Individual interview 3 – Toni

(Full time: 1: 20:43)

Int: Hi, hi. How are you?

Toni: I’m alright, how are you?

Int: I’m good thank you. So, you’ve read the consent form, you’ve understood the consent form?

Toni: Yes.

Int: Alright. You acknowledge that your participation is completely voluntary, no one’s forced you to be here.

Toni: Yes.

Int: Alright great. So, just an idea of what we’re going to do today – well, this evening. We’re going to start off with a little bit of background information, just to get an idea of who you are; and then we’re going to go into a quick discussion about this concept of belonging, we’re going to focus on the emotional aspect of it, and then we’re going to have a look at the political aspect if it; from there we’re going to have a look at safety, specifically South Africa – just living in South Africa. And then we’re going to look at the feminine aspect of living in South Africa – what’s it like to live in this space. So ah, sound good?

Toni: Alright, ya no sounds good.

Int: Do you have any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries before we get started?

Toni: No.

Int: Alright. Ah, ya, so we’ll start off with some background information. So, who are you, where are you, ah, are you working, did you study, are you still studying, um yeah.

Toni: Alright, so um, just at the risk of not sounding like I am at an interview – haha, no pun intended. So, ah, do I have to give you my name?

Int: No you don’t have to.

Toni: Cause I looked on the consent form and you’re ah, going to omit the names, so ya. So, um basically I am a – I can give my age though right?

Int: I kinda need it.

Toni: Alright, cool, cool, cool. I am 23 years old and I am in my first year of teaching, so I live and work in Johannesburg and I teach in high school. So, um ya, I studied a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts, at the University of Pretoria for three years and then did a PGCE last year, for a year. So ya, that’s pretty much me.

Int: What grades are you teaching. Like high-high high school or at the lower end.

Toni: All of them. \*Laughs.

Int: Oh goodness me!

Toni: I’m what you call the ‘Sliding Scale’ teachers, where I teach from grade eight to twelve basically. My qualification was in ten to twelve, but you know as it often happens in schools, you get hired where you’re needed so. So, if they need someone to come in and teach grade nine drama, you’re not going to say no.

Int: Yeah. So, you are a drama teacher I take it?

Toni: Yeah, drama and other things.

Int: Whoa!

Toni: \*Laughs. So, I teach – yeah I teach drama grade ten, eleven, and twelves, so I am a matric teacher; crazy stuff woo, crazy, crazy stuff. Um, then I also teach great eights and nines visual arts, I don’t know how that happened, but it happened. And I also teach grade eight LO.

Int: Ooooo. ‘Favourite’ subject

Toni: \*Laughs. Yeah, I’m that person now telling kids: “Hey, one day someone is going to offer you drugs on the side of the road.”  
So, um yah.

Int: I’m still waiting for someone to offer me drugs, like they were like: “You’re going to get trapped in a corner, their going to be like ‘do you want to smoke drugs’, and I must be like ‘no’.”  
I’m still waiting, no one’s offered me drugs.

Toni: I’m still waiting, no one’s offered – like I teach kids this is going to happen to them but psht, it hasn’t happened to me, you know.

Int: I’m waiting to see. Yeah, awesome. We’ll just get a bit into belonging – always been in Joburg, grew up in Joburg or moved around a bit?

Toni: No. So, I was born in Limpopo but I grew up in Pretoria. So, when I turned, I think I was 6, my parents brought us here to Pretoria to – just so that they could work, you know, we could have a better opportunity at you know, getting a good education, living in a good area, so. I spent most of my life in Pretoria. Um, ya, I only just moved to Joburg this year so, ya, ya.

Int: Joburg very different or not that different?

Toni: Completely different honestly speaking. I think that, ah, Joburg in terms of the way that people are is very different to how things are for people in Pretoria. People in Pretoria are very friendly, ya. Pretoria is a very welcoming place, here people have places to be so it’s very much, ah…

Int: ‘Get out of my way’.

Toni: Mmm.

Int: That sucks. Um, you said earlier, because I just want to touch in this aspect of safety. So, you’re parents moved away from Limpopo, to give you and … do you have siblings?

Toni: Yeah, I do. I have a younger sister that I share parents with, ya. That I share both parents with, but ya.

Int: Oh, okay. So, you move, your parents move you guys from Limpopo for a safer living environment did that affect you in any sense, did you actually understand at that age ‘okay this is safe, that isn’t safe’, or were you just really oblivious to it?

Toni: I think I was oblivious to it at first, um, but interestingly enough I think what made me understand that there were certain types of ‘safeties’ was that, um, you know from where we came from, um, we never used to lock our doors when we slept at night. Um, ya like, everyone kind of knew everyone and there was not that need to safeguard your belonging like that because you knew no one was going to touch your things – if that makes sense.

Int: Ya.

Toni: Um, but when we came to Pretoria you know, that was the first time I saw like gated communities and like fences with barbed wire and, you know, electric fences, and stuff. But interestingly enough I’ve always felt safer in Pretoria, maybe because I ended up growing up here, you know, and I got used to the way things are done here, but ya.

Int: So, let’s go into the first one of belonging, which is: How would you describe having a feeling of belonging?

Toni: Okay, oo. That’s and interesting one. So, in order to feel as though you belong, you have to walk into the space and feel as though it is home, like you do not have to over extend yourself to be understood; it’s a space the moment you step into which you entire being is recognised, appreciated, valued, safeguarded, um, ya. It is a place you can completely let you guard down and be yourself and basically yeah.

Int: Brilliantly said! I mean like I couldn’t have said it better myself, and I’ve done research on this for like three years now. Um, really touched exactly on what the theory says and that’s this – it feels like home. Like that’s belonging, it has this feeling of home; having yourself recognised and valued. Um, with that in mind, being a woman in South Africa do you feel as though you belong in South Africa?

Toni: That is such a – that is such a loaded question you know, because South Africa is such a special place. Um, it is, wow, it is one of the places that are just beyond unique, and I’m not just saying this because I’m from here, but in my few like explorations outside of this country where I have visited, you know, other countries and stuff, umm… you know, I went to the US when I was fourteen and then I went to South Africa when I was twelve and they were countries that I went to that were, obviously, richer than here so you know it looked better, it looked safer, cleaner, all of that, you know. Um, they had things we didn’t have, all of that. But it didn’t quite have the same feeling that being here is. So, ya I can’t quite describe what it’s like to come home after a long time away from the country; it’s this instantons – wow, English, English, English - anyways, it’s this instant feeling of just you know, ‘This is your home and this is where you belong, and there’s nowhere else you’d rather be’, but on the flip side of it, being a women in South Africa is such a fraught experience because everywhere you go you have to have this consciousness that you are not entirely safe you know. Um, when you go to the grocery store you need to like keep watch for anyone that might be trying to follow you, might be trying to rob you, might be trying to hijack your car; um, when you go to church it’s the same thing. When you visit your family members, you know. Um, I brought a car this year and the very first thing my dad said to me was: “When you go home every day, make sure you use different routes because there might be someone watching you.”   
You know: “Mapping out how you live your day-to-day life, they might know where you live. And that’s just not, um, something that we want.”  
So, it’s just interesting as a woman you are constantly thinking about all the ways in which you have to protect yourself, um, and sadly I don’t think there are enough mechanisms to protect us so. Ya, in that sense there are times I feel as though I don’t belong because I need to fight so hard just to make it home safe every day, you know. So, ya.

