

# ‘GUILTY PLEASURES’, ‘FORBIDDEN FRUITS’ AND ‘BRAVE CONFUSION’: QUEER LOVE IN THE MUSIC AND VIDEOS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SINGERS TOYA DELAZY AND NAKHANE TOURÉ

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## ABSTRACT

Guided by socio-musicological perspectives, this article contends that Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré grapple with issues pertaining to love and sexuality in their music. This is against the background of South Africa being hailed as a progressive country, especially relating to its constitution that acquiescently protects the rights of sexual minorities. Notwithstanding such constitutional protections, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT) continue to be victimised particularly in the impoverished townships of this country. Although they celebrate same-sex love, this article contends that such celebration is based on guilt and shame. Singing against such guilt and shame is a significant element in the construction of their sexual identity and acceptance of their same-sex love. The article concludes that Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré’s songs are pioneering in South Africa for their open depiction of queer love in a socio-cultural milieu that considers such identities and modes of self-expression as unnatural, deviant and taboo. This music can thus be considered as a transgressive space that seeks to rehabilitate the manner in which same-sex love is perceived.

**Keywords:** context; hetero-patriarchal perceptions; identity; Nakhane Touré; queer; same-sex love; Toya Delazy

## INTRODUCTION

In this article, I set out to analyse the songs of two contemporary South African musicians, Toya Delazy (Latoya Nontokozi Buthelezi) and Nakhane Touré (born Nakhane Mahlakahlaka). These two musicians are pioneering in their open depiction and broaching of same-sex love. The two musicians through their songs reflect on the variety of queer cultural practices particularly within an African context. It is my argument that such open discussion of same-sex love challenges the homophobia that is prevalent in South Africa, particularly in the impoverished townships. Through their music, Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré unwittingly fill an antagonistic gap that exists between legal rights guaranteed by the South African constitution and obstacles that impede upon the full recognition and the exercising of those rights. The central thesis of this paper is that music, as a form of expression of popular culture, is a site of LGBT artistic intervention because popular culture produces and reenacts a sense of the public sphere. Moreover, this paper will examine the role of music within the public sphere and the manner in which it generates solidarity and creates alternative understandings of justice and non-normative sexualities.

What offers a fascinating layer and localised specificity to their music is the fact that both singers come from families deemed to be the custodians of culture and tradition. Toya Delazy is the granddaughter of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, founder of the Inkatha Freedom Party, chief of the Buthelezi tribe as well as traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Nation. As for Nakhane Touré, his family is part of the Xhosa chiefdom in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Embracing non-normative gender and sexual identities certainly goes against the precepts of traditional South African societies which are largely hetero-patriarchal. Ncube (2015: 46) explains in this respect that custodians of culture normally ensure that traditional identities are adhered to. In going against what is expected of families that are custodians of culture, the two musicians queer?? the manner in which gender and sexual identities are viewed. I further assert that same-sex love has the potential to disrupt and question the hetero-patriarchal perceptions embedded in many African cultures. The music of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré, creates transgressive affective states through which it is possible to rethink and redefine what it means to love and what it means to be a man or a woman in present-day South Africa. This will inevitably involve an examination of not just the reception and impact of the music of the two artists, but also an analysis of what is specifically and complexly South African about the context and content of this music.

Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré are public figures and visible in the public sphere and music landscape of South Africa. Both have won awards at the South African Music Awards. Given this prominence that they have in South Africa and beyond, their musical oeuvre has the potential to constitute an artistic archive of same-sex love in post-apartheid South Africa. This is particularly relevant given the apparent divorce that exists between the rights enshrined in the constitution and the real lived experiences of people. Be that as it may, the music of these two artists has the potential of unsettling

the essentialising discourses that marginalise same-sex love. As pointed out by Epprecht (2009: vi), 'there is room for optimism that currently hegemonic heteronormativity is being challenged in promising ways. Peoples dignity, creativity and complex sexuality can be freed up from the toxicity and limitations of the past'.

