hooks (1989:103) observes saliently that while fear of exposure may lead to the suppression of radical ideas and methods, it can also lead to the strengthening of the commitment to take a political stance, which can be rewarding.

7.5 PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

During the research process, my personal growth and understanding of what it means to be human and to treat myself and others with dignity and respect, as well as how to deconstruct or reinterpret the meaning of citizenship, underwent a major shift. Initially, I saw the GEU programmes within the liberal rights paradigm, but my reflective research on the theoretical frameworks underpinning my work led me to recognise that the principles of black feminist theory embed a more personal understanding of humanism, exclusion, stereotyping, dehumanisation, violation and ridicule. I also became increasingly aware of my own memories of being excluded, ridiculed, stereotyped and dehumanised and very often, being made invisible as a black lesbian woman. In retrospect, I realised that the distance to be travelled in efforts to transform the university space into ‘a place for all’ also required major key steps with the self. Through all this work, I realised that I was busy creating a space of safety and the type of ‘intellectual home’ to which I had never been privy as a young student while searching for a place and identity within it.

At this moment of writing, participants in the programmes have taken ownership of the programmes. This approach is of fundamental importance, as noted by Bartolomé (2009:345) who points out that by “acknowledging and using existing student language and knowledge good pedagogical sense is exercised and that it also displays a humanizing experience for students traditionally *dehumanized* and disempowered in the education process”.

The practice of self-reflection and visual documentation was implemented in 2013 when five members of the Loud Enuf programme made short documentaries about themselves as lesbian, gay and gender-fluid students. In her particular documentary, *Free Love*, Bianca van Rooi uses her experiences in both *Reclaiming the P...Word* and Loud Enuf to express her journey of self-liberation. She opens her short film with an extract from another, more recent GEU play, *Words 4 Women*. In this opening scene, the cast is objecting to the labelling and name-calling of women, singing and dancing to the following words: “I want to introduce you to me, the woman I choose to be”. In her documentary narrative, she says:

I am not afraid to perform to and confront audiences who want me to conform in their ideologies or buy into their misconceptions of what a woman is supposed to be. No, I

am a woman, lover of other women. I am a leader of today with promises of a revolutionised tomorrow. (Van Rooi, 2013)

A question, probably posed by a parent:

Is this the best you could do with your life? I did not raise you so that you could do this.

She responds:

Now, these words are not said to you with disappointment or the intention to disrespect you ... I am me, I do not want to fit into your heteronormative box and won't allow you to feed on my emotions and vulnerability. (Van Rooi, 2013)

Van Rooi (2013) displays anger and talks back publicly to her family and society about their expectations and interpretation of who she should be. She takes a stand and does not defend her position as a young, black, lesbian woman but informs them about who she is with no sign of victimhood present (Van Rooi, 2013). In her documentary, she speaks in ways that she would never have been able to do had she not joined the GEU programmes and found, as Walters (1999) mentioned earlier, her "feminist community" (Van Rooi, 2013). This example shows the deep level of feminist political consciousness that has been cultivated and reached over a number of years with the GEU programmes through workshops, rehearsals, meetings, awareness-raising events, and more recently, the documentary film programme.

In my view, this is where the power of consciousness-raising lies in the future. While Van Rooi (2013) does not consciously make it her responsibility to teach others about her sexuality, she exudes the confidence to claim who she is and in so doing, she liberates herself from being defined by others. Lorde (1984) points out the power in this positioning:

Black and Third World people should educate white people about our humanity. Women are expected to educate men. Lesbian and gay men are expected to educate the heterosexual world. The oppressors maintain their position and evade responsibility for their own actions. There is the constant drain of energy, which might be better used in

redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future. (Lorde, 1984:284)

The examples of ‘talking back’ and ‘claiming voice’ throughout this dissertation point to the importance of talking back to a still white dominated, patriarchal, academic South African environment where black women remain objects of opportunistic research and are seldom seen or presented as having agency. Chapters four, five and six provided examples of black feminist pedagogic methods being consciously applied to raise awareness of the self and of others in order to address discrimination, sexism, violence against women and gender identity. These examples all show young women using their ‘voice’ to tell their own stories and to point out who they are for their *own benefit* first and then for others in the process. McArthur (2010:479) offers a reinforcing observation in this regard: “black pedagogy contributes to a less repressive form of education for black students because through emancipatory participation in education and society it enriches the educational experience of all” (McArthur, 2010:479).

The intention of the GEU programmes has always been to educate everyone about the meaning of discrimination, oppression and exclusion of black women, lesbians, gender non-conformed people and people living with disabilities, beginning with the marginalised in the campus community. Only after we have become critically conscious of our own oppressions are we able to raise awareness about these issues on a wider level. This is a, if not the, key defining principle in the value of black feminism. With these programmes, we have found a profoundly creative means that enables us to perform and speak from a position informed not by others’ research but by our own self-representation.

7.6 TALKING BACK, TALKING BLACK WOMEN

The University of the Western Cape remains a mainly black university where black students enrol, as do many other HBIs in the country. The percentage enrolment per headcount for white students remains small. Students living in university residences as well as those on student governance structures are, therefore, predominantly black students. While the

political choice was made that the edudrama, *Reclaiming the P... Word*, remains a programme for black women to speak out about the violence perpetrated against them and their role in taking agency and reclaiming their bodies, the Loud Enuf programme remains open to all students, irrespective of race or gender. Although the GEU has often received criticism that the edudrama programme is open to black women only, white lesbian, gay and non-conforming gender students seldom join Loud Enuf. The racial and class apartheid that dominates the broader lesbian and gay social world in South Africa is mirrored on campus in this regard. In a prior cultural study, it was found that because of the homogeneous learning environments from which many UWC students come, they have grown accustomed to socialising within their ethnic or race groups (Ravjee et al., 2010:131).