Int: When are those moments when you do feel like you belong?

Toni: I’d like to say that I feel like I belong when I’m with my family. Um, I feel like I belong when I’m among people that care about me, so my friends, my partner, um… where else? My social places – I really like going to the gym, I feel like I belong when I’m at the gym, you know, work sometimes too. So ya, just places where I have cultivated relationships with other people that I trust basically, ya.

Int: It’s a very interesting way to look at it because I want to take it back to what you said when you moved from Limpopo to Pretoria – you knew everyone in that community, it was a community. And you moved then to Pretoria, and you were like: “Okay these houses are like fortresses, I don’t know my neighbours.”  
Did you feel like you belonged more in Limpopo than in Pretoria right in the beginning?

Toni: Oh definitely ya. For the first few years, I looked forward to, you know, going back to Limpopo to visit because there it felt more – ya, like you said, I felt like I belonged more there and I had to, I didn’t have to work as hard to be close to people and to just feel safe, you know.

Int: Just summarise basically what you have said, or just clarify. Is your belonging associated or perhaps just linked to being with people, your people specifically?

Toni: Yes, one hundred percent.

Int: So, people you have established relationship to and everything, so it’s not necessarily – maybe we can say it’s not necessarily the country that you feel like you belong to, but South Africans?

Toni: Yeah! Actually yeah, no, no, that’s, huh – very interesting way to put it. You sometimes, I was saying this to someone the other day that like, you know, I go to therapy right, so sometimes you’ll be there explaining something to like your therapist and it feels as though all the puzzle pieces are there but one has like joined them yet. So, when you said what you said I was like: “Huh, it’s like the pieces were all there but someone just had to put it together.”  
So, ya, yes no I would say that my sense of belonging has to do more with other South Africans than South Africa itself.

Int: So, I think you said that you went to the US and South America?

Toni: Mmm.

Int: Where were you in South America, because sometimes I have this idea – I can speak about myself personally – um, that it’s not a safe place like Columbia, not the greatest place to be, Guatemala definitely not. So, what was that like?

Toni: Yeah, yeah. Um, so interestingly enough we went to Brazil, we went to Argentina, and then we went to Uruguay. So, ya. the Brazil part we were a bit sceptical about it. It was a school trip so, the trip to South America was arranged by my primary school at the time, so parents did – like the trip to Brazil was the one everyone was asking about, that okay, we haven’t heard anything in the news about Argentina, Uruguay I don’t think I even heard about it before I went, but the Brazil part, everyone was like: “Hey listen, are our kids going to be safe you know. Are their belongings going to be safe? How do I know that my child won’t be trafficked and find themselves half-way to someplace else?”  
So, that was, um, it was fun for once for the attention to be taken off South Africa and, you know, be focused somewhere else. But, um, when we eventually visited the countries, we did feel safe. I it worth mentioning that we were tourists essentially, so there were certain protections in place, there were certain places where we just did not go, um, so I think the feeling of safety was definitely… not mechanised – manufactured. It was a manufactured sense of safety, ya. If you’re going to take your kids to a country like Brazil you have to assure them that, you know, these are the places that we’re definitely going to avoid, just to ensure that your kids are safe, so ya.   
Ya, we went to some city – I don’t think people outside of Brazil even know about – when people think about Brazil they think Rio, they think Sau Paolo, they think what’s that other place. Ya, we went to someplace called, um, ‘Purto Algere’, which peoples ‘the port of happy people’.

Int: Aw!

Toni: Ya, ‘port of happy people’, and it really was this small town, you know, where – I don’t want to say it was rural, it definitely wasn’t rural, but it wasn’t as busy as the main cities, ya, hence why I say ‘manufactured safety’.

Int: I really, really, really like that term ‘manufactured safety’, I’m going to steal it, I’m sorry, its going to happen.

Toni: \*Laughs. It’s alright.

Int: So, are there in South Africa ‘zones’ that you feel safe?

Toni: Oh yes, definitely ya. Um, most of Pretoria I feel safe in. So, I grew up in Pretoria East, so Pretoria East I can definitely just, you know, guarantee with my whole life that it is safe, mainly because it has a lot of security. There are gated estates, like you said house that are built like fortresses, the streets are relatively safe to walk in; even Pretoria CBD, like if you know your way around, which I have gotten time to learn, um, it’s not as intimidating. So, Pretoria East I can definitely feel safe there. Other places not so much, but ya.

Int: I like what you said about Pretoria CBD, because I just did two interviews recently with two other participants, and they basically went like: “Pretoria CBD, no, no, no, no!”  
And these are two girls that like literally grew up in Pretoria but never step foot in the Pretoria CBD. This could be in part because they are white participants – do you think there is this fear that ‘Oh I’m white, I cannot go into this area’?

Toni: Ya, ya, no definitely because the thing about Pretoria CBD is that like most CBD’s in this country it’s a place where people go to hustle, you know. Um, so it’s mostly made up of um, you know, high-rise buildings where lower to middle lower income people live, you know. Um, there are a lot of just – I don’t want to say self-sufficient businesses, but int CBD that’s the place where you’ll find, you know, shops that don’t exist in malls for example; you know, like if someone wants to open up their own business selling blankets or something, they have a better chance doing that in CBD than they do in like Menlyn for examples. Like it’s a very, it’s a niche kind of area, you know, ah, and I will say for me it was not a place that I grew up in, it was a place that I visited often because that’s where I would go to do my hair, you know, that’s where I would go to catch transport before I had a car. So, I was comfortable in the sense of because I visited CBD’s so much and also on foot, I got to see that okay its generally a harmless place, if you’re there during the day. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. There you go.

Toni: So, ya, Pretoria CBD you can for the most part still walk around with your phone in your hand and not be afraid of someone snatching it from you, you know. Um, you can walk next to a car and not be afraid of someone like trying to hijack you type of thing. So, ya, it’s just one of those places if you figure out the niche communities and just how to navigate the landscape, and if you have a purpose there that’s also the other thing; ya no, it won’t be as intimidating, you know.

Int: Um, I do like what you said like: “I’ve been to Pretoria CBD not just once but throughout my childhood, I know this place. This place is not, dangerous because I know it.”  
Um, and I think that’s what perhaps the other participants are missing – you think it’s dangerous, because you don’t know it. Um, can we ask the same thing about Johannesburg, like you’re saying you feel very safe in Pretoria East, is than because you know it very well and Joburg isn’t a safe place yet?

