UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Demazane Ntombazane! An exploration of hair identity politics through performance and herstory.

Ntokozo Nonduduzo Ndlovu

STUDENT NUMBER: 214543574

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts Drama and Performance Studies

College of Humanities, School of Arts

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

January 2025

Supervised by

Ms. Tamantha Hammerschlag
(Supervisor)

Dr. Stephen Phiri
(Co-supervisor)

Plagiarism Declaration:

I affirm that this dissertation is my own work, that all acknowledgements have been properly made, and that I have read and understood the UKZN plagiarism policy.

Signed: 

Date: July 2024

Acknowledgements

Ingqungquthela yabafazi. A community. Ngiyabonga. Thank you for being a part of this journey. Thank you for the conversations, laughter, prayers, song and conversations. Thank you for seeing me. Thank you for allowing me to dream. I am forever grateful.

Ngiyabonga koGatsheni. Ko Khabazela, na Ko Makhaye. My mother and my grandmother for their constant support and their love. Ngaphandle kwenu angiyilutho.

To my supervisors, Tami and Dr. Stephen Phiri, thank you for your time, guidance, consideration, and patience. I will be forever grateful for your support and the knowledge you have shared with me. Thank you for your perspective and insight. Thank you for not letting me doubt myself. Thank you for pushing me. Thank you for constantly being there throughout this journey. Izandla zidlula ikhanda. Makwande.

Pumelela Nqelenga and Nomcebisi Moyikwa. Thank you for being one of the people who greatly influence how I engage art. Thank you for your wisdom.

Amanda Zuma, Sinethemba Maphumulo, Sisanda Radebe, Asande Zuma, Sanelisiwe Nqayi, Noluthando Mbonambi, Nonhlakanipho Ndlovu, Sabelo Cele, Andisa Mpisi, Sanele Gumede, Fnote and Xolani Mnguni. Thank you for being a part of this journey. Thank you for holding a part of me with love and talent. I thank God for all of you.

Lastly, Thando, Inkuru, Uncle-grandpa, Goat-goat, and Nomnom. I love you.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores, through autoethnography, the identity politics of hair through performance. It is a journey of understanding self, using hair as a site of learning, discovering and acknowledging. This research explores the notion of seeing and knowing the black female body as a place in which meaning is constantly made. The dissertation serves as an act of learning and re-learning about the self through ancestry, community, story and reflection. It can be looked at as a refusal to see the self without knowing and acknowledging those before you. The key intention is to locate the self and experiences in the existing literature on black hair, its significance, history and meaning. It looks at the body as a site of endless possibilities and possible tool of exploration through performance. This exploration is done by looking at the history of black hair in South Africa. How has black hair been looked at and perceived, by the world, culture and religion? It also examines, through Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness, the black female body in performance and looks at how black female artists uses their works to portray the black female bodies as possible sites of knowledge, resilience and empowerment. Using the creation process and performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* I locate myself within the existing conversations on hair.

Table of Contents

Introduction

"Remember all the women who wrote for you, all the women like you,
With skin like yours, women who were once enslaved, women who were once colonized,
Women who hold languages that when you try to speak it, it tears your tongue wide open, remember all these women who were singers, poets, priestesses, artists, healers, whose lives were declared anonymous, whose paintings hang in foreign museums as "unknown" whose lives declared as unlived, remember them."
-Ijeoma Umebinyuo (2015)

This research explores the understanding of self through memories, stories, song, and performance. In the process of this exploration; through *Demazane Ntombazane!* I remember. I remember, and then I write. I remember, I write, and then I read it out loud. I repeat the process with every memory as it assisted me in visualizing the memories as performance. This research is a personal exploration of the self, using hair as a tool of journeying from memory to memory. It is a paper of me as an artist, on how I come to understand myself in community with black women, using elements of our daily performances to include our existence and experiences in discourse on hair academically. I look at the ways in which my own sense of hair speaks to my sense of the body, and my body on culture, religion, family and society. This personal exploration recognizes that I will bring notions of hair in the analysis of literature and theories found within this study. It is important to recognize that this exploration is just one aspect of a much larger and intersectional experience.

As an artist, I have always been fascinated by the power of performance to explore and express the complexities of the self. The realization of how the concept of self for me as an artist is more than what you look like and what you can and cannot do, added to the depth of this research. Wanelisa Xaba (2021) speaks of 'The black body as the moving ancestral archive', her thoughts in this article invites us to acknowledge and remember the vastness of our beings as black people. The notion that we are not alone as we move through the physical world. The evidence of our ancestors' existence is found in both our physical and spiritual selves. Izithakazelo, which greatly impacted the creation of *Demazane Ntombazane!* can also be looked at as oral proof of the intergenerational existence within our identities as black people. They can be seen as a symbol of how those that are before us, continue to exist through us, and us, through them. This exploration allowed me to delve into parts of my being through memory and to understand how specific experiences and incidents informed my hair choices.

The idea to research hair identity was influenced by my conversation with my friends in 2016. Weaves had just started gaining prominence on campus, and one of our friends was adamant about spending all her National

Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allowance to buy a weave. The reason was that her boyfriend cheated on her with a girl who usually wore a weave. The conversation moved from hair to beauty to how our relationships with people around us influence how we view ourselves and wear our hair. We spoke about the different hair textures and our insecurities regarding hair. Those conversations showed how our identities are made up of many factors, namely, social, financial, personal, spiritual and religious.

Demazane Ntombazane! developed from the instinct of telling reflective stories about hair identity, connecting my memories and spirituality, and inviting people to an intimate performance of those worlds. With these site-specific performances, I explored and interrogated how performance can be used to represent black hair experiences and how this performative interrogation articulates my identity within the South African context.

With this production, I aimed to interrogate and explore my own identity through hair by positioning it as a central medium for tracing lineage, memory, and spiritual connection. Hair, in this context, served as both a metaphorical and literal thread linking myself to the generations of women who came before me, particularly within matriarchal households. By weaving (ukuluka) memories, history, and izibongo (praise names) into the narrative, the performance engaged in an embodied process of self-discovery, using hair as a site of personal and collective identity. In this instance, hair was not merely aesthetic but symbolic, representing a physical manifestation of the ties between myself, my ancestors, and my cultural heritage. The process of styling, caring for, and reflecting on hair paralleled the act of storytelling, weaving together fragmented narratives to create a cohesive understanding of identity.

Drawing on McKittrick's (2021) perspective on storytelling as a relational and interdisciplinary act, the performance emphasized the dialogic interplay between my lived experiences and ancestral histories. By embodying these narratives through text and performance, *Demazane Ntombazane!* investigates how hair becomes a medium for reconnecting with lost or silenced histories and for navigating the complexities of selfhood. In this sense, hair functioned as both a personal archive and a relational bridge, allowing myself as a creator to confront, reimagine, and celebrate my multifaceted identity as a black woman. Ultimately, *Demazane Ntombazane!* highlighted the act of weaving stories - both literal and metaphorical - as an act of resistance and reclamation, positioning hair as an intimate yet political symbol of identity and belonging.

The main aims of this research are: to represent my experiences of black hair through personal narrative in order to interrogate my identity as a black woman. To explore the relationship between hair identity and our emotional, spiritual, and psychological selves and to create a theatre piece that aims to broaden the discourse around black female bodies and their hair choices to encourage new conversations. The main questions that I intend to explore and answer are: how can performance be used to embody/represent black hair experiences and how does this performative interrogation articulate my identity within the current South African context? What can black hair, as a performed entity reveal about the black female body in terms of our political self as well as private psychological and spiritual selves? And how can theatre be used to help broaden perspectives and discourses around black women's hair and their choices of self-expression?

This paper is broken down into Five chapters. In Chapter One, the Literature review explores and explains how Blackness and black hair are portrayed in the white imaginary. This chapter looks at the concept of Blackness in relation to whiteness, the concept of Blackness to beauty, Black hair in Africa, Black hair in South Africa, and historical and socio-cultural aspects of black hair in South Africa. It also looks at African hair's cultural and religious significance, the politics of the black female body, the black body in theatre and black female bodies in South African contemporary art.

Chapter Two focuses on the Black Consciousness Postcolonial Feminism. It also looks at the process of exploring hair identity through Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness.

Chapter Three is a focused methodology chapter, where I unpack the use of Practice as Research and autoethnography as research methodologies for this explorative study.

In Chapter Four, I locate myself within the conversations of hair. I also critically reflect on the creative component's creation process and the performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* In this chapter, I discuss each performance station in the performance.

Chapter Five concludes the dissertation while discussing the limitations of this study.

The process of data collection for the creative component of this research assisted immensely in offering context to the intersectional writings that the Black female bodies carry, emphasizing the notion that Black female bodies are not to be considered or thought of as a single entity, but rather a “site of multiplicity” (Bennet & Dickerson, 2001:207). In remembering and creating, I witnessed the evolving and becoming of my identity and how I came to understand and know myself in performance. These discoveries have introduced me to the thought and processes of re-imagining and redefining the black female body in performance and in being.

Chapter 1

This chapter explores and explains why the black female body, particularly black hair, is politically, socio-culturally, and economically charged. To grasp the depth of the black female body and hair politics, this chapter first examines how Blackness and black hair are portrayed in the racial imaginary. It then looks at the concept of Blackness in relation to beauty. Furthermore, it analyses the history and politics of the black female body and black hair in South Africa. In the last section, this chapter explores the black female body in performance. It examines how contemporary black female artists use their work to challenge, invite, and incite people to act against oppression and how theatre and performance are still relevant in addressing issues affecting South African people. This establishes the study's framework and sets the stage for creating and analysing the performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* that follows in the next chapters.

1.1. The concept of Blackness in relation to whiteness

It is necessary to investigate categories that are related to black subjectivity, categories such as race, gender, sexuality, religion, and class, to get a better knowledge of what determines black African women's conceptions of their hair identity. In this section, I look at how Blackness interacts with whiteness and how the former manifests as a whiteness dialectic. Furthermore, I investigate the nature of Blackness in various historical periods and geographical places, similar to how Michell Wright (2015) argues that Blackness is "when and where it is conceived, defined, and enacted, as well as in what locales, both figurative and actual" (Wright 2015:3).

Differences are typically explained in biological and racial terms. As a result, society is assumed to be made up of female, male, white, and black bodies. According to Oyèrónké Oywùmi (1997:1), it is believed that a person's "beliefs and social standing, or lack thereof," may be determined simply by looking at their 'body.' This means a body can be viewed as a system of signs containing particular meanings. Hair, as a constituent of the body, becomes a significant indicator of self intimately related to one's identity. Investigating categories related to black subjectivity will help us better understand what determines black African women's conceptions of their hair identity.

The term 'whiteness' is used to refer to a "symbolic structure around which values and meanings are constructed, learned... and lived on the inside as well as attributed to one's external look." (Yancy 2008:10). Chapter 5, titled 'The fact of blackness', of Frantz Fanon's (1967) iconic book *Black skins white masks* further notes that Blackness is not an identity created by black people themselves, but rather an imposed identity. Tomaselli & Wright, (2013:5) assert that "Black individuals in 'predominantly black' African countries do not self-identify as black, but rather become or are assigned Blackness as an identity marker in the West"

Fanon (2008) developed a racial identification that served to exclude colonised black people. He observes that, unlike a Jew, who is a white person who can occasionally go unnoticed, a colonised black person becomes a "slave not of the 'concept' that others have of him, but of his actual appearance" (Fanon, 2008:87). George Yancy (2008) further pointed out that during the colonial period, black people were not only considered as different from white people, but also as a different species. During colonisation, Westerners "set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, compared with Europe's state of spiritual grace will be manifest" (Achebe 1977:20).

Whiteness identifies itself throughout the colonial era up to this present day through the fantasy of the 'other,' which is Blackness. "Not only must the black man be black; he must be black in respect to the white man" (Fanon 2008:82-83). To put it another way, there is no such thing as 'positive' whiteness without 'negative' Blackness. Even though Fanon was documenting the realities of colonial subjects, the black body is still dehumanised, and many of the stereotypes created during colonial days still persist. Hair, hairstyles, and hair texture remain crucial spaces where such dehumanisation is often acted out and prejudices surface. As evidenced by how black female students in Pretoria Girls' High School (2020) were mocked for their hair texture.

There are also images of whiteness in the black imagination, which evolved primarily as a response to white racial dominance and, to a lesser extent, to what bell hooks describes as responses to white caricatures of blackness (hooks, 1992). hooks (1992) further points out that in black people's imaginations, white people were negatively perceived as racists who ill-treated black people; such a perception was shaped by their suffering under white dominance. According to Fanon (2008:89), colour prejudice results in "unreasoning hatred of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and wealthier peoples for those whom they feel inferior to themselves, and the intense resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so constantly humiliated."

The assertion that Blackness is constantly defined in relation to whiteness further manifests in ways that continue to degrade and negatively affect how black women define and perform their Blackness. Hence, the Black Consciousness Philosophy used as one of this study's frameworks is used in exploring and unpacking a young black woman's notion of their own Blackness, mainly how it is represented and performed through hair. This is used as one of many ways in how Blackness is defined or perceived.

1.2 The concept of Blackness in relation to beauty

When describing the current Western condition, Patton (2006:36) observes that depictions of black beauty are frequently portrayed as the "antithesis of 'white' beauty, 'white' hair, and 'white' norms." Exploring the dialectics of Blackness and whiteness can help us understand a world of contradictions. For example, while the black body is portrayed as "evil, mean, and ugly" (Fanon, 2008:86), the black body is also portrayed as

exotic and sexually appealing. According to Yancy (2008:10), the black body is “feared and yet desired, sought out in forbidden white sexual adventures and fantasies; it is constructed as a source of white despair and anguish, an anomaly of nature, the essence of vulgarity and immorality.”

Shirley Anne Tate (2009), bell hooks (1989), and Zimitri Erasmus (1997), among other third-wave black feminists in the West and Africa, have added their voices to the debate. These black women add a new depth to writing about their bodies by examining the interplay of class, politics, and personal preferences and how these impact a person's identity and ideas of their own body and hair.

These black feminists, drawing on Edward Said's (1978) notion of othering, see beauty as a raced and classed site of 'othering,' but their ideas about hairstyling differ. According to Tate (2009:11), beauty is a “major source of [black] women's enslavement” under the patriarchal and racialised system because they pamper themselves to satisfy men while also attempting to resemble the white ideal. On the contrary, some third-wave feminists claim that the woman's body is portrayed as a source of power and that the beauty rituals they partake in empower them. Hence, black feminists argue that black women are not merely passive victims.

How South African women wear their hair as an expression of protest is not new. According to Erasmus (1997), in the late 1960s, racialised ideas of beauty continued to impact Black women's perceptions of beauty related to hair in South Africa. In those years, the media representations promoted the straight hair ideal. She finds that despite those representations, an increasing number of Black South African women recognised that hair texture alone cannot be utilised to distinguish between good hair and bad hair. This demonstrates that the white ideal is not the only standard by which beauty is measured; other factors include cultural and social conventions and beliefs and the current political context.

Tate (2009:13) points out that the significance of black hair is “moulded not only by white visual ideals but also by other elements such as current politics.” During apartheid, for example, efforts like the Black Consciousness Movement supported natural hair and discouraged hair straightening and skin lightening as part of decolonisation. It coined phrases like “Black is Beautiful” to instil black pride. Even today, efforts to embrace, accept and nurture Black, natural hair are a part of our living. Black women are firm in their right to choose how they wear their hair. Most Black females are intentional with their natural hair and hair choices. This natural hair movement is heavily present in the media, TV shows, social media, podcasts, etc. The discourse among women on hair is a topic that continues to grow, especially on social media. There are hair salons that are strictly for natural African hair. There are kids' salons that encourage natural hair. We have black women writing children's books on natural hair in vernacular. The changing notion of how black hair is portrayed, even for little children, gives hope to this growing space of re-shaping and re-imagining who we are as Black African women.

1.3. Black hair in Africa

The African continent is home to diverse ethnic groups, some of which are physically similar. One of the methods to distinguish people from different ethnic groups and geographical areas was through the way they wore their hair. However, with the international flow of people and goods, determining one's ethnicity based on a hairstyle is becoming increasingly difficult. Ethnic and national identities clash with global identities in today's world. In other words, technological advancements have expedited the international movement of people and communication, resulting in the pluralisation and hybridisation of identities. Identity formation is not something that an individual performs in isolation; the community heavily influences it; as a result, Todd (2011:48) adds that "consumption works as a mechanism for the consumer to communicate with society at large where they fit within the social structure."

According to Pieterse (1996), hybridisation occurs when "the ways in which forms become separated from current practices recombine with new forms in new practices." (Pieterse, 1996:49). Creolisation occurs as a result, and new hybrid identities emerge. Commodity purchases and cultural symbols such as hairstyles can be used to create these identities. Consuming certain things allows each person to establish their own identity. "Consumption is inextricably linked to the construction and production of a sense of self" (Todd, 2011:48).

Caroline Howarth (2006:20) claims that people's "identities are established by emulating or opposing the representations they are exposed to." She argues that people learn about others and the world they live in by reinterpreting certain 'presentations' of that reality to fit with what they already know, thereby forming their realities (Howarth, 2006:8). Reality is also formed in collaboration with others, resulting in hybridity and a variety of representations. In agreement with Todd (2011) and Howarth (2006), Erasmus (1997:16) believes that hair is "socially created, filled with significance, and with multi-identities." Hair can also be used to discriminate against others and as a racial sign. The convergence of people from many cultural origins has led to the adaptation and reinvention of social norms and the introduction of new practices as the world becomes increasingly interconnected. Hairstyles from the West have influenced different ways in which hair is conceptualised or symbolised by other sectors in Africa, making it increasingly challenging to use haircuts as a sign of ethnic identity in the global village, where women of all racial groupings, cultural backgrounds, and ages prefer similar hairstyles. While Africans used to braid their hair with hair extensions, Asian and Caucasian women and men now braid their hair.

Hairstyles 'worn' by African women have long been associated with rank, spirituality, mourning, and significant life events since "grooming, styling, decorating, and removing hair were widespread rituals in all societies" (Haas, 2008:525). In their writings on hair, scholars such as Joyner (1988) and Erasmus (1997) examine how hair is socially constituted and how its meanings materialise within social spaces. These researchers investigate the symbolism of hair and the importance of thoroughly studying how hair is socially integrated and depicted in historical black societies, where political and colonial connotations still exist.

The portrayal and representation of natural African hairstyles is gaining prominence in South African art and media. We have moved from seeing African hairstyles exhibited in sculptures, masks, and ceramics to experiencing them in our daily lives and in the media we consume daily. Contemporary visual artist Lebohang Motaung is one of the artists who, through social media and art, advocate for women's freedom of expression through hair.

> For me, hair grants women the freedom to be imaginative, expressive, and adaptable to altering their visual styles and representations, including aesthetics, fashion and trends, whenever it suits them and aligns with their personal preferences. Hair, in this context, becomes an active agent, inherently holding the potential for multiple identity interpretations and endless transformations, mirroring the discourse of evolution and fluid identities and affiliations akin to disguises or masks. The discourse pertains to how women style or address their hair to shape their visual appearance. It delves into the politics of self-definition, self-expression, self-care, self-appreciation, and self-love in diverse and essential forms of identity and representation (Motaung, 2023:1).

Hair enhancers for African hair have a long history. In ancient Egypt, wigs of human hair, wool, cotton, or palm-leaf fibres were used (Haas, 2008). It is worth noting that the present wig and human hair fashion is not entirely new. Hair enhancers are used for different reasons in the black community. Others use them for religious and cultural purposes, and others to celebrate and embrace their hair. On using hair enhancers to celebrate Black hair, an internationally renowned South African singer and writer, Sho Madjozi has recently released her range of sparkling hair fibre for children. Sho Madjozi is known for her flamboyant braid styles that are copied mainly by young girls and for her influence on adding colour to indigenous hairstyles for young girls. Her inspired hairstyles mostly take over in December, during school holidays. She is one of the artists influencing the young audience to use their natural hair as a canvas. She promotes the art of embracing and modernising African hairstyles for children.

Hairstyles and hair choices had symbolic connotations and acted as markers of gender, and they were also utilised to distinguish persons of different ages and as right-of-passage marks (Haas, 2008). Religious beliefs, social conventions, and economic concerns all influenced hairstyles. These still happen in African communities and cultures.

When my parents did the 'Umhlonyane' (Umhlonyane is a ceremony done for young girls once they start their periods) ceremony for my younger sister and I, we had to shave our hair off. That was to symbolise entering the stage of womanhood. Shaving off our hair meant exiting the stage of being a girl, and we were now young women; hence, our hair needed to start from scratch.

As young women with shaved heads we were acutely aware that our hair, or lack thereof, told a story. In the same way that other women’s hair also told stories. In the area of Imbali where we reside, some women cover their heads to indicate they belong to certain churches (eZayoni, The twele apostolic church, KwaShembe,

etc.). Young women who are undergoing intwaso (Sangoma initiation), the way they wear their hair differ, in terms of the colour of the beads they use and the fabric design and colour of their doeks. These are a few examples to show that some of the hairstyles women wear are influenced by religious and spiritual journeys.

Prince (2009) points out that hairstyling is a specialised talent passed down from generation to generation in most African households. If a mother from a certain household can plait hair well, there would be a higher chance for the next generation and the next to have that talent. Hairstyling in African communities was entrusted to family and close friends due to tribal norms. Some of the older generation still believe in that. They believe it could be easier for people who do not wish you well to take your hair strands and bewitch you. “It is prohibited to dispose of one's hair strands since it was once believed (and still is) in some black cultures that a person might bewitch or cast a spell on someone using their hair” (Prince, 2009:33). Even after a family member has finished doing your hair, they were to throw your hair strand in the toilet or burn them so that no one can use them for evil purposes.

One of the beliefs about hair that my grandmother once told me was that one was not allowed to plait or touch other people's hair because it would fall out. It was believed that a person on their period is dirty and should not touch other people's hair. Also, having grey hair while you are still young is believed to symbolise wealth and wisdom; therefore, plucking out grey hairs is forbidden. Prince (2009) states that a lot of hairstyling culture and how the intimacy of hairstyling in the African community was looked at shifted hugely when black people moved from their tight-knit communities to urban areas, as they turned to hair salons, which were introduced by industrialisation and where strangers style people's hair. They have no control over how their hair is disposed of and whether the person doing it is on their period.

1.4. Black hair in South Africa

Before 1994, South African social ties were “based around race, and hair, which is as obvious as skin colour and one of the most tangible markers of racial difference, has taken on a symbolic meaning” (Mercer, 2000:5). In his paper 'Beyond the pencil test,' Powe (2009) noted that hair is a deflective subject. He argues that “Hair is language, discourse, reason, and knowledge, and brings power to the body” (Powe, 2009:10). He believes that hair embodies the convergence of the historical past, the historical text, and the post-colonial narrative (Powe, 2009).

