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This issue marks twenty years of *Image & Text*. It is therefore appropriate that it opens with a Foreword by Jacques Lange, one of the founding members of the journal. In ‘Foreword. Evaluation, reflection, comment and analysis: Twenty years of *Image & Text*’, Lange gives his personal views on the origins and development of the journal and highlights its contributions. What Lange shows in admirable detail is that although *Image & Text* has been influenced by disciplinary and stylistic fads, it has also kept pace with the demands of international scholarship and has established itself as a reputable journal.

In keeping with the trajectory of the ‘new’ *Image & Text*, this issue offers six research articles that include design history, architecture and interior design, cinema and social media. As in most previous issues, the complexities of identity and narrative, and how they manifest in a range of historical and contemporary visual culture underlie most of the articles. The first two articles focus particularly on the domain of South African design history; the next two deal with a novel approach to postgraduate supervision in design and the contested relationship between architecture and interior design. The last two articles turn their attention to the contemporary moving image, specifically cinema and social media filmmaking.

The first article, by Deirdre Pretorius, Grietjie Verhoef and Marian Sauthoff, is entitled ‘The printed propaganda of the Communist Party of South Africa during World War II.’ This article builds on the research that has been done by Pretorius with regard to visual propaganda material produced in South Africa for political organisations. The article points out that the material disseminated during World War II focused on promoting the notion of Communist ‘respectability’ by means of an iconography that centred on the gentleman, intellectual, leader and soldier. Each of these images is interrogated in terms of its iconographical associations and some persuasive insights are offered by the authors. The authors thereby indicate the subtle ideological shifts that informed these images that supported the precarious Communist cause in the 1940s in South Africa.

The second article also adds to a much-needed investigation of South African design history. In ‘“Cloudless skies” versus “vitamins of the mind”: An argumentative interrogation of the visual rhetoric of *South African Panorama* and *Lantern* cover designs (1949-1961)’, Lizé Groenewald uses a case study of the mentioned journals to demonstrate notions related to nationalism and national identity. She skilfully ‘demonstrates the agency of graphic design in the strategies of propaganda and education as utilised by *Lantern* and *Panorama*’ (p 50) but also points out that other, more nuanced interpretations are possible, and indeed necessary. Groenewald argues this by applying Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971) ‘new rhetoric’ to unpack the covers of the two journals for the 13 years under discussion. Groenewald reaches a number of new insights regarding the audiences and purposes of the journals, and points the way forward for continued interrogation of these cultural products.
A great deal of deliberation has been devoted recently to mechanisms by which the process of postgraduate study may be facilitated and enhanced in a meaningful way. The third article adds to this debate by means of a meticulous case study of an innovative co-creative approach to supervision. “‘I participate, therefore I learn’: A process of co-creative graduate supervision in design research in Cape Town” by Alettia Chisin and Mugendi M’Rithaa tackles the context of changing pedagogical concerns in relation to their experiences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. They document the founding of the Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW), which aimed to ‘provide an academic and social support forum for postgraduate students’ (p 88).

Drawing on the experiences and perceptions of both supervisors and postgraduate students, they discuss the types of peer support that were offered and in particular, the kinds of ‘conversational and narrative methods to support postgraduate students’ that were successful (p 102).

Although Image & Text has carried articles in the past that deal with either architecture or interior design, the fourth article in this issues examines the fraught and complex relationship between these two disciplines in some detail. ‘Architecture’s “other”: An ontological reading of the abject relationship with interior design’ by Raymund Königk and Karel Bakker offers an intriguing reading of the dialectic and hierarchical relationship between the two disciplines. They chart the origins and unfolding of this troubled connection and attempt to understand it by means of a discussion of the politics of the abject in terms of Kristeva. The contested boundaries and tensions between the two disciplines are unpacked and the authors propose strategies whereby complementary and autonomous identities may be developed for this ontological pair.

Cheryl Stobie’s article ‘Dirty alien shadow-selves: Delving into the dirt in District 9’ offers an astute reading of this controversial film, directed by Neill Blomkamp (2009). Stobie skilfully weaves together a number of theoretical positions, ranging from film criticism to anthropology, to investigate the ideological and metaphoric meanings of dirt and synthetic dirt in the film. She demonstrates that it is particularly the South African setting of the film that colludes in revealing ‘the embeddedness of dirty habits of power’ (p 142). Stobie’s discussion of dirt and abjection derives mainly from the seminal work of Mary Douglas, and she combines this with Nicolas Bourriaud’s ‘relational aesthetics’ to offer a sophisticated view of the role of art in contemporary society, specifically societies that have been exposed to systems of oppression.

Image & Text ends with an article by Jodi Nelson that looks at some of the issues concerning the use of social media and the creation of ‘a variety of social media landscapes’ (p 146). ‘Social media as a filmmaking narrative tool’ is based on a case study of the author’s own experiences derived from her film project, What does a 21st century feminist look like? (2010). She is particularly interested in how documentary filmmakers can use narrative devices to involve new global audiences, engage meaningfully with virtual communities and also ‘utilise crowd funding support and fan-building initiatives’ (p 146). Nelson explores the challenges and constraints associated with social media platforms, but is optimistic about the potential of new technology and participatory modes to change both filmmaking and its audiences.

In conclusion, it is encouraging that contributions for Image & Text are being received from a broader base of academic institutions and that the content of the articles resonates with key concerns across a range of disciplines. It has been an honour for me to be involved with the journal for twenty years, and I am grateful in particular to the inspirational contributions that have been made by Marian Sauthoff and Jacques Lange.
Foreword

Evaluation, reflection, comment and analysis: Twenty years of *Image & Text*

Jacques Lange

*Image & Text* was conceptualised at the dawn of South Africa’s radical socio-political transformations and has become a mirror that reflects the changes in the country’s history and the impact on disciplines such as design, fine art, art history, popular culture, visual studies, and social anthropology. Over the past two decades, *Image & Text* has provided a platform for critical discourse that resulted in a large body of mainly new knowledge. Since 1992, *Image & Text* has published more than 170 articles, editorials and reviews by around 120 authors, spanning close to 1,600 pages. This is an impressive track record when one considers that most feature articles were peer-reviewed and therefore many more did not make it to the publishing stage. The editorial focus, quality of articles and ever-expanding scope of inclusive discourse that the journal has facilitated over the years are noteworthy in the South African visual culture landscape.

In this Foreword, I summarise the history of the journal and share my recollections. This appraisal emanates from a personal perspective in my capacity as one of the two remaining founding members who is still intimately involved with the journal.

The founding years

*Image & Text* started from humble beginnings more than 20 years ago when Marian Sauthoff¹ (head of Information Design at the University of Pretoria [UP]) proposed the idea of establishing Africa’s first scholarly journal based at a local academic design and fine arts institution. The founding publishing team included Jeanne van Eeden² (lecturer in Art History), Lesley Pretorius³ (part-time lecturer in Information Design and Visual Communication) and myself⁴ (part-time lecturer in Information Design). This team shared a common concern about the lack of published research sources, particularly in the field of South African design. As Sauthoff⁵ noted:

> Design in South Africa is still dominated by intuitive practitioners who are more likely to consult a trade magazine instead of a scholarly publication ... The search for any local literature dealing with the interpretation and significance of South African design, usually yields little more than elementary comments ... Yet an invisible networks of people with specialist knowledge in design does exist ... Now is the time to start amalgamating and organising existing knowledge and to establish a forum for wider exchange ...

The team agreed that since design is critically dependent on other disciplines, the journal should pursue a multidisciplinary trajectory. In 1992, after months of conceptualisation *Image & Text* was born. Sauthoff, van Eeden and Pretorius formed the editorial panel that developed the editorial strategy, while I was tasked with developing the publication’s name and creative strategy.
The journal’s name arose from a critical analysis of the founding team’s aims and objectives that were defined in Sauthoff’s first editorial: ‘Image & Text … aims to disseminate local design information, opinions, ideas and experiences and to provide a forum where design dialogue is supported and encouraged.’ She defined the three main objectives as being: ‘to foster a culture of design writing and research in South Africa; to contribute to the development of a coherent body of scholarship and knowledge in design; and to promote communication across disciplines.’

