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Youth magazine cover design in a democratic South Africa: An analysis of *SL* and *Y-Magazine* between 1994 and 2008

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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Abstract

This study will analyse the images created on the front covers of youth magazines to determine the manner in which visual culture in South Africa has been shaped by societal changes between 1994 and 2008.

The country's foremost youth publications will be examined: namely "Student Life" (*SL*) and *Y-Magazine*. *SL* was established amidst the changing socio-political milieu of 1994. *Y-Magazine*, its sister publication, which began in 1998, was borne out of the need to connect with an urban black youth culture.

The advent of democracy has allowed for identities to be reconfigured from the rigid apartheid systems of racial classification. As new possibilities to break the social boundaries of the past have arisen, this study aims to chart the representations and messages that the relevant magazine covers disseminate regarding various identity issues such as race, class, gender and sexuality.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Visual culture and youth consumer culture have become increasingly entwined and together have a considerable influence on the formation of South African youth identities (Nuttal, 2003). This is particularly evident in the case of the magazine covers of youth titles as they combine the two ideologies in order to be commercially viable.

The magazine cover is essentially an exercise in creating a brand identity and the types of representations portrayed on the cover need to appeal to the wider market. Publishers, editors and circulation directors of magazines are aware of how important the cover image is as both a "newsstand impulse buy" and as a brand (Johnson and Prijatel 2000: 240).

The images and designs that appear on youth magazine titles are an important identifying factor as the average reader spends only between three to five seconds scanning a magazine cover before deciding whether or not to purchase the publication (Quigley, 1998: 18).

The front cover of a magazine is not only its most important advertisement but also serves to label its possessor. In other words, the type of publication that one buys is a social indicator for how "trendy" or "cool" one is as the models and images on magazine covers offer the reader an ideal to which to aspire (Gray et al, 1997: 507).

Regarding this aspirational value, Sumner (2000: 02) states that:

> Editors and journalists assume that the cover is simply a way to sell the magazine. It never occurs to editors whether their covers are an accurate reflection of the demographics of society, of social trends, or whether they reflect any of their own political or ideological orientations.

It is these considerations that this study aims to address within the context of the South African youth magazine market. Specifically, this study will compare and contrast the country's longest standing youth magazine titles, *SL* Magazine and *Y-Magazine*, in terms of

their visual representations of gender, race and sexuality, in order to make inferences on the implications that this may have for South African youth and society in general.

1.2 Aims

This study analyses the images created on the front covers of youth magazines to determine the manner in which visual culture in South Africa has been shaped by societal changes between 1994 and 2008.

The country's foremost youth publications have been examined: namely "Student Life" (*SL*) and *Y-Magazine*. *SL* was established amidst the changing socio-political milieu of 1994. *Y-Magazine*, its sister publication, which began in 1998, was borne out of the need to connect with an urban Black youth culture.

The advent of democracy has allowed for identities to be reconfigured from the rigid apartheid systems of racial classification. As new possibilities to break the social boundaries of the past have arisen, this study aims to chart the representations and messages that the relevant magazine covers disseminate regarding various identity issues such as race, class, gender and sexuality.

Visual culture has the ability to reflect certain changes in societal thinking. As such, it could be expected that South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 would signal a new visual language that represents this apparent new social order. A society in transition is seemingly more likely to experiment with elements of design. As with the anti-apartheid struggle, youth are often at the forefront of revolutionary ideas. Youth magazines, like *SL* and *Y-Magazine*, are therefore most likely to convey avant-garde advances in visual culture.

Popular culture products, like magazines, rely on design elements such as photography, fonts, spatial and colour layout in order to create images that will appeal to potential readers. For this reason, the study will concentrate on aspects of representation and visual culture.

1.3 Rationale

Magazines hold an immense amount of cultural capital in that they are essentially inescapable when advertised in public spaces. According to "AdReview" (2007), a South African media and marketing research publication concerned with statistics regarding the readership and revenue of various media, consumer magazine publications have risen steadily. There were 480 existing South African magazine publications in December 2000; this figure has since increased to 670 as of March 2007. In terms of magazine advertising revenue, this has increased over a ten year period: R548 million in 1996 to R1855 million in 2006, accounting for nearly 10% of advertising across all media. As with circulation, "AdReview" (2007: 26) indicates that the general readership of consumer magazines is reducing, while the most significant increase can be seen in the "youth market" which is up by 31.3% in terms of circulation.

The above figures reflect the perpetual popularity of magazines in the print industry, particularly that of youth magazines. There is thus a need to closer examine the messages they advocate. Magazines have evolved over time into an important part of society in that they occupy the public domain, yet their content appeals to the private concerns of individuals such as identity, sexuality, affirmation and self acceptance (Miller and McHoul, 1998: 09). Magazine covers are of particular interest, as they provide a "snapshot of the events, attitudes and styles of a particular moment in time. Yet that very specificity also makes them ephemeral: they are read and thrown away" (Mehta, 2003).

It is with this in mind that my study seeks to analyse magazine covers in order to understand the formation of both visual trends as well as the respective socio-economic climate in which these covers appeared over time. The cover is perhaps the most important component of the magazine and is a showcase for the product. It is what the public sees first, what registers foremost in people's minds: "it is undeniably there, staring up at you and you cannot help reacting to it in some way" (White 1982: 1).

Johnson and Prijatel (2000: 240) describe it as follows:

> The cover, as the magazine's face, creates that all-important first impression. It also provides both continuity through format recognition and change through intriguing cover lines from issue to issue.

The cover has the multi-faceted job of pleasing the reader, advertiser and the publisher. Mclean (1969: 5) states that in order for a cover to please these various groups, it must advertise its contents or at least not contradict these values; should be in character with the inside; and should be distinctively recognizable as the cover of its particular publication. White (1982: 2) expands on this by stating that:

> It has to be manipulated in such as way that the reader, the buyer, the advertiser can all judge the book by its cover. It must express character as well as content, it must be believable, individual, have its own identity and its own image.

In terms of profitability, this is paramount as 80% of newsstand sales are determined by what is on the cover (Johnson and Prijatel, 2000: 240).

The work of Philip Bell (2003) in his analysis of *Cleo* magazine is invaluable to this study as it also seeks to analyse magazine covers with the aim of charting social transformation through the visual. This Australian study will be discussed in greater detail within the literature review and methodology sections. However, it must be stated at this point that Bell's analysis transcends national boundaries as it analyzes universal themes such as race, identity and sexuality. The fact that one of its fundamental aims is to determine social change through images makes it perfectly suited to this research.

The study will focus on two of South Africa's leading youth publications: *SL* and *Y-Magazine*. Both publications use a colourful and vibrant cover design. However, while both target the same age group (18-26), their audience differs in terms of race and social background. *SL* magazine was established in 1994 and has a predominantly White readership of 115 000, while *Y-Magazine* was created in 1998, and has a strong Black following of 427 000 (AdReview, 2007: 25). Both magazines appear intended for a middle-class readership with their pricing, product-placement and content.

By assessing the changing cover design of these publications over a period of time, one gains valuable insight into the types of images that are used, as well as the overriding message that

these images disseminate. In this manner, a trend in preferences for particular images or messages may be highlighted, and in so doing, this provides a better understanding for the way in which social change has occurred, as well as how specific audiences are targeted.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 What themes and images on the magazine covers are frequently given preference over the given time period of 1994-2007?

1.4.2 How are changing patterns of cover design related to the social context in which they have been created?

1.5 Hypothesis

Despite democratic change in South Africa, visual culture, as found on the front covers of youth magazines, still relies on the use of conservative stereotypes with regard to race, identity and sexuality.

Chapter 2

Using theory pertinent to this study, this chapter will discuss the notions of 'popular culture', 'visual culture' and 'representation' within the context of magazine covers in the literature review section. Apart from this, the work of Philip Bell (2003) will be elaborated upon in the theoretical framework together with the concept of visual semiotics as both of these models are central to this study. Finally, the methodology section outlines the manner in which data was both collected and analysed.

2.1 Literature Review

Magazine covers reflect popular cultural trends. Youth magazines in particular use images to create an ideal of being trendy and fashionable, and in so doing accrue symbolic value (Gray et al, 1997: 507). In establishing the changing trends of cover design for the chosen magazines between 1994 until 2008, and how these images have been shaped by societal changes, it is important to first contextualize the term "popular culture". This term has greatly influenced the visual sphere of cultural production and consumption that we encounter in our daily lives (Hall, 1993; Storey, 1993; Kellner, 1995; McQuail, 2000; Tucker, 2007).

Fundamentally, popular culture is widely regarded as referring to those activities in which people create their societies and identities through active participation (Rogoff, 1998). This notion of interaction is essential to the concept of what is deemed "popular," as it is the consumer that ultimately places emphasis on, and creates meaning from, the cultural product that is consumed.

Popular culture, also referred to as "media culture," has come to dominate our everyday existence and thus plays an important role both in terms of the shaping of society as a whole, as well as with regard to one's self-perception. In plain terms, popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well liked by many people (Miller and McHoul, 1998: 03). While this may appear to be an oversimplification, this notion is dependent upon a quantitative index, i.e. the sales/market research figures of a particular product being representative of how successful that product may be.

A definition of “popular culture” based on a quantitative index alone is not sufficient; it can also be viewed as a “residual category” that is there to accommodate the “cultural texts and practices that fail to meet the required standards to qualify as high culture” (Storey, 1993: 07).

Essentially, this refers to popular culture as being a “substandard culture.” For a cultural product to be worthwhile, it needs to be complex. This ensures its status as “high culture,” and in turn guarantees the exclusivity of its audience (Hall, 1993). This concept will be referred to once more when dealing with cultural products and the aspirational value that these products contain.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1998) states that this form of cultural distinction in turn serves to create class distinctions, a theme which will be further expanded upon when discussing the concept of the “power and politics” inherent in images.

A second definition for popular culture is that of “mass culture,” which presupposes that cultural products are mass produced for mass consumption, with consumers being uncritical of what they purchase (McQuail, 2000). Thirdly, popular culture is seen to be representative of the working class individual, it is a concept of ‘the people for the people’ (Tucker, 2007). A problem with this approach is that it is difficult to determine who qualifies as ‘the people,’ this notion will be discussed further when concentrating on issues of identity formation. In this light, popular culture can be seen as a form of hegemonic reinforcement i.e. the way in which dominant groups in society win the consent of the subordinate groups in society.

Finally, popular culture has been greatly influenced by notions of postmodernism, and more specifically, believes that popular culture no longer recognises the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture. Essentially, postmodernists believe that all culture is commercial culture. This concept of the commodification of culture will be looked at more closely when considering the rise of consumer culture (Jenks, 1995).

The concept of popular culture is an unstable one, constantly evolving and creating meaning from that which is deemed to be desirable. Storey (1993: 18) reaffirms this notion when he states that:

> It must be remembered that popular culture is not an historically fixed set of popular texts and practices, nor is it an historically fixed conceptual category. The object under theoretical scrutiny is both historically variable, and always in part constructed by the very act of theoretical engagement.

Whereas some cultural theorists (Lister and Wells, 2001) view popular culture as being dependent upon the participation and engagement of the masses, others (Kellner, 1995; Mitchell, 1995) reject the term "popular culture." They are of the opinion that the term popular culture "covers over the fact that it is a top-down form of culture which often reduces the audience to a passive receiver of pre-digested meanings" (Kellner, 1995: 33).

According to them, the term popular culture does not accommodate for a distinction between culture produced by "the people," and that of mass produced media culture. As such, terms such as "popular culture" and "mass culture" are viewed as being ideologically loaded. This in turn leads to an uncritical celebration of media and consumer culture. Instead, they believe that "culture" and "communication" should be the focal points.

As stated before, our lives have become increasingly dependent upon and mediated by forms of what is deemed to be "popular culture." This concept is vital in understanding the role that cultural products such as magazines play in our daily lives. The stresses of modern life have led to a chaotic existence in which individuals are perpetually occupied with one task or another. As a result, social communication has suffered and media in turn, have come to fill the vacuum. According to Tucker (2007: 01):

> Family time at the dinner table used to be sacrosanct. Nutritionists and psychologists will tell you that having dinner together uninterrupted is a good thing. We have moved from that to 'quality time,' where both parents were working. Now we've gone from family time to quality time to media time, or defining activities around media. We spend time together by using media in proximity to one another, in the same house or in the same car, but the media itself is often separate. The more we use technology, the less time we have to nurture our primary relationships. The reason is simple: Communications systems alter value systems. We're spending more time communicating via social networks, ignoring those in our immediate environment. Of

> course we're lonely most of the day. We're searching for meaningful relationships in front of screens and monitors.

This view is supported by McQuail (2000: 394) who states that “With the advent of media culture, individuals are subjected to an unprecedented flow of sights and sounds into one’s home, and new virtual worlds of entertainment, information, sex, and politics.” He believes that this has led to a reordering of perceptions regarding “space and time, erasing distinctions between reality and media image, while producing new modes of experience and subjectivity.”

Media usage is shaped by circumstances of time and place, and by social and cultural habits; as such, audiences of particular genres of “popular culture” subscribe to these products for various social reasons. Media culture encourages individuals to identify with the dominant social and political ideologies, positions, and representations (Hall, 1993; Mirzoeff, 1998; Wright, 1999; Cartwright and Sturken, 2001).

In a mediated culture, media are no longer media for media’s sake, but have become an indispensable companion throughout our everyday life. As a consequence for the consumer, this has led to the blurring of lines between what is traditionally considered to be the public and private spheres. Certain forms of media have a distinctly public character, both in terms of location i.e. being outside of one’s home/personal space, as well as with regard to the greater social significance of being a part of a shared cultural experience (Kellner, 1995; Rogoff, 1998; McQuail, 2000)

A further distinction is drawn in that public audience experience requires a certain level of identification with a wider social grouping; while the private type of audience experience is constructed according to personal mood and circumstance and does not involve any reference to society or even to other people.

Media products such as magazines, while circulating within the public sphere of the economy, have come to occupy the private spaces of those who consume them. With regard to private audiences and their consumption of cultural products, McQuail (2000: 396) contends that “when not purely introspective, it is likely to be concerned with self

comparison and matching with a media model, role or personality in search for an acceptable identity for public self-presentation."

Magazines occupy social space within the sphere of popular culture and are seen as the point of reference for what is deemed socially acceptable, and perhaps more importantly, that which is construed as being "popular." They refer to fundamental questions such as identity, sexuality, affirmation and self acceptance. Thus, popular culture can be seen as a reflection of everyday life. Miller and McHoul (1998: 09) state that "The everyday is invisible but ever present. It is full of contradictions and it can be transcended, passed over, and gone beyond, as when the drudgery of the workday is said to be transformed via popular cultural forms and flings."

Some popular culture theorists believe that as an escape from social misery, or as a distraction from the concerns of everyday life, people turn to media culture to produce some meaning and value in their lives. This is as a result of cultural capital consisting of the meanings and pleasures available to the subordinate (consumers) to express and promote their interests, and always exists in a stance of resistance to the forces of domination (producers). It is these ideologies that empower the subordinate which enable them to produce resistive meanings and pleasures that are, in their own right, a form of social power (Giroux, 1994; Docker, 1995; Lister and Wells, 2001; Fishwick, 2002).

Magazines serve this selfsame function, particularly with regard to identity formation, which, as stated previously, is linked to notions of cultural consumption within the private sphere. Fishwick (2002) states that audiences may resist the dominant meanings and messages; create their own readings and appropriations of mass produced culture; and use their culture as resources to empower themselves and to invent their own meanings and identities. Unlike pre-modern societies in which identity was seen as fixed and stable, postmodern identity has become associated with transformation and innovation. This idea of a continually changing fragmented self displays itself clearly within the context of the magazine cover, as the models and images used are never the same, but constantly evolving.

As magazine covers are visual products which are consumed by the gaze of the viewer, it is important to contextualize the notion of the image within what is termed "visual culture." In

his critique of what constitutes visual culture, Nicholas Mirzoeff (1998: 03) states that "visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer." Operating within a consumer driven market, magazine sales are dependent upon the notion of consumption, particularly that of images.

While they are inextricably linked, visual culture is not merely a sub-division of popular culture, but can be seen as an entirely separate field of study of its own (Lister and Wells, 2001: 62). The rapid rise in popularity of imaging and visual technology in the 20th century has allowed for everyday experiences to fall within the realm of visual culture (Lister and Wells, 2001; Dikovitskaya, 2006). This ranges from photography, artwork and video; to public signage, magazines and the internet (Holly, 1996; Mirzoeff, 1998).

As a field of study, visual culture cannot be confined to the study of images, but must also take into account the importance of the visual in creating meaning within everyday shared experience (Holly, 1996; Dikovitskaya, 2006). The word "idea" derives from the Greek verb meaning "to see." This lexical etymology is an indication that western culture is guided by a visual paradigm (Jenks, 1995). While heightened visualising is an attribute of our era, visual culture does not depend on pictures themselves, but on the modern tendency to picture or visualise existence (Mirzoeff, 1998: 4).

Viewers bring with them prior knowledge and assumptions from general experience which they draw upon in order to create meaning from visuals (Baxandall, 1972; Bryson, 1992; Hall, 1993; Jenks, 1995; Holly, 1996; Mirzoeff, 1998; Mitchell, 2002; Dikovitskaya, 2006). This concept serves to highlight the unity of culture rather than revealing the difference in reception of different groups i.e. either gender, social or religious groups (Bryson, 1992). Within the field of visual culture, images, as opposed to written texts are central to the way in which the world is represented (Alpers, 1993). As sight plays a vital role in our everyday interactions, modern culture has elected the visual to the dual status of being both the primary medium for communication and also "the sole ingress to our accumulated symbolic treasury" (Jay, 1992).

As such, visual culture should not merely concentrate on the study of objects, but of "subjects caught in the congeries of cultural meanings" (Holly, 1996: 40). Visual culture is thus aligned

with interpretation rather than mere perception (Bryson, 1992). Essentially, it is an approach to the study of contemporary living from the standpoint of the consumer rather than the producer, and is a means of understanding the consumer's response to visual media (Mirzoeff, 1998; Dikovitskaya, 2006).

A fundamental concept of visual studies is that the experience of the visual is deeply contextual, ideological and political (Dikovitskaya, 2006). The objects being studied must therefore be determined by the type of knowledge that one seeks to create and by the specific uses for that study (Crimp, 1999). With regard to this study, the type of knowledge that it seeks to create is based on the cover images of the chosen magazines, and the manner in which they reflect how South Africa has changed socially since 1994. Placing the study within visual culture is important as it is a field for the study of both the social construction of the visual and the visual construction of the social (Mitchell, 2002).

It must be noted that while 'visual culture' is a broad term that may be applied to various derivatives such as visual art and film, it is not solely limited to magazine covers. As such, youth magazine covers account for only a small portion of the various facets that fall under this umbrella which may only be true for this study.

It must also be established that magazine covers are designed with the specific purpose of appealing to a particular group of people within a particular social context; and that the emergence of trends regarding the designs of magazine covers are based on and inspired by the positive reception of the relevant designs by consumers. The primary product of media organisations is not contents, but audiences (Jensen 1990: 143).

Media deliver audience attention to advertisers in that they construct an apparently attractive lifestyle for which people are willing to pay money. We live in a world in which the production and consumption of photographic images has come to act as a substitute for first-hand experience, and this ultimately contributes to the economy, politics and the pursuit of happiness in one's private life (Lister 1995: 04).

Magazines have long been viewed as the means through which this elusive happiness can be achieved with their emphasis on beauty, lifestyle, personal and health matters. Media do not

merely tell people what to think, but what to think about (Jensen 1990: 146). Much like the process of advertising, it is widely held that the cover image on a magazine needs to catch the attention of a potential buyer:

> The fact that a cover picture illustrates something inside the magazine, however aptly, is irrelevant, since no one knows what is inside the magazine until he has picked it up and got past the cover. The first, last, and overriding consideration is, is it a good cover picture? (Maclean 1969: 05)

With a plethora of magazine titles competing to be bought, the cover image needs to catch the eye in order to create an impact on the viewer. The capacity of images to affect us as viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they invoke and the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they are viewed. It is through the practice of "looking" that images gain their significance (Cartwright and Sturken 2001: 10).

Photographs are a product of a particular culture, they are only perceived as real by cultural convention and appear to be realistic because we have been taught to view them as such (Wright 1999: 16). The interpretation of images is not only highly subconscious, but also subject bound (Bal 1994: 21). That is to say that consumers of images make their own meanings from what is viewed. This concept is highlighted by Storey (1994: 529) when he asserts that:

> People bring living identities to commerce and the consumption of cultural commodities as well as being formed there. They bring experiences, feelings, social position and social memberships to their encounter with commerce. Hence they bring a necessary creative symbolic pressure, not only to make sense of cultural commodities, but partly through them also to make sense of contradiction and structure as they experience them.

Kellner (1995: 18) further highlights the importance of images and states that "in our social interactions, mass produced images guide our presentation of the self in everyday life, our ways of relating to others, and the creation of our social values and goals."

This concept is vital to this study, as it focuses on how producers of images create meaning through the social knowledge of consumers. A particular image on a magazine cover will invoke varied reactions from varied individuals depending on their social background and the current social context that they occupy. As such this leads to the issue of representation, which is inextricably linked to notions of power and politics

Visual culture is integral to ideologies and power relations (Cartwright and Sturken 2001: 08) as the act of looking in itself is deeply philosophical, and has socio-political implications. Cartwright and Sturken (2001: 08) define ideology as "the broad but indispensable, shared set of values and beliefs through which individuals live out their complex relations to a range of social structures." The most important aspect of ideologies is that they appear to be natural or given rather than part of a system of belief. They go on to state that practices of looking are intimately tied to ideology:

> The image culture in which we live is an arena of diverse and often conflicting ideologies. Images are elements of contemporary advertising and consumer culture through which assumptions about beauty, desire, glamour, and social value are both constructed and responded to (Cartwright and Sturken 2001: 08).

This is particularly pertinent when applied to the nature of visuals on magazine covers and what they have come to represent. The practice of representation through images serves to highlight how certain ideologies are constructed. This is vital in analyzing the development of magazine cover designs in order to determine trends of what is represented. Representation is seen as a means of exercising power, not a means of escaping from the world, but of acting upon it. Through the process of representation, one makes sense of the world in a manner which serves one's own interest (Bailey and Hall, 1992; Hall, 1992; Buntman, 1994; Croteau and Hoynes, 1997; Cartwright and Sturken, 2001).

Images have "meaning potentials," which in turn create their own symbolic power. In analyzing the types of camera angles or "point of view" used in the taking of photographs and construction of images, symbolic relations between image producers and viewers is established. For example:

> In the case of the vertical angle, this relation will be one of symbolic power, if you look down on something, you look at it from a position of symbolic power. If you look up at something, that something has some kind of symbolic power of you. At eye – level there is a relation of symbolic equality (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 135).

It is important to note of course, that symbolic relations are not real relations, as Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 135) point out, they have the ability to "lie." Images have the power to create a sense of intimacy between the viewer and the image that might not necessarily be present.

The act of viewing images is a form of political resistance in which visual codes determine who is allowed to look and who is forbidden (Rogoff, 1998). As such, the construction of magazine covers is dependent upon various modes of address in which viewers seek to identify with the person on the cover. As Tolson (1996: 04) points out "identification in narrative texts is a powerful hook which supports the reproduction of mythology, some of the attention grabbing devices do make an appeal to the identity of the consumer ('Could that be me?' 'Am I that person?' 'Yes, it's really me!')."

In assessing the emerging trends of the way in which magazine covers are designed, the way in which these have changed from previous designs underlines the need for constant change. The "historical specificity" of images is apparent as visual culture is a "necessarily historical subject, based on the recognition that the visual image is not stable, but changes its relationship to exterior reality at particular moments of modernity" (Mirzoeff 1998: 08).

This view that these new trends are part of the problem, rather than the solution, is reaffirmed by other theorists (Rogoff, 1998; McQuail, 2000; Lister and Wells, 2001). They believe that it encourages superficiality rather than substance, cynicism rather than belief and the need for constant change rather than the stability of tradition. Consumerism is seen to encourage this yearning for a fluid individualism which negates the notion of a stable identity in that it speaks to everyone and yet no one in particular.

As discussed earlier, magazines have become commodities within the private sphere of cultural consumption, as such; leisure and culture have become the primary focus of everyday life. As Kellner (1995: 18) puts it "in an era in which individuals allegedly gain primary

gratification from consuming goods and leisure activities…contemporary culture is in a state of ferment and change."

Philip Bell's (2003) study of the Australian women's lifestyle magazine *Cleo*, is of particular relevance to this study. Bell makes use of a visual content analysis of its covers over a 25 year period. He then makes inferences based on his findings regarding the changing identities of women, the increased 'sexualisation' of youth culture, and the evolving social landscape in which these covers are situated. The adaption of this study for a South African context will be discussed further in the methodology section.

With regard to this study, I identify the ways in which the chosen South African publications have changed visually over the given time period. The represented visual identities on the cover will also be explored. Apart from this, the notion of the "aspirational market" will be expanded. More specifically, as previously discussed, issues of class distinction will be related to the target market of the relevant publications. Finally, the relevant magazine covers will be analysed in relation to graphic design theory in order to understand what the changing designs reveal about societal change.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Whether subconsciously or otherwise, we consume images on a daily basis which to an extent inform our understanding of the world in which we live. Visual elements used in magazine covers create specific representations of society. How viewers understand these images relies on their particular socialization, and often their positions of power in society. An image often has an ideological hold on its viewers with regard to how it represents the world to them. To understand these constantly changing social dynamics, the concept of "representation" needs to be further expanded.

The relationship and trends of society are reflected in its visual arts (Buntman, 1994: 01). However, representation also implies that images and texts do not only reflect their sources but refashion them according to pictorial or textual codes (Chaplin 1994: 01).

Representation refers to what is ‘re-presented’ of the prevailing reality of society by way of the inclusion and omission of certain texts. Representations then, are the result of processes of selection that invariably mean that certain aspects of reality are highlighted while others are neglected (Croteau and Hoynes 1997: 134).

Regarding magazine cover design, designers and editors use images, colours and texts to construct a particular representation of the world. Media do not reflect reality, but instead represent it through the use of social constructs. The label "social construction" emphasises the problematic nature of social reality. Essentially, it refers to the ideal that human beings are not merely acted upon by social forces, but rather that actors are constantly shaping and creating their own social worlds in and through interaction with others (Segal et al, 1992: 125). This is highlighted further by Berger and Luckman (1966: 60) who state that:

> However massive it may appear to the individual, [the institutional world] is a humanly produced constructed objectivity, it does not acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it.

Observing that representation is a “formative, not merely an expressive place”, anthropologists concerned with cultural production attend to the ways in which products reflect and construct consciousness, identities, social categories, and histories. They view representation as a historically situated process of construction that occurs within institutional and sociological parameters that can both limit and create possibilities (Mahon, 2000: 470).

Interacting with media products such as magazine covers can be viewed as a complex process of negotiation on the part of the viewer, who uses and interprets the covers according to the logic of their own social, cultural and individual circumstances. Magazine covers (and media in general) represent the collective hopes, fears and fantasies of its readership (McQuail, 2002: 57).

Visual imagery is paramount in terms of the mass media and the way in which society is represented, as well as the ideological hegemony that this perpetuates (Hawkins 1998: 48). “A magazine cover fixes an image of the world...even for those who don’t buy it” (Dyer 2002: 264).

