

**Analyzing Representations of Queerness in South African
New Media Spaces: A Case Study of QueerLife's '4Men'
and '4Women's' Website Sections**

By

Kudzaishe P Vanyoro

866489

A dissertation in partial fulfilment of a Masters Degree in Critical Diversity
Studies

Supervisor

Prof Melissa Steyn

Co-supervisor

Dr William Mpofu

At

Wits Centre for Diversity Studies

School of Social Sciences

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg, April 2019

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Research and Coursework at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination by any other University.

Kudzaishe P Vanyoro

Signed on the 29th of April 2019

Acknowledgements

A successful academic path is not a result of in-born intelligence or capabilities, but a supportive learning and working environment, colleagues, family and friends. Special thanks go to my supervisor Melissa Steyn, for her unwavering support throughout the phase of my study. Not only did she teach and supervise me in an efficient and timely manner, but she also provided support for me to work, conference and learn joyfully. I would like to thank my colleagues at the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies (WiCDS), for their support academically and emotionally. Without you, I would have never found a space to produce this research. For the academic support, I cannot thank William Mpofu and Haley McEwen enough.

I would also like to thank my friends and family for their support and for understanding that the reason I could not always be there with them even when I wanted, was this research.

This project would not have been successful if it was not for the funding I got through the NRF-SARCHI chair in Critical Diversity Studies at the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies (WiCDS), University of the Witwatersrand.

Dedication

To my mother, father, sisters, brothers for your love, laughter and bravery. This research is a testimony of your teachings on hard work. Love and respect to you!

Abstract

South Africa, also known as the 'Rainbow Nation' a phrase that translates the intersection of multiracialism and diversity such as queer rights, was the first country in the world to include a sexual orientation clause in its Bill of Rights in 1996. Using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis this study examines how text and visuals on QueerLife magazine's '4men' and '4women's' sections (de)legitimise certain accounts of queerness. This research defines the term 'queer' in accordance with QueerLife magazine's definition. This is 'queer' as encompassing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex individuals. The research aims to analyse representations of queerness in order to reveal the hidden dynamics of marginalisation that occur in personal accounts of queer experiences. The dynamics of exclusion or inclusion that this research engages with include race, class, gender, (dis)ability, body, age and beauty. My theoretical framework encompasses queer theory, intersectionality, representation theory, gender theory and critical diversity literacy. These theories help flesh out ideas such as the social constructionist nature of identities and how these ascertain particular intra-group privileges. Qualitative research methods are employed. Data are sorted using content analysis and finally analysed using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis. An important part of this analysis is how it is fused together with historical accounts of how differences have continued to be constructed across generations in South Africa and the world. Findings suggest that, although QueerLife provides an alternative space for a queer community to share their experiences of queerness, some accounts of queer experiences and expectations in queer relationships are highly gendered, raced, classed, aged and abled. These byzantine dynamics dialectically intersect with each other in different ways. Through this research, I seek to open up dialogue on the (re)emergence of centres of power within the margins of gender and sexuality.

Keywords: *queerness, gender, sexuality, race, class, body, age, beauty, disability, representation, QueerLife, power*

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Acronyms	vii
Glossary.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Rationale to the study	2
1.3 Research questions	3
1.4 Research aims	4
1.5 Scope and limitations	4
1.6 Structure of the research report.....	5
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	6
2.2.1 Intersectionality	6
2.2.2 Representation theory	8
2.2.3 Gender theory	9
2.2.4 Beyond Queer to Quare Theory.....	10
2.2.5 Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL).....	11
2.3 Literature review	12
2.3.1 History of South African Queer Media and Problems Arising	12
2.3.2 Political Economy of the Media and Marginalised Queer Bodies	14
2.3.3 New Media and the Politics of Queer Representation.....	15
2.3.4 The Internet in South Africa: Access and Power.....	17
2.4 Conclusion.....	18
Chapter Three: Methods and Methodology	18
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Qualitative research.....	19
3.3 Research method	19
3.3.1 Case study	19
3.3.2 Cyber-ethnography.....	20
3.4 Data Collection	20
3.4.1 Site selection and choice of study	20
3.4.2 Sampling	20

3.5 Data analysis.....	21
3.5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).....	22
3.5.2 Semiotic Analysis	23
3.5.3 Content analysis.....	24
3.6 Coding.....	24
3.7 Reflexivity	25
3.8 Ethics	25
3.9 Conclusion.....	26
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion	26
4.1 Introduction	26
4.2 Content analysis summary	31
4.3 Queerness as embedded in race and coloniality.....	31
4.4 Intersections of class and race in queer representations	39
4.5 Gendered accounts of (un)desirable queerness.....	43
4.6 Genital size and masculinity.....	47
4.7 Homofemininity	48
4.8 Representation of Queer Sexuality.....	51
4.9 (Dis)ability	54
4.10 Desirable Beauty and Body Size.....	55
4.11 Looks	59
5.1 Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations	62
References	66
APPENDIX A- Content analysis table.....	76

List of Acronyms

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

CDL- Critical Diversity Literacy

GALA- Gay and Lesbian Archives

GASA- Gay Association of South Africa

LGBTQI- Lesbian, gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

WiCDS- Wits Centre for Diversity Studies

Glossary

Gender- A socially prescribed identity of either ‘man’ or ‘woman’ usually based on the nature of one’s sexual organs

Hetero-masculinity- masculinity associated with heterosexuality

Homo-masculinity- masculinity associated with homosexuality

Homo-femininity- femininity associated with homosexuality

Queerness- An identity that goes against hetero/cisnormative gender and sexuality norms across the LGBTQI+ spectrum

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

South Africa, also known as the 'Rainbow Nation', a phrase which translates the intersection of multiracialism and diversity that includes gay rights, was the first country in the world to include a sexual orientation clause in its Bill of Rights in 1996¹ (Graziano, 2004; Oswin, 2007; Munro, 2009; Van Zyl, 2011). Along with the gradual ascent of gay magazines both offline and online there is now a greater appreciation for sexual diversity in South Africa (Beetar, 2012). According to Giffney (2009, p. 2) the term queer has been '[...] reclaimed in recent decades with anger and pride to signal an activist insurgence against homophobia and other forms of oppression, especially those relating to gender and sexuality'. The term 'queer' itself has been precisely the discursive rallying point for younger lesbians and gay men and, in yet other contexts, for lesbian interventions and, in yet other contexts, for bisexuals and straights for whom the term expresses an affiliation with anti-homophobic politics.' This research defines the term 'queer' in accordance with QueerLife magazine's definition. This is 'queer' as encompassing '[...] Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex individuals' (www.queerlife.co.za, p. online). By this definition 'queer' refers to men attracted to men, women attracted to women, men or women attracted to both men and women, men or women who feel like they belong to the opposite sex and persons born with ambiguous sexual organs. 'While "queer" is not always a word that is used in African LGBTI communities, it is valuable both as a critique of heteronormativity and as an expression of same-sex desire that is not necessarily hitched to a particular identity like gay, lesbian, or bisexual' (Green-Simms, 2016, p.143).

We have witnessed an increase in alternative public spheres that facilitate representations of queerness online; for example, QueerLife magazine. Using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis this study examines how text and visuals on QueerLife magazine's '4men' and '4women's' sections (de)legitimise certain accounts of queerness. Like in Beeter (2012)

¹See Section 8, Part II of the 1996 South African Bill of Rights

the responsibility and appropriateness of these media representations constitutes the partial focus of this project.

Theoretically, the paper employs intersectionality to outline the absence of various queer bodies online. According to Chappell (2015) homosexual cultures in South Africa are filled with westocentric, hetero-masculine images which exclude older, black, poor, disabled and certain queer cultures such as leather scene, transgender etc. Likewise, this research shows how online queer media cultures in South Africa are also western centric, with homo-masculine images which exclude older, black, poor, disabled and certain queer cultures such as bi-sexual in what constitutes 'bi-sexual erasure' (See Yoshino, 2000; Lynch and Maree, 2013). These are examples of intersecting privilege and oppression that account for the presence or absence of certain queer bodies online.

In addition, this research oscillates between queer and quare theory. This is because queer theory tends to ignore social structures and material social practices (Van Zyl, 2005) which impact certain queer identities; a quality that an 'intersectional queer' in the name of quare theory brings to the fold. This research seeks to 'queer' queer representations on QueerLife magazine. I refer to this queering of queer norms as 'quaring' (Johnson, 2001) or simply introducing an 'intersectional queer' which seeks to bring all material experiences into the realm of the queer. The aim here is not to dismiss the playful nature of queer theory but to jettison its homogenizing tendencies (Johnson, 2001). This research seeks to "quare" "queer" such that ways of knowing are viewed both as discursively mediated and as historically situated and materially conditioned' (Johnson, 2001, p. 2). This is not to dismiss queer theory because it is not necessarily insensitive to race- though some queer theorists certainly are. Therefore, the thrust of this project is to interrogate power by considering dynamics of representation online as reflections of the structural and material realities of different queer groups in South Africa.

1.2 Rationale to the study

'Why is sex so widely discussed and what is said? What are the effects of power generated by what is said?' (Foucault, 1978, p. 11).

Through the above quote from Michel Foucault, one considers the effects and affects of power generated by what is said about certain sexualities. According to Wetherell and Potter (1988, p. 170), 'In many cases talk which is simply packaged as describing the situation, "as

the speaker sees it', can be analysed in terms of discursive functions and effects which go beyond mere description'. One who says something about something actively constructs or represents ideas of what it ought to be like. Sexualities are not only queer, but also queer and... raced, classed, gendered, (dis) abled or aged, hence within queer, there are certain constructed categories centred on these other intersecting identities. Since QueerLife magazine attests to being 'South Africa's preferred LGBT news and lifestyle *information portal* for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex individuals'² (www.queerlife.co.za, p. online, emphasis added), it is an ideal space to study such representations of queerness. QueerLife is also different from other sites such as Gay Pages SA, Exit, OUT and Mamba Online which do not explicitly compartmentalise experiences into '4men' or '4women'.

This research emanates from the paucity of internet and sexuality studies in South Africa. According to Stern and Handel (2010), there is little empirical or scientific study of sexuality and the media, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, I observed that there has been a great amount of research on this issue in the past decade; but more research is needed to theorise sexuality and its representation on the internet. There are many issues emerging at the intersection of these digital media technologies and LGBTQ groups (Subramony, 2018). However, there has been little research attention given to technological issues related to LGBTQ stakeholders (Subramony, 2018). In this era where the internet is prevalent, one expects discourse analysts to examine discourse on the web a space currently crucial for enacting social practice, reflecting and shaping social processes and problems.

This research also springs from the under-theorisation and neglect of the state of local gay publications (Sonnekus and Van Eeden, 2009) particularly local online gay publications, be they non-mainstream or community based. According to Downey and Fenton (2013, p. 185) although such 'Small, alternative, nonmainstream, radical, grassroots or community media represent a vast and varied cultural realm of production that is often based on citizen participation [...]' they remain under-researched and under theorized.

1.3 Research questions

Overall, this study seeks to address the following research question:

²Note that gay is used interchangeably to mean queer by some scholars and groups

What are the dominant representations of queerness on QueerLife magazine's 4men and 4women's web sections?

The research also seeks to answer the following four research sub-questions:

- i) What historical intergroup material and structural realities can be used to explain the nature of representations of queerness on QueerLife magazine's 4men and 4women's web sections?
- ii) What are the (in)visibility patterns of the structurally marginalised such as the poor, black, female, old and disabled etc. on QueerLife's 4men and 4women's web sections?;
- iii) How does QueerLife's categorisation of experiences into cisnormative gender sections '4men' and '4women' shape queer representations?
- iv) What are some of the most dominant sentiments of queerness on QueerLife and how do these inform communities' perceptions?

1.4 Research aims

The research aims to analyse representations of queerness in order to reveal the hidden dynamics of marginalisation that occur in personal accounts of queer experiences. Through this research, I seek to open up dialogue on the (re)emergence of centres of power within the margins, particularly within the margins of gender and sexuality.

1.5 Scope and limitations

While QueerLife website has other subpages such as 'news', 'entertainment news', '4men', '4women', 'cars', 'competitions' and 'join our newsletter' sections, this research focuses solely on content on the '4men' and '4women's domains. These have the following sub-pages: 4men (fun, health, opinions, relationships and style) and 4women (fun, health, life, opinions, relationships and style). The study is limited to these pages because they have personal queer stories, ranging from individual experiences of queer fun, health, opinions, relationships, life and style. This is unlike other sections that focus more on contemporary queer related news and events. The '4men' and '4women's section also provoked my interest because of their compartmentalisation of experiences which is reflective of cisgender binarism.

The limitations to the study also include the unavailability of QueerLife staff input on organisational information. When I tried to get hold of QueerLife's editorial team through email, to let them know that I would be carrying out research based on their site, I did not receive feedback. This was a missed opportunity for me to discover how QueerLife posts are published and how they are reviewed or selected. This would have assisted in discovering whether the groups this research found to be marginalised contributed articles at all. It is this information that would have also spoken to why some queer groups are (under)represented.

Further, the research is only based on one media object. Due to time and feasibility, I could not examine how other media channels such as television comparatively represent queerness. I could have also examined other QueerLife website sections but I could not because of the aforementioned factors.

There were also technical limitations. For example, I would have loved to include queer voices and investigations into the editorial policy and structural organisation of QueerLife in this research. However, due to time, scope and the rules governing lengths of my research report, this was impossible.

1.6 Structure of the research report: chapter outline

This research has five chapters. Chapter One introduced the research by providing a background to the study, the rationale to the study and the research questions. In Chapter Two, an outline of literature, which contextualises the history of queer representations in South Africa media, is provided. This chapter also details current internet access trends and how these can possibly be used to explain queer representations. In order to link these epistemic accounts to theory, this chapter is fused together with an outline of the theoretical framework. Chapter Three goes on to explain the methods employed in the research including pertinent issues such as limitations, reflexivity and ethics. In Chapter Four, findings are presented and analysed in order to evaluate how they inform current scholarship. Finally, Chapter Five provides conclusive academic propositions, suggesting existing gaps and future research possibilities for Critical Diversity Studies.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with an outline of the theoretical framework I will adopt in the research. This includes intersectionality, representation theory, gender theory, queer theory and critical diversity literacy. These five theories will not be used in isolation but complementary to one another. In the literature review section, the chapter explores current and relevant literature on the history of South African queer media and problems arising, political economy of the media, new media and the politics of queer representation and finally, how internet access in South Africa is linked to power. Throughout this literature review, research gaps in the field are identified, in order to solidify the importance of this research.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section outlines theories that this researcher employed to locate the construction of ideal queer norms as embedded in power. These theories include intersectionality, representation theory, gender theory, queer theory and critical diversity literacy.

2.2.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept which was coined at the end of the 1980s in critical race studies by Crenshaw (1989) to refer to ‘intersections of axes of differentiation (race, gender, class, sexuality, and so on) and their contextual significations, informing the social identity and experiences of a person’ (Roy, 2012 p. 177). According to May (2015) within intersectionality, interlocking relations of dominance of multiple social, political, cultural and economic dynamics of power that are determined simultaneously by identity categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and others are mapped (May, 2015). In this research, I consider representation ‘intersectional’ in character (Roy, 2012). And because intersectionality’s ontological dimension reconceptualises agency to include privilege and oppression at once

(May, 2015) it will be used to explain both the presence and absence of particular queer people in online representation as either privilege or oppression.

According to Collins (2000; 2004), intersectionality first refers to a matrix of oppression where interlocking systems of oppression are constantly interacting. In the context of this study, the concept of 'exclusion by inclusion' is key to intersectionality whereby the fact that a certain queer group is represented on QueerLife was not treated as positive representation. For example, the presence of women experiences does not simply mean that all women are represented because 'women' is not only lesbian, white, middle class and abled but also includes intersex, black, poor etc. If used correctly, intersectionality can deal with difference and sameness simultaneously within a liberatory praxis. Intersectionality therefore does not promote static identity categories, but also refers to lived experience of power and privilege and relational contact between identity categories. In as much as white women's race is invisible, their experiences are often used as the experience of all women. At the same time, the categorisation of experiences as simply 'women's' on a platform which attests to being queer over-simplifies women's queer experience as universal. It also oversimplifies queer sex, as strictly possible within the confines of 'homo', not 'bi', multiple or infinite. This could lead to 'bisexual erasure'- which is not only the omission of bisexuality from discourses but also includes strategies used by heterosexual and homosexual people to delegitimise bisexuality (See Yoshino, 2000; Lynch and Maree, 2013).

To add, previous research on the internet and queer studies in South Africa has failed to account for the importance of political economy of new media technologies in accounting for online queer representation. For this purpose, I define intersectionality in terms of how lived identities are experienced within what Roth (2013, p. 12) terms 'simultaneous entanglement of inequalities' for subjects whose voices have been ignored (Nash, 2008). This means that one has to use offline realities to explain online (in)visibilities. These are important intersections. This concurs with May's (2015, p. 21) position that intersectionality highlights how lived identities, structural systems, sites of marginalization, forms of power, and ways of resistance 'intersect' in dynamic, shifting ways. Using the 'intercategorical complexity' approach (McCall, 2005), one acknowledges that ' [...] there are relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups, as imperfect and ever changing as they are, and takes those relationships as the center of the analysis' (McCall, 2005, p. 1784–1785). For such an analysis, one is called upon to examine how men, as a group could have different classes that limit their access to particular technologies. This approach exposes the relationships between inequality

and the categories themselves, and uses categories strategically in the service of exposing the connections between categories and inequality (Nash, 2008). For the purpose of this research, I referred to evidence based literature situated citations of class and access. However, I did not personally investigate access trends due to limited time.