From this, three core concepts were extracted that were distilled into the core elements of the publication’s name – ‘image’, ‘text’ and ‘and’ (the latter being represented by the ampersand). The ampersand is a logo-gram that can be tracked back to the first century AD – the Old Roman cursive, in which the letters ‘E’ and ‘T’ are occasionally written together to form a ligature (&), which in modern times, has taken on additional symbolic meaning. The significance of the modern ampersand connotes close collaboration between authors rather than merely meaning ‘et’ or ‘and’. For instance, in cinematography, the ampersand in movie credits indicates co-authorship and/or active collaboration. The italic version of the ligature brought additional meaning to Image & Text’s masthead (which is set in Trump Mediaeval Italic Oldstyle Figures) because it signifies close collaboration across disciplines.

In addition, the publishing team adopted the tagline ‘Evaluation. Reflection. Comment. Analysis’ as a guiding statement, which featured on all the covers from 1992 until 2007 and was re-introduced in 2012 (with
this edition). The tagline serves as shorthand for the journal's key directives, which guided the content, direction and design over two decades.

To support and endorse the publication’s scholarly credibility, the editorial team approached prominent scholars and design practitioners during 1991 to 1992 to serve on the advisory panel of Image & Text. The founding panel consisted of 14 members and included Jens Bernsen (Denmark), Robert Blaich (USA), Anne Marie Boutin (France), Paul Cheng (Taiwan), Eileen Hogan (UK), Frank Sander (Germany) and South Africans, Rick Andrews, Eunice Basson, Iaan Bekker, Brenda Hofmeyer, Joe Kieser, Nico Roos, Ian Sutherland and Adrienne Viljoen.

The first edition of Image & Text was published in November 1992 and featured 12 articles, including two published in Afrikaans.7 The edition covered the disciplines of advertising, communication design, industrial design, fine art and design education. In the editorial, Sauthoff highlighted the lack of scholarly literature on design that focused on the South African context, specifically against the backdrop of the rapidly changing socio-political transformations of that time. This theme was further elucidated in articles by Iaan Bekker, Ernst de Jong, Mervyn Kurlansky, Eunice Basson and Nico Roos, who all argue for the repositioning of South African design to allow it to embrace the country's rich and complex contexts.

In the article Visual arts education at the University of Pretoria (translation from Afrikaans by the author),8 Nico Roos, then head of the Department of Visual Arts at UP, writes: "It can justly be said that arts training in South Africa has outgrown its infant shoes and has taken its rightful place amongst other disciplines taught at universities and technikons. At the advent of radical changes that are looming in South Africa, the arts educator is faced by new challenges, especially in the field of design education."9 Roos argues that design faces the most pressing challenges of all the visual arts disciplines in order to transform and respond to the need for an unique vernacular visual language in the 1990s. He particularly highlights the move of educational focus from European- and North American-centric approaches to one that embraces the Afrocentric. This becomes a recurring theme in Image & Text and remains a key topic in feature articles.

Image & Text's second edition was published in July 1993 and again featured 12 articles. In the editorial message, Sauthoff takes a more interrogative stance when she summarises the key issues that confront South African design as addressed by the contributing authors Ian Sutherland, Thomas Oosthuizen and Jan Erasmus. According to Sauthoff:10

Aspects which characterise the broader context and the current situation of design practice in South Africa receive a fair amount of consideration in this edition ... A re-emphasis on the importance of design in both economic and social arenas, greater international acceptance and opening up of global markets in the aftermath of sanctions all serve to highlight problems and challenges facing design. The present economic climate, the level of industrialisation, little understanding of the impact of design and the general standard of design awareness are listed as impediments to the development of design.

While designers have been good at identifying problems and major issues confronting design, the tendency has been to suggest that solutions must come from other quarters. These suggestions are usually sound and valid, but often little is said about the role and responsibilities designers themselves must increasingly assume if they wish the strategic importance of design to receive corporate and national recognition.
The most appropriate and best people to look after the interests of design and designers, must after all be designers themselves.

Sauthoff concludes: ‘It is ... encouraging to see a trend emerging in which South African designers are reassessing their role and articulating potential contributions which reach beyond the traditional role and boundaries of design.’ Yet, she and several of the authors also flag the lack of broad public dialogue initiated and facilitated by designers, especially within the corporate sector, as a means to foster greater understanding and perception changes of the design sector.

The third edition of Image & Text was published in April 1994 – a significant date in South Africa’s history. The edition included an eclectic mix of 11 articles covering communication design, industrial design, fine art and education. It was the first edition to include book reviews and the first that addressed the often-precarious relationship between the design and craft domains.

Bev Gower, in the article titled Craft and Design writes ‘The ability of craft to express the vitality of a culture has not had an significant impact on design in this country. South Africa’s rich and diverse craft heritage needs to be reappraised by designers for the contributions it could make.’

Image & Text 3 also featured the first article on popular culture: Women – Suit yourself! authored by van Eeden. It deals with feminism and its role in South African society and features student projects on women’s rights that illustrate the myths and stereotypes that designers perpetuate about and around gender and feminism.
The fourth edition of *Image & Text* was published in December 1994. Of the eight articles, two deal with craft and two with explorations of vernacular identity and appropriation of indigenous cultures. Highlights include Barbara Buntman’s *Selling with the San. Representations of Bushman people and artefacts*; Kathleen Connellan’s *Craft: Status, perceptions and implications for South African design*; and Elize Taljaard’s *Translating the traditional: Designs for Shangaan embroidery*. Other authors include Neels van Heerden, Sauthoff, Bertie du Plessis, as well as an article titled *Deconstructivism and typography* (translation from Afrikaans by the author) co-authored by van Eeden and Charl Gräbe, a student at UP.

In the editorial, Sauthoff proudly writes about the accolades that the first three issues of *Image & Text* received:

**Academic publications are notorious for their lack of attention to visual presentation and design. One of the original objectives for this journal was to make the content easily accessible and the design visually appealing. It has therefore been extremely gratifying for the editors and designers to receive acknowledgement from the design industry and the University of Pretoria …**

Number 1 received a merit award at the First Paper House Art of Design competition in 1994. Number 2 was one of the national finalists that went to San Francisco in August for the final adjudication in the Sappi Designer of the Year contest. Number 3 was the recipient of one of the annual awards made by the University of Pretoria’s Marketing Services for outstanding contributions by non-marketing personnel which successfully promoted the University and helped to establish its profile.

Eighteen years later, I question the creative integrity of these editions because they now seem to be visually incoherent. However, these were designed at the time when deconstructivism was at its prime and computer generated imagery – specifically scanning, Photoshop’s image manipulation effects, bitmapping, layering and other visual devices – were in vogue.
Towards accreditation: the first milestone

From the outset, the editorial team aimed to have Image & Text accredited by the national Department of Education as an academic journal and during 1993 it implemented peer reviewing of manuscripts as a means to increase the standard of the published articles.

The fifth edition appeared in August 1995 and featured seven richly illustrated articles, four of which focus on popular culture. Maritha Snyman’s Stereotyping of women in advertising: The same old story (translation from Afrikaans by the author)\(^{16}\) continues the debate on gender stereotyping introduced in Number 3 by van Eeden, while Liese van der Watt’s The Voortrekker tapestry: Reconstituting identity and status challenges historical ideas about the ‘... inferior status [of] craft as a “feminine” activity’.\(^{17}\) Van Eeden takes a particularly interesting look at stereotypical Western constructs of Africa in Mickey’s African Adventure while Adré Rheeder’s What about a piece of Vetkoek? ‘Bitterkomix’ and vetkoek as satire (translation from Afrikaans by the author)\(^{18}\) explores the stereotyping of Afrikaners through the work of the often-controversial comic art duo, Anton Kannemeyer and Conrad Botes.

Since inception, each edition of Image & Text (up to Number 9) featured a section titled Portfolio of South African designers, as well as an in-depth article dedicated to a prominent fine artist as a means of developing local design and art history discourses. Number 5 featured interviews and showcases of seminal communication designer Garth Walker and then emerging (now internationally acclaimed) fine artist Diane Victor. Other featured designers and artists include Blueprint Design and John Clark (Number 1); Jan Erasmus, Roy Clucas and Pierre van der Westhuizen (Number 2); Ernst de Jong and Edoardo Villa (Number 3); Dairin Ashley, William...