In South Africa, for example, there have been several cases in which black female bodies and black hair have had to justify their existence and choices constantly. Pupils at Pretoria Girls High School protested in August 2016 against the school's code of conduct (News24, 2016), which discriminated against students with natural black hair. This protest prompted old and young black women to take to social media to express their dissatisfaction with the fact that black women still had to struggle for their choices to be ‘acceptable’ in this day and age. In the 1960s and 1970s, as part of the Black Consciousness Movement, black women and men

marched against a racially unjust society that attempted to demean and exclude black people. It has been over 25 years of democracy in South Africa, yet we still witness events where black women are protesting against being discriminated against in schools because of their hair and there are recurring discussions on why there is so much potency on black hair. This is why there is still much work to do in our society to teach and create an inclusive society.

1.4.1. Historical socio-cultural aspects of black hair in South Africa

Black hair has a long history of degradation and devaluation in South Africa, as Erasmus (1997) points out when she says, "The political and racial implications of hair in South Africa were reflected through terminologies such as kroes (kinky) or lekker-hare (fine or sleek hair)" (Erasmus, 1997:12). Erasmus (1997:16) describes her experiences with hairstyling as a mixed-race girl growing up in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and claims that "hair is gendered, racist, and sexualised." Furthermore, under apartheid, white South Africans used pejorative Afrikaans words for what they deemed to be "unattractive hair," such as korrelkop, boesmanskop, af-kop, and vos-koppie, among others (Erasmus, 1997:12). These Afrikaans phrases, particularly boesmankop ("bushmen" hair—a disparaging term for indigenous Southern African people known as the Khoi San), are embedded in a system in which being told that one's hair is dissimilar from that of whites is considered an insult. Likewise, Alubafi et al. (2018) state that even pejorative terms like "kaffir hare" (hair like kaffirs—a derogatory name for black Africans) are used to describe a level of hair that is coily (Alubafi. et al., 2018).

Hair was also a site of oppression in South Africa during apartheid. "During the apartheid era, the pencil test—a "test" in which a pencil was placed in one's hair and the result (whether it slid out naturally, fell out after the head was shaken, or stayed in the hair) indicated whether one would change or maintain one's racial identity—became a credible tool of racial classification" (Ndlovu, 2008:16). This test can be looked at as one of the negative effects of how black women viewed or continues to view their hair in South Africa. I believe it prompted the general notion of excellent hair as hair that looks like white people's hair and black hair as hair that contrasts perceived good hair and is described as 'unmanageable'.

On the differences in aesthetic value, Mercer (1987:76) says, "Hair has always been important to the way racism separates the world into binary oppositions in its application of human worth." Similarly, Nyamnjoh and Fuh (2014:13) argue that "the profound ways in which black women perceive themselves, and how they situate themselves in relation to the purportedly superior white 'other,' have been shaped by the politics and history of racialised encounters and relationships between whites and blacks." They highlight that corporeal elements like hair were utilised to highlight racial differences and draw unambiguous distinctions between superior and inferior beings (Nyamnjoh & Fuh, 2014).

Powe (2009) utilises soNme of Andre Powe's interview material obtained while conducting research for his thesis in and around Durban about the hair journey among black South Africans during and after apartheid. Powe, while working on his master's thesis in Communication for Development, interviewed a 36-year-old Rastafarian in 2006: “You could not wear your dreads and move freely during apartheid, you know...They are always on the lookout for someone with dreadlocks” (Durban interview, 2006). Dreadlocks were associated with resistance efforts for independence and were a dreaded hairdo (Powe, 2009). “Some of the warriors were fighting in Zimbabwe, which was their distinction, you know,” this interviewee explained. “Most of them wore dreadlocks because it was easy to maintain dreadlocks in the bush... it was just the preferable style, and they could easily distinguish one another from just a civilian and a guerrilla” (Durban interview, 2006, as cited in Powe, 2009). Throughout the African Diaspora, dreadlocks served as a symbol of resistance. The interviewee further showed that the police forcibly cut the dreadlocks of the men detained.

According to Powe (2009:3), hair is “an essential text in anticolonial discourse” because it “connects to different areas of identity production circumventing colonial and national bounds.” Hairstyles connect individuals and narratives: they connect struggles, social movements, and places where black people have lived in the past and present. “The possible effects of this linkage to transgression places can enable possibilities for self-identification and consequently societal transformation,” says the researcher (Powe, 2009:5). In his paper 'Beyond the pencil test,' Powe (2009) finds that hair is a deflective subject.

> “The potency of hair is important, and an unrestrained discourse about it leads to other topics. Consumption, manufacturing, and distribution all take place on the head. Hair represents the coming together of the past, the text, and the postcolonial narrative. Hair, like Michel Foucault's work, is language, discourse, reason, and knowledge, and it gives the body power” (Powe, 2009:10).

1.5. Cultural and social importance of hair

Although a lifeless biological phenomenon, human hair is a part of the human body and a component of a person's individuality and identity. Hair has been politicised and used to communicate socio-cultural, political, and religious implications. Hair, according to Powe (2009), is “the favoured medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is formed and transferred”. Meanings can only be exchanged if we all have access to the same language. He believes that culture, on the other hand, depends on individuals interpreting what is going on around them and 'making sense' of the world in essentially comparable ways.

For years, black female writers have tackled the topic of hair from various angles. Ingrid Banks (2000), in her ethnographic study 'Hair Matters: Beauty, power, and black women's Consciousness,' investigates how black women's hairstyles reinforce and question constructs of female beauty.

According to Banks (2000), Black women use their hair to interpret the complicated identity politics around race, gender, class, sexuality, and attractiveness. Hair has always been associated with strength, spirituality, sexuality, and identity in African societies.

Boram-Hays (2018) argues that hair would assist in buffering the connections between the body and forces in the spiritual realm because the body plays a significant part in Zulu culture, functioning as a vehicle for the ancestors' deeds. The hairstyle was given to close relatives because of this belief.

1.5.1. Hair as a symbol

Hairstyles have long been associated with significant life events, and anthropologist Edmund Leach (1958:154) claims that "hair plays a crucial role in rites of passage as a person moves from one socio-sexual position to the next." For example, certain hairstyles are reserved for specific age groups. Only married Zulu women can wear isicholo, made of palm fronds and grass woven together using age-old basket weaving techniques. This frame is then covered in fabric. Lastly, an intricate array of embroidered trim work is added to give the hats their significant Zulu look. In the olden days, one could tell the difference between teenage girls and betrothed females by their haircuts. Hair can be exposed for all to see, but it can also be hidden; for example, married women in the Zulu rural community wear a head scarf (iduku) as a gesture of respect and a signal of their marital status. According to Nettleton (2014:22), married women cover their hair to keep it under control "partly because it is thought to have an erotic attractiveness for men". To this day, many Zulu cultural people still practice this, especially when a married woman is in the presence of her inlaws. Head wraps, on the other hand, have evolved into fashionable fashion items used by everyone, including young girls, boys, men, and people of different races.

1.5.2. Religious significance of African hair

Hair was and still is regarded as a vital component of life and death in most African societies; as a result, shaving hair is one of the most important rites involved with burials and mourning the dead. Close relatives of the deceased are expected to shave their hair after the funeral to cleanse themselves and mourn the deceased among the Zulu tribes (Ritcher, 2005). The hair is gathered and burned with the clothes of the deceased.

Furthermore, certain Nguni people regarded a married woman's hair as sacrosanct while she mourned her deceased husband (Ritcher, 2005). Widows had and still has to cover their hair with doeks and scarves until the mourning period ended. While growing up, as children, we had to shave off our hair after the funeral of a related family member as a mark of grief and respect.

1.5.3. Cultural norms and beliefs associated with African hair

Hair is related to numerous taboos and beliefs in African societies; a few are discussed here. These customs protect a person's hair from conception to death. Grooming practices of black African women, particularly pregnant women, are governed by societal taboos; for example, in some African societies, pregnant women are not allowed to cut, style, or braid someone's hair since it is believed that the hair may break. Plaiting one's hair while pregnant is also not advised since it is thought to "create knots in the umbilical cord, therefore harming the foetus" (Holtz, 2008:454). Plaiting hair during pregnancy is banned in the Tswana culture because it is believed it causes the umbilical cord to wrap around the foetus's neck. Among the Sotho, plaiting hair during pregnancy was and is still thought by some to cause protracted labour (Ntoane, 1988:21). In addition, there are dietary limitations that must be followed throughout pregnancy to safeguard the hair of the foetus.

In some Nguni tribes, thanking the hairstylist after a grooming session is considered unfortunate. Hairstylists in historical African societies were not paid for their services. For example, after a hair grooming session, Zulus would say 'Izinwele azibongwa' or simply 'kazibongwa' to express their gratitude to the hairstylist (literally meaning hair should not be thanked, implying that one should not pay the stylist for doing her hair). Although this practice has been eroded as a result of the establishment of hair salons where clients pay for services, some Zulus continue to practice the custom by saying 'izinwele azibongwa' as they give over the money to the cashier or stylist (Mandlela, 2018).

Matsumoto (2000:24) defines culture as

> a dynamic system of explicit and implicit rules established by groups to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change over time, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across.

Because culture is fluid, some cultural norms, beliefs, and taboos have survived. In contrast, others have been undermined, mostly due to colonisation, which introduced new concepts through education and Western religions such as Christianity. Missionaries labelled several African rituals as savage and backward, and they were abandoned in favour of Christian virtues (Mandlela, 2018). Furthermore, because of the changed nature of the places where they resided, some individuals can no longer execute their practices after being uprooted from their communities.

Many things have shifted, from people's way of life to how they see or perceive themselves and others around them. It is not easy to preserve and look at hair like our ancestors and even our mothers did. Cultural fusion is a massive shift in how people receive religion and spirituality. Hence, how we speak about our hair will constantly shift. This opens a space for analysis, reflection and learning on the topic of hair. While we discover

our hair identity post-apartheid, it is vital to know the journey of those before us when it comes to hair. How our hair has been spoken about, written about and how it has been looked at by our people and the world at large.

Invariably, the issues surrounding black hair styling are political in origin; due to social, economic, and political forces, the significance and connotations associated with black hair shift. Hair, as mentioned in earlier sections, represented various things in past societies, including social status and religious beliefs. However, during the colonial and apartheid ages, it became racialised, connected with prejudice, and considered unclean. Nonetheless, modern discourses in film, performance art, photography, and internet forums are offering fresh viewpoints by examining the intersectionality of age, class, racism, and gender, as well as how these factors interact to influence how black hair is read. Hair can define ethnicity, class, gender, age, and religious beliefs, symbolising one's identity. Because hair wields so much power, society has established conventions and taboos that control it. These standards and taboos are not static but vary as society evolves.

The above sections examine the social, cultural, and political norms and the symbolic value of black hair, considering the segregation practices that influenced and continue to influence the politics of African hair in South Africa. Hairstyling, previously a social practice that allowed black African women to bond, has been commercialised and has placed women in a position to constantly defend or justify their hair choices and sometimes the texture of their hair. Hairstyling has lost its intimacy, and hair has become a commodity, resulting in a thriving hair and beauty market in South Africa. Mandlela (2018) believes that the social relations of hair are both a blessing and a curse for black African women, as it has resulted in empowerment and exploitation.

1.6. The politics of the black female body

"...the [female] body is a highly contested location - its flesh is both the recipient and the source of desire, lust, and hatred", according to Diana Angaitis (in Ewing, 1994:324). It is sacred and sacrificial as a pawn of technology [in a capitalist society], bearing society's and state's politics. The body unites us but divides us through its public displays of identity, ethnicity, and gender [class and age]. If the white female body is exposed to objectification, this is amplified for the black female body, which is further placed at the bottom of the food chain due to the interplay between race and gender. Sobopha (2005) believes that individual, ethnic, and societal values are imprinted on the body to increase ideological requirements, making it a rich and attractive 'object' of social use and political philosophy.

The politics of the female body's re/presentation have been, and continue to be, a contentious and challenging subject to address in visual culture. This is because the body is a disputed space where conflicting and diverging discourses collide. "Over the last 40 years, feminist theorists, historians, and artists have focused their attention on the objectification of women's bodies and the marginalisation of women artists in the arts"

(Sobopha, 2005:118). “The black female body experienced the most degradation,” according to Sobopha (2005:120), “functioning as an 'icon' in the creation of the intrinsic difference between the civilised and the uncivilised, white and black, male and female. The black female body has always been considered unclean, primitive, and embodied evil, whereas the white female body has always been viewed as pure, holy, and civilised.” (Sobopha, 2005:120) This perspective and experience of the black body have been passed down black consciousness consciously from generation to generation. The black women fighting to reclaim the black female body as sacred confront the most challenging assignment because they educate not just other black women but also black men. “A socio-cultural assault on the bodies of a whole people is perhaps one of the most vicious tragedies that can befall a people” (Manganyi, 2019:70).

How the West has historically represented and addressed black bodies has been noticed as an example of exploitation of the black body. Garland-Thomson (1996) believes this is inextricably tied to bizarre discourse, which examines how the representation of bodies that differ from European and Western standards serves to cement categories of normal and abnormality, inscribing difference as a means of regulating what is unusual and unknown. The aesthetic execution of hyper-visibility was one method that came from this drive to regulate that which is distinctive. Western and European anthropological explorers were introduced to other cultures with the growth of imperial exploration in the Victorian era (Currie, 2005). Many of these travellers were awestruck by bodies that did not conform to Victorian standards. These explorers frequently returned with photographs of these “strange” humans and scientific attempts to classify such bodies. Anthropologists like Herbert Lang and Frederick Starr objectified these various bodies by turning them into anthropological study and categorisation objects. These bodies were then separated from conceptions of human personality and labelled as 'other' (Currie, 2005:23).

These classifications arose from Western colonial traditions, dividing society into 'us' and 'them.' Postcolonial discourse has frequently addressed the binary relationship between Africa and the West. According to Abrahamsen (2003), this relationship has primarily revolved around power issues, specifically how the West has historically assigned power to itself while placing Africa on the periphery. As a result, the West denies Africa agency and labels it as 'primitive' and 'traditional,' as opposed to the 'modern,' 'cultured' and ‘civilised’ West (Abrahamsen, 2003:205). This establishes a binary contrast that categorises Africa as a second-class citizen regarding growth and creativity. These binary constructs have placed the black African body at the centre. The amplification of stereotyped signifiers emphasises these binary constructs. This was done in part by “presenting these bodies as biological and anthropological exhibits of difference” (Currie, 2005:65). Colonial explorers and anthropologists frequently created exaggerated representations of difference by portraying the black body as exotic and primordial, that is, naked or dressed in a cloth, reinforcing the concept of the African body as uncivilised and archaic.

Both patriarchy and colonialism, according to Sinead Caslin's (2009) book *The Imperial Archive, Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*, reduced women and black minorities to stereotypes such as 'virgin,' 'whore’,

'savage,' and 'heathen'; women and black minorities were thus denied an identity by the system that entrapped them (Caslin, 2009). In recent years, postcolonial academia has reacted to this perspective by examining gender and asking how it impacts the lives of female colonial subjects. According to Caslin (2009), phallocentric prejudice, which incorrectly characterises black women as passive and subservient inferiors, significantly affects pre-colonial conceptions. Furthermore, many depictions of the female 'native' figure in Western literature and art reinforce the notion of the erotically charged female, in contrast to the black woman's concept of being weak and inferior (Caslin, 2009). Caslin (2009) asserts that, for most of the nineteenth century, dark skin was associated with sexual promiscuity and deviant behaviour.

The infamous case of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman (termed the Hottentot Venus by Colonialists), which details how British colonial powers transformed one young African woman into an icon for racial inferiority and savage female sexuality, is one notable example of this ignorance and prejudice that 'offensive' foreign sexuality engendered (Syed & Ali, 2011). Sarah Baartman, a female Khoi San from South Africa, was brought to Britain in 1810 and shown as a biological oddity and scientific curiosity because of her prominent buttocks and genitalia (Caslin, 2009). Her plump, sensuous physique was viewed as a departure from traditional European norms, making her unusual and unique. An African cloak, a spear, and a loincloth were placed alongside her, all of which contributed to the hyper-visibility of the black female figure (Caslin, 2009). This accentuated her uniqueness and exoticism, culminating in a myth about Africa and her people. Her humiliation and degradation, as a result, exemplify the racist worldview prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe, and her picture has since become a symbol of Western colonial sentiments against Africa.

Furthermore, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, this historical 'othering' and binaristic classification was expressed in depictions of the female body in literature, art, and popular culture. The portrayal of women and the discussion of how women have been depicted throughout history are inextricably linked to concepts of the 'gaze' (Caslin, 2009). The term 'gaze' is used in the arts to denote the act of seeing. The gaze expresses a desire for control over its object, caught up in the dynamics of desire. Griselda Pollock (1999) explains in her book *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, according to psychoanalytical discourse, each subject, each sex, and each identity passes through processes and structures of differentiation that are figured in cultural representation from language to art as separate positions, fixed sexes, and distinct identities. According to Pollock (1999), the canon of art is both politically and culturally 'of the male' (1999:24). Through the idea of the male gaze, this cultural canon has historically been portrayed as the portrayal of men, for men. Art creation has long been regarded as a masculine discipline, which has resulted in male portrayals of women.

As a result, women were shown in a way that promoted patriarchal ideas by regulating how women were represented in art (Pollock, 1999:26). Women became objects onto which society's aspirations were projected, robbing people who were being portrayed of any sense of agency. The male gaze has come to be regarded as a technique for sustaining difference that symbolises and defines women as other, sex, lack, metaphor, and

sign by inscribing standards onto the female body, distinguishing and classifying accepted conceptions of femininity and identity (Pollock, 1999:26). Manganyi (2019:70) states that “theory of the body” investigates how humans emerge from our bodies' interactions with the environment. He further asserts that:

> Theory of the body explores how we come about in the interface of our bodies with the environment. The physical body makes it possible for an individual to be given a name and to tell who he is...the body is the connection of all fundamental relations (dialogue) that an individual develops with others and objects. If the integrity of the body is violated, as it has been in the case of black [females], the other existential relationships also become distorted. (Manganyi 2019:70)

According to Mnguni (2000), since the body is the connection of almost all essential relations that an individual develops with others and the world, it can also be said that it is intrinsic to the experience of either being black in the world or being white in the world, which agrees with Manganyi's theory. Much research has been done on black women's gendered subjectivity. It might even be claimed that attempts have been made to investigate and develop suitable black female body constructs (Tate, 2007).

Manganyi (2019) proposes that a person develops a customised or mental idea of their body, which he refers to as the 'individualised schema.' Individualisation is the process through which a person learns about themself. “The body becomes for the person under ideal conditions of a healthy body” (Manganyi, 2019:29).

In this case, the individual schema takes precedence over the social schema. About the evolution of the social schema, Manganyi (2019) also claims that in the African experience, a social schema of the black body imposed by white ideals has emerged through time. As we should all know by now, the sociological schema's required qualities have all been negative. Manganyi then argues that in these conditions, “it is normal for a black person to think of his body as something inherently unwanted (unattractive), which, ironically, must be maintained at a distance outside oneself” (Manganyi, 2019:69).

In this study, I explore ideas about body representation to further deconstruct the concept of hair by positioning it as a signifier for the body. Hair, in my opinion, cannot exist without the body; it is an integral component of it. As a result, it is regarded as the body. Western colonialism's imposition of whiteness as normative and everything else as non-normative has influenced social ideals of what it means to be 'fully' human. Biko points out in Black consciousness theory that the 'other' has stolen this distorted vision of being, and it is this colonisation and corruption of the mind that leads the so-called degraded 'other' to regard the white man as clean, holy, and civilised while degrading himself (Biko, 1972).

The female body is utilised as a vehicle by the ancestors to generate new life and continue the reincarnation cycle in the religious and philosophical beliefs of Zulu-speaking people who are involved in conducting

spiritual and traditional Zulu rites (Manganyi, 2019). This process gives female reproductive activities a unique significance in Zulu religious thought as a conduit for the ancestors, allowing them to traverse the spiritual and corporeal realms and perpetuate the life cycle. They are treated as the altar, also called 'Umsamo' in Zulu. Umsamo is a sacred space in a Zulu house where the spirits of the ancestors are said to reside. It is where you go when things are not going well. It is where you go when looking for answers; even though little has been written on black female bodies in the Zulu culture, and academia requires citations, we must acknowledge our rich cultural knowledge without resorting to Western anthropologies to explain our use of indigenous knowledge.

When looking at the concept of a body within the philosophical thought of the Zulu culture, the human body serves as a vehicle for spiritual forces. The Zulu culture considers the body to be the centre of our existence, the vessel that gives us access to this physical world. The body informs and is informed on the social structure to which it belongs. "It is the foundation of the social orders that exist. Thus, the body is at the centre of a gaze, a gaze of difference" (Oyewumi, 1997:15). It is picked apart and placed into whatever it is deemed fit to exist in, hence the 'other.' These differences are the lenses through which the hierarchy is established. The white male body is rendered supreme, while the black female body is "presented as the justification for this hierarchy, is degraded, and remains at the bottom" (Oyewumi, 1997:8).

As a result, this study considers it essential to investigate the relationship between the female body and the environment in which it resides. Its goal is to prioritise the female body's experiences and stress the need to recognise women's voices and autonomy through hair. The transgression of subjecting the black body to a white hegemonic lens has been seen through the lenses that have degraded the black body.

1.7. Black bodies in theatre and performance

I believe there is a necessity to study, represent, and record the experiences of black women in the academic community to empower those we study and allow them to give meaning to their own experiences. Many remarkable black female creatives in South Africa utilise their experiences and stories to investigate and empower women. For ages, theatre has served as a tool for social change (Litwak, 2015).

Theatrical performance has a long history in South Africa as a venue of protest and conflict. "[W]e felt Black Theatre was to be a venue where black people would recognise themselves as beings (not as negative forces, non-whites, non-beings) with the power to think, evaluate, and develop our values of life, rather than copy those assigned to us by others" (Moodley, n.d.).

Sam Moodley was a part of TECON (Theatre Council of Natal), a group that embraced the black consciousness movement to broaden its conceptual understanding of the arts in the 1970s. They saw plays created by Western writers such as Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare, Moliere, and Wilde as theatre students. Their model was

everything white and Euro-centric. “As we became more conscious of the socio-political situations around us, we began to rethink who we were, as well as the type of theatre we wanted to produce.” (Moodley, n.d.). In theatre groups like TECON, plays were workshopped, and scripts were reshaped and recreated collaboratively (Peega & Masole, 2018). This was done with the conscious intention of breaking received norms and conventions in order to shape a radical political message, and theatre practitioners created highly polemical works (Steadman, 1990).

In its thinking, TECON used the Black Consciousness Movement to extend its philosophical understanding of the Arts. As affirmed by TECON, Black Theatre should be a platform where people of colour define their being, ‘not as negative forces [of non-beings or]’ but people with a capacity for thought, analysis, and people that form their very own identity and values of life that are not imitating values that are set for them by others (Moodley. n.d.). As a result, TECON decided to expose the beliefs that were not true, to accuse, and to attack the system by themes of revolution. They did this because they did not want theatre to be a theatre of victims but a theatre of inspired revolutionaries. They wanted theatre that rejected all value systems that sought to make them foreigners in the country of their birth and reduce their basic human dignity'. Black Conscious Theatre aimed to highlight the audience's mental and physical strength, shift from the cultural description of Blackness to a position where Blackness is related to commitment, and conceptualise Blackness not as an expression of one’s physical pigmentation. However, Blackness had to be defined by one’s commitment to the struggle for liberation in all their theatrical plays.