Regarding the link between images and societal attitudes, Gray et al. (1997: 506) state that "in post-modern times the production and consumption of images has assumed particular importance." They attribute this to the loss of imposed self-identity and the rise of consumer culture. It is believed that people now strive to establish their identity by referencing themselves through the image of the products and lifestyles they consume, as opposed to class structures and social backgrounds (Bauman, 1988; Giddens 1991). Essentially, images have become commodities.

Berger (1972: 132) believes that magazine images (as with all images displayed in public spaces) are important indicators of social relations. The contrast between the interpretations of these images with the actual condition of society is often very stark. Publicity images such as those on magazine covers propose a glamorous alternative to banal everyday life.

> The power of the glamorous resides in their supposed happiness…It is this which explains the absent, unfocused look of so many glamour images. They look out over the looks of envy which sustain them (Berger, 1972: 133).

In this way, viewers are encouraged to be transformed by way of purchasing various products based solely on the images they portray. The social constructions here rarely appear as such to the reader and may be largely unconscious on the part of the image producer as well (Gamson et al, 1992: 382). "A magazine cover fixes an image of the world...even for those who don't buy it" (Dyer 2002: 264).

In terms of traditional visual culture theory, the analysis of images is dependent upon several broad themes, namely: the context of viewing, context of production, pictorial conventions, photographic conventions, social conventions and lastly, recognition and identity (Lister and Wells, 2003).

With regard to the context of viewing, two vital questions must be answered. Firstly, where is the image? This is important in order to contextualise our expectations of what the image represents e.g. Does it appear in the public or private sphere? Does it require insightful contemplation, or can it be understood by merely glancing at it in our daily lives? The second question asks why the viewer is looking at the photograph. This is a philosophical question

which seeks to understand the pleasure that is being sought by the viewer in looking at a particular image. Of importance is the notion that the seeking out of a particular image is an exercise of power in that we privilege that which is being looked at while disregarding other images (Lister and Wells, 2003). In terms of my study, magazine covers fall within the realm of both public and private as they appear on newsstands as advertisements, but then enter the private sphere once purchased. The privileging of certain images refers to power relations and can be applied to editorial and production decisions in choosing the cover images. This will be further explored within the methodology section, specifically with regard to the interviews of the production editors.

The question posed by the context of production is: how did the image get here? The intention of this question is to determine the social contexts in which images are produced as visuals are created because of, and in response to, social events (Hamilton, 1995: 182). As the societal context in which magazine covers are created is a fundamental aim of the study, this will be kept in mind when analysing the images.

A pictorial/photographic convention is understood to be a socially accepted way of producing images. Viewers need to be able to both understand and relate to an image. Just as grammar forms part of language and is necessary in order to speak and be understood, so too are there certain visual codes which are universally expected and accepted (Baxandall, 1988). With regard to magazine covers this relates to aspects such as the use of logos, cover lines and certain types of photography which consumers identify as being associated with magazines.

Much like pictorial conventions, social conventions refer to what is expected and accepted within the production of images. However, emphasis is placed on the social interactions that are portrayed. This relies on photographic and representation theory. Simply put, photographs are seen as markers of reality which contain conventions which are subconsciously understood, or as Barthe (1977: 17) describes, as a “message without a code.” When applied to magazine covers, particularly to South African magazines since 1994, this might refer to the representation of raced subjects, interracial couples or indeed fluid sexual identities which previously would have been viewed as taboo and unconventional.

Lastly, regarding recognition and identity, the aim is to see how meaning is encoded in particular photographs (Lister and Wells, 2003). Photographs contain material qualities which viewers perceive in their indexical relation to what is represented e.g. pictures of African refugees use the physical signs of arid landscapes and individuals in distress to signify poverty and hardship (Simpson, 1985). This also concerns who the viewer is and how they are 'placed' to look, as the practice of viewing in turn grants the viewer a form of identity in relation to the image. As mentioned in the literature review, identities are seen as being in constant flux.

Theorists such as Laplanche and Pontalis (1988) agree with the view that post-modern identities are a pastiche of various elements which individuals assimilate into their persona, and place emphasis on the influence of the visual. "Identities are positional in relation to the discourses around us, that is why the notion of representation is so important – identity can only be articulated as a set of representations" (Bailey and Hall, 1992: 20). With regard to this study, the notion of identity and representation is useful in order to determine how the "aspirational market" is targeted and how these have changed visually between 1994 until 2008.

Visual images inform the receiving culture, which in turn affects the attitudes of both the makers and consumers of visual texts, either by reinforcing ideals or altering perceptions. However visual images also operate as the material evidence which encapsulates the prevalent values and ideas of a particular society (Buntman 1994: 03).

It is these 'values' and 'ideas' that will be identified through the analysis of the relevant publications. As mentioned before, *Y-Magazine* is targeted at a predominantly Black market, while *SL* caters for a generally White readership. With this in mind, it can be said that the representations of race and the practice of stereotyping form part of the production process of these publications, whether subconsciously or otherwise. By visually analysing these texts it can be determined as to who is privileged and towards whom bias is shown.

The term ‘race’ is a social construct whose representation essentially serves to reinforce social, political and economic inequality. As such race remains interlinked with other markers of social inequality like class and gender (Banton, 2000: 62).

Media theorists have shown how often White people are portrayed in media texts as the “norm”, ‘just’ human. ‘Black’ people however are usually presented simply as a group or representative of a group. They can only speak for their race (Dyer 2000: 539-540; Hall, 1992).

Black people are often portrayed as “the other,” being Black in relation to the White man i.e. being depicted as that which they are not – White. By being represented in this manner, the man of colour feels not only inferiority on a personal level, but also a sense of non-existence (Fanon 2000: 257).

The representation of race and gender is often affected by social bias. Therefore often its depiction in the media is based on stereotypes and simplistic and often derogatory stock images (Ferguson, 1998; Williams, 2003). Media’s representation of what can be deemed ‘racial’ or ‘ethnic’ provides us with a well “well-worn script for a very familiar ‘racial’ play in which we are all performers in some regard or other” (Downing and Husband, 2005: 43).

This dissertation looks particularly at how these representations are visually constructed. Therefore semiotic analysis becomes a key theoretical framework: “Rather than rehearsing old debates about what visual representations count as art; semiotic theory explores how communication works at the visual level” (Chaplin 1994: 81).

2.2.1 Visual Semiotics

Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress are pioneers in the analysis of the visual dimension of printed texts. They consider texts from “a multimodal perspective, to include semiotic modes that accompany language or through which language is realized” (Garrett and Bell in Fairclough 1995: 14). Textual analysis must describe the interplay between the verbal and the

visual, and effectively analyse visually expressed meanings (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1998: 186–7).

The trend towards a multimodal appreciation of meaning making centers around two issues. First, the de-centering of language as favoured meaning making; and second, the re-visiting and blurring of the traditional boundaries between the roles allocated to language, image, page layout, document design etc (Iedema 2003).

According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 134), who draw heavily on the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen; “Social semiotics of visual communication involves the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted.”

Semiotics has traditionally been viewed as the "study of signs." For a sign to exist there must be meaning or content (the signified) manifested through some form of expression or representation (the sign). Semiotics provides us with a potentially unifying conceptual framework and a set of methods and terms for use across the full range of signifying practices, which include “gesture, posture, dress, writing, speech, photography, film, television, and radio” (Harrison 2003).

Social semiotics is a branch in the field of semiotics. It is a synthesis of several modern approaches to the study of social meaning and action. While formal semiotics is concerned with the systematic study of the systems of signs themselves; social semiotics goes on to ask how people use signs in order to construct meaning within society (Lemke 1990: 183).

It originates from a synthesis of structuralist semiotics and Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (Aiello 2007). More specifically, visual social semiotics, as defined by Jewitt and Oyama (2001) “is functionalist in the sense that it considers all visual texts as having been developed to perform specific actions, or semiotic work.”

The structuralist semiotic approach to representation has been typically interested in deconstructing texts in order to identify codes, or sets of rules that are agreed upon within a given cultural system, and that thus allow the members of the same culture to understand each other by attaching the same meanings to the same signs (Aiello 2007). *SL* and *Y-Magazine* have specific target markets based on both race and class. As such, it could be argued that the readers of one magazine may not necessarily understand the content of the other magazine with regard to factors such as slang terminology or visual icons and what they represent. This is as a result of readers having different social and cultural backgrounds.

The main aim of social semiotics is to look systematically at how "textual strategies" are deployed to convey certain meanings. Deconstructing a visual text in a systematic manner is a way in which to subject its meanings to critical analysis (Iedema 2003).

For social semioticians, the key issue is who creates the rules concerning representation and how and why they might be changed (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 135). It is important to establish therefore who has the power to create and interpret representations of post-apartheid youth.

Knowledge of the three categories of images: the icon, index, and symbol are the first step in understanding visual social semiotics (Harrison, 2003: 06). An image is iconic if it bears a similarity or resemblance to what we already know or conceive about an object or person. Icons include paintings, maps, and photographs and can range from very realistic to very simplistic.

With regard to indexical images, an image is considered to be indexical if it is recognizable, not because of any similarity to an object or person, but because we understand the relationship between the image and the concept that it stands for.

Lastly, concerning symbols, an image can be deemed a symbol when it has no visual or conceptual connection to an object or person. We know the meaning of the image only

because of convention; that is, it is something we have learned. A word, for example, is a symbol because it does not resemble what it stands for, nor does it have any indexical relationship to what it signifies.

This discussion will now focus solely on the framework used by Jewitt and Oyama as this methodology will be adapted for use in the dissertation. They believe that social semiotics replaces the notion of code with that of semiotic resource. Unlike code, the notion of resource accounts for change and power imbalance in the visual signification process, as defined by its two ends: representation (or, encoding) and interpretation (decoding) (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 134).

2.2.2 Images and Meaning

Only certain social actors such as the producers of mass images and visual grammars have the power to establish as well as break the rules of visual representation. This is because semiotic resources are not merely means of communicative exchange, but have been produced in the course of cultural histories, stemming from specific interests and purposes. The way in which semiotic resources are mobilized in a text creates a field of meaning potentials, that is, "a field of possible meanings, which need to be activated by the producers and viewers of images" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 135). However, as discussed previously in the literature review, meanings are not permanently fixed or certain.

Images have "meaning potentials," which in turn create their own symbolic power. In analyzing the types of camera angles or "points of view" used in the taking of photographs and construction of images, symbolic relations between image producers and viewers is established. For example:

> In the case of the vertical angle this relation will be one of symbolic power, if you look down on something, you look at it from a position of symbolic power. If you look up at something, that something has some kind of symbolic power of you. At eye – level there is a relation of symbolic equality (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 135).

Apart from this, Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 141) differentiate three types of "meaning" which can be used to further interrogate visuals in order to draw inferences, namely; representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. Representational meaning concerns the people, places, and objects within an image (the represented participants) in terms of their "function of relating visual participants to each other in meaningful ways." Representational meaning can be described through "narrative structures" as well as "conceptual structures;" the narrative structures relating participants in terms of 'doings' and 'happenings', of the unfolding of actions, events or processes of change, while the conceptual structures "represent participants in terms of their more generalized, stable or timeless essences" (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 141).

With regard to interactive meaning, images can create particular relations between viewers and the world inside the 'picture frame'. In this way they interact with viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented. Within this heading are three factors which influence interaction, "contact," "distance" and "point of view" (which has already been elaborated upon). Contact refers to the interaction between the viewer of the image and the represented person/object, essentially the represented person or object may either be able to "offer" something to, or "demand" something of, the viewer by way of posture, facial expression and gesture. With regard to distance, Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 146) draw on the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) which will be further expanded upon in the methodology section. This translates into the 'size of frame' of shots." Images which are considered to be "close-ups" suggest a personal and intimate relationship, while "medium shots" suggest a social relationship, whereas "long shots" portray impersonal relationship.

Lastly, compositional meaning seeks to examine the way in which the representational and interactive meanings relate to each other and integrate into a meaningful whole. This is observed through the means of assessing the "informational value", "framing", "salience" and "modality" of an image (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 145).

The emphasis of this study will therefore be on the analyses of the "semiotic resources" used to create the images. Thereafter, the aim is to understand the relations of power and societal contexts that allow these resources to be imbued with particular meanings.

2.2.3 Values and Variables as used by Philip Bell's analysis of Cleo magazine covers

Bell's content analysis of *Cleo* draws heavily upon the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) who outline the relevant theoretical semiological concepts in the context of visuals. The three most significant as used by Bell are: Social distance, visual modality and behavior.

Social Distance

Social distance (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 129-131) relates to the idea that:

> In everyday interaction, social relations determine the distance (literally and figuratively) we keep from one another.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 130) when depicting human or "quasi- human" participants, image producers decide whether to make them look at the viewer or not. At the same time, they need to consider whether to portray them as close to or far away from the viewer. The choice of distance suggests different relations between viewers and the represented participant/s. As with film and television terminology, the size of the frame in which the subject is represented is defined in relation to the human body (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 130):

> Even though distance is strictly speaking, a continuum, the 'language of film and television' has imposed a set of distinct cut-off points on this continuum, in the same way as languages impose cut-off points on the continuum of vowels we can produce.

Thus, the 'close-up' shows the head and shoulders of the subject, while the 'extreme-close up' shows anything less than that. The 'medium-close shot' cuts off the subject

approximately at the waist, the ‘medium-shot’ at the knees; while the ‘medium-long shot’ shows the full figure of the subject. In the ‘long-shot’ the human body occupies half the height of the frame, while the ‘very-long shot’ is wider than this. While stylistic variants from these angles might appear, they are always referred to in terms of the aforementioned system (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 130).

Essentially, social distance refers to how much of the human body is represented in the frame of a particular image. Bell (2003) makes further use of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 130) and further categorizes social distance into the following six values (Bell 2003: 29): Intimate, close personal, far personal, close social, far social, and lastly, public. Each of these values has a particular semiological meaning which can be applied when analysing images.

According to Edward Hall (1966: 110-20) individuals carry a set of invisible boundaries beyond which we allow only certain kinds of people to come. The location of these invisible boundaries is determined by configurations of “sensory potentialities” – by whether or not a certain distance allows us to smell or touch the other person for example, as well as by how much of the other person we are able to see with our peripheral vision. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) and Bell (2003) who draws on their work, apply Hall’s (1966) theory to their respective studies.

‘Close personal distance’ is the distance at which ‘one can hold or grasp the other person’ and therefore also the distance between people who have an intimate relationship with each other. As such, non-intimates cannot come this close, and if they do so, it will be experienced as an act of aggression. ‘Far personal distance’ is the distance that ‘extends from a point that is just outside easy touching distance by one person to a point where two people can touch fingers if they both extend their arms’, the distance at which ‘subjects of personal interests and involvements are discussed’. ‘Close social distance’ begins just outside this range and is the distance at which ‘impersonal business occurs’. ‘Far social distance’ is the distance to which people move when they are ordered to step back in order to be viewed – ‘business and social interaction conducted at this distance has a more formal and impersonal character than in the close phase’. Finally, ‘public distance’ refers to anything further than ‘far social distance’ i.e. ‘the distance between people who are and are to remain strangers’ (Kress and van Leeuwen:

1996: 131). It is important to note that these judgements apply within a particular cultural system, and Hall (1966) acknowledges that misunderstandings may arise from intercultural difference in the interpretation of distance.

In terms of the way in which these values correspond to the camera angles used in magazine cover photography, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 131) cite Hall (1964) who outlines the following. At close personal distance the head and shoulders of the subject are visible. Far personal distance shows the subject from the waist up, while from close social distance we see the entire figure. Far social distance portrays the entire figure with "space around it;" while at public distance we see the torso and at least four or five other individuals.

Modality

Regarding visual modality, Bell's second variable based on the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), it can be defined as "the represented 'realism' of an image" (Bell 2003: 30), and concerns whether an image is portrayed as realistic and lifelike, or as something that can be classified as either a fantasy or caricature. The term 'modality' is a linguistic one and refers to the value or credibility of statements about the world. Modality is 'interpersonal' rather than 'ideational' in that it does not express absolute truth or falsehoods, it produces shared truths aligning readers and viewers with what they hold to be true for themselves, while distancing from others whose values they do not share (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 160). In terms of visual modality, visuals can represent people, places and things as though they are real. Here too, modality judgements are social and dependent upon what is considered real in the social group for which the representation is primarily intended. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 256) modality results from:

> The degree to which certain means of pictorial expressions (colour, representational detail, depth, tonal shades, etc.) are used. Each of these dimensions can be seen as a scale running from the absence of any rendition of detail to maximal representation of detail, or from the absence of any rendition of depth to maximally deep perspective.

Reality is based upon the frequency of these factors within a specific image; the less they appear, the more "abstract" the image, while the more prevalent they are, the more realistic the image can be said to be. However, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 256) argue that modality is context dependent i.e. "modality is coded according to particular 'orientations' appropriate to different conventional domains of representation." The domains they distinguish include scientific/technological, abstract, naturalistic and sensory. For purposes of this study (as with Bell's), a 'sensory' coding orientation is appropriate, as this refers to images which provide "sensuous and sensory pleasure to the viewer" (Bell 2003: 30).

Highly saturated colour conveys high modality within modern display advertising such as youth magazines. As such, modality can be defined as the represented 'realism' of an image, given the sensory coding orientation, based on degrees of colour saturation. Three values can be distinguished for this variable: high, medium and low. High sensory modality regards images that use highly saturated colours naturalistically. Medium sensory modality refers to images that use less saturated, 'washed out' or 'ethereal' use of pastels. Finally, low sensory modality concerns monochrome (black-white) images only (Bell 2003: 30).

Behaviour

Lastly, with regard to behavior, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 122-3) discuss the way in which interaction between the viewer and the individuals shown in images is affected by the gaze of the represented participants. Images make 'demands' when participants look directly at the viewer because vectors, or lines of direction, connect the viewer and participant on a formal (and imaginary) level:

> ...the participant's gaze ... [or gesture] demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her. Exactly what kind of relation is then signified by other means, for instance by the facial expression of the represented participants. They may smile, in which case the viewer is asked to enter into a relation of social affinity with them; they may stare at the viewer with cold disdain, in which case the viewer is asked to relate to them, perhaps, as an inferior relates to a superior; they may seductively pout at the viewer, in which case the viewer is asked to desire them.... In each case the image wants something

> from the viewers – wants them to do something (come closer, stay at a distance) or to form a pseudo-social bond of a particular kind with the represented participant. And in doing this, images define to some extent who the viewer is (e.g. male, inferior to the represented participant, etc.), and in that way exclude other viewers (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 122-3).

On the other hand, images make 'offers' when represented participants look away from the viewer. In such cases, the viewer is invited to participate as an 'invisible onlooker' and the image participants are offered as "items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case" (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 124).

From a different theoretical perspective, Goffman (1979) has analysed the ways in which gendered bodies are represented in magazines. He distinguished several 'rituals of subordination' or 'infantile' bodily poses. These include 'head canting'(tilting the head down or sideways while looking up), 'bashful knee-bending' (where one knee is bent) and self touching (as opposed to holding or performing work with one's hands). Goffman analysed these represented behaviours in terms of power, that is that these three actions (or behaviours) signify powerlessness, and place the viewer in a position of superiority over the model.

Bell (2003) has combined Goffman's (1979) study with that of the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) for the purposes of his own study of *Cleo* magazine (2003). Bell (2003: 31) places five values in the variable of behavior. This will be useful to this study as it regards issues of gender, power and class, and will be included in the coding sheet for the magazine cover analysis. The five values are: 'Offer/ideal' in which the model offers themselves as an idealized example of a class or attribute, looking away from the viewer (for example, the pose of a female model displaying clothing). 'Demand/affiliation' also referred to as "equality", refers to when the model looks directly at the viewer, smiling. 'Demand/submission' concerns the instance when the model looks down at the viewer, not smiling. 'Demand/seduction' regards the model looking up at the viewer, head canted, smiling or 'pouting'. Lastly, the fifth variable that can be applied is "none of the above" when an image does not fit any of the above circumstances.

2.3 Methodology

This study relies predominantly on two research methodologies, namely: content analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) and semi-structured interviews. By using these research methods in conjunction with each other, greater clarification of the research questions can be achieved.

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis fall within the field of content analysis which Bell (2003: 13) defines as:

> An empirical (observational) and objective procedure for quantifying 'audio-visual' (including verbal) representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories ('values' on independent 'variables') ... [It] is used to test explicitly comparative hypotheses by means of quantification of categories of manifest content.

Bell (2003: 27) further states that "content analysis proceeds by defining relevant variables, or dimensions, and then on each variable, distinguishes the values which yield categories of content that can be observed and quantified. Each variable and value should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. It provides 'a background "map" of a domain of visual representation'"

Content analysis also has the potential to function as a tool through which "key characteristics in media texts" can be seen in terms of their "relative prominences and absences" (Hansen et al 1998: 95).

Creswell (2003: 19) is of the opinion that: "A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e. cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories)."

An advantage of quantitative analysis is that "it sees messages as coded representations of the real world, fixed and knowable" (Bertrand and Hughes 2005: 174). Similarly, Schroder et al. (2003: 349) view quantitative analysis as having "greater reliability, because its more formalized procedures of data collection and analysis increase the likelihood of obtaining consistent data and consistent codings."

With regard to representation, Golding et al. (1999: 116) claim that quantitative content analysis can be used "to make broader inferences about the processes and politics of representation," which is what this study hopes to achieve.

Concerning qualitative analysis, Creswell (2003: 18) believes that this approach:

> "is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change oriented) or both."

The individual experiences and socially constructed meanings referred to above are essential to this study due to its aim of charting visual representation within the context of social change. In line with this, Van den Bulck (2000: 59) believes that qualitative analysis "…is grounded in the interpretative tradition, stating that there is no such thing as an objective coal reality, but instead that reality is a social and cultural construction…that can only be approximated, never fully appreciated."

Apart from this, qualitative analysis examines "production as a process which is contextualized and extremely integrated with wider social and cultural practices" (Bruhn Jensen 1991: 4), which will help to highlight the differences in production of the two publications concerned.

The disadvantage of qualitative analysis is that it relies heavily on the interpretation, objectivity and impressions of the person conducting the research, which in turn, can be deemed as unscientific (Denzin and Lincoln: 2005).

As outlined by Bertrand and Hughes (2005: 184) the strengths of content analysis are that when applied to found text, it is inexpensive and it is relatively easy to get past material. It is unobtrusive in that it does not interfere in people's lives, can deal quickly with both past and current events, and is excellent at managing large amounts of data which can be quantified and compared with statistics about the real world. However, it also has its weaknesses with regard to problems of sampling, a difficulty in defining category definitions and establishing units of measurement, as well as creating problems of interpretation (Bertrand and Hughes 2005: 184).

In order to identify emerging trends, content analysis was used in order to examine the magazine covers of the aforementioned youth group publications over a specific period of time i.e. from their inception (*SL* was created in 1994 whilst *Y-Magazine* was established in 1998) until 2008. In terms of sampling, three issues per year (between 1994 -2008) per publication were examined i.e. six covers in total for each year over a 15 year period. Both *SL* and *Y-Magazine* frequently combined their December and January editions, as a result the February, June and December issues of both magazines were analyzed for each year over the given time period. Magazine covers normally reflect the moods of the various seasons, and thus different themes appear at different times of the year. As such, February editions normally focus on "new year's resolutions," while December issues concentrate on holiday themes. As the mid-point of the year, June is included to contrast the extremes of the other two months. Where January, June or December editions were unavailable, months closest to these were included.

As stated before, the work of Philip Bell (2003) is of vital importance to this study. His analysis of magazine covers based on the Australian publication *Cleo* also applies a visual content analysis. As with this study, Bell's aim was to chart social transformation through images over a set period of time. His study has been adapted for use within a South African context, and some of his model is outlined below. Bell made use of a coding sheet on which

various values and variables were recorded in order to determine the frequency with which certain images or themes occurred. Some areas of his coding sheet have been reworked for this study e.g. the *Cleo* study focused on a magazine on which cover models were always women, thus, the coding sheet includes both sexes as the chosen publications are not gender specific. The additional themes that have been included in my coding sheet have been discussed within the theoretical framework section as Bell makes use of these theories as well.

To return to the concepts of variables and values as mentioned previously, Philip Bell (2003: 16) makes use of this terminology in his analysis of the front covers of the Australian publication *Cleo* magazine, and states that:

> A variable consists of what we will call values. These are elements of the same logical kind. That is, elements can be substituted for each other because they belong to the same class: these constitute the values on a particular variable.

For example, if the term "gender" is to be considered a variable, the concepts of "male" and "female" are likely to be its values.

When analysing the various magazine covers, the following variables with their relevant values were examined: gender, race, number of people within the featured image, social distance, modality, themes (the most prevalent words and phrases on the cover) and miscellaneous factors that might be meaningful. It is believed that by determining the frequency with which the aforementioned variables occur, a greater insight can be achieved concerning how visual culture has changed and how this is reflected socially in post-1994 South Africa.

It is also important to note that the researcher is aware of the controversial nature of the term "race" and the historical and ideological ramifications that accompany it, particularly within the context of South Africa's segregated history. However, for purposes of this study, and when placed in relation to the coding sheet as outlined by Bell (2003), race refers to the race

of the cover models as viewed by the audience and not to the manner in which the subject would view themselves.

The results of the quantitative analysis are then discussed through the qualitative lens of social semiotics as discussed under the theoretical framework. “Landmark” moments within the various covers will be identified and then further analysed using Jewitt and Oyama’s understanding of representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning, making inferences on the use of particular types of images and what these images may represent, as well as the depiction of relations of power concerning the use of camera angles used.

Landmark moments can be classified as those covers which break from the tradition of what has visually gone before them. Examples of “landmark” moments are the first appearance of a Black face on an *SL* Magazine cover or the changing of the logo of *Y-Magazine*. By comparing these moments to the norms of the other editions, meaningful data will present itself in terms of contextualizing matters such as socio-economic and identity issues and how these have changed in their representation over the specified time period. The publishing houses of both magazines have been approached in order to obtain the relevant covers.

After examining the covers according to the aforementioned criteria, a numerical set of results has been produced in order to show whether the distributions of values for each variable are significantly different between the two publications being compared.

Lastly, the production editors of both publications have been interviewed in order to determine the rationale for using certain images. According to Gill et al. (2008: 292) “The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters… Interviews are, therefore, most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participant.”

Bruhn Jensen (2002: 240) states that “interviewing, with its affinities to conversation, may be well suited to tap social agents perspective on the media.” This is particularly pertinent when applied to interviewing the design teams as they can be classified as “social agents” within the media.

Schroder et al. (2003: 153) believe that “the individual interview may be the best choice for a researcher who wishes to illuminate a sensitive issue, located beyond the discursive range of the socially acceptable or the politically correct.” As the interview questions chosen concern sensitive topics such as race and sexuality, this method has been used as it is the least intrusive form of interviewing.

However, Lambert and Loiselle (2007: 229) warn that “Although individual interviews contribute in-depth data, the assumption that words are accurate indicators of participants’ inner experiences may be problematic. Interviewees may choose to withhold certain descriptions–or alternatively, embellish them–particularly if the ‘truth’ is inconsistent with their preferred self-image or if they wish to impress the interviewer.”

The interviews conducted were semi-structured. A set of questions were put to the interviewees, in this case, the production editors. Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants, but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researcher. It also makes it possible to scrutinise the semantic context of statements made by social movement leaders (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002), in this instance, those of the production-editors.