In Chapter Two, I reviewed the theory that provided possibilities for education regarding issues such as sexism, homophobia and the meaning of ‘democracy’ for young, black women and men who are consistently being marginalised on many levels within the classroom and in the broader community. Of crucial concern is how to raise consciousness and educate about dignity and humanness that is meaningful for both the oppressed and the oppressor, especially in the case of the university where they share the same classroom, social and sports spaces and often, living environments as well. Therefore, taking pedagogy to where people are located is the central focus of this dissertation. In this regard, I have argued that black feminist theory promoting self-agency notions of ‘voice’, ‘visibility’, and ‘liberation’ offers profoundly creative strategies that I have shown to work effectively in the programmes established at the GEU.

The use of multiple fora to create participative black feminist teaching and learning opportunities has proven significant in the GEU’s awareness-raising aims. Both programmes offer opportunities for taking action against oppression.

Anzaldúa (2009) has the following to say about activism:

Activism is the courage to act consciously on our ideas, to exert power in resistance to ideological pressure ... Empowerment comes from ideas – our revolution is fought with

concepts, not with guns, and is fuelled by vision. By focusing on what we want to happen, we change the present. The healing images and narratives we imagine will eventually materialise. (Anzaldúa, 2009:247)

Collins (2000) contends that:

[B]lack women's intellectual tradition has long taken place in institutional places other than the academy and that in spite of the fact that black women are now able to access and work in the formal academic environment as intellectuals the production of intellectual knowledge continues to take place outside the classroom. Even as researchers the production of knowledge is curtailed by academic protocols, rules, regulations, and these are being determined within the patriarchal paradigm. (Collins, 2000:15-16)

The GEU programmes have had to deal concurrently with the paradox of the *right* to be in the academic space as black women as well as the *privilege* to be there in a country where millions of young, black women are denied access to the academy. I refer to Badat's (2010) earlier argument that the academic space by virtue of its epistemological and ontological issues is exclusionary and privileged. I am, therefore, also arguing that for black women, access to the South African academy can never be equal or equitable, irrespective of class. This message has come across very clearly during workshop sessions in both programmes.

At workshops, students have reflected on their ambiguous positioning within their own communities and schools, especially with regard to previous Model C schools. At another 2011 production by the GEU, *Khulelekani Emakhaya (Freedom in the Home)*, a student, Sinethemba Chole, wrote a piece called 'Dilemma', which explores the ambiguity of being born Xhosa and taught in English at a Model C school (Chole, 2011). I present below a large section verbatim because she expresses how many students experience the tension between their spoken languages and the language used to teach:

It has always been a struggle for me to fit into any conversation — be it in English or Xhosa. The English said I lacked their accent and the Xhosa said I lacked their

grammar. I was left in the middle, left wondering why language was such an issue for me. I practised all my traditional Xhosa rituals and ceremonies, but even after that, I was never convinced that I was Xhosa enough (whatever that meant). It did not seem enough for them. I went to white schools, but that still did not do it for them. I started growing an Afro thinking maybe that would make me black enough; I thought maybe that would make them respect me for not knowing my language ... isiXhosa. Its clicks make me think of drum beats, its rhythm makes me think of a thousand rivers meeting in the ocean. When I speak Xhosa, I feel a sense of belonging; a sense of warmth and tranquillity ... but does language defines me who I am? Am I less black if I fail to express myself in the beautiful language of my ancestors? All my life I have been taught to dream and think in English and speak *that* language, as *they* refer to it.

‘Little black girl’ they called me, I was never enough for anyone.

But I have now made a decision to create my own language. It would be very simple and would require no grammar, accents nor rituals or ceremonies. It would be used as a tool to unite all races, genders, sexualities and classes of people. (Chole, 2011)

Chole (2011), in fact, gives expression to what many other marginalised, racialised groups are experiencing all over the globe, as has been extensively described by Anzaldúa (1983:

White eyes do not want to know us; they do not bother to learn our language, the language which reflects us, our culture, and our spirit. The schools we attended or didn’t attend did not give us the skills for writing nor the confidence that we were correct in using our class and ethnic languages. And though now I write my poems in Spanish as well as English I feel the rip-off of my native tongue. (Anzaldúa, 1983: 165-166)

This argument is difficult to express in words because sexism, racism and homophobia are pervasive on South African campuses and since the menial work on campuses is being performed by black women, there can be no equitable access to the academy, let alone talk about it. The percentage of black woman academics, administrators and students presently on

South African campuses by no means represents a critical mass but by default, they form part of the academic elite. Many of the participants in the programmes are first-generation university students, and many of them depend on part-time jobs or study loans to support themselves financially.

Chapters four and six interrogated some of the ‘silences’ within the UWC academy that were broken through word and action in the GEU programmes. However, the silences are meaningful too and say much if one listens closely. Kadi (2003:539-540) comments in this respect: “If you want to hear me you will listen to my silences as well as my words”. She writes that “speech and silence is [*sic*] both worthy of intense political analysis” (Kadi, 2003:539-540). Housee (2010:421) writes in this regard that silence can be either a sign of oppression or an indication of resistance.

The methodological approach in the edudrama of the black woman speaking out to reclaim her body makes the audience inherently complicit in her action. The silent placard protest of Loud Enuf resists in a different way; the act of resistance takes place during the day with students walking across campus with placards that affirm sexual orientation and claim social rights. Unlike the edudrama, the spectator in this instance is out there in the open rather than being in the enclosed theatre space by choice. The campus spectator is not compelled to watch but for the marcher, the resistance will still occur regardless of the choice the spectator makes. The act of being lesbian or gay among people who choose to see or not emphasises the right to be present in the space.