It is in this way, from the activism and contributions of Sam Moodley, that we can derive a political agenda, a constant focus on self-determination in the form of self-identity and inclusivity of the total body of the oppressed as pillars of Black Consciousness Theatre as influenced by Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.

The growth and development of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa prompted many significant developments in South African theatre. The Black Consciousness Movement was equated with black men, especially in its writings. However, Black Consciousness enabled the practitioners of black theatre, which included female performers and artists, to “create a 'structure of feeling' within their plays and performances commensurate with the larger mythology of blackness prevailing amongst audiences during the groundswell of consciousness-raising in the formative years of the Black Consciousness Movement” (Steadman, 1990:212). Black Consciousness gave black theatre an identity.

With Black Consciousness theatre, Steadman (1990) states that the artists were less concerned with the literary nuances of their work than with the opportunities provided by theatrical performances to explore new forms and techniques. Literature in performance broke down the rules and constraints imposed by publishing conventions. Instead, with Black Consciousness theatre, a concern with a communal approach to creativity emerged. The lived experience of literature in performance was a far richer one than that captured in textual form because of “the added dimensions of participation from audiences in the form of chanted responses to

signals from the stage, emotive music, unison speaking, a metonymical rather than metaphorical construction, and language which worked as utterance rather than statement" (Steadman, 1990:225). This sense of performance means that there was a different vitality in the performance of Black Consciousness theatre. This vitality is, in many ways, still operative in South African theatre post-apartheid.

Theatre in the townships during apartheid drew inspiration from the realities of black people in South Africa. Its proponents are members of the same society that suffered due to apartheid. Mda (1996:7) states that "the separation of art, especially theatre, is an illusory idea in South Africa". Because they were inextricably linked to the racially separated, politically repressed, and economically exploited black South Africans, theatre practitioners functioned from the periphery and within. They became the personification of the people's struggle for liberty, survival, progress, equality, and democracy, in addition to championing it. Rive (1981) speaks on this topic, stating that the black writer in South Africa is no different from the black guy in the ghetto, the downtrodden, nameless individual" (Rive, 1981:48).

> Because of this indistinguishability, dedicated artists in South Africa were forced to choose between fighting and writing or doing both simultaneously. Nonetheless, because they have been "an articulate remembrance of his subjugated people, the fundamental duty of the black South African artist has been to define and record (Rive, 1981:49).

South African black theatre was constantly developing in terms of the plays and writings it produced. Black Consciousness continued to inspire writers and theatre practitioners to create art for the people, by the people. The broad consensus was that art should be accountable to the people, avoid portraying oppressed people in a position of 'near-helplessness,' and follow Ndebele's (1992) 'literature of affirmation.' In essence, this was a proposal to adopt commitment literature/theatre. This theatre had taken on a new significance because of the racial inequality, economic exploitation, and political oppression that characterized South African society. It had become "a prominent voice in the oppressed majority's struggle" because of the Black Consciousness philosophy (Mda, 1983:13). Shava (1989:145) concludes with the insightful comment that, like Black Consciousness poetry, theatre proved to be "a cultural weapon" that created "unity and solidarity" among the oppressed. Its primary role was to promote consciousness, which evolved into a means of propagating the Black Consciousness Movement's ideology and approach.

According to Kavanagh (1985:161), the Black Consciousness Movement's theatre work had several aims that spelt out the movement's ideas and values. First and foremost, plays like Bloke Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1963) and others that depicted the struggle adversely and showed his scorn for 'African culture' were to be repudiated and denounced. It seems as if the playwrights of the Black Consciousness Movement needed to promote African culture and commit themselves to the political battle. They were working on African culture to be treated with the respect and legitimacy it deserved.

It was also believed that because multi-collaboration with whites led to white rule and dominance, black artists should break ties with them. It was seen as necessary and imperative for black playwrights to reject the whites' tutelary position, attempting to repair the psychic harm caused by oppression in South Africa (Moorosi, 1997). The plays' creative substance had to instil hope, courage, and a positive attitude among the people fighting for independence. The methods used and art that was/is created under Black Consciousness theatre did more to Africanize theatre. It is theatre, by the people, for the people. It uses creative methods and language that the artists, performers and the audience are familiar with.

Historically, it can be argued that theatre has been centred around the male gaze and perception. However, through feminist analysis and women's empowerment, black female artists have used the space to write and portray their own narratives. The number of black female artists in theatre and literature continues to grow and inspire other women to own their creative languages and explore their craft without centralising whiteness in how they present their art. For this research, I align mainly with this political ideology.

1.8. Black female bodies in South African contemporary art

Grosz argues that the body is a "site of social, political, and geographical inscriptions, production, or constitution" (Grosz, 1994:23). Drawing on this argument, I consider the importance of investigating how colonial writings of women and postcolonial engagements with these writings impact the ways in which artists are using their own black female bodies to consider which images, imaginaries, and regimes of truths are appropriate now. Henderson (2010:28) affirms that "Because of black people's polarization to whiteness, African bodies were hypersexual and ultimately inhuman". She continues to discuss how "The naked or semi-naked bodies of black women in nineteenth-century paintings and photographs suggested the hypersexuality of African (black) women and the hidden sexuality of European women who, despite being objectified through these visual images, were still allowed to remain modest and fully human" (Henderson, 2010:40). According to Coly (2015), Bodies and clothing are thus central to the colonial discourse on the civilized subject. However, African engagements with colonial rhetoric on "the un/clothed African female body underscore the Fanonian argument that colonialism ultimately determines the form and content of anti-colonial resistance" (Coly, 2015:13) As a result, contemporary African feminists are contesting colonial discourses as well as different traditional African inscriptions of how they are defined and portrayed, notably in terms of their sexuality, sexual appeal, and humanity.

Current female artists are challenging women's roles and portrayals in contemporary South African art. Mamela Nyamza and Chuma Sopotela are among the new generation of South African female performance artists confronting gender issues that are primarily disregarded in gender conversations. The topic of hair in performance is seldomly explored as an issue that goes beyond the idea of beauty and affordability in South

Africa. The different layers and individual perceptions around hair among black women open a space of exploration and possible performance techniques for/by Black female artists.

Nyamza and Sopotela utilize their bodies and skin to contextualize history and challenge racist and patriarchal myths. I have decided to briefly refer to both Sopotela and Mamela's works to show how their use of their bodies as a site of resistance relates to the politics of hair. They have an intriguing method of interrogating various ways in which people and society at large may be involved in the oppression of women in modern South African communities by employing distinct aesthetics that explicitly deal with abjection or beauty as creative tactics. I will be using the analysis of their performance pieces as case studies for this section.

Mamela Nyamza created 'Hatched' (2008) to address the political and social concerns she experienced as a woman born during apartheid into a patriarchal culture. She continues facing persecution based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. 'Hatched' documents how she begins considering what critical feminism may imply for a black woman making art in South Africa after 1994. It explores Nyamza's challenges as an artist, balancing her IsiXhosa culture, customs, and societal expectations with her changing cultural and sexual experiences and desires. According to Nyamza, this choreographic performance was a defining moment in her development as a woman, mother, and artist, allowing her to 'hatch' and become the woman, mother, and artist she is today (Nyamza, 2015).

According to Hutchison (2018), Nyamza's mixing of classical European and African music and dance traditions in this performance is complex because it exposes underlying hegemonies of performance forms while encouraging audience members to examine their personal and cultural associations with specific rhythms, sounds, and dance forms. Jill Mills (1997), cited in Hutchinson (2018), has argued, "Ballet is the pinnacle of the dance world and 'ethnic dance' is at the lower rung" (Mills, 1997:154). According to Mills (1997), this is because ballet is seen as having a greater degree of artistic or aesthetic skill, such as balance, elegance, and control. In contrast, African dance traditions are portrayed as embodying strength and energy but lacking the technical and disciplinary qualities of Western dance forms.

Nyamza, like many post-1994 theatre practitioners, has turned increasingly to embodied forms like dance or physical theatre to create what James Thompson (2009) terms 'affective theatre,' or a performance that "awakens individuals to possibilities beyond themselves without an insistence on what the experience is what meanings should be attached" (2009:115). This change is significant since many theatrical works presented united racial identities that were gendered and frequently stereotyped during apartheid. Nyamza (2015) begins challenging assumptions about hierarchies and separateness of gendered and racial identities, art forms, and social interactions with her body in 'Hatched'.

This performance shows Mamela Nyamza as a body between two contrasting worlds. Alude Mahali mentions these worlds as "Westernized ballerina and the archetypal rural black African woman." (Mahali, 2016:1). In the in betweenness, she is on a journey of self-discovery. She yearns for liberation and steadiness through

movement and facial expressions on her journey. The performance opens with her son drawing underneath a table covered in a red skirt. There is no interaction between the mother and the son until the last part of the performance. On stage, there is a washing line that goes across the stage. She enters, her head bald and her back turned towards the audience. She is topless, wearing ballet shoes and a tutu with many washing pegs hanging. She enters gracefully, carrying a bucket on her head. Her bare back is visible.

In the performance, there is an interconnectedness between beauty and pain. Beauty can be linked to the nature of ballet - the smoothness and elegance of the performer's posture and history. Pain is visible in her facial expression and the repetition of the staccato movements. In this research, there is a connection between station 2 of *Demazane Ntombazane!* and this performance piece. That station (Discussed in Chapter 4) explored the female body through the character of umakoti. Similar to this performance, it aimed to answer the following questions: 'Who are you when nobody speaks for you? Who are you now? How do you see yourself and those around you? How are you feeling?' The performer (Sinethemba Maphumulo) in the station repeatedly uttered the words "*Amandla ami lawa. Ngiyadliwa la. Kudliwa Amandla ami*", which translates to "These are my efforts. I am being eaten. They are eating my efforts." In 'Hatched', Amandla can be considered the performer's identity at home and in the world. Amandla can be seen as one's identity being constantly suppressed by society's expectations of you.

In this instance, ballet can be argued to represent Western notions of beauty. Beauty being long hair tied in a bun and subtle facial expressions. Similar to how women are typically expected to present themselves. In this performance, Nyamza uses her body as a site of resisting those expectations. Her head is bald, and she is topless. Her movements and physical self during the performance can be argued to be the opposite of 'pretty' and 'elegant'. Her costume is not close to how the black female body has been constantly viewed in performance. Her artistic performance aesthetic breaks modern notions of what a beautiful, desirable woman is. A consistent negotiation exists between beauty, body, motherhood, and identity. As the performance progresses, she goes through the process of unbecoming to become. She separates herself from assumed notions of black African mothers, and she rejects the Western notions of how a female body should move (by removing ballet shoes). She also separates herself from the conventional ideas of a woman's work – domestic duties (By detaching herself from the washing line).

For me, this performance is both painful and liberating. She is not romanticising the works and realities of black women's experiences nor sexualizing the Black female body and its appearance. Black women are mostly expected to aesthetically perform their blackness through their hair by having an Afro or any 'African' hairstyle. In this instance, Nyamza is aesthetically performing her identity through her hair by being bald. The portrayal of how motherhood does not stop is visible throughout the performance. In her uncomfortable journey of learning and unlearning, motherhood is constant. Towards the end of the performance, when she asks her son which way she should go, he points her in a direction. She then grabs his hand, and they circle and cross together. That was an unusual aspect of the relationship between an African mother and her child. It

is unusual for a mother and a child to figure out life together. In traditional African settings, a mother is expected to lead and have it all figured out.

Nyamza's art invites us to explore what Mark Sanders refers to as a sense of 'foldedness' in which we become aware of how "our human being is folded together with the other, allowing us to perceive the alterity inside" (Sanders, 2002:125). Susan Foster claims that "by allowing viewers to enter a specific experience of what a body is, they allow us to think about how the body is grounded, its function in remembering, its affinity with cultural values, its participation in the construction of gender, sexuality, and how it is assimilating technologies to change the very definition of the human" (Foster, 2005:218). This method of addressing gendered roles is significant because it provides specific steps for breaking down role binaries and gendered power hierarchies.

Equivalent to Nyamza's art, Chuma Sopotela's work evokes a "completely distinct aesthetic experience, one that forcefully presents complicity for its spectators, as well as its consequences as embodied feminist action" (Hutchison, 2018:361). Hutchison (2018:363) described Sopotela's 'Inkukhu ibeka iqanda' (2013) performance piece as a performance that "clearly engaged with specific gender issues related to the objectification of the female [black] body and how women negotiate their bodies and sexualities." Sopotela explains that her work "necessitates and challenges the performer's entire emotional and psychological presence, as well as an awareness of space, time, and the surrounds as well as the inner environment" Rutter (2014:13). She states that the performer's emotional landscape serves as the primary creator of the live performance, we witness that on the way she uses different objects to extract memories, feelings, and situations that audience members might relate to from their own lives.

Guided by Lieketso Dee Mohoto-wa Thaluki (2019) in her paper "*Corporeal HerStories: Navigating meaning in Chuma Sopotela's Inkukhu ibeke iqanda through the artist's words*", we get to know that Sopotela created 'Inkukhu ibeke iqanda' based on her physical, emotional and psychological experiences. In the performance, Sopotela stands under a web of braided hair extensions. They can be viewed as an extension of her physical, emotional and psychological experiences that will be unpacked or explored as the performance progresses. Thaluku (2019) argues that Sopotela uses hair extensions as "a marker of an urban black woman subjectivity that travels between the domestic worker, the birther of the nation and herself" (2019:116).

The performance happened in an intimate space, making the audience experience not only the physical performance but also be engaged by the smell of incense and cow dung. The objects used in the performance trigger the audience members to confront the memories or knowledge they have of those objects. The objects were used strangely, but Thaluku (2019), as an audience member, found familiarity with the strangeness of how these objects were used. I know cow dung is used as floor polish, especially in rural areas, to repel insects and improve house hygiene, but Sopotela applied it on her body. Could it be that she is cleansing her body of the colonial perceptions and writings about the Black female body?

There is an element of ritual in her performance. The use of incense and a candle may evoke memories of rituals and ‘umsamu’. However, how she engages these objects is very unusual. Thaluku (2019) argues that Sopotela uses her performance to highlight the intersectional gaze in performance. She is resisting the cliché roles normally available to young, black women in theatre and performance. Sopotela’s body and hair are seen as sites of resisting patriarchal and racist perceptions of how black female bodies are viewed in performance. “Sopotela deals with layers of womanhood and shows us the folds of the layering in such a way that the fact of her black body is not as static as it might be if she simply ‘played’ a domestic worker or a sex worker in a play” (Thaluku, 2019: 120).

In this performance, Sopotela insisted on deconstructing and intentionally questioning the audience’s idea of what black female bodies do and signify. Through performance, Sopotela seeks to undermine the construct of racial knowability by telling the kinds of stories that her own body is not necessarily ‘assigned’ by colonial logic to tell (Thaluki, 2019). Through the embodied articulation of a black feminist language, she claims authorship of her body and its artistic skills. Similar to how I grapple with hair in this research, she portrays the female body as a site of contestation, resistance and creative potential. It portrays how she knows her body and how it has experienced the world.

Both artists used layers of performance to create aesthetic experiences that engaged their audiences in active and embodied ways. Still, in different ways, Mamela Nyamza explores Western and African notions of being a woman, using dance and symbolism to bring her audience into the work. At the same time, Chuma Sopotela examines the objectification of the Black female body and how women negotiate their bodies and sexualities. These performance modes assert that rather than being “acted upon,” black South African women may actively participate in defining themselves.

Black African women are taking a stance and reclaiming their identities and stories in theatre and performance. Nyamza and Sopotela’s work can be described as one of the straddling definitions of performance art and contemporary theatre. Such artists inspire and encourage young and rising South African artists to produce critical work by women. It is evident that performance art and theatre have been and continue to be a platform where the marginalized use their experiences and knowledge to dismantle the status quo. Prominent young African women are taking up space to re-write their narratives and embrace their identities. They are creating ways of archiving their lived experiences using their bodies through art.

My artistic interest for this research involves delving into theatrical explorations centred on narratives surrounding hair, carefully exploring the complex nuances of its presentation. In the same way in which Mamela and Sopotela insist on their bodies serving as vessels for narratives that carve out a distinct space reflective of their experiences as black women, I, too, attempt to engage in a similar process. Through these creative explorations, I aim to confront and navigate the complexities of my black female hair identity through performance. By analysing the 'visual articulation' inherent in the various ways in which hair is styled and

presented, I embark on a journey of self-discovery and expression, utilizing performance as a potent tool for introspection and empowerment.

Chapter 2

This research will use the Feminist Black Consciousness frame as the overarching theoretical framework, highly informed by postcolonial feminism and Black Consciousness. These concepts are underpinned by many theoretical practices, such as writing back, re-writing, writing off, contestation, finding a quest for meaning and self-definition. This is a crucial practice of postcolonial feminism as it re-works the coordinates of colonial and nationalist canons since these are shaped by patriarchal interests that seek to write out, distort, and repress women's experiences. It is also an essential aspect of the Black Consciousness theory as it seeks ways to think, reflect and create in community. In this regard, Feminist Black Consciousness theory interrogates and explores the colonial and postcolonial norms to expose modes of domination, omission, and distortion in how society perceives black women's hair choices. This theory seeks to address the interests of marginalized women who are supposedly free from colonialism. They represent the subaltern as the woman that Gayatri Charkravorty Spivak speaks of in her seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988). She argues that the subalternity of women has ethnic, racial, and class (known as intersectionality) inflexions that question the universality of women's experiences.

These concepts will help contest the construction and circulation of unspoken experiences of the colonised women in imperial society as invisible, silent and passive. Ronit Frenkel (2008) argues that women's invisibility and lack of agency did not disappear with independence in South Africa. He speaks about how, in post-apartheid, this country is one of the countries with a more significant percentage of women in parliament. Nevertheless, it also has the highest levels of rape and violence against women. He further states that in South Africa, "women are clearly both empowered and victimised, seen and unseen, included and excluded in different ways." (Frenkel, 2008:2). This example is one of many that portray how the feminist movement has contributed mainly towards this country's reconstruction, yet these conflicting indicators highlight the urgent need for issues surrounding victimhood, voice, agency, subjectivity, power, gaze, silences, and knowledge; and how they need further exploration in South Africa today. Postcolonial feminism will allow me to critique Black Consciousness on the erasure of women and their experience in many of its writings and movement history. At the same time, Feminist Black Consciousness assists me in analysing how my research's focal text (*Demazane Ntombazane!*) portrays a black woman's hair identity and experiences in her performance language as she re-constitutes and negotiates new discourses of black female hair subjectivity.

2.1. Black Consciousness

> The black response to racism is a complex one. Acceptance of the oppressor's viewpoint is but one aspect. Every Black, from cradle to grave, is faced with evidence of their secondary status in society. This perception of one's worth is deeply painful to one's ego. A typical response is the defence mechanism of denial, not of one's alleged inferiority, but of one's very

> blackness. Since all the symbols of success - material comforts and scientific and literary achievements - are presented from a Eurocentric perspective, they are associated with whiteness. The superficial symbols of the denial of Blackness are evident in the (formerly) widespread use of skin-lightening and hair-straightening agents by Black women (Sibisi 1991: 133).

The above-mentioned is an excerpt from a collection of writings attempting to explain and appreciate South Africa's Black Consciousness era. It comes from Sibisi's paper 'The Psychology of Liberation,' I begin this part with it because it explains not only the essence of Black Consciousness thought but also some of its ambiguities and complexities about attitudes toward black women. One of the primary objectives of this section is to study and explore the nature of these ambiguities in Black Consciousness ideology as well as the literature it gave rise to. The rise of the Black Consciousness concept in the late 1960s was one of the most significant ideological shifts in the growth of African political thinking in South Africa.

Apartheid in South Africa erased the concept of self and the concept of community among black people. These concepts were eroded because people were responding to an attack on everything to do with their way of life. In the 1960s when the Sharpeville massacre happened, and a lot of black leaders were sentenced, it created a massive void in the country. Steve Biko described this period as hopeless, where people were settling in the reality they had lost. People knew that their way of life was about to change irrevocably. That precipitated the need for Black Consciousness in the late 1960s. According to Biko (1972), what needed to change was that many things are said to us, about us, and for us, but rarely by us. In an article titled 'The black thing ... is honest ... is human', Mafika Gwala (1972:13) writes:

> ...The Black who becomes aware of his Blackness and its implications in a racist society will often strive for self-definition, to a large measure of success or failure. This self-definition will take the form of negation. That is neglecting all that has been imposed on him, superimposed by white cultural values, economic domination, and white stratification of society. And when a man begins to negate, he refuses to see himself as a commodity. This is when the consciousness of contestation emerges. This contestation will bear an essentially black character. Black in its doubts about white superiority, its criticism of white values, and its challenge of the white right. This is when Black Consciousness takes form. Black Consciousness calls for a redefinition of concepts. Cultural, economic, social, and theological concepts are seen by the Black and seen through his Black self.

Apartheid's influence and success may be linked to two factors: first, its emphasis on division and difference, and second, its ability to consistently reinforce a negative self-image in those it aimed to oppress. If apartheid was successful because it divided Black people, Black Consciousness recognized that the most effective

strategy against racism as a force was black solidarity. According to Black Consciousness, black people (considered as various 'races' by the government) were all part of one oppressed mass. Biko thought black solidarity (solidarity of the oppressed) was crucial to depose the apartheid administration successfully. He believed it was also critical that Black people determine how and when this battle would occur. Black Consciousness was thus a principle that advocated for psychological liberation, creating a single identity for oppressed people, finding a quest for meaning, cultural conscientization and thinking of the black community projects as a physical manifestation of the Black Consciousness.

In Black Consciousness philosophy, the definition of Blackness attracted much attention. This seemed appropriate in a movement seeking to correct white power's racist and derogatory portrayal of Black people. Black self-redefinition was regarded as critical to destabilizing the power structure, which was identified as predominantly based on race during apartheid (Gwala, 1972). As Black Consciousness termed it, mental emancipation, or psychological liberty, was considered a critical step in this approach. This freedom involved rejecting the principles that perpetuated white society at the expense of the Black community. Whereas white society branded everything black as degenerate and base, Black Consciousness emphasized positive images of blackness. 'Black' is almost entirely used in English to refer to evil and unwanted. Black Consciousness saw a link between this colour bias in language and racial prejudice in South African culture. For Black Consciousness to succeed, Black people needed to redefine and take responsibility for their definition of Blackness.

Various contemporary scholars, Kimberly Yates, Pumla Gqola and Mamphela Ramphele (1998), and Daniel Magaziner (2011) highlight that the language used in the movement's writing is characterized by the use of the third-person masculine, where the pronoun 'he' and 'man' are viewed as all-encompassing descriptions of the Black condition. Gqola (2001) and Ratele (1998) highlight that the use of 'Black men' as the reference to the communalistic idea of the Black condition was not merely a coincidence of time but that it is inherently sexist as the Black subject is equated with the Black man.