2.2.2 Representation theory

Having sexual orientation enshrined in the constitution creates legitimised discursive spaces in the media for everyday representations of same-sex relationships (Van Zyl and Steyn, 2005). Representation shapes identities and according to Fricker (2007, p. 14) power can operate in instances where there are shared conceptions of social identity of say; what it means to be a woman or man or what it means to be gay or straight, young or old and so on. According to Hall (1997, 2) 'To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for; as in the sentence, "In Christianity, the cross represents the suffering and crucifixion of Christ"'. This article employs the same manner of signification to show that on QueerLife, *representation is used to demonstrate how particular bodies come to represent the ideal queer identity.*

One can think of images as forms of 'text' used to 'represent' the world (Jenkins, 2003). The term 'text' in this context is used broadly to include paintings, maps, photographs and landscapes. These, texts do not hold fixed meanings but are subject to individual interpretations. According to Jenkins (2003) visual images, which circulate within a culture, are pregnant with particular meanings, associations and values. As the meanings become shared through circulation in different sites, they inform culture (Hall, 1997). These texts are therefore representation mechanisms and according to Hall (1989, p. 71) every regime of representation is a regime of power formed. Hall opines that the media represent a phantasmagorical 'reality' through strategic selection and manipulation of imagery in order to shape public perceptions (1982, p. 64) of what it means to be queer in this instance.

Those who have control over the media have the power to make others see and experience themselves as the 'Other'. Those who write articles on queerness also have the power to include or exclude experiences as valid for the common 'culture'. Dyer (2002, p. 1) notes that '[h]ow we are seen determines in part how we are treated; how we treat others is based on how we see them; such seeing comes from representation.' Representations are also paradoxical and antagonistic. This is because being represented or representing oneself renders the self -visible,

while simultaneously constraining what is (il)legitimate and (il)licit (Roy, 2012) about that particular identity. Representations of queer people of colour in gay media for example, are important to understand because they allow us to realize what kind of visibility is given to them, how they are rendered intelligible and licit as subjects, and if they are commoditized objects or excluded abjects (Roy, 2012, p. 177).

Representation is also a mechanism to consolidate power. By manipulating images, symbols, and ideologies, dominant groups can legitimize their own position by assigning stigmatized characteristics to the 'Other' (Roy, 2012, p. 178). Linguistic representation of the 'gay' category sets normatively defined attributes of the ideal 'gay subject' (Roy, 2012). According to Roy, the sexed and gendered subject is constituted and constrained, while others are rendered abjects, underrated and relegated to the margins (Roy, 2012). Hence, representation theory is central to this research as it also speaks to these dynamics of marginalisation through representation.

2.2.3 Gender theory

Sex and gender are imbricated in one other. Sex consists of physical organs such the male organ (penis), the female organ (the vagina) or both organs (intersex). These sexual organs are used to assign specific roles and attributes to different bodies at birth. The assignment of roles based on one's sex is called gendering. According to Butler (1986, p. 35) ' [...] sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas gender is the cultural meaning and form that that body acquires [...]'. The distinction between male and female serves as a basic organizing principle for every human culture (Bem, 1981, p. 354).

Boy and girls are expected to possess different traits such as masculinity or femininity. Heteronormative society expects them to acquire sex-specific self-concepts and personality characteristics such as masculinity or femininity as defined by that culture (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957). The process by which a society recasts 'male' and 'female' into masculine and feminine is known as sex typing (Bem, 1981, p. 354). Sex typing informs the gender schema theory (Neisser, 1976; Bem, 1981). According to Bem:

Because sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information in terms of and conforming to whatever definitions of masculinity and femininity the culture happens to provide, it is the process of

partitioning the world into two equivalence classes on the basis of the gender schema, not the contents of the equivalence classes, that is central to the theory (Bem, 1981: 356).

Gender schema theory allows one to read how the socially construction of attributes that are associated with the category of ‘man’ or ‘woman’ influence individuals’ overall perceptions of the world as existing mostly in binaries. This theory was used to make ‘sense’ of the organizing principle behind QueerLife’s binary-based ‘4men’ and 4women’s sections.

Scholars such as Butler provide a feminist critique to gender. For Butler (1986) to be a man or woman entails an ongoing process of culturally interpreting bodies, hence it means to be dynamically positioned within a field of cultural possibilities. Because gender identities are unnatural (Butler, 1986) they should not be viewed as static. Rather, there are many ways of being a man or woman. ‘Feminist theory has often been critical of naturalistic explanations of sex and sexuality that assume that the meaning of women's social existence can be derived from some fact of their physiology’ (Butler, 1988, p. 520). This essentialist categorization of women as naturally inclined towards emotion for example is what this research set out to antagonize. Such an analysis does not deny the facticity or materiality of the body. It simply challenges the way through which these corporeal factors come to ascribe particular meanings to certain bodies (Butler, 1988). In other words, my critique of gender like Butler exposes how certain differences come to make a difference (Steyn, 2015). These differences are constructed through discourse, which refers to repeated signs and texts, which keep certain regimes of knowledge (Foucault, 1980) such as patriarchy in place. According to Foucault (2002), discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Hence, by accounting for particular identity related experiences, individuals are complicit in asserting discourses, which feed into how those identities are naturalized as solely conceivable within particular experiences.

2.2.4 Beyond Queer to Quare Theory

Johnson (2001) propounded Quare theory. Queer theory has been criticised for being whitewashed (Barnard, 1999) so in light of these developments, Johnson (2001, p. 1) proposed the use of the term ‘quare’ studies as a vernacular re-articulation and deployment of queer theory to accommodate racialized sexual knowledge. This research sought to ‘queer’ queer

representations on *QueerLife* magazine. I refer to this queering of queer norms as ‘quaring’ (Johnson, 2001) or simply introducing an ‘intersectional queer’ which seeks to bring all material experiences into the realm of the queer. This is necessary because the dominant South African queer media content is symbolic of an assimilationist approach to LGBTI issues, ultimately perpetuating a westernised, homonormative, monolithic identity (Beetar, 2012). For this, there is queer theory, which helps one-question and challenge normative assumptions around desire, actions, feelings, subjectivities, norms, identities and ethics (Giffney, 2009, p. 2). However, just as there is more than one-way to be critical, there are also many ways to be ‘queer’ (Thomas, 2000). Hence, this research sees quare theory as an ‘intersectional queer’ theory, which can be used to flesh out racist, ableist, ageist, classist, and gendered etc. discourses in online queer media.

I acknowledge queer theory’s role in probing the distribution of power through and within social productions of (homo) sexuality (Schneider 2000, p. 206). However, because queer theory is not enough to account for the experiences of queer people of color (and beyond), it is necessary to adopt a quare theory (Johnson, 2001). ‘While queer theory has opened up new possibilities for theorizing gender and sexuality, like a pot of gumbo cooked too quickly, it has failed to live up to its full critical potential by refusing to accommodate all the queer ingredients contained inside its theoretical pot’ (Johnson, 2001, p. 18). Queer studies elide issues of race and class (Johnson, 2001). Much of queer theory unpacks notions of selfhood, agency, and experience, but is often unable to accommodate the gays and lesbians of color who come from ‘raced’ communities (Johnson, 2001). With intersectionality in mind, I do not take ‘race’ for granted, but I connect it to multiple axes of oppression. The aim is not to dismiss the playful nature of queer theory but to jettison its homogenizing tendencies (Johnson, 2001). ‘[...] I wish to “quare” “queer” such that ways of knowing are viewed both as discursively mediated and as historically situated and materially conditioned’ (Johnson, 2001, p. 2).

2.2.5 Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL)

Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) brings our attention to the complex nature of power and its establishment within diverse societies. CDL is a critical theory initiated by Steyn (2015) and it provides various frameworks with which to interrogate power. As in quare theory, CDL is used to show that, although queer theory unpacks notions of selfhood, agency, and experience, it is

often unable to accommodate the gays and lesbians of color who come from ‘raced’ communities (Johnson, 2001). CDL does not essentialise this ‘race’ but also connects it to multiple axes of oppression. Steyn’s CDL acknowledges that othering processes which revolve around class and gender, gender and race, race and nation, sexuality and race, disability and race, gender and sexuality within different arrangements and interactions, are implicated in one another (Steyn, 2015, p. 383). All these dynamics reflect the dialectics of representation that this project seeks to tackle, making it a CDL project.

2.3 Literature review

This literature review section, explores current and relevant literature on the history of South African queer media and problems arising, political economy of the media, new media and the politics of queer representation and finally, how internet access in South Africa is linked to power.

2.3.1 History of South African Queer Media and Problems Arising

The history of South African queer media informs my understanding of current online queer media spaces. Mainstream gay publishing has a relatively short history in South Africa (Sonnekus and Van Eeden, 2009) because historically, the apartheid regime censored and policed sexuality leaving little room for public sex talk (Posel, 2004). This was primarily done in order to hinder interracial marriages and the exposure of white homosexual relationships. In 1949 and 1957, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Act respectively; were passed to maintain the ideals of hegemonic whiteness (Ratele, 2009). The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act rendered relationships between whites and blacks illegal. The Immorality Act barred media from lewd depictions of sex (Posel, 2004). According to Sonnekus and Van Eeden (2009) the stringent policing of sexuality by white Christian Nationalist ideologies gave homophile publications little space and resources, leading to independent production or importation of queer media with western content. Sonnekus and Van Eeden (2009) further state that up to today, locally produced queer media are still scarce and far between.

In 1982, the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA), the first South African formal queer organisation was formed along with a gay publication *Link/Skakel* (Gevisser, 1994). Sonnekus and Van Eeden (2009) posit that both GASA and *Link/Skakel* adhered to white norms. GASA

a former overseer of the gay press in South Africa paid little attention to racial and gender based inequality in post-apartheid South Africa (Sonnekus and Van Eeden, 2009). This led to what Mugari (2015, p. 76) terms the perfection and completion of ‘racial segregation on [...] pages’ in the colony. It can be argued that the mainstream South African press became, Parker’s (1972) ‘Little White Island’ in their exclusion of black bodies. Because the earliest forms of gay organisation in South Africa were primarily fronted by white, middle-class gay men, the impediments created for black queer people are still present in the way in which the local gay press represents a ‘particularised’ (white) version of gay masculinity (Reddy 1998, p. 67–68). That along with the historical inequities of apartheid assures gay white men with financial resources the ability to render themselves widely visible in the media and impactful on urban geographies, which accounts for why gayness is equated with whiteness in the popular consciousness (Hoad, 1999, p. 564). This research acknowledges the importance of such historical factors in shaping racial dynamics of current queer representations in a new media space.

Graziano (2004) and Beetar (2012) concur that between 1993 and 2006 there were dramatic legal moves from the legally entrenched restriction of queer rights to constitutional protection on the basis of one’s orientation and an increased social visibility for queer people in sport, academics, law, media and the streets. South Africa has also experienced radical political changes, including the democratisation of the media since 1990 (Fourie, 2002). Fourie (2012) posits that while the South African media market is more open than before, it is still under the pressure of privatisation, liberalisation, convergence and internationalisation. Black queer views are silent within popular queer press spheres in what Sonnekus and Van Eeden call the ‘formation of a minority within a minority (or the ‘other’ other)’ (2009, p. 81).

This exclusion is broad. For example, in the academy; the dominance of white researchers and discourses has led to the elision of the subject of racial marginality of non-white queer bodies in the media. Barnard (1999) states that academic work done under the framework of ‘queer’ tends to deploy mono-faceted categorisations that erase the localised presence of queer people of color, establish an imperialistic teleology for queer politics, and white-wash Queer Theory (Barnard, 1999, p. 199). Although at the time of Barnard’s writing, there was little work on the racialized constructions of sexual identity and the sexualised marking of race (Barnard, 1999), off late; there is a lot of emerging work on racialized queer representations (see Msibi, 2013). However, more still needs to be done in terms of internet-based research on queer representations in South African online spaces.

2.3.2 Political Economy of the Media and Marginalised Queer Bodies

Political economists of the media demonstrate how media influence entrenched tendencies in society such as racism, sexism, ableism, ageism etc. (McChesney, 2008). McChesney (2008) argues that the political economy of the media shows how communication systems and content are shaped by ownership, market structures, commercial support, technologies, labour practices and government policies. Ownership of communication systems also shapes the sexuality and gender of content. Lyotard (2004) for example is of the view that every political economy is libidinal; therefore there is a link between political economy and queer representations in the media.

Political economy of the media is intimately tied to racialized queer representations. In addition, the dominance of media content conflating queerness to whiteness is suggestive of broader infrastructural relations of racial domination in South Africa. Sonnekus and Van Eeden's (2009) exploration of queer visual media deals not only with the overrepresentation of white homomascularity, but also, more significantly, with the underrepresentation of black homomascularity. For Sonnekus and Van Eeden (2009) in an analysis of Gay Pages there is a 'spiral of silence' where dominant representations of whiteness in gay magazines normalise gayness as white, silencing 'other' images. Collins posits that:

The status of being the "other" implies being "other than" or different from the assumed norm of white male behavior. In this model, powerful white males define themselves as subjects, the true actors, and classify people of color and women in terms of their position vis-a-vis this white male hub (1986, p. 18).

The consequences of this history are the exclusion of non-white queer identities. Hence Msibi (2013) troubles the queer identity by referring to it as an identity, which is helpful in elaborating differences in sexual experiences yet, still laden with western historical influences. In the same wavelength, because black and white men own most media corporations, white and black women are marginalised in some queer discourses. This is why Msibi (2013, p. 107) argues that "'Queer" may sometimes be used as yet another fixed form of gender [male] identity, something for which it was not intended.'

According to Morris (1991, p. 20) normative sexual discourse represents those with disabilities as asexual or sexually inadequate individuals who cannot ovulate, menstruate, conceive or give birth, have orgasms, erections, ejaculations or impregnate. May and Ferri (2005) problematize the entrance of disability into the sexuality discourse as a medical or bodily ‘fact’ rather than a lived reality as the root of this silence on disability and sexuality in research. This silence is a sign of adultist and ableist constructs of both young people and disabled sexuality (Chappell, 2014). The disabled queer body’s absence in representations of queerness is another focus of this research.

The research views the relationship between political economy of the media and representation as intersectional. The intersectional nature of queer representation is important (Roy, 2012) because research exploring how queer online spaces foster homonormativity through the exclusion of black, poor, old or disabled queer people is minimal. Chappell (2015) asserts that mainstream homosexual cultures in South Africa are filled with westocentric, hetero-masculine images which exclude older, black, poor, disabled and certain queer cultures such as leather scene, transgender etc. Therefore, this study seeks to analyse representation at its privileging intersections of age, gender, race, class, (dis) ability, beauty and so forth.

2.3.3 New Media and the Politics of Queer Representation

Representation involves the description or depiction of something. Representation also calls up in the mind through description, portrayal or imagination. Cilliers (2010) postulates that it involves asking the following questions: ‘what kind of mental picture do you see when you call up on gays and lesbians in your mind? Who do you imagine?’ Through representation, humans can make sense of the world’s people, objects and events. The power of representation lies in its ability to enact experiences of the self and other and shaping our ways of thinking about certain cultural protocols in the process. Through representation, the media are constantly teaching us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire (Kellner 2003, p. 9) about queerness.

Most research on representation focuses on mainstream media to ‘consumer’ flow of content with a few exploring ‘prosumer’ type scenarios. According to Fuchs (2011) the term ‘prosumers’ refers to new media audiences, whose role is no longer solely that of content consumer, but also producer. Although important work on representations of LGBT people in,

on, and through new media is ongoing (Keeling, 2014) there exists a deficit of inquiries into the complexities that come with intra-group generated representations of queerness.

This section of literature sees this intra-group representation as both a feature and consequence of domination which can potentially create an 'us' versus 'them' relationship. According to Brittan and Maynard (1984, p. 199) 'Domination always involves the objectification of the dominated [and] all forms of domination imply the devaluation of the subjectivity of the oppressed'. In a world where intersections of discourses of race, class, culture, history, location, gender, sexuality, and age are captured in media representations (Beetar, 2012, p. 50) representation should not be viewed in isolation. One ought to treat the representation of a 'public gay culture' as evidence of the 'deep social cleavages' of the past and present (Cock 2005, p. 205). This research considers representation through language and image an agent of (de)legitimisation of certain accounts of queerness at the expense of others.

Representation occurs in various public spheres. Cilliers (2010) and Dadas (2016) capture Habermas' concept of the public sphere and representation concisely. According to Dadas (2016) queer political culture and the practices associated with them believe in the public sphere. Because queer bodies have been ignored and ridiculed in mainstream media accounts, they have created alternative media spaces while striving towards improved positive representations in the mainstream media (Cilliers, 2010). Warner states that queer people '[...] have believed that political struggles were to be carried out neither through the normal state apparatus nor through revolutionary combat but through the non-state media in which public opinion is invested with the ability to dissolve power' (2012, p. 210). However, within these alternative public spheres, there are formations of new centres of power: the continuance of stereotypes and archetypes of queerness.

Such representative accounts (de)legitimise particular regimes of queer 'truths' and codes at the expense of others. They may also exclude women or essentialise 'their' femininity. In this regard, representation is at times a confirmation of 'Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere (which) functioned merely as a realm for privileged men to practice their skills of governance, [through excluding] women and non-propertied classes' (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 11). This subject has been dealt with by scholars (Hawley and Altman, 2001; Graziano, 2004; Sanger, 2007; Sonnekus and Van Eeden, 2009; Milani, 2013) who mention the media's complicity in the representation of globalised, post-modern gay identities. These ideas are all central to this research.

2.3.4 The Internet in South Africa: Access and Power

Scholars (DeSola Pool, 1983; Jenkins, 2002; Allan and Thorsen, 2009; Mano and Willems, 2010; Willems, 2012; Castells, 2015) have written voluminously on the internet. According to Kerr (2014) the internet and other information communication technologies are liberation technologies that can expand political, social, and economic freedom. Formerly marginalised identities can create platforms for free interaction on the internet. The rules central to the internet can be somewhat less strict than those controlling print and broadcast media (Sussman, 2000). Citizens are now able to take part in the creation of their own media content, hereby shifting the balance of power between producers and consumers of media (Willems, 2012). Former media consumers are now ‘prosumers’ (Fuchs, 2011) that is producers and consumers of content. While old media have always played a crucial role in enabling participatory media cultures in Africa, the internet is increasingly being used to comment upon state media discourse (Mano and Willems, 2010). The internet is also a site for the refuge of socially oppressed identities.