Figure 5a: Cover of Image & Text number 5 (1995). Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editor: Jeanne van Eeden. Designer: Jacques Lange.

Figure 5b: Text spread from Image & Text number 5 (1995) features Garth Walker in the section titles Portfolio of South African designers.
Steyn and Nico Roos (Number 4); Cross Colours (Number 6); Willem Bosshoff (Number 7), Tin Temple (Number 8) and Sue MacGillivray (Number 9). Over the years, these designer/artist features have accumulated and now provide a small but valuable resource for South African design and art history scholars.

Nineteen-ninety-six was a milestone in *Image & Text*’s history because in November the publication was officially granted academic accreditation by the national Department of Education. This benefited its contributing authors, especially those affiliated to academic institutions, who received subsidy for peer-reviewed publications. As Sauthoff stated, ‘[b]eing granted a position on the accredited publications list acknowledges that the calibre of content and writing in a publication meets a high academic standard.’

**Fostering and maintaining high standards: pursuit of the next milestone**

*Image & Text*’s sixth edition appeared in December 1996 and included eight articles, five of which provide critical analysis of trends in design practice and the business of design. This edition can be regarded as one of the highlights of *Image & Text* because of the high level of editorial care and mentorship provided by editors Sauthoff and van Eeden, as well as the engaging level of critique displayed by the contributing authors. It is significant to note that four of the featured authors were under 30 years of age at the time, which highlights one of the journal’s founding objectives: to foster and develop scholarship amongst the young generation of scholars.

Christel Wolfaardt’s International textile trends: Curse of blessing? ‘questions the value of locally generated textile design set against the backdrop of annual international design trends.’ Thomas Oosthuizen’s provocative article Communication: A commodity business harshly criticises the advertising industry (and others such as design, public relations and consumer promotions) for becoming ‘stagnant’ and ‘the ultimate bureaucracy which fails in the fundamental task of furnishing clients with creative, innovative and appropriate products’. My article, Strategic design in a transforming communications ecology, explores the role of designers in employer communications and comments on their lack of organisational knowledge which are critical for working in the area of employer branding. Johan van Wyk addresses topical issues regarding design ethics while Sauthoff looks at the need for assertive development of design leadership. In Lion, Camel, Man, Martin Erasmus provides an interesting take on gender stereotyping: ‘Much attention has been paid to the deconstruction of female stereotypes in mass media. In this article a masculinist approach similarly explores and questions the use of the male as an icon in current beer and cigarette advertising.’ Finally, van Eeden’s Russian posters in South Africa briefly discusses a rare collection of 62 Russian propaganda posters from the 1930s held by the South African National Gallery in Cape Town.
Figure 7: Cover and text spreads of *Image & Text* number 7 (1997). Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editors: Jeanne van Eeden and Retha van Niekerk. Designer: Jacques Lange.
Image & Text received another accolade in 1996 when I was invited to present the keynote paper at the national conference of the South African Institute for Industrial Editors. The paper, Image & Text: Shaping a new South African language in editorial design, presented the publication as a case study for new trends and experimentation, particularly in the academic arena.

The seventh edition of Image & Text was published in 1997 and the production was again made possible by the goodwill of design, paper, print and production sponsors. This edition allowed for creative experimentation by combining diverse paper combinations (finishes, colours, textures and shapes), yet a notable aspect is that the design was more reserved and mature than previous editions, making the dense content more accessible. The cover features an adaptation of a project created by Rudo Botha, a final year Information Design student from UP, which in my opinion, was the most experimental and impressive Image & Text cover to date. It also illustrates the eclectic central themes contained in this edition, which consisted of ten articles. Sauthoff writes:

This edition of Image & Text invites readers to review a number of pertinent design issues – the development context, the primacy of the visual in design, embracing the digital age and the creation of a South African cultural landscape through popular expressions of entertainment. Although the articles deal with seemingly diverse topics, each in its own way confirms that designers need to continually reflect on the essence of what they do, their attitudes, preconceptions and how they define themselves.

With this edition, the editorial team set new standards for itself and the design discourse in South Africa by implementing more stringent peer-review standards for manuscript submissions. Notable contributions include Mirjam Southwall’s Magic by design: Technology transformed; Christel Wolfaardt’s Of mice and (Wo)men: Disneyland and the cultural aesthetics of entertainment in the new South Africa; Amanda du Preez’s Femme fatale revamped; Benjamin Myer’s Blind design: A proposal for design schools, Van Eeden’s Willem Boshoff’s Blind Alphabet; Willem Boshoff’s Aesthetics of touch: Notes towards a blind aesthetic, and Anthony Bizos’ article on South African design in a digital age.

Image & Text 8 appeared in 1998 and the high level of scholarship is evident in the nine featured articles, proving the benefits of the publication’s academic accreditation. In the editorial message Sauthoff writes: ‘A theme that weaves its way through this issue … is the question of identity, both, historical and contemporary, technical and conceptual. It is explored from a number of viewpoints: professional, personal, societal, architectural and by means of graphic and linguistic expressions.’ Retha van Niekerk’s Humour at the Horingboom Oasis illustrates how humour is used in a series of television commercials for Castrol Oil as a means ‘to forge an identity which comes to terms with the inequalities of the past’. Sauthoff’s Portfolio of South African designers: Tin Temple ‘underscores the way a uniquely South African visual aesthetic is being refined and distilled as an extension to an earlier and more direct appropriation of vernacular sources and inspiration.’ Anton Kannemeyer’s The comic: a homogenous art form (translation from Afrikaans by the author) takes an analytical look at comic art and its technical processes and positions it as a complex form of art. Sabine Marschall’s Regionalism and South African architectural identity; Federico Freschi’s Forms follows façade: the architecture of W H Grant 1920-1932; and van Eeden’s Malling: a Postmodern landscape, explore the built environment from three diverse angles, focussing on iconic meanings and social identity. My article, Tested and detested designers. Conflicting opinions on title protection and industry regulation explores how designers
perceive themselves and how they would like to be perceived as professionals. Marilet Sienaert’s *The interface of image and text*. Breytenbach’s Durban exhibition *PORTRAITS, PRINTS and PAPER* explores the acclaimed writer and painter, Breyten Breytenbach’s constantly transforming search of self-identity. Finally, Rolf Gaede’s *Visual and verbal texts: a semiotic distinction* examines the visual-verbal dichotomy and defines the distinctive features of written and pictorial texts against the backdrop of varying levels of literacy.

Over the years, *Image & Text*’s editorial team faced many challenges, as can be expected from any endeavour that relies on the contributions of expert services provided by volunteers. The early 2000s were particularly difficult because the professional priorities and workload of the editorial team and the stringent criteria imposed by the peer-review system delivered fewer suitable manuscripts. This was exacerbated by the radical transformations that South African education experienced when many higher education institutions were required to merge and resulted in major disruption of design research at the time.

The ninth edition of *Image & Text* appeared in 2001 and featured six articles, two of them by high-profile international scholars. A common theme in this edition was the role of transforming processes in design.
viewed from different angles. *Between word and deed: The Icograda Design Education Manifesto, Seoul 2000,* co-authored by Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl and Sang-Soo Ahn provides a brief historical overview of manifestos and then focuses on the Design Education manifesto that was developed in 2000-2001 on behalf of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda) by a panel of leading international academics and design practitioners. Gui Bonsiepe’s article *Design as a tool for cognitive metabolism: the role of design in the socialisation of knowledge* interrogates ‘[t]he use of digital media for knowledge presentation in education and knowledge management in business, [which] raises two fundamental questions: the relation between design and cognition, and the role of audiovisualistic rhetoric.’