## CONTEXTUALISING QUEER LOVE AND SEXUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

'In 1996, the South African government approved a new constitution. In addition to ending de jure apartheid, it was the first in the world to protect the rights of homosexuals', explains Massoud. He further develops that:

Lawmakers made history by writing sexual orientation into the national non-discrimination clause, enshrining gay rights in the supreme law of the land. This progressive government and constitution, however, did not reflect the attitudes of most South Africans, who did not support gay rights. The government created a gap between its tolerant laws and the conservative social attitudes of its citizens (2013: 301).

In as much as the constitution protected minority sexualities, there remains a yawning gap between the spirit of the laws and what happens in reality in the everyday life of South Africans, especially LGBT. Violence, especially corrective rape against lesbians, is prevalent particularly in the impoverished townships of South Africa. Such violence against LGBTs certainly goes against the discourse of diversity and plurality espoused in the comparison of South Africa to a 'rainbow nation'. It is thus paradoxical that whilst South Africa's constitution guarantees and celebrates the rights of LGBTs, there is continued homophobia and transphobia. Such a state of affairs undoubtedly points to the fact that constitutionalism can in no way single-handedly change behavior, modes of self-expression and ways of thinking that are in many instances deeply embedded in enduring sociocultural and religious practices.

Although South Africa boasts of cosmopolitan and modern metropolises such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban; it should be highlighted that this country remains largely conservative. To better appreciate this reality, one simply needs to observe how high-ranking public officials conflate culture and tradition into their political discourses regarding sexuality. An example is President Jacob Zuma's speech made during celebrations to commemorate Heritage Day in 2006. Zuma declared that 'same-sex marriage is a disgrace to the nation and to God' (Van Onselen n.p.). Another official, Phathekile Holomisa, Head of the Congress of Traditional Leaders, notwithstanding his acceptance of the prevalence of non-normative sexualities in African societies, declares that 'of course it is unconventional, because it is expected it will be people of the opposite sex who will have sexual relations with each other, because there is a purpose for sexual relations: to build families, to have children' (Tlabi n.p.). Although these discourses may seem isolated and of little significance, they do

nonetheless reflect the general attitudes and thoughts that are rampant in everyday lives in the communities of South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Henderson (2015: 109) explains that the homophobia that is widespread in South Africa is fostered in schools which 'are critical sites for the enforcement of heterosexuality'. Such enforcement is made possible by religious discourses which do not easily accept sexual and identity expressions that are deemed to be wayward or deviant. De Vos (2008: 162) attests that it is particularly because of religion that there has been difficulty in 'extending marriage rights to same-sex couples'. Religion, coupled with traditional norms, has allowed homophobia to continue to manifest itself in South Africa.

Traditional modes of thinking have certain expectations of what men and women should do or not do with their bodies, sexualities and eroticisms. The principal objective of formalised and schematised acts and practices is to mimic the structural dominance of males. Such a staging and performance of masculinity and manhood feminises emotions like love which are considered weak and weakening. What this construction of masculinity and femininity is that it frames the two as unequal notions. Moreover, such a perception of gender identities fails to acknowledge the nuances and textures that exists within and between masculinity each of the genders. In fact, any gender identity that strays from the traditional roles is deemed unnatural, deviant and therefore wrong.

Non-normative sexualities and genders challenge the heteronormative logic which silences and banishes to the margins gender and sexual identities that are deemed deviant. Non-heterosexual identities contest such dichotomist vision of genders and sexualities and rework the traditional ways of thinking about identities. As such, the non-normative gender and sexual identities undeniably play a central role in offering alternative perspectives on how subjectivities are constituted through an acknowledgement of diversity, contradiction and uncertainty.