However, old methods of censoring news and information are being remodelled to cope with the new communication platforms (Sussman, 2000).’ This presents similarities between the ‘new’ and the ‘old’. According to Beetar (2012) internet usage does little to deter transnationalised patterns of consumption in which popular queer news sources maintain notions of identity and privilege. Cost and language are still barriers to access. The wide use of English and the high cost of infrastructure limit the use of the internet to the elite in many countries (Sussman, 2000). Because all South African internet providers must lease lines from Telkom and due to the high tariffs associated with dial-up access, internet had weakened by 2007 (Horwitz and Currie, 2007). From fourteenth in the world in the mid-1990s, South Africa’s internet connectivity had dropped to thirty-seventh a decade later (Horwitz and Currie, 2007). This confined online interactions to the privileged few. However, due to the popularity of smartphones ‘The number of internet users as a percentage of the total population in South Africa is nearing 60%’ (Kemp, 2018, p. online).

In light of such evidence, scholars like Zizek (1998, p. 484) posit that ‘the pre- dominant doxa today is that cyberspace explodes, or at least potentially under- mines, the reign of Oedipus: It involves the “end of Oedipus.”’ The reign of Oedipus speaks to the ‘ancient’ socialisation which only accommodated heteronormative subjectivities. The idea of Oedipus as a representation of a hegemonic hetero/cis-gender identity is challenged in alternative

communication spaces where people can explore their identities. The ubiquity and convenience of the smartphone allows individuals to surf the internet and post articles about their gender or sexuality.

All this however depends on affordability because the digital divide - which excludes many people from the internet - exacerbates South Africa's deep social and economic inequalities. Those who live on the margins of society are pushed even further out beyond the margins, as they do not have access to the digital tools of the modern economy (Harber, 2014, p. online). This research acknowledges these as structural factors affecting web based representations of queerness. However, due to the scope of this research, there is no room to include queer voices to account for personal experiences of internet access and its impact on their presence or involvement in shaping online representations. A future study on this is indeed necessary.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlined theories that were used for this research. These include intersectionality, representation theory, gender theory, queer theory and critical diversity literacy. All these five theories were not used in isolation but complementary to one another. It further explored current and relevant literature on the history of South African queer media and problems arising, political economy of the media, new media and the politics of queer representation and finally, how internet access in South Africa is linked to power. Throughout this literature review, research gaps in the field were identified. Overall, the chapter attempted to show the relationship that exists between existing research and theory and gaps, which this research will fill. In the next chapter, I will outline my research methods and methodology.

Chapter Three:

Methods and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods and methodology employed in the research including issues such as research approach, limitations, reflexivity, ethics and the way through which data were analysed. This is an important undertaking because it helps to flesh out how concepts such as the study's rationale, theories and literature are related to the methods used in the research.

3.2 Qualitative research

The study employs a qualitative research approach within a poststructuralist thinking. It also employed minimal quantitative analysis through content analysis. According to Berggren (2014), poststructuralist perspectives have been of great influence to the field of gender studies for over the past twenty years. These poststructuralist perspectives view gender as inessential and performed (Butler, 1986, 1988, 1990). According to Berggren:

The most important and distinguishing feature of poststructuralist social thought is the claim that subjects are constituted in discourse. This involves a critique of representational theories of language, as it is claimed that categories such as “homosexual,” “criminal,” or “man” do not represent a pre-discursive reality. There is thus no essence or authenticity to subjects: instead, discursive categories establish the conditions of possibility for the emergence of different forms of subjectivity (2014, p. 237)

In other words, poststructuralism contends that normative subjectivities are shaped by normalized accounts attached to respective bodies. Language plays an important role in assigning (im)possibilities and characteristics to certain gender categories. These linguistically constructed categories are part of discourse, a component that this research sets out to analyze.

3.3 Research method

Identifying an appropriate research method is important. In this section, I outline my use of the case study and cyber-ethnography.

3.3.1 Case study

The research is based on a case study of QueerLife magazine. A case study is an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, which uses qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon (Feagin et al., 1991).

3.3.2 Cyber-ethnography

Cyber-ethnography has its roots in ‘ethnography’ (Keeley-Browne, 2011). According to Ward (1999, p. 1) ‘cyber-ethnography is the most appropriate tool in reaching an understanding of the online community’. Cyber-ethnography is simply online ethnography and is concerned with data that can be collected from the internet (Hine, 2000). It involves watching what happens and examining what is said in order to shed a light on the one’s research questions. In this research, representation was examined under the ‘natural’ setting in which it occurs, making power more evident in its everyday form. Cyber-ethnography is compatible with qualitative analysis’ tendency to take form as it is being carried out. Because it consists of an unstructured data collection process for the most part, it leaves room for queer and less scheduled data collection processes. According to (Canella and Lincoln, 2012) critical inquiry cannot be described by predetermined linear methods or unquestioned methodologies.

3.4 Data Collection

This section discusses the data collection methods, which are employed in this study. These include the site selection and sampling followed by an outline of the data analysis methods.

3.4.1 Site selection and choice of study

This study was conducted on QueerLife magazine’s website who’s Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is www.queerlife.co.za. It focuses on content on the 4men and 4women’s sections with the following sub-pages underneath: 4men (fun, health, opinions, relationships and style) and 4women (fun, health, life, opinions, relationships and style). The researcher asks whether these sites contain potentially harmful categories, which are homogenous and inaccurate representations of queerness. Following Nash (2008), I also ask if the categorisation of experiences can potentially generate singular, hegemonic queer identities and norms.

3.4.2 Sampling

The sampling technique for this study is purposive which is sampling based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2017). Purposive sampling makes it easier to select relevant texts and thematise them; leaving out content which makes no significance to the study. Purposively selected content was published between 1 January 2016 and 30 April 2018, under the 4men and 4women's web sections. This time was chosen because content, which is produced over a longer period, is more representative of common cultural discourses. In other words, the longer the period of the articles selected, the larger the set of data I can purposively select.

Sixty-six articles are subjected to purposive sampling. The articles are purposively selected according to how they speak to the research questions particularly to dominant and less dominant representations of queerness. Selection of the articles is based on the types of texts and images and their significance to the intention of the study. The dominant themes, which spoke to issues such as race, class, (dis)ability; age and beauty are identified for analysis and discussion.

3.5 Data analysis

The dominant themes, which speak to issues such as race, class, (dis)ability; age and beauty were identified for analysis and discussion. Through content analysis, quantitative accounts of the number of times each group appears are provided (Appendix A). This first level content analysis is important because Elo and Kyngas (2008, p. 1) observe that content analysis is a method that may be used with either qualitative or quantitative data and in an inductive or deductive way.

Text analysis is used. Text analysis, which is an overall term, used to refer to the analysis of media texts and objects, includes Critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis. According to Holsti text analysis involves the systematic identification of special characteristics in content in traditional media and websites or any other medium that can be turned into text (1968, p. 608). Kerlinger avers that 'Instead of observing people's behaviour directly, or asking them to respond to scales, or interviewing them, the investigator takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of the communications' (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 544). The research treats articles posted as forms of intragroup communication by individuals. Such interaction and communication still involves power dynamics (Castells, 2007) which shape

whose story is told and whose is left out. For the stories which are told, power also influences how the story is told.

Because the study acknowledges that authors construct different versions depending on the functional context, questions were asked of the data through a thematic data analysis based on Wetherell and Potter's (1988) critical discourse analytical tool of interpretive repertoires. Hence, the emergence of recurring themes or repertoires within articles is used to thematise the data because these recurring discourses have ideological consequences (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Lastly, because semiotic analysis is a way of analysing meaning in photos, they are rendered important sources of data, alongside the text which is analysed using CDA.

3.5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Discourse is what people say about something within different contexts. Discourse facilitates representation. The product of discourse is knowledge and power (Hall, 1997). This research employs Wetherell and Potter's (1988, p. 169) 'discourse analysis and the identification of interpretive repertoires'. Interpretive repertoires are recurring patterns in different actors' discourses that are similar. For Wetherell and Potter:

[...] one speaker will construct events and persons in different ways according to function. This is not to imply that there is no regularity at all in discourse- simply that regularity cannot be pinned at the level of the individual speaker. There is regularity in the variation. Inconsistencies and differences in discourses are differences between relatively internally consistent, bounded language units which... [are]... called [...] interpretive repertoires (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, p. 172)

Because Wetherell and Potter's CDA considers individual accounts to be the primary object of research rather than transparent representations of individual attitudes and beliefs or the true nature of events (Mckenzie, 2005) this approach is more relevant. This is because it discounts the identity of the author and prioritises the ideological consequences of the statements. For Wetherell and Potter (1988) discourse should be considered a social practice not a neutral transmitter; having its own features and consequences. They add that:

We can think of a continuum from more ‘interpersonal’ functions such as explaining, justifying, excusing, blaming and so on, which define the local discursive context, to the wider purposes discourse might serve- where, for instance, a social analyst might wish to describe account, very broadly, as having a particular kind of ideological effect in the sense of legitimating the power of one group in society’. (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, p. 169)

Through their CDA, the research’s concern shifted from the actual individual writer, to the ideological consequences of discourse. In addition, this approach enables one to probe intragroup communication among queer people, not as innocuous, but as political.

3.5.2 Semiotic Analysis

I use Semiotic analysis to unpack the meanings imbued within visual images. Semiotics is the doctrine of signs (Hershberger, 2014). Language or images are signifiers in a sign system, and their meanings make up the signified (Barthes, 1964). For example, if one says ‘dog’, what is conveyed mentally is not the dog itself but a concept of ‘dogness’. Similarly, what writers say about ‘gay people’ conveys a mental concept of ‘gayness’. Hence, Barthes (1988) opines that elements are understood as signifiers by their own correlative position than by their content. ‘Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture’ (Hall, 1997). Dominant representations of gay cultural codes are signifiers of acceptable forms of gayness. For example, the argument that whiteness is the standard of gay identities, is contextualised by the fact that ‘Whiteness in the [representation of] gay community is everywhere, from what we see, what we experience, and more importantly, what we desire’ (Han, 2007, p. 52).

Socially created connections between expression and content inform culture and are central to semiotics (Culler, 1975). Semiotics views culture as a reference point or a way through which one comes to believe in the reality of an expression (Eco, 1979). In this research, semiotic analysis unpacks meanings attached to visual images, which shape normative queer culture, rendering these meanings, complicit in power relations. These images are therefore signs, which is ‘something that stands for something else’ (Sebeok, 1986, p. 936). Semiotics which

is the 'science of signs' provides me with a set of assumptions and concepts which allowed for a systematic analysis of symbolic systems (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994).

Semiotics depends on meaningful connections between expression and content which are socially created and maintained (Culler, 1975). These shared and collective connections are a source of ideas, rules, practices, codes, and recipe knowledge known as culture (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). Culture is a reference point or a way through which one comes to believe in the reality of the expression (Eco, 1979). In other words, the culture is shaped by power relations where the most powerful presently or historically, determine(d) the meanings attached to signs. Photographs are signs and they can just be biased as language (Syracuse, 2008). The 'paradigms' of their meanings come together to form a 'field' created or constituted by discourse (Bourdieu, 1977). Semiotics thus enables this researcher to explain how particular queer groups can come to understand certain signs and how these inform the normative culture.

3.5.3 Content analysis

Through content analysis, quantitative accounts of the number of times each group appeared are provided. I classify these 'groups' using socially constructed categories such as race, (dis)ability, body type (slim/muscular or chubby), age and gender. Although this risks reconstructing categories, this qualitative account provides evidence of how these constructs are used by authors to speak to queer culture. Hence, this first level content analysis is important because Elo and Kyngas (2008, p. 1) observe that content analysis is a method that may be used with either qualitative or quantitative data and in an inductive or deductive way. Data obtained through content analysis is used as evidence in the data analysis process.

3.6 Coding

Coding makes the data concise. The initial goal of this study is to undertake preliminary coding so as to sieve out manageable subset of data from hundreds of pages of articles (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Sixty-six selected articles are selected and their coding is guided by interpretive repertoires. Such an analysis searches for similarities rather than variations within and across accounts in order to aggregate them into categories such as 'attitudes' McKenzie (2005). My coding policy at this stage of discourse and semiotic analysis is usually an inclusive one, accepting all borderline and anomalous cases (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Like in Wetherell and Potter (1988) after this, proper analysis began through a careful repeated reading in search for patterns and recurring organisations over a period of seven months. This process had no

rules, a trait which suits queering researchers. After this process, repetitive repertoires were identified and categorised as themes for discussion.

3.7 Reflexivity

Gender, nationality, ethnicity, class and theoretical positions have a bearing on observations, analyses and interpretations (Kawulich, 2005). As such, Sultana (2007, p. 380) observe that 'It is critical to pay attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge and the power relations that are inherent in research processes in order to undertake ethical research'. As a Masters researcher within the field of Critical Diversity Studies my positionality in terms of sexuality, gender, race and class is likely to influence my research in one way or the other. Being a black able-bodied heterosexual male, my study of representations of queerness could also be questioned because, according to Moya (2011) straight people rarely think seriously about sexuality issues. As one unpacking queer discourse but not emerging from the community I can be considered out of touch with queer issues on the ground or risk doing theory 'for' instead of 'with' the people (Lather, 1991).

Despite my positionality, this research is important because it contributes to existing important research on the limitations of new media in snatching power from society's elite. My interest in media and cultural studies places me in a great position to study the emergence of centres within margins and in this case, it is the new queer normativities that can be found on online queer sites. Lastly, being black and economically underprivileged, I identify with the markings of racial and economic exclusion that other black, poor queer people may identify with. These include lack of access to infrastructure or identifying with lived experiences and stereotypes of blackness. All these factors make this research vital and credible.

I undertook reflections on my aforementioned positionality here and in the conclusion of this research. This includes self-introspection into the possible implications of various analyses I carry out; particularly for queer communities.

3.8 Ethics

No clearance was sought from the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee for Non-Medical Research on Human Subjects because 'Web content is often characterized as 'mass communication' or 'publication,' and researchers generally are not required to obtain the informed consent of site producers in order to study or quote content from their sites,

provided the source is appropriately acknowledged' (Herring, 2004, p. online). This makes the web ideal for outlining power relations because people exercise free expression, giving the researcher access to all that has been published, including that which would otherwise be unsayable in other forms of research. Finally, QueerLife's articles do not mention the author by name therefore; all writers' names are anonymous.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explains the methods and methodology employed in the research including issues such as research approach, limitations, reflexivity, ethics and the way through which data were analysed. This is an important undertaking because it helps to flesh out how things such as the study's rationale, theories and literature are related to the methods used in the research. The chapter also outlines all the limitations the researcher faced. Bearing in mind all these methodological insights, the next chapter is concerned with outlining, discussing and analysing the findings.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This section analyses the data that this researcher engaged. It starts off with a brief background to QueerLife website followed by a brief outline of the content analysis data. The data analysis is thematically organised into subjects such as: queerness as embedded in race and coloniality, intersections of class and race in queer representations, gendered accounts of (un)desirable queerness, genital size and masculinity, homofemininity, representation of queer sexuality, (dis)ability, beauty and body size and looks. Semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis are deployed in interpreting the gathered data.

A background to QueerLife

To submit a post for publication on QueerLife, one has to go through the ‘Contact us at QueerLife’ submission tab. Although this researcher made an effort to contact the editorial team in order to find out how articles are selected, there was no response from the editor.

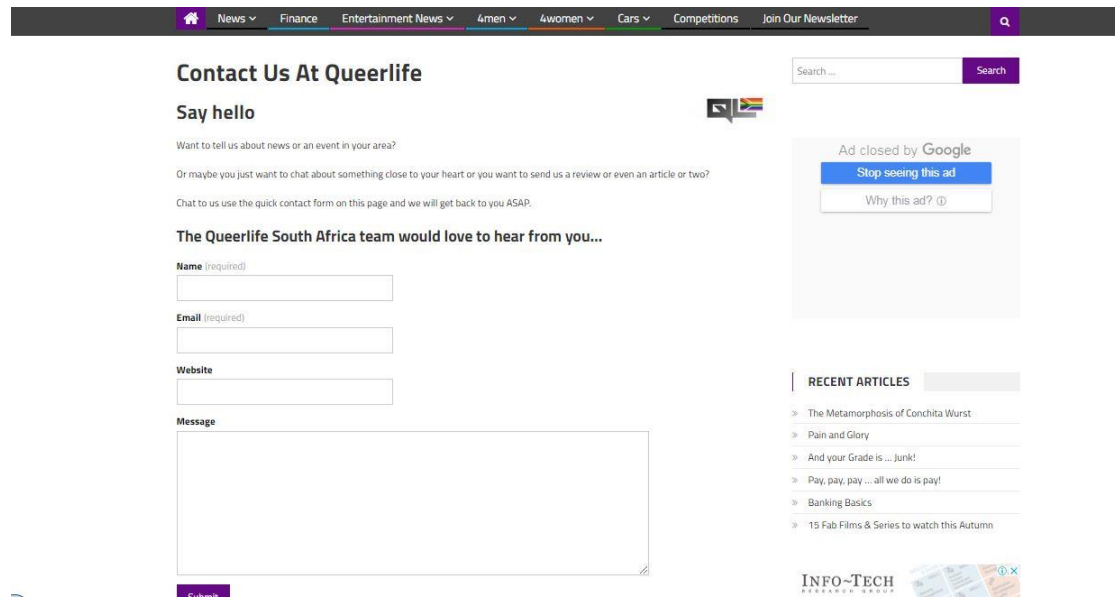
The image is a screenshot of a web browser displaying the 'Contact Us At Queerlife' page. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with links for 'News', 'Finance', 'Entertainment News', '4men', '4women', 'Cars', 'Competitions', and 'Join Our Newsletter'. A search bar is located on the right side of this bar. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'Contact Us At Queerlife' in a bold, black font. Underneath this heading is a sub-heading 'Say hello' followed by a small rainbow flag icon. The text 'Want to tell us about news or an event in your area?' and 'Or maybe you just want to chat about something close to your heart or you want to send us a review or even an article or two?' is displayed. A note states 'Chat to us use the quick contact form on this page and we will get back to you ASAP.' Below this, a bold statement reads 'The Queerlife South Africa team would love to hear from you...'. The form itself consists of several input fields: 'Name (required)', 'Email (required)', 'Website', and a large 'Message' text area. To the right of the form, there is a search bar with a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there is an advertisement from Google with a 'Stop seeing this ad' button and a link to 'Why this ad?'. Further down, there is a section titled 'RECENT ARTICLES' with a list of links to various articles. At the bottom right, there is a logo for 'INFO-TECH' and a small graphic of a newspaper.

Figure 1: The contact us/submit portal on QueerLife (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/contact-us/>)

Another way through which QueerLife gathers articles and opinions is through their ‘award winning’ authors.