Toni: Oh, no, you can’t say the same for Joburg. Um, Joburg is – ya, no Joburg is phew, Joburg is a very special place. Um, so where I live now in Joburg is relatively safe. Um, it’s also got, you know, high security, it’s a middle-class area, all of that, but I would never ever on my life tell you that I feel safe in Joburg CBD. Um, I’ve been there before, you know, on foot, in a car, it’s a completely different environment, completely different pace, ya no it’s-it’s – it’s like a jungle out in there, you know. Every man for themselves truly speaking, you know. Um, just the other day my collages and I were having a conversation about Small Street in – is it in Parktown, no, no not Parktown – Small Street in… it’s going to come to me – Parkstation, there we go. Small Street nearby Parkstation ya, so it’s a very busy area and it’s right next to Hillbrow, it’s ya notorious, you know. So, my collage had this really pretty dress on, so someone asked her, “Oh hey, where’d you get this ?” you know.   
And she said: “You’d be surprised, you know, I got it in Small Street.”  
And one of my other collages said, “Oh yah no, I’ve been meaning to go to Small Street.”   
So, my friend immediately says, “Okay, you know, word of advice. When you go to Small Street, make sure that you go there with a car, that you leave your phone in your car, that you do not carry cash, you pay with a card. Um, if you’re wearing a wig, take it off. You know, you can’t walk with that, they are going to take it.”

Int: No.

Toni: And even if you go on Twitter there are threads in how to survive Joburg CBD and the first thing people tell you is, do not ask random people where you are – don’t look lost, you know. If you’re walking around and you don’t know where you are, um, duck in a store and ask someone for advice, but don’t look around because people are going to know that you aren’t supposed to be there. Um, so ya, its like every single moment there’s this heightened sense of anxiety – she was even explaining ‘Okay these are the types of bags you should carry, because it’s either they’ll cut into your handbag or they’ll do this, they’ll do that’.  
The survival guide for Joburg CBD was so much more detailed than, you know, Pretoria CBD’s so. Ya no, it’s a completely different ball game.

Int: I was shocked by the wig comment. I went ‘no, surely they wouldn’t take a wig straight off your head’.

Toni: Well, they would. If you think about it, um, most women wear human-hair wigs and they’re very valuable so, hey, why not, you know.

Int: Why not. So, with this survival guide to Joburg CBD, what you’re survival guide be to – like if I come to you and say, “Hey, I want to go to Pretoria CBD do you have any tips for me to keep safe?”   
What would you give?

Toni: Honestly, I’d just say look like you know where you’re going, and if you do get lost just kindly speak to, um, either speak to shop owners or security guards – like people you can see that this is their livelihood, you know. Ya no, it’s as complicated truly and honestly speaking. I would also say, just you know, keep your phone away, like don’t necessarily walk with it in your hand, but that’s just like to like make double sure you know, and if you need directions to some place just ask someone that works there – they’ll be more than willing to direct you as to where you should go. That’s pretty much it basically, you know. And also just keep your eyes open, like if someone is walking too close to you, obviously just, you know, be cautious of that, you know. Ya, it’s not as intense.

Int: So, while we’re on this topic of, I want to say survival guides – because I actually really like that, I’m going to steal that one as well. Um, do you think we give these to guys as well or are these survival guides particularly just for women or do men get a different type of survival guide?

Toni: Men definitely get a different type of survival guide. So, when I was still in varsity in Hatfield, I realized that for men… the feeling of safety is completely different. So, for women it’s usually that, you know, if you’re walking by yourself there’s the fear of being catcalled or sexually harassed […]  
Okay sorry, your screen froze so I didn’t know if Zoom kicked you out. But ya, there’s the fear of being catcalled, hijacked, abducted – what else is there, there is the fear of, you know, being mugged all of those things. Um, but for men, I realised that for them that the likelihood of being seriously harmed over your goods, like your phone, your laptop, your money, was way higher. So, men were more vulnerable to, um, like direct attacks essentially. So, for them it was just a thing of, you know, when you’re walking look like you know where you’re going, you know; don’t have your valuables out. Um, I don’t know if you saw the news recently, but there was a student in UP who was brutally murdered, you know, in front of his Res for his cell-phone. And truly and honestly speaking, its not to say I hasn’t happened to women, but in the years I was in Hatfield it was more likely to happen to men. So, men were more likely to be shot, stabbed, you know, beaten-up for their goods, so, their sense of safety and belonging were slightly different, but ya.

Int: Do you think there is a reason for this situation – so, guys would perhaps be physically assaulted more severely than a women would be. Is that because guys would fight back and women would just kind of give in?

Toni: I honestly think it is ah, it’s a patriarchal thing truly and honestly speaking. I think men – not I think, um, I believe that when men catcall women or use sexual harassment they are asserting their dominance over women because women are seen as the weaker sex, you know. So, men don’t necessarily have to get physical to prove their point – sometimes they do, but I think just intimidation and threats or threats of intimidation or violence are way more effective for women whereas with men, because there is a situation where if two men have conflict one of them has to come out on top and threats don’t necessarily work on a man; you can’t necessarily sexually harass them, I mean you can – you can try to catcall a guy, but it doesn’t have the same, the word I want to use is ‘gravitas’, but I don’t know if that’s the correct word, but it doesn’t have the same impact. So, they have to resort to violence because that’s the only way that they can assert their dominance over them. Um, so men are aware that to other men there is nothing more humiliating as being perceived as weak. So, if you are physically overpowered that is your masculinity being stripped from you. Ya, that’s why I think they resort to physical violence with men.

Int: I didn’t even think about it in that way and it makes a lot of sense when you’re talking about it – a mans worst fear is another man. Well, actually people’s worst fear is men. We’ll get into that in a moment. You said something quite interesting, you say they ‘use’ sexual assault or they ‘use’ threats of sexual assault, you didn’t say that they commit it. Is this a tool rather than a crime?

Toni: Wait, wait, please just clarify – so are you asking if threating threatening sexual violence is a crime or is a tool used to -

Int: Assert their dominance.

Toni: Assert their dominance

Int: Mmm.

Toni: Um, I guess when you have to look at it from an everyday perspective, I personally believe that, um, threats of violence or even just violent language is as bad as violence itself, you know. Um, I don’t know if you’ve seen on social media that almost all heinous crimes, so the things like, um… things like sexual assault, things like murder, things like ah, ya. Those super, super, heinous crimes, they don’t start at the act of doing the thing to the person, it always starts with perceptions, stereotypes, and jokes. As you move up the hierarchy the behaviours get more extreme. So, I’ve always believed that it starts with inciting language, you know. So, from my perspective I do believe that threats of violence are as bad as violence itself, but obviously when you look at it from a legal perspective it’s not always as clear. Also, our legal system is not always… it doesn’t always work to the favour of, you know, those who are victimised. So, um ya, I would say that men who use violent language to get what they want are essentially being perpetrators, but it is very difficult to prove and, ya.

Int: So, when we talk about the South African legal system, we don’t speak about ti in a positive light. Have you experienced the South African legal system, have you had to be involved in it?

Toni: Well, interestingly enough no – not from a personal perspective, like not like me myself, and that’s not to say I haven’t been put in situations where I could’ve reported the matter I just chose not to, because I realised that um, trying to go through the legal route might bring me more pain than actual justice, you know. Um, but ya I do know people around me that have been, um, through the legal system and have been disappointed by it, so yeah.