It is against such a sociocultural background that the music of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré positions itself. It is essential at this point to give brief presentations of the musicians before examining how they broach same-sex love in their songs. Toya Delazy was born in February 1990 and she obtained a degree in jazz piano from Howard College at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. To date, she has released two albums: *Due drop* (2012) and *Ascension* (2014). The former has, according to Honeychild (2014: n.p.), been 'pushing boundaries in an otherwise conservative continent when it comes to sexuality and prescribed roles of both men and women'. The album *Ascension* is fearless in not just describing same-sex love but in also supporting and celebrating the legitimacy of this love. Although Delazy acknowledges queerness in her lyrics, she does not publicly self-identify as queer. It can be argued that her lyrics seem fairly

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1 Although I reference statements by conservative politicians as evidence of a homophobic culture in South Africa, it is worth noting that this is not specific to South Africa only. The same could certainly be said and demonstrated for a number of countries, especially the United States of America where in recent times there has often been a gap between the law and the culture, between the law and enforcement of protections.

explicit to render her sexual orientation an 'open secret'. Nakhane Touré was born in February 1988 and has also released two albums thus far: *Brave confusion* (2013) and *The laughing son* (2015). Unlike Toya Delazy, Nakhane Touré has made music which details his own experiences as an openly gay man in post-apartheid South Africa. He explains in an interview with Gremore (2014: n.p.) that:

My work is an extension of who I am. No censorship allowed. So basically that means my entire being, whether it's flattering or not – and most of the time it is not – is put into my work. My sexuality is a facet of who I am, so naturally it plays a part.

It is relevant to examine at this point the manner in which the families of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré have reacted to their music and sexuality. Although her sexual orientation has been publicly questioned, Toya Delazy has remained quiet about it. She explains in an interview that her sexual identity is 'like a flower. It's the one special thing you have that you don't want everyone to scrutinise. There's nothing to hide. It's just personal and special' (Channel 24 2014: n.p.). Nakhane Touré takes a different approach in that he openly declares his sexual orientation. He clarifies that in spite of initial reservations by members of his family, they have now accepted who he is:

I guess in the typical fashion: tears, phone calls from aunts and uncles, supportive cousins and friends in the same generation, slight mental breakdown from me. But then over time they thawed. You know, it's easy to throw stones when the person is so far away, but when it's personal, when it's your own child, you look at things differently and you realize that maybe some things that you believed about a certain group of people are not necessarily true. At least that's what my mother says to me now. All is well now (Gremore 2014: n.p.).

For the purposes of this article, I will concentrate on Toya Delazy's album *Ascension* and Nakhane Touré's *Brave confusion*. The two albums deal with various overarching issues on non-normative sexuality and gender identity. In his analysis of the music of Nakhane Touré, Ncube (2015: 50) argues that for Touré, music: 'offers an elaborate contemplation of the anxieties that LGBT individuals have to deal with in their quest to assume their so-called deviant sexual and gender identities.' As such, music offers an avenue through which he is able to negotiate and deal with diverse issues relating to his sexuality.

Although there is solid studies on the correlation between music and identity (Klein, 2002; Lewis & Seaman, 2004; Swarr, 2004; Whiteley, 2013; Levi, 2015), there still exists a dearth of scholarship on the intersection of non-Western music as well as non-Western queer gender and sexual identities. The potential for this article thus lies in the valuable work of de-Westernising queer popular music studies. In their study, Aronoff and Gilboa (2015) focus on three roles of music, of which two are of relevance to the arguments I make in this article: music as a means of concealing and exposing as well as music as a means of making change. Through a queer theory-based textual reading of the lyrics of the two artists and also an analysis of their music videos, I will show how they are involved in not only confronting homophobia but more significantly

in challenging dominant narratives that demonise, pathologise and also vilify same-sex love and sexuality.

## RETHINKING SAME-SEX LOVE AS A GUILTY PLEASURE

In their introduction to the book *Gay shame*, Halperin and Traub (2009: 6) postulate that 'shame provided the conceptual link necessary to understanding the relation between queer identity and queer performativity'. The personae presented in the songs of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré palpably grapple with coming to terms with their sexual orientation. The songs chronicle, in a way, a journey towards acceptance and celebration of same-sex love.

This journey towards self-acceptance starts and is shaped by the peremptory presence of shame and some level of guilt on the part of the presented personae. In her song 'Forbidden fruit', Toya Delazy describes same-sex as somewhat illicit. The persona laments at the beginning of the song:

What should I do? What should I do?