Considering the local context, the artist, Jan van der Merwe looks at the use of found objects in the ever-transforming creative process in the article *Transformation of the found: an alchemical process* (translation from Afrikaans by the author) while Ingrid Stevens’s *Sue MacGillivray, glass maker* explores the impact of Africa on the design processes of the British glass designer who spent two years in South Africa while assisting the establishment of a glass department at the Technikon Pretoria. Trudy du Plooy’s *Madam & Eve: a change agent in the new South Africa* attempts to reposition cartoons as a legitimate field of mass-communication research, and particularly addresses the question: ‘How does communication contribute to development and change?’ Marian Sauthoff’s *Pretoria stories* reviews a project produced by students from the University of Pretoria from a pedagogical perspective. The project required students to document their city through personal exploration, interpretation and expression, coming up with a unique brand positioning for the city, as well as merging digital and autographic media and processes as a means to develop their integrated observational, narrative and technical skills.

**Towards the next ten years: the second milestone**

In 2002, the editorial team updated *Image & Text*’s advisory panel and reduced it from 14 to eight members. The panel now consisted of academics and design practitioners Eunice Basson, Brenda Hofmeyer, Eileen Hogan (UK), Marthie Kaden, Nico Roos, Frank Sander (Germany), Ian Sutherland and Adrienne Viljoen.

At the same time, a review of all articles featured in previous editions of *Image & Text* highlights the rapid convergence and increasing fluidity of discourses in design, architecture, fine art, art history, popular culture, visual studies, social anthropology and others disciplines in South Africa and further afield, leading to greater cross- and meta-disciplinary collaboration and interchange. As a response, the editorial team implemented a more rigorous double-blind peer-review system for evaluating manuscripts as a means to maintain high scholarly standards.

The tenth edition of *Image & Text* appeared in 2003. This was a special edition dedicated to architecture and was also the first to be guest edited. In the editorial, *DESIGN 100: Architecture 60 + Landscape Architecture 30 + Interior Architecture 10,* Roger Fisher explains the title and its relevance to this edition:

This issue … celebrates the teachers in the various programmes in the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria as academics. The Department of Architecture celebrates its sixtieth year in 2003, the programme in landscape architecture its thirtieth year in 2002, and interior architecture its tenth year in 2003. Each milestone marks a moment to stand still and reflect.

The edition contains seven articles: Alta Steenkamp’s *Reminiscences: The Pretoria School of Architecture as*
remembered by early graduates, 1943-1953; Nico Botes’ Text in space; Gift Phalatse Setshedi’s Documenting the post-apartheid ‘genius loci’ of Salvokop: A recommendation for the rehabilitation process; Rudolf van Rensburg’s The poetics of light in architecture: Light as architectural form; Graham Young’s Transforming urban open space: The development of two parks in Soweto with emphasis on art in the park; Henri Comrie’s Beds are better in France: A sentimental architect’s laments the fact that in the digital age few students of architecture still travel sketchpad in hand; and Fisher’s SA Architecture as image and text – A critical overview of publications in 2003.

Figure 10: Cover and title spread of Image & Text number 10 (2003). This is the first special edition dedicated to architecture. Guest editor: Alta Steenkamp. Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editor: Jeanne van Eeden. Designer: Jacques Lange and Nico Botes (pp 10-13).
Image & Text 11 appeared in 2004 and featured six articles that ‘continue the cross disciplinary debates around themes of interest and relevance to design that has become the hallmark of the issues of the journal published over the last decade’. Four of the articles engage directly with areas of practice in the South African context through the consideration of furniture, health material, posters and monuments. These are: Karen von Veh’s *Found wood: South African ecological furniture design as seen in the work of Phil Oosthuizen*; Adelia Carsten’s *HIV/AIDS, Literacy and Health Communication. A Study on the comprehension of visual symbolism in educational documents produced for people with limited reading skills*; Deirdre Pretorius and Sauthoff’s *Challenging apartheid. Posters from the United Democratic Front and the End Conscription Campaign*; and Sabine Marshall’s *The signifying power of the monumental image*. The other two articles, Federico Freschi’s *Unpacking Miró’s box of tricks* and Amanda du Preez’s *The machine as woman: An analysis of how technology is sexed and gendered in selected South African advertisements* move outside of the immediate design domain but offer valuable insights to designers.

The last print edition of Image & Text appeared in 2006 and the design can be described as confident and maturely supportive of the content – a coming of age of sorts. Number 12 is richly illustrated and features four articles. Sauthoff’s *An alliance of style, situation and content: The design of a typeface for South Africa’s Constitutional Court* and Stella Viljoen’s *‘Imagined Community’: 1950s kiekies of the volk* consider current and recent conceptions and visual expressions of cultural, gendered and national identity respectively, against the backdrop of diverse case studies (the new Constitutional Court and *Huisgenoot* magazine covers) which date from pre- and post-apartheid eras. Ria van Zyl and Hester du Plessis ‘consider the design process, not from the position of the lone designer, but as a collaborative endeavour situated in the context of developing communities’ by describing and commenting on Interdesign 2005, a two-week-long interactive workshop convened by the International Council of Industrial Design Associations (Icsid), which focused on the topic of sustainable non-motorised rural transport in the North West Province of South Africa. Both authors address the benefits of cross-disciplinary collaboration and research – Du Plessis focuses on action research and collaboration with social scientists, while Van Zyl highlights the benefits that communication designers bring to augment industrial designers’ research during the new product development process.
Figure 13: Cover and text spreads from Image & Text number 13 (2007). This is the first edition that is only published in digital format. Editor: Marian Sauthoff. Assistant editor: Jeanne van Eeden. Designer: Jacques Lange.
Going digital: the third milestone

During 2006, assistant editor, Ria Van Zyl, facilitated the process of converting *Image & Text*’s distribution channel from hard copy subscription via snail mail to also include online subscription via the Sabinet Reference platform. This allows readers and researchers from anywhere in the world with options to search content, read abstracts and download complete editions or single articles from Number 11 onwards.

In 2007, the editorial team decided to further exploit new technological and research advances by only publishing the journal in digital format as a means to make it more accessible to a broader audience, reduce production and distribution costs and carbon footprint, while also taking advantage of the benefits of unlimited page counts offered by online media. At the same time, the team again updated the advisory panel, which now consisted of only five members, Eunice Basson, Marthie Kaden, Jacques Lange, Ian Sutherland and Adrienne Viljoen.

*Image & Text* 13, published in 2007, introduced an invigorated and more refined approach to the publication’s design, featuring larger images, vibrant screen-based colour palettes and substantially increased page counts. A central theme of this edition, like many before, interrogates topics related to identity:

The articles in this edition … demonstrate how issues surrounding the construction and visualisation of identity continue to present fertile ground for critical and sustained engagement. The distinctive circumstances of South Africa and its physical, political, cultural, social and historical richness encourage an on-going desire to examine how it represents itself with images and stories that reflect its diversities more candidly. Four of the five authors published in this edition locate their investigations of identity in the South African environment. The fifth article adopts a more distant perspective in its focus on Victorian England.

Articles include Deirdre Pretorius’ ‘*Amapasi Asiwafuni!*’ / *To hell with pass laws!* Class, race and gender identities in the anti-pass laws cartoons published in ‘Umsebenzi’ / *South African Worker*, 1933-1936; Lizè Groenewald’s *Loose your warts, become sublime: South African paper currency as instruction in the making of nation*; Catherine Karusseit’s *Victorian respectability and gendered domestic space*; Robyn Sassen’s *Attention seeking images: early work by Berni Searle and Paul Emmanuel*; and David Paton’s *The sound of a book: sound as generator of narrative in the reception of selected new media objects as books*.

In 2008, *Image & Text* embraced online publishing head-on and the team redesigned the design approach in totality to accommodate the requirements set by newly introduced smart phone technologies. *Image & Text* 14 was the first to be published in portrait format. Other features include increased font sizes, larger line spacing and the elimination of background elements as a means to increase faster online download time and ease of reading.

The fourteenth edition of *Image & Text*, published in 2008, was the second special edition. As Sauthoff explains:

The nine articles in this special edition of *Image & Text* are derived from two institutions, namely the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria and the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. The articles reveal common areas of research such as identity, ideology, ethics, sustainability and the politics of representation in design and visual culture, yet also consider the ontology and epistemology of specific fields of endeavour.
The first four articles are contributions from members of staff at the University of Pretoria and reflect some of the research interests of the Department of Visual Arts as well as engaging with the Centenary of the University. The Centenary was marked in May 2008 by two exhibitions curated by the Department: Visuality / Comment and X-ings: shaping culture through design.