A semi-structured approach is able to adapt to these possibilities. However, critics of this approach are of the opinion that the information gathered in this manner is diverse and thus difficult to compare from respondent to respondent. Critics also believe that it allows for researchers to be selective about the information they choose to use in order to make it fit into their particular explanatory framework (Pawson, 2006). The researcher is aware of these

difficulties and aims to compensate for these shortcomings by following the example of Hutchinson and Wilson (1992). They believe that greater emphasis must be placed on the relevance of the questions asked rather than possible diversions into further streams of thought which often result from open-ended questions. Apart from this, they believe that the structure and flow of questions from “general” to “specific” is of vital importance in order to obtain the most relevant information from participants.

Chapter 3

3.1 Visual Culture in relation to Youth Magazines

Visual culture occupies a pivotal role within the economic organisation of a modern society but is not a purely economic entity (Kang, 1997: 02). It also deals with ideas, attitudes, and values, giving them "cultural form through its signifying practices" (Sinclair, 1998: 13). As discussed in the literature review, magazine covers fall within the realm of visual culture as well as compete for viewer's attention by way of being an advert for the publication. The magazine industry is currently experiencing a period of significant growth both locally as well as internationally, resulting in increased competition in the marketplace (AdReview, 2007; Davidson et Al, 2007). As a consequence of these changes, many magazine producers are being forced to look for fresh and innovative ways to attract and retain readers.

This ideology is particularly prevalent within the "youth magazine" market which has seen the greatest increase (31.3%) in circulation when compared to other sub-genres of magazines between 2006 and 2007 (AdReview, 2007: 26) in South Africa. Youth magazine covers:

> Embody the values, knowledge and emotions which they share with their readership. This is particularly manifest in fashion spreads which utilize the creativity and imagination of top photographers to portray looks which tap into and reflect back the mythology of being a young person today and which young people may identify with and aspire to; the mythology of being young, noticeable and 'someone' (Gray et al, 1997: 507).

The aim of this genre of photography may be to shock, to convey a certain mood or portray a model in 'realistic' surroundings (Guha, 1995). The implication is that the characters on the magazine cover inhabit a world and a way of life that is more desirable than that of those without the appropriate style and self-image.

In post-modern times the production and consumption of images has assumed particular importance with regard to an individual's identity formation (Gray et al., 1997: 506). Magazine covers take on the role of "signifying practices" which give meaning to words and

images. Through this process they diffuse their meanings into the belief systems of society (Kang, 1997: 03).

How individuals construct their social identities, how they come to understand what it means to be male, female, Black, White — even rural or urban — is shaped by commodified texts produced by media for audiences that are increasingly segmented by the social constructions of race and gender. Media, in short, are central to what ultimately come to represent our social identities and realities (Brooks and Hebet, 2006: 297).

The contemporary youth is no longer bound to a single, coherent or lasting identity and may play with and formulate a multiplicity of identities simultaneously (Gilbert, 2007: 06). According to Miles (2000: 50), the idea in postmodern society is that there is no such thing as a 'real self;' the individual is instead "free to construct an identity from the vast diversities available from the menu of life." For Denscombe (2001: 159), this is due to the current social context in which adolescents find themselves, which fosters what he terms 'uncertain identities'. Essentially he believes that a late modern society is a time when the certainties of the past, such as tradition, custom and ascribed identity, have given way to a situation characterised by a greater level of uncertainty.

This uncertainty rings particularly true in a democratic South Africa in which identity is invariably linked to notions of race and class. According to Walker (2006), in a socio-economically unequal and gendered society such as South Africa's, race, class and gender work together to create either valued or marginalised identities:

> In a society deeply marked by its racialized past but also striving to make a different present and a new future, young people are likely to make complicated and more or less conscious investments in choosing some subject positions over others, in becoming and being one kind of person rather than another (Walker, 2006: 133) .

In contemporary South African society, the predominant message is that race and racism no longer exist as society has melded into multiculturalism. However, the reality is that "race and racism continue to shape our reality, perhaps more unabatedly than ever before, as their workings are now deeply obscured" (Erasmus, 2004: 13).

Gilroy (2001) believes that race has secured its class function through various manipulations and manifestations based on the prevailing societal climate. Regarding the collective identity of the new South Africa, he believes that "we are certain of what we are against but cannot say what we are for with the same degrees of certainty" (Gilroy, 2001: 41).

According to Miles et al. (1998: 83), young consumers are more adept at, and more willing than adults, to experiment with their identities, no matter what boundaries (whether they be class, gender or race) of identity, may appear to constrain them.

With regard to youth magazine consumption, readers construct their own realities, meanings and identities through product differentiation and the symbolic capital associated with their chosen publication (Gray et al., 1998: 507). Fung (2002) states that readers of these magazines often develop a sense of attachment to brands when they perceive them as reinforcing their identity. This leads to the creation of "magazine communities" and "brand community formation" in which youth are connected to each other by way of their shared tastes and preferences; a defining feature of youth magazine titles (Davidson et al, 2007). In order for the formation of this imagined community to occur, the relevant title needs to possess the following criteria: A well defined brand image; hedonic nature, a long and rich history, the ability to be publicly consumed; and lastly, a competitive edge (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al., 2002; Fung, 2002).

These qualities apply to both *SL* and *Y-Magazine*, South Africa's most financially successful and well established youth magazine titles which themselves have become brands; at once espousing a glamorous youth lifestyle while trying to maintain a South African authenticity that appeals to its target audience along racial, gender and socio-economic lines. Nuttal (2003: 238) surmises this dichotomy in the analysis of the "pay off lines" of both publications:

> *SL*'s line was 'SL – everything you know is wrong', and *Y*'s line, as we have seen, was 'Y – because you want to know'. Analysis of these pay-off lines is revealing: while SL's line expresses the existential uncertainty of young White people whose security has been compromised by history, Y's line captures the confidence of a free Black youth.

The above quote refers to the shifting South African socio-political milieu in which the notions of race and class have become increasingly obscured with the emergence of a Black middle-class. Prior to 1994 White South African youth had greater opportunities than their Black counterparts; however, the analysis of the "pay off lines" of both publications demonstrates how this is no longer the case, as Black youth are now represented and appealed to in manner not previously possible. Consequently, the statement that White youth now face an "existential uncertainty" implies a marginalisation previously not experienced by Whites in South Africa.

This study will now analyse both *SL* and *Y-Magazine* in relation to the quantitative and qualitative methodologies outlined in the previous chapter in order to draw inferences regarding the manner in which the themes of 'race', 'identity' and 'sexuality' are portrayed on the covers of both magazines.

Chapter 4

4.1 *SL* Magazine

As a local publication that considers itself the county's leading youth culture magazine by way of being the longest standing; *SL* would be expected to reflect the multiculturalism and identity of the "new" South Africa on its cover images. According to their advertising "rate card" which is essentially a pricelist for placing various types of advertisements in the publication:

> 1. *SL* is the most authoritative youth culture magazine in SA. A specialist magazine targeted directly at students. *SL* is a magazine for thought leaders. *SL* is the magazine for cool kids on campus, leaders not followers. The editorial mix is focused and edgy. Editorial tone is sexy, irreverent and funny. The three main editorial pillars are fashion, music and student culture with a strong emphasis on travel.
>
> 2. It goes on to state that its core target market is 18 – 24 year old tertiary students, which is further broken down into 60% male and 40% female; while race is thought to consist of a 56% White and 44% Black readership[1].

It may be assumed that after 1994 the newly emergent "aspirational" Black youth market would have been included within *SL*'s target audience and marketing strategy. After analysing a cross section of *SL*'s covers between 1994 and 2008, a deeper insight has been gained regarding the messages and themes advocated by the magazine based on its use of images, wording and design elements. The findings however correlate to the hypothesis of this study which states that despite democratic change in South Africa, visual culture as found on the front covers of youth magazines still relies predominantly on the use of conservative stereotypes with regard to race, identity and sexuality.

[1] www.slmagazine.co.za/ratecard08.pdf

4.1.1 *Research design*

As outlined in the Methodology section of this study, analysis of the various covers occurred in two phases: Firstly, through a quantitative content analysis of a variety of *SL* magazine covers using the framework outlined by Philip Bell's (2003) study; and secondly, after using a qualitative semiotic analysis of "landmark moments" on specific issues as outlined by Jewitt and Oyama (2001).

4.1.2 *Research Phase I*

Please note that the relevant coding sheets for this section can be viewed in Appendix F of the appendices.

During this phase 40 *SL* magazine covers were analysed according to Bell's (2003) study of *Cleo* magazine. This sample of covers spans a 14 year period (1994 – 2008). The covers were divided into what was considered the three most significant months of the year with regard to sales and continuity i.e. the February, June and December editions.

February was chosen as it is the benchmark for the beginning of the each year as SL combines its December and January editions into a "holiday" package. The June editions traditionally indicate the trends of the year up until that point, and look toward what can be expected for the rest of the year. December editions are generally the most profitable as the emphasis is on sex, parties and travel (Appendix C). The frequencies of predetermined values and variables were observed and noted. They are: gender, race, modality, social distance, behaviour and the number of individuals on the cover. These have been explained in greater detail in the theoretical framework section.

The prevalence of various themes and miscellaneous observations were also accounted for. It must be noted that as a result of a lack of access to every edition of the magazine, it is only as of 1997 that all 3 months (February, June and December) are analysed in sequence. Prior to this there were gaps and inconsistencies with a few editions e.g. For the year 1994, the December edition was available, but not the February and June editions; while for both 1995 and 1996 it was only the December editions that were unavailable.

The quantitative analysis can be looked at in two ways. Firstly, it can be determined if there is a trend towards certain themes and images based on the month of the year examined; and secondly, the data provides for an analysis of preferences over the 14 year time span in general. In this way the data can be placed into the perspective of the prevailing societal context of the particular issues.

4.2 Findings

Please note that all covers referred to in this section may be viewed in Appendix A of the appendices.

Gender

With regards to gender, there was an overwhelming preference for the use of females, specifically White females. Between December 1994 and June 2008, female models were used 82.5% of the time with females who were not White only appearing 12.5%. Males appeared only 0.75% and when they did appear, they were always White. When more than one person appeared on the cover (this never exceeded two people), one individual was always White and/or female. A male who was not White did not appear at all on an *SL* magazine cover in the sample analysed.

In terms of there being an identifiable trend regarding gender; White male models, though rarely used as the only models on the cover; were seen to be viable cover models during the mid-nineties i.e. between 1994 – 1998 (Three times alone [once in 1995 and twice in 1998]; and twice in relation to a female model [1994 and 1996]). It is of importance to note that all the males that appeared on the covers could be considered as being recognizable local celebrities, whereas the majority of the female models were not. Since then, women have prevailed up until the present, a decade after the last male cover was published. It is interesting to note that while men and women have been portrayed together on the cover 10% of the time, same sex covers with either two men or two women appeared only once each. These occurred in the June 1997, 1998 and 2004 editions of *SL*. Since then same sex covers have not been published. In line with this, it is also noteworthy that unlike the February and

June editions, the December edition which is always deemed "the sex issue," (Appendix C) has only ever made use of female models.

Race

White models (male and female) were used over 88% of the time. When two individuals appeared together, one was always White. Only White males appeared on the covers of *SL* magazine, while males who were not White did not feature at all. A Black female appeared alone on the cover once (June 1996), while Coloured females appear three times (June 2002, February 2003 and December 2005).

With regards to race trends, a greater degree of multiculturalism was represented in the mid nineties (1995 – 1997) in which at least one cover per year contained a Black/Coloured face. After this, the next Black face appeared again only in 2003, and not thereafter. *SL* has not used an Indian model or any other traditionally South African minority group on its cover. The first and only occurrence of a multi-racial male/female (i.e. White male, Black female) couple appeared on the February 1996 cover. In terms of a multi-racial same sex couple, this has only occurred once, on the June 1997 cover with a Black and White female.

While Black and Coloured females were infrequently used on covers, when they did appear, they were always placed in either the February or June issues, and only once on the December/"sex" (December 2005) issue which is considered the publication's "biggest seller"[2].

Modality

As discussed in the theoretical framework, modality refers to the presented "realism" of an image. "Realism" in this instance regards the usage of highly saturated colours that would indicate "reality" in the way in which a photograph can be considered as depicting real people, places or events (Bell 2003: 30). Images can be classified as having high, medium or low levels of modality.

[2] www.slmagazine.co.za/ratecard08

High modality would mean that the image can be considered "highly realistic" and natural, while medium modality suggests that the image represents either a caricature or fantasy scenario based on the colours used or the context of what is being depicted. Finally, images with low modality are deemed as having a "scientific" quality as they probe beneath the surface and reveal "hidden truths" about what is portrayed (Jewitt and Oyama 2001: 151).

Between 1994 and 2008, 60% of covers made use of images with high modality, such as the June 1998 edition; while 32.5% of the images utilised medium modality to convey messages.

One of the most striking differences between the June 1998 edition and those considered medium modality is the way in which the Springbok player (James Small) and the lead singer of the Springbok Nude Girls are captured. Firstly, in contrast to a fantastical portrayal the men are presented to the readers in their 'natural' skin tones, none of the embellishment or glamourisation that one would find in a fashion magazine. This is particularly important to the theme of the edition, which attempts to convey a feel good "proudly South African" sense. It is almost as if the reader can feel the sun shining on James Small's suntanned face by way of the lighting of the image. Viewers of the image can relate to Arno Carsten's cigarette-in-the-mouth stance as being indicative of the "regular South African guy". Indeed, the modality which emphasises a sense of realness, together with the close personal camera angle; concur in transmitting a sense of intimacy between the reader and the personalities portrayed.

While high modality was favored over the entire analysis period, it could be argued that medium (or "fantasy") modality became more prevalent on covers. For example, between 2003 and 2008 nearly 60% of covers displayed medium modality.

A prime example of medium/fantasy modality is the February 2002 SL cover which reveals an interplay between the main feature - an interview with Egoli soap star (Egoli meaning the "place of gold"), and the use of the "forbidden fruit" stereotype with the headline "Gold 'n Delicious" (referring to the type of apple). The escapism meets complete fantasy, and is conveyed through the choice of setting for the cover photo i.e. the wild jungle backdrop wherein a sexually provocative nymph like Nina Wassung awaits. The bold greens contrasted

with the shimmering yellow of both Nina's skimpy attire and her hair serve to sensualise the theme. The photo editor is clearly aiming to increase sales through this choice of imagery – a direct sales pitch to the imaginations of thousands of young and sexually adventurous South African youth.

In contrast low modality (black and white) images were only used three times during the 14 year period (June 1997, February 2005, February 2007). The February 2005 cover features a black and white image of a swimsuit model from the *Sports Illustrated Swimwear Edition* (this publication is referenced on the *SL* cover). The model's cleavage is largely exposed, and her objectification is reinforced by the suggestive stance of her pose. The black and white image is contrasted by the cover lines and magazine logo which appear in a light shade of blue.

In terms of the way in which these were spread out amongst the February, June and December issues: February contained the most high modality images, and 2 out of 3 of the low modality images. The June and December issues contained the majority of the fantasy (medium) modality images. This can be attributed to the increasing sexualisation of *SL* in which models were placed in "fantasy" scenarios either by way of their settings or attire, (vividly portrayed in all the December issue aka "Sex" editions). It is particularly interesting to note that the December issue has never made use of a black and white (low) modality image.

Social Distance

Social distance within the context of visual analysis refers to the way in which characters in images are depicted in terms of the relationship they form with the viewer; as well as how close to or far away from the viewer they are presented as being. As explained in the theoretical framework, it is the measure of how much of the human body is represented in the frame of a particular image. Images which are considered to be "close-ups" suggest a personal and intimate relationship, while "medium shots" suggest a social relationship, whereas "long shots" portray impersonal relationships (Bell, 2003: 29).

Most covers (77%) made use of “close personal” social distance, which is considered to create a social relationship between the viewer and image. Covers such as the June 1999 cover, portray the model as being within the sphere in which to have a conversation with the viewer. As the camera angle does not show a close up shot (which would be indicative of a more intimate relationship), but instead focuses on the model’s upper body, a sense of openness is created that suggests that the viewer be able to relate to the model.

While very few covers moved away from this formula, the next most popular category was “far personal” social distance (used only 14%) which utilizes the concept of replicating the distance between individuals engaged in a conversation within the context of a public space. This category refers to images which are neither indicative of an intimate relationship by way of the camera angle used; nor of an impersonal relationship between the model and the viewer. It is a compromise between the two social distances as demonstrated on the February 2001 cover. The model is shown from below the waist upwards; it is this inclusion of a greater proportion of the model’s body in the frame that defines the social distance. Her body language also suggests that she might be approachable. Unlike the close personal distance which creates a “one-on-one” relationship between the viewer and the model; the far personal distance suggests that the “conversation” would take place in the view of others i.e. within a public setting.

The remaining categories; “intimate” social distance and “close” social distance were only used once (February 2003) and twice (February 2007, February 2008) respectively.

Intimate social distance refers to images which portray an extreme close up of the character depicted, and in so doing signifies a close and intimate relationship (even more intimate than that of “close social” distance). The only instance in which this occurred was on the February 2003 cover. It is one of two occasions in which a Coloured model appeared alone on the cover of *SL* magazine. The camera has zoomed in on the face of the model who suggestively holds an ice cube between her lips. The notion of an intimate connection between the viewer and the model is highlighted not only by the close up nature of the picture and her ‘racy’ behavior, but is reinforced by the theme of the issue which takes up the most space textually in relation to the other cover lines with the word “desire”; implying that the model should be desired. Apart from this, the words “sex” and “porn” appear in relation to the image.

Finally, close social distance is defined as lying outside the range of "close personal" social distance and is considered to be the space at which impersonal business occurs between individuals (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 131). This is demonstrated on the February 2008 cover. The camera angle used implies that the model is being photographed from a reasonable distance away. One can almost see her entire body, but the image is cut off at her thighs. As stated before, it is this distance which ultimately defines the classification of the image as being one of "close social" distance. It is important to note that the theme of this issue was the "party" issue, with the model styled accordingly and holding a balloon to symbolize the party theme. This is important as the aim of a party within the context of a youth magazine is to bring young people together. Bell (2003) states that the purpose of the various types of social distances is to create relationships between the cover images and their viewers. The context in which they appear can serve to either promote individual connections (as with "intimate" social distance) or group interaction (as with close social distance).

The most evident trend regarding social distance was that the February issues were the only ones to make use of other types of social distance apart from the "close personal" category. June and December issues solely made use of "close personal" social distance.

Behaviour

With regard to behavior; just as social distance determines the relationship between the viewer and the image in terms of proximity; so too does the represented behavior of the depicted character interact with the viewer in terms of how they are affected by the gaze of the represented participants. Images make 'demands' when participants look directly at the viewer because vectors, or lines of direction, connect the viewer and participant on a formal (and imaginary) level (Kress and van Leeuwen: 1996: 122-3).

The types of behaviour exhibited on the covers of *SL* were: demand/seduction, demand/affiliation, offer/ideal, and demand/submission (Bell, 2003: 30). A brief explanation will be offered here as these were discussed in the theoretical framework in greater depth.

Demand/seduction involves the depicted character looking at the viewer in a seductive manner that demands the viewer to desire them. Demand/affiliation refers to the pose in which models look directly at the viewer, usually smiling or indicating a pleasant demeanour, and in so doing, establishes a relationship of equality with the viewer. The offer/ideal pose concerns instances in which the model offers themselves as an idealised example of a particular class or attribute. Lastly, the demand/submission pose involves the depicted character looking down upon the viewer, seemingly displeased, and demanding respect.

Unsurprisingly, due the increasingly sexualised nature of SL's covers, and with the overwhelming prevalence of female models; the demand/seduction pose was most frequently used, nearly 80% of the time. The increasing use of sex as a central visual theme reflects the environment in South Africa where print media houses rely on the "sex sells" ideology in order to increase circulation. This was confirmed by the former *SL* editor who was in charge of the magazine between 2002 and 2007. When interviewed for the purpose of this study she explained that, "Any cover that was vaguely sexy or featured a girl in a bikini was a seller" (Appendix C).

The demand/affiliation pose was the next most evident pose appearing four times (December 1994, February 1996, June 1998, and December 2002). The offer/ideal pose had only one occurrence (June 1996), while the demand/submission pose featured twice (June 1997 and June 2000).

The clear trend regarding the types of behaviour used on the *SL* covers was to use demand/seduction poses, particularly on the December/"sex issue" covers. It may be argued that the December editions maximise the theme of sex and adventure as they are released at the time when the entire country switches to 'Summer holiday mood'.

June was the only month to make use of all the various poses at one time or another, regardless of their relative infrequency. In line with Goffman's (1979) study which analysed the ways in which gendered bodies are represented in magazines, *SL* makes use of what Goffman terms 'rituals of subordination' or 'infantile' bodily poses. He analysed these represented behaviours in terms of power; in that these various actions (or behaviours) signify powerlessness, and place the viewer in a position of superiority over the model.

Goffman considered the pose of "self touching" in which the model provocatively uses their hands as one of the rituals of subordination that occur on the majority of magazine covers and fashion spreads.

Self touching occurred on nearly 40% of covers, while models appeared nude/topless nearly 20% of the time. Models wore revealing clothing or underwear on the remaining 40% of covers.

Number of Individuals on a Cover

Concerning the number of people that appear on the cover, a detail used by Bell (2003) as an indication for the publication's message for social interaction; *SL* opted to use just one individual on 82% of the covers analysed. The remaining covers never featured more than two people at a time. As stated before, the majority of the covers used White women when shown alone, as well as White couples when depicting two individuals. It was found that when compared to February and December, the June editions more frequently used more than one person on the cover.

Themes

The last step in the quantitative analysis was to determine the frequency with which certain themes appeared on the various covers i.e. the messages within the "cover lines" or "blurbs" of the magazine cover that describes the content inside the publication. According to Colson-Smith (2005: 07):

> These blurbs provide a glimpse of the entire magazine's content and will determine if the magazine makes it into the hands of the consumer or is simply left on the shelf. Through a publication's cover blurbs and images, the magazine hopes to make a connection with its audience, inviting the reader to take a look inside.

SL cover lines followed a fairly routine course over the 14 year period regarding the themes that were presented. Unlike most speciality magazines such as those targeted specifically at women or men, as a youth magazine, *SL* rarely made mention of eating plans or exercise

programmes, with only one issue in February 1995 (the first ever February issue) using the term “diet”.

Apart from the themes that have been identified as recurring, topics were as varied as “Poetry” (February 1998), “Gambling” (June 200), “Female boxing” (February 2001), and “Comedy” (June 2001). It must be noted that these variations appeared predominantly during the early phase of the publication’s existence.

Other themes such as travel, celebrities and dating each appeared almost 20% of the time over the 14 year period. However, over time, the following themes occurred consistently on almost each edition: Sex, music, drugs, travel, celebrities and dating. The theme of sex appeared 80% of the time on covers, the next most popular theme was music, occurring 70% of the time and then drugs, which appeared almost 35%.

The most striking cover regarding the “Sex Issue” is the December 2006 edition. The scantily clad model stands topless with one hand on her hip, while her other hand is placed atop her head as she tilts her neck backwards. This stance serves to highlight her exposed breasts, which while still visible in the picture, are strategically covered by a “peel off sticker” which reads “THE SEX ISSUE – 2006 Limited Edition *SL* Magazine”. The cover lines reinforce the theme of sex with words such as “slutting”, “sex on drugs” and “strip club”.

Regarding the theme of music, it is interesting to view the way in which various genres have been represented, and how they are ultimately replaced by new fads. As a magazine whose target audience is primarily White, *SL* magazine has for the most part referenced “rock” and “rave/techno” music (genres commonly associated with Whiteness – as opposed to ‘R&B,’ ‘Kwaito’ and ‘Hip-Hop’ – traditionally Black genres) on its covers.

While *SL* has charted the evolution of “Rock” music into “alternative” and “indie” forms over the 14 years of the magazine’s existence; the rise in popularity of “hip-hop” and “kwaito” music among Black South African youth during the mid 1990’s led to the mainstream success of the genres soon after. In 1997 *SL* referenced both “hip-hop” and “kwaito” on two out of the three covers in the sample for that year (February 1997 and June 1997). The other instance in which “Kwaito” was referred to on a cover was the June 2002 issue.

The February 1997 edition uses a cover line which reads: “The Hip-Hop Phat Rap”. The word “phat” is ‘ghetto’ or ‘township’ slang for ‘cool’, and thus indicates the magazine’s intention of appealing to an audience outside of the predominantly White readership, and in so doing, portrays “hip-hop” as a fashionable and trendy form of music.

Importantly, in each instance in which either “hip-hop” or “kwaito” were referred to on the cover of *SL*, a Black/Coloured model was used for that edition. The February 1997 and June 2002 editions made use of Coloured females as the cover models, while the June 1997 issue featured a Black female.

As stated before, the attention given to “hip-hop” and “kwaito” was short lived. With the emergence of the “indie” genre (an offshoot of traditional and “alternative” rock music); *SL* covers placed greater emphasis on new bands and artists that pertained to this new fad. Nearly every music related cover between 2003 and 2008 referred to either the “indie” music genre itself or to artists and bands synonymous with it. All of these covers featured White female models.

An example of a cover concerning “indie” music is the June 2006 cover which is termed “The Rock Issue- *SL* at the world’s largest Indie Music Festival”. The model is styled according to the type of fashion associated with the “indie” music genre; her hair is unkempt and her clothing scruffy (although still revealing her midriff). The cover lines refer to “indie” bands, and interestingly, also to *YFM* (who are closely linked to *Y-Magazine*), posing the question “Is the *YFM* revolution over?” This is important as *YFM* and *Y-Magazine* have been the bastions of “hip-hop” and “kwaito” music in South Africa. The fact that this particular cover line appears on *SL’*s “Rock Issue” implies the end of the popularity of these traditionally Black music genres and indeed the increase in support for “rock” music.

4.3 *Research Phase II*

This phase of the research draws upon the semiotic analysis of images as outlined by Jewitt and Oyama (2001). “Landmark moments” concerning the sample of *SL* covers will be analysed according to the following principles which have been discussed in greater depth

within the theoretical framework: representational meaning (which consists of either narrative or conceptual structures; Interactive meaning (which is informed by the notions of contact, distance and point of view) and lastly; Compositional meaning (which uses the concepts of information value, framing, salience and modality.)

The five covers that were chosen each contain images that up until the point of publication had not been seen before in *SL*. While the matter of aesthetics regarding font choices, colour themes and layout were considered, and will be analysed to some degree, the main focus will be on the themes of race, gender and sexuality.

Please note that all covers referred to in this section may be viewed in Appendix A of the Appendices

4.3.1 *Cover 1: February 1995*

The significance of this cover is that it is the first time in which a male model is presented by himself, as stated earlier, nearly 83% of cover models were female, and thus this can be viewed as a "landmark moment".

The cover portrays a male model, and in accordance with the "representational meaning," he portrays a sense of masculinity by way of his pose and almost aggressive demeanour which seems to be challenging the viewer. As there are no vectors or visible lines which show him interacting with an "inferred other," or which indicate that he is in the process of performing a task, it is clear that the relationship is purely between the model and the viewer. This falls under the "conceptual" structure, which states that the model is "not represent[ed] as doing something, but as being something" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 141).

