

Prof. Pumla Dineo Gqola, *University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa*

**Unfashionable Sexualities:
Post-Apartheid Black women, Complexity and the Feminist Imagination**

pumla.gqola@wits.ac.za

Representations of Black women (sexualities) in South African creative genres have been the subject of much academic writing across disciplines. Most of this scholarship focuses on the problematic heteropatriarchal and/or pathological inscription of Black women's sexual agency and embodiment. This paper focuses on the television series, *Society*, co-written by Makgano Mamabolo & Lodi Matsetela, which premiered on South African Broadcasting Television 1 (SABC1) in January 2007 and is currently in its second season and *Shouting Silent* (2001), an award-winning documentary film by celebrated filmmaker, Xoliswa Sithole. Varied in genre and stylistic choices, these two texts offer refreshing representations of Black women's self-styling and sexual agency. Their chosen idioms disrupt larger narratives of sexuality and embodiment in contemporary South Africa, and as I will demonstrate, craft a language for more interesting public discursive imaginings of Black women. My analysis will be attentive to the transgressive portrayals of invalidated subject positions, such as that of Black lesbian, sexually liberated urbanite and transactional sex-engaged teenager. I am also concerned, in this paper, with the ways in which such representational idioms as are adopted in these texts suggest new registers for the public imagination/recognition of varied sexualisations of Black women (characters) in South Africa

Associate Professor in the School of Literature and Language Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Author of What is Slavery to me? Postcolonial Memory and the Post-Apartheid Imagination (Wits UP) and numerous essays on African sexualities, African feminisms, postcolonial literature and contemporary South African identities. Co-editor of Discourses on Difference, Discourses on Oppression (CASAS, 2002) and special issue on subaltern sexualities of the journal "Feminist Africa". Guest edited special issue on Sexuality and body image of the journal "Agenda".