The articles include Duncan Reyburn’s Nomads at a cross-roads (X-roads): a framework for ethical design in South Africa; Jenni Lauwrens’ Sightseeing in art and visual culture; Amanda du Preez’s (Im)Materiality: on the matter of art; and Elfriede Dreyer’s Unlocking identities in globalising South African art. Articles five through nine are contributions from members of staff from the University of Johannesburg which reflect not only some of the research interests of members of staff, but also the manner in which a previous technikon is confronting the challenges of the changing higher education landscape. Articles include Deirdre Pretorius’ Countering stereotypes: the representation of Africans in Communist Party of South Africa cartoons 1930-1936; Amanda Breytenbach’s Industrial Design education: quo vadis?; Angus Campbell’s Industrial Design education and South African imperatives; Desiree Smal’s Eco fashion: fashion fad or future trend?; and David Paton’s Body, light, interaction, sound: a critical reading of a recent installation of Willem Boshoff’s ‘Kykafrikaans’.

Notably, Smal’s article was the first to engage with the discipline of clothing design in Image & Text.

Image & Text 15 appeared in 2009 and featured six edited papers presented at the Design Education Forum of Southern Africa’s (DEFSA) annual conference, held in November 2009, entitled Opening gates between...
Amanda Breytenbach's Reflecting on the past, present and future role of the Design Education Forum of Southern Africa provides a descriptive outline of the history of the Forum and suggests possible ways in which it can re-establish itself. Mary Duker's Making space for identity, diversity and voice in a transcultural visual arts community of practice tackles issues in contemporary education, specifically transformation, curriculum relevance and teaching and learning approaches which take into account aspects such as dominant worldviews, inclusiveness and diversity. Piers Carey and Rowan Gatfield's Creative industries, creative solutions: developments in a work integrated learning project in Durban and Inge Economou and Nina Joubert's Towards an educational strategy for promoting social, environmental and ethical awareness in visual communication education each describe specific initiatives within their teaching programmes that move students out of lecture halls and teaching studios into environments that enable a direct confrontation with the constraints of practice and the realities of less privileged communities respectively. The final two articles engage interdisciplinary ideas. Nadia Viljoen and Ria van Zyl's Design thinking – crossing disciplinary borders explores the potential of employing design thinking in the seemingly disparate discipline of operations research/management science while Karen von Veh and Landi Raubenheimer's Interdisciplinary theory teaching: can one size really fit all? points out some of the dilemmas involved in developing an interdisciplinary course in the history and theory of art and design at the University of Johannesburg.

The perennial desire to drive home the imperative of design for social good is reinforced by the first article in this edition ... In the article The VHEMBE filter: a product for rural South Africa, authors Angus Campbell and Martin Bolton document a ... design project that focused on an intervention aimed at social upliftment and the impact the outcome could offer a very large segment of society through improved water quality. The article illustrates how a user-centred approach was employed to improve an existing product ... to ensure that it was better suited to users living in rural settings. The development of the resulting design ... formed part of a larger collaborative research project that aimed to investigate whether an intervention that improves water quality would measurably improve the health of people using the intervention.

Johann van der Merwe's Cybernetic conversations: designing ourselves towards discovery, argues for the renewal of design and he suggests that 'systemic thinking is something that had a place in design and that
this place was somehow lost. He contends that by cultivating a new outlook designers can rediscover and reinvent a systems mind-set through the dynamics of a cybernetic design conversation, which in itself is a notion based on a social systems design structure. Christo Vosloo’s Toward local identity in South African architecture presents three perspectives with the aim of extracting transferable design strategies that can be applied by architects during the process of developing a national architectural identity, even though, he contends, this is a goal that will continuously remain ‘in process’.

Repositioning: the fourth milestone

The seventeenth edition of Image & Text appeared in 2011 and marks the most radical changes in the journal’s history when Van Eeden takes over as editor. Image & Text was published primarily as a journal for design but under Van Eeden’s editorship the journal is now repositioned as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that ‘orbits around the nexus of visual culture.’ The aim of the journal was adjusted to draw perspectives from a much broader field of interests and subjects including visual anthropology, material culture, visual arts, design culture, visualising sciences and technologies, art history, philosophy, fashion, media and film studies, architecture, literary studies, tourism studies, new media and cyber theory, and so forth. To this end, Van Eeden explains: ‘The grounding provided by visual culture studies as a comparative and enabling premise for all these approaches, subjects, interests, fields and theories is located in the global South, not only geographically but also critically.’

Other important changes in 2011 included the expansion of the editorial board from two to seven members, as well as re-reviewing and enlarging the advisory board from five to 18 members as a means to support the repositioned scope of the journal. The editorial board now consists of van Eeden (editor), Amanda du Preez (assistant editor), Rudy du Plessis (editorial assistant), with Fatima Cassim, Benita de Robillard, Ashraf Jamal and Mugendi K M’Rithaa. The advisory board comprises prominent experts in their fields: Steven Dubin (USA), Paul Duncan (USA), Amy Kirschke (USA), Annette Kuhn (UK), Victor Margolin (USA), Nicholas Mirzoeff (USA), Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (USA), George Pfruender (Switzerland/SA), Annette Pritchard (Wales), Annie van den Oever (The Netherlands) and South Africans Rory Bester, Deirdre Byrne, Elfriede Dreyer, Pieter Fourie, Ian Glenn, Jacques Lange, Jenni Lauwrens and Marian Sauthoff.

Number 17 was the second special edition of Image & Text to be guest edited. It consisted of 11 articles spanning 196 pages – the largest to date – and was devoted to the theme Space, Ritual, Absence: The Liminal in South African Visual Art. The eclectic and yet closely related set of articles were first presented as papers at a colloquium held at the University of Johannesburg in March 2011, convened by James Sey, Leora Farber and Bronwyn Law-Viljoen under the auspices of the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre at the same institution.

Sey explains that the authors featured in this edition seek to interrogate the well-known trope of liminality in terms of its usefulness as a frame within which to understand and analyse South African visual art. Sey’s editorial, Mieke Bal’s Video, migration, and heterotemporality: the liminality of time and Ashraf Jamal’s Learning to squander: Making meaningful connections in the infinite text of world culture set a global theoretically framework and positioning for the other articles in the edition that focus on the South African context. These include Maureen de Jager’s Remains
Collectively, these articles represent a substantial new contribution to South African art theory and history. Nevertheless, much still remains to be done – critical work that can usefully be assayed through the concept of the liminal. If liminality can be understood as a lens to contextualise a particularly South African ‘transaesthetics of indifference’, there is a need to understand the relation of ritual to aesthetic meaning in South African society and history, as well as to understand the nature of liminal aesthetic experience in all its guises …

The eighteenth edition of *Image & Text* also appeared in 2011. It consisted of six articles, two book and exhibition reviews as well as two conference reports (a new addition to the journal’s content). In keeping with the wider ambit of the journal as a visual culture publication, the articles reflect on a diversity of disciplines and embraces a historical dimension as well as focussing on current topics. As Van Eeden states: ‘Although the articles appear divergent, they have many commonalities, one of which is the interrogation of the status of the visual image in terms of its ability to enchant, fascinate, edify, persuade, disgust, urge reflection, or call to action.’

Wendy Gers’ *Re-presentations’ of Southern San rock art on Drostdy ware pottery from the 1950s demonstrates how parietal imagery by the San people has fascinated travellers, writers, artists and craftspeople.
during the past century, thereby adding to the body of writings about material and visual culture and local design history. Andrew Hennlich’s *Treating the body of witness: medical understanding in William Kentridge’s ‘History of the Main Complaint’* focuses on the artist’s short film and demonstrates how medical imagery aligns with Kentridge’s thematics of erasure and trace, acting as witnesses to memory and forgetting in the post-apartheid state. Duncan Reyburn’s *Chesterton’s ontology and the ethics of speculation* and Anneli Bowie’s *Aesthetics versus functionality: challenging dichotomies in information visualisation* deal mainly with the aesthetics and ethics of visual information and the manner in which information is visualised and framed. Reyburn is particularly interested in the ethical implications pertaining to visual interpretation, while Bowie looks at the rhetorics of the visual image in the context of the long debate concerning the primacy of either aesthetics or functionality in communication design. Jessica Hughes’ *Postmodernising the lady vampire: melancholy, isolation, and the female bloodsucker* and Annie van den Oever’s *The prominence of grotesque figures in visual culture today. Rethinking the ontological status of the (moving) image from the perspective of the grotesque* focus in the moving image, and particularly on discussions of the grotesque and vampiric imagery in cinema.