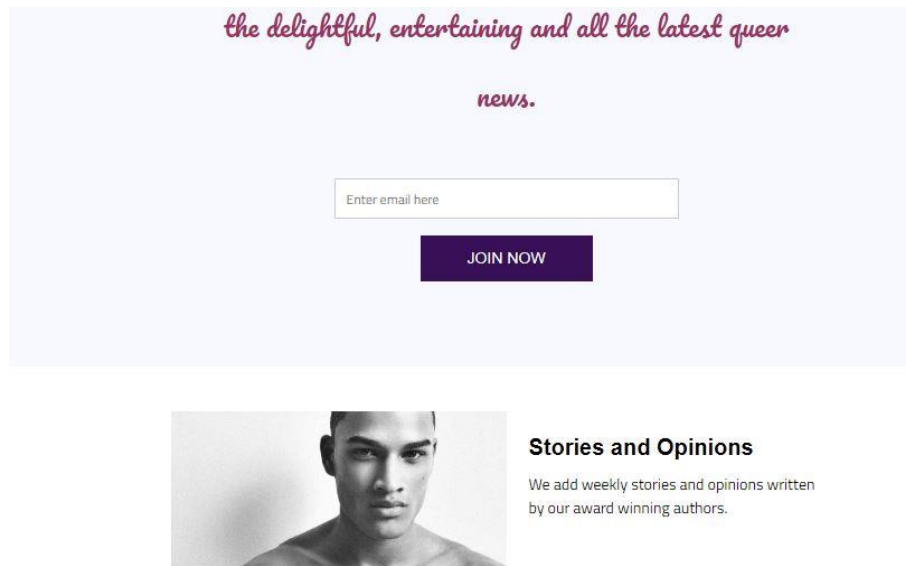


Figure 2: QueerLife's subscription portal shows that weekly stories and opinions are written by their award winning authors. Their reference to the authors as 'award winning' makes them appear as authorities or experts in queer stories and opinions (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/join-our-newsletter/>)

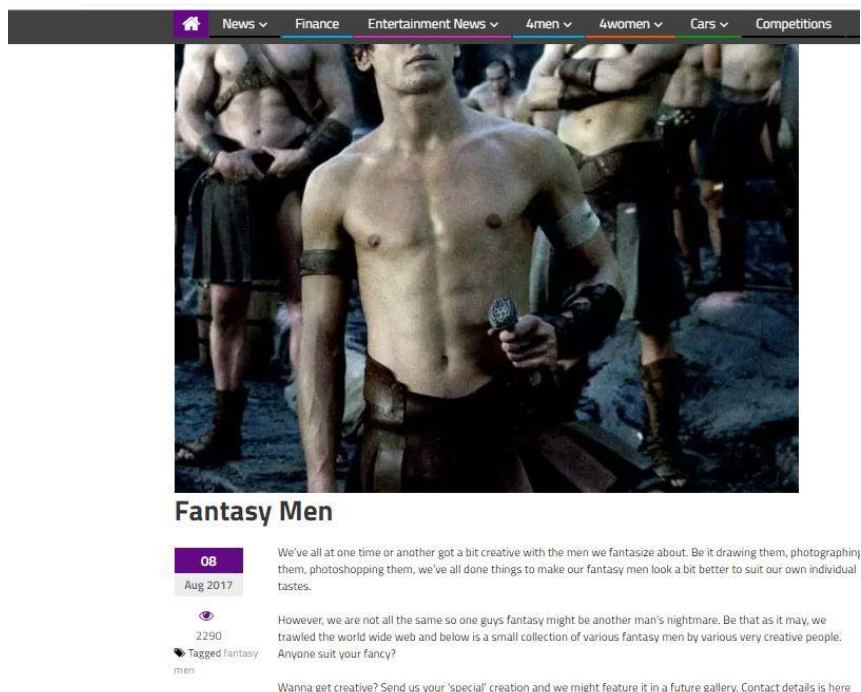


Figure 3: Author names on posts are anonymised. However, the reader is able to see how much views a post has had through the number underneath the eye below the article's publication date (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/fantasy-men/>)

Articles in the 4men's section usually have a 'men' tag and the ones in the 4womens section have a common 'women' tag among other post-related tags. These emphasise the gender differences in these posts. In addition, tags are a way of helping people search and find content that is related to these particular genders. Tags are in a sense, tools for interpellation.

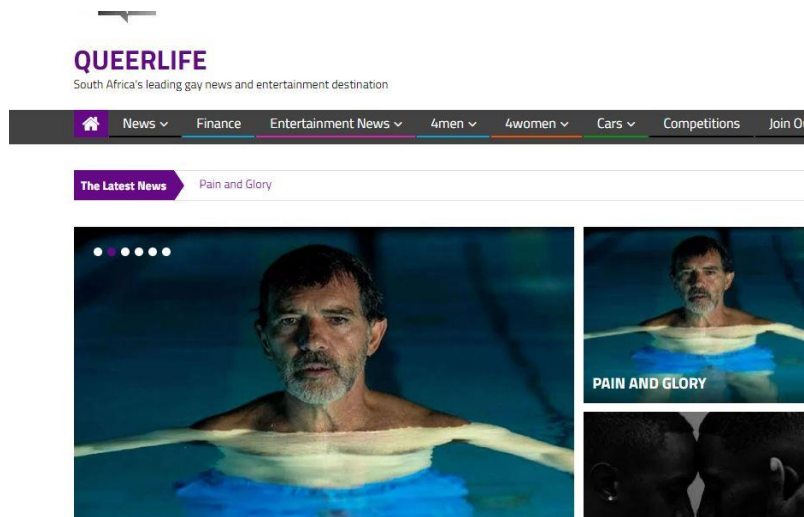


Figure 4: QueerLife tabs divide the website into different sections. Experiences of men and women are distinguished through the 4men and 4women tab. Naming these two different spaces '4men' for example, places the queer man in his separate space of experiences (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/>)

QueerLife has eight tabs namely the 'news', 'entertainment news', '4men', '4women', 'cars', 'competitions' and 'join our newsletter' sections. On each page, there are usually adverts for QL (QueerLife) dating and Pride TV. Pride TV's hyperlink leads to www.pridetv.co.za, a multimedia queer website whose content is outside the focus of this article. The QL dating advert follows QueerLife's '4men' and '4women' gender based distinction. On the left hand side is 'queer dating for women' and on the right hand side is 'queer dating for men'. This spacing has gendering consequences because according to Ahmed (2004, p. 5) bodies are gendered, sexualised and raced through how they extend into space.

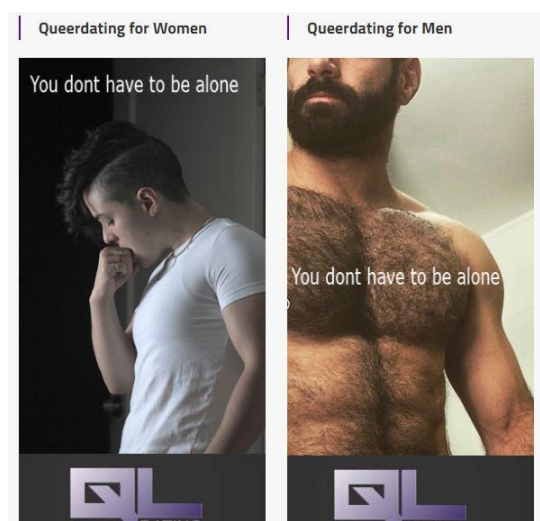
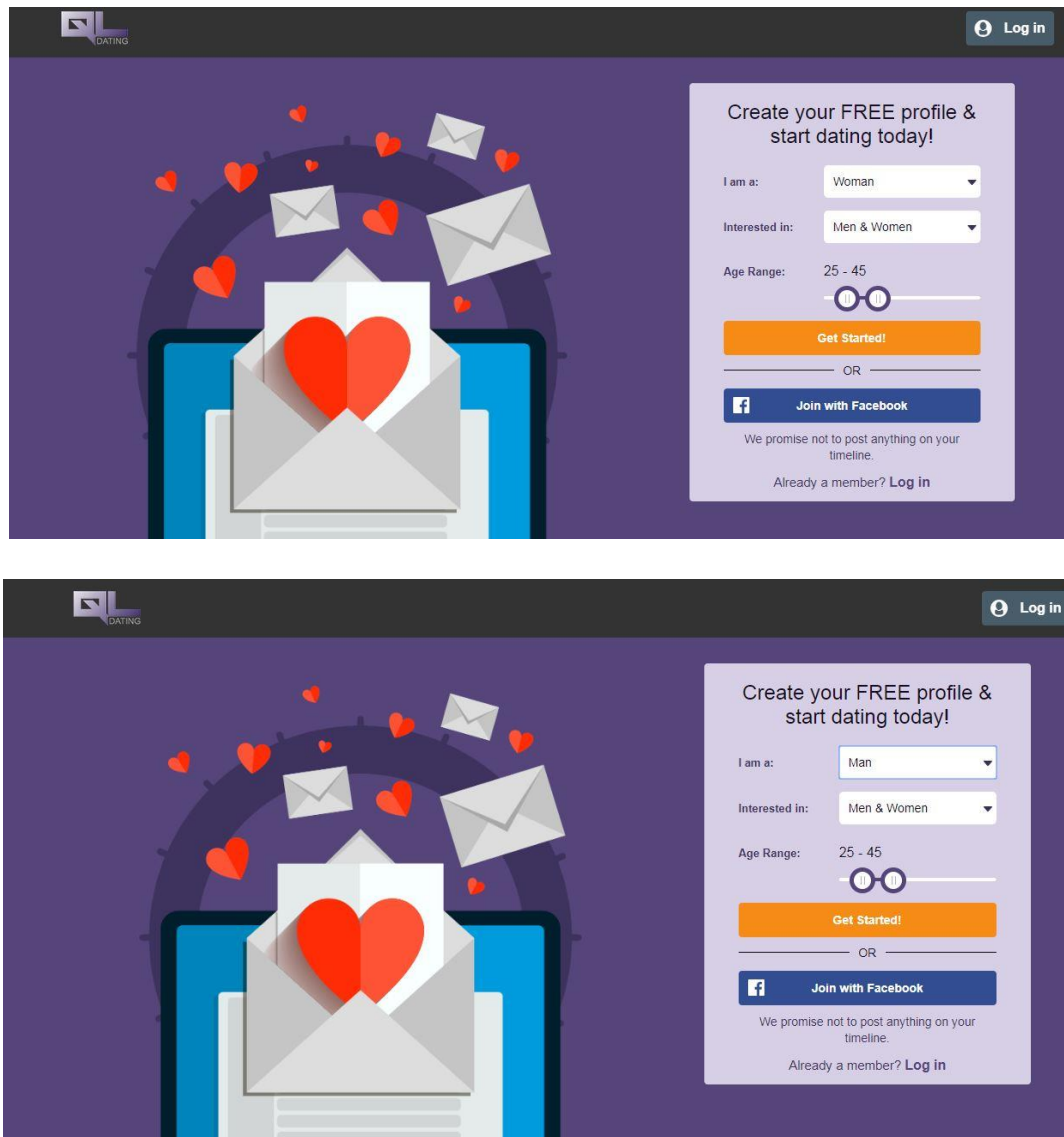


Figure 5: This advert of QLDating appears at the bottom of every page on QueerLife. There is a distinction between 'Queer dating for men' and 'Queer dating for women'. First, this serves as a reminder of gender differences in each page. Second, the distinction between man and woman is reinforced through a dividing frame, creating a binary of man versus woman (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/>)

Through a 'left' and 'right' positioning which distinguishes dating for 'woman' from 'man', the QL Dating advert emphasises gender differences.

On clicking the QLDating link, a window leading to www.queerdating.co.za appears with login and registration options.



The image displays two screenshots of the QLDating website's registration form. The top screenshot shows the 'I am a:' dropdown menu set to 'Woman'. The bottom screenshot shows the 'I am a:' dropdown menu set to 'Man'. Both screenshots show the 'Interested in:' dropdown menu set to 'Men & Women' and the 'Age Range' set to '25 - 45'. The form includes a 'Get Started!' button, a 'Join with Facebook' button, and a 'Log in' link for existing members. The background of the form features a graphic of a laptop with a heart and envelopes floating around it.

Figure 6: Upon clicking the QLDating link, one is led to a separate QLDating website where they can create their profile. On the 'I am' space, there only available options are 'man' and 'woman'. On the 'Interested in' tab, the only options are 'men', 'women' or men and women'. These two tabs joined together make the following statement: 'I am a man/woman interested in men/women/men and women' (image source: <https://www.queerdating.co.za/s/a/18458>)

The only gender options, which appear when creating a profile, are man and woman.

Although there is an option to state an interest in both men and women, the gender option tab erases gender non-conforming or intersex identities.

4.2 Content analysis summary

Through content analysis, quantitative accounts of the number of times a particular group per theme appear are provided and tabulated in Appendix A. Of all the photos in the sixty-six selected articles, seventeen include black bodies while the remaining forty-nine consist of white bodies. In the seventeen instances where black bodies appear in photos they assume supporting roles nine times. Supporting roles are in this context defined as photographic instances where a particular group appears in the shadows of the other. This is opposed to leading roles, which are photographic encounters in which particular groups assume dominance over certain bodies in images.

None of the sixty-six articles features people living with disabilities. In fact, the term ‘disability’ is not mentioned at all in the sampled articles. The majority of the images in the men’s section also consist mainly of young, abled, slimmer and muscular queer people. In the case of women, there are only a few scenarios when plus sized bodies are represented. Where they appeared, this was the exception not the norm. All of these dynamics are discussed in the thematic analysis that follows.

4.3 Queerness as embedded in race and coloniality

Race was an important theme, which came out in the research findings particularly because of the predominance of white images on QueerLife. ‘Race and racism are synonymous with South Africa’ (Moolman, 2013, p. 97). Of all the photos in the sixty-seven selected articles during the larger part of this research, eighteen included black bodies while the remaining forty-nine consisted primarily of white bodies. In the eighteen instances where black bodies appeared in photos they assumed supporting roles nine times. I define supporting roles in this context as photographic/visual instances where a particular group appears in the shadows of another. These supporting roles involve the presence of certain racial bodies in background or subservient roles to others. It is such dominance of a certain racial group at the expense of others which I argue, positions the most pictorially represented white group as the hegemonic category of gay, meaning the ideal version of what a gay person looks like. This hegemonic representation is deeply so in the historical context of white superiority in South Africa which lies on the racial legacy of apartheid.

‘Far from reflecting a pre-given, natural-order, all of our categories of thinking about difference are socially constructed within unequal power relations’ (Steyn 2015, p. 381). In one of the few

instances, an article titled *The top low down on bad boys* had an image of two shirtless men; one white staring directly into the eyes of a black man with their noses touching each other. The white man's hand is in this image, touching the black partner's back as they stare intimately at each other. Both seem fascinated by the other. 'The meaning of the image does not reside in the image itself but in its interaction or negotiation of the context in which it is produced or interpreted' (Gill, 2009) which is in this case the history of apartheid South Africa.



Figure 7: Image header for 'The top low down on bad boys' (image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/low-bad-boys/>)

Because of the rarity of the black body on QueerLife and how it is in this case featured in an article focusing on bad boys, I submit Monroe's (2010) suspicious question; except in a different context, 'Why are "Bad Boys" Always Black?' This association of bad boys with black bodies can perhaps be seen as a consequence of power and history. For example, being white in South Africa meant 'repudiation of the sexual desire with [sexual] "others"' Ratele (2009, p. 170). Hence it is no coincidence that in one of the fewer instances where a black body appears on QueerLife, there is a discourse of deviance and monstrosity, viewing black people as primitive and dangerous (Moolman, 2013). 'The historical stereotyping of black males is similar to current constructions of black masculinity as aggressive, deceitful, hypersexual, and dangerous' (Makoni 2016, p. 52). I will show how in this instance, 'Black sexuality is simultaneously desired while repressed as immoral' (Swarr 2004, p. 81).

West (2017) illustrates the historic relationship of black bodies with the status of 'bad' and how not only white media, but also black media have come to embrace this identity with black people themselves becoming complicit in this representation.

[...] For most young black men, power is acquired by stylizing their bodies over space and time in such a way that their bodies reflect their uniqueness and provoke fear in others. To be "bad" is good not simply because it subverts the language of the

dominant white culture but also because it imposes a unique kind of order for young black men on their own distinctive chaos and solicits an attention that makes others pull back with some trepidation. This young black male style is a form of self-identification and resistance in a hostile culture; it also is an instance of machismo identity ready for violent encounters (West 1994, p. 128).

These intersections of representation and racial politics are important to acknowledge within media and cultural disciplines because, as Steyn (2015, p. 383) argues, systems of oppression intersect, interlock, co-construct and constitute each other in as much as they are reproduced, resisted and reframed. Here, I am not claiming that the author of the article *The top low down on bad boys* consciously sets out to paint blacks as bad boys- for even the race of the author is unknown to me; but that the consequences of such representations given the historical association of blackness with bad, do something to power. Also, within formulations of oppressive systems, the actors themselves may be unaware of the nature of their performances. When people deploy a particular form of discourse, it has repercussions of its own which may not have been formulated or even understood by the speaker or writer [emphasis added]. These representations therefore ought to be interrogated rather than treated as innocent because they discursively reconstruct racial stereotypes.