Int: Just to stay on this topic for a bit, um, when you say you just didn’t want to go through the legal system because its going to give you more pain. We know for a fact that there are two types of victimisation that happens in South Africa – first, you’re a victim of a crime and then you’re a victim of the South African police force, specifically in terms of sexual assault cases where women have said “I don’t want to go report a crime because those cops are going to look at me and be like ‘why were you dressed like this’, ‘why were you in that area – you’re asking for it’.”  
So, we have situations like this where we have this double victimisation, why is that happening?   
Is it just a lack of compassion or is it just the simple patriarchal structure of our police force?

Toni: It’s actually interesting that you ask this question hey, because I think in one of my drama classes – I think it was my film analysis, we were looking at the history of patriarchal violence, specifically in like, you know how they say we’re the rape capital of the world, and we have all of these terms of violence that were created just to describe our experiences. Like, you know for example, ‘corrective rape’, that is a term that comes specifically from South Africa, you know.

Int: I did not know that.

Toni: The term ‘jackrolling’ – um, I don’t know if you know what ‘jackrolling’ is?

Int: Ya.

Toni: But ya, that comes specifically from here. So, there was this paper that I read that was just trying to trace the origins of where, you know, this systemic violence comes from. And the long and short of it is basically just, um, our history of colonialism and our history of slavery basically and just how, you know, centuries – ah, not centuries-wide, centuries-long, there we go – centuries-long, oh my goodness what am I trying to say. Okay, let me say this in English that I will understand. So, basically the paper was trying to posit that because men of colour, specifically coloured and black men, were systemically dehumanized by their colonisers for centuries, you know; their autonomy was taken away from them , they weren’t allowed to work the jobs that they wanted to work, they couldn’t own land, they couldn’t – ya, they were just not seen as autonomous beings. What then happened to them, was that culmination of oppression and trauma created this very violent psyche within them. And it became a system where in order for a man to assert himself, especially a man of colour to assert himself, he has to be the strongest and he has to be the most dominant. And because of patriarchy that existed way long before colonialism, those ideas intertwined and men were taught to believe that in order for you to be seen as strong and to be seen as powerful you need to dominate women, and more specifically you need to dominate black and other women of colour because they are the only people in the system weaker than you. So, um ya it kind of just snowballed to the point where there were certain attitudes that men have that are beyond cultural, they are beyond like a national – like a nationality type of thing – it is imbedded in their psyche that violence is our right, you know. And ya, it’s really horrific the more you look at it that because, you know, black men and coloured men have been dehumanized for so long that they no longer see their humanity and therefore they can act in such ways that, you know – when you talk about them, it’s almost like he doesn’t have a soul.   
“I can’t believe he does this, you know, like what type of person does this.”  
It’s almost as if, because of all of this has happened their sense of compassion has been taken away from them, but I do think that there are other things to consider not just colonialism and, you know, the intergenerational trauma, there are other things to consider as well, like, you know, there are papers that suggest that men that come from dysfunctional families just need someone to dominate, basically to feel good about themselves, and the only other people that are weaker than them are women and children. So, ya, I think it is a very long and complicated history that doesn’t have a single answer, but ya, we can at least try and attempt to draw those links, ya.

Int: Ya, what you’re saying, I don’t know if you’ve read – I feel like you’ve read this, it’s called ‘Rape: A South African Nightmare’.

Toni: Yes! I’ve read some chapters ya. I’m trying to get my hands on the book but I think I’ve read, um, the author, um, she gave a speech on it or something along those lines, I read that. I read the transcript of the speech, ya.

Int: I’m going to try and say her name correctly because I have been in training for months – Gqola?

Toni: Almost.

Int: It’s with the ‘click’.

Toni: Almost ya.

Int: I love her! I thoroughly suggest that you must read more of her things, but um, but what you’ve just said is what she talks about quite a lot. And when you’re saying its so deeply imbedded in their psyche, um, what do you mean by that?

Toni: Well, there are theories that suggest that when people experience trauma it actually changes their DNA, like it actually changes DNA. And as they reproduced that gene gets passed on, and trauma literally becomes a part of who they are essentially. To the point where, if you have large masses of people that have been dehumanized systemically for all of these years and they are also now having children, that trauma gets passed on, you know. Um, and also just if a person is not encouraged to break those generational curses they then also, just in the way that they carry themselves and conduct themselves, they then also pass on certain attitudes to these younger, you know, their children. And then the system just continues, you know. So, its like a double fold thing where, like genetically speaking, something has happened to you that has altered the way in which you perceive things and the way in which your brain processes certain stimulus, and also just how you treat those around you. So, if enough people are damaged in the same way or damaged in similar ways, it becomes like the status quo, if that makes sense, you know. It starts sounding like it’s something cultural, so ya. A lot of arguments I’ve heard recently is, you know, when people discuss certain like patriarchal practices that are harmful to women, people will jump to the defence to say: “Oh no, but that’s our culture. That’s just the way we’ve done it since always.”  
But when you sit down with elders or with someone that has studied the history of that particular culture, they’ll tell you: “No, actually it wasn’t always like this.”  
Always, they will come to a point where they’ll say: “At some point, um, either during colonialism, or slavery, or during Apartheid, something happened that change the way in which this culture did things.”  
And because so many people were following this new status quo, it just become the norm, but it wasn’t always like this, you know. So ya.

Int: We’re going to touch on that in a minute because the meeting is now going to end, so I’m going to restart it quickly and we’re going to get right back to this. Awesome, thank you.

Toni: Alright, cool, cool.

Int: Awesome, welcome back! Thanks so much for joining again.

Toni: Alright.

Int: So, we’re talking about this patriarchal structure of societies and you’re saying, “Well, it’s a psychological thing.” And nothing had to have happened, these cultures aren’t historically this – I don’t want to say ‘anti-women’, but.

Toni: Mmm.

Int: Machismo masculinity. And there is proof of this, I mean one of the papers I’ve read they’ve said that one of the most equal societies we’ve ever seen in the world, in terms of gender, were African societies – African communities before the times of colonisation. Simply because, you didn’t have the choice a dominating force because everyone in the community had to work together to ensure the survival of the community. If what made this society so gender equal, what happened then?

Toni: Sorry, can you rephrase your question?

Int: Sure, sure, no problem. So, you said previously that something had to have happened either during the times of colonisation or Apartheid or slavery – something had to have happened to these African communities, we’re talking ‘African communities’ specifically now. What happened to these communities to shift the gender imbalance, because people are saying: “No, we have a rape culture in South Africa; we have a violent culture in South Africa.”  
And historically, that’s not true. Our ‘African cultures’ aren’t violent, they’re not rape cultures, they have gender equal views of people; and I agree with you, something had to have happened in history where this gender view kind of shifted. Um, what do you think that is?