In the conclusion of her editorial, van Eeden\(^5\) notes ‘[i]n keeping with the editorial policy of *Image & Text*, this issue features contributions by established researchers as well as younger voices. Our dedication to growing scholarship in South Africa demands that we take seriously our mandate to pass on the research imperative to a younger generation of scholars.’

In 2012, *Image & Text* again published two editions in a single year, indicating the renewed commitment and drive initiated by van Eeden and her editorial team to increase the output of academic research in the creative disciplines, particularly anchored (but not exclusively) to the South Africa context. Both can be described as bumper issues – Number 19 runs to 134 pages and Number 20 to 171 pages. In addition, the complete collection of *Image & Text* was digitised and made available on Sabinet in February 2012 and a dedicated website was launched (www.imageandtext.up.ac.za).

Number 19 was published in November 2012 and was the third special edition to be guest edited – this time by Ulrike Kistner from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria. The edition was devoted to the theme *Vryheidspark and other governmentmentalities* and featured nine articles (including a contextual editorial) and two book reviews. In the editorial, Kistner\(^4\) states:
Approaching the city of Pretoria/Tshwane from the south, one is greeted by three monumental structures perched atop three hills surrounding Pretoria, from west to east: the Voortrekker Monument, Freedom Park, and the University of South Africa (UNISA), each one of them a dense conglomeration of symbols, emblems, and icons forged out of concrete, rock, earth and stone. Not far behind this formidable threesome follows another massive fortress marking the entrance to the city – Pretoria Central Prison.

How does one inhabit this weight of overdetermined meaning? How to penetrate the perpetuity, to contest what has been incontestably solidified, fortified against ‘outsiders’ of various categorisations, as against change? How to blow open what remains cast in stone – closed, mute, and immobile?

Against this backdrop, the articles in this issue originate from a ‘walkshop’ entitled Vryheidspark and other governmonumentalities hosted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) in September 2011. The authors interrogate the ‘incongruous with the currently advertised and advertorialised “virtual” online distance learning mission [of the institution] with a planetary reach … from “proudly South African” appointments through an “African university” to “humanity” as a whole – [while] UNISA stands as a grandiloquent monument to the mute immutability of a previous political regime similarly seeking to eternalise itself. Thus does the present mission shake hands with the past vision.’ The authors explore selected monuments that surround the institution – UNISA as a means to interrogate issues related to legacy, place, time and context on multiple levels and diverse subjects including visual anthropology, material culture, design culture, art history, philosophy, architecture, literary studies and tourism studies.

The articles are: Annett Schulze’s Nation-building premises in Freedom Park, South Africa; Johan Strijdom’s Problems with indigeneity: Fragmentation, discrimination and exclusion in post-colonial African states; Cynthia Kros’ A new monumentalism? From public art to Freedom Park; Sopelekae Maithufi’s Running on the outskirts: Outpacing the city of Pretoria and its monumental commandments; Charles Villet’s Loftus as Afrikaner heterotopia: The lifeworld of rugby mentality; Natalie Swanepoel’s At the crossroads of history: Street names as monuments in the South African cityscape; Rolf Annas’ Remembering my European past: Observations and reflections on places of memory in South Africa; and Ivan Vladislavić’s The Cold Storage Club.

The content and focus of the twentieth edition of Image & Text is presented in Van Eeden’s editorial message featured on pages 6-7 of this edition. It again features an eclectic mix of articles from divergent disciplines.
Conclusion

Sauthoff’s editorial message published in *Image & Text* 1 states that ‘[v]irtually all academic disciplines have communications channels and forums to disseminate information, to encourage dialogue and to support research and the building of a knowledge base.’ In the same edition she and others highlight the urgent need to establish a foundation and resource that would fill the gap of locally anchored scholarly sources that critically investigate and reflect on South African design and its connections to related disciplines.

Twenty years on, I believe that *Image & Text* has gone full circle by establishing, building and populating a solid platform of scholarly discourse that responds to the founding aims and objectives of the journal. Over time, it has also become as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that ‘orbits around the nexus of visual culture’ as defined by Van Eeden when she took over the editorial stewardship of this journal in 2011.

The topics and disciplines covered by the journal to date are quite impressive. These include postmodern theory, gender studies and popular culture; design studies and professional ethics; national and international contemporary visual arts, and visual technology. The plethora of topics range from the historical (Voortrekker tapestries, vintage magazines, posters, currency and monuments); the curious (gender and feminism, comics, alchemy and liminality); the material (textiles; glass, pottery, skateboards, embroidery and shopping malls); the patronising (stereotyping, representation, appropriation, myths and humour); the pragmatic (trends, ethics, education, technology and practice); the topical (HIV/AIDS, blindness, literacy, rural transport and access to clean water) to the sublime (politics, vampires, aliens and cyborgs), amongst many others.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of two visionary thinkers: Marian Sauthoff and Jeanne van Eeden.

Notes and references

1 Sauthoff served as the editor from 1992 until 2011. She was Head: Department of Visual Arts at UP from 2000 to 2006. In October 2006, she was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. Sauthoff retired from academia in December 2012 but continues to serve on the advisory panel of *Image & Text*.

2 Van Eeden served as assistant editor from 1992 to 2007, co-editor from 2007 to 2010 and became editor in 2011. She is currently Head: Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria.
Pretorius served as assistant editor from 1992 to 1994. In 1994, she relocated to Mexico where she completed a MA in Semiotics and is currently based in the USA.

Lange has served in various capacities over the years. He is a partner and creative director at Bluprint Design, editor of www.designmagazine.co and part-time lecturer at the University of Pretoria.

Since inception, the editorial policy positions Image & Text as a bilingual journal – English and Afrikaans – to align with the University of Pretoria’s language policy. However, to date only six articles have been published in Afrikaans.


Original Afrikaans text: ‘Daar kan met reg gesê word dat kunsopleiding in Suid-Afrika nou sy kinderskoene ontgroei het en volwaardig sy plek kan inneem tussen al die ander dissiplines wat aan universiteite en technikons onderrig word. Op die vooraand van ingrypende veranderinge in Suid-Afrika bevind die kunsopleider hom voor nuwe uitdaginges, veral op die gebied van ontwerpmpleiding.’


Original title: Dekonstruktivisme en tipografie.


Original title: Wat van ‘n stukkie vetkoek? Bitterkomix en vetkoek as satire. Vetkoek is a traditional Afrikaner dish made from deep-fried dough.


Erasmus, M. 1996. Lion, Camel, Man. Image & Text 6:25. This was the second article authored by a student at UP to be published in Image & Text.

Over the years, the design, paper, print and production of Image & Text was made possible by the kind and committed support of sponsors, including Bluprint Design, Peter Sauthoff, Sappi, Papersmith & Son, Spicers, Finwood Papers, Peters Papers, Creda Press, Ultra Litho, Business Print Centre, Whitnall Simson, Klem-Lloyd, Ramata Bureau and Future Graphics. Many of these establishments have since
been incorporated into other entities owing to mergers and/or acquisitions.