As mentioned above, the model can be said to represent masculine identity, this is further highlighted by the relative size depicted, the facial expression, as well as his position in the frame. These factors also fall within the range of interactive meaning, which in order to be determined, require an analysis of contact, distance and point of view. The contact between viewer and model is one in which the image demands deference by way of unblinkingly looking down at the viewer. The distance between the viewer and the image can be classified

as “close/personal,” which indicates a social relationship, but not an intimate one. Regarding point of view, the vertical angle from which the model looks down upon the viewer creates a sense of power and dominance conveyed by the subject.

In terms of compositional meaning, the cover conforms to the norms of informational value placement i.e. the picture is placed in the left quadrant of the frame, while still allowing for cover lines to be placed on both the right and left. According to the framework of Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 148), this seeks to entrench already established social norms and values, as what is placed on the left (the model) is considered stable and known, while the cover lines on either side are unstable in that their position on the cover infer “new information” as viewers have to make a special effort to look for them.

The cover is framed according to the “colour picking” or co-ordinating from the colour of the model’s eyes (blue). In using this hue of blue in the logo and sub-headings, a sense of fluency is created, the same can be said for the salience of the image, as the blue colour contrasts the rest of the page, thus drawing our attention back to the model. Finally, the image can be considered to contain a high level of modality in that it uses natural colours and creates a sense of reality.

4.3.2 *Cover 2: February 1996*

This cover is significant as it is the first (and only) time in the sample in which a heterosexual multi-racial couple are depicted on the cover.

In order to get a broader picture of the representational meaning, it is important to take the date of publication into account. This cover appeared less than two years after the implementation of democracy in South Africa. At that point, the idea of depicting a multiracial couple on the cover of a magazine was considered ground-breaking. As such, the narrative structure that this follows is one of socio-political change. The couple are shown lying on the ground, smiling, with the White male feeding the Black female an ice cream. The female holds his hand as he is doing this. Both models look directly at the viewer.

The interactive meaning of this image can be said to be creating a friendly and welcoming relationship with the viewer. This is indicated by their joyful demeanour, and the type of social distance (close/personal) used indicates a sociable relationship with the viewer, although the body language between the two models indicates a more intimate relationship between the two of them. The point of view places the viewer in control of the depicted scene, and is thus adds to the non-threatening nature of the image.

The compositional meaning of the cover follows the norms of layout and informational value, although the characters are positioned in the centre as opposed to the left quadrant of the frame, a detail which Jewitt and Oyama (2001) consider as being indicative of "new information" which is apt given the context of the picture. Regarding the framing and salience of the image, this is achieved once more through "colour picking" from the different clothes worn by the models which feature in the logo, as well as some of the cover lines. This image can also be deemed as having a high level of modality, and thus is said to be indicative of the prevailing social reality.

4.3.3 *Cover 3: June 1996*

This cover is considered a landmark moment as it is the first and only time in the sample in which a Black girl appears alone on the cover.

The representational meaning of this image is that of a strong and independent young Black youth. As the cover was shot in 1996, the element of socio-political change is also apparent, and echoes much of the same sentiment as the February issue discussed above. In this instance though, the narrative structure is different as the model reaches out with her hands and in this way interacts with the viewer in a more active manner.

Regarding interactive meaning, the relationship formed with the model is one in which the viewer is being given an imaginary "offer" as her hands are outstretched toward the viewer. The social distance between the model and the viewer can be deemed as "intimate" as the model reaches forward toward the viewer. In terms of the point of view, the model is considered being dominant through the use of the vertical angle in which the model looks down upon the viewer.

The compositional meaning of the image follows the same pattern as the February 1996 cover discussed above. Once more colour picking from the model's painted nails adds salience and framing on the cover, helping to create a focal point around the model as well as consistency with regard to the logo. Lastly, the image uses natural colours in a realistic manner, and thus can be deemed as having a high level of modality.

4.3.4 *Cover 4: June 1997*

This cover is of interest as it is the sole occurrence in the sample in which a Black and White female appear together. Once more, taking the date of publication into account, the representational meaning is also one of change, and given the same sex pairing, perhaps one of "gay friendliness" at a time when homosexuality in South Africa was emerging as less of a taboo. As neither model is depicted as performing a task or being active, the conceptual structure can be regarded as female empowerment.

This idea is reinforced by the interactive meaning, as there is contact between the models, with the White model resting her hand and head on the female model, indicating a friendship and sense of intimacy between the characters. However, their serious facial expressions and direct eye contact with the viewer can be said to dare the viewer to disapprove of their lifestyle in a predatory manner. They are shown at close/personal distance, and in accordance with the framework, the use of the frontal camera angle is a marker of equality between the models and the viewer.

When compared to the previous three covers, there is a distinctive change in the layout of the text and images which is sleek and uncluttered. This adds to the degree of compositional meaning. Restraint is also shown in the use of implementing colour picking, with red being the only colour used apart from black and white. Finally, the modality of the image can be deemed as "medium" or fantasy modality due to the use of washed out and ethereal colours. This might have been to emphasise the pseudo-lesbian theme, with the slick and masculine hairstyles of the models reaffirming this; especially when placed in relation to the catch phrase of the issue: "straight up & downright deviant".

4.3.5 *Cover 5: June 1998*

In the only instance in which two males were depicted on the same cover, the representational meaning of this cover, by way of the implied conceptual structure, is of White South African male masculinity. The conceptual structure is further informed by the identity of the two models: James Small (former South African rugby player) and Arno Carstens (South African rock star), both of whom have come to embody the values of both masculinity as well as South African White identity.

Unlike the previous year's cover in which two females appeared together, there was no alluding to a homosexual relationship, either through interaction between the models or use of cover line text relating to the image. Instead, interactive meaning between viewer and the characters was blurred in that James Small is portrayed as smiling and friendly, while Arno Carstens (cigarette in mouth) is depicted as challenging in a 'gangsterish' manner that suggests "boys playing men".

However, the social distance between the characters and the viewer is once again that of close/personal distance which indicates a social relationship and this is reinforced by the use of the frontal point of view camera angle which is also indicative of equality and friendship between the models and the viewer.

The compositional meaning of the image followed the same principles as the previous year's cover.

4.4 *Summary of key findings*

As was mentioned in the statistical analysis of phase one of the research, the majority of the models were White and female. While White males appeared infrequently, Black males did not appear at all on *SL* covers. Minority groups such as Coloureds were rarely portrayed on covers and Indians did not appear at all in the 14 year period. Covers frequently featured local and international celebrities e.g. soap stars, musicians and athletes. When Coloured or Black individuals appeared on covers they were normally celebrities, whereas the majority of White cover models were not. It was only in February 2006 of the sample that an

international celebrity (Kirsten Dunst) appeared for the first time. As is evidenced by the five covers used in the semiotic analysis, multiculturalism was more frequently portrayed on the covers of *SL* during the initial years of its inception (1994-1997), thereafter; it follows a fairly conventional trend regarding the use of White and female models.

The themes of sex, drugs and music were the most popular. However, themes such as politics (mentioned twice only – June 1999, February 2003), race relations and employment, which would be considered pertinent to the country's youth, particularly post-1994, either appeared infrequently or not at all.

A recent *SL* magazine cover (June 2008) referred to what Nuttal (2003) describes as the fear and uncertainty of White youth concerning their futures in South Africa. The cover line reads: "Think SA sucks? Study Overseas," clearly advocating that one might have a brighter future elsewhere. Apart from the June 1997 cover which has been analysed previously in this chapter, reference to gay or lesbian themes is almost nonexistent.

In terms of there being an identifiable change over the given timeframe, this is most evident with regard to music. As stated above, the notion of multiculturalism did not last very long; however, music trends were well documented depending on what genre was popular at the time. For example, the "rave culture" which dominated youth culture during the mid-1990's is referenced throughout this period. Similarly, the popularity of "kwaito" and hip-hop culture (once considered solely Black genres) among White youth is also shown on the covers during the time in which this was considered trendy (1999-2003). Thereafter, the "indie" music scene, a traditionally White genre, has dominated covers ever since, with each issue showcasing new bands, both from South Africa as well as overseas.

Chapter *5*

5.1 *Y-Magazine*

Y- Magazine was first published in 1998 and is South Africa's second oldest youth culture magazine. It was established out of a joint partnership between 'Studentwise' (then publishers of White youth targeted SL Magazine) and a Johannesburg radio station YFM, who aimed their content at the Black youth market. *Y-Magazine* was conceived as the new voice of South Africa's recently liberated Black urban youth. As Nicole Turner (2008) explains:

> Published under the pay-off "Y - because I want to know", it aimed to tap into the market that made *YFM* the biggest regional station at the time. This was what was referred to as the Y Generation, "freedom's children" that got to celebrate the freedom of an apartheid-free South Africa. As poet Lebo Mashile put it: "If we were 20 or 30 in the 70's and 80's we would have been using everything we had to fight Apartheid... but now we have the freedom and space to do what we want with our talent and we have the ability to really manifest our dreams..."

As with *YFM*, its emphasis is on urban street culture with a strong focus on the sounds of post-apartheid Black South Africa especially Kwaito. With a mix of colloquial English and '*Scamto*' (also known as 'township talk'), YFM attempts to capture youth interests that range from entertainment to politics. Topics covered are as broad as kwaito's apolitical, "hedonistic and flighty preoccupations," former South African President Thabo Mbeki's macroeconomic ideology; the politics of fashion and also the aesthetic of struggle (Turner, 2008).

According to *Y-Magazine*'s assistant editor, its target market falls within the 'LSM 3 - 6' categories of the Living Standards Measurement (LSM). The Living Standards Measurement (LSM) was developed by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) to measure social class, or living standards, regardless of race and without using income as a variable to segment the market. The LSM uses wealth, access and geography as the major indicators to segment the market. "Instead of approaching social class from the point of view

of obvious demographic differences, the LSM yields a composite measure of social class" (Truter, 2007: 52).

In line with the LSM 3-6 grouping, *Y-Magazine* readers are between the ages of 16-24 years old and can be classified as ranging between lower middle class to middle class, with the average reader having some form of high school education (Truter, 2007: 53). As stated above, readers of *Y-Magazine* identify strongly with the *Y-FM* radio station whose own target audience mirrors that of the magazine. In terms of race, the assistant editor states that *Y-Magazine*'s readership is 99% Black.

Unlike the *SL* magazine rate card which gives specific information regarding the magazine's target audience and statistics concerning circulation; the *Y-Magaz*ine rate card simply uses the following words to describe itself: "Urban sexy mobile ambitious brand conscious club culture Black youth[3]"

Since its inception in 1998, *Y-Magazine* has transformed from being a publication which espoused a truly South African youth ideology with regards to culture and politics, to one which frequently relies on the use of international trends and celebrities in order to guarantee its sales and survival. This is reflected in the types of images and themes used on the various covers over a 10 year period. Further discussion of this concept will occur within the analysis section of the dissertation which makes use of interviews with the editorial and production teams of both magazines.

5.1.1 *Research design*

As with *SL* magazine, analysis of *Y-Magazine* occurred in two phases: A quantitative content analysis of a variety of *Y-Magazine* covers was performed according to Philip Bell's (2003) study of *Cleo* magazine. Thereafter, "landmark moments" on specific covers were identified and analysed according to Jewitt and Oyama's (2001) model for a qualitative semiotic analysis of images.

[3] http://yfm.immedia.co.za/content/view/42/39

5.1.2 *Research Phase I*

Please note that the relevant coding sheets for this section can be viewed in Appendix G of the appendices.

During this phase, 21 various *Y-Magazine* covers were analysed. These covers range a 10 year time span from the publication's creation in 1998 until 2008. As a result of a lack of access to a greater amount of magazine covers, the available (and admittedly modest) sample was divided into three main editions per year i.e. December/January; June/July and October/November. This was also done to facilitate the fact that *Y-Magazine* published these editions once every two months and thus had to combine monthly issues. It has only been as of recent years that the magazine has been able to afford to publish a new edition each month. However, the December/January edition remains combined. Only three issues did not fall within the above mentioned months, these were: February 2001, May 2001 and March 2008.

The same variables and values which were used to analyse *SL* magazine have been applied to the *Y-Magazine* analysis i.e. gender, race, modality, social distance, behaviour and the number of individuals on each cover. In addition to these defined variables, other recurrent themes and forms of representation were also considered.

As stated above, due to the lack of access to more *Y-Magazine* covers there are some gaps between 1998 and 2008 in terms of how many covers per year are represented. However, the only year which is not represented at all is 2006.

The quantitative analysis provides the opportunity to look at the covers both in terms of the types of images and themes used within the specific months (December/January, June/July and October/November) as well as over its 10 year history. This allows for the relevant data to be placed within the context of the prevailing social climate.

5.2 Findings

Please note that all covers referred to in this section may be viewed in Appendix B of the appendices.

Gender

With regards to gender, *Y-Magazine* shows a clear preference for the use of males on its covers. Of the 21 covers analysed, 16 of them (76%) featured males either by themselves, in a group setting with other men or in relation to females (usually with the men outnumbering the females).

Covers on which males are portrayed alone account for 29% of the covers analysed, whilst females placed alone appear 19% of the time. Covers in which two men are portrayed together appear twice (June/July 2005 and December/January 2007/08); while covers depicting two women together appeared once (December/January 2003). Apart from these, there were instances in which men were shown in groups, for example covers in which three men together (March 2008) and six men together (June/July 2007), appeared once each. Covers in which more than two females appear without men were nonexistent. Males and females appeared together as couples three times (June/July 2001, October/November 2002 and June/July 2003).

The most identifiable trend regarding gender is the prevalence of males on the covers and the fact that when women do appear, they are outnumbered by the men (December/January 2003/04 and June/July 2004), and that the one instance in which two women and one man are depicted together, (December/January 2001) the women are reduced to sexual objects belonging to the male figure.

It is also interesting to note that four out of five of the December/January editions (1999, 2001, 2002 and 2003) frequently use women on the cover whereas the June/July and Oct/November editions show a preference for the use of males.

All of the covers analysed made use of either local or international celebrities and no 'unknown' male or female models were used.

Race

As *Y-Magazine*'s target market is 99% Black, it is not surprising that twenty out of the twenty-one covers analysed made use of Black individuals. As such, there are no clear trends to be identified regarding race. The only cover in the sample in which a Black person was not featured at all on the cover was the December/January 2002/03 edition on which two women are portrayed; one being Indian and the other Coloured. The only other instance in which a model who was not Black appeared, was on the June/July 2004 edition in which the Coloured lead singer of the band '340 Ml' is shown with Black celebrities; *Kwaito* star 'Zola' and actress Joy Monareng.

Modality

Regarding modality, the clear preference is for the use of high modality images on *Y-Magazine* covers. This accounted for nineteen out of the twenty-one covers (90%) and is an indication of *Y-Magazine*'s inclination to portraying lifelike and highly realistic images. The two exceptions were the June/July 2000 edition which used medium or 'fantasy' modality in order to produce a stylised homage shot reminiscent of the early editions of *Drum* magazine, and the black and white or 'low' modality image of the December/January 2003/04 edition.

Concerning the June/July 2000 cover, a sense of 'retro-chic' glamour is produced as a result of the bright colours, make-up, pose and hairstyle of the model. These elements were synonymous with the covers of the early *Drum* magazine era. The December/January 2003/04 edition is classified as using a low modality image as it is a black and white image. The image in question portrays ex-South African president Thabo Mbeki in the centre of the image. He is flanked by two men and two women, all of whom are displaying the 'peace' or 'v for victory' hand gesture. This will be further discussed within the qualitative analysis section.

Social Distance

In terms of social distance and the types of relationships formed between the image and the viewer, the majority of images (57%) made use of 'close social' distance. These types of shots usually show a substantial portion of the model's body, with the figures within the image portrayed as being at a safe social distance; a compromise between an intimate portrait and that of a long shot which creates the impression of an impersonal relationship between the image and the viewer (Bell, 2003: 29).

'Close personal' social distance which normally indicates an intimate relationship between the viewer and the image due to the 'close up' nature of the camera angle was used 19% of the time, and on average more often on the June/July editions (1999, 2008). Both of these covers depict South African male celebrities as powerful and successful authority figures regarding the relevant cover themes, in this instance soccer and *kwaito* respectively.

'Far social' distance which is usually captured using the 'long shot' technique, depicts the entire length of the individual's body and due to the distance portrayed away from the viewer, is said to foster an impersonal relationship. This type of social distance is made use of 14% of the time and also appears with greater frequency on the June/July editions (2002, 2004). Apart from this, two out of the three incidences of 'far social' distance shots on *Y-Magazine* covers depict groups consisting of three individuals (June/July 2004, March 2008). Both of these covers portray South African celebrities as youth icons of success and sophistication in terms of the way in which they are dressed, as well as the settings in which they are photographed i.e. inside a minimalist art gallery on the June/July 2004 cover; and outside in a stylised homage to an urban South African version of New York City.

Lastly, 'public' social distance serves much the same purpose as that of 'far social' distance, the only difference being that it gives the impression of having the photographed individuals further away from the viewer. It is also used to accommodate more than 3 individuals on the cover. This occurs twice within the 21 cover sample (December/January 2003/04, June/July 2007). Both of these covers portray groups of people, with five and six individuals appearing on the respective covers. These covers will be discussed in greater detail within the qualitative analysis section.

Behaviour

With regard to the behaviour portrayed on the covers of *Y-Magazine*, these were fairly evenly spread with no clear preference shown for one particular type. However, three different types of behaviour appeared 5 times each (23% for each type of behaviour and 71% when totalled in relation to the 21 cover sample). The three main types of behaviours displayed on the covers were: 'demand/affiliation', 'offer/ideal' and 'demand/submission'.

'Demand/affiliation' refers to the pose in which the portrayed individual engages the viewer, usually smiling or indicating a pleasant demeanour, and in so doing, establishes a relationship of equality with the viewer. This pose appeared on the covers of the following editions: December/January 1998/1999, June/July 1999, May 2001, June/July 2001 and December/January 2002. It is evident that this pose was deemed popular between 1999 and 2002 as it does not appear again later in the sample. Also, October/November editions never make use of this pose. It is interesting to note that apart from the June/July 1999 edition, the only one of the five 'demand/affiliation' covers to have a man appear by himself, the remaining four covers depict females either by themselves or with men.

The 'offer/ideal' poses concern instances in which the depicted individual offers themselves as an idealised example of a particular class or attribute. This involves a combination of the stylisation of the model's clothing according to a particular genre or theme, as well as their pose. Usually the model does not make eye contact with the viewer. This pose occurred on the June/July 2000, June/July 2002, December/January 2007/08, March 2008 and October 2008 editions. Whilst this pose has been used in all the months that have been specified for analysis, it is clear that it has reclaimed its popularity as of 2008 as its last appearance before this was in 2002. Apart from the June/July 2000 issue which featured a woman by herself, the remaining four 'offer/ideal' covers featured men only.

The 'demand/submission' pose involves the model looking down upon the viewer, apparently disgruntled, and thus demanding respect. It is a pose that gives power to the depicted character. This pose appears on the following covers: June/July 2004, 2005, 2007 and Oct/November 2007, 2008. The 'demand/submission' pose did not feature on any of the December/January covers. It has become increasingly more popular as of 2004 as it was not made use of before then. Four out of the five covers featuring this pose depicted a male

character by himself. The June/July 2004 issue featured a woman, although she is placed in relation to two men in the image.

On covers which featured more than one person it was common for the various individuals to display different types of behaviour from each other. An interesting trend was identified in that three out of the four times in which mixed behaviour was identified; 'demand/seduction' and 'offer/ideal' behaviour were shown together (December/January 2000/01, 2001/02, June/July 2003). The other instance of mixed behaviour (October/November 2002) showed 'demand/seduction' and 'demand/submission' type behaviour at the same time. In all of these instances men and women were shown as couples, with the men being portrayed as the ideal of masculinity and the women as objects to be desired.

Apart from the aforementioned types of behaviour, the 'demand/seduction' pose which asks the viewer to desire the depicted individual (February 2001) and the 'challenging' (October/November 1999) pose which cannot be classified according to Bell's (2003) study each appear once.

Number of Individuals on a Cover

Concerning the number of people that appear on the cover; *Y-Magazine* used a single individual on 48% of the covers analysed. The remaining covers featured either two (23%), three (14%), five (less than 1%) or six (less than 1%) people at a time. It was found that four out of the five December/January issues (2000/01, 2001/02, 2002/03, 2007/08) made use of two people or more on the covers. With the 1998/99 edition being the one December/January issue in the sample with just one person on the cover.

The majority of June/July issues made use of having just one person on the cover, while only one of the October/November editions made use of a couple (2002).

Lastly, the frequency with which various themes occurred was recorded. *Y-Magazine* often makes use of slang terminology and this was mostly used in reference to music. The themes of music and celebrities (both local and international) were the only two to have appeared on all 21 covers in the sample. Apart from these, sex and politics each appeared roughly 50% of

the time. Other themes included: cars (14%), soccer (19%), and drug and gay issues which each account for less than 1%.

5.3 *Research Phase II*

During this phase "Landmark moments" in the sample of *Y-Magazine* covers will be analysed according to the framework for the semiotic analysis of images as outlined by Jewitt and Oyama (2001). As with *SL* magazine, the following values will be used as the basis of analysis: representational meaning (which consists of either narrative or conceptual structures; Interactive meaning (which is informed by the notions of contact, distance and point of view) and lastly; Compositional meaning (which uses the concepts of information value, framing, salience and modality.)

The covers that were chosen each depict a move away from what was traditionally used on the cover up until that point in the history of *Y-Magazine* with regard to the variables used in the quantitative analysis. Other factors such as font choices, colour themes and layout were also considered when they played a defining feature in the composition of the cover. However, the main focus will be on the themes of race, gender and sexuality.

Please note that all covers referred to in this section may be viewed in Appendix B of the appendices.

5.3.1 *Cover 1: June 2000*

The significance of this cover is that it is the only occurrence in the sample in which the modality of the image can be classified as 'medium' or fantasy modality. Every other cover in the sample apart from the December/January 2002/03 edition made use of high modality images which portray realistic and life like characters.

The image on the cover depicts a female model, and in accordance with the classification of "representational meaning" she portrays a sense of sexuality and femininity which is distinctly South African. This is as a result of the composition of the image, which is a reference to the types of front cover images which were frequently used by *Drum* magazine

during the apartheid era. At the time, *Drum* magazine was a channel of expression for the oppressed Black population of South Africa. As such, the representational meaning not only conveys African female sexuality, but also freedom and glamour. This is further reinforced by her pose and the sense of joy that is conveyed. The image does not contain any vectors or visible lines which show the model interacting with an "inferred other," or which indicate that she is in the process of performing a task, it is therefore clear that the represented relationship is purely between the model and the viewer. This falls under the "conceptual" structure, which states that the model is "not represent[ed] as doing something, but as being something" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 141). This notion of "being something" correlates to the classification of the model's behaviour as outlined in the quantitative analysis.

As the model's gaze is not directly with the viewer, her air of sophistication and joy lends itself to being deemed as 'offer/ideal' behaviour. According to Bell (2003: 30), in this instance, the model is classified as representing particular traits associated with a specific class or group of people; in this case, the glamour girls of the *Drum* magazine era.

In order to determine the interactive meaning formed between the image and the viewer, an analysis of contact, distance and point of view of the image is necessary. Contact between the viewer and the model gives a sense of equality and openness as the depicted character smiles freely with a hand gesture and body language that suggests relaxation. The distance between the viewer and the model is "close/personal," which further indicates a social relationship, but not an intimate one. Regarding point of view, the vertical angle of the photograph which slightly 'looks up' at the model further creates a sense of aspiration towards the lifestyle being portrayed.

In terms of compositional meaning, the cover conforms to the norms of informational value placement i.e. the picture is placed in the centre of the frame (not the right quadrant) while still allowing for cover lines to be placed on both the right and left of the central character. As stated by Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 148), this form of layout seeks to entrench already established social norms and values, as what is placed on the left (the cover lines) is considered stable and known, while the caption on the right is unstable in that its positioning infers "new information" as viewers have to make a special effort to look for it (in this instance the introduction of a new South African starlet).

The cover is framed according to the "colour picking" or co-ordinating from the colour of the model's lipstick (red). By using this hue of red in the sub-headings, a sense of fluency is created. The same can be said for the salience of the image, as the blue background contrasts the rest of the page, thus drawing our attention back to the model. Finally, the image's use of washed out and ethereal colours serve to create a sense of vibrancy while also harkening back to the past. This is therefore an image which makes use of "fantasy" or medium modality.

5.3.2 *Cover 2: December/January 2000/01*

This cover was of interest as it is the only time in the sample in which females outnumber males on a *Y-Magazine* cover. However, as will be explained, the gender quota on the cover did not serve to portray an ideal of female authority and influence, but instead reduced the women to sexual objects belonging to the man in the image.

Regarding representational meaning, the male figure represents what popular culture, through hip-hop and rap music videos, has come to deem as the "pimp" or "player," i.e. a chauvinistic individual who views females as mere sexual objects to be used for personal gratification.

The narrative structure that this follows is one of male possession and opulence. The vectors or lines which indicate 'doings' and 'happenings' (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 141) emanate from the male's arms which are suggestively placed around both scantily clad girls as he sits on a motorcycle (which further alludes to the materialism that is stereotypical of this lifestyle).

The interactive meaning of this image is to create a sense of respect and aspiration towards the male. This is indicated by the type of behaviour displayed by the different characters. The male's behaviour is one of 'offer/ideal', dressed accordingly in the all white stereotype of the "pimp" and not making direct eye contact with the viewer while placing his arm around the females, entrenches the ideal of him as a modern day alpha male. The behaviour of both female model's is that of 'demand/seduction,' this coupled with their revealing clothing further establishes them as sexual objects, which more specifically belong to the male holding them. The social distance used (close/social) indicates a sociable relationship with the viewer,

although the body language between the models indicates a more intimate relationship between them. The vertical angle point of view places the viewer looking up to the depicted scene, and thus adds to the aspirational value of the image.

The compositional meaning of the cover follows the norms of layout and informational value, the characters are positioned in the centre as opposed to the left quadrant of the frame, a detail which Jewitt and Oyama (149: 2001) consider as holding the marginal elements (such as the blurbs and cover lines) together . Regarding the framing and salience of the image, this is achieved once more through "colour picking" both from the red worn by one of the female models, as well as the green from the motorcycle. These are used in the sub headings. This image also has a high level of modality as colours are used naturalistically.

5.3.3 *Cover 3: December/January 2001/02*

This cover is considered a "landmark" for two reasons: Firstly it is the only time in the sample in which two females appear alone i.e. without a male. It is also the only time in which a Black individual is not featured at all on the cover as the models are classified as Coloured and Indian.

The representational meaning of this image is that of young, strong and independent women of colour in South Africa. Both were DJ's on the *YFM* radio station which the majority of *Y-Magazine*'s readership was familiar with. This cover follows a conceptual narrative as there is no clear action being taken by either of the models.

Regarding interactive meaning, the relationship formed with the model is twofold as the behaviour displayed by both females is different. The Coloured model placed at the top displays behaviour indicative of the 'offer/ideal' pose by way of not maintaining eye contact with the viewer. She displays a detachment that is nonchalant and confident, thus symbolising the ideal of the radio DJ. The second model reclines below and establishes eye-contact with the viewer. Her behaviour is that of 'demand/seduction' and represents both confidence as well as femininity. The social distance between the models and the viewer is "close/social". In terms of the point of view, the models are photographed from the frontal angle, which is considered to portray a relationship of equality with the viewer.