Further down, the author of the article writes that:

Bad boys are usually lack (sic) mental and emotional security; which is why they try to seek out others to fill in for them. They're not men yet, hence the word boys. (QueerLife, *The top low down on bad boys* 10-12-2017, online)

Using CDL this identification of particular groups of queers with childhood can also be read as historically informed by power. For example, one could ask the question that; given the historical context of racism across the world, who are these boys? For Langa *et al.* (2018) during apartheid black men were positioned as 'boys' and black masculinity was rendered inferior to white masculinity. During the conquest of Africa, white men positioned themselves as the greatest standard of human. 'Women and children became the point of reference to describe the inferiority of non-Europeans' (Mignolo, 2008, p. 16). I read the author's narrative of boyhood and bad throughout the reading. According to Moolman (2013, 95), 'African

masculinity by definition is contradictory, since colonisation 'denied' African men masculinity, reducing men to children (boys) or animals (savages). In the article, these 'boys' are regarded as bad. The writer warns the reader to cut off bad boys in capital letters within the quote below:

I never understood why young gay men tend to continuously fall for
the bad guy...because...they think they can change him. Newsflash:
if that's one of the main reason why you fell in love with him,
BREAK IT OFF NOW (QueerLife, The top low down on bad boys,
10-12-2017: online)

The state of these bad boys, is even rendered worse than that of animals, as the author advises the readers to 'Buy a f*cking cat!' instead of being in such a relationship. This comparison underscores the association of black bodies with 'animalism' (Makoni, 2016). According to Gilman (1985), through the division of both the self and the world into 'good' and 'bad' objects, the 'bad' self is distanced and identified with the mental representation of the 'bad' object. The idea of good versus bad, which comes out in this article, is in itself a binary which perpetuates a distinction between the 'self' and the 'object' which is eventually qualified as the 'Other'. 'Western social thought associates Blackness with an imagined uncivilised, wild sexuality and used this association as one lynchpin of racial difference' (Hill-Collins 2004, p. 27). This example can also be elasticated to remind one of apartheid's decision to distinguish and police white sexuality from black sexuality. Therefore, innocent as the categories of 'bad' and 'good' might seem at face value, they confer or withhold rewards such as inclusion, belonging and acceptance, resulting in eventual exclusion and censure (Steyn, 2012).

According to Collins (1986) domination always involves the objectification of the dominated and all forms of domination imply the devaluation of the subjectivity of the oppressed. In an article titled *Give and Take*, there is an image of a black man lying down on grass in an almost 'bottom' plank position. Here, the muscular black man stares directly into the camera, half of his bottoms out, appearing to seduce the reader.



Figure 8: Image header for 'Give and take' has a black man assuming a seductive role (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/give-and-take/>)

The title of the article 'give and take' suggests some form of transaction or exchange between partners. This title creates some form of value to be given in exchange for a service. It is also a sexual anecdote of the 'receiver' and the 'giver', the 'bottom' and the 'top'. The representation of this man is also laden with seduction and desirability. This type of representation commodifies the black gay body, as a desirable figure for the satisfaction of readers. As this black gay man is portrayed as the object of desire, the author speaks about how by giving and receiving the reader can get maximum satisfaction from their partner: *Work together so you can experience pure giving and receiving. Then you can surrender totally — and enjoy true freedom and fulfilment in your sex life.* In CDL Steyn (2015) argues that the meaning of bodies in spaces is not detached from their histories. This conflation of black people to sexual satisfaction is embedded in colonialism. Han fleshes out this representation at length:

It's almost as if no gay men of color exist outside of fantasy cruises to Jamaica, Puerto Rico, or the 'Orient'. And even then, they exist only to fulfill the sexual fantasies of gay white men. 'Exotic' vacations to far- away places are marketed to rich white men and poor colored bodies are only another consumable product easily purchased with western dollars. As such, gay men of color, whether found within western borders or conveniently waiting for white arrival in the far off corners of the globe, are nothing more than commodities for consumption (Han, 2007, p. 53)

The man's depiction lying on grass also says something about the construction of black men as closer to nature. Also, when black men are portrayed as desirable in such a visually submissive position, a representation that supports male-homomasculine domination at the

expense of a feminised black man is mobilised. This is because the colonisation of black people in South Africa is connected to their infantilisation and feminisation. 'The limited definition of desirable masculinity within the gay community leads to white males as being 'men' while men of color are placed lower on the hierarchy much in the same way that the mainstream creates a hierarchy of men and women' (Han, 2007,p. 61).

On the other hand, other articles such as one titled *Thoughts and bigotry in SA* sought to establish queerness as multiracial, calling for people to stop blaming violence on racial issues. It represented violence within relationships as a-historic and non-racialized. Published on 9 August 2017 under the 4women's opinions section, the article was accompanied by an interracial collage made up of interracial women's faces and four interracial hands holding each other to form an irregular square. In the introduction to the article the writer states that:

In SA we have been inundated with news of murders, riots, attacks and countless acts of violence ever since I can remember. People keep blaming racial issues. But there's one problem with that: *They're not racial issues. The truth of the matter is that we have human issues.* We are so currently fixated on the color of one's skin that we have forgotten about the person underneath the skin. All we're looking at is melanin, or the lack thereof. We're not looking at our fellow human beings; we have removed each other's humanity. That needs to stop. Regardless of colour let us all become beacons of light and love. Let us prove that there is more to people than simply their skin tone (QueerLife, *Thoughts and bigotry in SA*, 09-08-2017, p. online).



Figure 9: This image of is the article header in the 'Thoughts and bigotry in SA' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/thoughts-bigotry-sa/>)

Using a semiotic analysis, this image was viewed as an emphasis of unity, multiracialism and multiculturalism owing to the racial differences of people holding hands alongside the face with different shades. This feeds into the ideology of the rainbow nation which suggests that

we are all human despite our race. However, the downside of these discourses is that they enable individuals to ignore the structural implications of race which influence patterns of violence within queer communities.

The article author further states that:

Regardless of colour let us all become beacons of light and love. Let us prove that there is more to people than simply their skin tone [...]
So the next time you see someone, don't look at their skin. Look at who they are as a human being (QueerLife, Thoughts and bigotry in SA, 09-08-2017, p. online)

However, queer people are not only human but also differently human. This statement thus elides the centrality of race in assessing why hate and bigotry could be more among queer people of color. It (un)wittingly erases race, disability, class, age etc. This agitation for a convivial queerness is therefore exclusionary. Because, in this research I seek to 'queer' queer representations on QueerLife magazine (I refer to this queering of queer norms as 'quaring' (Johnson, 2001)) or simply introducing an 'intersectional queer' which seeks to bring all material experiences into the realm of the queer (Giffney, 2009, p. 2), the above storyline is not a solution to queer problems. However, this way of knowing which seeks to erase racial difference (and other differences), is theoretically and potentially complicit in constructing 'epistemologies of ignorance' in what (Steyn, 2012) terms the ignorance contract 'a tacit agreement to entertain ignorance [which] lies at the heart of a society structured in racial hierarchy [s]' (Steyn, 2015, p. 8).

According to Steyn:

Unlike the conventional theorization of ignorance that regards ignorance as a matter of faulty individual cognition, or a collective absence of yet-to-be-acquired knowledge, ignorance is understood as a social achievement with strategic value. (Steyn, 2015, p. 8)

Calling for convivial relations between groups in South Africa regardless of their skin colour ignores structural realities of the historical background of other queer peoples who are black, coloured or Asian who are more likely to be poor or disabled. Such discourses on a queer space therefore reinforce the myth of the 'Rainbow Nation' a phrase which translates the intersection of multiracialism and gay rights (Graziano, 2004; Oswin, 2007; Munro, 2009;

Van Zyl, 2011). This idea embodies the myth of inclusion allowing for social issues such as racism and the legacy of apartheid to be glossed over (Obbard and Cork, 2016, p. 418) in queerness.

‘Class and race are often played off against each other, rendering one less visible than the other, rather than holding both simultaneously in analysis’ (Steyn , 2015, p. 38). Because it is important to hold race and class in any analysis, this section discusses the intersections of class and race in selected representations on QueerLife. The intersections of race and class in what constitutes ideal standards beauty of gay men, was encapsulated in an article titled *The thing about eyebrows* with an image of a white man with bushy eyebrows. Under the title *Fashionable eyebrows were once made from mouse skin* the article argues that:

The look isn’t as hideous as it sounds. In fact, if contemporary portrait of the colonial elite in America near the end of the 18th century are any indication, the gray mouse skin looks fairly normal, if not slightly bushy by our standards. In *The Eyebrow*, authors Robyn Cosio and Cynthia Robins trace the evolution of the eyebrow as a target of beauty and fashion in both men and women back to the *earliest-known civilizations*. It’s clear that, while we may celebrate the eyes as the most beautiful facial feature, it is in fact the brow that is the object of that attention and the area where alterations can bring about the most dramatic change in one’s looks (QueerLife, *The thing about eyebrows* 27-05-2017, p. online).



Figure 10: This image of is the article header in the 'The thing about eyebrows' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/the-thing-about-eyebrows/>)

This colonial account of the history of the eyebrow is also elitist and intricately woven with class. It is important not to overlook the significance of a reference to the work of eyebrows as a beauty trend in colonial times within a post-colonial state. I treat this example as political because it feeds into the stereotypes of the ideal hair types, eye colours and so forth, which

were major ideologies on which apartheid race and class based privileges thrived on. According to Hall (1993) the genotypic and phenotypic essentialisation of race disguises and masks what is historical and cultural as being natural. By celebrating eyebrows that are associated with colonialism the writer legitimises attraction among gay people as colonial. Steyn (2012) argues, racial ideologies are now embodied in coded-hegemonic practice because power does not name itself as such. These coded hegemonic practices muddy the way through which power is used by QueerLife writers to establish a raced and classed tautology of gay. Therefore, it would be a mistake to depoliticise the present by refusing a critical memory of the past (Steyn, 2012) particularly in the representations of racialized and classed gay desirability.

I have presented selected articles that highlight that the discourses which speak to race on QueerLife online maintain hegemonic racial hierarchies. These hierarchies speak to ideas such as, the right kind of gay man, who the bad boy is or the most attractive eyebrows. These discourses also intersect with gender, race and class. Because the approach to analysing these texts sought to locate the emergence of new centres of power in queer representations, I acknowledge that in these articulations some authors may not consciously seek to recreate a predominantly white queer identity. However, analysis suggests that the consequences of their actions includes, invisibilising other racially different queer categories such as Asians, Indians or Blacks. Queerness is therefore presented as widely as either white or a 'human' experience. In the next section, I discuss the intersections of class and race in the representation of queerness.

4.4 Intersections of class and race in queer representations

This section discusses the intersections of class and race in selected representations on QueerLife. Intra-group representation is both a feature and consequence of domination which can potentially create an 'us' versus 'them' relationship. The representation of a 'public gay culture' is evidence of the 'deep social cleavages' of the past and present (Cock 2005, 205) and can also be used to conveniently assimilate particular gay identities. Despite the dominance of white images on QueerLife, an article titled *South African Celebrities* in the 4Mens section was an exception as it contained the most number of blacks in one photo; namely Somizi, Sade, Toya, Thandiswa and Bujy. Moolman (2013, 97) speaks to class in a broader sense by stating that 'As a considerable number of black men enter elite status based on wealth and capital accumulation, categories of black masculinity are contested and

renegotiated'. Hence, I argue that Somizi and Toya Delazy are here incorporated as signifiers of a legitimate queer identity, which is classed.



Figure 11: This image of is the article header in the 'Queer South African Celebrities' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/queer-south-african-celebs/>)

Mhlongo and these other four individuals are rich and famous blacks who are prominent within queer popular culture. The article was structured into five subheadings with each dedicated to profiling one celebrity. I noted how the author introduced each of these individuals with a reference to their portfolio of work as a take-off point. I read this as a strategic sentence ordering, meant to position them as classed and prosperous in order to capture the reader's attention:

Somizi

Idols SA Judge and choreographer, Somizi Mhlongo, is out and proud and not afraid to speak his mind...

Toya De Lazy

Singer Toya De Lazy is known to push boundaries and challenge people's way of thinking, especially when it comes to hating someone because of their sexuality...

Sade Giliberti

The former Yo. TV presenter is openly lesbian and has supported causes aimed at putting an end to bullying of any kind, and for whatever reason...

Thandiswa Mazwai

While *singer* Thandiswa Mazwai do (sic) not excessively flaunt her private life on social media she does show she cares on the odd occasion...

Bujy

Bikwa's larger-than life personality, Bujy, has seen him gain scores of fans over the years. [Emphasis added] (QueerLife, South African Celebrities 27-05-2016, online)

Due to the consistency of this order one could argue that, in order for predominantly invisible black queer bodies on QueerLife to be made visible and worthwhile references of pride and legitimate queerness, they have to be reputable, popular and classed. This is because the ordering has the effect of stressing these as important flags for obtaining the reader's interest.

According to Croucher (2002), most of the lesbians and gays in South Africa are poor and remain marginalised from the social and economic mainstream. Hence, they exist separately from the emerging gay and lesbian movement. And by starting of sentences with phrases such as 'Idols SA Judge and choreographer, Somizi Mhlongo' for example, the writer is justifying the validity of Somizi's appearance in this queer space as preconditioned by the initial text on his profession and class. Class therefore becomes an exceptional circumstance and condition under which even the black queer body can lay a legitimate claim to entry into QueerLife. This article therefore subvert gay into a classed identity constituting of rich and famous members who despite their race (In the case of *South African Celebrities*), can defy the rules of entry into media spaces in which the cultural construction of queerness takes place.

Classed and raced identities on QueerLife also intersect with athleticism.



Figure 12: 'Rugby fetish for gay men' header image

The above picture was in the header of the 'Rugby fetish and gay men', post. The image has eight men and one woman playing rugby on the seaside. Because the image was placed in an article, which speaks of men who play rugby as more desirable, the men in the picture are portrayed as the ideal gay men. In the article, the writer asks readers which random stranger they would rather go down on: 'the lusty lad in the Springbok shirt, with all his spunk and vim, or your trainee bank manager?' Through the vocabulary in this text, 'the lad in the Springbok shirt' is constituted as lusty, with spunk (courage and determination) and vim (energy) in contrast to the bank manager who is addressed merely by his work title of, simply, 'trainee bank manager'. Here, vocabulary choices construct particular ideological representations of events (Willems, 2010). The terms 'spunk' and 'vim' are aligned with the 'virility' and 'force' associated with normative masculinity. The frame of 'trainee' places the queer man as an inferior in a social hierarchy. Economic and institutional power is being used here to construct desirability and undesirability. In addition, the more athletic one is, the more masculine appeal he has and the more desirable he is they are for sex without any other reasons. As a result, the athletic rugby player who is represented as the epitome of desirable sexuality is likely to lead a queer man into 'going down on him'. Lastly, after making this position clear, the writer states that all this '[...] is partly to do with the desire for masculinity'. This demonstrates the valorisation of masculinity within representations of queer men. It is also an assignment of particular gendered sporting roles to men.

One can also locate this post within the context of the historical relationship between rugby, Afrikaner nationalism and masculinity in South Africa. For example, Nauright and Chandler (1996) state that rugby played a historical role in the formation of national identities in countries such as Wales, New Zealand and South Africa where it was a central element in the shaping of middle-class male-dominated hegemony. According to Nauright and Chandler

(1996) South African rugby success through its national team, the Springboks, has been one of the most potent sites for the demonstration of white power and cultural identity. By focussing on Rugby the author does not only celebrate hypermasculine athleticism but a type of athleticism associated with whiteness and a particular vision of the nation. Some social fault line established along axes of difference are enduring (Steyn, 2015). For example, axes of difference constructed along lines of genders and 'races' are difficult to change (Payne, 2006).

The intersection of race and class is important here. The author of the article also confesses to how '[...] Engagement with levels of status has also traditionally been part of the hidden gay lifestyle'. Their reference to status as *traditionally* part of the gay lifestyle is in this instance to normalise class as a prerequisite to the gay lifestyle. This is because to refer to something as traditional is to imply that it is authentic and prime. The author goes on to write:

[...] If you doubt the lingering presence of sporting attitudes and sporting aspirations, not to mention stereotypes, try hitting the nearest gay bar and open your ears to the fake accents there. Gay identities remain very strongly marked by stereotyping views of class and sport, of which rugby in South Africa seem to be no 1. (QueerLife, Rugby fetish and gay men, 04-12-2017, p. online)

The above statement presents an intersection between sport, class and race. According to Nauright and Chandler (1996), rugby played a historical role in the formation of national identities in countries such as Wales, New Zealand and South Africa where it was a central element in the shaping of middle-class male-dominated hegemony. 'The sex-gender-sexuality system under which urban white men operate values masculine gender identities, and many middle-class white gays are concerned with respectability and social approval' (Swarr 2004, p. 82). These two articles therefore subvert queerness into a classed identity constituting of rich and famous members who despite their race (in the case of *South African Celebrities*), can defy the rules of entry into media spaces in which the cultural construction of queerness takes place.

4.5 Gendered accounts of (un)desirable queerness

Attributes of (un)desirable queer men are gendered. My definition of desire and (un)desirability in this research follows Hendricks' (2018) in his research on desire in Urban

Congo men who have sex with men (MSM). This definition is a ‘conceptualisation of desire-as-connection’ (Hendriks, 2018, p. 860, his emphasis). This desire views (un)desirability as a set of personal attributes that deter or enhance ‘connection’ or what one QueerLife post terms ‘Chemistry between men’. This ‘chemistry’ is a connection, which stimulates desire. This ‘Chemistry between men’ post, considers the need for one to allow their ‘[...] desires to come out again, to become both active and attached to other people’. This connection is also captured in a 4Mens’ relationships post titled ‘Bi-Curious Experimentation’ where the author starts off by stating that:

It doesn’t take a scientist to know that men are extremely different from women. Our prowl and need for sex cannot compare with each other. We’re visual creatures who depend a lot on our physical attraction to the world. We gain our self-esteem by how we sexually attract others to us – it’s imperfect, but it’s a basic human instinct (QueerLife, Bi-Curious Experimentation, 08-12-2017, p. online)

This suggests that there is an inherent gendered difference between queer men and women’s sources of desire. I align this text to an article titled *Men are angrier on Facebook* which features an image of a white angry white man shouting into the camera, then goes on to mention how men’s language on Facebook is more aggressive than women’s. According to Bem (1981) the schema of heterosexuality subschema consists of a gender-based schematic processing in many young adults, which supposes that the two sexes are quite different from each other. Likewise, these QueerLife articles suppose that there exists a difference between men and women. ‘The gay sex fact sheet’s’ title supposes that the contents of the post are fact. Factuality is problematic when discussing queer sexuality because facts establish normative regimes of ‘truth’.

The author of *The Gay Sex Fact Sheet* writes that ‘Gay sex ain’t for sissies’. In the context of South Africa sissies can be a derogatory reference to the absence of masculinity in a man. For example McFarland (2001, p. 174) mentions how heterosexual boys who do not fit into the traditional male gender role of aggression, control and contained emotions, are called by derogatory names such as ‘faggots’, ‘fairies’, ‘sissies’ (McFarland, 2001, p. 174) or the equivalent *Sisi*³ in South Africa. After stating that ‘We all enjoy a bit of machismo...’ a statement highlighting a desire for hypermasculinity among queer men, the article also

³ Sisi is IsiZulu ‘sister’ but is sometimes used to call feminine presenting gay men

ridicules femininity. 'Femininity' refers to a '[...] position within language and in a psychosexual formation that the term Woman signifies' (Pollock, 2015, p. 17).