I'm cut in two,

A love/forbidden fruit

Two essential issues are presented in these opening lines of the song. To begin with, the rhetorical question 'what should I do?' indicates the intrinsic difficulty facing the persona in embracing her sexual orientation. The question, rhetorical or not, points to some level of confusion on the part of the persona who is unsure what to make of the love she feels for someone of the same sex as her.

This is further illustrated by the fact that she is 'cut in two'. Secondly, she characterises same-sex love as a 'forbidden fruit'. The adjective 'forbidden' suggests that such love is either not allowed or that it is in some way wrong. The phrase also has connotations of framing same-sex love as a decadent indulgence in spite of the pleasure that might be obtained from participating in it. The expression has its origin in Judeo-Christian beliefs in the story of the fall of Adam and Eve after they had eaten a fruit they had been prohibited from eating. In this light, the 'forbidden fruit' can be read an extended metaphor of carnal desire whose lure emanates from the awareness that it should not be acquired. If this is the case, then Toya Delazy's persona alludes to same-sex love as desire that leads only to sin, destruction and condemnation. Reference to sin inevitably brings into play the effect of religion which considers non-heterosexual couplings as unbecoming, aberrant and abominable. The phrase 'a love/forbidden fruit' points to the constant discord between the spiritual and the carnal, the pure and the impure, the correct and the incorrect.

Nakhane Touré also deals with this same antagonism between the spiritual and the carnal. In the song 'Abraham', the persona repeats several times the following quatrain:

Abraham, father of my fathers  
 I am the sand and I am the stars  
 So don't take me away  
 No, please don't

This quatrain obviously refers to the story of Abraham in the Bible as recounted in the twenty-seventh chapter of the book of Genesis. In this chapter, Abraham is informed by God that he would be made the father of a vast nation that would be as innumerable as the stars and sands of the sea shore. The quatrain present two opposing views on the persona's struggle with his sexuality. In the first two lines, the persona pledges alliance to his spiritual roots which make him a descendant of Abraham. In the remaining two lines, the persona begs an unnamed interlocutor not to take him away from this spiritual descendance. Although it remains vague who the persona is addressing, it is nonetheless evident that there is an internal strife which like Toya Delazy's persona, cuts him in two. He struggles between love for God and his 'forbidden love'. This perpetual internal battle is multiplied in Nakhane Touré's album. For example, in the song "Christopher", the title through its witty onomastic repartee reflects the struggle between the spiritual and carnal. The name Christopher camouflages that of 'Christ' who inescapably plays a central role in the life of the persona. However, the name that easily perceptible is that of Christopher and this suggests that the role of Christ remains in the foreground of the same-sex relationship with the singing persona and Christopher.

The songs of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré follow the schema of beginning with guilt and shame and thereafter move towards a celebration of same-sex love. In the song 'In my head', Toya Delazy's singing persona opens by avowing 'you will get me in trouble', as if cognisant that she is about to do something deemed wrong. She subsequently goes on to describe the beauty of the beloved person:

Beautiful girl, beautiful eyes  
 Beautiful body, beautiful lies  
 Caught in the headlights thinking of you

It appears that an acceptance of the guilt is sine qua non for the persona to fully express her same-sex love. There is in this instance an attempt to go beyond the shame which is itself a form of internalisation of the hostility and phobia faced by the persona. The persona clearly describes what she loves in the unnamed girl: eyes, body and lies, which are all qualified as beautiful.



Nakhane Touré also uses the same narrative schema but in the song 'In the dark room', he inverts it by beginning the song with a description of the intimacies of same-sex love experienced with a dark room. This is directly followed by a chorus that discloses shame and guilt: 'I hope you know I will hate myself in the morning for this'. The song is particularly fascinating for its opposition of the dark room and the morning. The same-sex adventures experienced within the secluded darkness of the room implies that these experiences can only be done under the covers of obscurity and isolation. This opposition also demonstrates the cavernous hiatus between pride in same-sex love that is achieved only within the darkness and the subsequent guilt, self-loathing and self-hate that kicks in at the break of dawn. It is however worth pointing out that the music suggests a dramatic overcoming of the shame experienced by the personae. The final wordless section of the video, with its intensity and fast-rhythm can be read as an apotheosis and overcoming of the shame. This is also palpably audible in the shift away from the vertiginous polyrhythms felt through most of the song into a more 'locked-in' streamlined rhythm.