Many of the above issues regarding exclusion and the aim of feminist effort were discussed during workshops for the edudrama, and it is in this context that Collins’s (2000:160) argument resonates, namely: “[b]lack women academics struggle to find ways to do intellectual work that challenges injustice”. It is in this regard that I found value in the use of black feminist theatre activism and protest marches against homophobia on campus as feminist tools to realise and give concrete articulation to my black feminist intellectual activist work.

Any act of cultural defiance or ideological dependence — whether through song, dance, our use of language, the way we style our hair, our dress, our view of the world, a painting or a poem — testifies to our existence outside the roles in which society has cast us. (Bryan, Dadzie & Scafe, 1987:49)

7.7 FINAL WORDS

Traditionally, theses and dissertations suggest recommendations for new research or policy directions, but mine is not that kind of dissertation. I offer reflections on what seem to me to be the hardest but also the most rewarding path pursued in the two programmes. The main effect of the work has been that it is not yoked to the system of accreditation and reward, which defines the worth and legitimacy of most educational projects in universities and which, therefore, dilutes their subversive potential. In this system, students acquire credits for having pursued certain courses, and they are ensured to ‘get through the system’. In pursuing the programmes at the GEU, the student volunteers step outside this cycle and accept the value of learning for quite another purpose, the purpose of critical education to become active citizens. The same applies to me as educator.

My intellectual feminist work takes place in the margins and is often regarded as not essential to the academic project. But my intellectual activism has transpired because there are very few classroom spaces in which students can critically engage as black students, as black women students, as homosexual students, as students living with disabilities or as gender non-conforming students with their own lived experiences and perspectives. And when they do, their experiences are converted into supervised, academic research projects and spectacles. Sometimes students merely want ‘to be’, and they need a home where others are ‘just like them’. I believe that I have begun to create these spaces, both physically and metaphorically, in an academic world that can be very unwelcoming. For me, this research project is as much the students’ journey of reflection as mine.

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APPENDIX 1

THE SCRIPT

RECLAIMING THE P...WORD

2010

Edudrama Production by the Gender Equity Unit

University of the Western Cape

Bellville

OPENING

(A woman sits on stage with a handbag and shopping bag. The stage light focuses on the woman.

The pianist is playing soft background music.

A backstage voice asks the audience to please switch off their cell phones.

A voice introduces the topic of masturbation.)

voice:

It is said that 95% of men and 80% of women masturbate.

If so many people masturbate, then why are we ashamed of it?

Masturbation is a normal sexual activity.

The majority of women and men practise it.

It is a choice that each person makes to share this information or not. I know of someone who just loves to masturbate ...

SCENE 1

LOVE YOUR BODY - LOVE YOURSELF

(Written by Mary Hames)

Performer 1:

The history of South African women's struggles can be traced back to the second decade of the last century. In 1913, women organised in the Free State and marched to the municipal offices and refused to carry any passes. These struggles continued throughout the first half of the century. In 2006, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Women's March to Pretoria when 20 000 women from all walks and parts of South Africa marched to the Union Buildings and dumped their passes in the office of the Prime Minister. They sang "*Strijdom, you've struck the women, you struck the rock!*" He, of course, took flight and was nowhere to be seen. Talking of women power! So anybody who claims that women have no power are sorely mistaken. But I do not want to take you on a historical journey — I want to show you that you possess power and agency.

Please take out the little mirror that we've handed you. Tonight you are going to use it. Look at yourself in the mirror and say after me:

"I am beautiful" AND "I love myself" AND "I will treat myself with the dignity and respect that I deserve."

(Wait for audience to repeat each sentence)

Now open your legs and lower the mirror until you can see between your legs. Locate one of the most important parts of your body.

(Look at the audience and point to someone that looks uncertain)

No, no, you over there — that's your navel — hold the mirror a little lower. OK, there you are. Take a good look — beautiful isn't it? My pubic hair is a little grey, so I have to touch it up. What colour shall I use — brown, black, touch of blonde or red? I think I still have a little bit of the dye I used the last time in my bag — let me have a look.

(Scratch in the bag. Take out items, look at each and comment. A pad, tampon, toilet paper, lipstick — whatever is in the bag)

The other day, I went shopping. I LOVE shopping! And GIRL, did I go wild. Let me show you what I've got for myself.

(Talk about the shopping bag, lifting it up and comment on its colour and texture. Take out the sex toys and other items and comment on the package, the use, etc.)

But you don't have to spend a fortune on gifts for yourself. Let us do some hand and finger exercises. Stretch out your arm, spread your fingers, make a fist, then open it. Are your fingers loose and agile? This is the equipment you carry with you all the time, no batteries or charger needed. I often use some water-based lubricant as it's harder for me to get really wet. I dim the lights and slip a CD — good old Nina Simone — in the CD player, and then I start to stroke myself — *until ... until ... I, my poes, my cunt scream in all eleven official languages: **NKOSI SIKILELE AFRIKA!***

(Say last line very fast).

(Performer holds pose and exists stage after lights have dimmed)

SCENE 2

Frightening Facts and Figures

(Compiled by Mary Hames)

Performer 2:

Between April 2005 and March 2006, 54 926 rapes and attempted rapes and 9 805 and 9 805 indecent assaults were reported to the South African Police Services. The South African Law Commission found that only 5% of adult rapes and 9% of cases involving children end in conviction.

However, the rape of women and children started centuries ago ...

One hundred and forty seven women are raped on a daily basis in South Africa.

It is a fact that women born in South Africa have a greater chance of being raped than learning to read.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world.

Rape appears to be the only crime where the offence and sexual history of the victim are judged and not that of the rapist.

Only 1 in every 20 rapes is reported to the police.

As many as five women are estimated to be killed by their intimate partner every week.

Once a rape survivor gains access to the criminal justice system, there is no guarantee that her case will be properly investigated or prosecuted.

