

processes that shape and are shaped by stories, re-telling and memory. In one of the introductory texts, Sisonke Msimang reflects on Winnie Madikizela-Mandela in ways related to Msimang's own teachings and warnings about dangerous women, while recovering Mama Winnie also as complicated hero and villain, moving and shifting between these positionalities under the apartheid regime. Zoë Wicomb's interview with Desiree Lewis on Sara Baartman explores Baartman as a figure 'belonging to all' and the ways she has been represented and claimed by women in Africa and the diaspora. These introductory texts capture the imperative of the book: to show how archives capturing African women's lives are subjectively shaped. Feminisms are informed and shaped by our experiences.

Archives that centralise Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Sara Baartman and Mirriam Tlali are constantly re-made, un-done and re-articulated when they are re-told in the present, by the subjectivity of the persons engaged in this memory work. This lays the ground for the stand-point perspectives that follow in the book. *Surfacing* is an embodied epistemological contribution that encourages us to consider how the learning we do in our worlds shapes our reading and learning of the past and our imaginations of our future. Reflected in the title of the book, which reads as "Black and feminist" rather than 'Black feminist', this contribution raises a provocation about what it means to be Black *and* feminist simultaneously. Rather than engaging as 'African feminists', Lewis and Baderoon, through the work of Stuart Hall, frame the book as also an inquiry into race, where Blackness operates as a construction of difference in relation to hegemonic whiteness. *Surfacing* then offers us a reading of intersectionality and also employs intersectionality as its methodology.

*Surfacing* is divided into three sections namely, "Unmaking", "Positioning" and "Remaking". The essays, letters and reflections in "Unmaking" destabilise ideas of learning and teaching as limited to the formal educational context. As Pumla Gqola writes in her contribution, "A Playful But Serious Love Letter to Gabrielle Goliath", we come to learn and teach about gender, violence and fear also through art. In Yewande Omotoso's essay in the second section of the book, "Positioning", she echoes Gqola's sentiments by referring to bell hooks who teaches us that art and fiction help us to imagine possibilities. Mary Hames draws our attention to progressive learning spaces outside of formal education that seek the face of the intersecting lives of Black and classed women. We are reminded also that struggles against apartheid and projects of healing and reconciliation did not consider gender-based harm or

### **Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminist in South Africa.**

Desiree Lewis & Gabeba Baderoon (eds.).  
Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2021, 328 pp.  
ISBN 978-1-77614-609-3.

*Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminist in South Africa* (2021) is a collection of essays, reflections and conversations between and by feminist forerunners, as identified by Lewis and Baderoon, the editors of the book. This is a pensive work that considers feminist thought, being, politics and traditions in their multiplicity. It brings us closer to the intimacy of the complicated and complicating nature of subjectivities and identifications as

homophobic violence in the way these existed under apartheid. “Unmaking” shows us how intersectionality has been practiced by Black women, feminists, queer people and activists prior to ‘formal’ theorisation of the concept of intersectionality. Inquiry into race, class, gender, religion and sexuality is an ongoing project that can be found everywhere.

I read the section titled “Positioning” as a call to courageous writing. “Positioning” delves into the personal-political aspects of reading and writing, of audience, reception and publication. How we write depends on our positionality, imagination and where we ‘go’ to seek healing, breathe, life and futures. Danai Mupotsa’s essay “Breathing Under Water” intricately references other books and writings through which she reflects on her life as a gendered person and also as a reader. Our writing will always be received in complex and conflicting ways—by patriarchal imaginaries, colonial eyes, whiteness and even by other women. But “Positioning” shows us that we should not stop reading, writing, creating and making. In the concluding section, titled “Remaking”, readers are moved towards an imaginary of the future and it is a befitting end to this collection of essays, reflections, poetry and photographs. As Baderoon and Lewis assert, *Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminist in South Africa*, is not the full conversation, but I certainly think it is a significant part of the conversation. We are confronted with prospects of organising and protest as a transnational project that is also prone to internal contestation and unequal power relations, as Leigh-Ann Naidoo points out in her essay. Most notably, Naidoo (253) asserts that transnational solidarities are necessary and made possible by “the capacity to transcend one’s own direct experience, in order to be with other people” and to destabilise systemic violence.

Makhosazana Xaba offers us an experience of the body, centring sexual pleasure and the importance of the experience of the erotic for women. Xaba so beautifully remembers her “mama”: she cites her as being one of the sources of her advocacy for women’s sexual expression and sexual freedom. I especially appreciate this narrative because it shows us that not all Black women, Black mothers and Black aunties have discouraged girls and women from exercising sexual agency. This is also, for me, a transnational call for women’s sexual autonomy, sexual freedom and pleasure to be encouraged and actualised.

This book is a deeply affirming read that links Black and feminist lives, thinking and action. For young and emerging feminist scholars such as myself, this text is especially useful in terms of our engagement

with African feminisms especially as they regain currency and emerge within the calls for decolonisation advanced by the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student movements. This text moves us from fear to the courage needed to mine from our experiences and lives and connect them with feminist identification/s, feminist politics and feminist futures.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/tl.v59i1.12920>