Figure 13: This image is the article header for the 'The Gay Sex Fact Sheet' post. These two muscular white, young men, in my view would fit into the 'non-sissy' category because they are muscular in build (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/man-man-hugging-explained/>)

The post's author encouraged gay men to 'Try not to trip in public, stumble on the staircase, scream with excitement when you see your friend on aisle 4, or jam out a little too much on your iPod when you see a potential cruiser. Best to keep the cool factor going as much as possible' (sic). These are traits associated with femininity. By advising that a queer man who is likely to attract potential cruisers - that is men who are looking for a sex partners - is one who sticks to hegemonic masculinity's codes, this article shows how desire as a connection (Hendricks, 2018) is dependent on the existence of normative masculine characteristics.

Desirable masculinity in QueerLife is also associated with athleticism. In an article in the Men's Relationship section titled *Rugby fetish and gay men* which features an image of eight men and one woman playing rugby at the beach, four of these men and the one woman are naked.



Figure 14: This picture was in the header of the 'Rugby fetish and gay men', post. The image has eight men and one woman playing rugby on the seaside. Because the image was placed in an article which speaks of men who play rugby as more desirable, the men in the picture are portrayed as the ideal gay men. There is one only woman in the picture, and they are not mentioned in the text, suggesting that rugby is obviously associated with men (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/rugby-fetish-gay-men/>)

The writer asks readers which random stranger they would rather go down on: 'the lusty lad in the springbok shirt, with all his spunk and vim, or your trainee bank manager?' Through

the vocabulary in this text, 'the lad in the springbok shirt' is constituted as lusty, with spunk (courage and determination) and vim (energy) in contrast to the bank manager who is addressed merely by his work title of, simply, 'trainee bank manager'. Here, vocabulary choices construct particular ideological representations of events (Willems, 2010). The terms 'spunk' and 'vim' are aligned with the 'virility' and 'force' associated with normative masculinity. The frame of 'trainee' places the queer man as an inferior in a social hierarchy. Economic and institutional power is used here to construct desirability and undesirability. In addition, the more athletic one is, the more masculine appeal he has and the more desirable they are for sex without any other reasons. As a result, the athletic rugby player who is represented as the epitome of desirable sexuality is likely to lead a queer man into 'going down on him'. Lastly, after making this position clear, the write states that all this '[...] is partly to do with the desire for masculinity'. This demonstrates the valorisation of masculinity within representations of queer men.

It is also important to locate this post within the context of the historical relationship between rugby, Afrikaner nationalism and masculinity in South Africa. For example, Nauright and Chandler (1996) state that rugby played a historical role in the formation of national identities in countries such as Wales, New Zealand and South Africa where it was a central element in the shaping of middle-class male-dominated hegemony. According to Nauright and Chandler (1996) South African rugby success through its national team, the Springboks, has been one of the most potent sites for the demonstration of white power and cultural identity. By focussing on Rugby the author does not only celebrate hypermasculine athleticism but a type of athleticism associated with whiteness and a particular vision of nation. It therefore becomes important to locate the intersectional discursive field of such utterances because their meaning are not a straightforward matter of external reference but rely on local and broader discursive systems in which the utterance is embedded (Potter and Wetherell, 1988). This broader discursive system is that of historically hetero-patriarchal apartheid South Africa where rugby and the hierarchy of masculinity is also racialized.

Masculinity and femininity are two binaries that enforce fixed gender identities and limit possibilities for fluidity. Texts such as *The gay sex fact sheet* and *Bi-Curious Experimentation* iterate gender binaries that obscure and repress human variation thus sedimenting social understandings into a self-fulfilling 'common sense' (Steyn, 2015). In these selected QueerLife posts, the desirable queer body, with which one can develop a 'connection' or chemistry with, is one that is limited and constrained by biology, despite queerness tendency

to defy form. Such a framing establishes what Foucault refers to as procedures that govern the production of discourse and establish the materiality of knowledge as ‘an instance of power’ (as cited by Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008, p. 99). The generalization of these experiences also falls into Keeling’s conceptualization of common sense as a ‘...linchpin in the struggle for hegemony that conditions what is perceptible such that aspects of what is perceptible become generally recognizable only when they work in some way through ‘common sense’’ (2014, p. 153).

4.6 Genital size and masculinity

Just like in the hetero-patriarchal world, desirable queerness is described as masculine and linked to genital size. Contemporary research has conceptualised the relationship between the male penis and power, particularly patriarchal power (Ostberg, 2010). The male penis symbolises the masculine domination of women or other cases lesser-endowed men (De La Torre, 1999). In a post titled ‘Size DOES matter’ the author suggests ways through which a queer man can convince his partner who is ‘less endowed’ that he is ‘110% man and huge!’ Featuring two muscular black men in an interlocking scissors position, the article suggests that a man whose partner possesses a smaller penis can find alternative ways to please. The writer states: ‘Convince him there’s way more to being a man than the size of his penis. When you’re out with him, make it 100% clear he satisfies you- and there’s no harm in pandering to those old, masculine needs to protect, support, provide and be generally ‘manly’’. According to Bordo (2000) stereotypically, men’s penis size is linked with Western cultural notions of masculinity, which supposes that a large penis size is a sign of one being ‘more’ of a man. The ‘genitals symbolize virility, procreative potency, and power’ (Pope and Phillips, 2000, p. 165). What is conflicting about this article is that in as much as the article’s headline emphasises by uppercase that ‘Size DOES matter’, its content still offers alternative solutions that can help preserve the masculinity of the ‘less endowed’ man. The implication of this is that despite the physical absence of a large penis one can still perform masculinity. Masculinity is thus an idea; a matter of *cojones* (*Cuban for testicles*). In Cuban machismo, it is the *cojones* (testicles), not the penis, which is the cultural ‘signifier of signifiers’ within male domination. In addition, in contemporary South Africa, ‘weak’ men are referred to as ‘lacking the balls (testicles)’ to measure up to ideal manhood. One can be male, have a penis, but still lack the *cojones* to use it (De La Torre, 1999, p. 215). Hence, for

this author, although ‘Size DOES matter’, one can acquire other desirable features (*cojones*) to make up for the lack of endowment.

According to the author of *Smell Matters More Than Size* ‘In gay relationships one thing is more important than size...SMELL’ (QueerLife, *Smell Matters More Than Size*, 30-08-2017, p. online). This statement is a clear indication that only a few things are as important as size, and by a margin, smell is one of those things.

In ‘How to be a power bottom’ the author also indicates that ‘Size does make a difference boys, and especially thickness- though often length makes up for girth. If you find *yourself fortunate enough* to be with a ‘date’ that’s rather sizably endowed, look at it as a challenge’ (emphasis added). For this author, having a ‘date’ with a sizably endowed man is good fortune. This shows queerness as an identity fixated on penis size because a larger penis is more likely to penetrate, or in Hendriks’ (2018) terms, establish a better ‘connection’. . This speaks to how in western masculinity, men are expected to occupy space or ‘penetrate’ space (Pronger, 1999). These are all ‘[...] Dictums which both lend credence to the need for a large, penetrating penis’ (Drummond and Filiault, 2007, p. 122) which signifies male power. ‘This gendered logic of penetration thereby reproduces a male/female binary that somehow “heterosexualises” same sex desire’ (Hendriks, 2018, p. 858).

4.7 Homofemininity



Figure 15: This image is the article header for the ‘Intimacy issues’ post. Here women were represented as drawn towards intimacy. The smiling and happy women are gendered representations of femininity (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/intimacy-issues/>)

Femininity is implied in both '4men' and '4women's' sections. In 4Women's Fun a post titled: *Intimacy issues*, advances the concept of 'homofemininity'. According to Coy-Dibley (2016) homofemininity is a feminine-identified homosexuality. The author states that 'Thankfully, by the very nature of women intimacy can sometimes be an easier state to come by in a relationship'. Firstly, to say 'thankfully' is to declare that there is an element of desirability in this trait because to thank is to emulate. Femininity like masculinity does not come 'naturally', but it is continuously fought for through performances (Ortner, 1995; Ratele, 2007) and further normalised through discourse. By so doing this discourse applauds women's feminine gender performance as the normal order of things. Further, the use of the phrase 'by the very nature of women,' constructs intimacy as a natural predisposition of women. 'Feminist theory has often been critical of naturalistic explanations of sex and sexuality that assume that the meaning of women's social existence can be derived from some fact of their physiology' (Butler, 1988, p. 520). In addition, because the implications of female intimacy are reproduction, the '[...] woman's body seems to doom her to mere reproduction of life' (Ortner, 1995, p. 43) because of their bodies' 'naturalised' inclination towards intimacy. The essentialisation of queer women on a site that categorises experiences into the gender binaries of 'man' and 'woman' intersects with cultural constructs, which subjugate women in the service of reproductive interests (Foucault, 1980). Because this speaks to women's bodies and their socially constructed, normative codes and gestures, I think with Judith Butler's concept of 'intelligibility' whereby 'An identity becomes comprehensible by adhering to social norms, which often assume a coherent relationship between (biological) sex, gender and the sexual orientation and preferences of an individual' (2002, p. 22).

This links with the 'Bi-Curious Experimentation' post, where idea that queer women are extremely different from queer men is mentioned. The post mentions that 'It doesn't take a scientist to know that men are extremely different from women'. This is a statement of power, which subvert queer women's performances to particular realms of femininity.

Representation thus becomes as Butler (1990, p. 1) posits, '[...] the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women'.

However, in the 4women's section, some articles emphasised the gender fluidity of the lesbian identity. In an article under 4women Fun, titled *Dressing up like Gay Girls*, the author

dismissed the assumption that the type of clothes one wears as a lesbian is gendering. They state that:

There is a ton of trouble in even calling one thing ‘masculine’ and another thing ‘feminine’, but for the sake of brevity, let me just say – that for most of us- it is how those aspects of another individual interact with each other that attract us to them, not the fact that they are EXCLUSIVELY female/feminine or male/masculine (QueerLife, Dressing Up Like Gay Girls, 18-05-2017, p. online)

By concluding that, ‘You cannot boil down sexuality to its simplest bits and call it a day. We are all much too complex for such nonsense’, the author is representing queerness an identity of unlimited possibilities. However, one could consider all these aforementioned dynamics as concurring with Matebeni’s (2009, p.14) female same-sex related assertion that individuals in same sex relationships ‘define and identify themselves in various ways. While some choose to identify as lesbian, others take on more gender-related roles as their forms of identification’.



Figure 16: *This picture is the article header for the ‘Dressing Up Like Gay Girls’ post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/dressing-like-gay-girls/>)*

To conclude, masculinity and femininity are two binaries, which enforce singular gender identities and limit possibilities for fluid identities. The statements in the aforementioned articles also imply that there exists an obvious relationship between one’s body and emotions. This is in line with Steyn’s (2015) position that binaries obscure and repress human variation thus sedimenting social understandings into a self-fulfilling ‘common sense’. The desirable male queer body is thus represented as limited and constrained by biology, despite queerness’ tendency to defy form. Such a framing establishes what Foucault refers to as procedures that

govern the production of discourse and establish the materiality of knowledge as ‘an instance of power’ (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008, p. 99). The generalization of these experiences also falls into Keeling’s conceptualization of common sense as a:

[...] linchpin in the struggle for hegemony that conditions what is perceptible such that aspects of what is perceptible become generally recognizable only when they work in some way through ‘common sense’ (2014, p. 153)

The effect of these statements is the formation of a discursive field that polices desirable gender sensibilities.

This section has tried to demonstrate how the majority of content in these articles is bound within gendered definitions of man and woman. Even the images accompanying these articles also show the gender-based separatism that exists on this site, because; there are not instances where a man and a woman were featured in one image. This presents queerness as essential and contained within gender binaries.

4.8 Representation of Queer Sexuality

The previous section demonstrates how desire is political and related to power. This section seeks to locate how gender and power are implicated in queer sex. Posts in the 4men’s section present different opinions on the idea of the ‘top’ and the ‘bottom’. In ‘Top vs Bottom’ the top is presented as the one who does all the work. The author advises that: ‘No top likes to screw a loose ass’ and that one should: ‘Be an aggressive bottom- don’t just lay there- if your partner doesn’t seem to take the initiative- then take it yourself. Make him use different positions. Tell him why you want him to screw you, fast or slow. Tell him you want him to stroke your ‘member’ etc. etc.’. This representation of the bottom’s ability to take charge as desirable or leading to a ‘connection’ contradicts ideas that seamlessly attribute power to the top; that penetrates. According to Kippax and Smith:

What comes ‘naturally’ and with greatest linguistic and conceptual ease is to attribute activity to the erect penis. It comes less *naturally* to think of the anus or vagina as ‘engulfing’, ‘enclosing’ or ‘swallowing’ up the penis’. (2015, p. 427, their emphasis)

I follow Hendriks' (2018) findings in his research on men who have sex with men (MSM) in Congo, where he found that the *fioto*⁴ desire is sometimes represented as exploitative. Although the context of Hendriks' research was of 'straight' men that penetrate queer men for gifts, I wish to use the same reading in this text; which is that; the *fioto* possess the power to control how the sexual encounter goes. In the case of the Congo, Hendriks (2018) posits that unlike in heterosexual 'transactional' sex, it is the *fioto* men who have to 'convince' their objects of desire and command the sex. This reading subverts the common linguistic norm of only attributing 'activity to the erect penis' (Kippax and Smith, 2015, p. 427). This is contrary to the 'Tops vs Bottoms' post's position that:

The use of the terms 'bottom' and 'top' can suggest an unbridgeable gulf between those who prefer the respective roles. It can seem rather as if, within gay sexuality, there is a further division of sexualities, where the all-male equivalent of the battle of the sexes persists, often not entirely on cold war levels

The author's association of men with war (Ortner, 1995) and sex with war is an attribute of masculinity. Further into the article, the author associates particular sexual positions with masculine domination by stating that the bottom has to accept passivity and this may entail letting go of 'any residual notions of what it means to be 'properly' masculine'. For this writer, the bottom becomes feminine. The post also posits that 'There is a degree of (contained) violence and power-play entailed in penetration...' According to Kippax and Smith (2015) during anal intercourse, some chances of power relate to the corporeality of one body connecting with another. In this connection, the receptive person is more physically vulnerable than the insertive person is.

However, the Queerlife post concludes with dynamism, explaining how even the top can involve a feeling of femininity, and how this is not such a bad thing. Such femininity perhaps speaks to Hendriks' (2018, p. 865) conclusion that '[...] unveils how feminine "passive" pleasures are actually more "active" than supposedly "active" male drives [...]'. I link this to the 'Top vs Bottom' post which concludes by stating that 'After all, you [the bottom] are the one that's really in control here- you decide when the fun starts and when it ends. Use your imagination, and have him do you the way you want to be done'. This also comes out in a 4men article titled 'Give and Take' in which the author states that '[...] giving and receiving

⁴ Fioto is Congolese for 'bottom' in MSM relationships

is not about who is about the 'top' or the 'bottom', who is active or passive in the traditional sense'. Overall, queer sex between men is a complex field in which there is a struggle over the meaning of sexual positions and their implications for gender and power.

At times, gay men were represented as hypersexual. In an article, titled *Blind dates and true love* an interracial couple of one black man and one white man are pictured kissing. The author asks:

Why are gay guys more willing to take risks when it comes to sex than they are with love? Entering blindly seems to have little or no fear- apps like Grindr made sure of that. Sex can be quick, emotionless, and easily attained during a lunch break...Dates have become a waste of time; meanwhile, we'll bend all of our plans if an opportunity for sex presents itself. There's something wrong with this picture (QueerLife, *Blind dates and true love*, 11-12-2017, p. online)



Figure 17: This picture is the article header for the 'Blind dates and true love' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/blind-dates-true-love/>)

Using a semiotic analysis, I saw that the image of the two men kissing also speaks to the perceived hyper-sexuality of gay men. The idea that gay men will do anything for sex comes out often on QueerLife.

In *Gay men and fake orgasms* the author connects sex to porn, stating that 'Porn is so prevalent in our culture that it's taken over nightlife, our standards of beauty, and now, our bedroom activities'. (QueerLife, *Gay men and fake orgasms*, 11-12-2017, p. online). This frames gay men as obsessed with porn; despite the fact that even non-queer identifying individuals are also into it.



Figure 18: This picture which is the article header for the 'Gay men and fake orgasms' post shows gay men kissing which for me, semiotically represents hyper-sexuality (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/gay-men-fake-orgasms/>)

4.9 (Dis)ability

There was not a single article in the sample that had a body or issue dealing with queer people living with disabilities. Instead, most articles described the queer body as ideally abled. I viewed this as a fixation on ability. In a Men's Relationships article titled *A matter of size*, the narrator wrote a disturbing statement as a solution to a small sized penis. They offered the following solutions:

So if you're not that huge what do you do? We can answer that with more questions. Do you have a mouth? Does it have a tongue in it? Do you have hands? No offence if you don't but if you do, they're there to be used when having sex' (QueerLife, *A Matter Of Size*, 30-08-2017, p. online).

Because the author makes use of a disclaimer 'No offence if you don't, [have hands] but if you do, they're there to be used when having sex' (QueerLife, *A Matter Of Size*, 30-08-2017: online), it is important to follow Hewitt and Stoke's (1975) position that a disclaimer is a verbal device designed to ward off potentially obnoxious attributions. Thus if someone prefaces their remarks with statements such as 'I'm no sexist but...' the reader should prepare themselves for obnoxious remarks about women, in which the speaker wishes to disclaim the fact that they are sexist (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). The fact that the writer apologises to those who might not have hands and further asserted that hands are in fact to be used when having sex implies that those without hands cannot be considered equally indulgent in sex. This tallies with Chappell's (2015) position that media represent sex as entirely an able-bodied experience. Similarly, through the absence of bodies living with disabilities in queer sexual discourse QueerLife can be seen as fronting an agenda of hegemonic abled sexuality.