Rape clinics are reporting a dramatic rise in cases, including gang rapes. Here are the rape statistics in the Cape Peninsula as of September 2006:

Nyanga	325
Khayelitsha	280
Harare	220
Mitchells Plain	205

Gugulethu	195
Kraaifontein	190
Delft	187
Lingulethu West	123
Strand	110
Bishop Lavis	86

(Performer holds pose, walks across stage and exits strongly)

ALTERNATIVE SCENE 2

Performer 2:

To be born in a black woman's body in this country comes with certain risks, and this is clear from the following 2007 media reports:

Eleven-year-old Annestacia Wiese's body was found in the ceiling of her mother's home in Mitchells Plain. She was killed by her mother's lover, a previously convicted killer of young girls.

In April, 16-year-old Madoe Mafubedu, who was living openly as a proud lesbian, was raped and repeatedly stabbed until she died.

On June 23, the body of six-year-old Mikayla Roussouw was found in a box underneath her neighbour's bed in Swellendam.

On 2 July, the body of Sonja Brown was discovered in a sewerage drain near her home in Rawsonville.

The media informs us that 105 children were killed in the Western Cape between January and August 2007, and only 12 of them were killed by strangers.

In June 2007, Simagele Nhlapo, a member of a support group for Women Living with HIV run by Positive Women's Network, was found raped and killed. Her two-year-old, baby girl was also raped and killed, and both her tiny legs were broken.

On Sunday, 8 July 2007, Sizakele Sigasa and her friend Salome Moosa were brutally raped and killed in Meadowlands, Soweto. Sizakele was found with her hands tied with her underpants and her ankles tied together with her shoelaces — she had three bullet holes in her collarbone. She worked for Positive Women's Network.

And let us remember Zoliswa Nkonyana from Khayelitsha who was murdered in 2006 because she was a lesbian.

In August 2008, National Women's month, 21-year-old Lithemba Jama was killed by her boyfriend in her residence room at the University of the Western Cape. She was stabbed 26 times.

**WE LIGHT THIS CANDLE TO TONIGHT TO REMIND OURSELVES TO FIGHT
AGAINST THE VIOLENCE, RAPES AND KILLINGS**

LET US STOP THIS WAR AGAINST OUR BODIES!!!

SCENE 3

POWER IN YOUR PANTS

(Written by Carmen Hartzberg: Adapted by Esley Philander)

Performer 3:

What is a vagina? When I was a little girl, I was told, “Love it but don't touch it.”

But ... why? I was confused. My mother never spoke about it except to say, “Love it but don't let anyone including yourself touch it.”

And the hair grew. And the blood flowed. And it developed a scent of its own; I began to understand it was the dirty place. Love it but don't touch it.

But my poes is itching for attention. It has a life of its own, you know.

And I can't understand why people get so angry when they speak about it: "Jou poes man."
Ja, and I wish someone would tell me something about it.

But these sensations won't stop. I am yearning for I don't know what. And then this guy, he offered to help me out. And I feel this incredible sense of ... disappointment.

So I decided to take matters in my own hand. And I felt like a pervert.

"Love it but don't fucking touch it! Are you jars?"

I know now that the loving is all in the touching. A lesson not learnt from one big moment. It took many different moments of: He touching me. Me touching me. She touching me. Saying no. Screaming yes. Demanding. Pleading. Begging. Asking. Not stopping. Fucking. Licking. Kissing. Slowing down. Making love. Speeding up ... Letting go ...

... and finally ... I came to understand the power of my poes.

(Performer holds pose and exists stage)

SCENE 4

LEGENDS OF THE POES

(Written by Mary Hames)

Performer 4:

And then the wind calls: *Krotoa, Krotoa, Krotoa ...*

"My name is Krotoa and you can hear my soul calling in the still of the night or howling when the South East blows

I was a child playing on the beach, hopping, skipping and digging for seafood

When the big boats came

I could speak many languages like Portuguese and Dutch but my clicking mother tongue was beautiful

Then they took away my language

Then they took away my name and called me Eve

I was still so young 10, 11 or maybe 12

Then they took my childhood and innocence away
Then they took my children away
Then they took my freedom away and banished me to Robben Island
I died young”

And then the wind howls: *Sara, Sarah, Saartjie ...*

“My name is Sara Baartman and you can hear my soul calling in the still of the night or
howling when the South East blows
They kidnapped me and paraded me in a cage on the British and European continents as a sex
freak
They called me the Hottentot Venus
Staring and poking at my genitals
They took away my dignity, my humanity, my spirit
And when I died young
Of loneliness and heartache in a foreign country
They cut out my vagina and brain and pickled them
They said for scientific reasons
Thanks Diana Ferris for bringing my body home after 200 years”

And this winter the South Easter continues to scream:
Of the rapes, the violence against women, the femicide of today
And the leaves fall
And the rain pours
And the trunks sway and break like the broken bodies of these women
The list of women’s names gets longer ...
Now the wind howls my name, your name.

(Cast members say their names as performer(s) exit stage)

SCENE 5

MENSTRUATION MY SALVATION

(Written by Juliana Davids)

Performer 5:

The first 13 years of my life was a battle for my sex organ

I did not have a vagina

Or did I?

All I can remember was, that it was present but absent.

There was limited access to the detainee

Had visits now and then.

My stepdad kept it in confinement

He had full access to the cell

Did with it what he liked

I tried everything in fact screaming only made it worse

With the beatings, the stuffing of my mouth, the threats.

My last resort, was to cut it out

Kill it!

If I can't have it

He can't

Then I woke up

Did I do it?

Did I cut it out?

It can't be.

Then it hit me

I got my period

My shero in red armor came and saved me.

After winning so many battles

I have finally won the war.

Now I can rebuild my battlefield

Set free my dove

And make ready for peace.