In an interview, Pumla Gqola asks Ramphele (1998) why there is a lack of material nor visibility on or by black women in the history of Black Consciousness, even when this movement was gaining prominence in South Africa. Gqola asks if there was an unspoken rule about women writing in the Black Consciousness Movement at the time. Ramphele asserts that the invisibility of women's writing in Black Consciousness writings and archives is because there was not a culture of writing within the black communities. Ramphele shares that one of her most incredible sadnesses is that "Biko's intellect has not left a deeper imprint on the South African landscape than it could have" (Yates, Gqola & Ramphele, 1998:94). Ramphele shares that there were very few women who had a public platform to speak, let alone write. She argues that women could not create a space to write because they had to be wives and mothers.

However, a closer look into the roles women played and gender relations in the movement shows that women were neither silent nor passive (Nxongo, 2019). Some Black Consciousness Movement activists have argued

that the masculinized discourse was a result of the use of the English language, where the 'generic male' included both males and females (Mangena, 2008). Others have argued that Biko and Pityana were "a product of their time" where women were acknowledged as secondary citizens (Magaziner, 2010:34). In 'Pieces of Women', Daniel Magaziner (2011) wrote against this narrative, arguing that women's exclusion was not a historical incident. Instead, it demonstrated a careful choosing of words and concerns, which revealed "conscious silences and stressed syllables of this past" (Magaziner, 2011:48). He cited an article which appeared in the SASO newsletter, 'The Chemical Analysis of a Woman', as a sexist satire against women. According to Magaziner, the article was "a momentary lapse into old tropes" of gendered discrimination used in older nationalist organisations in South Africa (Magaziner, 2010:34). Pumla Gqola made a similar argument and added that Black Consciousness discourse did not just silence women, it silenced the differences in class, age, geographical location and sexual orientation within the black community for the benefit of racial solidarity (Gqola, 2001:136).

The argument of the language in which the Black Consciousness movement is documented and presented is seen as placing 'Black men' at the forefront of the democratic revolution and fails to recognize women as full citizens and leaders of the democratic revolution. Ramphele (1998) emphasizes how the Black Consciousness movement borrowed language from a culture that did not have space for women. Such exclusionary language reflects the cultural and political environment that oppressed Black women and deemed them 'invisible'. Due to such critique and the dynamics of the history of Black Consciousness, Ndelu (2015: n.p.) in 'Mind the Gap' considers:

> …What does it mean for me to be at the front lines of the struggle to protect performers of violent masculinities straight after they have inflicted violent against me? Where do I draw the line between self-caring for my body and not breaching my decolonial pact of pro-blackness, Ubuntu, and restoration? The Black women's self-representations of their key experiences in the art, protests, and academia unearth what constitutes solidarity with the intersection of Black Consciousness philosophy and Black feminist thought, and at whose expense is this collective liberation achieved?

From where these Black women are situated, their accounts reflect more complex and nuanced understandings of blackness that the post-apartheid experience of institutional and gendered racism and a new articulation of Black Consciousness has shaped. In contemporary South African art, we find black women who use their bodies as tools for activism, e.g., Mamela Nyamza, Chuma Sopotela and Zanele Muholi; these black women artists come to understand how violence operates at micro and macro levels and is complicatedly linked to the phenomenological condition of blackness. An experience of dehumanization causes the phenomenological condition of isolation; this is the violence they speak of. "As the Black women activists unearth this experience of dehumanization, sexualization and their modes of resistance, described through their self-expression, and add nuance to the definitions of Blackness and Womanhood" (Matandela, 2017:4).

2.2. Postcolonial Feminism

The language in which black consciousness is presented can be argued that did not include the space for politicizing black women's experiences, including the rallying cry of the black awareness movement, “Black man, you are on your own,” continues to express the discourse of early black consciousness. However, as more scholars grapple with and converse on the philosophy, it gives momentum to female black academics, artists and activists to re-write the narrative and cement themselves in the forever-growing space of being black and conscious.

Gqola (2001:15) argues that it is challenging to represent black women in postcolonial ways since it “demands from us that we create and refashion forms of representation which continue to break new ground.” This rediscovery and re-vision of the terrain of representation pervades several spaces advanced by black women (Gqola, 1999; Gqola, 2001). It is a necessary part of breaking with oppressive systems “looking ahead to the full realisation of the horror with which we are faced and embracing the terrifying peril in standing up” (Head, 2001:18). While postcolonial feminist project is undeniably concerned with subverting colonial and patriarchal systems of logic, its focus is on opening the terrain of black women's representation and theorisation to new signification. These spaces within which black women with a feminist consciousness congregate are about breaking new ground, making new meanings and redefining the terms of our participation in all discourse. Ogundipe-Leslie (2001:136) states that,

> African women were re-discovering themselves again, re-creating themselves in various social arenas through theory and practice. We tried to rediscover African women in the academy as speakers and spoke about them as critics and creators. We pursued women's episteme in society through research and activism. Through writing and organising women, we tried to uncover and learn from how we know what we know and how we create what we do create socially and ideationally.

I believe it is essential to present some history of postcolonial feminism to put it into the framework of this study. Postcolonial feminism is a philosophy from both postcolonialism (or postcolonial studies) and (western) feminism. My study does not present a comprehensive overview of the histories of postcolonialism, postcoloniality, postcolonial theory, or Western feminism, but rather a summary of how these have influenced postcolonial feminism. The significance of the European/imperial text in its politics and techniques of silencing, dominating, and erasing the non-European text is evident in the early phases of postcolonial theory and penetrates postcolonial feminism. According to Benita Parry (2004:67), the postcolonial theory allows for “a different understanding of colonialism and its legacies than the narratives handed down either by colonialism or by anti-colonialist organizations, therefore throwing the claims of both official and dissident historiographies into disarray”. Parry's approach here emphasizes the contestation that distinguishes postcolonial discourses. The emphasis of Parry's work is on disputing official and rebel historiographies. Similarly, the beginnings of postcolonialism are said to be found in “historical resistance to colonial

occupation and imperial control, the success of which then enabled a radical challenge to the political and conceptual underpinnings of the institutions on which such dominance had been built" (Young 2001: 60). This history of resistance demonstrates the contestation that pervades postcolonial discourses.

According to Achille Mbembe, a prominent postcolonial theorist in Africa, the postcolonial subject is pushed to "have a marked ability to manage not just a single identity, but numerous flexible enough to negotiate as and when appropriate" (2001:104). Mbembe (2001) situates this argument within the context of the post-colony's multiple public spaces. Mbembe's statement attests to an essential nexus of postcolonial discourse: the identification of the postcolonial subject. Identity can be defined in various ways, including race, gender, and political identities. Identity negotiation opens the way for a push toward empowering the postcolonial subject to speak for themself rather than being defined by the colonizer. According to Mbembe (2001: 108), "conflict originates from the fact that the post colony is chaotically pluralistic and that it is in practice impossible to establish a single, permanently stable system out of all the signals, images, and markers current in the post colony". Mbembe's concept of a "chaotically pluralistic" post-colony opens the possibility to recognise that identity, as demonstrated via hair, is pluralistic and sometimes contradictory. Multiple cultural, historical, and social elements all can intersect in a single hairstyle.

A hairstyle can articulate personal rebellion, cultural assertion, private needs, and desires to be attractive, acceptable, and loved. This multiplicity of meaning – particularly in the post colony – a space ripe with its own plurality of meanings - opens up hair as such a rich and dynamic space for creative and artistic investigation. For this reason, I centred myself as a site of investigation via creative engagement.

The elements of Black Consciousness theatre required me to reflect and look at the self, using extensions of the self I was more familiar with. One of the main aims of Black Consciousness theatre is to instil pride within black people. Izithakazelo, memories, creating in community, and writing in ways familiar to the body and everyday life are some of the fragments that are a part of this body.

After considering postcolonial theory and its contribution to postcolonial feminism, it is crucial to analyse feminism's influence on postcolonial feminist studies. Postcolonial feminism is the result of the intersection of postcolonialism and Western feminism. This occurs as women strive to articulate their postcolonial position and place. Postcolonial feminists are concerned with women, their space, and their portrayal in masculine narratives. African women's recognition of the need for agency is also a result of broader Western feminist articulations.

In her seminal text 'The Second Sex', Western feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1953) criticizes the concept that "humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him" (de Beauvoir 1953:14) as the source of the problem of women's identity. I agree with de Beauvoir in opposing this viewpoint since it implies that women's identities are only relative to men. The patriarchal prescriptions that confine women stem from this authority to define a woman.

Postcolonial theory emerged from political and economic theory, concerned with writing back. As writing back, postcolonial theory and practice believe that the colonised's discourse and text are silenced. The colonized are portrayed as passive recipients of imperial knowledge and aesthetics. The habit of writing back as a form of retaliation contains an element of bravery and resistance that reminds the silencer that the silenced have a voice. As a result, the primary goal of postcolonial theory is to impose "a fundamental re-thinking and re-formulation of forms of knowledge and social identities produced and authorized by colonialism and Western" (Prakash, 1992: 8). Prakash's argument confirms the character of postcolonial theory as a contestation. While I agree with Prakash that the postcolonial criticism is based on opposition to, displacement of, and writing back to imperial discourses, I contend that it is expressed in different places and times and has been expanded to theorizing about what follows after the colony. The plurality of locales in the experience of colonialism and its aftermath is foregrounded in postcolonial theory by Homi Bhabha's idea of "location" (Bhabha, 1994: 107). Although postcolonial feminism draws on the archive of Western feminism and shares many theoretical characteristics with it, it differs in its emphasis on writing back and creating space for diversity depending on the location and specific experiences of the colonized and formerly colonized woman. Historical context is essential in understanding women and how specific limits and opportunities of their time affect their identities.

Dineo Pumla Gqola (2001) believes that, while the postcolonial feminist/womanist effort is concerned with overthrowing colonial and patriarchal systems, "its concentration is on exposing the terrain of black women's representation and theorization to new signification" (2001:15). Gqola's statement that postcolonial feminism's primary duty is to open the territory of black women's representation and theorization is consistent with it being a writing politics.

Postcolonial scholar Spivak's critical work "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is an essential source for articulating the primary challenge in postcolonial feminism. (1988). Spivak examines the Western imperialist overdetermination of the subaltern woman in this essay, calling into question her ability to speak and be heard outside Eurocentric epistemic restrictions. This postcolonial feminist scholar documents Western feminism's prescriptive tendency when she claims that "confidence in the possibility of global alliance in politics is popular among women of dominant social groupings engaged in 'international feminism'" (Spivak, 1988:84). Spivak proposes here that dominating social groupings transfer the Western movement's goals onto the struggles of the voiceless, third-world woman. Spivak's key point in warning us against "romanticizing and homogenizing the subaltern subject" is that the experiences of marginalized women in different historical and geographical contexts are not always the same (Spivak, 1988: 84). She advises against outsiders (especially those from the West) romanticizing what is often a bleak reality for colonial and formerly colonized women as subaltern subjects. In the same vein, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) poses the issue of African women's voicelessness as follows: "Are African women voiceless, or do we fail to hunt for their voices wherever they may be found? In the places and forms where these voices are heard?... we must seek out African women's

voices in female settings and modalities, such as rites and work songs" (1994:11). In this argument, Ogundipe-Leslie contends that African women do not lack a voice, but scholars look for these voices in the wrong places.

2.3. A process of exploration through Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness

The complexities of South African society under apartheid tended to marginalise Feminist content in art, partly because it was identified with white, middle-class, western ideals and labelled elitist. In a country where the majority of the population was dispossessed and oppressed both socially and politically, cultural activities were often biased towards activism, especially in the late 1970s. Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness can be seen as a refusal of the frameworks and spaces that South African Black women are forced to occupy. In this theory, refusal can be argued as a mode of critical thought, hugely influenced by the Black Consciousness thought. Through communal engagements, it seeks to embrace uncertainty and humility in the experiences and choices of Black South African women. In this instance, it involves methods of creating art, writing and archiving that struggle alongside and work with diverse, critical and self-reflective post-apartheid contexts.

Being rooted in the concept of exploring and understanding self through thinking and creating in community was an experience I would want to continue engage and grow in as a young, black, female who still wishes to pursue academia in the field of Performance Studies. It was an experience where I constantly had to go back to who I am, how I know myself, how I remember myself and how I know what I know about myself. Who am I when I speak for myself? It was a process of constant decentering. I had to decentre from ways in which I was taught on how to prepare as an actor or as a director. Through this process, an approach on how to carry one's memories and experiences, share them in community and allowing fellow black women to hold and pass on these memories and explorations to the audience through performance was an in-depth process that birthed the need to explore more theories and approaches on how we write and perform our blackness.

Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness recognizes the significance of hair identity politics in the black South African female experience, acknowledging that it is a powerful tool of self-exploration and cultural identity. This approach emphasizes the need for black women to embrace and celebrate their natural hair, challenging and rejecting the Eurocentric beauty standards that have historically been imposed upon them. By doing so, black women can assert their own identities and resist the oppressive structures that seek to limit their freedom and agency. In this study, Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness sees hair as a site of resistance and empowerment in performance research for black women.

Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness can also be argued to emphasize the need for black women to take an active role in shaping their own liberation and to challenge patriarchal structures that limit their freedom and agency. It also recognizes the intersectionality of black women's experiences, acknowledging

that their identities are shaped not only by race and gender but also by factors such as class, sexuality, religion, spirituality, mental health, and ability.

This understanding encourages black women to explore and celebrate the unique qualities of their hair and its significance in their personal and cultural heritage. Overall, it offers a more nuanced and inclusive approach to black liberation that recognizes the unique challenges faced by black women and seeks to address them in meaningful ways.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on Practice as Research and autoethnography, the foundation of my preferred research methodology. I will briefly discuss both methodologies in research and provide some information about how they came to be seen as a valuable and practical way to examine one's work. These methods are helpful in arts research and in research exploring one's art production and creation. In the following chapter, I support and demonstrate how these methodologies, which are a diverse field of study, relate to my work as a writer, director and self-reflecting artistic scholar. This chapter introduces Practice as Research and autoethnography as a methodology and frames discussions and reflections on my rehearsal, writing, and directing processes, particularly relating to the creation and rehearsal process of the performance piece I created, and was performed in October 2022, *Demazane Ntombazane!*

3.1. Performance as Research and Autoethnography

This research will use qualitative research methods that involve a strong focus on performance as a research methodology with the utilization of autoethnography, in that I am the subject of my own study. I will be using my personal hair journey and experiences to reflect on self as subject of research.

Baz Kershaw (1998) observed that practice as research had become a well-established approach to using creative performance as a method of enquiry in universities. He states that the establishment and growth of interest in the idea of practice or performance as research is reflected in the increasing number of publications devoted to the subject that grapple with the concept in all its heterogeneity and complexity. Mark Fleishman, in his article 'The difference of performance as research' states that "definitions of performance as research are at best provisional, there is a general consensus that performance as research concerns research that is carried out through or by means of performance, using methodologies and specific methods familiar to performance practitioners, and where the output is at least in part, if not entirely, presented through performance" (2012:28). In other words, such activity suggests that there are certain epistemological issues that can only be addressed in and through performance itself and that such performance practice 'can be both a form of research and a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available'. Hence, there is no necessary connection 'assumed between the apparatus of research and the written word' (Chang, 2016).

For Kershaw, placing 'creativity at the heart of research implies a paradigm shift, through which established ontologies and epistemologies of research in arts-related disciplines potentially could be radically undone' (1998:105). Performance as research is carried out through or by means of performing using methodologies and specific methods familiar to performance practitioners, and where the output is at least in part, if not entirely, presented through performance (Fleishman, 2012). In other words, such activity suggests that there

are certain epistemological issues that can only be addressed in and through performance itself and such performance practice 'can be both a form of research and a legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available'.

Fleishman argues that the performance as research

"Is a process of creative evolution. It is not progressivist, building towards a finality; nor is it mechanistic in the sense that it knows what it is searching for before it begins searching. It begins with energy (an impulse, an idea, an intuition, a hunch) that is then channelled, durationally, through repetition, in variable and indeterminable directions; a series of unexpected and often accidental explosions that in turn lead to further explosions. It expresses itself through a repeated, though flexible and open-ended, process of ontogenesis" (2012:34).

It is not, as Gregory Bateson (1977) would say, 'bounded by ... skin but includes all external pathways along which information can travel' (1977:231). According to Fleishman (2012), if performance as research is anything, it is the desire to make conscious, to become aware from within the midst of the endless process of becoming and then to attempt to translate this for others through a variety of modalities. He suggests that this requires a kind of perceptual still point, a slowing down or thickening of the ongoing, of the flow, so as to surface the differences in the spaces in-between. According to Dr. Rollie, performance as research is performative, dynamic and evolving practices (2016). She argues it is public thus political, deeply invested in exploring the intersections of knowledge, culture, understanding and performance. She suggests that performance as research generates questions and embraces the complexity of lived and performed experiences. According to Fleishman, Performance as research carries a "radical openness" and embraces "multiplicities, [with] its unrepresentability, its destabilization of all pretentions to fixity and determination" (2012:36).

While accepting that there are no neat and easy solutions to these problems, Rollie (2016) believes that scholars are convinced that there are differences that exist between performance as research and other forms of scholarship and that these are important and productive for the discipline, that they open up new ways of thinking and new subjects for exploration that traditional textual scholarship does not or cannot gain purchase on. There is no doubt that increasing numbers of scholars and students within the discipline wish to include performance as an integral part of their research activity and that this number widens as we move across geographical boundaries and particularly away from the Western academic context. There is a real desire for information and a real need to articulate what performance as research is all about, how it works and how it differs from other ways of knowing.

However, by suggesting that performance constitutes an alternative way of knowing, Fleishman (2012) is not suggesting in some naive way that performance as research will or should simply replace other forms of scholarship. In his article, he states that too often in the past practitioner–researchers have jumped reactively to defend the discontinuities between what we do and what they do, between embodied practice and traditional

textual scholarship. He believes that such a response is often framed as a contest between epistemes: the particularity of performance as a way of knowing and its place vis-a-vis dominant and hegemonic forms of knowing in the academy. In the narrative of this contest, the dominant way of knowing is characterized as being distanced, static, dispassionate, and self-contained contemplation, a product of the mind as somehow separate from the body, giving rise to concepts that are durable, stable, available, and transmissible, requiring a language shared by a community and a particular technology of communicating that language – in this case, writing (Kershaw, 1998). The performance way of knowing is, by contrast, close, active, immediate, on the move, embodied, sensual, fluid, interactional and effectively engaged. It gives rise to representations but is not of itself 'a project concerned with representation' (Fleishman 2012:29). It is a way of acting on the world 'probing more deeply into it and discovering the significance that lies there' (Ingold, 2000:11). According to Fleishman, this significance is available to those who are attuned to it and transmissible through the interactional relationships of bodies.

Autoethnography is an approach that emphasizes "employing oneself and comprehending or recognizing oneself or culture as the subject of inquiry" (Wade, 2015:194). According to Ellis and Bochner (2011), it is a method of conducting research and writing that aims to methodically analyze and "describe a personal experience to comprehend cultural experience". In the instance of this dissertation, I am looking at performance creation and performance. My identity, personal experience and story are central in this research. I use autoethnography as a tool to contribute to the academic archives on black hair experiences and Black female body narratives. Through performance and creative writing, I document a personal journey.

Ellis & Bochner (2001) advise scholars who use autoethnographic methodologies in their writing and research should "concentrate on producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitize readers to issues of personal and consequently social identity politics, to open up experiences shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with" (Ellis & Bochner, 2011: 274). Through this research method, one got to understand and experience how our worlds as art creators are mostly created through interpretation.

Autoethnography allowed me to recognize how my identity, views, and values affect how I conduct research. For example, I had to search for parts of myself in 'Izithakazelo' (Clan praises); where do I see myself in them? How do I see myself in them? The process of journeying from memory to how I visualize and include it in performance required me not to leave out the personal, political, and spiritual aspects of myself. They can be perceived as the elements that kept me grounded in the process of this research.

As art creators and researchers, some things, behaviours, or incidences cannot be analyzed but instead require narratives and stories to be communicated. During the rehearsal process of *Demazane Ntombazane!* the memories and stories shared among the cast and myself allowed us to connect and relate to one another.

This is one of the methodologies that demands openness and encourages vulnerability from the researcher. By allowing other people to hear about the actions and events that took place, vulnerability can, in a way, be seen as being brave. Custer (2014) argued that autoethnography embodies innovation and creativity. Since it concentrates on individual experiences, autoethnography is then original by design and inspires creativity by allowing the reader's imagination to run wild. Knowing that autoethnography refers to not just understanding/examining personal experiences but also connecting the individual to understanding cultural/social experiences gives significance to this dissertation. Although cultural experience and context might refer to various things, for this study, performance is part of the culture.

Considering the argument above, I choose autoethnography as my preferred research methodology because it is relevant and connects with my work. This methodology also allows for the performers to grow in terms of finding a space of relationality between the research and the world around them. In that way, not only the researcher benefits.

3.2. The experience of writing 'self'

> … the self-portrait painter] must begin with the invisible, with lines rawer than bone or flesh, building volume and tone, sketch and underpaint, into a finished replica of himself. So, he works from memory as well as sight, in two levels of time, on two planes of space, while reaching for those other dimensions, depth, and future. The process is alternatively reductive and expansive; it imparts to a single picture the force of universal implications. [Autoethnography] is a literary version of this curious artifact. (Howarth.1974.2)

One of the dynamics I came across as I was reading more about autoethnography was the problem of perceiving the self as a construct worthy of being spoken about in the first place. Especially in academia, around people who deal with more complex and fundamental studies. As I read more on this methodology, I understood its purpose, impact, and need in the arts.

According to Coullie et al. (2006), this type of methodology is a search to answer the question, "How did I become who I am?" Thus, it is not as neat and straightforward. Creating a performance of the self is a private experience of unravelling the self and then exposing the results to the world. The excavation of memories and of the self is followed by polishing and displaying (In this instance, performance). For the audience, watching the autoethnographic performances can sometimes be seen as an act of seeking. We search for ourselves in the world of the text and see similarities between our characteristics and the performer's characteristics in the lines

and the body's movement. In this strange process of unravelling and seeking, there are beautiful moments of meeting and understanding the self as the work's creator and with each other (the cast and the audience).

In the creation process of *Demazane Ntombazane!* I worked a lot through memories and stories. There is an ethnographic element to this research that is also interpretive. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) put it, "[i]nterpretive research shares with hermeneutics a concern for meaning…framed by descriptions of, explanations for, or meanings given to phenomena by both the researcher and the study participants rather than by the definitions and interpretations of the researcher alone." (1993:31-32). This is about the director's choice of allowing the audience to interpret the performance stations as they wish. For this performance, I did not get to converse with the audience about the meaning behind each station and about how they perceived the piece, making it challenging to write the self for public consumption.

Having been nurtured and widely used by members of the feminist movement, the autoethnographic form has become a powerful way to declare the performer's presence. Heddon (2008) argues it serves as an act of speaking out and of making oneself heard or representing oneself in a society that marginalizes the subject. The performer/creator of the autoethnographic research has a way of revealing their innermost selves in such a way that they become the embodiment of every possible pattern.