Toni: So, I have an answer I just don’t know if it can, you know be applicable everywhere, but I personally believe that there were a few forces that disrupted, you know, these um, equal African societies, you know. So, my theory, or some of the papers that I read, um, asserted that, quite a few things were happening in order to ensure that colonialism would happen, you know. So, um, a lot of people aren’t aware that South Africa does have a history of slavery in the Cape. Um, it’s one of those things that we just buried, you know. The only reason why I found out about it once was that when the Javett Centre at UP opened, I was there with my friends once and there was this, I think it was a portrait of the wine cellar if I’m not mistaken, and on the back of that portrait it had this whole long story about how ‘oh this particular wine cellar was on a plantation in the cape’.   
And I was like: “Huh? Plantation in the Cape? Mm?”   
You know, um. I read up on it and that also just – that was a whole new like ‘wow’, you know. But ya, when we talk about the history of slavery in Africa, in general, in order for the powers that be to justify coming onto land that did not belong to them and subjugating people, they needed to have a rational um- what is this, like a rational reason for doing what they were doing.

Int: A justification?

Toni: There we go, they had to justify why they were dehumanizing people, you know. So, the first thing that they came up with was, you know, Africa was this dark place where everyone was a savage heathen that needed to be saved. And there is this beautiful quote, I don’t know which country it comes from, but basically it says: “So, the colonisers came and when they asked us to close our eyes in prayer, we did so, and when we opened our eyes, our land was gone.”   
And it perfectly sums it up. So, I think with the advent of colonialism there was this idea of using religion to subjugate people and to get people to conform to what essentially colonialists wanted us to conform to. And the first thing that they did was to attack the gender thing basically. So, you know, they came with that idea of, you know, men and women are different, um, men are superior to women, and this is the science and the religion, and the bibles we’re going to throw at you that prove our theory, you know; and if you follow what we are teaching you, you’ll be saved, you know. Ya, so I think religion and patriarchy and colonialism worked really well to kind of form this new idea of who men and women could and couldn’t be. So, it was very simple things. I remember my - was it my grandmother? Ya, ya. She was, I want to say – when she was young the German missionaries were here, and ya, um, missionaries were definitely used to sanitize the colonial project, you know. They came here under the mission of saving people and converting them to Jesus Christ, but they often worked hand-in-hand with the state to displace people, take their land, brutalise – all of that. So, the first thing that they did, you know, was say to people: “Okay, women need to keep long hair; women need to wear skirts, men need to wear pants.”  
The they started saying things like, you know: “If you want an education then you first need to convert to Christianity.”  
And I have read quite a few fiction books, because as much as I’ve gone to varsity and I read papers, I think fiction has a really great way of just telling us things. So, you read books like ‘Things Fall Apart ‘, or you read books like – well, not books, sorry – you read plays like ‘I’ll Marry When I Want’, you read, ah what else have I read that really opened my eyes, um? The work of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also really, the things -

Int: Purple Hibiscus?

Toni: Yeah, ‘Purple Hibiscus’, ‘The Thing Around Your Neck’, those books, they really just give you a fictionalised account of how it was like to be colonised, and how all the systems just worked hand-in-hand. So, I think religion played a really huge role in convincing people that men were more dominant than women and that women needed to be subservient, they needed to be submissive, they needed to be dominated over, they needed to obey; and also, this is another one I just remembered now, before the advent of colonialism, um, African societies did not believe in corporal punishment. They saw children as precious beings, you know. They saw a child as a – not as an inheritance – they saw a child as a source of wealth; you know how African societies were largely agricultural so the more children you had the more people could work on your lands, the more you could, you know, secure your prosperity and all of that. So, it was essential to keep that child alive and it was essential to make sure that the child was strong and that they were smart, like they knew how to work the land, they could make smart decisions that could, you know, protect crops and all of that good stuff. And then, you know, with the advent of colonialism and with religion, there was that idea of, you know, ‘you spare the rod, you spoil the child’. And now all of a sudden, children were seen as things that needed to be managed, controlled, in the same way in which their own parents were seen as subjects that needed to be controlled and managed. So, you start seeing this, um, throughline of violence and oppression work together to just kind of keep people in their places. So, ya.

Int: Yeah, well you’ve just mentioned two of my most favourite books – ‘Purple Hibiscus’ is one of my most favourite novels to read and I’ll read it often. And what really shocked me – and you touched on this as well. I did English in my bachelors and we did ‘Heart of Darkness’ and then right after reading it we did ‘Things Fall Apart’, and I mean it gives a different meaning to that entire storyline; like yes you have the perspective of Marlow, who is this European ‘saviour’, coming and you’re like ‘oaky cool, he even sees that he’s evil’, and then you get ‘Things Fall Apart’ and ‘whoa’, like this is, this is what the very people experienced and that was very shocking for me.  
Um, I’m going to move us a bit ahead because we got ourselves into a very interesting conversation and unfortunately that’s not on my interview topics. Um, but yes. How would you describe life living as a women in South Africa?

Toni: Yoh. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Toni: Dangerous. Ya, I would describe it as dangerous.

Int: Danger from all sides or in specific places?

Toni: From all sides, truly and honestly speaking, because, you know, not only do we have the threat of like physical danger – you have no idea whose going to follow you home, whose going to try and rob you, whose going to, all of that. But with us having such an imbedded system of gender-based violence, there’s danger in the home as well, you know. The other day someone said something along the lines if, ‘In South Africa a woman is least safe in her own home’. So, ya you just never know where the danger is going to come from. So, for little girls, you know, there could be the threat of them being abused by, you know, their own fathers, their own family members, the neighbour next door, the security guard who patrols, um, when they go to school it could be their teacher, their principle, one of the classmates, um. So, it’s a constant battle of just not knowing when you are safe, and if you can be safe; even when, you are with your people there’s always just that thing in the back of your mind just, you know, um, alerting you at any moment something could happen that could, um, threaten your sense of safety.

Int: We might have been at Tuks at the same time, I’m also 23, there – I don’t know if you know this the #AmINext? movement?

Toni: Mmm.

Int: Were you on Tuks campus when we heard about Uyinene, when they eventually found her body?

Toni: Oh yah, no definitely. I was on campus. I was \*Breathes. That was a very charged time of my life. I think as much as, you know, we were in Pretoria and all of this happened in Cape Town – you know, funny enough, um I actually left Pretoria soon after that and went to Cape Town, so I got to see the different like energies and what was happening at the time, it was interesting. But ya, I was on campus at the time, I attended a few vigils. I, you know, supported many of my friends and - not associates, we are not collages, ha, - friends and acquaintances, there we go; friends and acquaintances, and friends of friends who came forward to just share what they had been through. I don’t know if you were there on the day, but there was a time when the university allowed us to use one of the spaces. Was it the Amphitheatre – I think it was the Amphitheatre. Where we could just share what had happened to us, you know. And I heard so many perspectives, it wasn’t just young, black women who were describing how unsafe they felt. Um, one of the stories that actually moved me to tears was when this, um, young white guy spoke about how there are older men who prey on younger men in Res’; men that know that these are boys that don’t have access to certain things. So, it just really showed me how as a country this system of violence was already imbedded and that it was so random. You know, I heard stories from people saying that they got assaulted while they were at home, for some people it was when they were with their boyfriends, some people it was their uncles, some people were just taking a walk, they were at a party, they were at school, they were at church, it was insane. So, ya I was on campus at the time and it was such a charged time in my life, I had never felt so… unsafe but also at the same time like really, really empowered by the strength that I saw around me, you know. But ya, you know, Nene’s story specifically just shattered me, you know, especially because she was only one year younger than us, and I was just sitting there trying to think about how – like, what were those final moments like for her? You know, and um, I was just trying to image what it was like for her friends and the life that she left behind, you know. So, ya, that one was particularly, it really, really hit home, because she was someone that I easily could have, you know, been friends with or someone I could have interacted with, and if something like that could happen to her – you know \*Sighs. You can fill in the blanks, you know.