(Performer holds pose and exits stage slowly)

SCENE 6

AFTERTASTE

(Written by Wahseema Roberts)

Performer 6:

My vagina is musical. It is my Pandora's box. I hide it for special occasions. It plays melodies that make even the black sparrow sing.

You were the black sparrow. Pressing your beak into my secret hide out, consuming the seeds of life I bore within me so you could live. You never flew away.

I made my vagina my own Robben Island recently. A little paradise that the ocean leads you to. A private heritage site in the middle of a passionate moment. The history of Robben Island

...

The history of that island disturbs me. You made me a prisoner, a hater of my own paradise. You opened my legs, silenced me with a stare and just like that, you took my purity.

I used to imagine what was inside there: thousands of tongues, getting a lekker high from eating chocolates (I know now that it's called a clitoris). And every time my lover touches it, my vagina tastes it — Ferrero Rocher. I love chocolate.

Sometimes I wanna spit it out. Like the time I was seven and you bought me chocolates, and you forced your tongue down my throat, touching me inside my chocolate eating machine, which was then a blood-spitting vagina. I hate chocolate.

I love it when my lover takes his time. Gently he blows into my vagina, unfolding multiple layers of velvet in there, looking into the binoculars of my intimate self. He looks, touches gently, kisses: he respects.

I hate when you forcefully lifted my dresses, looking into the binocular of the beast my vagina come to represent. Ashamed. You stared at it, grabbed, bit: did not respect. My vagina — A beast of burden. You are free ‘cause they say you were ‘mad’. You are the victim. **I do not hate you.** But I remember. I am the beast. I am a statistic. Here are my statistics:

Your fingers in my five-year-old Pandora’s box: now the music has stopped.

Your body on my seven-year-old Robben Island: now the Atlantic is dry.

Your tongue tasting the chocolate I just had in my mouth: you extracted my sweet tooth.

Sometimes my vagina wants to vomit when it thinks about sex. It still has the nauseating aftertaste of sexual molestation.

Interlude with the song of Johanna Booyesen, “I am a Woman”.

SCENE 7

“I HATE BOYS, WHY MUST I HAVE A VAGINA?”

(Written by Carmen Hartzenberg)

Performer 7:

Being young and innocent, there was absolutely no way that I could have known the answer to this question. Way back then, everything was so simple and easy to understand. There were no probing questions trying to analyse my body, my gender or my feelings. I can still remember my first encounter with Shaun. **Oh**, it left me feeling **light headed ... dizzy ... happy** — I *really* thought **he** was the one for **me**! When we had playtime together ... the **world** stop moving. There was this wonderful warm feeling, butterflies in my tummy and the colour purple in my head — as Barney the dinosaur sang, *“I love you, I love you, I love you” (little girl sing-song voice)*... **Perfect!** But then again I was six years old. Back then, a vagina was something between reality and fantasy. I did not have a clue what it was. I was also constantly reminded that my vagina was ugly and was, therefore, indoctrinated to believe that nothing good was **down there**.

Then in my early teens my pubic hair appeared — I must have been around 11, 12 or 13. I was scared to remove it, to embrace my vagina and could not understand its intriguing ability to grasp unwanted attention. It was better to forget that ugly thing between my legs. Worst still — the **RED** flag went up every month. **RED** to warn me to take note, **RED** to send out an alarm signal, **RED** because who can ignore the danger it bestows? Yes, the red flag, the pubic hair caught both my attention as well as my mother's. She would constantly warn: *“Now you must really keep your legs closed”* or, *“Be sure you maintain your hygiene, my girl, by keeping your vagina hair free.”*

I could never understand why my ugly place should be exposed, why it should be bare. And why is there hair if it's supposed to be bare? In my opinion, there is hair because it is a form of protection, hiding the it away from prying eyes, allowing it to live and breathe in solitude, remaining happy and serene without me or anybody else looking at it. But ... Some people enjoyed the look, feel and touch of it — this ugly bit of me. Is it really so intriguing, thrilling and exciting? I need to get in touch and find out why it appears so fascinating to others. What is the reason that so many love it **down there**?

Then I met this guy and for the first time, I felt what being a woman was all about. You see, Frank didn't like hair at all! So what did I do? *I ... SHAVED ...* for ... **HIM! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT!** I stripped myself of what I thought was my protective layer. I felt that I needed to impress him in order for him to like me. So I took away the part of me that made me feel whole. I shaved ... I felt so broken inside, like an empty vessel. Like killing myself, destroying my own being.

After Frank, there was Dave, then Siphon, then Bongani, then Rashaad, then ... I lost count because the list just went on and on ... I was looking for someone to fill my empty vessel, to help me replace my protective layer. I was looking for someone to make me feel loved again, to make me feel worth something. To make my vagina, its hair and all, feel loved.

But then I got to the point where I just felt — you know what? **FUCK IT!** Why do I have to impress someone else in order for me to feel more like a woman? **That's bullshit!** I wasted so much of my time wanting to be loved, so much time looking that I forgot I was carrying the answer with me all this time. How could I want respect when I didn't respect myself

enough to say, **NO, I'm not going to change for you!** How could I want love when I didn't love myself enough to say, **NO, I refuse to shave**, to make it bare for you. What I should have said was: **"Why don't you get yourself a poes and shave it. Then tell me how it feels! If you don't like what you see down there, you can hit the fucking road Frank, Dave, Siphon or whatever your name is! Because you see — me, I love my vagina, its folds and its hair! THIS IS A LIBERATED POES!!!"**

SCENE 8

VAGINA DIALOGUE

(By Desiree Lewis)

Could be one speaker taking two parts with alter ego, or two speakers.