What is certainly central in the songs of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré is that they mark a significant turn in South African music through their bold and open portrayal of same-sex love. In Toya Delazy's 'Forbidden fruit', the persona expressively bellows:

Is this what I've been kept from?

Caught between hell and heaven

I'm feeling joy and freedom

There's no reason to feel

I love the guilty pleasures

The persona openly declares the joy and liberation that she experiences in fully embracing the love she has for another woman. In fact, she clarifies that she also loves the guilt that accompanies the expression of her love. There is agency in the acceptance of all the contradictions that seem inherent to the manifestation and experiencing of same-sex love. Finding agency in and through shame and guilt allows for a more robust consideration of sex, sexuality and gender which in turn makes it possible to undo the narrow and monolithic ideals that cast identity as fixed rather than a flexible and fluid phenomenon.

Through candidly singing about same-sex love and sexuality, Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré achieve three main objectives. Firstly, they confront and destabilise the heteronormative notion that erotic love can only be expressed when the couple is composed of a man and a woman. Toya Delazy's songs show that love between two women is possible whilst those of Nakhane Touré point to the prospects of a man expressing love to another man. In the song 'In my head', Toya Delazy's singing persona expounds that she is aware of the effects that heteronormative dictates have on defining



what behavior and modes of self-expression are reckoned to be correct. The persona states at the beginning of the song that 'I love to bend the rules' and at the end of the song brazenly proclaims that 'I got the rules, fuck all the rules'. The persona obstinately breaks societal rules that limit love and its expression to the heterosexual couple.

Secondly, the music of the two artists reveals that identities are fluid and multiple. Toya Delazy states in the song 'Why hate':

We are all shapes and colors  
Some are dreaded like a rasta  
Some have a same-sex lover.

By showing that people cannot be the same and that difference and diversity are salient, Toya Delazy deconstructs the monolithic perspective which considers identity to be a stable and unalterable social phenomenon. Nakhane Touré, for example, also illustrates that there isn't a single definition of being a man or experiencing manhood. He shows that same-sex love and desire should in no way be used to denigrate or marginalise some men. In the song 'The dead' he affirms:

I'm going to love him unceasingly  
Sing hallelujah willingly  
Dance in front of God like David.

There is a suggestion in these lyrics that it is possible to love a person of the same sex and still have the courage to dance before God. The inference that I make from this statement is that identities, sexual or otherwise, are complex and multifaceted. There is thus need to undo heteronormative ways of thinking which limit gender and sexual expression to an outmoded binary. Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré show through their music that there is an opulent grey space between the traditional gender binary. In this space between the binary it is possible to imagine fluid identities in their diverse manifestations. Moreover, such thinking challenges the heteropatriarchal thinking which frames gender and sexual identities as existing in the traditional binary of masculine and feminine.

Thirdly, the music of the two artists transforms itself into an alternative discursive space not just for the expression of same-sex love but more importantly to fight for the legitimacy of this same love. Nakhane Touré in the song 'Utopia' talks of the need for a place in which he can choose who to be and who to love. He dreams of a place:

Where the angels beckon me and push me to my sleep  
In a place of sunlight, no doomsday and no rain.

If music is considered as an expression of both individual and collective identities, it can be argued that it therefore plays a key function in articulating the social relations between unequal groups. On the one hand, music can be used by the dominant group to buttress its dominance and hegemony. On the other hand, it can be deployed by the subaltern as a means of questioning and challenging the position and discourses of the dominant group. In the case of Nakhane Touré and Toya Delazy, their music can be seen as an attempt to give voice to a marginalised social group, ostracised as a result of its difference in sexual and gender expression and in the ways in which they choose to love. In the song, 'Why hate', Toya Delazy sings: 'one for all, no more fights/ all for one, rainbow rights'. The 'rainbow rights' that she sings about are an allusion to LGBT rights which she feels need to be fought for by all., Nakhane Touré in the song 'Be moved' also pronounces:

If some of you are deaf  
No, none of you are blind  
Say none of you dead  
Allow yourself a privilege to be stitched  
Be moved to love my friend  
Be moved to love

These lyrics make it clear that the two musicians are engaged in more than just entertaining. The message of their songs constructs a counter-discourse that questions the homophobic and heteronormalising logic which discounts same-sex love. Of specific interest in the above lyrics is Nakhane Touré's use of the metaphor of stitching. This metaphor speaks to the need to bridge differences by sewing and patching the disconnectedness that may exist as a result of the reasoning of the 'straight mind' which Nakhane Touré characterises as deaf, blind and dead.

Such a consideration of the music of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré implies that it possesses a destabilising force that enables LGBTs to display and perform different understandings of themselves as agentive and moral beings. Therefore, 'through their interventions in the public sphere, create and generate solidarity through narratives which demand recognition and, at the same time, aim to redefine the collective understanding of justice and the good life by proposing new visions of institutional transformation' (Lara 1998: 1). It is precisely the role of music videos in addition to the sound that I seek to analyse in the last section of this article. By visualising same-sex love, Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré the sung word is mediated to that its transgressive potential reaches a wider audience.

## FROM AUDIO TO VISUAL: RHAPSODIES OF DIFFERENT SHADES OF 'LOVE'

In addition to the music that they produce, Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré are also involved in collaborative projects through music videos that depict, in different ways, same-sex love. The music videos of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré are innovative for their open engagement with queer politics in South Africa. In this ultimate section of the article, I will examine four music videos by the artists: 'Forbidden fruit' and 'Why hate' by Toya Delazy and 'Fog' and 'In the dark' by Nakhane Touré. Although the two artists do not direct the recording of the music videos, they were nonetheless fully involved in the imagining and designing of the video concepts as well as the sets themselves. I will show how these music videos mold themselves along North American videos that openly broach LGBT issues. These include videos like Macklemore and Ryan Lewis' 'Same love', Sam Smith's 'Lay me down' and Carly Rae Jepsen's 'Call me maybe'. The music videos certainly provide a visual context to the songs which I have previously analysed. Furthermore, music videos as forms of artistic expression in popular culture currently have wide circulation owing to the ubiquity of social media and video-sharing websites such as YouTube (Gever et al 1993; Railton and Watson 2011). Music videos are exceptionally indispensable for the way in which they give visibility to concepts that may remain largely abstract in the lyrics and the music.

Toya Delazy's videos begin with what might appear to be shocking scenes which are followed by a series of rapid vignettes depicting people of different sexes, races and sexual orientations. Her music videos have bright and vibrant colors, reminiscent of the metaphoric 'rainbow nation' that South Africa has come to be referred to as. The video for the song 'Forbidden fruit', for instance, commences with Toya Delazy wearing a nun's habit and carrying a rosary as she sings 'what should I do?' It is interesting that she chooses to start the video with the image of a nun who is contemplating some internal strife and spiritual dilemma afflicting her. The video deals already in its opening sequence with the embedded religious concerns that constrain, to a large extent, the expression of same-sex love. This opening scene is trailed by sumptuous fruits that are crushed by different characters with exuberant juices flowing all over them. Quick vignettes present thereafter same-sex and heterosexual couples of different ages, genders and races passionately kissing. This video celebrates the diversified manifestation of love. This unrestricted display of different types of love dismantles the discursive practices that construct same-sex love as the queer and perverse 'other'. In fact, within the space of the video, heterosexual and same-sex love seem, in a utopic manner, to agreeably co-exist along each other. In so doing, the video also subverts the hierarchical categorisation of identities ranks heterosexuality above all other gender and sexual identities. In this logic, the video advocates for the same status to be accorded to different forms of expressing and experiencing love. Moreover, the open depiction

of same-sex love and love making in the video presents the substance of everyday existences of queer persons and same-sex love in South Africa.