Int: So, being in that space in Amphi, because I was there too but unfortunately I couldn’t stay for the whole time – I was there for like five minutes and then I had to run quickly to work. What was that like? What was it being in that space, obviously very emotionally charged, and you say, was that empowering just sitting there hearing each other’s stories?

Toni: Honestly speaking, I didn’t feel empowered. I felt, ah, powerless. I felt quite the opposite. It was very debilitating for me to see all of these different women at different ages, at different walks of life, studying different degrees, from different backgrounds, and all of them similarly having the same story; that one day they were as they were, someone violated them, and then their life changed, you know. So, ya, as more and more people came I think I just felt really hopeless at the fact that there really didn’t seem to be a formula. Um, when I was younger my mom always used to tell me, you know, ‘don’t go there, and do this, and wear this’. And as I was listening to all these different stories, I just realised that, truly and honestly speaking, as a woman in South Africa there was nothing that I could actually do to protect myself from it happening, you know. So, ya, that’s what it felt like for me.

Int: So, I want to talk about this because you said this earlier, and I do kind of talk about it in my research, this notion of ‘manufactured safety’. So, we sit down little girls and we’re like, “Listen, don’t do this, don’t go here, don’t wear this, don’t say this; if this happens, do this, and this, and this.”  
We’re manufacturing a sense of safety, and you said now: “There is nothing that you can do; there is no predictability, there’s no pattern we can prevent.”  
What do we tell little girls now?

Toni: Honestly speaking, I have no idea what we should tell them, you know. I don’t know if you saw Uyinene’s funeral or at least heard the quotes that her mother gave; she said something along the lines of: “All your life I gave you – I told you of all the places you should avoid. I never told you not to go to the post office.”  
And when she said that, I was like ‘oof’. Truly and honestly speaking I don’t think there is anything that we can say to our girls, and it is completely heart breaking because on one hand you want the women around you, like the younger girls in your life like your daughters and sisters, your nieces, your cousins, all of those people, you want them to have a sense of autonomy; you want them to have a sense of freedom, you want them to be able to move freely within their own country, because you know they’re citizens here and, you know, um, I think it’s the Freedom Charter that says South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, but at the same time you also can’t say to her that: “Hey, it’s oaky for you to walk at eight o’clock at night.”  
Because then if something happens to her, you’re liable, you know.  
Also, at the same time you want her to trust those around her, but you also then want to tell her: “Hey, listen, if uncle so and so touches you here, you have to say something.”  
So, it’s ya, ya, I don’t even know how to tackle that question, truly and honestly speaking. And I even mentioned to one of my loved ones that: “Hey, if I ever do start a family, it can’t be here.”   
You know what I mean. I don’t think I can live with myself if I one day sent my child to school and she never came back, you know. Um, so ya, its just one of those things – ya, ya. \*Sigh.

Int: That was a very, very excellent answer. And no I asked you the question, because I can’t come up with the answer myself. I want to, because you did touch on this, the Freedom Charter. It’s one of my questions: Are South African women free?

Toni: That’s a big one hey. Um, looking at things now, I want to say no. If we had to look at it from all angles, I want to say no. So, as much as there is no one shackling us, there are no physical shackles on our bodies, we – there are so many bargains we need to make when we step out of the house. And it’s bargains that woman all over the world have to make, you know. Um, so no, even when we exist in public spaces it is so incredibly difficult. Ya, like we can say to each other that, you know: “My body belongs to myself and I can wear whatever like.”   
And yes, truly, wear whatever you like, but you also need to make peace with the fact that if you step out into the world with, you know, a miniskirt on, men are going to catcall you and they are going to try and make you feel unsafe, and it’s just something you need to negotiate, basically. That’s what I say to myself, because I’m one of those women that love, you know, just wear whatever I want to wear. I also love, you know, going out at night and all of those things. So, every time I leave the house there just certain negotiations I need to make to myself – I need to say to myself that, you know, I am wearing what I like, but I have to make peace with the fact that a man probably will say something to me, someone will try to touch me, or if they did succeed I do have to find ways to navigate myself out of that situation, and keep myself safe whatever that looks like. So, ya I think there are just many considerations that we need to make, as we step out of the house. Um, so ya, South African women and girls are definitely not free, it is a very fraught existence that we live here, ya. You know.

Int: I want to flip this for a moment before we go into that any deeper. Are South African men then safe?

Toni: No, no, I don’t think so.

Int: No one’s free here in South Africa?

Toni: No, I don’t think so either. I think for men, their sense of safety is completely different, but I do think that they have it easier though, I do think they have it easier. Something that I observed when I was in varsity was that it was easier for me to go out with my male friends than just us girls, you know. So, in a sense when women and men work together, um, more safety was guaranteed basically, you know. A guy that is walking with a group of women is less likely to be attacked because she will be perceived as the protector you know. Anyone looking on could say that: “Okay, if he is in charge” – and I hate to use these patriarchal terms, but – “If he is in charge of these girls, um, he’s probably really strong, he knows how to defend himself, he might even have a weapon.”  
People would be less likely to approach that man with the women that he is with. So, ya, I think men are definitely not safe from other men as well, but they do have more privilege and they do have more, um, accommodations ya.

Int: So, you say that we’re not, women are not physically shackled but um – I’m going to use this as an […]. So, we might not be physically shackled but are we not shackled by our bodies?

Toni: Oh definitely.

Int: That’s the only difference I can see – did I lose you?  
…  
Welcome back, again! Fun and games in South Africa.

Toni: This is going to be so much fun to edit for you.

Int: So, we’re talking about the feminine body. I don’t want to say the ‘female’ body, because then we get into a situation of what is female and what isn’t female – if you want we can get into that conversation. But particularly the feminine body or the femininized body – so, bodies that are perceived as feminine. This is a body that I see as the reason why women can be seen as unsafe, because one crime in particular effects one body particularly and not another, and that’s because the one body is the perpetrator and the other one is predominantly the victim. Yes, there are cases where men have been victims of rape, but if we’re looking in terms of majority and in general standing, a women tends – well a feminized body tends to be the victim of rape. And when we look at this body, one of the main aspects, and you’ve touched on this when you were walking about colonialism, is this notion of one is subservient and the other is not; one must be submissive, and the other isn’t. What is it that makes the feminine body seem submissive? Or what do they do to the feminine body that makes it seem submissive?