Performer 8: (speaking plaintively and holding up 'intimate' body spray and a box of panty liners)

I reeaally don't know which one to use, I reeeeaally need to look after my ... privates ... I really want the confidence to play tennis, bend over in public, change at the gym ... without feeling anxious or embarrassed.

Performer 9 or alter ego: (speaking very assertively)

I AM GATVOL! ... My vagina is gatvol. Gatvol ... even though that's an unfortunate word choice here. Thank God I grew up with my mother telling me I had a honeypot ... a honeypot mind you. Then I went to school, learnt it was called doos, cunt, poes ... saw it insulted on toilet doors, station walls ... schoolboys' desks ... So now I want my honeypot back ... she's pissed off ...

Performer 8:

God, I really have to go to my gynae again ... I usually go every sixth month. It's been a whole year. I need him to tell me my ... privates ... all that business down below ... that everything's okay.

Performer 9:

My honeypot has had it with things shoved up inside ... Tampons, metallic pipes, sprays that fuck up the ozone layer. If they fuck up the ozone layer, imagine what's happening to me! Me and my honeypot are saying ... no more. Enough is enough!

Performer 8:

One thing that really bugs me is the smell ... I really don't want the smell. I read the ads and try to figure out what's best ... Flowers? Too floral. Sensuous? Too sensual. Exotic? Too Eastern. Frivolous? Too flighty. Flamboyant? Too loud. I'm still trying ... really. I'm looking for the ideal spray. I check out all the ads you know. On TV and *Cosmo*, *Fairlady*, *Truelove*, *Femina* ...

Performer 9:

... Bottom line is there's no way anybody can make what naturally smells one way smell another. You can pour as much floral, sensual, exotic, whatever in there as you like, spend a fortune on sprays, change your panties five times a day, wear panty liners day and night ... that smell is not going anywhere! And the great thing is ... I like it. Girl, when I smell me I *know* I'm me.

Performer 8:

... Really, really worried about going to my gynae. He always tells me what to do, how to look after ... well you know ... everything down that's down below ... Tells me what's going on down there. God, *I'm* not going to look! Think I'll just take the plunge and make an appointment. I really, really need him to tell me, you know. Really concerned about what's happening in here ... Really ... you know ... most times my body just scares the shit out of me ... don't know what's happening when ... Really need Dr Markowitz to check me out.

Performer 9:

And why, why, why, is that almost all these gynaes in Cape Town are men? And what's worse, white men. I hate those exams and the people who do them. What's in it for them? Damn sadism, that's what. Frustrates men who want to control women by strapping them to beds and pretending it's science. No more, my sister! If I ever get a scare, I'm going to find a

woman gynaecologist, a black woman gynaecologist. Still won't like it, but at least I'll feel it's somebody with a body like mine. Someone who knows what it means to have a black woman's body in a white male world.

Performer 8:

The main thing is I really feel I need to have myself sorted out for my husband. I know that he can't stand it when anything's wrong. Doesn't sleep with me when I have my period. But I wouldn't want to anyway ... Always bath for one whole hour before sex. Feel I have to be really clean and nice for him, you know. As for oral sex ... well I really, really just don't see *how* women can have it done to them. It's okay for us to do it for them, of course ... men's bodies are different. But the idea of him doing it to me ... Oh my Gooooood! Too disgusting!

Performer 9:

My vagina ... my honeypot ... has reached a stage where she's into pure, pristine, pussylike pleasure. Pleasure, my sisters. My pussy, my cunt, my poes, my doos, wants to feel it all, have it all. Oral sex on demand ... that's her new slogan. Tired of the verbal garbage, tired of the toxic waste, tired of the frozen steel. And God help me ... why, why, why the hell are all the products we're supposed to use so fucking phallic! Tampons, body sprays, forceps? What's really going on here girlfriend???

Performer 8:

Well, all I can say I'm really, really worried ... really need to sort a lotta things out with my ... privates ... really need someone to look for me ... tell me what to do ... what to use ... how to fix things up down below ...

Performer 9:

All I can say is my vagina's pissed off. Outraged ... Gatvol! But also demanding. Girlfriend ... my honeypot wants sex, good sex, gentle touches that make my entire body tingle ... wild embraces that envelop me in ecstasy, seductive words that make me scream with joy, passionate strokes that take me places I don't ever want to come back from ...

Girlfriend ... my honeypot's decided to stop listening ... she's making demands!

SCENE 9

See in Me

(Written by Mavis Maki Mokone, Soweto)

Performer 10:

See in me the black woman who can make a change
Not the woman who causes trouble
See in me the positive mind I have
Not negative mind you think I have
See in me the lesbian woman, feminist, activist
Not the wanna be “man” type
See in me the woman who loves women
Not the evil of this country
See in me the leader of tomorrow
See in me the power I have by only speaking my mind
About the hate-crimes, torture, rape and murders of lesbians
See in me the actions I have done and yet to do
See me as a woman
See me as a lesbian and proud one at that

(Performer leaves stage)

SCENE 10

TAXI QUEEN

(Written by Wahseema Roberts)

Performer 11:

It starts with the hooter ...

Toet, toet, toet. I hear it calling my royal pussy like the trumpet that blows for the queen.
Toet, toet, toet.