In this dissertation, *Demazane Ntombazane!* is seen as a case study for this autoethnographic exploration. Its creation process can be observed as a method/s of studying one of many art processes and products. The production of this component is studied to explore the different aspects of the process. From the development of the research idea, to how the text was generated from the personal hair stories and to the performance production. In working with this performance piece as a case study, I observed a constant progression toward discoveries and understandings regarding story development, developing grounded and in-depth characters, and relating the rehearsal process to our realities. The explorative analysis of this case study allowed me to enter an unpredictable space in which I discovered the unknown within the well-known parts of the self while continually observing my own choices and performance as an aspiring artistic scholar.

Chapter 4

The intention behind this chapter - through autoethnography - is to locate myself within the conversations of hair discussed in the literature chapter to interrogate, through theatre and performance, how I come to understand myself using hair as a tool of exploration. This chapter is layered in the following manner. First, I will describe and offer a narrative around what *Demazane Ntombazane!* is about, which will intersect with why and how the work was initially developed. It is significant for every work I create to explore/question layers forming part of what is visible to the audience. In this way, I offer my perspective on what action or event I am interrogating. Secondly, I will look at how the work of *Demazane Ntombazane!* came about. From the first version to the reworked final version. The foundations of the work must be understood, and see where and what they lead to. Finally, I will look at the creation, the process, and the final performances of how *Demazane Ntombazane!* was developed.

Demazane Ntombazane! explores the process of weaving memories, history, izibongo (Clan/praise names), and stories together to make sense of one's identity. *Demazane Ntombazane!* conceptualized the black female body as an umsamo (altar), a sacred space for ancestral connection, self-reflection, and expression. Where one discovers and meets one's true self repeatedly. Umsamo is used to 'house' ancestors in your place of living (home). In this instance, the body is the place of living. It is where we pray, communicate, plead, rejoice, and express our true selves. The concept of creation and performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* was influenced by McKittrick (2021), who believes that "telling, sharing, listening to, and hearing stories are relational and interdisciplinary acts that are animated by all sorts of people, places, narrative devices, theoretical queries, and plots" (McKittrick, 2021: 6). She believes the process of creating, telling, and experiencing stories is sustained by invention and wonder. The performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* offered an aesthetic relationality that relied on the dynamics of creating, narrating, listening, hearing, reading, and sometimes, unhearing.

Demazane Ntombazane! is a site-specific performance piece that was written and directed by myself, under the supervision of Miss Tamantha Hammerschlag. It was performed on the 19th and 21st October 2022 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. It was part of exploring the black female body and hair identity politics through performance. It is of a young woman, tracing back to the women before her to understand who she is entirely. She comes from generations of women-headed households. Using her hair as a source of connection between herself, her memories, and the women before her, she explores who she is when she is together (spiritually, physically, and in memories) with these women. Through text and performance, she goes through the process of weaving (ukuluka) the stories and memories together. *Demazane Ntombazane!* is an act of curving multiple voices that are found within one voice.

This speaks to the concept of intertwining or merging different perspectives, experiences, and histories into a singular expression. In the context of *Demazane Ntombazane!* this can be understood as the act of myself as a creator, channeling not just my own voice, but also the voices of the women who came before me. The

"curving" metaphor suggests a non-linear interaction between past and present, where my voice is both distinct and, at the same time, a conduit for ancestral wisdom, collective experiences, and intergenerational knowledge.

As a creator, I am not speaking in isolation; rather, I am speaking through a multi-layered lens of shared experiences. In the creation and staging of *Demazane Ntombazane!* my voice was then a convergence of historical and lived experiences. It is shaped not just by my individual identity but by the collective identities of the women in my lineage, community, and those I identify with. The act of performing these voices is an expression of solidarity with and homage to these women.

It is the process of acknowledging and accepting the layers within our identities through detangling our hair until we find parts of who we are, *emicwini yezinwele zethu* (in the strands of our hair). These explorations and stories are performed in installations. For me, the installations are an act of praise and resistance. They are a persistence on being alive and an insistence on living traces of being here.

I was raised in a household deeply rooted in the Zulu spiritual philosophy and culture. In my primary school years, I attended an all-girls Catholic boarding school and an all-girls high school. I was surrounded by feminine energy from my family, women teachers, and fellow female students. Through memory, I explore how these worlds shaped how I perform blackness through how I wear my hair. In the creation and performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* I use hair as a tool to explore the layers of identities that can be found in me, which connects me to the women before and around me. Through memory, I navigate specific experiences from my childhood about hair (my first salon visit, the sound of a hair clipper, the stinging feeling of a hair relaxer, the intimacy of braiding, the hair combing ritual, my idea of perfect hair, sister-bonding hair rituals, etc.)

Through performance, I also navigate the cross-generational understanding of hair. I navigate this world by exploring my relationships with my mother, grandmother, father, religion, spirituality, and politics. I unpack the journey and process of making meaning of these experiences and accepting them as a part of my identity. Through performance and creating, I reflect on what it means for me as a performer and a young, black South African female to exist in this era—always having to defend and justify my hair choices. Parts of the performance explore how the body of a young, black female finds its voice through performance while being ridiculed and judged for the way it carries its Africanness through hair.

4.1. Autoethnography

> In my heart (and the multiple hearts that exist within my heart), I believe that as Black people, we move through the physical world and psycho-spiritual worlds as archives. Your father's nose on your face? Your mother's wide hips? Your grandmother's high cheekbones? These exist as physical evidence of the endurance and invincibility of amaYirha, Batshweneng,

> ooXaba, ooJamabase, ooDlamini, Chavalala, Hlatshwayo as you move in the world. (Xaba, 2021:)

Conversations around the topic of hair, I believe, are something that will keep coming up as we try to reimagine what has been written about us and learn more about ourselves and our history as black South African women. The 2016 Pretoria Girls High School incident and the discussions and conversations it stirred on social media influenced my interest in researching hair identity politics and wanting to understand the influences behind how we view and relate to our hair. The pupils of Pretoria Girls High School protested the school's code of conduct which viewed and labelled their natural hair as 'not neat' and did not meet the school's perception of 'good hair.'

As I was introduced to the world of discourse, I often heard that our hair is historical. It has a journey and stories to tell. As I embarked on a journey to learn more about the history of black hair in South Africa, I came across many philosophies, beliefs, and worlds of hair that I have encountered but never fully understood. For me, a black woman relaxed her hair because she wanted to look beautiful. A black married woman will only cut her hair if she lost her husband. A young black woman would have dreadlocks because she is lesbian. It never occurred to me that a woman would wear her hair a certain way as a political choice or statement. As I read and listened to other people's hair experiences and preferences, I learned that how they wear their hair is more than a choice for black women. For us, hair is history; hair is mental health. Hair is politics. Hair is spirituality. Hair is biology. Hair is beauty. Hair is money, and hair is a journey. A journey that you can ask fellow women to go with you on or a journey that you would instead take alone.

Demazane Ntombazane! is a performance piece with a strong element of installation art, exhibition, site-specific, and performance art. The performance consisted of six female performers (Amanda Zuma, Sisanda Radebe, Sinethemba Maphumulo, Noluthando Mbonambi, Sanelisiwe Nqayi, and Asande Zuma) and it took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The performance traveled from the Hexagon Theatre foyer to the New Arts Building corridor and staff offices. *Demazane Ntombazane!* in its performance layout, applied the structure of having different performances happening in different parts of the site/s, giving the audience the liberty to join the pieces together and make meaning from them. The performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!* started at the foyer with the entire cast, and the audience journeyed with them into their respective stations (the offices and the corridor at New Arts Building). Each station was about 7 minutes long. The performances happened simultaneously and repeatedly for 40 minutes, and the audience could watch in whatever order they wished to watch.

For the performance, all aspects of the production were equally important. The set, costume, spoken text, and the performance itself had a connection with each other. All the elements within the piece spoke back to each other. From how the performance was set up to how the performers dressed and the site re-imagined. The performance aspect of the work was achieved mostly through the set, spoken word, song, physical theatre, and storytelling. The rehearsals had a significant impact on the creation and execution of the performance. As an

aspiring theatre practitioner and writer, I got the opportunity to work with the cast to be a part of my journey. Through *ukuxoxa nokuzendlala* (conversing and being vulnerable) in front of the people who will be re-telling my journey to the audience, I discovered techniques to broaden perspectives around using stories to relate to one another. The techniques allowed the cast members to be part of the journey of reimagining how we can tell, imprint, and archive our identities in the institutions of higher learning. *Ukuxoxa* (conversing) in the presence of young, black women who are in the art and understand the importance of the journey that we still must go on as young, black female South African creatives felt safe. It created an intimate space of vulnerability, moments of prayers, and songs. There were moments of relatability in what they shared in response to the performance idea and the exercises to prepare them for the performance.

In the final performances, I also wanted to create an intimate environment for the audience—an environment where they could closely experience the journey with the performers. I did not only want them to experience the closeness of the performers' bodies but also the smell of the space, the sounds, the breaths, and the layers of the performers' voices throughout the performance.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will be looking at the creation methodology and how the work was developed.

4.2. The creation methodology

What is significant about the performers of *Demazane Ntombazane!* is that a part of their performance influence and training was developed in the same drama department at UKZN- Pietermaritzburg campus. They are also students researching and tackling black women's issues and experiences through art and performance. This played a significant role in understanding and adapting their characters for the performance. Each step in creating *Demazane Ntombazane!* was designed to develop and strengthen a sense of community through performance for myself, the cast, and the audience. For this section, I will share the creation process of the piece and analyze and reflect on each performance station.

The process

Creating and coming up with the concept and ideas for the final product of *Demazane Ntombazane!* consisted of much learning and unlearning for me, both as a creative and a student. Since this was an autoethnographic study, it required me to tap into the uncomfortable parts of myself and my experiences. Ellis and Bochner (2001) believe that the researcher's past and lived experiences are prioritized as sources of information in research. Autoethnographers' reflective experiences and stories serve to "connect emotion, embodiment, spirituality, morality, culture, and history" (Ellis & Bochner, 2011:37). It can be said that autoethnography is an act of connecting the personal to the cultural and political. In the creation of *Demazane Ntombazane!* I was

the site of excavation. Excavation of fragments of memories and how I remember myself. The way in which I remembered myself hugely impacted the visual aspects of the production. I could not remember my childhood memories outside my home. I took parts of my home with every memory. In the artistic response to the memories, the elements of home and intimacy ended up being visible in every station in the performance. That created a safe space to hold my memories and hair journey.

With autoethnography, the aim is to produce evocative and healing stories through acts of writing that lead to "self-discovery and self-creation" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008:300). The performer's artistic process was mainly driven by conversation and song. The rehearsal process started after I was done with all the material for the performance. The material included my memories on specific incidents, my memories of my mother's words and how I remember those incidents. I then wrote 5 pieces of texts, and thought of the world in which these texts would exist in. What I needed most was for the performers to understand the type of world I wanted to create for the performance. In as much as they were accompanying me in sharing my journey and experiences through performance, I also needed them to be accompanied by their own stories and experiences in the performance. Even for them, there was a process of excavating. The stories of the women in our families and how we see ourselves in them, and them in us. How we remember the way they perform their womenness in the household? How do we interpret their quietness and stillness? How we remember their prayers and praises? The aim was to use ourselves to learn about the women before and around us, through sharing their stories. How they sit, walk and what we think when we see them.

Rehearsals played a massive role in the creation and development of the piece. I started the work alone. I wanted first to explore objects and sounds that stirred my childhood memories. Who I was before I knew I was black.

Early stages of the creation process

After journaling down my memories and experiences with hair, I read them continuously in different spaces. My journaling was prompted by '*Ngikhumbula…*' which translates to 'I remember…'. I used a format of re-telling a memory in a form of a story. I journaled the memories of my first salon visit, the day I shaved my hair because of boils in my head, my experience in high school and how my mother spoke about my hair. I would sometimes play music as I was reading these memories. I read them out loud. I read them in silence. I read with the intention of listening to the memories. I wanted to hear what these memories artistically demanded from me. I then wrote a response to the memories. Some of the questions that facilitated the response were:

- How do you see the women you grew up around?
- How did the ones you have never met look like?
- How are these women?

- Where do you see them?
- Where are you in them?
- Who are they?
- How do you see them now?

As I read the written response, I took note of the different objects that came to mind while reading and re-reading the text. Most of the objects are found within a household. The objects included mirrors, a chair, a school uniform, pictures, hair extensions, combs, white cloths, shawls, books and enamel dishes. After collecting these objects, I recited the memories out loud as I placed these objects around the room in positions that felt like a response to the memories. I asked my friend to join me in playing with the idea. This method assisted me as a director with the ability to listen to text and to respond visually to it. I also used the UKZN PMB Drama Department corridor as a space in which I visually respond to the text. I listened to how the space carried the text, I did that by repeating the lines over and over again and began stationing the objects in the space one by one. The idea of the space acting as a carrier of the text was made successful by creating a unique relationship between the text, the object and the space.

The link below is a video recording of the two spaces I used to explore the response to my memories of hair visually.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11bYYkbuBWUhUxqKOoaLxqDIcsMwzQzCu/view?usp=sharing

This second link is a video containing snippets of the final performance of *Demazane Ntombazane!*

https://drive.google.com/file/d/17ASQCTZHa6ihJVxNkGnKNFAp1xIZL3G6/view?usp=drive_link

Rehearsal process

Rehearsals played a huge role in the creation process of the performance pieces. The rehearsals with the entire cast differed from those I have ever had as an actor and director. Our first rehearsal was on a Sunday morning, and I briefed them on my research and how I would like them to accompany me in telling this story. We talked about hair, our salon visits, stories of other women's hair, our choices, and our beliefs about hair. When reflecting on our conversations, I noticed that the conversation deviated from hair to mental health, to religion and culture, to womanhood, and the existence of a black female body in South Africa today. Somehow, we found similarities in our stories, significantly how the women before us impacted who we are and how we see ourselves. Our rehearsals mainly consisted of stories and songs; we sang songs from childhood, songs from ceremonies, and we made up songs.

In her article, Wanelisa Xaba (2021) unpacks the dangers of the colonial archive and knowledge institutions. She argues that when we center coloniality as our guide and as a system for producing knowledge, we diminish ourselves, belittle indigenous knowledge, and alienate our ancestors (which she believes is also an exclusion

of self). The rehearsal process for me as a researcher provided an opportunity to dream, play, and pray in community. By working with the cast, I got a chance to experience the practice of embracing our experiences and identities through songs and stories. The indigenous songs we sang and the songs we made up emphasized women's journeying together. Songs that recognized and celebrated women. When creating the characters, we played with the idea of a black woman in the homestead during a ceremony. How they sing, move, and how they speak. Through rehearsals, the exploration of the black female body as *Umsamo* introduced the practice of praying in community with black women. In one of the rehearsals, we explored the ritual of *ukuphahla* and how it ignites the spirits of the women before us while communicating with ourselves. That process was spiritually stimulating to the point where one of the cast members got into a medium trance during the rehearsal. In that rehearsal, we tackled the concept of *izibongo* (Clan praises) and conversations with our mothers. We looked at our everyday habits and gestures that make us see parts of our mothers, grandmothers, and sisters in our physical selves and hear them in our voices. We reminisced on our hair conversations with them and their teachings on hair. These intimate processes and practices opened a space of vulnerability, comfort, and relationality between the performers and the stories crafted for the performance piece.

I wanted the cast to experience each other as a group before I had to work with them separately in their stations. I needed to have them together in one space, even though they would perform in different venues. The exercises used in rehearsals to grow the characters, stories, and their stations worked and ensured that the relationship between the story and the performer was solid and relatable.

Station 1

Figure 1: Sisanda Radebe as the woman in station 1 (2022).

The performance opens with a woman carrying a bundle of wood on her head. She is standing underneath a web of braids. The other women are stationed around her. They sang "*Kuleziya ntaba, kukude la esiya khona. Sofika Lishona*" (In those mountains, where we are going is far. We will get there when the sun sets). She introduces and sets the mood for the performance. She is the woman before them. She knows who they are and which parts of them are found in each other. In her performance, she speaks to and about these women through text. Telling them who they are and what they are made of. The delivery of this monologue is inspired by '*ukufemba*' (whereby an ancestor speaks through a Sangoma or a spiritually gifted person). She is inviting them to *Emsamo* to meet their selves. To recognize parts of themselves and their journeys that they may not understand. She is inviting the women and the audience to experience parts of these women's identities and journeys. As the performance progresses, she becomes a force that threads together the stories of these women. She represents the connection between the stories of these women as she is randomly seen in their stations during the performance.

When the audience gets in, they meet her. Standing back to the entrance, she slowly turns towards the audience as the women sing. Her speech and movements are not ordinary, showing she is not of this world. Her opening lines are "*Senaba yimihlatshelo?*" which translates to "Have you become a sacrifice?" These lines speak back to what I mentioned in a section in Chapter 2, of how blackness is always defined in relation to whiteness. These dynamics affect how black women embrace their wholeness and express themselves. It affects how they perform their blackness, even with other black women. Colonisation and apartheid degraded our customs and philosophies, making black women ashamed of publicly performing and embracing their spiritual, emotional, and physical journeys through how they wear their hair, clothes, etc. As a woman who existed before these women were born and experienced the world before colonization, she sees them carrying themselves as a sacrifice. They are sacrificing their black bodies, histories, who they are, and the work of the generations before them. They are sacrificing the archived experiences of black women of their family lineages and South Africa, which resides in their skins and hair.

"Woman 1: Senaba yimihlatshelo? Ubunjwe ngamanzi. Ungumfanekiso wendalo. Ubazwe ngamaphupho. Uyimbumba yeziphrofetho. Uyinhlama yezono zikayihlo, imisiko kanyoko. Ungukushabalala nokuhlubuka kolimi. (Have you become a sacrifice? You are molded with water. You are made in the image of creation. You are carved with dreams. You are a collection of prophecies. You are a batter of your father's sins, your mother's contractions. You are a laceration and extinction of a language).

Amehlo akho athwetshulwe ondlebe zikhanya ilanga. Baxhaphela olwami ulwazi bashaya indiva izimfundiso zokhokho bami. Bathatha ulwazi lwabo balenza umsunu. Bakhanyisa izindlebe zabo ngokuxebula impande yezinwele zakho. (Your sight has been manipulated by the West. They stained my indigenous knowledge and disregarded my ancestor's teachings. They made a mockery of their intelligence. The West enriched itself with the brilliance of your hair roots.)

Ngihlezi entendeni yesandla sabo. Bagcoba ikhandalami ngamafutha indebeyami ichichime. Bangabesifazane besililo, ozinyembezi zabo zingumfula osuhlambe zonke, osuhlambe zonke,

osuhlambe zonke, osuhlambe zonke. Bangabesifazane besililo ozinyembezi zabo ziyimvula evundisa lomhlabathi lo. (I reside at the palm of their hand. They anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows. They are women of prayer whose tears are the river that has purified all, purified all, and purified all. They are the women of prayer whose tears are the rain fertilizing this soil).

Imilomo engathethi manga. Lalela isililo sabo. Ufundise namadodakazi awo ukukhala. Yilowo nalowo makabe nesililo sakhe. Ezinqolobaneni ezafa zagqitshwa bawucu olungabonakali that exists within us." (The tongues that never lie. Listen to their prayers/cries. Teach their daughters how to pray/cry. Each one must have their individual prayer/cry. In the archives that have been buried, they are an unseen piece that exists within us)

There are elements of praise in this station's monologue. They are there to create a space for a plurality of being. For these women to keep meeting parts of themselves that they did not know existed within them or may have forgotten about. This opening monologue tells us: How did these women become who they are? Who are they when they are not spoken for? Who are they when they are not spoken of? Who are they when parts of them talk, and the world is summoned to listen? The second line of the monologue, "*Ubunjwe ngamanzi (You are moulded with water),*" is about being guided by the spirits of water. In the Zulu spiritual realm, being guided by the spirits of water means you are a very powerful being. It is impossible to mould something with just water. This line affirms these women and reminds them they are a generation of never-imagined women. They are moulded from the impossible. "U*yinhlama yezono zikayihlo, imisiko kanyoko* (*you are a batter of your father's sins, your mother's contractions*)." This line symbolizes the merging of differently gendered bodies that existed and continue to exist in different realms. Parts of these bodies and identities now exist in the bodies of these women. The being/ performance of these women portrays a past-present experience when they are meeting themselves through this woman's words. This woman's words are a mirror in which these women are learning about themselves. In the performance of *Demazane Ntombazane*!, just like how "hair represents the coming together of the past, the text and the post-colonial narrative" (Powe,2009:10), these women portray how the experiences of their mother's mothers are a part of their beings and influence their performance.

The performance of the monologue happens underneath a web of braids. The web symbolizes the connective force that this woman is. These women are connected through her, and parts of their stations speak back to this woman's monologue. There are parts of her in each woman's station. The bundle of wood in her head symbolizes her relation to the earth. Those woods are what she gained from this earth and what she wishes to let go of. When her monologue is finished, the women get up and go up the stairs to their stations. She instructs the audience to go up the steps and follow the women. The audience goes past her, up the stairs to where the rest of the performances happen. She puts down the bundle of wood, takes a sjambok, and follows the audience as if she is herding them.

The image of her 'herding' the audience is related to the story behind the title of the piece: *Demazane Ntombazane*! and why she is the force that connects the stories of these women in the piece. In the history of the Ndlovu surname, there was a young girl named Demazane. She was the daughter of Gatsheni (Ndlovu). Originally from Lesotho, they moved to KZN because of the extremely cold weather conditions in Lesotho. They couldn't find a shepherd to herd their many cattle because it was rumoured that people from the Ndlovu clan were witches and wizards since Senzangakhona's warriors always failed to win them over. Demazane took it upon herself to herd her father's cattle. Demazane's brief history is found in the praise name for the Ndlovu clan.

"*Gatsheni, Boya beNyathi,*
Obusonga busombuluka,
Mpongo ka Zingelwayo,
Nina bakwa Ndlovu zidla ekhaya ngokweswela abelusi,
Zase ziluswa intombi uDemazane,
Nina baka Demazane Ntombazane,
Nina bakwasihlangu sihle,
Mthiyane!
Ngokuthiya amadoda emazibukweni,
Mdubusi!"

Herding cattle was and is still widely known as a man's job. For Demazane to take it upon herself to dismantle the status quo can be argued as an act of re-shifting and re-shaping the narrative of the black female body. 'Herding' the audience can also be seen as re-shaping and re-imagining the space of writing and archiving our narrative in academia through performance. In theatre, the audience usually shapes the structure of how the performance will be set by the way they are seated. The director blocks the actor's movements based on how the audience is sitting. In *Demazane Ntombazane*!, the audience is 'herded' to the performance stations. The performances are not blocked according to how the audience is seated but rather by how the director wants the story to be told and received. The audience could watch the performance in whatever order and angle.

Station 2

Figure 2: Sinethemba Maphumulo as the woman in station 2 (2022).