28 Original title: *Die stripmedium*: ‘n homogene kuns-
vorm.

29 Dorette Bosshoff was the designer of *Image & Text* 9.

30 Bonsiepe, G. 2000/2001. Design as a tool for cogni-
tive metabolism: the role of design in the socialisa-

31 Original title: *Transformasie van die gevonde*: ‘n
alchemiese proses.


34 Alta Steenkamp was the guest editor of the edition.


37 Kiekies is a colloquial Afrikaans term for ‘photo-
graphs’ and volk means ‘nation’.


39 http://reference.sabinet.co.za/sa_epublication/
imtext

40 This edition comprised 86 pages.


42 Anri Theron was responsible for the redesign under
the guidance of Jacques Lange.


44 The summary of articles in this edition is extracted
from Sauthoff’s editorial message. Sauthoff, MD.


48 Editorial policy and guidelines. *Image & Text* 17:118.

49 The edition is guest edited by Leora Faber and James
Sey.


Text* 1:2.
Abstract

This article examines the printed propaganda of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) from the World War II (1939-1945) period by briefly describing the impact that the War had on the party and its propaganda production. This is followed by an iconographic analysis of the subjects who appear prominently in the images contained in the propaganda. Four iconographic types are described and the reasons for their emergence and visual appearance are proffered. It is argued that the impact of the War on the CPSA and its production of printed propaganda was largely positive, owing to a change in perceptions of the party following the Soviet Union’s declaration of war on Germany and the easing of State repression on the party. As a result, CPSA membership numbers increased, the volume and variety of printed propaganda expanded and the audiences for the propaganda grew. The gentleman, intellectual, leader and soldier are identified as iconographic types which appear prominently in the CPSA’s printed propaganda during the War. The emergence of these figures is ascribed to the ‘accommodationist path’ followed by the CPSA during the War, the development of closer ties between the African National Congress (ANC) and the CPSA, and the alignment of the party’s propaganda with values relating to respectability, which resonated with a large part of the audience for the propaganda.

Key words: Communist Party; South Africa; Second World War; printed propaganda; image; iconography

Introduction

A linocut cartoon printed in the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) newspaper Umsebenzi (The Worker) in 1934, captioned with the strong sentiment ‘GET OUT!’, shows the politician Jan Smuts flying through the air after being kicked by a giant worker (Figure 1).

This image is emblematic of CPSA propaganda images from the first half of the 1930s, which were premised on an aggressive binary conflict between the figure of the black worker and his white enemies (Pretorius 2007; 2008). This binary conflict was influenced by Soviet rhetoric from the 1930s and its preoccupation with internal and external enemies (Clark 1981:114). Bonnell (1997:9)
notes that at the outset of the 1930s and into the
1940s the repertoire of enemies depicted in Soviet prop-
aganda grew:

... to include a multiplicity of new images cor-
responding to the categories of transgressors
concurrently introduced into verbal political dis-
course. These are images of ‘the other’, the nega-
tive figures against which Bolsheviks attempted
to define their positive heroes and create models
for acceptable thought and action. Such images
served to reinforce a Manichean view that divid-
ed the world into two camps (analogous to the
forces of good and evil), which existed in a state
of irreconcilable conflict.

In a survey of Soviet posters printed only between 1930
and 1933, Bonnell (1997:212) identifies more than fifty
categories of enemies. External enemies, for example,
include ‘interventionists, White bandits … German
Social Democrats, social fascists, monarchists, fascists,
Hitler, Kautsky, and the pope’, whereas internal enemies
were identified as, among many others, monarchists,
tsarist high officials, members of the tsarist entourage,
the tsar, capitalists, priests, rabbis and mullahs.

The CPSA propaganda from the early 1930s also con-
structed a range of enemies against which the heroic
worker was defined: these included the capitalist,
policeman, soldier, priest, ‘good boy’ and politician
(Pretorius 2008:54-65). Mr M Liebenberg from Paul-
pietersburg commented in Umsebenzi that ‘[s]ome
of the cartoons, especially one showing General Smuts
being kicked by a Native was [sic] offensive’ (Umse-
benzi 1935:1). Such ‘offensive’ images disappeared,
along with most other depictions of enemies, from the
party’s printed propaganda during World War II. Com-
pared to the revolutionary and confrontational linocuts
printed in Umsebenzi in the early 1930s, CPSA propa-
ganda during the War appeared far more mainstream
and conformist.

This article examines the CPSA’s printed propaganda
from World War II by briefly describing the impact the
War had on the party and its propaganda production.
This is followed by an iconographic analysis of the sub-
jects who appear prominently in the images contained
in the propaganda. Four iconographic types are de-
scribed, namely the gentleman, intellectual, leader and
soldier, and the reasons for their emergence and visual
appearance are proffered.

World War II and CPSA
printed propaganda

In September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany,
and South Africa followed suit. At the outbreak of the
War, the CPSA branches were divided in their opinions
whether they should support it or not (Drew 2002:
228-229), but soon the party denounced it as an ‘impe-
rialist war’ between ‘rival capitalist powers’ (Callinicos
1990:103-104). However, following Hitler’s invasion
of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the CPSA did an
about turn and issued a statement supporting the War
(Callinicos 1990:104). In reversing its position, the CPSA
allied itself with the South African government and
supported its war policies, thereby setting the party on
an ‘accommodationist path’ (Drew 2002:234). As a con-
sequence, during the war years, the CPSA toned down
its policies, opposed strikes, as these were thought to be
‘counter-productive to fighting the fascist enemy’,
placed a ‘tactical emphasis on reform rather than so-
cialism’ and avoided confrontation with the govern-
ment (Furlong 1997:80).

The Soviet Union’s entry into the War saw the tide turn
in favour of the communists. Support for the CPSA
increased, the party turned towards the white elec-
torate, and repression by the state tapered off, allow-
ing the party to operate openly (Drew 2002:234).
The communists’ newfound respectability became clear when in 1942, CPSA stalwart, Bill Andrews, was invited to broadcast a pro-war May Day address on South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) radio, General Jan Smuts, the prime minister of South Africa, ‘opened relations with the Soviets, the Minister of Justice joined the Friends of the Soviet Union, and the party held patriotic rallies’ (Furlong 1997:81). CPSA members volunteered and served in the South African Defence Force and contributed to the establishment of the Springbok Legion, ‘which organised soldiers to campaign for democracy in South Africa’ (Callinicos 1990:104).

The party’s influence and membership, particularly among whites, increased substantially, and Communist Party members were elected to the Johannesburg and Cape Town City Councils (Bunting [sa]:2). In addition, the party’s credibility improved in African nationalist circles, and membership numbers grew to 1,500 in January 1944 and to 2,360 by October 1944 (Switzer 1997b:38). The moderation of the CPSA during World War II ‘helped encourage cooperation with the more conservative ANC leaders’ (Furlong 1997:80), and many ANC leaders became CPSA members (Zug 2007:88).

The CPSA’s decision to support the War resulted in an increase in the volume, range and diversity of the types of printed propaganda, and its accompanying visual imagery, produced by the party. The audience for printed propaganda expanded, and the CPSA’s ‘biggest single activity at that time was in the field of propaganda and publicity’ (Bernstein [sa]). The propaganda produced by the party during the War included an official party newspaper, called *Inkululeko* (Freedom), a number of other serial publications, large, full-colour posters, as well as pamphlets, leaflets, and booklets, many of which included images (such as cartoons and photographs) and even colour.

In addition to *Inkululeko*, serial publications aimed at specific audiences appeared as well during this time. The CPSA’s theoretical journal, *Freedom*, had a limited readership drawn mostly from within party circles. *Die Ware Republikein* (The True Republican) was aimed at the Afrikaans-speaking working class, but survived for only a few issues. Similarly, the *Cape Party Organiser* and *Inkululeko Newsletter* disappeared quickly (Ceiriog Jones 1997:341).

CPSA members were also involved in the founding, running and production of the newspaper *The Guardian* (Zug 2007). Although the paper was described as the CPSA’s unofficial newspaper (Switzer 1997b:274) and the most influential of the South African socialist papers, it was never publicly acknowledged as part of the party’s official propaganda efforts. A commentator at the time claimed that ‘*Inkululeko* … is designed mostly for Africans’ while ‘*The Guardian* is read primarily by Europeans’ (Correll 1946:4). Approximately two-thirds of *Inkululeko*’s content was written in African languages, including isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and isiXhosa, but the front page and the editorial page were always in English (Ceiriog Jones 1997:346).

According to Ceiriog Jones (1997:347), *Inkululeko*’s advertising content – which focused on ‘[e]ssential goods and services, mainly medicine, furniture, clothing and food’ – implied ‘an intended audience that was poor, urban and African’. Most of the advertisers were based near or in Johannesburg, and Ceiriog Jones (1997:349) concludes that this suggests that most of the readers were also based in Johannesburg.