The gaatjie (guardjie) screams at me in the crowd, Athlone-Mowbray-Cape Town. Wouldn't he just love to take my toet, toet, toet for a ride in his VW Kombi. **Asshole.** Putting **19** people in a **14** seater taxi that has no air conditioning in rush hour *nogal*, when everyone stink like dry sweat and tin-fish. He probably thinks I can handle the smell 'cause I mos have a vagina that smell like that. Anyway (*sigh*), so he puts me between the driver and the passenger who has the comfort of sticking his face out of the window to get fresh air. The overfed driver can't even breathe 'cause his belly is resting on his lap. While the man next to me is sitting so close that he can take a look at my cleavage under the white T-shirt I am wearing. Two windows are open, the passenger's next to me and the old woman's on the back seat ... *and let me tell you — it stinks like shit!!!*

Step 2: We're in the taxi and the driver pulls away ... I feel it — the sound system blowing my ears and boxing my toet. It's playing beats my toet can't dance to. This royal pussy likes Barry White and slow, soft, seductive beats. **Not “Open up, it's the police!” knocking music!** *Fuck it — I'm not a criminal.*

Step 3: Now we begin to drive really fast, and I have the gear lever between my legs 'cause it's the only way I could actually fit my voluptuous ass into that small piece of uncomfortable tin of a taxi. The driver changes the gears ... *1st gear — away, 2nd gear in my toet, 3rd gear — away, 4th gear in my toet, the driver's penis screaming: up-up-and-away.* Oh God ... I hate this simulated sex bullshit! So the gaatjie still wants my money, like I'm paying him a service charge for torture of the toet (VAT incl.). If that's not enough, he calls me 'mummy girl'— like I could be either of the two. He gives my change, holding onto my hand soooo seductively. Meanwhile ... *his hands are like crocodile fucking Dundee that scratched in a pants full of old, hard, dry semen.*

Step 4: My bus stop's coming up. Fina-fuckinly! So I tell the driver to stop 'cause I've reached my palace. He says, “Ok beautiful, when then?” When then what? When then can I slap you through the face with my stiletto? Huh huh? Taxi stops. Passenger next to me gets out, I get out, my pants lowers just beneath my crack. The driver is staring and wants to eat. I'm out of his kingdom and I am safe, so just before he drives away, I say to him: “Asshole, you can never have a piece of my royal toet, and this may be your kingdom, but I am in

control of my body, and I'd rather pay than give you a free ride in my toet palace ... **I AM MY OWN TAXI QUEEN.**"

SCENE 11

MY MISUNDERSTOOD, OVER-USED, UNDEFINED

POES

(Written by Dawn Bosman)

Performer 12:

JOU MA SE POES!!! (*Loud*)

Does it grab your attention?

Or are you one of those that pretend that you did not hear it.

JOU MA SE POES! (YOUR MOTHERS CUNT).

On the street in the township. Oh, and let's not forget the taxi.

(At this point have a person shouting)

Bellville, Parow, Kaap!

Hallo girl ga jy saam. What? Are coming? No? Jou Poes!

Women, men, children, some can't even speak yet. They all use it. You're Poes.

You are a Poes. You look like a Poes. You act like a Poes.

I mean really, come on, listen to it, Poes.

What does it mean?

I looked it up in the dictionary — being the diligent student that I am.

I did not find it in the Oxford, the Collins or the Webster.

But I found it in the HAT — the Afrikaanse Explanatory Dictionary.

Right before the word poephol — which means anus.

And after the word poespas — which means a strange mixture.

Now, according to the HAT

POES means a woman's shy part.

Now think about it people — a woman's shy part on the street,

Worst of all in the taxis.

And let us not stop there ...

One of the UWC managers said, when told about the name of this production, “So I guess the P is not for poetry”.

And why not Poes poetry? Seeing as I am taking it back, reclaiming it,
I find it utterly PPPronounceable, POES (*said sensuously in a soft tone*)
Come on, work with me.

(Engage the audience here)

POWERFUL, Palace, Pit, Paradisical, Poes (*all the p's will be said in a soft but explosive way*)

Is this not Poetically Poesible?

Provocative, playful, pleasurable Poes.

Perky, perfect, proactive Poes.

Punchy, perceptive, poetic Poes.

Does this not just do it for you?

And do you have a Poes? I know I do.

And on that note, People, I rest my poetically corrected Poes.

SCENE 12

Premium Poes

(Written by Roché Kester)

Give it up? What do you mean give it up?

Give her up just like that? Disregard her as if she deserves no respect?

Just to inform you, the only giving up will occur
when I'm secure that the language is pure,
and even more so that every part of me is sure.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not prissy or pompous,
but my pussy needs fluent talk.

Passionate, poetic, articulate conversation.

Soulful words, powerful chatter,

an art of rhetoric consisting of intellect and mutual respect
because these lips don't speak to just anyone.

These lips are not to be shouted or imposed upon,
they come with assurance you know
natural lubricant, a poised predicament, a tight little slit.

I'm talking about premium poes,
top of the range not to be exchanged
with vulgar language to satisfy only him and his thing.

No, no profanities are allowed when speaking to her
no jabbing conversation that is short-lived and lacking in content.
The words have to be well spent, eloquent, well expressed.

Now I know and I've heard that the initial conversation is not that enticing,
not even inviting.

Awkward, unstable even a bit painful.

But I'd choose a lover who would understand,
he'd approach me with a murmur, a whisper
listening to the quivers of my body's rhythms.

His voice would be sensual and smooth,
no babbling or sentence that are misconstrued.

He'd prove himself a cunning linguist
await my call, my indication
that I am pleased with his stimulation.

Yes, it may be a mindful fantasy,
but the reality is I've got standards
this cutchie has standards and this is our speech...

No I am not full of shit just because I won't give it up
and no I am not a self-righteous bitch who thinks purity
gives moral security
and no I am not going to die with my virginity.

And frankly I don't give a damn
if you call me a hag and say that I can't get a man.

It's a choice ... a choice of quality,
because not any Tom, DICK or Harry
is going to infiltrate the sanctity of my punani.
So if you feel that you have to do too much talking to get to her
get to walking sir,
because her and I are fine without you.

LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

(Sivuyiswe Veronica Wonci)

I have sucked the rivers of the world more like the crocodiles of the drought.
I have dug the mines more like the men trying to make ends meet.
When I crossed the mountains I felt loosened and empty like a man that has been robbed off
his income by the hookers.