This performance happens in an office space. A straw mat is on the floor, and on the right is a broom made of dry grass, raw red beans placed on a tray, and an enamel mug with water. Adapted from a character developed and created in the 2022 Drama Honours production '*Ingqungquthela yezifebe: A congregation of Women'* by Sinethemba Maphumulo, this station sought to analyze and explore the black female body as *Umsamo* in contemporary South Africa, through the character of '*Umakoti*.' Using performance, this station served as a deep reflection and confrontation of one's experiences and memories. Similar to black Zulu women, black hair undergoes a lot of pressure, resistance, and subjugation. The performer goes on the journey of different stages of learning and unlearning who she is. Creating this station was more of an initiation process for me as a writer and creative who values the experiences and livelihoods of black women in South Africa. It explored finding your voice as a black woman in space and culture positioned and structured to silence you. It is the beginning of finding and exploring one's voice, cementing yourself in that voice, and growing in it. The process and performance also explored the questions, 'Who are you when nobody speaks for you? Who are you now? How do you see yourself and those around you? How are you feeling?'

Mandla Mbothwe (2010) explains that "rituals incorporate spirituality, the soul, the body…they tell us that we are multiple people. We are the results of other people's actions, and we continue becoming who we are because of those actions." The performance in this station begins with a woman kneeling, body covered with a shawl. Underneath the shawl, she repeats one of the actions that form part of *ukuphahla*: the continuous clapping of hands in a rhythm. This is one of the actions done in the ritual of summoning and inviting the spirits of *Amadlozi/Amathongo* (ancestors). *Ukuphahla* is a very intimate practice, where one gets to be very vulnerable as they are gaining their spiritual strength and asking for the presence of their ancestors in that

space and time. The practice opens a space in which our ancestors can form part of the conversations by permitting us to enter a consciousness (through trances, singing, burning of incense and candles, etc.) that allows us to see and understand things that cannot easily be spoken into language. "Access to these forms of truth-telling allows us to access the spiritual moulding in which the self is cast. In so doing, the self is not only realized in the physical and material sense but is also formulated in conversation with spiritual community wherein our ancestors reside." (Moche, 2020: 49)

The style of this station can be argued to be in alignment with Mandla Mbothwe's key concerns as a theatre maker, to introduce the experience and elements of ritual in African tradition into theatre and academic conversation with modernist and avant-garde theatre practice (Barnes, 2015). I believe this opens a space for black creatives and academics to investigate more and document their spiritual and cultural identities in contemporary South Africa. The performance in this station adopts *ukuphahla* as a theme. The performer's first lines are "*Amandla ami lawa. Ngiyadliwa la. Kudliwa Amandla ami*" which translates to "These are my efforts. I am being eaten. They are eating my efforts". She says these lines while pointing and looking at a shawl in front of her as she moves around it, saying the lines with a growing expression of agitation as she is saying them repeatedly. When calmer, she takes it and wraps it close to her tummy, caressing it. The shawl can be said to symbolize what keeps her warm. The experiences she has been through that are now a part of her.

Her following lines are: "*Ngiyesaba. Ngesaba ukona*." Which easily translates to "I am afraid. I am afraid of doing it wrong". This woman is on a journey; she is journeying in fear. These lines can be looked at rather as an acknowledgement of Ndelu's (2015:2) statement where she asks, as a black female South African, "Where do I draw the line between self-caring for my body and not breaching my decolonial pact of pro-blackness, ubuntu, and restoration?" In a country where your body (hair) as a black woman is constantly the point of debate, having to stand up for who you are, puts you in a position of being caught between politics of the black female body (rape, discrimination, crime, murder, patriarchy, etc) and politics of this country (racism). In this station, this woman recognizes herself, her weaknesses, and her strengths through her voice. "*Phela izwi lami lingulwandle olugubha amagagasi (My voice is the raging sea) ngiyazi nonyiwe, kepha ngiyesaba (I know you are thirsty, but I am afraid) ngoba izwi lam liyimpophoma ehlala izinkanyamba. (Because my voice is the waterfall where izinkanyamba inhabits.) lingumfula ogeleza igazi. (It is the river where blood flows.) ngyawubona umhlaba womile kodwa ngesaba amandla ami. (I see the dry earth but fear my power).*"

As she says these lines, this woman talks to the women before and after her. She can be interpreted as a woman in her homestead, tracing her footsteps and journey. She is talking about how her voice is like the waters. The text in this station is woven around the concept of water. "African cultures characterize water by its life-giving nature, as both physical and spiritual in essence – but even of greater spiritual utility than physical." (Hagan, 2020: 2). The sea is known as one of the places where one can pray, get cleansed and can practice *ukuphahla* at. Some ancestors are believed to reside in the waters and are known as the most powerful ancestors. Hence,

only a few people have the gift of communicating with them. So, when this woman compares her voice to the raging sea, a waterfall, or a river where blood flows, it gives a sense that her voice can either give you life or take it from you (like water). In her words, we understand that she is not alone in this life journey. She recognizes the powers and resilience of those before her.

Mbothwe (2008:29) previously wrote, "[W]e, particularly young people, are living through a social and spiritual crisis". The performance in this station speaks to Mbothwe's statement through the shift between the performer's body and the text. The performer moves cautiously and slowly throughout the performance, yet her words are compelling, prompting her to take up space and physically own it. She moves faintly during her performance, and most of the time, her head faces down. It reflects how black women in this country must tread very carefully when speaking about their identities and experiences. The pressure and fear of having to re-write narratives that have been misrepresented for a long time put us in a state of confusion and distress, both socially and spiritually. There is also an element of relationality with *Umsamo* in how the performer moves in the space. *Umsamo* is treated with grace and nobility, and the voices must always be soft. Through the text and physical movements of the performer, it can be argued that this station portrayed acts of bravery and resistance.

Station 3

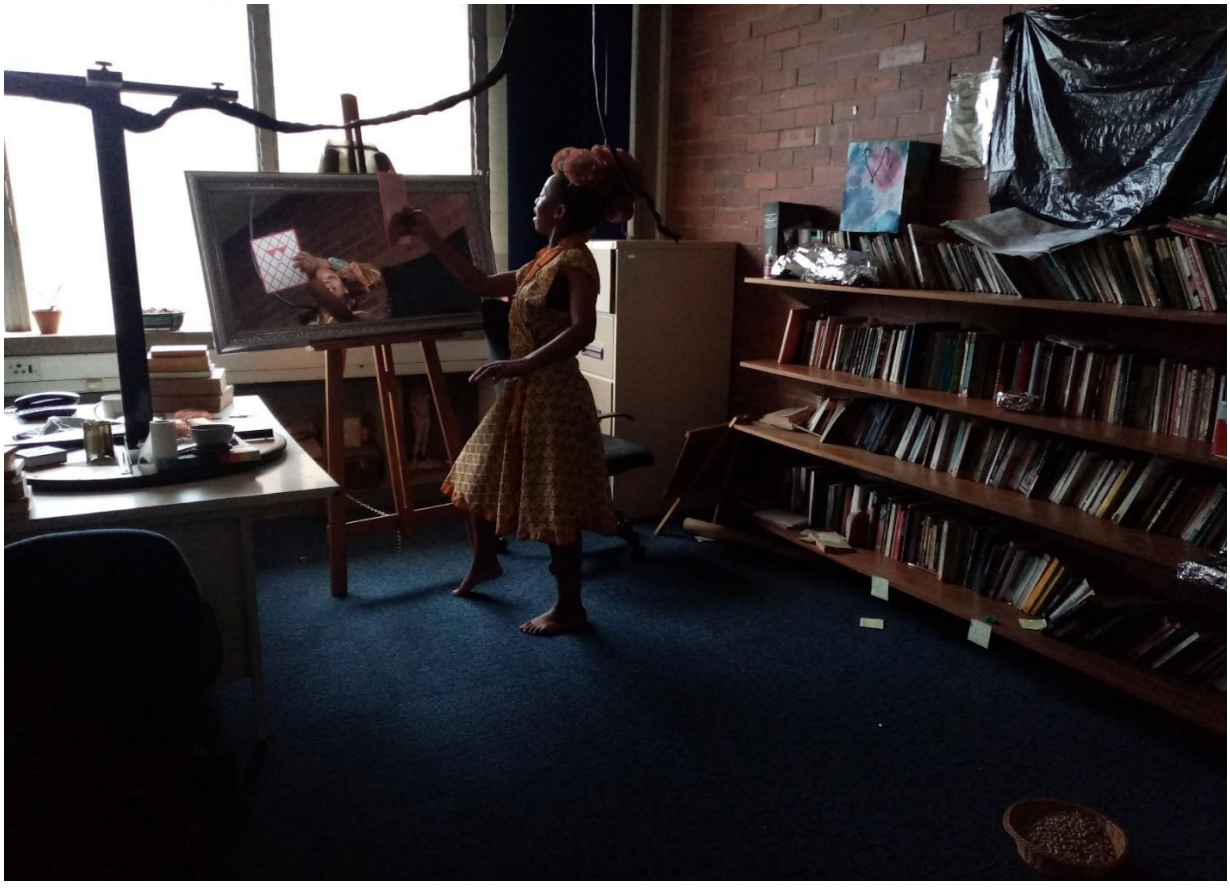

Figure 3: Noluthando Mbonambi as the woman in station 3. (2022)

This performance happens in an academic office space. This part of the performance looks at affirming all that you are through text and performance. Through text, we get that the woman appreciates, owns, and recognizes the history and journey of her hair. The primary props for this station were mirrors and scouring pads. The artistic work of a renowned South African visual artist and activist, Zanele Muholi, inspired them. The initial photograph that inspired this station's set and the performer's hairstyle is titled '*Bester V, Mayotte, 2015'* by Zanele Muholi. In this photograph, Muholi's face is painted black, and her head is decked out in scouring pads. The first time I saw that photograph, it reminded me of the times I was growing up. My younger sister had very coiled hair. We would normally tease her and call her hair "steel wool." When reflecting on that memory, I remember that most of the time, it would be because we were envious of her hair and how black, healthy, and voluminous it was compared to ours. At that time, relaxing hair was a big thing among our peers and the black community. No matter how healthy your hair was, if it were not relaxed or straightened, we would consider it ugly and call it "steel wool or kaffir hare." Nowadays, the "steel wool" hair is considered beautiful and woke and inspires black pride. I acknowledge the discourse around this portrait, on how other scholars view it as a mockery of black people, especially in the USA. In this instance, I am referring to and relating to it from the perspective of a South African, influenced by the language and culture of the black community.

One of the incidents in 2020 that this performance spoke back to, was the protest over an online advert for TRESemmé products featured by Clicks. That advert degraded black hair by depicting African hair labelled "frizzy and Dull" and "Dry and Damaged. "While white hair was labelled "Normal" and "Fine and flat." Most people took to social media to voice their concerns and shock over this advert. In response to the advert, Nombulelo Shange, who is a lecturer at the Department of Sociology at the University of Free State, stated that her anger turned into disappointment as some black men felt confused by black women's outrage or felt aggrieved regarding this advert because our role models are women who typically wear straight, blonde weaves (News 24, 2020).

Shange (2020) shares how, historically, we have always wanted black men to be our allies in various struggles, even in this incident. She says that, unfortunately, in different spaces or social justice issues, we often find that black men are just not there, especially in matters that resonate primarily with black women. As our allies, they do not come to our defence. This incident illustrates this, judging from their social media comments. She believes that whichever way you look at this, whether through the white or male gaze, the problem with both is that black women are stripped of their rights to choose what kind of expression they want to put out. It is often done in violent ways, where our beauty is put into question. You often feel alienated in your community because you do not fit specific criteria.

The above argument influenced the ukuzibongela (Self-praise) element in this station. One of the aims was to use *ukuzibongela* as a stage for reaffirmation and commanding to be listened to. The performer commands the audience through text. The performance, through text, aimed to create a space for recognizing black beauty

within the self and the community of black female bodies around. The creation of this station was derived from an indigenous game called "*Khilikithi*." In this game, each player gets to command other player's attention and introduce themselves by their surname and their mother's surname. Then they showcase their ability of '*ukusina*' (Zulu traditional dance) and how they do it better than the last and the next person. The performance, similar to the *Khilikithi* game, is very proud and over the top. A person (young woman) is given a spotlight to appreciate themselves (hair) and the women before her through the site and self-praise.

Station 4

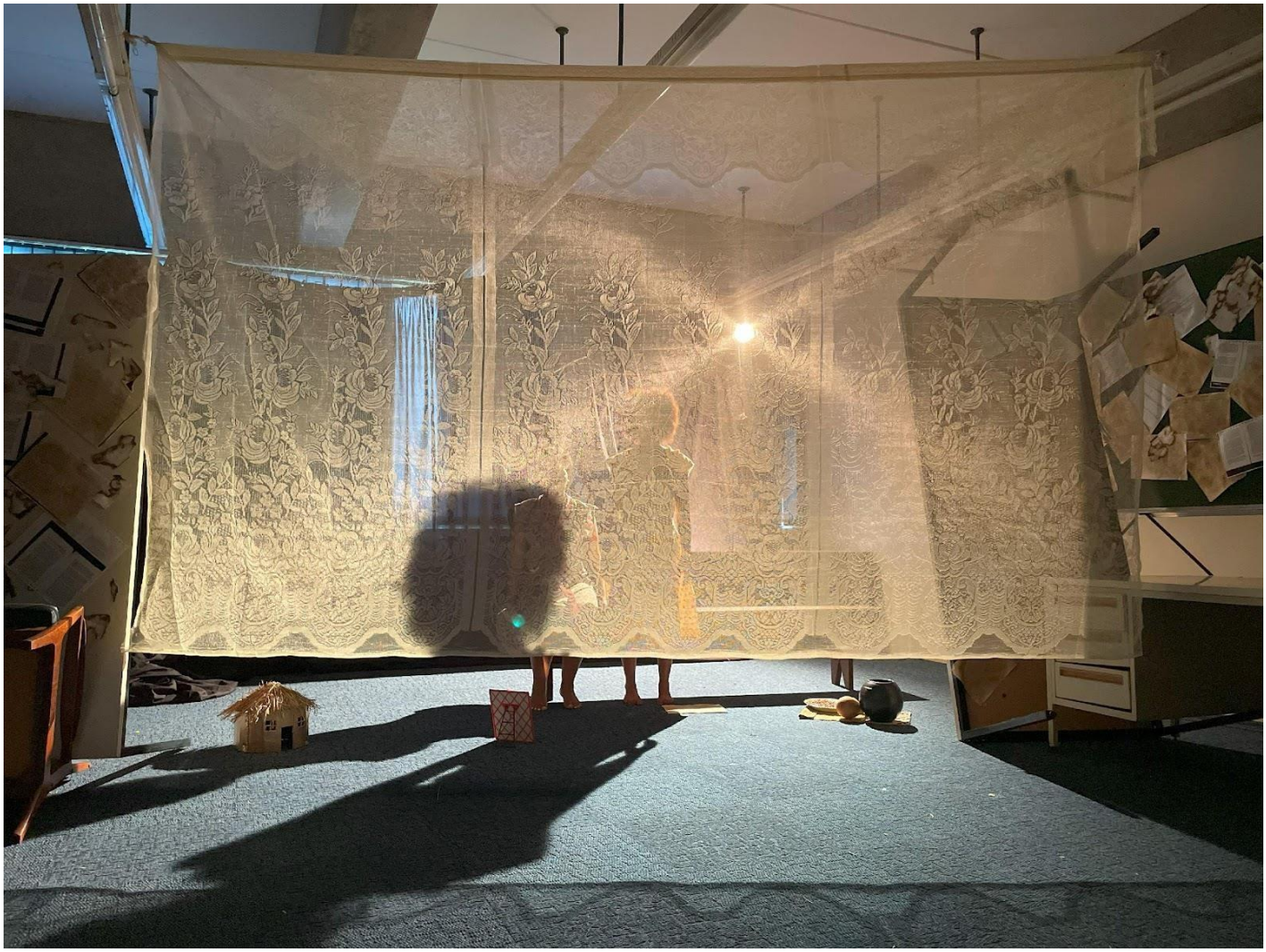

Figure 4: Asande Zuma and Sanelisiwe Nqayi as women in station 4 (2022).

This station explores the relationship between myself and the women before me. It looks at the body as a moving ancestral archive (Xaba, 2021). This performance happens in a Drama seminar room. A lace cloth is used to divide the room into two parts. The one part is where the audience stands, and the other is where the performers are situated, behind the lace cloth.

This station explores how I see the women before me, tracing their existence and seeing them in me. It uses creative text and izibongo (Clan praises) to make meaning. It is an exploration of a refusal of a single story. Refusing to not acknowledge those before you and their existence. Through text, it emphasized an insistence on being alive, an insistence on leaving traces of being here physically and spiritually. Creating space for a plurality of beings. As a researcher, this station was an act of love, recognition, and acceptance.

Station 5

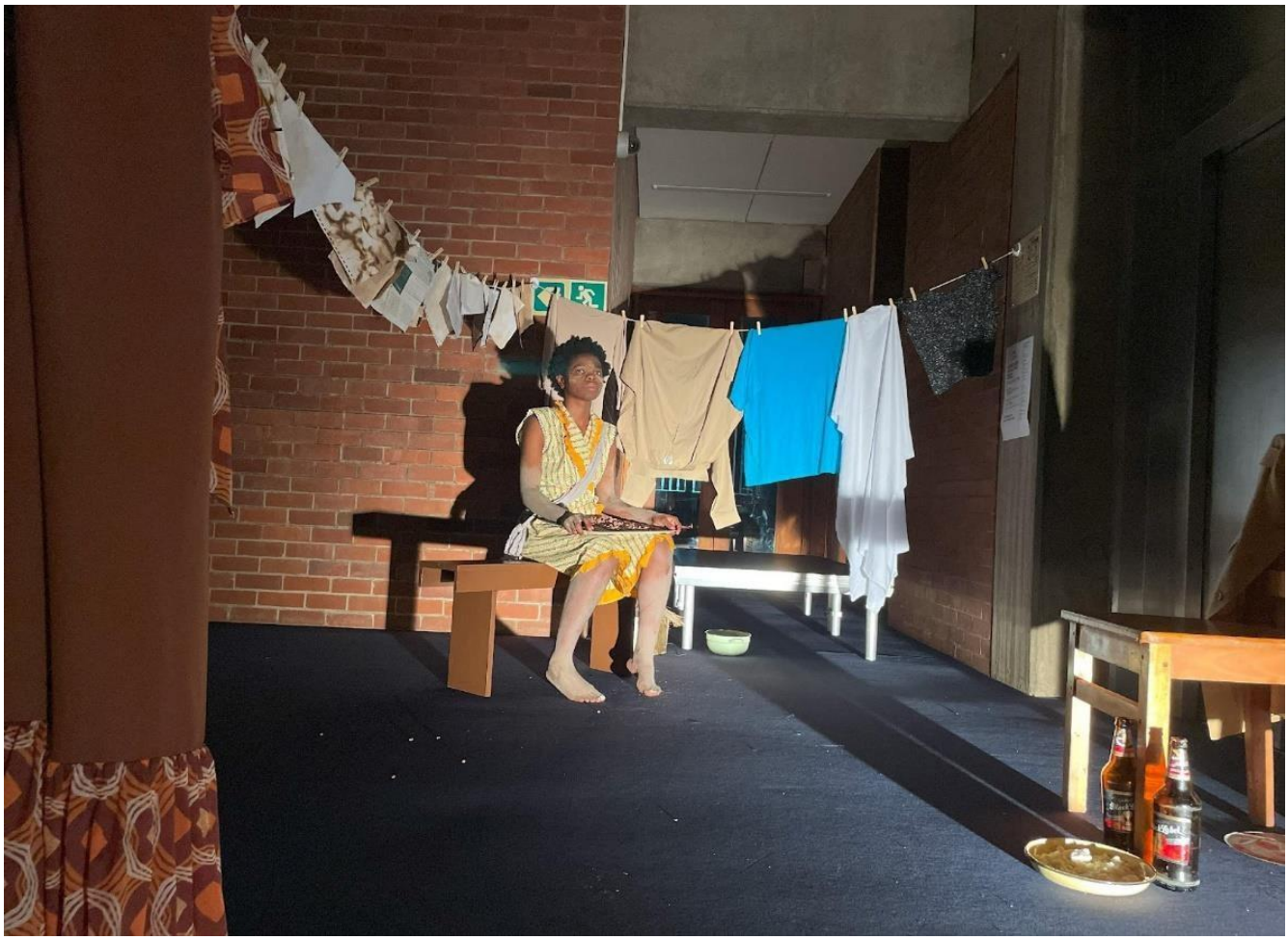

Figure 5: Amanda Zuma as the woman in station 5 (2022).

This performance happens at the far end of a corridor. On the right-hand side is an enamel plate full of hot pap and a quart of Black label in front. There are two washing lines, one in the middle (clothes are hung there) and one on the left side (book pages are hung on that side). Beneath each washing line is a bench. The performer is carrying a tray full of sugar beans.

"*Nibosala Nikhwezela. Nithayisele amanzi umangabe sekusha*" (You ought to stay behind and fan the dying fire into flames. Add water when it starts to burn). These words can be considered the teachings or knowledge we are left with. Knowledge that is not recorded or written anywhere but is orally or physically passed down

from generations. *Ukukhwezela* can also be looked at as *ukuvuselela* (to renew). When these teachings fade or are forgotten, we are asked to instil and renew them. "*Nithayisele ngamanzi uma ngabe sekusha*" can be seen as acknowledging new generational discoveries about the lineage that were not known. This part of the text insists on ensuring there must always be something cooking in the fire for the next generation to eat.

The second part of this station looks at the body as home, where the spirit resides. "*Abesifazane abadala balandela izimpande zami ngokungibhekisisa ebusweni*" (Older women follow the roots by looking closely at my face." Inspired by the habit of older women of looking closely at a newborn to identify any familiar family physical features is what inspired this text. On toddlers, they look at how they do things and the little mannerisms to see who the child is behaving like in the family.

In the work, *Demazane Ntombazane!* through spoken word and performance language, black women are aware of their womenness. They are in their 'expected habitat' performing their 'woman duties'. The theory of Post-Apartheid Feminist Black Consciousness has guided this research and my understanding on how women can use art to self-define and re-imagine. This theory has hugely impacted my writing and performance language to be able to critique and explore the ways in which Black female bodies and narratives have been presented. I have, in turn, looked at ways in which black women can internally excavate to mine material for self-exploratory works.

Through the research and creative process of *Demazane Ntombazane!*, I have experienced a reflective shift in my perception of hair and its role in shaping identity, particularly within the context of pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. My exploration has allowed me to engage deeply with the socio-historical complexities of hair politics and to understand how these dynamics have influenced not only society at large but also my own sense of self.

During apartheid, black hair was heavily politicized and stigmatized, becoming a tool of racial classification and oppression. Practices like the pencil test, which used hair texture to categorize individuals, reduced hair to a marker of compliance with Eurocentric beauty standards. These standards sought to erase cultural heritage, leaving black individuals alienated from their identities. As I delved into this history, I began to see how hair was weaponized to enforce systems of power and control, stripping it of its cultural and spiritual significance.