Figure 19: This picture is which the article header for the 'body language for gay men?' post suggests that there exists such a thing as an ideal 'body language' for gay men. However, idealism is not innocuous but is attached to power (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/body-language-gay-men/>)

Some articles subtly invoked ableism through their prescription and description of what constitutes a normative queer body performance. In Men's Relationships article *Body language for gay men*, one of the subheadings suggested that one should '*stand up straight*' when seeking to attract another gay lover. For the writer, 'Standing up straight is another essential element of good body language'. However, it is the statement that follows which is problematic: 'Slouchers look tired and beaten down'. According to Turner and Stagg (2006) when eighteenth century French surgeon Nicolas Andry outlined a publication on 'deformities of children' he listed bodily abnormalities as diverse as club feet, spinal curvature, pock-marked skin, red hair, slouching posture, effeminate voices in men and deep voices in women. Drawing from this, I argue that the reference to slouching as a non-ideal posture is an ableist discourse constructing what constitutes the ideal body. 'Disability' includes a vast array of experiences that resist straightforward categorisation. Facial scarring, for example, may be a disability of appearance only, causing no physical difficulty but may yet have socially disabling consequences (Turner and Stagg, 2006). In the same vein, such discourses have disabling implications for queer 'slouchers' because their postures do not match with popular perceptions of what is perceived to be the ideal posture in queer culture. Using Wetherell and Potter (1988, p. 70) I argue that such talk which is disguised as merely describing the situation 'as the speaker sees it' can be analysed in terms of discursive functions and effects which go beyond mere description.

4.10 Desirable Beauty and Body Size



Figure 13: This picture is the article header for the 'About the gaining fetish' post. The woman is seen holding a glass of whisky which symbolises toxicity and unhealthy indulgences (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/about-the-gaining-fetish/>)

Another 4women's post titled: 'About the gaining fetish', describes the fetish among some queer women to have plus size partners. The fetish be it '[...] a specific articulation of sexual desire' remains an object of 'abnormal traffic' (Pels, 1998, p. 94). Therefore, the use of the term fetish suggests some form of 'abnormal desire'. For instance, the post welcomes readers to '[...] the world of 'Gaining', a sexual fetish that celebrates bloated bellies and the process of fattening up', the conclusion suggests this desire is nothing more than just a fetish. The writer also sets themselves from this experience by suggesting that '[...] it's the journey to obesity that really gets *this group* off' (my emphasis). By referring to women who gain as 'this group' the writer asks of us to remember that 'this group' ought to be distinguished from other queer people. According to them:

If 'selectively particularising' someone's body to the point of developing a handicap doesn't sound sexy to you, you're not alone. Most don't have a problem with those who consider plus-sized individuals sexy. But the consequences attached to the gaining lifestyle can distract from this notion and work to distinguish it. And maybe that's where gaining belongs. Maybe that's where it will stay. Left to exist within a fetish world all on its own and apart from all the rest (QueerLife, A Matter Of Size, 21-02-2017, p. online).

Disguised as an encouragement for healthy lifestyle, such discourses mock desires for plus-sized queer bodies. The writer uses a discourse of health to regulate desires, which threaten normative ideas about size, lifestyle and queer bodies. Using an intercategory complexity approach to intersectionality, I treat this as a form of exclusion by inclusion. 'Intercategory complexity' compels scholars to provisionally adopt existing analytical categories to

document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions (McCall, 2005, p. 1773). In this instance, in as much as white chubby lesbian women are represented, they are also marginalised, as those whose ways of life are unhealthy and risky. Because society's feminine aesthetics of women's beauty promote stereotypically white, slim, able-bodied femininity with its westernized aesthetics (Coy-Dibley, 2016), women with slimmer and 'ideal' bodies are not subjected to scrutiny because they fit into popular culture's gendered definitions of female beauty. According to Steyn (2010) of the core insights to CDL shows, that power does not name itself as such. Instead, hegemonic language muddles the ways through which social control is exercised and how alternative ways of thinking are curtailed (Steyn, 2012). Hence, the gendered idea of an ideal female body as tall, slim and model type is interrogated in this article.

Ideas around age and body size stood out in both 4Womens and 4Mens sections. A Men's Style article titled *The late great Speedo⁵ debate* had an image of four white men with flat bellies shirtless and wearing Speedo swimming trunks at the beach. Their faces are cropped out by the upper border, suggesting that their age was a given.



Figure 20: This picture is the article header for the 'The late great Speedo debate' with four muscular men juxtaposed to two older men with pot bellies (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/speedo/>)

This was juxtaposed to older white men in Speedo swimming trunks with bulgier bellies on the front of the article, then an older man lying in water, shirtless and in shades (obviously attempting to look cool) under the subheading 'The argument against Speedos'. The man is ridiculed by being referred to as a 'shmuck'. The text right next to this photo reads:

There's an unfortunate relationship between the size of a man- his waist, that is- and the size of his swimwear. If you're packing some extra weight in the stomach or thighs, or if you generally have a larger frame, avoid the Speedo at all costs. Even if you have all the self-confidence in the world, have a little consideration for the people

⁵ The Speedo is a swimwear brand based in Nottingham, England

around you. There's always some *shmuck* who looks past his body type and embraces the Speedo- this can ruin a day at the beach for everyone (QueerLife, The late great Speedo, 01-09-2017, p. online)



Figure 21: This picture is an in-text photo under the sub-topic 'The argument against speedos' in 'The late great Speedo debate' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/speedo/>)

Another contrasting discourse around the ideal body a queer man should have was encapsulated in a men's health article titled *The secret to a sexy butt*. The article has a photo of muscular, young black man doing planks on a gym mat. In the second paragraph of the article, the author states 'Which better body part to start off with than the second thing most of us notice on the beach. Yes. You too can have a sexy butt'. By their use of the phrase 'the second thing most of us notice on the beach...' without actually mentioning it, the writer assumes that this physical 'thing' is a given to the 'us' the gay community. Such a view of the gay community and the specifics of queer bodies demonstrates how some ways of understanding the world can become culturally dominant or hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) such that by way of narration, actors assume their status of facts or 'common sense' is in fact a true and accurate description of the world (Wetherell et al., 2001). Using a critical form of discursive psychology which seeks to reveal the normalisation and naturalisation of identities and bodies and whose interests are best served by different discursive formulations (Foucault, 1980; Shapiro, 1992), such an analysis undresses power. This is because these kinds of formulations are aligned to beliefs of how the attractive, male body ought to look like.

In an article titled *Chubby chasers and their men*, the writer suggests that 'Everyone knows our gay community worships youth and beauty (among other things)'. The use of the term 'our' persists within this article. I argue that the use of the term legitimises the author's experiences as the actual fact for the whole queer community. In a statement that speaks directly to the notion of the types of bodies, whose exposure is acceptable they continued to say 'Thanks to our culture's continuous message; unless you look like an underwear model,

you're never going to be an object of desire'. The use of the explicit term 'never' in the article denies any other possibilities of thinking about desirable gay bodies, except those within their 'culture's' norms of beauty. Hence, in as much as this article aims to project chubbiness as an alternative gay, which is also fashionable, the implications of these statements are that it is never really part of the legitimate gay experience. The headline *Chubby chasers and their men* distances the writer from a possible relation to chubby gay men. The use of the terms 'our' and 'their' (chubby men) creates an 'us versus them' dynamic where 'their' men could mean they are not really 'our' men.

4.11 Looks

In a Men's Relationships article titled *Do looks really matter?* looks are represented as a form of currency in the gay community. The writer says:

It makes me laugh when gay guys proclaim that looks don't matter. I've come to realise that after *years of researching* the topic that it's *impossible* not to associate feelings, ideas and impressions from another man's appearance. It's biological and physiological. (QueerLife, *Do looks really matter?*, 11-12-2017, p. Online).

Firstly, the author positions themselves as an expert in the topic by reminding the reader that they have had 'years of researching' on the topic. Secondly, they use the word 'impossible' to signal the inevitability of any alternative position on the matter. Lastly, they qualify their formulation as scientific owing to its biological and physiological nature. This statement places the authenticity of these claims through what Foucault terms disciplinary power. According to Foucault (1988) there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. The article features a photo of a shirtless, white model in briefs, showing his six pack and headless, looks here refer to the entire body. Through a semiotic analysis I concluded that because the model is headless, they are being presented as an object of masculine beauty. This is because, where a body appears headless, the implication is that the viewer ought to forget about the face, brains or soul of the model, but rather, focus on them as an object of gaze. This representation positions gayness as an identity which worships 'perfectly chiselled' and good looking bodies.



Figure 22: This image is the article header for the 'Do looks really matter?' post (Image source: <https://queerlife.co.za/gay/looks-really-matter/>)

However, some articles in the Women's Opinions section made a positive representation of chubby lesbians. The article has an image of a so called chubby white woman who looks shy with a group of seven other chubby women in the background in what looks like a hot tub. The author presents a case for plus sized women and dismisses the authenticity of BMI in determining one's health. They state that '[...] Before anyone starts making us worry about how lesbian women are less healthy than straight women, let's take a deep breath, eat some wholegrain toast and have a small pot of sugar-free, low fat yoghurt. Maybe we'll go for a jog later...We're good'.

Conclusion

This section analysed the data that this researcher read. It started with a brief background to QueerLife website followed by an analysis of the text and images on QueerLife. The data analysis were thematically organised into subjects such as: queerness as embedded in race and coloniality, intersections of class and race in queer representations, gendered accounts of (un)desirable queerness, genital size and masculinity, homofemininity, representation of queer sexuality, (dis)ability, beauty and body size and looks. The categorisation of these themes is by no means meant to suggest that these dynamics occur in isolation. Where possible, I have tried to identify intersections of exclusion. In the next chapter, I summarise the study and arguments made and also make propositions for future research. Because this research seeks to inform a possible online queer journalistic praxis, the chapter also discusses what can possibly be done to ameliorate inclusive queer representations.

5.1 Chapter Five

Conclusion and propositions

The present study has attempted to show how contributor content on QueerLife magazine marginalises other queer sexual experiences such as those of people living with disabilities, bi-sexual, gender non-conforming, poor or black people. This chapter provides conclusive academic propositions, suggesting existing gaps and future research possibilities for Critical Diversity Studies. Because this research sought to inform a possible online queer journalistic praxis, the chapter also discusses what can be done to ameliorate inclusive queer representations.

The important takeaway from this research is how QueerLife's content reinforces gender binaries through the categorisation of content into '4men' and '4womens' sections. This is despite queerness' non-binary orientation. While Queerness agitates for going against gender and sex norms, a limiting categorisation of experiences by gender is evident on QueerLife. Most representations of queerness on the site failed to integrate 'male' and 'female' experiences in one article, pictorially or textually. They had either all men or women. None really, spoke to the ambivalent nature of queer gender experiences. Little to no writers acknowledged bi-sexual experiences in their narratives. These trends speak to a degree of 'bi-sexual erasure' (Yoshino, 2000; Lynch and Maree, 2013). It is almost as if bisexuality is regarded as a threat due to its blurring of boundaries between the two historically distinct categories' of man and woman (Yoshino, 2000). By excluding bisexuality, homosexuality polices its own boundaries and remains a seemingly homogenous identity around which individuals can cohere and politically mobilise (Lynch and Maree, 2013, p. 471). Therefore, in the censure of gender fluid experiences, QueerLife's content represents queerness as an essential, homogenous identity, wherein one can only be 'homosexual' not 'bisexual' or genderqueer.

Besides this 'erasure' some article writers reinforced notions of masculinity and femininity in both '4men' and '4women's experiences respectively. Had the idea behind the categorisation of QueerLife into 4men and 4women been to make the website concisely structured then, these sections would not have content which reinforces the 'differences' between men and women. For example, I showed how some writers alluded to the 'natural' predisposition of women

towards emotion, and men towards anger and domination. With this in mind, I argue that the structuring of this website embodies gendered power relations by allowing distinct representations of men as powerful and strong and women as emotional. This portrayal of men as highly masculine is a consistent characteristic of power, which does not name itself as such but is obfuscated through hegemonic codes (Steyn, 2015).

I have also highlighted how queerness excludes queer people of colour. Where they are included, it is in contexts where the article suggests relationship problems such as the crisis of 'bad boys'. The exclusion of black bodies in queer discourses is nothing new. In the case of South Africa, this is informed by the historical policing of black sexuality. Hence, it is not surprising that in post-apartheid South Africa, white queer images are the most dominant. In my findings, I showed how these representations were not static, but dynamic, intersecting and informed by the historical context. For example, in the classed nature of queer identities, and why white images are dominant on queer media, I tried to show how apartheid's racial exploitation continues to shape class in South Africa. Some writers used rugby to imagine the 'desirable' masculine gay man. Rugby played a historical role in the formation of national identities in countries such as Wales, New Zealand and South Africa where it was a central element in the shaping of middle-class male-dominated hegemony (Naughton and Chandler, 1996). These intersections of class, sport and race, intersected in interesting ways in an online site, which one can easily dismiss as detached from the lived realities of South African queer societies. Hence race and class are intricately linked in the representation of queerness on QueerLife.

Class on its own is also a strong point for discussion. I argued that classed identities regardless of race, are represented as accurate experiences of queerness. This probably speaks to the alternating intersections of privilege and oppression wherein, being black but rich, allows one certain privileges not accorded to the black and poor. Both identities may share racial experiences, but they certainly do not share class experiences.

This research has also shown that representation of queer disabled sexualities in South Africa continues to be a problem. No article on QueerLife currently speaks to disabled sexualities. All images on QueerLife are of abled individuals. This supports the ableist system of a society which excludes and or censures disabled bodies. Some articles also constructed negativity around possibly disabled individuals. For example, we saw how in *A matter of size* the author offered an apology to those who might not have hands. The fact that the writer apologises to

those who might not have hands and further asserted that hands are in fact to be used when having sex implies that those without hands cannot be considered equally indulgent in sex. This falls well with Chappell's (2015) position that media represent sex as entirely an able-bodied experience.

The body therefore becomes an important site of inquiry. This researcher asked himself the question: what constitutes a desirable queer body? Evidence from the study suggests that this is definitely not a plus-size or non-handsome entity. Plus sized men are advised to stay away from wearing speedos at the beach, as they risk spoiling the day for other people. Plus sized women on the other hand are 'excluded by inclusion' by virtue of being rendered, at high risk of ill-health and immobility. Men who have ideal eyebrows and eyes on the other hand are considered handsome. In fact, being young and handsome is a currency in the queer world. Therefore, at the various points, age, body and beauty are considered factors for desirability. The younger, the handsome and the slimmer/muscular people are considered desirable.

Gay men are also represented as hypersexual and obsessed by penis size and porn. These traits perhaps speak to the general supposition in South African communities that gay men tend to 'hit on everyone'. This observation is based on my personal experience of heterosexual colleagues who are always suspicious of gay men as 'out to get them'. In South Africa, it is this suspicion that leads to violence and marginalisation of gay men by 'straight' men. This is because they are seen as hypersexual, and threatening particularly to straight men. Perhaps more empirical evidence on this issue is needed.

Summary of research limitations

There were several limitations to this research. First, the research tended to look more at queer men than women because I found more dynamics, which spoke to issues of gender, sex, (dis)ability, age and body in the 4men's section. The other reason why I related more to the experiences on the 4men's portal is my positionality. As a black heterosexual man I understood concepts such as race and masculinity more because I have a lived experience of how these systems operate in my life.

Research gaps and propositions for future research

Many complications come with queer representations. These open up more opportunities for empirical academic inquiry into all these intersecting issues. In total, this research has shown many research gaps. These include the need of a queer audience or user centred inquiry on the

implications of political economy and access to technologies to the nature of online queer representations.

Suggestions for praxis

CDL has an important social value. Hence, this study is not just academic work but a social attempt to seek and find justice in form of diversity and difference in togetherness. Steyn's (2015, p. 387) tenth criterion for CDL encourages praxis which is a willingness to bring together theory and practice into everyday life. This research suggests that there are many instances where queerness is portrayed as gendered, raced, abled and classed through linguistic and pictorial representations. Hence, there is an urgent need for online queer writers to be conscious of the deeper meanings attached to the language and images in narrating queer experiences. I argue that is the language and images that individuals use to explain queerness that has exclusionary consequences. So, the politics of gendered, raced, abled and classed queer desire might not be wholly embodied in these relationships themselves, but in the language that writers use to explain these relationships. This is why Queer theory advocates for the reshaping of language, concepts and theoretical concepts of current knowledge production (Green, 2002). As it stands, the language and images that writers use on QueerLife does little to 'queer' or 'quare' queer desirability.

Lastly, there is a need for web designers of Queer news websites to be aware of the implications of website layouts for queer politics. It is easy to overlook the fact that allocating different web spaces to different gender identities has the same effects as the physical politics of space in our everyday lives. In other words, website designers have to be aware that even online structuration has real consequences for queer politics. Likewise, queer media organisations should not assume that all website designers have a queering consciousness.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2004). Affective economies. *Social text*, 22(2), 117-139.
- Allan, S., & Thorsen, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Citizen journalism: Global perspectives* (Vol. 1). Peter Lang.
- Barnard, I. (1999). Queer race. *Social Semiotics*, 9(2), 199-212.
- Barry, A. M. (1997). *Visual intelligence: Perception, image, and manipulation in visual communication*. SUNY Press.
- Barry, H., Bacon, M. K., & Child, I. L. (1957). A cross-cultural survey of some sex differences in socialization. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 55(3), 327.
- Barthes, R. (1988). Semiology and urbanism. *The semiotic challenge*, 191-201.
- Barthes, R.M. (1964). *Elements of Semiology*, New York: Hill and Wang.
- Beetar, M. (2012). Questions of visibility and identity: an analysis of representations of the Mr Gay South Africa pageant. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 80(1), 44-68.
- Bem, S. L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological review*, 88(4), 354.
- Berggren, K. (2014). Sticky masculinity: Post-structuralism, phenomenology and subjectivity in critical studies on men. *Men and masculinities*, 17(3), 231-252.
- Bourdieu, P., & Nice, R. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Vol. 16). Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Butler, J. (1986). Sex and gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*. *Yale French Studies*, (72), 35-49.
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre journal*, 40(4), 519-531.
- Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic discourse. *Feminism/postmodernism*, 327.