Your eyes refused to glance at the pimples of my pain.
Your pride refused to open up the door when I was soaking in the rain.

Your ignorance pushed me away not just away but it flashed me down the drain.
Your words made me to reap rotten grain, rotten grain which painted the mansion of my hope
with colours of stigma.

I have bled from the inside until the components of my blood burst.
I bleed components of sickness.
I bleed components of vulnerability.
I bleed components of fear.
I watched my blood filling up the rivers.
Meanwhile your teeth shines out more like the snow at the top of the mountains.
Meanwhile I was cutting my veins with sharp blade of hatred.

Dancing to the igniting stages of my yesterday burnt my feet
But the wounds which were attached to my feet left stones of courage.
The stones which were thrown in my naked skeleton broke my bones
But my spirit was healed. Spirit healed to pick up the pieces of my bones in building back my
skeleton attaching it to the muscles of courage.
Secreting the fluids of pain was like accepting a bullet in my head.
In secreting the fluids of pain I was giving birth to love and acceptance.
In secreting the fluids of pain I was giving birth to love and acceptance.

Love has opened my mind up until I saw the cells which have composed my brain.
Then I was impregnated by courage and I gave birth to son acceptance.
Acceptance opened my wings and I flew like an eagle in search of its prey.
A seed grew in the uterus of the bride and the star was born.
Indeed the star shone for love and acceptance.
The star shone for love and acceptance.

In the ocean of love and acceptance I have found my freedom.
In the mountains of love and acceptance I have found my purpose.
In the valleys of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my goals.
In the fields of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my dreams.
In the stones of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my wealth.
In your heart of love and acceptance.

In your heart of love and acceptance I could find a reason to live.
In your heart of love and acceptance I could find a cure for AIDS.

LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Ndiyifunxil' imifula ndixel' okrebe bembalela.
Ndiyombile imigodi ndixel' amadoda ezama isonka sokuphila.
Ndathi xa ndiqabel' iintaba ndasuka ndalilize ndaxel' indoda etyelwe imali ngamankazana.

Your eyes refused to glance at the pimples of my pain.
Your pride refused to open up the door when I was soaking in the rain.
Your ignorance pushed me away not just away but it flashed me down the drain.
Your words made me to reap rotten grain.
Rotten grain which painted the mansion of my hope with colours of stigma.

Ndophele ngaphakathi amahlwili am ad' agqabhuka.
Ndatsho ndakhupha izixwexwe zengulo.
Ndatsho ndakhupha izixwewe zongxunguphalo.
Ndatsho ndakhupha izixwexwe zoloyiko.
Ndalibukela igazi lam ligcwalisa imifula.
Ngeloxeshe amazinyo wakho eqhakrazile exel' ikhephu ezintabeni.
Ngeloxesha imisipha yam ndiyiqhawula ngenzondo.

Dancing to the igniting stages of my yesterday burnt my feet
But the wounds which were attached to my feet left stones of courage.
The stones which were thrown in my naked skeleton broke my bones
But my spirit was healed.
Spirit healed to pick up the pieces of my bones in building back my skeleton attaching it to
the muscles of my courage.
Secreting the fluids of pain was like accepting a bullet in my head.
In secreting the fluids of pain I was giving back to love and acceptance.
In secreting the fluids of pain I was giving birth to love and acceptance.

Lundivule ingqondo ndatsho ndabubona ubuchopo.

Ndatsho ndakhulelwa bubugorha ndazala unyana olulwamkelo.

Unyana undivul' impiko ndatso ndabhabha ndixel' ukhetshe ezingela amantshontsho.

Yahluma imbewu esibelekweni somtshakazi.

Yazalwa inkwenkwezi yakhanyisela uthando no lakhanyisela uthando no lwamkelo.

In the ocean of love and acceptance I have found my freedom.

In the mountains of love and acceptance I have found my purpose.

In the valleys of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my goals.

In the fields of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my dreams.

In the stones of love and acceptance I have found the pieces of my wealth.

In your heart of love and acceptance.

In your heart of love and acceptance I could find a reason to live.

In your heart of love and acceptance I could find a cure for AIDS.

From the cores of my heart: Sivuyisiwe Veronica a.k.a Ntombi Wonci.

PLEASE DO NOT COPY WITHOUT PERMISSION

CURTAIN CALL

APPENDIX TWO

PHOTOGRAPHS

CHAPTER ONE



Statue of a woman domestic worker at her son's graduation.

Statue by David Hlongwane

(Source: Tremain Bam)

CHAPTER FOUR: FEMINIST THEATRE



Body Mapping

CHAPTER FOUR: FEMINIST THEATRE

Body Mapping



In 2006, a group of women students and staff at the University of the Western Cape came together to explore new ways of challenging the terrifying cycle of violence against women in South Africa.

The result was the dynamic and empowering play, *Reclaiming the P...Word*.



Grahamstown National Arts Festival 2007: *Reclaiming the P...Word*
Left to right: Juliana Davis, Zuhira Mohammed and Andrea Joy (AJ) Castle



Reclaiming the P...Word Katilist audience



**Juliana Davids. Menstruation my
salvation. 2006**



Mpho Nduna: Taxi queen 2006

2007 National Arts Festival



AWID Conference 2008: Cape Town International Convention Centre



Jou Mase Comedy Club

**Public innuendos: Comedy club owned by comedian Kurt Schoonraad
located in Observatory**

CHAPTER SIX: SEX, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION



2006 UWC Pride Protest





2006 UWC Pride Protest



'Soen in die Laan' University of Stellenbosch 2010: Mark Dean Brown and Bjorn Czepan

(Source: Vanessa Smeets/*Die Matie*)



Burning the Closet: University of Cape Town 2010



Loud Enuf IDAHO awareness raising 2012