In the post-apartheid era, while legal frameworks of discrimination have been dismantled, the legacies of colonialism persist in subtle and overt ways, particularly in beauty standards that continue to favour Eurocentric ideals. However, this period has also given rise to powerful natural hair movements that celebrate blackness, reclaiming hair as a symbol of pride, resilience, and cultural identity. My research and creative work have allowed me to locate myself within this shift, understanding hair as a site of resistance and empowerment.

Before undertaking this journey, I often saw hair as something external, shaped by societal expectations and beauty norms. Through *Demazane Ntombazane!* and its focus on weaving (ukuluka), I have come to view hair as much more than an aesthetic feature. It is a living archive that carries the stories, memories, and voices of the women who came before me. Hair is deeply connected to ancestry, spirituality, and self-expression, and it provides a tangible link between myself and the generations of women in my family.

This shift in perception has also allowed me to see hair as both a site of oppression and a powerful tool for resistance. While apartheid policies sought to control and homogenize black identities, the reclamation of natural hair in post-apartheid South Africa challenges those colonial legacies and affirms the richness of black identity. This realization has reframed how I approach my own hair—not as something to be managed or altered to meet external standards but as a source of strength, pride, and connection.

Through this process, I have come to argue that hair is far more than a personal attribute; it is a symbol of cultural heritage, a medium for storytelling, and a means of resistance. By engaging with the historical and contemporary politics of hair, I have deepened my understanding of its role in shaping both personal and collective identities. This journey has transformed my relationship with my own hair, allowing me to reclaim it as a powerful expression of who I am and where I come from.

Audre Lorde (2000:326) writes "[W]e were never meant to survive…so it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive" I have considered the importance of advocating for black women to freely re-write their narratives and re-position themselves in society, arts and academia. hooks (2015:13) asserts that:

> Feminist commitment to breaking silences inspired individual black females writing theory to create work that would connect us to those black women who either did not know about feminism or were hostile to the movement, seeing it as being for white girls only.

It is within the writings of hooks and many Black female feminists, that I too, have found depth to what it means to advocate for Black women centred writings on identity, womanhood, Black experience and Black female bodies.

Chapter 5

Though Black female bodies have been subjected to various social, political and cultural discourses where their voices were minimal or not included at all, they have also been the root of resistance in claiming for the re-shifting and re-definition of their identities and experiences. Art has been majorly used as one of the tools used by black female academics/artists to contest and challenge the status quo of gender relations of this country. In the course of this research, I came to understand that the way in which we think, write and speak about ourselves is one of the ways we are reclaiming our power and re-writing our narratives and histories. This chapter discusses my crucial research findings about the central question of this paper. The question is:

1. How can performance be used to embody or represent black hair experiences, and how does this performative exploration articulate my identity within the South African context?

In response to this question, I consider the process of the entire journey of this research, from the proposal stage to the creation process of *Demazane Ntombane!* and reflect on the final performance. This chapter will also cover the validity, overall challenges of the process, and recommendations. Furthermore, I provide a summative conclusion.

5.1. Discussing and reflecting on research findings.

The process of this research revealed findings about the central research question. The findings were:

1. Understanding of self through story, memory, song, and collective conversations.
2. The use of Izithakazelo and clan history as a point of departure in understanding the women before me.

5.1.1. Understanding of self through story, memory, song, and collective conversations.

Bolton (2010) argued that "stories are a vital part of our lives." (Bolton, 2010:28). They make our experience meaningful. They impose a "structure, a compelling reality on what we experience." (Bruner, 2003:89). In collecting memories connected with my research, I did much free writing. I wrote my earliest memories of hair, how I remember my hair to be like when I was still very young, in primary school years, high school years, and varsity years. Some of my earliest memories of hair were how I always shaved my hair because I have susceptible skin, so my scalp usually had abscesses whenever I had hair.

During my primary school years, I mostly had short hair. Some of the memories I wrote about were my first hair-relaxing experience, one of my first hair salon visits, my mother's relationship with my hair, my friends' stories with their hair, and how I now see and experience my hair.

In the rehearsal process, after I had briefed the cast members on what my research was about, what I did in the process to realize that I needed them to accompany me in this journey of exploring and extending my hair memories in a performance form, I told them the memories as stories. I told them how I had experienced my hair and how I had experienced my relationships, using hair as a centre of reflection. I shared how I never thought much about hair when I was young. I remember feeling that hair was something I could not have for a long time because of my susceptible skin. I cannot remember having any sensual feelings towards it since I never had it grow on my head for a long time. The turning point was when I was 12 years old. I cannot remember why I suddenly wanted to grow my hair. I did grow it, and luckily, I have not developed any abscesses on my head ever since. One of the hair-relationship reflections that opened a space and led to numerous conversations between me and the cast was how I experienced my mother through my hair.

> I was about 13 years of age, doing grade 8. This was the first time that my mother had used my hair as punishment. It was a frigid Saturday, and my mother decided to spring-clean the room I shared with my younger sister and cousin. She would call any of us occasionally to assist her with lifting the bed so she could sweep and mop under it or rearrange the clothes in the wardrobe. We were watching TV, and she had called my younger sister to assist her with something. Looking frightened, she returned and whispered, "*Ye ye Ntoko, u Ma ufunda I diary yakho*." (My mom never knew I had a diary because I knew she would read it. I had written about my first kiss with a boy) I remember my stomach went ice cold. I have never gotten a beating that bad in my entire existence. From slaps to fist punches to being hit with a belt. At some point, she grabbed my afro with her hands and spun me around the sitting room. After that, her exact words were, "*Ng'funa ukukugunda lezizinwele khona bezobona ukuthi umumbi kanjani. Ngyabona ukhohliswa izona*." (I want to cut off your hair so they can see how ugly you are. I can see you are fooled by them (hair)). She took a pair of scissors and unevenly cut my hair. Monday morning, I did not want to go to school. The thought of catching a morning taxi looking like that made me feel so seen and vulnerable. For some odd reason, nobody said anything to me at school.

These collective conversations went from hair to motherhood, to the women in our families, to friendships, popular culture, and politics. This was a relational process for all involved. We found, and we held each other in the conversations. This occurred through conversing, and it invoked our emotional selves in that space to assist in holding each other's stories, thoughts, reflections, and experiences.

My experience on this journey has been progressively reviving, demanding, and humbling. I vividly remember my anxious self and urgency to stage my creative component as soon as I finished my proposal. However, the entire research process reminded me of the humbling experience of being a learner. The process demanded that I learn and unlearn parts of myself I didn't even know existed. I have felt very humbled as I have learned more about myself, my physical history, and understanding my artistic language as a young, black South African female. It has also been restorative for me to learn more and experience the contexts that have shaped me and my research process as I have journeyed to find my authentic voice as an inspiring theatre practitioner and researcher.

What enabled this progressive restoration of my research voice and artistic language has mainly been the congregation of women who have been a part of my creation process. It is in the conversations, song, and their bodies, memories, and voices accompanying me in bringing *Demazane Ntombazane!* to life. My experiences

along this journey show my progression toward deeper self-understanding and the place in which this research study took me. It has been an emotionally, spiritually, and academically demanding journey.

In relation to post-apartheid feminist black consciousness theory, *Demazane Ntombazane!* serves as a powerful link between the personal and the political, connecting its creation to the broader framework of post-apartheid black feminist consciousness. Rooted in the exploration of the black female body, hair, and identity, the performance embodies the principles of black feminist thought, which seeks to centre the lived experiences of black women while challenging intersecting systems of oppression such as patriarchy, racism, and colonial legacies.

At its core, post-apartheid black feminist consciousness is concerned with reclaiming spaces for black women's voices, narratives, and agency. This consciousness emerges in response to the historical silencing and erasure of black women under both apartheid and patriarchal systems. *Demazane Ntombazane!* aligns with this movement by foregrounding the black female body as a site of meaning, resistance, and empowerment. By positioning the body as *umsamo* - a sacred altar where ancestral connections are nurtured - the performance actively resists colonial and apartheid-era narratives that sought to dehumanize and displace black women from their cultural roots.

The performance's emphasis on hair as a central motif also reflects the principles of black feminist consciousness. In post-apartheid South Africa, hair has become a powerful symbol of resistance, with natural hair movements challenging Eurocentric beauty standards and reclaiming black hair as a source of pride and identity. Through the act of weaving (ukuluka), *Demazane Ntombazane!* frames hair as both a personal and collective archive, holding the stories, struggles, and resilience of generations of black women. This process of weaving not only reclaims hair's cultural significance but also aligns with feminist practices of storytelling as a tool for healing, empowerment, and community-building.

Furthermore, the creation of *Demazane Ntombazane!* embodies the relational and interdisciplinary ethos of black feminist thought. Influenced by McKittrick's (2021) emphasis on storytelling as a relational act, the performance blends text, movement, and embodied practice to create an aesthetic experience that is deeply personal yet universally resonant. This approach highlights the interconnectedness of black women's experiences, both across generations and within the broader socio-political landscape of post-apartheid South Africa.

The performance's exploration of intergenerational memory is another critical link to black feminist consciousness. By tracing my identity through the stories of the women who came before me, *Demazane Ntombazane!* underscores the importance of honouring ancestral knowledge and resilience. This perspective challenges the individualism often emphasized in Western feminist frameworks, instead centring the collective strength and wisdom of black women's communities.

The production aligns with post-apartheid black feminist consciousness by offering a form of resistance to the lingering effects of apartheid on black women's lives. It challenges the historical marginalization of black women in cultural and artistic spaces, positioning their voices and narratives as central to the discourse. Through its creation and performance, *Demazane Ntombazane!* asserts the importance of black women's stories in shaping a post-apartheid society that values equity, dignity, and justice.

By engaging with the principles of black feminist thought, *Demazane Ntombazane!* becomes more than a performance - it is an act of reclamation, resistance, and healing. It bridges the personal and the political, offering a lens through which to explore black feminist consciousness in post-apartheid South Africa and affirming the transformative power of storytelling as a tool for liberation and self-definition.

5.1.2. The use of Izithakazelo and clan history as a point of departure in understanding the women before me.

Izizukulwane zabesifazane abangakaze bacatshwanga.

A generation of women who were never imagined.

Abathwali beziphrofetho. Abathwali bamaphupho. Abathwali boshintsho nenguquko.

Iziphrofetho zizinze enkabeni. Inkani bayincela ebeleni, yadlula yafika esizukulwaneni sesizukulwane. Ezinqolobaneni ezigqitshiwe kithi, bawucu olungabonakali that exists within us.

The journeys of these women are always badly told.

Sihlanganyele kwinqubo yokulinda, yokukhumbula, yokugcina. Inqubo yokumba,

yokuvusa nokuvuka. Until we find our voices, sithole ubuthina in the journeys of these women.

Kusukela ezinweleni zabo, sehle njalo. Zehle njalo. Kwehle njalo. Sizolinda size

sithole laba abalahlekile. Siyoze sithole laba ese sabakhohlwa nalaba asebe kade

bazikhohlwa.

(*Carriers of prophecies. Carriers of dreams. Carriers of change and revolution. Prophecies reside in the depths of the umbilical cord. They suck stubbornness from their mother's bosom, inherited by generations. In the archives that have been buried, they are the unseen pieces that exist within us. We are gathered in the process of waiting, remembering, and keeping. The process of digging, wakening, and awakening. Until we find our voices and our being in these women's journeys. From their hair down to generations before them, we will wait until we find the lost ones. We will wait until we see those we have forgotten and those that have forgotten themselves*).

It is a process of weaving the stories together. Ukuluka (*Weaving*). Of curving the multiple voices. Of acknowledging and accepting the layers within our identities through detangling our hair until we find parts of who we are emicwini yezinwele zabo (*In the strands of their hair*). Kuwukuzama ukuthola ukuthi singobani uma sihlangene (*It is trying to find who we are when we are together*). It is in this constant search for a common identity that our journey is not straight.

Mothers in spirit

Mothers in flesh

Mothers in memory

Mothers in prayer

Mothers in dreams

Generations of women who were never imagined. Carriers of prophecies. Of dreams. Of revolution. Iziprofetho zizinze enkabeni. Inkani yancelwa ebeleni, yadlula yafika esizukulwaneni sesizukulwane. Ezinqolobaneni ezigqitshiwe kithi, bawucu olungabonakali, olusuka enkabeni.

Siphila kubo, baphila kithi. Siphila kubo. baphila kithi. Sikubo. Bakithi. (*Prophecies reside in the umbilical cord. They suck stubbornness from their mother's bosom, which is inherited by generations. In the archives that are buried within us, they are the unseen pieces from within, rooted in the umbilical cord. We live within them, and they are within us. We live within them, and they are in us. We are in them. They are in us*).

uMvundlane wasokhabeni wazala u Nosgonyela, owazala uMaNcalane owazala intombi yesbhono. Yinde lenyoni ayiboni KwaZulu.

UMashombela, iDeke elihle. MaNyawonhle. MaNyawonkulu. Mangcingcingci. Mthonjana kawushi. Nkungwana ezathi ncwelele phezu kweTongwe.

Owazala uMaGcwabe, Gubhela, Khabazela kaMavovo KaZihlandlo. Mumb'omhlophe.

Owazala u MaGatsheni, uboya benyathi. Obusongwa busombuluka. uMaZingelwayo. Mpongo. Demazane Ntombazane!

They exist within us. Enqolobaneni eyafa, yagqitshwa, yazalwa, bakhona. Nibiziwe. Lalelani. Emcwini yezinwele zami, I see your reflection. Indlela amanhlonhlo agijima ngayo okhakhayini abonisa ukuthi bakhona abaseke bahamba la. Izindlalelo zemicu ekhanda zibonisa ubunina kimi. (*They are there in the archive that died, that was buried, birthed. You are called. Listen. In the strands of my hair, I see your reflection. The path in the corners of your forehead shows that there have been those who have taken that journey. The coordination of my hair strands shows your existence in me*).

Kusukela ezinweleni zabo, sehle njalo. Zehle njalo. Kwehle njalo. Sizolinda size sitholelaba abalahlekile. Siyoze sithole laba ese sabakhohlwa nalaba asebe kadebazikhohlwa. Kusukela ezinweleni zabo, sehle njalo. Zehle njalo. Kwehle njalo. Sizolinda size sithole laba abalahlekile. Siyoze sithole laba ese sabakhohlwa nalaba asebe kade bazikhohlwa.

(*From their hair down to generations before them. We will wait until we find those that are lost. We will wait until we find those we have forgotten and those that have forgotten themselves*).

5.2. Challenges and Recommendations

Women have stories that remain untold. Many of the transcripts of their lived experiences remain hidden as platforms for their voices remain minimal. Various spaces, such as the home, church, and workplace, to name a few, remain spaces that conditionally accommodate women's agency. Therefore, as I embark on my scholarly pursuit, I believe I must acknowledge and use a gender lens that takes thoughtfully situated life experiences of women within various contexts. Throughout history, women have been rendered invisible and silenced, with minimal space for their voices to be heard. Over time, many have been denied the platform to self-represent and have their experiences acknowledged and valued. I told the progression of a black woman's hair experiences from her personal view, using her own words and her performance language. We have men telling us what our hair means. We have had culture telling us how we should wear our hair. Religion tells us what to do with our hair, when, and how. In these times when women are writing their own identities and using their bodies as a tool for activism, I saw validity in a study based on a woman's journey, experience, and affirmations. To focus on the African context and conduct a study in South Africa, a multiracial society with a volatile history characterized by discrimination and advancement of white supremacy during the colonial and apartheid eras.

Cultural and societal practices just as much influence women from other racial groups; however, more has been written about them, and I wanted to explore the construction of hair in the black imaginary. Because of our unique circumstances, the study focused mainly on a black female South African living in South Africa. Moreover, while some studies have incorporated the narratives of older black women (Tate, 2007), the voices of younger black women are minimal. This study explored and navigated the hair journey of a young, black South African female. Her narrative of the construction of the black female body and hair is explicitly engaged.

Conducting research with a young black woman provided significant insight into her individual experiences and strategies of resistance. This research presented an opportunity to uncover young black women's challenges as they construct their identities and allowed for forming alternative, more positive constructions of their narratives and experiences. Black women must be given a platform to converse on such issues independently. To see how their hair experiences, stories, and memories could help write new literature on black hair in South Africa.

5.2.1. Overall challenges encountered while putting *Demazane Ntombazane!* together

One of my challenges in making *Demazane Ntombazane!* was not preparing myself enough emotionally and psychologically for the work I encountered. I started the process of free writing in 2021. Fresh out of COVID-19, where almost everyone was trying to get back on their feet and adjusting to the world. The act of remembering and writing was so heavy that I had not prepared myself. The process of creating this production demanded that I heal so I could continue doing the work. I saw it beneficial to attend therapy sessions as I excavated these memories, understood them, and made meaning from them. During these moments, I realized this research is more than just about hair politics. The process forced me to confront my fears. It forced me to search for my inner child, recognize her, and get to know her. This process made me realize that I have yet to confront and understand my experiences. Unpacking, speaking back, and writing about some of the relationships that hugely affected my identity was challenging. Psychologically and artistically, the process challenged me to reflect on strange places where I encountered uncomfortable realizations.

The second challenge was the act of writing, as I remember. This challenged me not to suppress my humanness. Being vulnerable in writing, also writing as you remember when you remember. Writing became a method of discovery. One of them was how I learned about myself and the relationships that significantly affect me. The process of wording out my memories through free writing and then re-wording those writings for the sake of writing a scene for a performance. Moving paragraphs, shifting ideas, moving paragraphs again, and changing language to hear which version sounds better made it harder to precisely capture the studied world (memory). This process honoured and encouraged trying. From the challenge, I found a way of nurturing my individuality in writing for performance and creation. This process also gave me authority over my understanding of self.

Lastly, I was challenged to find a visual language for my reflections and discoveries. In the final production, I had to find a way for the site to speak to the work and the work to speak to the site. Textually, it was challenging to create different worlds for these memories yet make them a part of one performance piece. There was no dialogue in any of the stations and the spoken text had to be different in terms of texture, pace and delivery. I had to work more on fusing the sites and the performances. As an individual who has yet to gain substantial experience in site design, I needed to work harder to make the site speak back to the text and the performance. It was well done, but I could have done better.

5.2.2. Recommendations

In the creation of *Demazane Ntombazane!*, the distinction between writing and directing became a central part of the creative process. Unlike traditional productions, where a script is developed first and then performed,

this piece was built from fragmented texts written for five specific stations or sites. The writing was less about crafting a conventional narrative and more about providing a framework - a poetic and thematic foundation for performers to inhabit and interpret. This creative approach allowed the performers to infuse their experiences and connections, particularly through the lens of the women in their families closest to their hearts. The stories, emotions, and memories these women inspired became the essence of the performances.

As a director, my role diverged significantly from the writing process. While the writing provided the initial spark and structure, directing required me to engage deeply with each performer, helping them bring these texts to life in authentic and meaningful ways. This meant guiding character development not from the script alone but from personal and familial narratives. I asked questions like, “Who are the women in your family that anchor your identity?” and “How do their stories intersect with your own?” These reflections shaped the performers’ portrayals, creating a tapestry of interconnected voices and experiences.

Other performers received my directing with curiosity and openness, particularly because of the unconventional nature of the process. Feedback often centred on the depth of personal connection and the authenticity it brought to the performances. Performers remarked on how the process felt collaborative and introspective, as though they were co-creators in shaping their characters. Audience members shared that the performance felt intimate and resonant, as though they were witnessing a dialogue between the past and present, between personal and collective memory.

The techniques I employed as a director have revealed valuable methods that I can extrapolate into future creative processes. First, I learnt the power of grounding performances in personal narratives. By encouraging performers to draw from their lived experiences and familial connections, I was able to cultivate authenticity and emotional depth. This method, which I now think of as "story-weaving," involves guiding performers to merge written text with their personal stories, creating a layered and textured portrayal.

Second, I embraced site-specificity as a tool for enhancing the narrative. Directing within five distinct stations required me to consider the physical environment as an active participant in the storytelling. Each site informed the mood, tone, and dynamics of the performance, allowing the audience to experience the piece as a journey rather than a static event. This technique of allowing the space to shape the performance added a sensory and immersive quality to the production.

Finally, I relied on relational direction - an approach that prioritizes dialogue, trust, and collaboration with performers. By creating a space where performers felt comfortable exploring their identities and stories, I was able to foster a process that was both creatively fulfilling and emotionally healing. This method underscored the importance of empathy and mutual respect in directing.

The experience of creating *Demazane Ntombazane!* has reshaped my understanding of the interplay between writing and directing. While the writing laid the foundation, directing became the bridge that connected text

to embodiment and, ultimately, to the audience. The techniques and insights gained from this process have become invaluable tools for future narrative, identity, and performance explorations.

The following recommendations are primarily for other young, black, and female emerging artists. Artists interested in learning, seeing, and hearing black female bodies in research spaces. First and foremost, you must take your time. Hold the stories and voices of your fellow black women with love, care, pride, and spirit. The world is already complex for you, and you only have each other. The process of going back to excavate from memories, experiences, and inner selves, as hard as it is, is important that you do it. The process of creation and rehearsals does not begin when the script is present. The process starts as you jot down ideas, reflect, and have conversations with your fellow artists.

Listen to each other's bodies; listen to your writings. Find people to journey with you. Create spaces for you to converse and relate. Never stop playing.

5.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study used the processes of making and creating to explore hair identity politics from a personal reflective perspective. It intended to understand myself through the hair by exploring my relationship with people close to me and how it affects how I view or understand myself.

In the process of this research, I have looked critically at my approach as a director. Through conversations and sharing of stories during our rehearsal stages, I got to experience imimoya (auras) of the cast. Through that experience or encounter, I knew which parts of my memories and stories I would like each person to hold, experience, and portray to the audience. I did not orchestrate the physicalization of each text as a director; it was through exercises I did with the cast of saying the line repeatedly and allowing the text to move their bodies. The ritual of reflection after every rehearsal gave birth to a series of explorations and discoveries that we might have to go back to as a cast and weave into performance pieces. I got to develop my performance language as an artist. I see this as the beginning of a journey on how I want the art I create to speak about the Black female body experience and story. I want to experience and learn about the Black female bodies through how they view themselves. This entire experience was more than an academic learning experience; it was a healing space. It was a chance for my physical self to meet my spiritual and psychological self and introduce them to the academic aspiring self.

By exploring identity through the black female body, hair, and intergenerational narratives, *Demazane Ntombazane!* created a dynamic platform for personal and artistic growth. The process and the performance reframed identity as a layered and evolving construct, rooted in the complicated interplay between personal experiences and ancestral histories. By positioning the black female body as *umsamo,* a sacred altar where spiritual and ancestral connections are nurtured, I situated myself within a continuum of matriarchal strength and resilience. This approach encourages a shift in understanding identity as not merely individual but relational, deeply tied to the stories, struggles, and triumphs of generations of women. The act of weaving -

both metaphorically and literally - creates space for reconciliation with intergenerational trauma, fostering a sense of healing and wholeness.

The focus on hair as a central idea further shifted my perception of selfhood. Historically politicized within black culture, hair in this context moves beyond societal constraints to become a powerful symbol of agency, resistance, and pride. *Demazane Ntombazane!*'s exploration of hair as a bridge between the past and present allows for a reclamation of identity, reinforcing its role as a site of cultural significance and personal empowerment.