In terms of the compositional meaning of the cover, the informational meaning of the photograph is stable as the image occupies the left quadrant. However, the cover lines are placed on the right hand side which does not follow the norm of the other *Y-Magazine* covers. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 148), information placed on the right hand side of the image is deemed "new information" and not simply a given. Apart from the red that is used on the top of the cover and on the subheadings, there is no salience that holds the cover together in relation to the image itself as "colour picking" does not occur. Lastly, the image uses natural colours in a realistic manner, and thus has a high level of modality.

5.3.4 *Cover 4: December/January 2002/03*

The importance of this cover is that it is the only cover in the sample to use 'low' modality i.e. a black and white photograph, and as will be discussed in the following chapter, was one of the lowest selling editions in the history of *Y-Magazine*.

It is also the only time in which a political figure; in this instance the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, was used on the cover. In terms of representational meaning, the image portrays a sense of South African pride, particularly targeted at Black youth. This is reinforced by the narrative structure and the "action" performed. Mr. Mbeki is seen smiling and displaying the 'v for victory' or 'peace' hand gesture. He is flanked by Black youth on either side who maintain the same pose as him.

In terms of interactive meaning, the relationship between the viewer and the image is one of equality and sociability. The behaviour displayed by the represented participants is in line with the "demand/affiliation" classification as they all look directly at the viewer while offering a smile. They are shown at far public distance, but this is done presumably to accommodate all five characters in the frame, and not as an indication of an impersonal relationship with the viewer. The frontal camera angle also serves to establish a sense of equality with the viewer.

Regarding the compositional meaning of the cover, the informational value differs from the norm in that that the cover lines are placed in the top quadrant. Jewitt and Oyama (2001: 148)

believe that this is done to introduce information which is viewed as the "ideal" in relation to what is represented. The cover is made salient through the use of "spot colour" i.e. using one colour, in this instance, red. This contrasts the black and white image and lends consistency and focus to the image. Finally, the low modality of the black and white image seeks to reveal "a deeper, hidden truth" by "probing beyond the surface" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 151).

5.3.5 *Cover 5: June/July 2007*

This cover is significant as it is the only time in which six individuals are depicted at once. All six characters are male and are involved in the "house music scene" in some form, either by being a DJ on *YFM* or producing their own music.

The representational meaning of this cover is one of Black male success. A narrative is not played out, and thus the conceptual structure relies on the celebrity status of the individuals in order to reinforce the representational meaning.

In terms of the interactive meaning, the characters in the image demand respect through their body language and behaviour, which can be classified as "demand/submission" i.e. demanding that the viewer offer respect and submit to their gaze. The number of individuals, together with their aggressive body language is also a reference to 'gangsterism' which is stereotypical of the lifestyle associated with *Hip-Hop* and *House* music. As with the previous cover, the social distance is at far public distance in order to accommodate the number of individuals in the frame.

The compositional meaning also differs slightly from the other covers as the informational value is placed in the centre, while the 'teasers' are placed at the top and not at where they are usually found at the bottom of the cover. However, the cover is made salient through the use of red in the title of the edition i.e. "Legends of House". The image used high modality in order to portray a sense of realism.

5.3.6 *Cover 6: December/January 2007/08*

This was the first instance in *Y-Magazine's* history in which international celebrities were used as opposed to local personalities. The celebrities in question are *Hip-Hop* performers Jay-Z and Kanye West, both of whom have achieved superstar status in their genre over the last few years and have a cult following overseas as well as locally.

The representational meaning of this cover, by way of the implied conceptual structure, is of Black male "coolness" and success. This is dependent upon being familiar with the identity of the cover models as they have come to embody the values of both Black masculinity, as well as financial success.

In terms of the interactive meaning between the image and the viewer; the body language, clothing and pose of the characters on the cover demand reverence from the viewer. This is made clear by the behaviour of both individuals who do not look directly at the viewer. Instead they exhibit the 'offer/ideal' classification which views them as the idealised example of the *Hip-Hop* lifestyle, also made apparent by the excessive jewellery or *"bling-bling"* that they sport.

They are shown at close social distance, which indicates a connection to the viewer that is neither personal nor impersonal. The vertical point of view looking up towards them, and the fact that the heads of the models are tilted downward further places them in a position of power over the viewer.

The compositional meaning of the image followed the same principles as the December/January 2000/01 cover.

5.4 *Summary of key findings*

As was mentioned in the statistical analysis of phase one of the research, the majority of the models were Black and Male. White individuals did not appear at all on *Y-Magazine* covers. Minority groups such as Coloureds were rarely portrayed on covers and an Indian (female) only appeared once. Covers frequently featured local celebrities e.g. soap stars, musicians and

athletes. It was only on the December/January 2007 issue of the sample that international celebrities (Jay-Z and Kanye West) appeared for the first time.

The themes of sex, music, politics and celebrities were the most popular. Apart from this, only two issues in the sample referred to gay or lesbian matters (March 2008 and June/July 1999 respectively). However, the March 2008 issue made use of the word “gay” in a negative light when quoting a local rap artist on the cover, and thus can be considered as a homophobic slur. The most notable trend with regard to the design of *Y-Magazine* front covers is the frequency with which the different types of social distances are changed, never sticking to one type of camera angle for long periods.

Chapter 6

6.1 Interviews

In order to gain insight into the decision making of those responsible for the creation of the covers, the editorial teams (including the designers and production editors) of both magazines were interviewed. Their views regarding the variables analysed above, as well as the production process, target audience and limitations concerning South Africa's youth magazine market are discussed here. For purposes of privacy the names of the interviewees have been withheld.

As *SL* magazine's current editor is relatively new to the publication, having taken over as of April 2008; the views of previous editor (who was in charge since 2002) will also be included for further clarification and insight. Both individuals were asked the same questions; however the current (and entirely new) production team added their comments and feedback on certain questions.

As with *SL*, the current *Y-Magazine* production team were also new at their jobs, having recently changed publishing houses and editors. Fortunately, the November 2008 issue celebrates 10 years of *Y-Magazine's* existence. This issue contains an article that focuses specifically on the creation of a *Y-Magazine* cover and includes interviews with certain editors who presided over the magazine during the past decade. This article has been included in the appendix section (Appendix E).

6.2 Findings from Interviews

Please note that the interviews conducted with both teams appear in the appendices (Appendix C – *SL* interview, Appendix D – *Y-Magazine* interview).

Both publications place an emphasis on being fashionable and "trendy". This is evidenced by cover lines on both magazines which frequently display the opportunity to enter competitions to win the latest clothing, music and accessories such as cell phones. Models on both covers are styled in clothing that is reflective of what is popular or "trendy" during the time in which

a particular issue is published. This is also true regarding the theme of music when the latest and most popular artists and bands are featured.

Regarding *SL*'s target audience, its features writer described readers as being "Niche 'indie-kids' who follow trends which are lesser known. We're not about 'hip-hop' from Rivonia; we target the kids from Melville who wear skinny jeans. Kwaito is also a no-no."

This statement is significant not only for its reference to trends regarding music and fashion, but also encapsulates the ideals of *SL* in general, more specifically its White orientated covers and content as inferred by the reference to the Johannesburg suburbs Rivonia (seen as the area popular with Black youth who listen to 'hip-hop' music) and Melville (the place associated with White youth involved in the 'indie music scene').

As is noted in the analysis of themes from the *SL* chapter, the theme of 'Kwaito' appeared sporadically on the cover of *SL* magazine between 1997 and 2003, the period during which this genre of music which is traditionally associated with Black youth became commercially popular with White youth as well. The claim that "Kwaito is a no-no" or that it is not considered trendy enough anymore to appear on *SL* covers indicates that the trend from the past has since faded and that the core target audience of *SL* magazine is interested in the "indie" music genre.

Similarly, *Y-Magazine*'s designer believes that their target audience comprises of "township youth aspiring to be someone, who want to live well and are part of the party culture. The kids who go with the trends." This is reflected on the covers of *Y-Magazine* as well in terms of the models used (always Black celebrities) who township youth; according to *Y-Magazine*'s designer, view as being successful and often aspire to. The emphasis on a party culture is evident on the covers of *Y-Magazine* as well, with words such as "party," "gigs" and "club guide" appearing often.

Regarding the types of images that have been shown to be successful on the magazine covers over the years; the views of the editorial teams of both publications correlated to the findings of the quantitative analysis.

According to the current editor of *SL* magazine, it was former editor Andy Davis (quoted earlier regarding race) who "introduced the idea of using 'hot students' as models – mostly White girls. [The previous editor who succeeded Davis] then started using international celebrities as models – usually White females as well."

As is noted in the *SL* magazine analysis chapter, the majority of its covers made use of scantily glad girls in suggestive poses. *SL*'s previous editor believes that it is these types of images that most easily grab the attention of the target audience, stating that: "Any cover that was vaguely sexy or featured a girl in a bikini was a seller," while the current editor reiterates this notion, stating that "Our biggest seller's always the December issue, also known as the 'Sex Issue' – it always uses quite provocative imagery which I guess people like."

Both the present and former editors believe that while focus group research suggests that the target audience is happy to buy a cover featuring a local model, it is the covers on which international models and celebrities featured that sold the most copies. International celebrities however only featured twice (February 2006 and February 2007) in the sample of *SL* magazine covers.

While the findings concerning *Y-Magazine* covers differs to *SL* with regard to the use of female models and sexual imagery, the same is true for *Y-Magazine* in terms of the debate between the use of local and international models. *Y-Magazine*'s assistant editor states that "in the past it has been mostly local celebrities [that have been popular], but we used our first international celebrities [rappers Jay-Z and Kanye West – refer to cover 6 of the Y-Magazine analysis in the previous chapter] on the December 2007/January 2008 cover which sold quite well. We try to support local talent, but if they don't sell we don't really have a choice [but to use international artists].

This dilemma is highlighted in the article published in the October 2008 edition of *Y-Magazine*, when the author Kwanela Sosibo states that "while we catch hell for running consecutive international covers, it is really the public and their pockets that have decided that debate" (Y-Magazine, October 2008: 53); referring to the fact that covers with international celebrities on them have always sold more copies since their introduction.

Once more, regarding the types of images that did not do well on the covers of both publications, the findings of the analysis are consistent with what the editorial team had said about this topic.

The main point that was made by the *SL* team concerning the topic of unpopular cover images reinforces the point made by Andy Davis earlier in this chapter concerning the use of Black faces on *SL*'s covers. According to *SL*'s features writer, "One of the covers that didn't sell well was the Beyonce' [Knowles – Black pop singer] one...that was one of our worst selling issues... In general Black covers don't sell very well... It's sad but true."

This is evidenced by the findings of the analysis chapter of *SL* magazine which indicated that in the sample of forty covers spanning a fourteen year period, only two covers show Black faces alone (June 1996, February 2003) while Coloured individuals also appeared alone on two occasions (February 1997, June 2002). Black and Coloured males did not appear at all, while Indians (male or female) did not feature either.

Regarding the *SL* magazine cover featuring Beyonce', *Y-Magazine*'s designer says that " I'd choose a *Y-Magazine* with Beyonce' any day because we have a stronger brand identity with 'r&b' and 'hip-hop', it'd seem more authentic. I don't think Black faces sell well on 'White' magazines. It's about who your market thinks is 'hot', that's what matters."

Similarly, when asked if race is a factor when choosing a cover model, *SL*'s former editor defends the lack of covers featuring Black faces by stating that "Of course. This all depends on your primary demographic that you are appealing to. *True Love* [a magazine traditionally aimed at Black women] would never put a White woman on the cover - this is not their target audience." However, the editor in question does not take into account the supposed 44% Black readership of *SL* magazine.

Referring to images which are not race specific and have not been successful on the covers of both publications, *SL*'s features writer believes that this is largely hit or miss with *SL*'s various themed issues (a different theme for each month). "We experiment with different themed issues, they don't always sell very well the first time, it just depends on whether or

not our readers are interested in what we think will be popular. For example the 'Design Issue' didn't do well last August (2007)." The way in which themed issues are conceptualised and eventually created will be discussed when referring to the way in which cover designs have changed over time.

Concerning the cover images which were not well received on *Y-Magazine*, its assistant editor says "I haven't been here very long and can't say for sure which covers haven't sold well, but I do know that the cover that wasn't well received at all was the December 2002/January 2003 issue [refer to cover 4 of the *Y-Magazine* analysis in the previous chapter]. It's black and white and has Thabo Mbeki on the cover. I don't think our readers could relate to that, it seemed overly political and didn't capture the imagination of the youth audience."

While the publication often carries content regarding politics, there has been a clear trend by *Y-Magazine* to shy away from producing another cover image such as the Mbeki cover. As *Y-Magazine*'s designer puts it, "The cover is the most important part of a magazine. It needs to feature people who are young, hot and sexy." Apart from the Mbeki cover, every other cover in the *Y-Magazine* sample features youthful celebrities who exude a sense of vibrancy.

The conscious change to be viewed as less serious and more fun-loving has been criticised however by former *Y-Magazine* editor Rudeboy Paul, one of the founding members of *Y-Magazine* who was in charge at the time of the publication of the Mbeki cover. In the article by Kwanela Sosibo; Paul is quoted as saying "The magazine now has turned into more of a... I wouldn't say teen mag, but more of a young man and women's street guide. I don't think there is anything wrong if you wanted to target that audience, but there are more serious issues to discuss. As much as youth like their artists, they want to see other people who have contributed to Africa's growth" (Y-Magazine, October 2008: 55)

When asked about the extent to which designers and editors were influenced by political and cultural contexts for cover designs and content, the teams of both publications answered differently. *SL* magazine's designer believes that "It's not very important to be honest... The only thing I can think of is the cover with the White girl wearing a Steve Biko T-shirt, I can't remember exactly what edition that was, but I think it did well."

The notion that politics does not play a prominent role in the makeup of *SL* is particularly true in relation to the analysis of its covers, not only in terms of the types of images used, but also the themes within the cover lines. As mentioned earlier in this chapter regarding the themes that were prominent on both magazines; *SL* magazine only made reference to political issues twice over the fourteen year period, whereas roughly 50% of *Y-Magazine* covers referred to political themes.

Y-Magazine's assistant editor explains that "*Y-Magazine* started off as being very political, this was in 1998, not too long after democracy in South Africa had been achieved. There was a need to create an identity for Black youth who now had so many opportunities their parents didn't. It started off as being quite intellectual, with poetry and articles regarding the 'New South Africa'."

However, *Y-Magazine*'s designer believes that the danger of frequently running covers with political themes is that the target audience may be alienated in a way that the now infamous Thabo Mbeki cover did in the past. He is of the opinion that the ideology of ex-editor Rudeboy Paul was overly intellectual and led to the decline in readership during his time in charge of the publication.

He goes on to state that "youth are [now] less politically motivated. There is no struggle. They're more concerned with music and partying. They don't have any role models to look up to, just look at that Julius Malema guy [President of the Youth League for the African National Congress]; he's an idiot! We don't have to be Black for Black's sake, the market's not intellectualised anymore."

While the market may fluctuate regarding the type of content that is deemed popular on a magazine cover at different times; the various parameters set by advertisers also plays a part in determining the way in which a magazine's readership is targeted. The teams of both publications believe that the most important ideal in this regard is for a magazine cover to portray individuals as being "hot and sexy" (*SL*'s features writer *)*. The designer of *Y-Magazine* reiterates this point and says that, "Youth are fickle, it's all about who your market thinks is hot."

The way in which these models were chosen for the various *SL* covers is also dependent upon the theme being represented for a particular month. *SL*'s previous editor describes this process in her interview by stating that: "The cover was always theme driven and very conceptual. The fashion editor made a selection of models and I chose the final cover model. The team styled her and I always came on the cover shoot to make sure it went to plan. We modelled out cover concepts on international magazines like *The Face* and *Dazed & Confused* and *ID*"

The present *SL* editor has continued to emulate international youth publications, stating that "Since Nigel Moore [who has done design work for MTV and Levi's] took over the conceptualising and photography of the covers, they're edgier and sexier. They look more like covers you'd find on overseas magazines like *The Face*, part fashion – part youth [orientated].

This mimicking of international youth magazines is evident on both *SL* and *Y-Magazine* covers (as mentioned above in relation to the conceptual work and photography). As *Y-Magazine*'s designer puts it; "*Y-Magazine* is global... it's an international nomad in the global village." This is evidenced by its continued trend to use international celebrities on its cover whereas in the past it made use of only local celebrities.

Regarding the way in which the cover designs have changed over time, *SL* magazine's designer believes that "The cover design's changed a lot since [the previous editor] took over. She did an entire redesign of the mag, we changed the logo, the use of colour's more important and there's less clutter. Now there's a cleaner design that's more sleek."

The former editor herself feels that "A magazine is a vibrant, constantly changing entity. So naturally some design changes get made over time - to all magazines. One thing everyone strives for though - is recognition on the shelf. A magazine like Cosmopolitan is immediately recognizable by its cover (even if you obscure the masthead you would recognize the brand)."

Y-Magazine's designer says that the redesign of his publication has "mostly got to do with the types of camera angles used for the photographs because no matter what we always end up using a celebrity model. We tend to use more 'big close ups' and try not to show full body shots (which were popular under the previous editor)."

The sample of *Y-Magazine* covers correlate with this statement, as older editions tended to use images of "longer shots" (medium distance) whereas recent covers (i.e. after December 2007 – when the current designer took over duties at *Y-Magazine*) concentrated on using "close ups." The reason for this, according to the assistant editor, was to create a more 'in your face' and edgier brand.

But do these covers reflect societal changes in South Africa? The following chapter will analyse the findings of the previous two chapters in order to determine whether or not societal change is depicted on the covers of both publications as well as the social context in which these images have been created.

Chapter 7

7.1 Analysis

When analysed according to the framework outlined by Bell (2003), it is evident that both *SL* and *Y-Magazine* have changed their cover designs over the given time period according to the social milieu in which they were produced. While both publications bear certain similarities which will be discussed, the themes and images portrayed vary substantially given the difference in their target market, particularly with regard to factors such as race and socio-economic standing.

For purposes of this study, the term "stereotype" includes the inappropriate generalisation of simplified categorisations which unsettle. However, neither magazine breaks the mould with frequency regarding the use of stereotypes which reinforce familiar notions of racial, gender or sexual identity, particularly within a South African context. Nuttall (2003: 446) confirms these commonalities and differences, arguing that:

> *Y* and *SL* speak of a still emerging crossover culture that often retains racially distinctive modes of self-styling, at least at the level of content. *Y magazine* in particular, focuses on crossover language of styles as important to a process of cultural translatability, while in *SL*, crossover configurations are more apparent in terms of entertainment and advertising.

This chapter will analyse the findings previously discussed, and examine the meaning such representation may have for contemporary South Africa. The findings will be placed into the context of what was expected in relation to the hypothesis of this study, as well as aims to answer the research questions posed; namely: What themes and images on the magazine covers are frequently given preference over the given time period of 1994-2007 and how changing patterns of cover design are related to the social context in which they have been created.

Gender

This section will address the manner in which gender was portrayed on the covers of both publications. As Colson-Smith (2005: 13) states, "The use of magazines, and the way certain messages are framed in these magazines cultivate beliefs on gender issues." The types of images shown on South Africa's premier youth magazine titles provide an insight into the "socially acceptable" standard that is created for youth, as well as indicates the manner in which the differing target audiences of these magazines are appealed to.

7.1.1 Women

As stated in the theoretical framework, the representation of gender is often affected by social bias. In line with the hypothesis of this study; media often resort to the use of stereotypes and simplistic and often derogatory stock images in order to create meaning (Ferguson, 1998; Williams, 2003).

It was thus expected that both magazines would portray women as submissive sexual objects as this has been the norm within the media industry, particularly with regard to magazine covers. As Hazell and Clarke (2008: 05) put it; "ideal women" are commonly portrayed as physically beautiful, submissive, and as sexual objects. These ideal images are used in selling products both to men and women. For example, in selling products to men, the image of the ideal woman is used as a status symbol—if men purchase the product, they can hope to become more appealing to women possessing the characteristics of the ideal woman (Baker, 2005). It was also expected that women would appear more frequently than men on the covers of both publications as a result of this "sex sells" ideology.

As was predicted, *SL* magazine showed a clear preference for the use of females on the cover (83%) while males hardly appeared at all (7.5%). In contrast to this, and unexpectedly; *Y-Magazine* predominantly used males (76%) either by themselves or in a group setting. Women appeared alone only 19% of the time on *Y-Magazine* covers, and when they did appear in group settings, they were always shown to be outnumbered by men. This is in line with what Colson-Smith (2005: 10) states regarding the messages on magazines aimed at

both men and women; “males are over-represented as prominent and financially secure, while females are outnumbered and are not viewed as having the same opportunities given to them as males.”

Women were portrayed as sexual objects more frequently on *SL* magazine covers, often appearing nude or semi-nude, particularly on the December “sex edition” issues. The former *SL* editor comments on this in the interview section of this study (Appendix C).

The only clear instances of the objectification of women on *Y-Magazine* covers both occurred in 2001; i.e. the February and December/January editions. The February 2001 issue shows local actress “Thembi” of the then famous television programme “Yizo Yizo” (which was particularly popular with township youth). She is dressed in a revealing item of clothing and is placed in relation to a cover line that reads “Sex survey: your erotic thoughts”. The December/January edition in which the male figure is presented as a “pimp” possessing the scantily clad girls on each arm, has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. This falls in line with what Brooks and Hebet (2006) state regarding the depiction of Black women within Black cultural production. They state that “reworked through the prism of social class; the sexualized Black woman has become an icon in hip-hop culture” (Brooks and Hebet, 2006: 300).

When comparing the manner in which women are portrayed on the covers of both magazines it appears that while women are more sexualised on the covers of *SL* magazine (which is intended for a predominantly White audience), they are depicted as disempowered in relation to men on *Y-Magazine* covers (aimed at a Black audience). Both publications depict women as commodities; for *SL* they are sex objects, whereas *Y-Magazine* shows them as mere accessories used to enhance the status of men. This correlates with the findings of Colson-Smith (2005: 21) who believes that while little or no attention is drawn to the body of male models on the covers of magazines, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the physical appearance of women.

Researchers believe that it is important to examine magazine images of women due to the impossible standards they depict as well as the potentially negative physical and psychological consequences this may have for the young women who read them (Millard and

Grant, 2006: 659). Concerning the issue of body image; the consequences of striving for these unrealistic ideals may lead to young girls developing eating disorders or to resorting to aggressive means to control and reduce their weight which in turn can have serious implications on their health (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999: 648).

Apart from this, the result of using overt sexual imagery, particularly on the cover of youth magazines in a country infamous for its high rate of violence against women, is the perpetuation of sexist ideals which both promotes patriarchy as well as devalues the position of women in society. This is problematic particularly within a South African context where women make up 51% (approximately 24.3 million) of the population and are thus vital for the economic and social prosperity of the country[4]. The objectification of women on the covers of local youth magazines further deteriorates an already alarming situation with regard to the empowerment of women, specifically those from a previously disadvantaged background who have limited socio-economic opportunities. While equal rights for both men and women have been enshrined in our constitution; the reality is that at least 28% of females in South Africa have been abused either physically or sexually (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002: 1235). This figure is expected to be much higher due to the problematic methodological and ethical considerations inherent in studies of this nature (Kim and Motsei, 2002: 1244).

As Sultze (2005: 275) states, "the two most significant concerns related to women and visual representation have been the marginalization of women as leaders and communicators and the objectification of the female body in visual art." Youth magazines have the ability to highlight the work being done by South Africa's numerous female artists, musicians and politicians. South African youth magazines (and the print industry in general) need to place less emphasis on the female body as a sexualized commodity and instead portray women in a more positive light, with the ability to lead and accomplish without being placed in relation to the "male gaze".

[4] http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statskeyfindings.asp?PPN=P0302&SCH=3952

7.1.2 Men

It was expected that men would appear less frequently on the covers of both magazines; however this was only true for *SL* magazine, whereas *Y-Magazine* used male models on the majority its covers. It was also expected that men would be portrayed as aggressive and financially successful, and that the majority of depictions would involve White males. According to Hazell and Clarke (2008: 07) the dominance of 'Whiteness' on magazine covers is maintained and legitimated through the power of White males over females and other races in society. While men were portrayed as dominant and upwardly mobile; the majority of male models were Black and appeared on *Y-Magazine*.

In terms of the representation of men; *SL* featured males at least once a year between 1994 and 1998 (although they only appeared alone on three occasions in those four years – twice in 1998); after this period females were used solely. In comparison, *Y-Magazine* has consistently used men on the cover since its inception and has very rarely used females alone (i.e. without the presence of a male).

While women were "sexualised" on the covers of both magazines (although not as frequently on *Y-magazine*); men on both publications were portrayed as dominant, businesslike and successful. However, on two out of the three occasions in which men appeared by themselves on the cover of *SL* magazine (February 1995, February 1998), they were shown either shirtless or exposing the chest through their clothing. Male body exposure did not occur on any of the *Y-Magazine* covers, and thus *SL* portrayed a greater amount of male objectification.

In spite of this statistic, *SL*'s June 1998 cover (Appendix A), which was discussed in greater depth in the previous chapter) falls in line with the majority of *Y-Magazine* covers in that the male subjects are dressed in formal attire. As will be discussed further when referring to the 'behaviour' of the cover models on both publications, men were frequently portrayed as aggressive and domineering, while women were shown to be passive and submissive. While *Y-Magazine* always relied on male and female celebrities (both local and international) for their covers, *SL* cover models which were male were regularly well known, whereas the majority of its female models featured 'unknown' faces.

According to former *SL* editor Andy Davis, there is a dogma within publishing circles that "Males on covers sell fewer than women... it is an issue of guys won't sell so many copies"[5]. As a result, *SL*'s publishers only allowed the cover to portray males that were well-known (i.e. celebrities) and guaranteed to appeal to the target audience; whereas the use of scantily clad females (as noted by the former *SL* editor in Appendix C) was a certainty to secure high sales figures.

It is interesting to note that male models need to be recognisable as a face (i.e. a celebrity) whereas unknown female models legitimate their presence on covers through the objectification of their bodies. The implication is that men need a recognisable image that denotes a form of status with reference to society, whereas women are merely physical objects which can be anonymous and interchangeable. Once more, this is problematic with regard to the empowerment of women in society

This again highlights *SL*'s reliance on the use of 'racy' imagery and female objectification. However, it also highlights *Y-Magazine*'s dependence on celebrity power to appeal to its audience. When broken down into the dichotomy of White vs. Black readership; the predominantly White readership of *SL* is targeted through sexual imagery, whereas the readers of *Y-Magazine* are appealed to through the use of Black celebrities who they can view as role models (Appendix D). Once more, men are targeted in relation to the manner in which women are portrayed. While young White women are encouraged to be attractive and sexually adventurous in order to be desired on the cover of *SL*; young Black men in particular are taught to emulate local and international celebrities who are the yardstick of success.

These representations affect race and gender identities for both Black and White youth. As young White women are depicted as the ideal of beauty and sexuality which at once renders them mere objects to the male gaze; this may also serve to alienate young Black women who do not fall in line with this assumed standard of beauty. This correlates with the 2006 study of the stereotypes of Black and White women in magazines conducted by Millard and Grant (2006: 661) who state that "White women are still used as the standard icon of beauty and

[5] http://www.jingo.co.za/journalism_article.php?article_id=58&section_id=6

femininity" whereas Black women are generally shown as "unskilled labourers, athletes and entertainers."