Toni: I think that’s a very interesting question to ask, and it’s, you know when you get down to the like nitty-gritty of it all, you start to realise just how stupid it all is, but basically, I think this idea of the man being seen as the individual that carries the seed, you know; the only person that is capable of um continuing a bloodline and all of that nonsense. I think it worked really well – oh no, no, no, let me rephrase that. I think it just boils down to the ability to reproduce in one sense. SO, this idea that men have the power to get thousands of people pregnant in one go, but when a woman is pregnant she carries that child within her body for nine months and for those nine months that is her priority – she can’t get pregnant again. Whereas a man could get someone pregnant today and then get someone else pregnant – am I loud? Oh, okay.  
This idea of men being able to carry-on legacies that women somehow don’t, even though we know how mitochondrial DNA works, that’s why I’m saying its stupid. So what I think then happened was because women were seen as people who couldn’t carry the bloodline, or people that couldn’t sustain legacies and all of that nonsense, they were then seen as people that had to be recruited in the quest to ensure that men do so. So, if you take a look at things, like religion for example, you’ll see that King Solomon had wives, right.

Int: Many, many wives.

Toni: And then he also had concubines. And the man had hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of women he was able to impregnant and then call, you know, their kids his sons to continue his bloodline, all of that right. So, um ya, I think it all just boils down to a man’s sense of belonging in the world and his ability to dominant people by being able to create his progeny basically, I think that’s that. So, then in this quest to establish the man as the – how do I say this – ya, in this question to establish the man as the alpha and all of that, they started looking at biological components of, you know, the human body; they tried to use science to say that: “Oh well, because men have certain biological body parts they can do things that women can’t, and because women can’t do this then” – ya.  
And because women started to be seen as machines for birthing, obviously, their biological components had a very specific function under, um, patriarchy. So, you get this situation where because of the parts that are on your body, you are perceived a certain way, you are treated a certain way, all of that stuff, you know. So, ya, that’s pretty much that.

Int: I like what you said now because there was a honest view of women as these biological machines like, ‘you’re a reproducing organ, that’s what you are; you are not necessarily a person’. Does a woman’s body ever belong to her?

Toni: I don’t think so unfortunately. I think women can pioneer to make their bodies their own, women who walk around the world with a sense of autonomy over their own bodies, are seen as the anomaly, as people we should scorn, they are seen as taboo, you know. Because if we really, really, really look at it a girl belongs to her father first, you know, she’s property of her father until a suitor, suitable suitor comes along. And then as soon as she gets married, ownership of her gets transferred from her father to her husband. And when she belongs to her father, she is expected to be virginal, she is expected to remain pure, she is expected to honour him with her purity. There are so many cultures in the world where – I don’t know why I’m saying in the world. There are so many cultures in South Africa where this idea of remaining a virgin is seen as this huge achievement and - actually the whole pretext or premise of being married now, um, I think in the modern days it’s a lot more relaxed but when this whole concept of ‘bride prices’ started, a man literally had to pay a woman’s father to thank him for keeping her pure, you know. And for ensuring that the wife he has gotten is up to standard, you know, and that she is acceptable: she is a virgin, belongs, you know, only to him. So, there was a lot of pressure or there was just this expectation for women to preserve their bodies for their future husbands and in doing so, they were also honouring their fathers, because if they went out and had premarital sex or just did things to their bodies that were not considered, ah, acceptable , they then brought dishonour upon their fathers, you know. And then, once she got married, you know, after this, after, you know, a bride price is paid for her – we are probably going to have to leave this meeting soon, but ya. Um, after a bride price was paid for her she was then expected to be pure, you know. So, the man had some assurance that she would belong and that he was the only person she had ever been with so that when they had children, he could be hundred percent certain that they belong to him. So, I think […] as much as I think we have more relaxed attituded around premarital sex there is still that expectation of ‘women are expected to be ‘purer’- I’m going to put that in inverted commas – than men. A woman cannot have the same sexual experience that a man had – a man has, unless if she wants to call on the scorn of the world that will come onto her, that why I’m saying women who do behave autonomously are seen as taboo. So, a women who has as many sexual partners as men, or has the same liberal ideas around sex as men is definitely seen as an anomaly and she is seen as someone that is lose and all – you know how misogyny works you know. Um, so ya, I think in the current context, um, our bodies don’t belong to ourselves, or sometimes, if religion plays a role in it, they’ll tell you that you’re body belongs to God, you know. ‘Honour your temple’ and all that good stuff. So, ya, I don’t think that women are ever encouraged to ever truly see their body as truly belonging to theirs, you know – to themselves sorry. As belonging to themselves, so ya.

Int: Just last question to end this off with. When Gqola speaks about this in ‘Rape: A South African Nightmare’, it is kind of like, ‘how do we reclaim our bodies’? How do we say ‘I don’t want to be the victim anymore; I refuse to be continuously seen as the victim’, how do we go about it? One example is, ‘well, we fight violence with violence’, but we can’t really do that because it’s going to end up in more violence. So, how do women – how do you suggest women go about it from this day forward; how do we go about reclaiming our bodies?

Toni: Well, it’s a very layered question, so I think before we can even look to how other people treat us, and how we are perceived we have to first see our bodies as belonging to ourselves. So, there are quite a few things – sorry, I think there is a mosquito here, okay it’s not a mosquito. So, this is going to sound unconventional but very first thing that women need to look into is essentially exploring their own bodies and being able to be comfortable within their own bodies. So, some women turn to extreme modesty, you know. Where they cover everything up and they say to themselves that: “My body belongs to be so no one is going to look at it, no one is going to objectify it, no one’s going to do, this or this, or this, or this, or this, um, I will revel it only when I’m comfortable to do so.”  
Which is one way I think is reclaiming your body. Another is, some women embrace their sexuality, you know, by wearing whatever it is that they want to wear; they um, explore different parts of themselves, they date different types of people, they engage in different types of activities, um, just to essentially assert to themselves: “You know what, this is who I am, this is what I like, this is how I carve out a sense of safety and belonging for myself.”   
And ya. I live in a boarding house so I don’t want to say the words – had I been in my apartment, I’d be able to say the words, but um, ya. I don’t want to talk too loudly in case – next thing you know, the principle is calling me in tomorrow: “M’am, what on earth were you talking about on the phone yesterday?”  
But, ya. How women can reclaim their bodies – oh.

Int: You may go.

Toni: Got it. Alright, so, to basically just to end off – women need to explore their sexuality and sensuality, so you know. Can you hear me?

Int: Ya, perfect. All good.

Toni: Oh okay, seems to be a bit of a lag. But ah, being afforded the ability to explore their sexuality and sensuality. So, how they connect t other people, how they connect to their own bodies, how they crave out that space of belonging and feeling within their own body. That is a right step in at least assuring that, um, that they can be convinced that their bodies belong to them. I think there is still a lot of work that still needs to be done in terms of how they are perceived by man and society in general, but it all starts with the little things, you know. So, ya.

Int: I like what you say as well, because what you saying is: “Well, there steps that women have to take but there are also steps that society fundamentally needs to change.”  
And I take this back to, we sit little girls down and we say ‘don’t go here, don’t go here, don’t do this, don’t wear this, don’t say this’. But do we ever sit little boys down and say ‘hey, listen let’s not do this’?