The creative process and performance methodology also expanded my artistic vision as a creative. The interdisciplinary and relational nature of storytelling, as inspired by McKittrick's work, opens up possibilities for new narrative techniques that integrate memory, spirituality, and physicality. This approach encourages the blending of text, movement, and embodied performance, fostering innovation in how stories are crafted and shared. The site-specific nature of the performance highlights the importance of place and environment in shaping meaning, inspiring a greater awareness of context in future works.

Furthermore, the production's emphasis on aesthetic relationality - through creating, narrating, listening, and unhearing stories - paves the way for a deeper engagement with participatory and interactive performance practices. This relational approach invites audiences to co-create meaning, emphasizing the shared experience of storytelling as a communal act.

Through the integration of personal narratives and broader political themes, *Demazane Ntombazane!* positions personal identity as inherently political. This perspective encouraged me to continue using art as a medium for social commentary, addressing complex issues such as race, gender, and power. Additionally, the exploration of spirituality and memory as central themes opens pathways for future works that draw on diverse cultural traditions, enriching my artistic practice with new layers of depth and universality.

By engaging deeply with identity, spirituality, and artistic innovation, *Demazane Ntombazane!* lays the groundwork for my continued evolution as an artist and storyteller. This reflective and performative process not only reshapes my understanding of self but also inspires a bold and interdisciplinary approach to my future creative endeavours.

As performance artists, we must explore decolonial methods of generating or presenting knowledge in the academic space through theatre. By instilling the idea of play in actors, directors, and writers, more worlds will be explored, which will birth new, relational art for people to engage with and reflect on. We should avoid getting comfortable in routine when it comes to creating work. My hope with this dissertation is that it adds – a bit – to a growing pool of practice for artists and scholars who are beginning to engage methods of research and knowledge production critically in the ways they conduct their research, explore their practice with a primary mandate to grow not only the art but also grow the culture critical research in South Africa.

References

- Abrahamsen, R., (2003). African studies and the postcolonial challenge. *African Affairs, 102*(407), pp.189-210.
- Achebe, C., (1977). An image of Africa. *The Massachusetts Review, 18*(4), pp.782-794.
- Alubafi, M.F, Ramphalile, M. and Rankoana, A.S., (2018). The shifting image of black women's hair in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1): 1471184.
- Banks, I., (2000). *Hair matters: Beauty, power, and black women's consciousness*. New York: New York University Press.
- Banks, I. and McKittrick, K., (2000). Hair matters: Beauty, power & Black women's consciousness. *Resources for Feminist Research*, 28(1/2), pp. 254. New York: New York University Press
- Barnes, H. and Mbothwe, M., (2015). Creating Communitas: The Theatre of Mandla Mbothwe. *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows* (pp. 57-76). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Bateson, G., (1977). Les usages sociaux du corps à Bali. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 14(1): 3-33.
- Bennet, M. and Dickerson, V.D., (2001). *Recovering the Black Female body: Self-Representations by African American women*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi K., (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Biko, S., (1972). Interview with Gail M. Gerhart, October 24, 1972, Durban. (Transcript).
- Bolton, G., (2010). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. Sage publications.
- Boram-Hays, C., (2018). Between the body and the ancestors: expressions of religious thought in the clothing of Zulu-speaking women in the Nongoma region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Southern African Humanities, 31*(1), pp.31-54.
- Bruner, J.S., (2003). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Caslin, S., (2009). Feminism and post-colonialism. *The Imperial Archive.*
- Chang, H., (2016). *Autoethnography as method* (Vol. 1). London: Routledge.

- Coly, A.A., (2015). Un/clothing African womanhood: Colonial statements and postcolonial discourses of the African female body. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *33*(1), pp.12-26.
- Coullie, J.L., Meyer, S., Ngwenya, T.H. and Olver, T. eds., (2006). *Selves in question: interviews on Southern African auto/biography*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Currie, N.E., (2005). *Constructing Colonial Discourse: Cook at Nootka Sound, 1778*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Custer, D., (2014). Autoethnography as a transformative research method. *The qualitative report*, *19*(37), pp.1-13.
- De Beauvoir, S., (1953). *The second sex: Simone de Beauvoir*. New York: Singapore Books.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T.E. and Bochner, A.P., (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Historical social research/Historische sozialforschung*, pp.273-290.
- Ellis, C. and Bochner, A.P. eds., (2001). *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (Vol. 9). Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman Altamira.
- Erasmus, Z., (1997). "Oe! my hare gaan huistoe": hair-styling as black cultural practice. *Agenda* 32, pp.11-16.
- Ewing, W.A., (1994). *The body: photoworks of the human body*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Fanon, F., (1967). *The wretched of the earth*. Translated by C. Farrington. London: Penguin Books.
- Fanon, F., (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press.
- Fleishman, M., (2012). The difference of performance as research. *Theatre Research International*, 37(1), pp.28-37.
- Foster, S.L., (2005). Choreographing empathy. *Topoi*, *24*(1), pp.81-91.
- Frenkel, R., (2008). Feminism and contemporary culture in South Africa. *African Studies*, *67*(1), pp.1-10.
- Garland-Thomson, R. ed., (1996). *Freakery: Cultural spectacles of the extraordinary body*. New York: New York University Press.

- Gqola, P.D., (2001). Contradictory locations: Black women and the discourse of the Black Consciousness Movement (BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS) in South Africa. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, *2*(1), pp.130-152.
- Gqola, P.D., (1999). *Black woman, you are on your own: images of black women in Staffrider short stories, 1978-1982*. Master's thesis, University of Cape Town.
- Grosz, E., (1994). *Volatile bodies: Toward a corporeal feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Gwala, M.P., (1972). The Black Thing... Is Honest... Is Human. *SASO Newsletter*, *2*(1), pp.13-15.
- Hagan, P.G., (2020). *Water and Spirituality in Some African Cultures and Traditions*. Available online: https://www.humandevelopment.va/content/dam/sviluppoumano/water-resources/33.pdf [Accessed on 4 June 2023].
- Heddon, D., (2008). *Autobiography and Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Henderson, C. ed., (2010.) *Imagining the black female body: Reconciling image in print and visual culture*. Springer.
- Holman Jones, S., (2007). Autoethnography. In: Ritzer, G., ed. *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Holtz C., (2008). *Global health care: issues and policies*. London: Jones & Bartlett.
- hooks, b., (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, B., (1992). *Black looks: race and representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Howarth, A., (2006). Social representation is not a quiet thing: exploring the critical potential of social representation theory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(1), pp. 65-68.
- Howarth, W.L., (1974). Some principles of autobiography. *New Literary History*, *5*(2), pp.363-381.
- Hutchison, Y., (2018). Aesthetics of South African women's embodied activism: Staging complicity. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *28*(3), pp.355-366.
- Ingold, T., (2000). *The perception of the environment: essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge.

- Jackson, A.Y. and Mazzei, L.A., (2008). Experience and "I" in autoethnography: A deconstruction. *International review of qualitative research*, *1*(3), pp.299-318.
- Joyner, M., (1988). Hair care in the black patient. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, *2*(6), pp.281-287.
- Kershaw, B., (1998). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists/research as social change: New opportunities for qualitative research. Research in Drama Education*, 3(1), p.119.
- Leach, E.R., (1958). Magical hair. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, *88*(2), pp.147-164.
- LeCompte, M.D., Preissle, J. and Tesch, R., (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Litwak, J., (2015). *My heart is in the East: Exploring theater as a vehicle for change, inspired by the poetic performances of ancient Andalucía*. Doctoral dissertation, Antioch University..
- Lorde, A., (2000). *The collected poems of Audre Lorde*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Mandlela, K., (2018). *Black hair politics: the representation of African women on True Love magazine front covers and hair advertisements*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria.
- Magaziner, D.R., (2011). Pieces of a (wo) man: feminism, gender and adulthood in Black Consciousness, 1968–1977. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *37*(01), pp.45-61.
- Magaziner, D.R., (2010). *The law and the prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968-1977*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Mahali, A., (2016). Rites of passage: separation, liminality and an initiation into being in Mamela Nyamza's 'Hatched'. *South African Theatre Journal*, *29*(1-3), pp.1-14.
- Manganyi, N.C., (2019). *Being black in the world*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Mangena, M.O., (2008). The Black Consciousness Philosophy and the Woman's Question in South Africa: 1970–1980. *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (pp. 253-266). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

- Masole, M. & Peega, L., (2018). The Black Consciousness Theatre and Politics of Self Determination in an Oppressive State. *Black Consciousness Theatre.* Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.33095.14245 [Accessed: 4 May 2023]
- Matandela, M., (2017). Redefining Black Consciousness and resistance: The intersection of Black Consciousness and Black feminist thought. *Agenda*, *31*(3-4), pp.10-28.
- Matsumoto, D., (2000). *Culture and psychology: people around the world*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Mbembe, A., (2001). *On the postcolony* (Vol. 41). University of California Press.
- Mbothwe, M., (2008). *An African Dream Play - Isivuno Sama Phupha: reconstructing the spirit of ubuntu in the contemporary urban 'village' through theatre.* Master's thesis, University of Cape Town.
- Mbothwe, M., (2010). Dissecting the aesthetics of identity in *Isivuno Sama Phupha. South African Theatre Journal*, 24 (1), pp.241–258. Available: https://doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2010.9687932 [Accessed: 20 April 2023].
- McKittrick, K., (2000). Hair matters: Beauty, power, and black women's consciousness. (Book reviews/comptes rendus). *Resources for Feminist Research*, *28*(1-2), pp.254-257.
- McKittrick, K., (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.
- Mda, Z., (1996). Four plays. *(No Title)*. London: Oxford University Press
- Mda, Z., (1993). *When people play people: Development communication through theatre*. London: Zed Books.
- Mercer, K. (2000). Black hair/style politics. In: H. A. Young, ed. *Black British culture and society: A text reader*. London: Routledge, pp.34–49.
- Mills, G.Y., (1997). Is it is or is it ain't: The impact of selective perception on the image making of traditional African dance. *Journal of Black Studies*, *28*(2), pp.139-156.

- Mnguni, M.M., (2000). *The role of black consciousness in the experience of being black in South Africa: The shaping of the identity of two members of AZAPO*. Doctoral dissertation, Rhodes University.
- Moche, T., (2020). *Conversations With My Father: On Isithakazelo, Meadowlands And Acts Of Self-Writing*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Moodley, S. n.d. Black Theatre an Expression of Black Consciousness. In South African History Online. Available from: http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/Paper_Sam_Moodley.pdf [Accessed: 20 May 2022]
- Moorosi, M., (1997). *The notion of commitment in selected works of Maishe Maponya*. Doctoral dissertation, Rhodes University.
- Motaung, L., (2023). Portfolio. Available from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mADxihC97AUKjf3WjuPOECpnA93IERlL/view?fblackconsciousnesslid=PAAaZfLO60QPqYdRmRivK3AFn3hUxlGp_JuDyjMUAU2dCaeDw9UHrELczXio8 [Accessed: 19 October 2023]
- Ndebele, N., (1992). South African Literature and the Construction of Nationhood. *Staflfrider*, *5*, p.l0.
- Ndelu, S., (2015). Mind the Gap. *Unpublished Op-Ed.* Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2017.1402410 [Accessed: 15 March 2022].
- Nettleton, A., (2014). Hair paraphernalia. In: L. De Becker & A. Nettleton, eds. *Doing hair: Art and hair in Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits Art Museum, pp.13–25
- Ntoane, C., (1988). Traditional birth attendants in Bophuthatswana (Bo Mmaabotsetse). *Curationis*, *11*(3), pp.20-23.
- Nxongo, S., (2019). *Women, gender and the black consciousness movement (1968-1977)*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Johannesburg.
- Nyamnjoh, F. and Fuh, D., (2014). Africans consuming hair, Africans consumed by hair. *Africa Insight*, 44(1), pp.52-68.

- Nyamza M., (2016). In Phillips A., (2015), 'Hatched 2015 – A Journey to the Heart of South Africa' (7 June 2016). Available from: http://lookingfordrama.com/2016/06/3608/ [Accessed: August 16, 2022]
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M., (1994). *Re-creating ourselves: African women & critical transformations.* Africa World Press.
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M., (2001). Moving the mountains, making the links. In: Bhavnani, K., ed. *Feminism & 'Race'.* New York: Oxford University Press
- Oyěwùmí, O., (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pather, J. and Boulle, C., (2019). *Acts of transgression: contemporary live art in South Africa.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Parry, B., (2004). The institutionalization of postcolonial studies. *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies*, pp.66-80.
- Patton, T.O., (2006). Hey girl, am I more than my hair?: African American women and their struggles with beauty, body image, and hair. *NWSA journal*, pp.24-51.
- Pieterse, J.N., (1996). Globalisation and culture: Three paradigms. *Economic and political weekly*, pp.1389-1393.
- Pollock, G., (1999). A Tale of Three Women: Seeing in the Dark, Seeing Double, at least, with Manet. *Differencing the Canon: feminist desire and the writing of art's histories*, pp.247-315.
- Powe, A., (2009). Beyond the pencil test. Transformations in hair and headstyles, or communicating social change. *Global Times*, (12).
- Prakash, G., (1992). Postcolonial criticism and Indian historiography. *Social Text*, (31/32), pp.8-19.
- Pro'Sobopha, M., (2005). The body: gender and the politics of representation. *Agenda*, *19*(63), pp.117-130.
- Ratele, K., (1998). The end of the black man. *Agenda*, *14*(37), pp.60-64.
- Rive, R., (1981). *Writing Black*. Cape Town: David Philip.

- Rollie, E.A., (2016). A Collaborative Director Prepares: Ric Knowles's Fundamentals of Directing. *Canadian Theatre Review*, (167), pp.85-88.
- Rutter, K., (2014). 'Shared, Edgy "Mouthings"', *Cape Times*, p.13.
- Said, EW., (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Sanders, M., (2002). *Complicities: the intellectual and apartheid*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Shava, P.V., (1989). *A People's voice*. London: Baobab books.
- Shange, N., (2020). Black women have a right to wear their hair any way they want (IOL), (9 September 2020). Available from: https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/black-women-have-a-right-to-wear-their-hair-any-way-they-want-205a7c4e-f826-44f4-8253-1ff31f09f2de [Accessed: 15 August 2023].
- Sibisi, C. D. T., (1991). "The Psychology of Liberation." *In Bounds of Possibility: Steve Biko and the Legacy of Black Consciousness*. edited by N. Barney Pityana et al. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Spivak, G.C. and Studies, S., (1988). Deconstructing historiography. *Selected subaltern studies*, pp.3-34.
- Steadman, I., (1990). Towards popular theatre in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *16*(2), pp.208-228.
- Syed, J. and Ali, F., (2011). The White Woman's Burden: from colonial civilisation to Third World development. *Third World Quarterly*, *32*(2), pp.349-365.
- Tate, S., (2009). Black beauty: shade, hair and anti-racist aesthetics. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30(2), pp.300-319.
- Thompson, J., (2009). Performance Affects: A Kind of Triumph. *Performance Affects: Applied Theatre and the End of Effect*, pp.115-135. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Thaluki (Mohoto-wa), L., (2019) 'Corporeal HerStories: Navigating meaning in Chuma Sopotela's *Inkukhu Ibeke Iqanda* through the artist's words', In Jay Pather and Catherine Boulle (eds), *Acts of Transgression: Contemporary live art in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- Todd, D., (2011). You are what you buy: postmodern consumerism and the construction of self. *Hohonu*, 10, pp.48-50.
- Tomaselli, K. and Wright, H.K. eds., (2013). *Africa, cultural studies and difference*. Routledge.
- Umebinyuo, I., (2016). *Questions for Ada*. South Carolina: Charleston.
- Wade, J.P., (2015). Reality as Fiction: Autoethnography as Postmodern Critique. *Memory Studies*, *22*(2), pp.194-215.
- Wright, M.M., (2015). *Physics of blackness: Beyond the middle passage epistemology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Xaba, W., (2021). *The Black Body As A Moving Ancestral Archive*. Culture Review [Online]. Available from: https://culture-review=.co.za/the-black-body-as-a-moving-ancestral-archive [Accessed: 2 August 2023]
- Yancy, G., (2008). Colonial Gazing: The Production of the Body as "Other". *Western Journal of Black Studies*, *32*(1).
- Yates, K., Gqola, P. and Ramphele, M., (1998). This little bit of madness: Mamphela Ramphele on being black and transgressive. *Agenda*, 14(37), pp. 90-95.
- Yates, K.A., (1996). "To be [Feminist] or not to be? That is not the question." In: Baderoon, G., Roper, C. and Wittenberg, H., eds. *Inter Action 5: The Proceedings of the Fifth Postgraduate Conference.* Bellville: University of the Western Cape Press.

Bibliography

- Adichie, C.N., (2009b). *The danger of a single story*. TED Talk. [online] Available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story [Accessed: 11 October 2021].
- Adichie, C.N., (2018). *Dear Ijeawele: A feminist manifesto in fifteen suggestions*. London: 4th Estate.
- Aidoo, A.A., (1992). The African woman today. *Dissent*, *39*, pp.319-325.
- Appadurai, A., (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Public Culture*, *12*(1), pp.1-19.
- Appiah, K.A., (1991). 'Is the post- in postmodernism the post- in postcolonial?', *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (winter).
- Appiah, K.A., 2023. Is the post-in postmodernism the post-in postcolonial? *Postcolonlsm*, pp.85-104. London: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. and Singer, B., (1990). *Seduction*. Toronto: New World Perspectives.
- Beasley, C., (1999). What is feminism? An introduction to feminist theory. *What is Feminism?* pp.1-192.
- Cohen, C., Varea, R.G. and Walker, P.O., (2011). *Acting together: Performance and the creative transformation of conflict: Vol. 1: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence*. New York: New Village Press.
- Cole, C.M., Manuh, T. and Miescher, S.F., (2007). Introduction: When was Gender? *Africa After Gender*, pp.1-14.
- Doty, R.L., (2010). Autoethnography–making human connections. *Review of International Studies*, *36*(4).
- Eysenck, M.W., (1976). Arousal, learning, and memory. *Psychological bulletin*, *83*(3), pp.389.
- Fleishman, M., (1997). Physical images in the South African theatre. *South African Theatre Journal*, *11*(1), pp.199-214.

- Fleishman, M., (2014). *Performing migrancy and mobility in Africa: Cape of flows*. Switzerland, Cham: Springer.
- Flockemann, M., (1999). Getting harder? From Post-Soweto to post-election: South African theatre and the politics of gender. *Contemporary Theatre Review, 9*(3), pp.37-53.
- Foucault, M., (1997). The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom. Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. *Ed. Paul Rabinow. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: New*, pp.281-302.
- Garvin, J., (2011). Preface. In Carman, J. ed., 2011. *Visual Century: South African Art in Context. 1907-1948*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Gouws, A. ed., (2017). *(Un) thinking citizenship: Feminist debates in contemporary South Africa*. London: Routledge.
- Green, J., (2001). Socially constructed bodies in American dance classrooms. *Research in Dance Education*, *2*(2), pp.155-173.
- Hall, S., (1980). *Encoding/decoding in culture, media, language*. London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. ed., (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.
- Heddon, D., (2009). To absent friends: Ethics in the Field of Auto/biography. In *Political Performances*, pp.111-133. Brill.
- hooks, b., (1981). *Ain't I a woman: black women and feminism*. Boston: South End Press.
- hooks, b., (2015). Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness. In *Women, Knowledge, and Reality*. pp. 48-55. London: Routledge.
- Jones, S.H., (2008). Making the personal political. *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*, *3*(205).
- Kavananga, R., (1985). *Theatre and cultural struggle in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Zed Books.
- Le Roux, J. and Oyedemi, T.D., (2023). Entrenched Coloniality? Colonial-Born Black Women, Hair and Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *African Studies*, *82*(2), pp.200-214.
- Maart, R., (2013). Black consciousness and feminism. *Frank Talk*, *5*, pp.7-11.

- Mashala, K., (2020). *Were women hidden from South Africa's political history?: a life history of Mina Thembeka Soga*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Johannesburg.
- Mason, J., (2002). *Qualitative Researching Sage Publications*. London: Thousand Oaks and New Delhi.
- Mekgwe, P., (2008). Theorizing African feminism (s). *African feminisms*, *11*.
- Mikell, G., ed., (1997). *African feminism: The politics of survival in sub-Saharan Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Mohanty, C.T., (1998). Locating the Politics of Experience. *Feminism and Politics*, p.254.
- Moodley, A., (1993). Black woman, you are on your own. *Agenda*, *9*(16), pp.44-48.
- Moodley, K., (1991). The continued impact of black consciousness in South Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *29*(2), pp.237-251.
- Morrell, R., Jewkes, R. and Lindegger, G., (2012). Hegemonic masculinity/masculinities in South Africa: Culture, power, and gender politics. *Men and masculinities*, *15*(1), pp.11-30.
- Morrell, R. and Ouzgane, L., (2005). African masculinities: An introduction. In *African masculinities: Men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present*. pp. 1-20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Ndlovu, N., (2008). The 21st century pencil test. *Mail & Guardian*, *24*.
- Ngoepe, K., (2016). '*Black girls in tears at Pretoria school hair protest*'. *News24*. 29 August 2016. Black girls in tears at Pretoria school hair protest | News24 [Accessed: 18 September 2019]
- Ngozi Adichie, C. 2015. *Americanah.* London: 4th Estate.
- Nyamnjoh, F., Durham, D. and Fokwang, J., (2002). The domestication of hair and modernised consciousness in Cameroon: A critique in the context of globalisation. *Identity, Culture and Politics*, *3*(2), pp.98-124.
- Nyamza, M., (2013). *I Am Woman–Leap of faith*, Episode 2, Season 2 – S.A BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkeP3aCoEwE [Accessed:16 August 2022].
- Parry, B., (2004). *Postcolonial studies: A materialist critique*. London: Routledge.

- Pityana, N.B., (2021). Steve Biko: Philosopher of black consciousness. In *The Pan-African Pantheon*. pp. 391-409. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Ratele, K., (2003). We black men. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *27*(2), pp.237-249.
- Sichel, A., (2010). Grappling with South African Physical Theatre: report. *SATJ: South African Theatre Journal*, *24*(1), pp.41-50.
- Sithole, T., (2016). The concept of the black subject in Fanon. *Journal of Black Studies*, *47*(1), pp.24-40.
- Tate, S.A., (2016). *Black beauty: Aesthetics, stylization, politics*. London: Routledge.
- Tate, S.A., (2017). Libidinal economies of Black hair: subverting the governance of strands, subjectivities and politics. *Image & Text: A Journal for Design*, *29*(1), pp.95-111.
- Yancy, G., (2005). *Whiteness and the return of the "Black body"*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Duquesne University.

***Demazane Ntombazane!* Archives**

Demazane Ntombazane! Performance Poster (October 2022)

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/13JRoAK06cRhyvslv-jY_l9HaaiTZrkyn/view?usp=drive_link

- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1D67nZOKw8Mr0DGUJCfUvILbKiKEWn7SQ?usp=drive_link