Nakhane Touré's videos are evocatively gloomy and forlorn as they are cast in black and white with minimal décor and montage. In the video for the song 'Fog', the first fifteen seconds are a black background that is interrupted by the strumming of a guitar. Progressively, the singer's face appears covered in a slimy and grotesque aqueous substance which he removes from his face as the song advances. The final fifteen seconds, like the beginning, turn to blackness and the singer redolently sings 'I've got the holy ghost' as the video comes to a melodramatic close. The video for the song 'In the dark room' employs a similar narrative and filmic technique of using black and white as well as minimalistic décor save for a mattress and a chair. The dark room seems to be a dilapidated and abandoned prison cell because of the placement of the windows away from the ground. The singer, dressed in a white shirt and black trousers, erotically dances with a man who is only wearing black underpants.

Nakhane Touré videos seem to find their force in the element of provocation that manifestly runs through them. Moreover, his videos project black queer bodies in their barest forms. The videos concentrate on bodies that are 'no longer thought or experienced in terms of sexual difference, and pleasures that [are] diffuse, possibly nameless, intense and intensifying, pleasures that [take] the entire body as the surface and depth of its operation' (Butler 1999: 11). Unlike Toya Delazy's videos which celebrate same-sex love, Nakhane Touré's videos are involved in a more philosophical engagement with the viewer. Candid in their portrayal of same-sex eroticism and the queer body, Touré's videos create a compellingly powerful audiovisual edifice which through the interplay of grotesque and minimalism subverts the dominance of heteronormative discursive practices.

I argue that the music videos are important in visualising the message carried in the songs. The combination of the sung word and the visual image perceptibly have a greater impact in as far as projecting same-sex love. In effect, the visual image radicalises and materialises the message articulated by the songs. It is unquestionable that the representation of LGBTs has increased over the years. Such representation plays a pivotal part in unmasking and giving visibility to the historically marginalised group that are LGBTs. As such, visual visibility made possible by the music videos has the potential of undoing the figurative negation and erasure of LGBTs whilst challenging misunderstood myths about same-sex love. Vernallis (2004: 179) elucidates in her analysis of the aesthetics of music videos that 'the sheer complexity of the relation between music and image: it reveals that correspondences between music and image can range from most strict to the most subtle or enigmatic – and that the most fragile may be the most engaging'. By producing visually engaging music videos to accompany their songs, Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré show that in spite of the strong hold of mainstream and mass media by heteronormativity, it is still possible to create a space

that is both liberated from these constraints and theoretically liberating in the discussion of same-sex love.

It is necessary to briefly analyse the reception of these videos. Comments posted by people who have viewed the videos on YouTube show that some find the videos fascinating whilst others see in the videos nothing more than sexual immorality. Of special interest is how different viewers discuss amongst each other the content of the music video and the music itself. What this does is create an alternative space of discussing issues that have to do with same-sex sexuality and love. The presence of both positive and negative comments to the videos highlights the multifaceted contradictions of South Africa and its antinomies of sexual modernity.

## CONCLUSION

The burgeoning crop of artists who are openly engaging with issues pertaining to LGBTs plays a pivotal role in presenting an alternative image of same-sex love. Showing that same-sex love is far from being aberrant and ghastly, the music and music videos of Nakhane Touré and Toya Delazy capture and unpack the diverse issues that play out around same-sex love in contemporary South Africa. Whilst celebrating same-sex love, the music by the two artists also highlights the challenges faced by LGBTs as they negotiate their sexual and gender identities. Guilt, shame and self-loathing are elements that cannot be disassociated from the process of both embracing same-sex love.

As a form of artistic expression in and of popular culture, the music of Toya Delazy and Nakhane Touré is critical in providing alternative understanding of same-sex love in South Africa. By creating affective states the music allows for the creation of discursive space in which same-sex love is performatively examined and explored. Music videos as collaborative projects to the music make it possible to offer a visual facet to the message that is carried in the music. This paper has thus offered insights into the intersection between cultural productions and their discursive function as a critique of the heteronormalising logic that reigns in heteropatriarchal societies such as South Africa. There certainly is more work to be done to examine the function of cultural productions such as much in transforming conventions around sex and sexuality in South Africa, and other countries of the global south.

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