- Butler, J. (2003). Gender trouble. *Continental feminism reader*, 29-56.
- Castells, M. (2008). The new public sphere: Global civil society, communication networks, and global governance. *The aNNals of the American academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 78-93.
- Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Chappell, P. (2015). Queering the social emergence of disabled sexual identities: Linking queer theory with disability studies in the South African context. *Agenda*, 29(1), 54-62.
- Cilliers, C. (2010). Media and Sexual Orientation: The Portrayal of Gays and Lesbians. *Media Studies: Media History, Media and Society*, 2, 331.
- Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social problems*, 33(6), s14-s32.
- Collins, P.H. (1993) The sexual politics of black womanhood. Violence against women: The bloody footprints. 85-104.
- Collins, P.H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. Routledge: London.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *U. Chi. Legal F.*, 139.
- Crossman, A. (2017). Understanding purposive sampling. *Retrieved July, 31, 2017*.
- Culler, J. (1975). *Poststructuralist Poetics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Cullum-Swan, B. E. T. S. Y., & Manning, P. (1994). Narrative, content, and semiotic analysis. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 463-477.
- Dadas, C. (2016). Messy methods: Queer methodological approaches to researching social media. *Computers and Composition*, 40, 60-72.
- De La Torre, M. A. (1999). Beyond machismo: A Cuban case study. *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 213-233.
- De Lauretis, T. (1991). *Queer theory: Lesbian and gay sexualities*. Indiana Univ Pr.

- Downey, J., & Fenton, N. (2003). New media, counter publicity and the public sphere. *New media & society*, 5(2), 185-202.
- Dyer, R. (2013). *The matter of images: Essays on representations*. Routledge.
- Eco, U. (1986). *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*(Vol. 398). Indiana University Press.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.
- Epprecht, M. (2013). *Hungochani: The history of a dissident sexuality in southern Africa*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Feagin, J. R., Orum, A. M., & Sjoberg, G. (Eds.). (1991). *A case for the case study*. UNC Press Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978). The history of sexuality: An introduction. Vol. 1. *New York: Vintage*, 208.
- Foucault, M. (1980). The history of sexuality. Volume one: An introduction.
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Archaeology of knowledge*. Routledge.
- Fourie, P. J. (2002). Rethinking the role of the media in South Africa. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*, 21(1), 17-40.
- Gevisser, M. (1994). A Difficult Fight for Freedom: A History of South African Lesbian and Gay Organisations From the 1950s to the 1990s.
- Giffney, N. (2009). *Queer Theory: The Key Concepts*. Berg Publishers Limited.
- Giffney, N. (2009). *Queer Theory: The Key Concepts*. Berg Publishers Limited.
- Gill, R. (2009). Mediated intimacy and postfeminism: A discourse analytic examination of sex and relationships advice in a women's magazine. *Discourse & communication*. 3 (4), 345-369.
- Gilman, S. L., & Gilman, S. L. (1985). *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race, and madness*. Cornell University Press.
- Graziano, K. J. (2004). Oppression and resiliency in a post-apartheid South Africa: unheard voices of Black gay men and lesbians. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 10(3), 302.

- Green, A. I. (2002). Gay but not queer: Toward a post-queer study of sexuality. *Theory and Society*, 31(4), 521-545.
- Hall, S. (1989). Cultural identity and cinematic representation. *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (36), 68-81.
- Hall, S. (1997). The work of representation. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. 2, 13-74.
- Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.
- Hammersley, A. P. (1996). AP Hammersley, SO Svensson, M. Hanfland, AN Fitch, and D. Hausermann, High Press. Res. 14, 235 (1996). *High Press. Res.*, 14, 235.
- Han, C. (2007). They don't want to cruise your type: Gay men of color and the racial politics of exclusion. *Social Identities* (13)1, 51-67.
- Hawley, J. C., & Altman, D. (Eds.). (2001). *Postcolonial, queer: Theoretical intersections*. SUNY Press.
- Hendriks, T. (2018). 'Erotiques Cannibales': A Queer Ontological Take on Desire from Urban Congo. *Sexualities*, 21(5-6), 853-867.
- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Bonus, S., & Wright, E. (2004, January). Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs. In *System sciences, 2004. proceedings of the 37th annual Hawaii international conference on* (pp. 11-pp). IEEE.
- Hershberger, A.E. (2014). *Photographic Theory: An Historical Anthology*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hoad, N. (1999). Between the white man's burden and the white man's disease: Tracking lesbian and gay human rights in Southern Africa. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 5(4), 559-584.
- Horwitz, R. B., & Currie, W. (2007). Another instance where privatization trumped liberalization: The politics of telecommunications reform in South Africa—A ten-year retrospective. *Telecommunications Policy*, 31(8-9), 445-462.
- Ithiel de Sola, P. O. O. L. (1983). *Technologies of freedom*. Harvard University Press.
- Jara, M., & Lapinsky, S. (1998). Forging a representative gay liberation movement in South Africa. *Development Update*, 2(2), 44-54.

- Jenkins, O. (2003). Photography and travel brochures: The circle of representation. *Tourism geographies*, 5(3), 305-328.
- Johnson, E. P. (2001). "Quare" studies, or (almost) everything I know about queer studies I learned from my grandmother. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 21(1), 1-25.
- Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Sage.
- Kawulich, B. B. (2005, May). Participant observation as a data collection method. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 6, No. 2).
- Keeling, K. (2014). Queer OS. *Cinema Journal*, 53(2), 152-157.
- Kelly, L. (2007). Lesbian body image perceptions: The context of body silence. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(7), 873-883.
- Kerr, J. (2014). The digital dictator's dilemma: Internet regulation and political control in non-democratic states. *Palo Alto: The Center for International Security and Cooperation-Stanford University*.
- Kilomba, G. (2013). *Who Can Speak? Decolonizing Knowledge*.
- Langa, M., Kirsten, A., Bowman, B., Eagle, G., & Kiguwa, P. (2018). Black Masculinities on Trial in Absentia: The Case of Oscar Pistorius in South Africa. *Men and Masculinities*, 1097184X18762523.
- Lewis, J., Loots, F., Gevisser, M., & Cameron, E. (1994). *Defiant desire: gay and lesbian lives in South Africa*.
- Lyotard, J. F. (2004). *Libidinal economy*. A&C Black.
- Makoni, B. (2016). Labelling black male genitalia and the 'new racism': the discursive construction of sexual racism by a group of Southern African college students. *Gender & Language*, (10)1.
- Makwavarara et al (2015) *Dialoguing Land and Indigenisation in Zimbabwe and Other Developing Countries: Emerging Perspectives*, Harare. *University of Zimbabwe Publishing*.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2016). Outline of ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality. Retrieved from *Foundation Frantz Fanon*: <http://frantzfanonfoundation-fondationfrantzfanon.com/article2360.html>.

- Mano, W.& Willems, W. (2010). Debating 'Zimbabweanness' in diasporic internet forums: technologies of freedom? *Zimbabwe's new diaspora: Displacement and the cultural politics of survival*, 183-201.
- Mautner, G. (2005). Time to get wired: Using web-based corpora in critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 16(6), 809-828.
- May, V. M. (2015). *Pursuing intersectionality, unsettling dominant imaginaries*. Routledge.
- May, V. M., & Ferri, B. A. (2005). Fixated on ability: Questioning ableist metaphors in feminist theories of resistance. *Prose Studies*, 27(1-2), 120-140.
- McCall, L. (2005). The Complexity of Intersectionality, *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(31): 1771–802.
- McChesney, R. W. (2008). *The political economy of media: Enduring issues, emerging dilemmas*. NYU Press.
- McFarland, W. P., & Dupuis, M. (2001). The legal duty to protect gay and lesbian students from violence in school. *Professional School Counseling*, 4(3), 171.
- McKenzie P.J. Interpretative repertoires. In: Fisher K, Erdelez S, McKechnie E.F, editors. *Theories of information behavior: a researcher's guide*. Medford, NJ: Information Today; 2005. pp. 221–4. p.
- Milani, T. M. (2013). Are 'queers' really 'queer'? Language, identity and same-sex desire in a South African online community. *Discourse & Society*, 24(5), 615-633.
- Monroe, C. R. (2005). Why are "bad boys" always black?: Causes of disproportionality in school discipline and recommendations for change. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 79(1), 45-50.
- Moolman, B. (2013). Rethinking 'masculinities in transition' in South Africa considering the 'intersectionality' of race, class, and sexuality with gender. *African Identities*. 11(1), 93-105.
- Morgan, R., & Wieringa, S. (2005). *Tommy boys, lesbian men, and ancestral wives: Female same-sex practices in Africa*. Jacana Media.
- Morton, D. (1995). Birth of the Cyberqueer. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 369-381.

- Moya, P. M. (2011). Who we are and from where we speak. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(2).
- Mugari, Z. E. (2015). Colonial designs, landscapes and the mediation of forced removals in postcolonial Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Nash, C. (2002). Embodied Irishness: gender, sexuality and Irish identities. In *In search of Ireland* (pp. 122-141). Routledge.
- Ncube, L. (2014). The interface between football and ethnic identity discourses in Zimbabwe. *Critical African Studies*, 6(2-3), 192-210.
- Neisser, U. (1976) Cognition and reality. San Francisco: Freeman,.
- Ortner, S. B. (1972). Is female to male as nature is to culture?. *Feminist studies*, 1(2), 5-31.
- Ostberg, J. (2010). Thou shalt sport a banana in thy pocket: Gendered body size ideals in advertising and popular culture. *Marketing Theory*, 10(1), 45-73.
- Oswin, N. (2007). The end of queer (as we knew It): Globalization and the making of a gay-friendly South Africa. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 14(1), 93-110.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere. *New media & society*, 4(1), 9-27.
- Parker, J. (1972) Rhodesia Little White Island. London. Pitman Publishing.
- Pollock, G. (2015). *Vision and difference: Feminism, femininity and histories of art*. Routledge.
- Posel, D. (2004). 'Getting the nation talking about sex': reflections on the discursive constitution of sexuality in South Africa since 1994. *Agenda*, 18(62), 53-63.
- Ratele, K. (2009). Apartheid, anti-apartheid and post-apartheid sexualities. *The prize and the price: Shaping sexualities in South Africa*, 290-306.
- Ratele, K. (2009). Sexuality as constitutive of whiteness in South Africa. *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. 17 (3), 158-174.
- Reddy, V. (2004). Sexuality in Africa: some trends, transgressions and tirades: Guest Editor, Vasu Reddy, introduces the issue.
- Reynolds, M. (2011). *The Best Ye Breed*. Hachette UK.

- Roth, J. (2013). Entangled inequalities as intersectionalities: Towards an epistemic sensibilization.
- Rothblum, E. D. (1994). "I only read about myself on bathroom walls": The need for research on the mental health of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical psychology*, 62(2), 213.
- Roy, O. (2012). The colour of gayness: Representations of queers of colour in Québec's gay media. *Sexualities*, 15(2), 175-190.
- Sanger, N. (2007). *Representations of gender, race and sexuality in selected English-medium South African magazines, 2003-2005* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Western Cape).
- Schneider, L. C. (2000). Queer theory. *Handbook of postmodern biblical interpretation*, 206-12.
- Sebeok, T. A., & Umiker-Sebeok, J. (Eds.). (1987). *The semiotic web 1986*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Sigusch, V. (1998). The neosexual revolution. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 27(4), 331-359.
- Smith, K. L., Kerr, D. A., Fenner, A. A., & Straker, L. M. (2014). Adolescents just do not know what they want: a qualitative study to describe obese adolescents' experiences of text messaging to support behavior change maintenance post intervention. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 16(4).
- Sonnekus, T., & Van Van Eeden, J. (2009). Visual representation, editorial power, and the dual 'othering' of black men in the South African gay press: The case of Gay Pages. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 35(1), 81-100.
- Steven E. Stern & Alysia D. Handel (2001) Sexuality and mass media: The historical context of psychology's reaction to sexuality on the internet, *Journal of Sex Research*, 38:4, 283-291, DOI: 10.1080/00224490109552099
- Steyn, M. (2015). Critical diversity literacy. *Routledge international handbook of diversity studies*, 379-389.
- Steyn, M., & Van Zyl, M. (2009). The prize and the price: Shaping sexualities in South Africa.
- Subramony, D.P. (2018). Not in our Journals—Digital Media Technologies and the LGBTQI Community. *TechTrends*, 62 (4), 354-363.

- Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An international E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 374-385.
- Sussman, L. R. (2000). Censor dot gov: the Internet and press freedom 2000. *Journal of Government Information*, 27(5), 537-545.
- Swarr, A.L. (2004). Moffies, artists, and queens: race and the production of South African gay male drag. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 46 (3-4), 73-89.
- Toolan, M. (1997). What is critical discourse analysis and why are people saying such terrible things about it? 1. *Language and literature*, 6(2), 83-103.
- Turner, D. M., & Stagg, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Social histories of disability and deformity: Bodies, images and experiences*. Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Aims of critical discourse analysis. *Japanese discourse*, 1(1), 17-28.
- Van Zyl, M., & Steyn, M. E. (Eds.). (2005). *Performing Queer: Shaping sexualities, 1994-2004* (Vol. 1). Kwela Books.
- Ward, K. J. (1999). The cyber-ethnographic (re) construction of two feminist online communities. *Sociological Research Online*, 4(1), 1-14.
- Warner, M. (2002). *Publics and counterpublics*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone.
- West, C. (2017). *Race Matters, 25th Anniversary*. Beacon Press.
- Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1988). Discourse analysis and the identification of interpretive repertoires. In C. Antaki (Ed.), *Analysing everyday explanation: A casebook of methods* (pp. 168-183). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zack, N. (2005). *Inclusive feminism: A third wave theory of women's commonality*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Zizek, S. (1998). Cyberspace, or, How to Traverse the Fantasy in the Age of the Retreat of the Big Other. *Public Culture*, 10(3), 483-513.

APPENDIX A

Article	Section	White Bodies	Black, Asian or Coloured Bodies	Abled Bodies	Disabled Bodies	Slim/Muscular Bodies	Chubby Bodies	Older Bodies	Women's Bodies
1. South Africa's 'Pienk Gevaar'	4men- Man Opinions	4	3	7	0	7	0	2	0
2. Leather Spirituality	4men- Man's Opinions	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
3. Advantages Of Being Versatile	4men-Man Opinions	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
4. Gay In The 'Platteland'	4men-Man Opinions	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
5. Straight In A Gay Bar	4men-Man Opinions	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	0
6. What to Wear To The Gym	4men- Man Style	4	1	5	0	5	0	0	0
7. The Late Great Speedo Debate	4men- Man Style	7	0	7	0	4	3	0	0
8. Men Are Angrier On Facebook	4men- Man Style	1	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0

9. Queer South African Celebs	4men- Man Style	0	5	5	0	4	1	0	0
10. The Thing About Eyebrows	4men- Man Style	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
11. Only You Can help You	4men- Man Health	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
12. The Secret To A Sexy butt	4men- Man Health	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
13. How The 'Gay Gene' Survived	4men- Man Health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Managing an Open relationship	4men- Man Relationships	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
15. Gay Sex fact Sheet	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
16. It's in his eyes	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0

17. Size DOES Matter	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2		0	0	0
18. Sex and The Senses	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0		0	0
19. Still In Love With Your Ex	4men- Man Relationships	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	0
20. Blind Dates and True love	4men- Man Relationships	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	0
21. Gay Men and Fake Orgasms	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	0
22. Do Looks Really Matter?	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0
23. Chemistry Between Men	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	N/A	N/A		0	0

24. How To Be A Power Bottom	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0
25. The Low Down on Bad Boys	4men- Man Relationships	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0		0	0
26. Fantasy Adventures	4men- Man Relationships	6	1	7	0	1	0		0	0
27. Impress Your Man	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0
28. Body Language For Gay Men	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0
29. Rugby Fetish And Gay Men	4men- Man Relationships	9	0	9	0	9	0		0	1
30. How To Be A Great Top	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0

31. Give And Take	4men- Man Relationships	0	1	1	0	1	0		0	0
32. Meaningful Matches with QueerLife Dating	4men- Man Relationships	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
33. The gay Moral Compass	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0		0	0
34. Its All About The Mouth (Sic)	4men- Man Relationships	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	0
35. Bottoms Up	4men- Man Relationships	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	0
36. Chubby Chasers and Their Men	4men- Man Relationships	1	1	2	0	1	1		0	0
37. Metrosexuality And gay Men	4men- Man Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0		0	0
38. Tops vs Bottoms		2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		0	0

	4men- Man Relationships								
39. Bi-Curious Experimenta tion	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
40. Doggy Style	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
41. Smell Matters More Than Size	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
42. A Matter Of Size	4men- Man Relationships	2	0	N/A	N/A	2	0	0	0
43. Finding the ONE	4women- Relationships	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	Men' s Bodie s 0
44. I was married to a Man and in love with a Woman	4women- Relationships	6	1	7	0	7	0	0	0

45. I'm A Shy Lesbian	4women- Relationships	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
46. Dressing Up like Gay Girls	4women- Fun	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
47. Intimacy Issues	4women- Health	2	0	N/A	N/A	2	0	0	0
48. De-constructing Lesbian Sex Myths	4women- Health	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	2	0
49. HIV and lesbians	4women- Health	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
50. What lesbians Should Wear	4women- Life	6	0	6	0	6	0	0	0
51. Lesbians can and DO Love	4women- Life	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
52. Butch Girl In Love With Butch Girl	4women- Life	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
53. About									

the Gaining Fetish	4women- Life	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
54. Traditional African lesbian Wedding	4women- Life	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
55. A Discussion on Biphobia	4women- Life	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
56. Shaleen The Human Rights Ambassador	4women- Opinions	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
57. Thoughts of Bigotry in South Africa	4women- Opinions	ND (interacial)	ND (interacial)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
58. Matching Socks and other stuff	4women- Opinions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
59. So What If most Lesbians Are Fat	4women- Opinions	8	0	8	0	0	8	0	0
60. Abuse in a Lesbian Relationship	4women- Opinions	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0

61. Feminine beauty Explained	4women-Opinions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
62. Fascism And Our Children	4women-Opinions	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 Boy
63. Lesbian beauty Routines	4women-Opinions	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
64. Mistaken Identity	4women-Opinions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
65. More Butch On TV Please	4women-Opinions	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
66. Help Keep Children Warm	4women-Opinions	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A