Apart from this, class movement in South Africa allows for young Black men to emulate the globalised alpha male, characterised by Hip-Hop icons and businessmen such as 'Jay-Z' and 'Puff Daddy' who frequently appear in *Y-Magazine*. Conversely, young White men are targeted by *SL* through depictions of frivolity which draws attention to the shift within the South African social milieu, as prior to 1994 young White men were depicted as the aspirant elite of society. According to Dolby (2001: 06), historically White men in South Africa acquired "a certain class status that was not only visible to themselves and Black South Africans, but to the entire world."

The creation of this new 'gentlemen's club' is problematic as it leads to the creation of goals and ideals which are both sexist in its portrayal of women; as well as superficial in terms of its emphasis on money and status. Youth magazine titles need not resort to this form of sensationalism and should instead strive to reflect the realities facing the young men of South Africa such as HIV/AIDS, education and unemployment.

7.1.3 Same sex

In terms of same sex covers (i.e. covers with either two men or two women) it was expected that despite South Africa's 1996 constitution being the first in the world to protect the rights of gays and lesbians (Croucher, 2002: 01); few youth magazine covers would depict these with great frequency as it would not be seen as commercially viable to target a minority readership. It was also expected that males would appear less than females in this setting.

SL used same sex covers on three occasions. Two of these occurred on the June 1997 and 1998 editions. The cover featuring two men (June 1998) portrayed a representational meaning which inferred a playful 'boy like' friendship between the two men, whereas the June 1997 cover showed two women together and alluded to a pseudo-lesbian relationship emphasised by the catch phrase of the issue: "straight up & downright deviant". The third instance (June 2004) featured two females in their underwear in a highly stylised image reminiscent of "Lad Mags" such as FHM and GQ.

The increase in popularity of such "glamour images" which commonly use the theme of faux-lesbianism and female bi-sexuality to appeal to the male readership of "Lad Mags" has led to them occurring more frequently on the covers of youth magazines. Once more this highlights the sexualised nature of *SL*'s covers. It also indicates the commercialisation and sensationalist misrepresentation of lesbianism as a hyper-sexed commodity to be enjoyed by men and to be mimicked by young women in order to gain the attention of men. Regarding this sensationalised portrayal Griffin (1996: 103) states that lesbians are "manipulated into heterosexuality through a discourse which exploits and redirects their emotional needs away from the female and to the male."

Y-Magazine covers in which two men are portrayed together appear twice (June/July 2005 and December/January 2007/08); while covers depicting two women together appeared once (December/January 2003). As with the *SL* covers, the instances in which two men appear together indicate a friendship, however the men on the *Y-Magazine* covers appear more serious and confrontational. This is in line with the view of Croucher (2002: 02) who states that "strong efforts are made among Black media to characterise homosexuality as alien or non-existent. Among Black South Africans, a prominent discourse has characterised, and continues to characterise, homosexuality as a Western colonial import – foreign in all respects to indigenous African culture." Unlike the *SL* cover, the *Y-Magazine* cover featuring two women does not infer a lesbian relationship.

Based on these findings, both publications convey a heterosexual ideology. Neither publication frequently makes mention of gay or lesbian issues or features celebrities or models who can be identified as gay icons. While women may be portrayed as sexually adventurous or at least bi-sexual in order to titillate (on the covers of *SL*); men are shown as being impassive. Heterosexual relationship and sexual health advice is offered on both publications, and thus portrays the norm concerning these issues. Consequently this alienates gay South African youth, who as yet do not have a magazine title specifically aimed at them. This falls in line with the hypothesis of this study, which states that despite societal and democratic change within South Africa; visual culture as reflected on the covers of youth magazines still relies on conservative stereotypes with regard to sexuality.

These findings correlate with the 2007 study by the Gay and Lesbian Archives of South Africa (GALA) together with the organisation known as Community Media for Development (CMFD). It found that there is limited coverage, as well as a lack of in-depth reporting concerning Gay and Lesbian issues within the South African media landscape.

According to the study, media's representation of the gay community greatly influences the perceptions of society in general. It goes on to state that despite South Africa's advanced constitution which protects homosexuals against discrimination; negative stereotypes perpetuated by the media reinforces perceptions that contribute to further instances of homophobia (GALA 2007: 04).

A further worrying factor highlighted by the study is that despite minimal media coverage of the gay community; gay and lesbian issues tend to be sensationalised when they are reported and frequently portray homosexuals in a negative light (GALA 2007: 09).

While the findings of the aforementioned report do not differ from the hypothesis and findings of this study; the youth of South Africa's gay and lesbian community are clearly being alienated from the rest of society. Apart from this, Black members of the gay community face greater stigmatisation as a result of the way in which the media portrays them i.e. as being "Un-African." Corresponding to suggestions put forward by gay individuals who contributed to the GALA study; greater coverage needs to be given to youth issues, while less emphasis should be placed on parties and sex, and more on everyday concerns such as discrimination and employment.

7.1.4 Race

As mentioned previously, the term 'race' is a social construct whose representation serves in large part to reinforce social, political and economic inequality. In this way race remains interlinked with other markers of social inequality such as class and gender (Banton, 2000: 62).

Media theorists have shown how often White people are portrayed in media texts as the "norm" or 'just' human whereas Black people are usually presented simply as a group or

representative of a group; being able to speak for their race in general and not as individuals. (Dyer 2000: 539-540; Hall, 1992).

It was expected that the covers of both magazines would follow conventional representation regarding race. In accordance with the hypothesis of this study, it was believed that racial stereotypes would be used according to the target audience of the relevant publication.

Both magazines predominantly used models that represented their target audience i.e. *SL* mainly used White models on their covers while *Y-Mag* used Black models almost exclusively. However, while *Y-Magazine* clearly states that its target audience is solely Black youth, and its use of Black models is justified in relation to this, *SL* magazine claims to be multi-racial in its composition of readership, which is more specifically broken down into being aimed at a 56% White and 44% Black audience. The relatively large Black readership of *SL* seems to be grossly under-represented in terms of the cover models chosen.

This is an indication that despite democratic change in South Africa, Black individuals still rarely occupy spaces on popular cultural texts viewed by a largely White audience; the insinuation being that White South African youth do not relate to or aspire towards the notion of "Blackness". Ballard (2002: 113) refers to the construction of White South African identity through media texts and states that White identity is constructed through the process of "othering" individuals who were different in terms of race. The lack of Black representation prior to 1994 was as a result of Whites viewing themselves as superior and normal, while other races were seen as inferior and abnormal (Ballard, 2002: 113). The perpetuation of this mindset within a racially diverse and democratic South Africa is problematic as it further indicates that those in positions of power with the ability to include or dismiss the use of Black faces still make use of outdated and prejudiced ways of thinking (as will be further discussed in this chapter by former *SL* editor Andy Davis).

Predictably twenty out of the twenty one *Y-Magazine* covers used Black individuals either by themselves or in a group setting, and the one instance in which a Black person did not feature at all (December/January 2002/03) made use of females who were Coloured and Indian (discussed in the previous chapter). Thus, a White individual (neither male nor female) was never used in the sample of *Y-Magazine* covers. In contrast to the White orientated *SL*

magazine which only rarely included Black faces as "tokens" of their multi-racial aspirations; the Black targeted *Y-Magazine*'s exclusion of a White face altogether can be viewed as a site of resistance i.e. that Blackness must not be seen in any kind of reliance to Whiteness but stands on its own.

This is a redefining of Black South African identity, which Posel (2003: 15) describes as "the valorisation of consumption, style and upward mobility within new young Black elites." Posel (2003: 15) further states that the representation of the newly emergent Black middle-class is a form of power which is gradually beginning to reshape notions of race and class within South Africa.

In the substantial sample of forty *SL* magazine covers which span a 14 year period, Blacks only appear alone once (June 1996) while Coloureds are also shown alone three times (February 1997, June 2002, February 2003). Multi-racial couples appear on the cover twice – once with a Black female and White male (February 1996), and another with a Coloured female and White female (June 1997). The representation of inter-racial couples is significant when viewed in the context of South Africa's segregated past in which sex across the Black – White racial divide was forbidden.

As Posel (2003: 04) puts it; "Particularly obsessive in its determination to prohibit sex across racial boundaries, and driven by typically colonial anxieties about rapacious Black sexuality, the apartheid state accumulated an extensive armoury of regulations and prohibitions to control the practice and transaction of sex."

As is evidenced by the published dates of the issues concerned, *SL* mainly experimented with the use of Black/Coloured faces on its cover between 1996 and 1997. This is important to note as South Africa was in a state of transition after the institution of democracy in 1994 and the novelty of a Black face on a youth magazine was fairly new. This statistic gives rise to the inference that that the experimentation with multiculturalism faded away as quickly as it had begun. This is perhaps an indication that South African White audiences were not responding well to the new ideology of racial equality. It is also likely that South African publishers preferred to "play it safe" and thus retreated back to a formula they trusted; one which would appeal solely to a White readership.

Black/Coloured/Indian males did not feature at all on *SL* magazine covers, and when either Black or Coloured females appeared in the context of a couple, the other individual (whether male or female) was always White. While the majority of the White females on the cover of *SL* were 'unknown' models, when Black/Coloured models were used they were often celebrities, as if to qualify their appearance on the cover. These factors reinforced *SL*'s identification with White South Africa as Black individuals (women) were depicted as possessions of the White male that they were placed in relation to.

The fact that Black men did not appear at all on the covers of *SL* magazine refers back to Posel's (2003: 04) reference to Black male sexuality being viewed as "rapacious" prior to the democratisation of South Africa in 1994. This anachronistic stereotype clearly views Black masculinity as a threat to the dominance of White males, who in turn would have to protect White women from Black men in order to preserve their racial purity. That Black men do not appear on a supposed multicultural youth magazine over a decade after the institution of democracy; reinforces the hypothesis of this study which states that the portrayal of racial and gender stereotypes would persist over time on the covers of the relevant publications.

Regarding the lack of Black faces that appear on *SL* magazine and South African magazine covers in general, former *SL* editor Andy Davis wrote the following in an article published in the daily newspaper "The Citizen":

> There is a dogma widely held in publishing circles that Black covers don't sell as well as White ones. Attractive, well-known White women are "proven" to sell more magazines. That is why you'll see at least 70 to 80% of the magazines on the shelves this month have such covers. This dogma has no place in South Africa, with our population make up and ever-increasing upward mobility and economic growth steadily blurring the Black-White economic divide. But it is alive and well in local magazine publishing... *SL*, being a youth culture magazine with a publishing precociousness that has always been on the cutting edge, should have bucked this trend years ago, but the publishing dogma stuck. In such a cut-throat industry, even something as seemingly logical as a Black cover on a South African youth culture magazine was perceived as a risky business proposition. The October 2002 issue

> featuring a popular Msanzi model on the cover was vetoed. So was the Zola cover for February. The April 2003 issue was intended to display rising Springbok rugby player Gcobani Bobo. He was a sure winner because his image consolidates the interests of our traditional White readership (rugby) while also showing a Black Rastafarian who is a poster boy for transformation. The publisher's response was short and to the point. He vetoed the cover in the belief that males on the cover sell fewer copies than females, and that it was likely for *SL* that Black males would sell much less (Davis, 2003).

Davis' view that "well-known White women (on a magazine cover) are 'proven' to sell more magazines" is shared by his successors at *SL*. Both editors who were in charge after Davis, were of the opinion that White females were a safe bet as Black/Coloured cover models (male or female) did not sell very well (Appendix C). Significantly, Davis also highlights the double standard of claiming to be at the "cutting edge" of the South African youth market while not being truly reflective of the country's racial composition. The fact that Davis' suggestion for the use of a Black male on the cover of *SL* magazine was vetoed is further evidenced by the findings presented in the "*SL* Magazine" chapter of this study which states that in the sample of forty magazine covers spanning a 14 year period, none contained a male on the cover who was not White.

What this means is that these South African youth magazine titles have not broken the mould with regard to race and who appears on their covers (as stated in the hypothesis of this study) save for the "token" rare appearance of a female Black face on *SL* magazine. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, race continues to be a measure of class structure in South Africa, with White youth being the main target audience despite an increasingly upwardly mobile Black youth. Former *SL* editor Andy Davis sums up this situation succinctly, stating that:

> The fact is that loads of White kids listen to kwaito and hip hop and loads of Black kids skateboard and rock to punk music. While South African youth culture tended towards the middle ground of integration, tolerance and unification before the great god of consumer culture, South African magazine publishing, via its media buyers and advertisers (A predominantly White, middle-aged, middle class sector) remains corralled into the Black market/White market laager mentality and still gives no

> serious thought or research to the changing landscape of post-apartheid South African youth culture. A perception promulgated more by the sub-conscious prejudices of those who make up the sector than any market research or trend analysis[6].

7.1.5 Modality

Modality, or "the represented 'realism' of an image" (Bell 2003: 30), concerns whether an image is portrayed as realistic and lifelike, or as something that can be classified as either a fantasy or caricature.

As youth magazines frequently change their use of modality based on the various themes and individuals that they portray; the types of preferences shown by both publications was largely unpredictable.

Both *SL* and *Y-Magazine* showed a preference for the use of high modality images. However, while *Y-Magazine* did not experiment with other types of image modality (only twice using modality other than high modality: December/January 2003/04 and June/July 2000); analysis of *SL* covers indicated a trend that 'fantasy' images were becoming more fashionable and appealing to its youth audience. This is evidenced by the fact that between 2003 and 2008 60% of *SL* magazine covers made use of 'fantasy' modality.

Whereas the front cover images on *Y-Magazine* were stylised to some extent, the use of 'natural' colour showed a preference for images depicting a sense of realism. Emphasis was placed on the clothing of the models, who were always smartly dressed and portrayed within the norms of a socially acceptable and realistic representation of Black youth life style. According to Ndlangamandla (2005: 46) who draws on the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996):

> An image might use a mode of representation that is in a hyper-realist form, perhaps a surrealist form of everyday realism. Colour photography is used as one means of

[6] http://www.jingo.co.za/journalism_article.php?article_id=58&section_id=6

establishing ‘realism’. This is how the world of the real, unreal, dreams and fantasies might get expressed in conjunction with other signs.

SL magazine covers moved from using high modality images to fantasy images as the images became increasingly sexual. While *Y-Magazine* models were realistically shown as businesslike in their attire, *SL* cover girls were objectified and portrayed in either bikini’s, topless or nude, and thus within the context of ‘fantasy’ modality. This was particularly evident in terms of the colour saturation of images, representation of models in fetishist poses; and the contextualisation of popular cultural fantasy roles such as the “French maid” (February 2004), “innocent school girl” (June 2005) and the “available vixen” (December 2006).

As was mentioned regarding the analysis of gender, the use of these types of image modality on the covers of *SL* magazine are reminiscent of the types of images used on the covers of “Lad Mags.” The prevalence of these types of images indicates a significant societal trend; namely that fantasy scenarios are favoured by the “White based” magazine, while *Y-Magazine* (the “Black” magazine) is more realistic.

As a result of this, the portrayals of fantasy modality indicate an escaping to the “past” i.e. when things were “more” favourable towards White youth, reconfigured through popular culture. That while for Black youth it is the exciting real-life opportunities to fight for status, power and money in the financial world; White youth are merely forgetting themselves within a haze of physical pleasure and addiction and consumption.

Again, while White youth are targeted through overt sexual imagery, aspirational Black youth are made to relate to images of celebrities whose businesslike attire is indexical of the wealth and success they represent. The implication is that White youth in comparison to their Black counterparts place greater emphasis on frivolity, while Black youth are more pragmatic.

7.1.6 Social Distance

Social distance refers to how much of the human body is represented in the frame of a particular image as well as determines the distance between the viewer and image. This in turn indicates the type of relationship that is created between the two.

SL and *Y-Magazine* differed once more regarding social distance and the types of camera angles that were used to create a relationship between the image and the viewer. The majority of *SL* magazine covers (77%) depicted 'close personal' distance, which is considered to create an intimate relationship between the viewer and image, while *Y-Magazine* showed a preference for 'close social' distance (57%), which creates the impression of an impersonal relationship.

The findings of the preferences for the types of social distance used by both magazines ties into the data observed for the number of individuals on the cover, as the number of individuals that appear in a picture frame is largely dependent upon the social distance created by the camera lens. Apart from this, as stated by Bell (2003), the number of people shown on a magazine cover is in part an indication of the publication's message for social interaction i.e. whether it places emphasis on the individual by using images predominantly featuring one person; or if it values group interaction and thus promotes a sense of community.

Both magazines made use of images that portrayed just one person on the cover; however, there was a marked difference in how often this occurred. *SL* magazine opted for one individual to appear on the cover 82% of the time, while *Y-Magazine* featured this on 48% of the covers in the sample.

Whereas *SL* never portrayed more than two people at a time, *Y-Magazine* chose to use three (June/July 2004), five (December/January 03/04) and even six (June/July 2007) individuals on the covers that have been referenced. Apart from this, *Y-Magazine* more frequently used two people on the cover (25%) when compared to *SL* (18%). Based on these findings, as well as the types of social distance that both magazines used, *SL* magazine clearly places emphasis on creating an intimate relationship with its viewers, one which does not involve the portrayal

of group interaction. *Y-Magazine* on the other hand keeps its readers at a 'close social' distance that borders the private and public realms of representation, and serves as a promoter of group dynamics and interaction.

The implication of these statistics is that *SL* magazine's readers are more likely to be introspective and prefer interaction on a personal level, whereas readers of *Y-Magazine* can be viewed as being more outgoing in comparison. However, the preferences for these types of social distances by both publications indicate more about the manner in which they target their audience as well as the image they both seek to portray.

Whereas *SL* magazine is meant to represent "coolness" and the latest trends, concepts which in themselves are related to a sense of individuality; *Y-Magazine* has come to symbolize an air of the "Afro-chic" which draws inspiration from the interaction between members of the urban African community.

This is reflected in the creation of locally produced fashion labels such as "Sun Goddess" and "Stoned Cherry" which target upwardly mobile Black youth; both labels receive extensive advertising within *Y-Magazine* and their financial success is seen as a being in direct relation to the emergent Black middle-class so carefully constructed on their covers.

When viewed from the context of a racial standpoint, the fact that the White targeted magazine (*SL*) depicts more instances of individuality can also be linked with the notion of the Black magazine (*Y-Magazine*) falling in line with the African ideal of "*uBuntu*" which places a greater emphasis on group dynamics than on personal gain.

Once more, this is part of a larger picture about the types of social values, activities and thoughts that are promoted, and more specifically, for who i.e. young Black or White South Africans. The occurrence of the various types of social distances is also an indication of the type lifestyle being portrayed as opposed to the lived reality of South Africa's youth i.e. while depictions of fashionable and socially thriving youth might appear on the covers of both magazines; the reality quite possibly is that the majority of youth cannot live up to this ideal as a result of their economic circumstances with regards to South Africa's high levels of unemployment.

7.1.7 Behaviour

Behaviour regards the way in which interaction between the viewer and the individuals shown in images is affected by the gaze of the represented participants. Images make 'demands' when participants look directly at the viewer as vectors, or lines of direction, connect the viewer and participant on a formal (and imaginary) level (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 122-3)

Both magazines used the following types of poses or behaviour: demand/seduction, demand/affiliation, offer/ideal, and demand/submission.

While this study did not expect a deviation from well established stereotypes regarding race, gender and sexuality, it was however expected that youth magazines would experiment with different types of behaviour on their covers, not portraying one type substantially more than another. However, *SL* magazine frequently used one type of behaviour, whereas *Y-Magazine* showed that it regularly changed these portrayals.

The demand/seduction pose was most frequently used on *SL*'s covers (80%). This is significant in relation to the amount of female models used (83%) and the increasingly sexualised nature of the magazine which is evidenced by the types of clothing worn and occurrences of topless and semi-nude/nude images. Once more this relates to the marginalisation and portrayal of women as mere sex objects discussed earlier.

In comparison, *Y-Magazine* did not show a clear preference for one type of behaviour. Instead, the three main types of behaviours displayed on the covers were: 'demand/affiliation', 'offer/ideal' and 'demand/submission'

While *SL* only used the demand/affiliation pose four times (10%), *Y-Magazine* applied it 24% of the time. This pose is generally characterised by the model looking directly at the viewer, smiling or indicating a pleasant demeanour, and thereby establishes a relationship of equality with the viewer. The importance of the use of this type of behaviour on a magazine cover is that the depicted model is easy to relate to which in turn becomes more appealing to the viewer.

The demand/submission pose featured twice on *SL* (5%) and five times (24%) in the *Y-Magazine* sample. This pose involves the depicted character looking down upon the viewer in a manner that demands respect. Interestingly, this pose was used most often with males on the cover, particularly on *Y-Magazine*, suggesting a preference for the portrayal of men as dominant and in control, as discussed earlier in relation to the portrayal of men.

The offer/ideal pose shows the model as an idealised example of a particular class or attribute; or in the instance of youth magazines, as representing "coolness". This pose features the model looking away from the viewer. *SL* only used this type of behaviour by a model once, while *Y-magazine* used it 24% of the time. Significantly the only time in which this occurs on an *SL* cover in the sample (June 1996) is also one of the two occurrences of a Black female appearing alone on the cover. The idealised nature of the Black girl (with her hair styled into an "Afro" – a signifier of both Blackness and a cultural icon of "coolness") on a magazine which usually uses scantily clad White girls indicates *SL*'s attempt at presenting a multi-cultural society while also reaching out to a Black readership. However, this cover occurred in 1996, and since then, a Black female on the cover only appeared one other time in the sample (February 2003).

It is also important to note that four out of the five covers on which the offer/ideal pose appeared on *Y-Magazine* depicted men, more specifically musicians/rappers of the 'hip-hop' genre. Ndlangamandla (2005: 69) quotes *Y-Magazine* in his study of selected adverts in South African youth culture magazines, stating that:

> According to Y magazine (2003, February/March Issue), Hip Hop started as the language of young urban America. It has since taken over the world's music market, incorporating everything from jazz to rock. One of its most significant influences can be seen in the extension of the music into fashion. It is said that the distinct style of Hip Hop clothing cannot easily be distinguished as one single thing. For some, Hip Hop is associated with sports-wear and labels. For others the perception is that Hip Hop is symbolized by diamonds and 'bling'. Bling is a slang word that refers to the flashy jewellery that is associated with Hip Hop artists and fans.

The rappers on the cover of *Y-Magazine* fit the above mentioned criteria in terms of attire and the use of 'bling' which is also a symbol of opulence, a theme which 'hip-hop' music in general views as necessary in order to be viewed as being successful.

The behaviour displayed by the models of both publications correlates to the earlier mentioned analysis of cover image modality. While *SL* cover models are commonly portrayed in suggestive sexual poses; models on *Y-Magazine* are frequently represented as affluent and professional, once more, this speaks to the emergence of a Black South African middle-class and the aspirational Black youth who read the magazine.

This is significant as South Africa's emerging Black middle class – increasingly referred to as "Black Diamonds" – comprise over 3 million adults. This accounts for over 10% of South Africa's total Black population, while "Black Diamonds" contribute 43% of total Black buying power and 22% of total buying power in South Africa (Evans and Chemaly, 2007: 02).

The growth of this sector is particularly noteworthy, as according to a study conducted by the University of Cape Town in association with the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing; there was a marked increase in the combined annual spending power of "Black Diamonds" between 2007 and 2008, from R180-billion to R250-billion (UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, 2008: 02).

Readers of *Y-Magazine* fall in line with a sub-genre of South Africa's "Black Diamonds" which marketers have termed 'Mzansi Youth' (Olivier, 2007: 180). This category refers to young Black individuals who are single and are either students or have just entered the job market. Regarding the aspirational value of these individuals, Olivier (2007: 180) states that:

> They are largely optimistic, self-confident, aspiring and future-focused, with a passion and drive for education. With this market's new-found entitlement and ambition comes the opportunity to have a voice, demand credit and product and be recognized as truly discerning individual consumers.

It is these consumers that the covers of *Y-Magazine* seek to target, and as stated previously, this is evidenced by the manner in which young Black individuals, particularly males; are being depicted.

7.1.8 Themes

The theme of sex appeared on 80% of *SL* covers and just over 50% of the time on *Y-Magazine*. The next most popular theme was music, which varied according to genre (with *SL* magazine preferring to promote 'rock' and 'indie' music, and *Y-Magazine* concentrating on 'rap' and 'hip-hop'), but nevertheless occurred 70% of the time on *SL* and almost 100% of the time on *Y-Magazine*. While issues concerning the lives of celebrities (both local and international) occurred on both covers, *SL* referred to these only 20%, while *Y-Magazine* referenced this on every cover that has appeared since its inception (100%). Lastly, in terms of the types of themes that have appeared on both magazines; the theme of drugs appeared less than 1% on *Y-Magazine*, whereas it occurred almost 35% on *SL*.

Regarding themes that were specific to their particular publication; the themes of travel and dating each appeared almost 20% of the time on *SL* magazine; while politics (50%), cars (14%) and soccer (19%) appeared on *Y-Magazine*.

Posel (2003: 08) comments on the popularity of the recurring theme of sex on South Africa's youth media, and singles out *Y-Magazine* stating that according to the editor at the time (*Y-Magazine*, April/May 2002: 12) "the magazine promises to deliver 'the best in youth culture', in which 'sex dialogues' are writ large."

Posel goes on to state that much of this is relatively new – partly because of the recently expanding magazine business associated with the growth of a consuming Black middle class, but also as a sign of the newly assertive prominence of sexuality as style on the cultural agenda of Black youth (Posel, 2003: 08).

However, the glamourisation of sex for a youth audience in a society rife with HIV/AIDS is problematic. The most recent statistics available regarding HIV prevalence and the sexual behaviour of South African youth, indicate that young women were significantly more likely

to be infected with HIV in comparison with young men (15.5% versus 4.8%). Among females, HIV prevalence rose from 4% among 15 and 16-year-old females to 31% among women age 21 years. Among males, HIV prevalence was relatively constant at 3% between ages 15 and 19 years and then steadily increased to 12% by age 24 years. Among 20–24 year olds, nearly one in four young women were infected with HIV in comparison with 1 in 14 young men of the same age (Pettifor et al, 2005: 1527).

These statistics paint a worrying picture for South Africa's youth. The fact that neither *SL* nor *Y-Magazine* gives the topic of HIV/AIDS prominence on its covers indicates that both publications implement an "escapist" view of society, one that would rather ignore pertinent social issues affecting the youth in favour of content that is largely based on fantasy and aspiration toward sexual and personal gratification. As Posel (2003: 15) states: "The imagery of sex as freedom, sex as style, progress and upward mobility, jars when juxtaposed with the more alarmed, urgent calls for sexual 'safety' and caution."

Regarding politics, *Y-Magazine* frequently makes mention of political happenings and offers its own brand of youth oriented political analysis; whereas the *SL* magazine covers only referenced politics twice (June 1999, February 2003) over the 14 year period, with its next most popular theme being drug use.

That Black youth would be more interested in political happenings than their White counterparts is unsurprising given the politicised and racialised history of South Africa and the adverse effect this had on the Black population at large. However, the apparent lack of interest shown towards political themes on White orientated *SL* magazine is problematic as this infers that White youth are generally apathetic regarding South Africa's political circumstances. The fact that the theme of drug use is given more importance on the covers of *SL* further reinforces this notion.