Toni: See, that’s a very interesting one because, um, now that I teach in high school, you know, I can see all the different phases of development. You know, like from the little grade eight boys to the eighteen-year-old matrics that are getting ready to go out into the world and all of that. Um, what’s happening now with some of our kids is that, or at least the kids I have been in contact with, is that there is a greater awareness about consent and autonomy and, you know, just ensuring that when you touch someone or when you go near someone, you are all on the same page. But interestingly enough, I wanna actually say that society actually impedes on this progress. The reason I’m saying this is that at the previous school that I worked at something very interesting happened. The school had a ‘Civies day’, and then they sent all the girls who were wearing short skirts home, everyone who stayed behind were given lectures about, ‘Oh, you know, girls you need to not wear outfits that are tempting – you need to think about the boys, you’re distracting them’ – Blah, blah, blah. Then one of the boys actually came to me, he was in grade eleven at the time so now he’s a matriculant, you getting a […], he said to me, “You know what M’am, I don’t like it when teachers use me as an scapegoat for their misogyny. I honestly couldn’t care less if a girl comes to school with a short shirt, um, I’m not an animal, you know, I can keep my eyes above.”  
And I really sat down and thought about that, and I was like, “You know what, are we really” – no, let me rephrase that. I think we are doing our boys a disservice when we treat them like they are these, you know, ‘brainless animals’ that are incapable of noticing, you know, ‘This is the same old classmate you saw the other day; that when she’s in uniform you can’t sexualise her, but now that she is in like short-shorts all of a sudden you’re brain’s not going to function’. That is so unfair on them, and it also just perpetuates this idea of men, and especially like, you know, and like black boys that they are inherently violent and like rapey in their nature, which they aren’t. We need to give them the opportunity to be in a safe and controlled space, like a school, where they have their classmates who wear these short things and we teach them that: “Okay, you see when we have Civies Day like this and the girls are wearing their crop tops, their short skirts, and, you know, the legs are out and all of that. That is not permission for you to touch them, to say anything about them, let them exist’, you know.  
So, ya, I think the kids are definitely alright. This generation of teenagers are very vocal and they are very aware of the world that’s happening around them, and they want to be better. Obviously, out there its not the same with all teenagers, but I do think that there is potential, and boys are definitely not, you know, they’re not creatures. In the same way in which we can tell our girls that: “Oh hey, you need to respect yourself when you dress a certain way.”  
We can definitely teach boys that you can’t just go around touching people just because you’re attracted to them, you know; that there’s a certain way of approaching things, and that consent is important. So, ya, I think there is a lot of work that still needs to be done with boys, because from what I have observed is, um, they really are just left to their own devices; no one really cares where they come and go, they really are expected to just know about sex, and just know how to deal with women. So, ya I think in the same way in which we – I don’t want to say ‘give girls attention’, but in the same way we pay so much, um, we give them and we tell them this is safe – why are there lights flashing outside?  
Sorry, how we say, ‘this is how to keep you safe’, we also need to invest as much time in our boys and to just, you know, guide them along. So, ya.

Int: Ya, I mean it’s a great way to put it, and you say that you’re got so much hope – well, there there is potential for the future for South Africa. I’m sorry, my cat.  
But you previously said that this is not a country where you would want to raise children. With those two ideas do you see a foreseeable future for yourself in South Africa, or is this just a temporary place that you think has potential and can grow but not a place where you see a future for yourself?

Toni: I think the latter is more applicable to me. So, I definitely do see this as a place where I definitely will do my part to ensure that the young boys around me, so the students that I teach, my nephews, my little cousins, I’ll definitely do my best to say: “Okay guys, lets talk about consent, lets do this.”  
But I do think that systematic violence won’t be fixed by just a conversation, you know, and that it will take a lot of time. And that if I do want to have children, um, I still don’t think that this will be a safe place for my kids to grow up in, whether I had a son or a daughter. So, for me personally I still look to raising a family where I can be guaranteed, you know, my children will be safe. But ya.

Int: Ya, thank you. Ah, just one last question. What is your biggest fear – no, I think I had already asked you. Did I ask you what is your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Toni: No, you didn’t.

Int: Oh, alright. What is your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Toni: Okay, I can answer that for you because I have thought about this. My biggest fear is one day leaving my home to go and run a non-comital errand, like maybe to go buy bread or a lighter, something really stupid, you know, and on my way there something happens to me, right. And because I was out for a non-comital errand I didn’t tell anyone where I was going, people just saw me get into my car and leave, you know, and then something happens to me – like maybe someone tries to take my car or it happens while I’m in the shops, and then I go missing, right. And everyone is looking for me and they can’t find me and, you know, I someone end up on missing posters. Like I’ve really thought long and hard about this, but I think the worst thing that could ever happen – and my family not knowing where I am and not knowing where to find me, I think ya, that would be the worst thing. And them also just not knowing where to start. That, you know, she left – they’d probably come to where I live and ask like: “Okay, you saw her taking her car, where did she go?”  
They probably say: “Oh, we saw her go in that direction.” - but that’s where it ends, you know what I mean. So, ya, ya, that’s my biggest fear I just ‘being next’, basically.

Int: Ya, ‘being next’, um this notion – just to extend this for a little longer. This notion, this fear of ‘am I next?’, do you think that is a South African thing or is that something that could be quite international?

Toni: Oh, it’s definitely quite international. I love watching documentaries – free documentaries on YouTube – and interestingly enough countries that have a similar like economic profile like South Africa; so mostly agricultural, you know, high levels of inequality. We have similar gender-based violence. So, it’s definitely not a South African thing, but there are places where it’s more prevalent. So, I know for example that in (inaudible), of young women disappearing and ya, they have an issue of pregnancies, so little girls get raped and then they fall pregnant as a result of it. In places like Honduras, they have issues of sex trafficking, you know. In places like you – what’s this place, not Congo mmm – Cameroon. In places like your Cameroon, your Nigerias, your Mexicos, your Central Americas – so basically your countries that, again, have a similar economic profile as South Africa, gender-based violence is more prevalent there, and the type of gender-based violence are similar to here, so it definitely has a – I don’t want to say that there’s an undercurrent, but um class, race, and I think geographical positioning, you know, these things play out, ya.

Int: Ya, well awesome. That’s basically all the questions that I have for you today. If you’ve got anything you’d like to add, you’re more than welcome to add it now.

Toni: Right, no. I think I’m good hey.

Int: You also have my email address, you are more than welcome to send me any emails with questions, queries, deep-seated concerns, anything you might find, articles, news articles, um, interviews, you find interesting, or you think might be applicable to here, you’re more than welcome to send me an email. And ya, that’s basically it, all I have for you today.

Toni: Alright, thank you so much for conducting this interview it was very fun to talk in academic again. \*Laughs.

Int: I’m glad.

Toni: Using words like ‘manufactured safety’, I was like: “Ooo, when was the last time you had to think up a word like this.”

Int: I’m so happy.

Toni: This is also just really, really refreshing and, you know, ah ya it really-

Int: I’m glad you had a good time.

Toni: interesting to see how we essentially map out our belonging – ya no, this is a very, I think it is a very interesting topic that you are working with and yeah, I wish you all the best with your research and I’m glad that I could help in some way, you know.

Int: Helped tremendously, thank you so much for your help and participation. And ya, for just sharing, I mean it’s not an easy thing to talk about and ya, just thank you so much.