The above statistics show the general preferences of both publications with regards to the types of themes that occurred. The data suggests that issues concerning sex and music play a crucial role in the identity formation of South African youth - both Black and White.

Throughout this chapter the main variables of this study have been analysed. Regarding gender it was found that little has changed regarding the representation of women as "sex objects" and that men on the covers of both publications were commonly depicted as being aggressive and financially secure. It was also established that same sex couples or the issues that would be deemed pertinent to them were very rarely portrayed. While race continues to be a crucial factor in the socio-political landscape of South Africa, it was found that the substantial Black readership (44%) of *SL* Magazine was grossly underrepresented. Apart from this, a defining aspect concerning the prominent themes on the covers of both magazines is the prevalence of sexual imagery and sex related topics in a climate of increasing HIV/AIDS infection. The findings of the analysis indicate that class status and racial lines have blurred with regard to the representation of aspirant Black youth, however, both publications indicate a lack of social responsibility in their depictions of reality to some extent. This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 8

8.1 Conclusion

The aims of the study were to identify possible trends that might define the editorial 'ideology' of the two magazines and how these were represented visually while taking the social context of the production of the images into account.

Within this context it is important to note the limitations to more in-depth study. Perhaps the greatest challenge of this study was the lack of material available at libraries (including the editorial libraries of the magazines themselves). As mentioned before in the methodology chapter, there is an admittedly large gap in terms of a lack of *Y-Magazine* covers. Despite the best efforts by the researcher to obtain more covers, the publishing house of the magazine itself did not maintain an archive of its material. This lack of record-keeping is mentioned in the article celebrating the 10 year anniversary of *Y-Magazine* in which the author Kwanele Sosibo states: "That this very magazine celebrates 10 years of existence this month, with hardly an archive (except patchy private ones) or any document of its exploits, in itself is a shame" (Y-Magazine, October 2008: 57).

Despite the inconsistencies and the imbalance in the comparative number of magazine covers between the two publications, the researcher believes that there was ample data available in the relevant samples from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn.

Apart from this, given the background of rather recent South African history, analysing issues surrounding "race" utilises mainstream South African terminology and identification. The author is aware of the dynamic debates that are currently raging in the media landscape regarding 'representation', particularly due to the dramatic change in the demographics of the South African middle class. This suggests that economic class has a large (larger) influence in social cleavages than "race" per say, a factor which inverts the notions of 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' and each category becomes appropriated for commercial means. A good example of this would be the clothing brand 'Loxian Kultcha' which is frequently advertised within *Y-Magazine*, which uses 'township style' in its design of footwear and youth targeted clothing, but whose prices are far from affordable for township youth. In effect what 'Loxian Kultcha'

represents is an aspiration of inverting the traditional notions of the township as being the home of the underclass to that of the 'mainstream' of high society. This aspiration feeds the need for the Black underclass to be represented despite the fact that the majority of consumers of these products are removed from the reality of township life. For White consumers on the other hand, it gives a sense of being part of the real South African 'urban playground'. It is this reliance on traditional race categories that makes transforming the South African media landscape so complex.

The change in the demographics of the Black middle class can be viewed in two ways, the first being perhaps the 'normalisation' of a capitalist society, while the second interpretation takes a more assimiliationist view of the media market i.e. the assimilation of dominant values as portrayed in the media most notably to do with consumerism with little emphasis on 'developmental journalism'. Before this can be elaborated upon, it is necessary at this point to reiterate some of the key findings of this study.

As the overwhelming majority of *SL* covers featured White models, it can be said that this statistic is in line with Millard and Grant's (2006: 03) analyses of racial and gender stereotypes within the magazine industry when they state that "there is a history of racial and gender bias" when it comes to the portrayal of Black individuals. They go on to state that "companies have rarely used Black models until quite recently."

Their study found that Black models comprised less than one-third of one percent on the total covers found among several genres of magazines (Millard and Grant, 2006: 03). As mentioned in previous chapters, *SL* estimates that they have a substantial amount of Black readers (44%), yet Black faces appear on their own less than 5% of the time over a 14 year period.

The notion of race is further expanded upon when placed in relation to gender stereotypes. While *SL* predicts that they have a 60% male and 40% female readership, it was found that *SL* made use of predominantly female models. This is in line with the study done by Athanassiou et al. (2008) which states that the overt "sexualising of women" is not limited to male-orientated publications, but that the depiction of women as being "shown in primarily submissive positions and as sex objects" has become the norm regardless of gender specific magazine titles.

SL's portrayal of women correlates with the study conducting by Ward (2002: 09) who states that "equally abundant yet more graphic are the sexual images and messages in mainstream magazines, believed to be one of the most accessible media for information about sexuality (Ward, 2002: 09).

This notion is reinforced by Athanassiou (2008: 02) who states that:

> Sexual imagery spanning both genders is used in business as an act of persuasive psychology, particularly in the publication media. The conditioning of advertising and social values has ornamented the 'beautiful people' myth with an equally enticing 'sexiness' myth in relation to purchasing choices.

As is the case with *SL*, recent content analyses of magazine advertisements have demonstrated that models are being photographed in a more sexually explicit manner than in the past (Kang, 1997; Plous & Neptune, 1997; Crane, 1999). This is especially evident when analysing the December issue which has evolved from being the "holiday" issue to the "sex" issue, and is typically *SL*'s most successful issue of the year.

While many covers in the past might have involved some degree of nudity or 'suggestiveness,' more recently, "the demure has been replaced with outright sexuality" (Athanassiou et al., 2008: 06). Both Kang (1997) and Millard and Grant (2006) concur with this notion by stating that the growing trend of depicting models in revealing clothing or shown partially or fully nude is simply because "sex sells" (Millard and Grant, 2006: 12).

The concept of objectification is not relegated to female models alone. In their study, Reichart et al. (2004) believe that men have become more explicitly portrayed as sexual objects when compared to magazine covers from the past. They believe that this trend has continued over the years and will continue to do so.

Ward (2002: 10) concurs with this and states that: "Male sexuality is commonly depicted as aggressive, urgent, insatiable, and relentless. The natural virility and sexual appetite of men is a prominent theme of magazine covers, and men are characterized as being in a constant state of sexual desire and readiness."

As a result of this, men are being depicted in a sexualised manner in much the same way that women have been in the past (Athanassiou, 2008: 07). This is true of the *Y-Magazine* covers which show a preference for the use of male models, whereas *SL* magazine has been shown to objectify and prefer the use of female models.

With regard to the frequency with which music or drug related themes appeared on the cover of *SL* and *Y-Magazine*, Croghan et al. (2006: 01) believe that "youth culture has emphasised the meaning of style in constructing identities and the importance of music and drugs as markers of identity."

As such, the music to which they listen, as well as drug consumption among youth is seen as a lifestyle choice. A choice which is borne out of the ideology of consumerism, one which is ultimately advocated by popular cultural products such as youth magazines. As Brain (2000: 05) notes:

> Particularly for youth, identity is formed in the sphere of consumption. Consumer societies depend upon constantly stimulating wants and needs, generating a constant search for sensation and excitement, and producing a proliferation of styles, fashions and consumer identities.

This mindset indicates that in general, youth are more interested in purchasing goods and services which serve no real "utilitarian" function, but instead buy those items that would reinforce their identity both to themselves as well as to their peers (Duff, 2003: 10).

Youth magazines which are normally commercially produced and reference music, and more controversially, drug culture; "inevitably depend upon the cultural currency of such allusions and interpretations for its effectiveness" (Taylor, 2000: 334). They can therefore be used as a way of gauging the extent to which music preferences and drug use are understood and accepted within youth culture.

What is important is not the extent to which young people actually participate in drug use or their knowledge of a particular music 'scene', but rather what these have come to signify in youth culture (Parker et al. 1998: 155). As Slater (1997: 08) states:

> Consumer culture marks out a system in which consumption is dominated by the consumption of commodities, and in which cultural reproduction is largely understood to be carried out through free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life.

It can be argued that these symbol systems have become a very real part of the mythology of youth culture and that the signifiers of this culture are an important part in the creation of meaning (Taylor, 2000: 341). What may have originally developed as an alternative to the mainstream has now, in recognizable terms, become a new mainstream that can be termed a 'high-street youth culture,' one which glamorises the above ideology (Collin and Godfrey, 1997: 07).

Popular cultural products such as youth magazines are reaching the point where the symbol systems of music culture and drug culture are becoming a dominant element in the language of youth culture (Redhead, 1997). The relationship between youth culture and drug/music culture is, therefore, becoming naturalized to the point whereby it is possible to market commodities to young people by associating products with particular aspects of these cultures (Miles, 1998).

However, while this may be the case, it is important to remember that individuals have the final say in what they purchase, and are not merely passive consumers, but active participants in the construction of meaning. As Taylor (2000: 342) points out:

> It must be recognized that culture is always dynamic, that what is being described is growing and changing as we speak. Meaning will always be drawn from that which is made available and translated through the medium of personal existence. There is never a static thing that can be described in isolation, it is always mutating, shifting and fragmenting as it is studied. It is the interaction of moments in the discourse, the dynamic relationship between producers and consumers of media messages, that characterizes the functioning of magazines in a commodity-based media saturated society.

The reference to consumerism relates to the statement earlier in this chapter that the findings of this study indicate a capitalistic mindset on the part of the producers of both magazines.

The trend towards depicting an assimilation of dominant values in order to maintain sales points to a lack of 'space' for social responsibility to some extent on the part of the magazine producers. The glamourisation of sex and drugs is an indicator of how the development of a national identity for youth may not be easily introduced into these media without a concurrent change in the overall environment for South African youth.

Therefore, while a greater emphasis needs to be placed on 'developmental journalism' many more studies need to be undertaken regarding the manner in which 'youth' in this country define themselves. This is of critical importance as it would begin to erode the stereotypical categories for something more dynamic and point to areas of perhaps covert change that is not necessarily reflected in these magazine titles. Once an understanding of this is achieved, a diversity of media titles for youth might become economically viable, a crucial factor in the long term consideration of any new media player.

The importance of the interaction between the producers and consumers of magazine covers is particularly pertinent in relation to the aspirational value that magazine covers convey to their readers, particularly in relation to a South African context and a growing Black middle class. As Laden (2003: 22) states:

> Consumer magazines for Black South Africans inspire new social contracts between themselves and their readers, and new sets of conditions that enable them continually to reconfigure and refine aspects of the new urban consumer culture they seek to evoke. Functioning significantly as indicators of, and contributors to, the dynamics of cultural change in South Africa, these magazines facilitate the formulation, dissemination, and authorization of new and revived linguistic and cultural repertoires for and by Black South Africans, within the broader context of a growing and increasingly more integrated consumer culture in South Africa.

The analysis of *SL* magazine indicates that it is not making a conscious effort to appeal to Black youth; this is supported by *SL* magazine's features writer (Appendix C). When asked if she believes that aspirational Black youth are a target as potential readers of the magazine, she replied that: "We're respected by our readers, they can tell when they're being manipulated, so we don't try to appeal to a specific group or 'try too hard', we just hope that

the content appeals to everyone. It might mostly appeal to White kids, but the AMPS statistics which come out every 3 months say that we have a 44% Black readership."

SL magazine's former editor answered in a more general manner avoiding the subject of race, saying "A cover should be friendly, welcoming - like a friend - "come chat" but at the same time not too distant to alienate potential buyers. The motto at SL (although quite crude) was 'girls want to be her and guys what to be with her'. Our focus was trying to be the "hippest" magazine in the market - so we hoped that readers might aspire to the "cool factor"."

However, *Y-Magazine* which is targeted solely at Black youth clearly places emphasis on the aspirational value that covers hold. When asked how important this is for the publication, *Y-Magazine*'s designer stated that "I think its massive, especially for *Y-Magazine*, we're like the only Black youth magazine in South Africa, so it's important that we convey a message of success and wealth to our audience, its telling them that they can be successful too and own the brands advertised inside. By reading our magazine, they're a step closer to achieving their goals" (Appendix D). This correlates to the previously mentioned statement by Brian (2000: 05) who believes that for youth, identity is formed in the sphere of consumption.

South Africa's recent history of race relations continues to define our idea of 'class' and 'transformation' e.g. that a mixed-raced couple on the cover of a youth magazine is a supposed indicator of social change or that a well dressed Black man is representative of a growing Black middle class. However, the researcher is fully aware of the other cleavages that are strongly influencing media marketing and social aspirations i.e. class rather than race. This notion is in accordance with the findings of the study conducted by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing which states that for the first time in South Africa's history "Black Diamonds' spending power matches that of White South Africans" (UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, 2008: 02).

As stated in the hypothesis of this study, despite democratic change in South Africa, visual culture as found on the front covers of youth magazines still relies on the use of stereotypes with regard to race, identity and sexuality. This has been found to be true of both the magazines in question as there has been no significant change in the way in which these themes have been represented over the given time period of 1994 until 2008.

In conducting this study the author realised that delineating ‘race’, ‘identity’ and ‘sexuality’ through the tried and tested categories actually limits the discussion of the more subversive trends taking place in youth culture. At the same time, it also highlights how difficult it is to characterise such a category as “South African Youth”. These difficulties extend further when trying to analyse magazine cover design techniques as a means of conveying particular messages about these categories.

In essence the actual process of research has highlighted perhaps how shrouded in mystery the South Africa’s largest constituency actually is. If the youth are to be the inheritors of democratic change then a greater understanding of who they are and what they are seeking to find in the media is sorely needed.

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Appendix A – Covers of *SL* Magazines between 1994 and 2008

Appendix B – Covers of *Y-Magazines* between 1998 and 2008

Appendix C – Interviews with the Production Team of *SL* Magazine

<u>*SL* Magazine Interview</u> – Production Team

Editor

Features Writer

Designer

1. How would you describe your typical reader i.e. your target audience?

[Features Writer]: It's not purely for students; there are also 15-16 year old kids who read *SL*... Niche 'indie-kids' who follow trends which are lesser known. We're not about 'hip-hop' from Rivonia; we target the kids from Melville who wear skinny jeans. Kwaito is also a no-no.

2. What types of images have been shown to be very successful?

[Editor]: Andy Davis [previous editor] introduced the idea of using 'hot students' as models – mostly White girls. [The previous editor who succeeded Davis] then started using international celebrities as models – usually White females as well. Some of the most popular covers featured [international] celebrities like [pop artist] Gwen (Stefani), [actresses] Scarlett Johansen, and Natalie Portman. Jared Leto [international actor and lead singer of indie band '30 Seconds to Mars'] was the most popular male cover in *SL*'s history.

[Designer]: The content and cover lines are also important in selling the magazine, its not just about the pics.

[Editor]: Our biggest seller's always the December issue, also known as the 'Sex Issue' – it always uses quite provocative imagery which I guess people like.

3. Which covers have not been received very well?

[Features Writer]: We experiment with different themed issues, they don't always sell very well the first time, it just depends on whether or not our readers are interested in what we think will be popular. For example the 'Design Issue' didn't do well last August (2007).

[Editor]: For some reason August is always a slow month...

[Features Writer]: Some of the covers that didn't sell well were the Beyonce' [Knowles – Black pop singer] one...that was one of our worst selling issues... In general Black covers don't sell very well... It's sad but true... The other one that comes to mind is the one with Sienna Miller [British Actress]... We were sorta put off international celebrities for about a year after that...

4. To what extent are designers influenced by political or cultural contexts?

[Designer]: It's not very important to be honest... The only thing I can think of is the cover with the White girl wearing a Steve Biko T-shirt, I can't remember exactly what edition that was, but I think it did well.

5. What sorts of parameters are dictated by the advertisers?

[Editor]: *SL* is an independent magazine, but certain advertisers are weary about certain images on the cover... there's a fine line between being a 'girly porn mag' and being 'hot and sexy'. We've had problems in the past with our publishers; we were recently off the shelves for 3 months due to a lack of funding.

6. *How important do you believe the "aspirational" value that covers convey to readers is (particularly with regard to a growing black middle class)?*

[Features Writer]: We're respected by our readers, they can tell when they're being manipulated, so we don't try to appeal to a specific group or 'try too hard', we just hope that the content appeals to everyone. It might mostly appeal to White kids, but the AMPS statistics which come out every 3 months say that we have a 44% Black readership.

7. *How have designs changed over time?*

[Designer]: The cover design's changed a lot since [the previous editor] took over. She did an entire redesign of the mag, we changed the logo, the use of colour's more important and there's less clutter. Now there's a cleaner design that's more sleek.

[Editor]: Since Nigel Moore [who has done design work for MTV and Levi's] took over the conceptualising and photography of the covers, they're edgier and sexier. They look more like covers you'd find on overseas magazines like *The Face*, part fashion – part youth [orientated].

8. What does transformation mean in the context of your publication?

[Editor]: I think content is the most important thing when it comes to transformation. What you find inside the mag should reflect issues that affect Black, White, Coloured and Indian equally. Most of our contributors are white and we're trying to change this.

9. Is race a factor when choosing a cover model?

[Features Writer]: Well no, it depends on how popular the person is at the time... Like in the case of Beyonce' (Knowles – a Black pop star), despite the fact that she's massively popular our readers didn't identify with her. This could be because she's Black, but also she doesn't represent the 'indie' scene.

10. How do you think your covers represent South African society?

[Editor]: I think we represent what's young and what's fresh, we have an international feel with a South African flavour.

_SL_ Magazine Interview 2 – Former Editor in charge between 2002 - 2007

1. What types of images were shown to be very successful during your time at SL?

SL is made up a couple of different sections:
Features (included profiles): where pictures depicting the actual person featured were the most successful. So if we were running a real life story on cocaine addiction I'd prefer to use a pic of the actual person featured - as opposed to an illustration for example. Besides seeing themselves in magazines people love seeing people like them (of the same age) and this is what resonates with them.

Images in the "what's cool" pages obviously were still shots of things that were hip and then fashion images were tailored to the audience - so they were usually quite quirky and bold.

2. Which covers were received very well?

The covers with international stars - although we found in research (focus groups) that many students said they like local covers, they almost always bought the international covers more. Any cover that was vaguely sexy or featured a girl in a bikini was a seller. Students love free stuff so cover mounts (things bagged with the magazine) meant these issues sold better.

3. To what extent were you influenced by political or popular cultural contexts?

SL tried to mirror or reflect what popular culture zeitgeist was. So this was the realm we operated in. We were constantly influenced by new youth culture trends in fashion and music.

4. What sorts of parameters are dictated by the advertisers?

Advertisers always push to have their products featured in the magazine if they advertise.

They also push for better placement in the magazine - upfront for example or right hand pages and this will always be something brand managers strive for - better visibility. Advertisers sometimes felt SL was too risqué and didn't feel they could safely place their brand in our mag. Luckily some advertisers liked the brand ethos of SL and this space fitted them better.

5. How important do you believe the "aspirational" value that covers convey to readers is (particularly with regard to a growing black middle class)?

It's a tricky one - a cover should be friendly, welcoming - like a friend - "come chat" but at the same time not too distant to alienate potential buyers. The motto at SL (although quite crude) was girls want to be her and guys what to be with her. Our focus was trying to be the "hippest" magazine in the market - so we hoped that readers might aspire to the "cool factor".

6. How have designs changed over time? If so, what do you feel has contributed to this?

Cover designs? A magazine is a vibrant, constantly changing entity. So naturally some design changes get made over time - to all magazines. One thing everyone strives for though - is recognition on the shelf. A magazine like Cosmopolitan is immediately recognizable by its cover (even if you obscure the masthead you would recognize the brand).

7. Is race a factor when choosing a cover model?

Of course. This all depends on your primary demographic that you are appealing to. *True Love* [a magazine traditionally aimed at Black women] would never put a white woman on the cover - this is not their target audience.

8. How do you think your covers represented South African youth in society?

We didn't know if they did. As an editorial team you put a cover out based on ad hoc research, your experience as an editorial team and grassroots input.

Apart from these questions I'd like to know the way in which your covers were conceptualised. For example, was there a specific brief? Did you choose the models yourself? What was your criteria for this?

The cover was always theme driven and very conceptual. The fashion editor made a selection of models and I chose the final cover model. The team styled her and I always came on the cover shoot to make sure if went to plan. We modelled out cover concepts on international magazines like *The Face* and *Dazed & Confused* and *ID*

Appendix D – Interviews with the Production Team of Y-Magazine

***Y-Magazine* Interview** – Production Team

Assistant Editor

Designer

1. How would you describe your typical reader i.e. your target audience?

[Assistant Editor]: Black youth between 16-24 that fit the LSM 3-6 bracket who come from lower middle class to middle class homes.

[Designer]: Township youth aspiring to be someone, who want to live well and are part of the party culture. The kids who go with the trends... you know... the kinda guys and girls you look at and say: "You can take them out of the township, but you can't take the township out of them."

2. What types of images have been shown to be very successful?

[Assistant Editor]: In the past its been mostly local celebrities, but we used our first international celebrities [rappers Jay-Z and Kanye West – refer to cover 6 of the *Y-Magazine* analysis in the previous chapter] on the December 2007/January 2008 cover which sold quite well. We try to support local talent, but if they don't sell we don't really have a choice [but to use international artists].

[Designer] It also depends on who's on the cover. We don't really care if they're local or international as long as they're 'hot' and popular with the youth.

3. Which covers have not been received very well?

[Assistant Editor]: I haven't been here very long and can't say for sure which covers haven't sold well, but I do know that the cover that wasn't well received at all was the December 2002/January 2003 issue [refer to cover 4 of the *Y-Magazine* analysis in the previous chapter]. It's black and white and has Thabo Mbeki on the cover. I don't think our readers could relate to that, it seemed overly political and didn't capture the imagination of the youth audience.

[Designer]: The cover is the most important part of a magazine. It needs to feature people who are young, hot and sexy. Generally the editors set the tone; they decide on which image will be used on a cover...I'm not sure what happened with that one [Laughs].

4. To what extent are designers influenced by political or cultural contexts?

[Assistant Editor]: We don't like to pigeonhole ourselves, but *Y-Magazine* started off as being very political, this was in 1998, not too long after democracy in South Africa had been achieved. There was a need to create an identity for Black youth who now had so many opportunities their parents didn't. It started off as being quite intellectual, with poetry and articles regarding the 'New South Africa'.

[Designer]: But now youth are less politically motivated. There is no struggle. They're more concerned with music and partying. They don't have any role models to look up to, just look at that Julius Malema guy [President of the Youth League for the African National Congress]; he's an idiot!

We don't have to be Black for Black's sake, the market's not intellectualised anymore. We're tapping into the market in a different way. *Y-Magazine* is global... it's an international nomad in the global village.

5. What sorts of parameters are dictated by the advertisers?

[Assistant Editor]: There are monetary considerations. There's a definite shift to go more mainstream and not focus on the serious issues dealt with in the past.

[Designer]: Youth are fickle, it's all about who your market thinks is hot. At the age of 23, you're only worried about getting laid [Laughs], but by 28 you're worried about taking out a bond. So we try to keep things light hearted for our target audience.

I bring up the fact that SL magazine's cover with Beyonce' (an artist more suited to appearing on Y-Magazine) didn't sell very well for them and asked what they thought of that.

[Designer]: I'd choose a *Y-Magazine* with Beyonce' any day because we have a stronger brand identity with 'r&b' and 'hip-hop', it'd seem more authentic. I don't think Black faces sell well on 'White' magazines. It's about who your market thinks is hot, that's what matters.

6. How important do you believe the "aspirational" value that covers convey to readers is (particularly with regard to a growing black middle class)?

[Designer]: I think its massive, especially for *Y-Magazine,* we're like the only Black youth magazine in South Africa, so it's important that we convey a message of success and wealth to our audience, its telling them that they can be successful too and own the brands advertised inside. By reading our magazine, they're a step closer to achieving their goals.

7. How have designs changed over time?

[Designer]: Its mostly got to do with the types of camera angles used for the photographs because no matter what we always end up using a celebrity model. We tend to use more 'big close ups' and try not to show full body shots (which were popular under the previous editor).

[Assistant Editor]: We've tried to make it more 'in your face' but there are budget constraints for this too.

8. *What does transformation mean in the context of your publication?*

[Assistant Editor]: Its about growing with the youth, being more global...it's not necessarily about race. Our magazine should be easily accessible to youth, giving them quality and current information about what's going on around them.

[Designer]: Township kids need to get more info on current news, that's what transformation is – not trying to dumb down or patronise readers.

9. Is race a factor when choosing a cover model?

[Assistant Editor]: Well, as I've said, its not necessarily about race, but more importantly about what your readers will be interested in. We have a 99% Black readership, so we'd be silly to try and change the formula we've used up until now in choosing models.

10. How do you think your covers represent South African society?

[Assistant Editor]: It's a celebration of the youth, what they represent, what they aspire to... It's about people who are doing well. We're not talking at you, we're talking to you.

[Designer]: *Y-Magazine* covers should be about staying 'forever young,' it should reflect the youth of the time.

Appendix E – Article Concerning the Production of *Y-Magazine Covers*



THE ALCHEMY OF A YMAG COVER



10 YEARS ON, WE LOOK BACK AT THE GOOD, THE INSANE AND THE DOWNRIGHT PERFECT ISSUES OF SA'S MOST INSTRUMENTAL YOUTH MAGAZINE, AS WELL AS ITS LEADERS...

The first discussion I found myself involved in at *Ymag* on my first day was about who should go on the next cover – Nas or Rihanna. It was for August, and naturally, one argument in favour of Rihanna was that it was women's month. I remember balking at that thought, thinking, she's not exactly an icon for women's rights or anything. The problem here was that the Nas cover would make it the sixth consecutive male cover after Jozi, Arthur, Tira, Sbu and Snoop Dogg. A female cover star was imperative. But with the Zonke photo shoot yielding no money shot, we had to return to the drawing board.

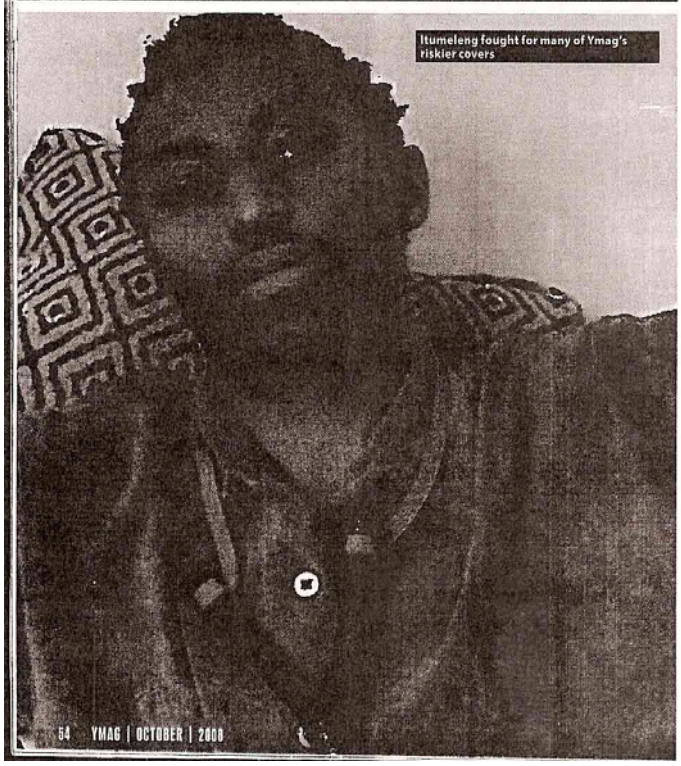
It took George, the resident art director, aka "the target audience" to argue the loudest for Rihanna and to school me on how Nas would have worked for people who read the mag while Rudeboy was editing it, but not now. I, having initially supported the Nas cover, was just getting an education as to who I was writing for. Nas, who had recently been in Durban, was eventually replaced by Rihanna. "This chick is all over," I can still hear George say. And she is.

Nas was still the subject of the best-written feature in that magazine, and a gig review. Suede, one of our contributors, pulled out all the stops, writing an anecdotal story that began with a lucid impression of Nas at the *Hate Me Now* video shoot. The compromise, it seemed, worked, although we still await the sales figures. And while we catch hell for running consecutive international covers, it is really the public and their pockets that have decided that debate.

Kabelo Mabalane, who has been on the cover four times says of *Ymag*'s evolution, "The magazine has always had challenges in representing kwaito, and it felt like it was being pushed in different directions. It has to represent the local hip-hop scene, the international scene and the kwaito scene. It's always been a challenge for the magazine because it has had to look like it was not biased towards anybody. Also, what's hot at the time has always been a deciding factor. There might be times where there isn't a lot going on in the local scene, and you guys still have a magazine to put out, but I think you've always strived to be balanced."



Sbu was the very first editor of *Ymag*



Itumeleng fought for many of Ymag's riskier covers

SBU NXUMALO (THE GENERAL):

I was always The General from the Voice of Soweto days. The Admiral had named me The General because we did this reggae show, and people didn't think that Sbusiso Nxumalo was a reggae-enough name. So a whole lot of staff at *Ymag* assumed military names. Itumeleng, being Itumeleng, decided he was The Civilian. What happened with *Ymag* is that the people from *SL* came up with a proposal to create a club magazine for YFM. They recognised that people wanted this content that was on the radio station, and their idea was to basically translate that. Well, I went to find Itumeleng because, essentially, I thought he should be the one to edit the magazine. They weren't comfortable with such a young editor who wasn't part of Y. So, in a sense, I became the figure-head editor, and he was the deputy, but, really, the person that put the magazine together. I think all in all we probably had a core team of about 10 people. My tenure as editor was only two issues, then I became Editor at Large, and Itumeleng became Editor, so I would say that our collective tenure was 10 issues, stretching over a period of a year and half.

"I REMEMBER THE MANDOZA ONE – THE IDEA WAS GULLIVER'S TRAVELS – YOU KNOW, THE GIANT RISING IN THE LAND OF THE DWARVES?"

We were some of the first people who started using scamto, I think, and we started experimenting with our covers. I remember the Mandoza one – the idea was from *Gulliver's Travels* – you know, the giant rising in the land of the dwarves? So on that cover, although you don't see it, it's Mandoza tied down with ropes with lots of GI Joe soldiers on him, and inside he's unleashed. We were selling around 15 000, or something like that, in a really difficult market. Eventually, they got rid of us. I'd rather not talk about it, but with Itumeleng they basically moved the magazine to Cape Town. They first waged a campaign against him for like four, five months that eventually culminated in them saying, 'Oh well, we're moving the magazine to Cape Town.' When we left, they started creating those covers with Arthur and Speedy with the girls, and it plummeted to like 8 000. I think the mag and the station can't escape each other. I think what happens to the magazine in many, many ways is reflective of what happens to the station. When the station becomes commercial, [the magazine] becomes commercial, and commercial meaning popular. I don't mean making money because that's what we all wanna do, yeah?

ITUMELENG MAHABANE (THE CIVILIAN):

How [the editorship of the magazine] got changed around was we had conversations about our strengths. I had more passion for magazines, and it made more sense for Sbu [Nxumalo] to have more free reign. SLY Media [the publishers] looked at YFM's numbers and its success, and they thought they could replicate it. Our view was that if it is a black youth publication, it's got to be interesting, it's got to be intellectual and it's got to have content. My stint as editor lasted about 18 months, ending with the Dec/Jan 99 issue, with Bongo Maffin on the cover. The relationship between us [editorial] and the publishers used to be quite tense. There were times when we refused to show them the covers because if they didn't like a cover they would change it. They didn't like the Pollen Ndlaya cover [Issue 8]. And, of course, black kids like soccer, but it wasn't just any soccer star that they wanted

on the cover. There was also the Thandiswa cover [Issue 2]. In the original cover we painted her face with red mud clay. What you saw was the compromise cover.

There was also a stylist we used to use a lot [for fashion shoots], his name was Shaldon Kopman. The first fashion shoot was with the Kalawa guys being frisked. There was also one with an albino girl, which we thought was groundbreaking and revolutionary. They thought it was too risky, and that we were asking the audiences to stretch themselves too much, which we were. But I was a strong-headed guy and pushed back a lot and eventually they found a way to push us out. Our writing could've been tighter, but the way Sbu wrote about Mandoza gave a depth to kwaito. A friend of mine who's a filmmaker used to complain that we were intellectualising kwaito. But what's wrong with that? It's an experience, and it has to be treated intelligently.

Given more time, it would have been a commercial success. Our formula wasn't easy. Real, credible pop-culture magazines are always niche. Youth culture has continued to evolve, but the media has not kept with its dynamism. The last thing that attempted to do it, (even though sometimes they got it wrong, but the idea was always right in terms of the thinking, the language and the tone) was *The Pure Monate Show*. It was new, radical and reflective of what was happening.

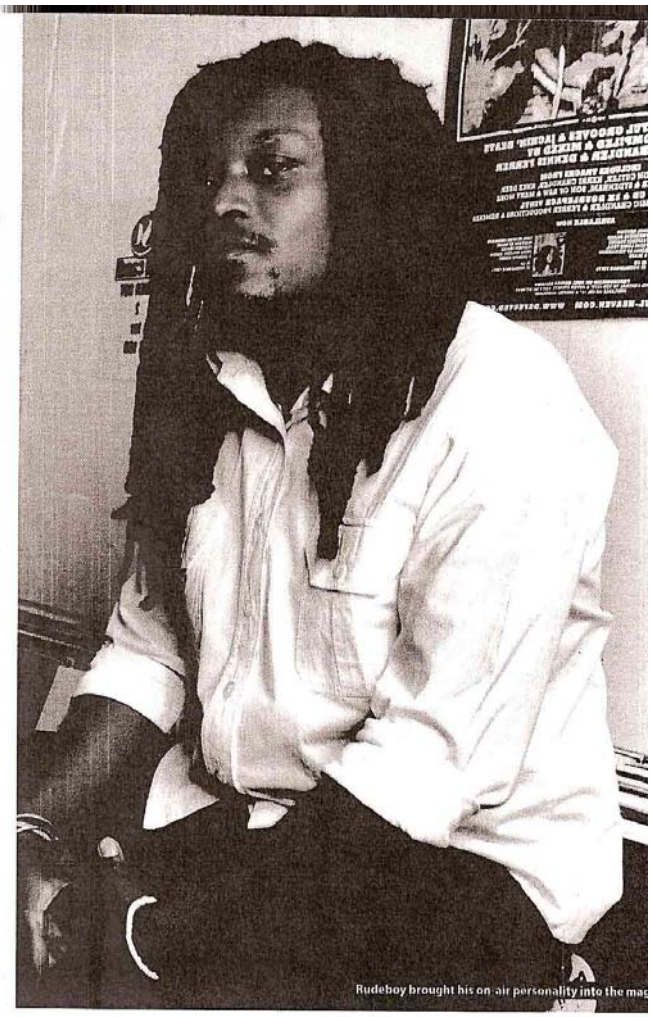
RUDEBOY PAUL

I was approached by Dirk Hartford (publisher) and Kim Thipe (managing editor) of Yired [Ymag's internal publishers after SLY Media] about editing *Ymag*. I was an on-air personality, but I had studied media and was up for the challenge. I didn't want to be a window-dressing editor, but to my peers in the industry, it did appear that I was [a window dresser]. It was difficult for me to manage both the radio show and the magazine. Something I'm passionate about is radio, but I found myself being absorbed into the magazine more and more, and I wanted things opened up to me in terms of my creative freedom. There was so much to learn, but I had a great team. Siphiwe Mpye was there, and Bongani Madondo, whose writing I had read for a long time and who was great at research pieces. Sbu, who was there from before, also wrote.

"MY FIRST COVER WAS THE KWAITO NATION ONE, BUT WE WENT ONTO GET THE PRESIDENT ON THE COVER."

My first cover was the Kwaito Nation one, but we went on to get the president on the cover. That [Thabo Mbeki] interview happened after I had got him on air. I didn't try to be anybody but myself, and I continued to do what I would do on my radio shows. That Q&A column was my inquiring mind; I wanted to find out more about people, put them out there and give the magazine a broader scope. We had the likes of Miriam Makeba, Brenda Fassie and Winnie Mandela on there. Towards the end of my term, the magazine became a monthly. As far as there being a ghost editor, there wasn't really. I had a lot to learn, and the team was great. It came to a point where I was hectic with other things. I had to get my numbers up to scratch and focus on Rudeboy Productions, and I wanted to tour the festival scene [as a DJ]. But if I had to do it again, I would.

The magazine now has turned into more of a… I wouldn't say teen mag, but more of a young man and woman's street guide. I don't think there is anything wrong if you want to target that audience, but there are more serious issues to discuss. As much as the youth like their artists, they want to see other people who have contributed to Africa's growth. I think the magazine is still reflective of what the interests of our youth are now, and what the station also reflects, I just wish it could get deeper under the skin, but you have to find a balance.



Rudeboy brought his on-air personality into the mag



One of Ymag's iconic covers



Lee is the longest-standing editor to date

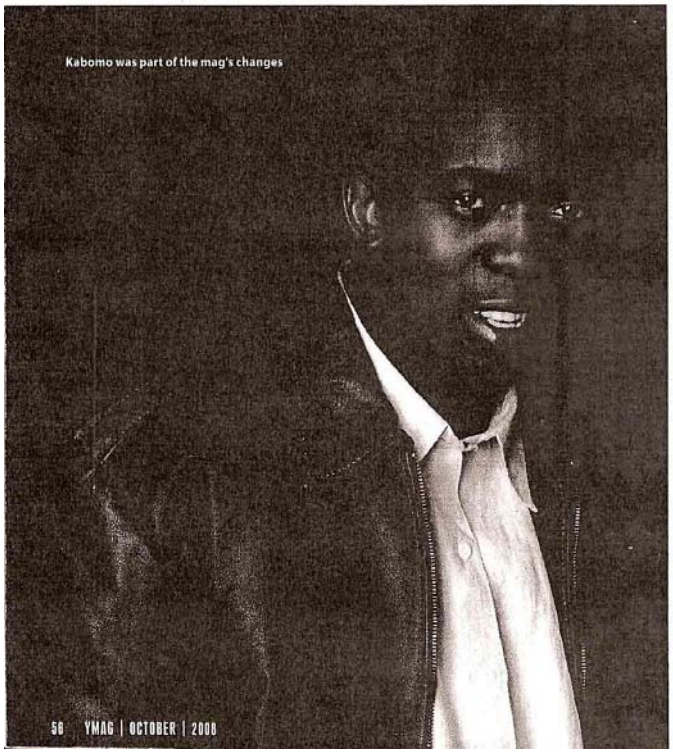
LEE KASUMBA

I came on as editor for the Tumisho cover. Rudeboy had just stepped down. I was actively involved in youth culture and with the radio show, which was representing continental content from a South African perspective, and they wanted that content to be reflected in the magazine. Like the way we interviewed politicians – all nice, clever and cool.

I wasn't gonna do it. I was obviously nervous and thinking of time issues. It was overwhelming, and it took a lot to convince me. YFM owned *Ymag* at that point, and they had a deal with TBWA, who were in charge of design. The deadlines were like four weeks ahead because everything had to be done in Cape Town. Plus, it was coming out every two months, so every issue had to be a collector's item – in-depth, not something you could just read in a week. Shaldon was heading up the fashion, which was pretty themed and meant to capture something thinking, but totally entertaining. Like the one shoot had 11 official languages with the models dressed accordingly. At one point, we had 12 people as part of the team, until we had only three people full-time in the magazine.

At times the magazine was late on the shelf, but nothing could be done; ideas were kinda cool but they were poorly executed, with no art direction because Vuyo [Lutseke, then Deputy Editor] and Kabomo were not art directors. We took the blame for a lot of what was happening, but nobody knew that it was just the three of us.

I feel that for every season, every editor that has been there has made sense. At the time I was editing, people were trying to find out more about the continent, and Rudeboy represented the consciousness era. Now, it's all about money, having smarts, looking glam and looking back to go forward, which is what I think Fungayi represents. It makes sense.



Kabomo was part of the mag's changes

KABOMO VILAKAZI

I started with the magazine as a freelance writer, then I became a regular writer even though it was very informal. At the time, Lee Kasumba was the editor, and Vuyo was deputy editor. Vuyo left, then Lee left, then there was a new publisher (Mojo Publishing). I took over as editor then. My term was very hard because the transition from what the magazine used to be, to what it is now, happened during my time. For starters, the publisher thought that the magazine was too serious, and covered a lot of things that he thought were not part of the core market. He wanted the magazine to be much closer to what the radio station was about. It was very difficult because that plan could totally abandon the core audience that had been there since it started. It took a while for me to even get sold to it. I think we made it too party too soon. It would have been better if it was a transitional thing. What we did was a total overhaul, so there was a lot of resistance. There was a lot of hate, but also there were a lot of new people who were loving it.

I love what the magazine looks like now, but I love it for very different reasons than when it first started. When it started, there was a lot of that euphoria of newness, not necessarily because it was the hottest thing. I think now it kicks ass because people have gotten over the Y craze and are actually buying into the product. Now I love it because I love music, and it speaks directly on the music. [As far as the haters go,] I'm not angry with anyone and understand where their frustrations came from. I took a lot of blame for decisions that were not really mine. I acknowledge the fact that I didn't always make great decisions, but there are some great things that still exist in the magazine today that I introduced that I'm very proud of. I'm glad that I had the opportunity. Not many people can say they edited a magazine – a very popular magazine at that. I get to say that I did, and I'm very proud of myself for doing it.

HIGH FIVE/LOW FIVE

Although times have changed, the quest for the perfect magazine continues. ..

Ymag was supposed to be a club magazine," is how Sbu Nxumalo usually starts his interviews on this subject, except that I figure he hasn't done enough of them to realise that it's becoming a stock intro. That this very magazine celebrates 10 years of existence this month, with hardly an archive (except patchy, private ones) or any document of its exploits, in itself is a shame. We all know the fate befitting a people without knowledge of their history: they are forever doomed to piss against the wind. Which is why the "club magazine" statement is very important, at least to me as a writer here, because it is a constant, naked reminder of what this refuse-to-die rag, complete with its checkered history and multiple editorial changes, should never stoop to being.

In a candlelit video, shot by South African arts maverick Aryan Kaganof, which forms part of the Chimurenga library project, the General (as Sbu is still called) and Itumeleng Mahabane speak with more frankness than a tipsy Steve Biko about what it took to constantly exceed the expectations of a youth publication in this country. Every single issue, they reminisce in conversation, was a virtual *coup de'tat* of their own bosses, who in those days were SLY Media. Every single 3000 worder (back in the days the youth wanted to read, they reasoned, and so they wrote) was crafted with blood, sweat and the requisite sleepless night. "If I had had an editorial meeting, I would play this thing over in my head, and I wouldn't get much sleep," says Itumeleng in the vid. "You [Sbu] would go out partying and play it over in your head in conversation with different people. We'd come back and decide to rewrite what we were forced into in the editorial meeting."

Chimurenga, a feisty little publication that has been written about in the pages of this magazine, decided to return the favour when it launched its online library project earlier this year (check out www.chimurengalibrary.co.za). If nothing else, for us magazine junkies, the project goes a long way in avoiding the piss-stained pants I referred to earlier. But as a periodical that takes itself too seriously, it paid tribute to this magazine with its nose in the air, celebrating only the first five issues, as if to say: "the rest were shit, guys. Close shop". And so it was that I felt strangely vindicated when, during an interview with Sbu, he added that those very first

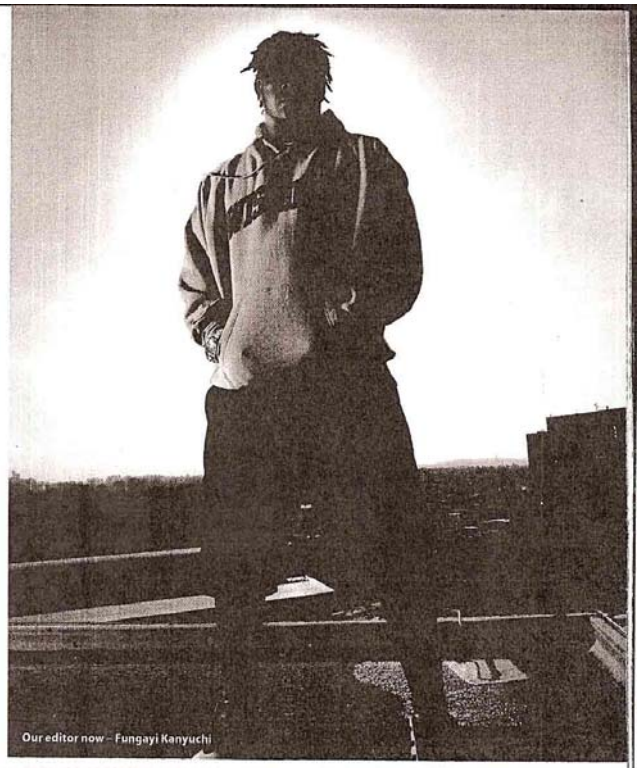
"ONE THING WE DO WELL IS HOLD YOUR HAND ON THE DANCE FLOOR, LIKE THAT FIRST DANCE BETWEEN TWO LOVERS. NOT MANY MAGAZINES CAN CLAIM THAT COMMITMENT – TO HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT MUSIC IN THIS COUNTRY FOR 10 YEARS. "

five issues "were full of typos, spelling errors and stories that weren't well-thought through. But, with time, we were going to get there."

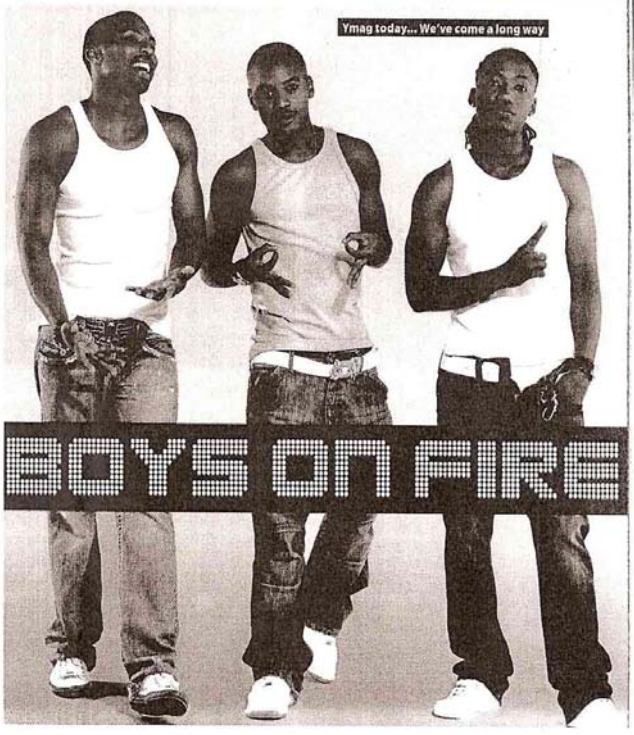
To be honest, in the past few months, I think we have slowly inched towards that elusive perfect issue. The fact that the content is no longer "as rounded as Lil Kim's ass", as a former contributor wrote, but, instead, closer to Amy Winehouse's skinny junkie ass is, for us, merely a sign of the times. All the girls standing in the line for the bathroom – we see you. All the young hustlers – we see you too.

One thing we do well is hold your hand on the dance floor, like that first dance between two lovers. Not many magazines can claim that commitment – to have written about music in this country for 10 years. Go ahead, count them on one hand. And if you're still reading *Ymag* since the first issue, we are starting to worry about you, but we won't loosen the grip on your hand. *Bambelela siyajika.*

Kwanele Sosibo



Our editor now – Fungayi Kanyuchi



Appendix F – Coding Sheets for the Analysis of *SL Magazine*

Analysis of SL Magazine Covers

Year	Month	Gender	Race	No. Of People	Social Distance	Modality	Behaviour	Identifiable Themes
1994	December	M & F	W	2	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Sex, Drugs, Relationships
1995	February	M	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Celebs, Diet, Sex
1995	June	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Travel, Celebs
1996	February	M & F	W&B	2	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Campus, SRC, Music
1996	June	F	B	1	CP	High	Offer/Ideal	Sex, Sports, Music
1997	February	F	C	1	FP	High	Demand/Seduction	Campus, Sex, Music
1997	June	F	W&B	2	CP	Low	Demand/Submission	Drugs, Gay, Travel
1997	December	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Submission	Sex, Music, Health
1998	February	M	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Wealth, Poetry, Music
1998	June	M	W	2	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Music, Sex, Celebs
1998	December	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Celebs, Party, Sex
1999	February	M & F	W	2	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Music, Status
1999	June	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Drugs, Sex, Politics
1999	December	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Party, Music, Sex
2000	February	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Dating, Music
2000	June	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Submission	Sex, Gambling, Music
2000	December	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Party, Music, Sex
2001	February	F	W	1	FP	High	Demand/Seduction	Boxing, Drugs, Marriage
2001	June	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Travel, Music
2001	December	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Drugs, Party, Music

M=Male F=Female B=Black C=Coloured I=Indian CP=Close/Personal CS=Close/Social

FS=Far/Social PD=Public Distance

Analysis of SL Magazine Covers

Year	Month	Gender	Race	No. Of People	Social Distance	Modality	Behaviour	Identifiable Themes
2002	February	F	W	1	FP	High	Demand/Seduction	Gay, Drugs, Sex
2002	June	F	C	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Travel, Music, Sex
2002	December	F & M	W	2	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Drugs, Sex, Travel
2003	February	F	B	1	Intimate	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Drugs, Music
2003	June	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Revolution, Sex, Rugby
2003	December	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	"The Sex Issue"
2004	February	F	W	1	FP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Music, Movies
2004	June	F	W&C	2	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Music, Student, Design
2004	December	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Travel, Celebs
2005	February	F	W	1	FP	Low	Demand/Seduction	Indie Music, Sex, Clothes
2005	June	F	W	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Music, Travel, Jobs
2005	December	F	C	1	CP	High	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Music
2006	February	F	W	1	FP	High	Demand/Seduction	Drugs, Music, Travel
2006	June	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Indie Music, YFM Dead?
2006	December	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Drugs, Music
2007	February	F	W	1	CS	Low	Demand/Seduction	Drugs, Party, Music
2007	June	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Travel, Music
2007	December	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Music
2008	February	F	W	1	CS	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Drugs, Music
2008	June	F	W	1	CP	Medium	Demand/Seduction	Travel, Sex, Music

M=Male F=Female B=Black C=Coloured I=Indian CP=Close/Personal CS=Close/Social

FS=Far/Social PD=Public Distance

SL Magazine: Summary of Key Findings

Frequency of Females on Covers:

White = 82.5%

Non-White = 17.5%

Frequency of Males on Covers:

White = 7.5%

Non-White = 0%

Frequency of Race on Covers:

White = 88%

Black = 5%

Coloured = 7%

Indian = 0%

Frequency of Modality on Covers:

High Modality = 60%

Frequency of Social Distance on Covers:

Close Personal Distance = 77%

Frequency of Behaviour on Covers:

Demand/Seduction = 80%

Frequency of the Number of People shown on Covers:

1 Person = 83%

2 People = 17%

Frequency of Themes Appearing on Covers:

Travel/Celebs/Dating = 20% Sex = 80% Music = 70% Drugs = 30%

Appendix G – Coding Sheets for the Analysis of *Y-Magazine*

Analysis of Y-Magazine Covers

Year	Month	Gender	Race	No. Of People	Social Distance	Modality	Behaviour	Identifiable Themes
1998/99	Dec/Jan	F	B	1	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Music, Celebs, Crime
1999	June/July	M	B	1	CP	High	Demand/Affiliation	Kwaito, Lesbian, Soccer
1999	Oct/Nov	M	B	1	CS	High	Other	Kwaito, Sex, Business
2000	June/July	F	B	1	CS	Medium	Offer/Ideal	Kwaito, Sex, Celebs
2000/01	Dec/Jan	M=1 F=2	B	3	CS	High	Offer/Ideal & Demand/Seduction	Hip-Hop, Sex, Cars
2001	February	F	B	1	CS	High	Demand/Seduction	Sex, Cars, Celebs
2001	May	F	B	1	CS	High	Demand/Affiliation	Sex, Cars, Celebs
2001	June/July	M & F	B	2	CS	High	Demand/Affiliation	Music, Sex, Politics
2001/02	Dec/Jan	F	C&I	2	CS	High	Offer/Ideal & Demand/Seduction	Kwaito, Hip-Hop, Sex
2002	June/July	M	B	1	FS	High	Offer/Ideal	Soccer, Music Sex
2002	Oct/Nov	M & F	B	2	CS	High	Demand/Seduction & D/Submission	Hip-Hop, Fashion, Sex
2002/03	Dec/Jan	M=3 F=2	B	5	PD	Low	Demand/Affiliation	Kwaito, Hip-Hop, Politics
2003	June	M & F	B	2	CS	High	Offer/Ideal & Demand/Seduction	Hip-Hop, Politics, Sex
2004	June/July	M=2 F=1	C&B	3	FS	High	Demand/Submission	Hip-Hop, Celebs, Politics
2005	June	M	B	2	CS	High	Demand/Submission	Politics, Celebs, Music
2007	June	M	B	6	PD	High	Demand/Submission	Music, Celebs
2007	Oct/Nov	M	B	1	CS	High	Demand/Submission	Celebs, Music
2007/08	Dec/Jan	M	B	2	CS	High	Offer/Ideal	Hip-Hop, Party, Music
2008	March	M	B=2 C=1	3	FS	High	Offer/Ideal	Music, Celebs
2008	June	M	B	1	CP	High	Demand/Submission	Music, Celebs, Fashion
2008	October	M	B	1	CP	High	Offer/Ideal	Drugs, Music, Celebs

M=Male F=Female B=Black C=Coloured I=Indian CP=Close/Personal CS=Close/Social

FS=Far/Social PD=Public Distance

Y-Magazine: Summary of Key Findings

Frequency of Females on Covers:

White = 0%

Non-White = 24%

Frequency of Males on Covers:

White = 0%

Non-White = 76%

Frequency of Race on Covers:

White = 0%

Black = 98%

Coloured = 1%

Indian = 1%

Frequency of Modality on Covers:

High Modality = 90%

Frequency of Social Distance on Covers:

Close Social Distance = 57%

Frequency of Behaviour on Covers:

Demand/Affiliation; Offer/Ideal; Demand/Submission = 23% each

Frequency of the Number of People shown on Covers:

1 Person = 48%

2 People = 14%

Frequency of Themes Appearing on Covers:

Celebs = 100% Sex = 50% Music = 100% Politics = 50%