With regard to pamphlets, it is claimed that most of these were aimed at ‘Europeans’ (Correll 1946:19). Although Afrikaans and African-language pamphlets were printed, the bulk of the pamphlets were published
in English. Some pamphlets were bilingual, with English printed on the one side and a vernacular language on the other. Posters appeared only in English and Afrikaans, with English posters predominating. The headlines of the posters indicate a focus on calls to support the War, the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. Silk-screening, a relatively new printing technique at the time, was used for the printing of some of the CPSA posters (Seidman 2007:29). The newspaper and other types of propaganda were printed on equipment owned by the party (Correll 1946:17) or the services of commercial printing firms were used.

The production of printed propaganda was funded from a variety of sources, including the monthly dues paid by party members and donations received from sympathisers and readers of the paper. Money was raised through fundraising campaigns, functions and collections organised by the CPSA and its members. The sale of printed propaganda and advertising space also brought in revenue.

_Inkululeko_ appeared in an edition of 12,000 copies by August 1941, and this increased to 18,000 by December 1941 (Ceiriog Jones 1997:346). The paper alleged in May 1942 that 20,000 copies per issue were printed, and on 9 January 1943 claimed to have a print run of 20,000 or 40,000 copies a month (Ceiriog Jones 1997:346). The CPSA produced numerous pamphlets, which were sold for a penny in quantities as high as 40,000 to 50,000 copies (Bernstein [sa]).

A variety of images, including drawings, cartoons and illustrations executed in a range of media such as linocut, water colour, pencil, and pen and ink, appeared in the printed propaganda. Photographs, however, were printed most often in _Inkululeko_. According to Ceiriog Jones (1997:349), news photographs were expensive, and, therefore, seldom printed, ‘but stock photos of South African communists, mostly Africans associated with the newspaper, were used again and again’.

The gentleman

Photographic portraits of Africans appeared for the first time in the CPSA press during the second half of the 1920s as a result of the party’s decision to shift its focus from the recruitment of white workers to that of African workers. The appearance of these portraits coincided with a period in which many CPSA members were also members of the ANC. The portrait of Josiah Gumede (Figure 2) – who was elected president of the ANC in 1927 and who was the leader of a group of ANC members with communist ‘leanings’ (Maylam 1986:157) – appeared in the party newspaper during 1928.

The radicalism in the ANC was short-lived and replaced with suspicion towards the communists during the 1930s, a position that changed again only in the 1940s under the leadership of Dr Alfred Xuma (Furlong 1997:69). Furlong (1997:69) argues that during the War, the threat from South African fascists, including the Greyshirts, New Order, Ossewabrandwag, and Daniel Malan’s ‘Purified’ National Party, contributed to ‘energis[ing] the conservative ANC leadership, made possible (despite many ANC leaders’ scepticism) extensive cooperation with the CPSA, and set the scene for an expanded liberation alliance, beginning with the 1947 “Doctors’ Pact” between the Indian congresses and ANC’.

As the relationship between the party and the ANC disappeared during the 1930s, so too did the use of portrait photography in the party newspaper. Portrait photography emerged more strongly than ever in _Inkululeko_ during the war at a time when the relations between the two parties were warming up. The
photographs of Gumede from 1928, Edwin Mofutsanyana (Figure 3) from 1943 and Alpheus Maliba (Figure 4) from 1944 are representative of the portraits printed in the CPSA’s propaganda.

These photographic portraits conform to traditional codes of portrait photography, which are typically composed to include the subject’s head and shoulders, or torso, from the front, or in a three-quarter side view. These well-lit studio pictures show the subjects at their best, neatly dressed in suits, white shirts and ties. Tagg (1988:37) notes that the development of portrait photography coincided with ‘the rise of the middle and lower middle classes towards greater social, economic and political importance’. Portrait photography democratised the ownership of portraits of the self, which for centuries had been the preserve of the aristocratic, rich and privileged, and portrait photography took on the ‘signifiers of aristocratic portraiture’ (Tagg 1988:37-38).

The invention in 1845 of the carte-de-visite, small photographic prints mounted on card, made mass-produced photography possible (Holland 2000:130). These photographs, named after the visiting cards of the ‘leisured classes’, made class differences less obvious than in real life and saw the middle classes ‘posing stiffly in their best clothes’ (Holland 2000:130). Similarly, the working classes opted to present themselves in dignified studio portraits (Holland 2000:137). This representational tradition was adopted by urban working- and middle-class Africans in South Africa, and is explained by Mofokeng (1996:56) as reflecting the aspirations of mission-educated and/or property-owning Africans who modelled their dress and behaviour on that of European immigrants, particularly the English.

Ross (1999:43) argues that as a result of the rule of the British in the Cape Colony since 1795, ‘Englishness was the major symbol used to determine what was right and acceptable in the political life of the Cape Colony’ throughout the nineteenth century. Clothing is one of the main ways to claim status and respectability, and Ross (1999:85) points out that Pixley Seme, a founder of the ANC, presented himself in photographs in ‘full court dress, with frock coat, top hat and umbrella’ as a way to show equality ‘with all the lawyers of South Africa’. Although this did not guarantee acceptance of Seme by fellow white lawyers, it did increase ‘his prestige among his various black constituencies’ (Ross 1999:85-86).

According to Honeyman (2003:57), the suit became the dress of choice for men of all social groups from the late nineteenth century until World War II in England. Collars, ties and clean clothes indicated that the person
was not a manual worker, and, therefore, such clothing communicated ‘a higher and more desirable status’ (Ugolini 2007:31). The suit also signified the wearer’s adherence to the established order, and ideas of masculinity based on ‘respectability, rationality, sobriety, and diligence’ (Ugolini 2007:30-31).

Honeyman (2003:58-59) argues that the increase in the number of men wearing suits suggested ‘a more democratic and egalitarian society’, as ‘respectable working-class and lower-middle-class men were offered the opportunity to dress like gentlemen’. Honeyman (2003:59), however, quickly adds that ‘this did not mean that all were regarded or appeared to be equal or equally gentlemanly’. Ugolini (2007:31) agrees with this view, stating that ‘working and lower-middle class men who wore collars and ties for work, as well as on Sundays, were not necessarily viewed with admiration’.

Tagg (1988:37) describes a portrait photograph as ‘a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity’ and the photographic and sartorial codes reproduced in Inkuilelo portraits clearly attempt to show the subjects as ‘respectable’. This social identity is not surprising if one considers Goodhew’s (2000:265) argument that the majority of black radicals of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were ‘respectable’, supported ‘the fight against crime, the need for temperance and the importance of education’ and a ‘number had considerable links with religion’.

Goodhew (2000:265-266) notes that from 1930 to 1955, ‘working-class respectability’ was commonplace among the inhabitants of the Western Areas of Johannesburg, among whom the CPSA and the ANC ‘laboured with much effort and mixed success’. The Western Areas was a collection of townships predominantly populated by Africans earning low wages through...
unskilled or semi-skilled work for a variety of employers (Goodhew 2000:241). It was ‘one of the most significant centers of population in South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s’, and, therefore, ‘to assert that respectability was essential to a working class district such as Western Areas is to imply that it had a much wider significance’ (Goodhew 2000:241). Goodhew (2000:241) defines respectability as a ‘stress on economic independence, on orderliness, cleanliness and fidelity in sexual relations ... often linked to religion ... belief in education as beneficial’, and he contends that in their commitment to education, religion, and law and order the people of the Western Areas were ‘deeply attached to respectability’.

The image of Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana (1899-1995), the most represented person in *Inkululeko* in the first half of the 1940s, exemplifies the idea of what a respectable man should look like. Roux (1948:233) singles out Mofutsanyana as one of the party intellectuals who played an important role in the CPSA’s history. Mofutsanyana joined the CPSA in 1927 and was educated in the CPSA night school (Edgar 2005:3). He studied in Moscow from 1932 to 1934, became the general secretary of the CPSA in the late 1930s and editor of the party paper in June 1945 (Ceiriog Jones 1997:343; Davidson, Filatova, Gorodnov & Johns 2003:xxvi) after serving on its editorial board during the 1930s and 1940s (Drew 2002:197; Ceiriog Jones 1997:343). During the 1930s, Mofutsanyana participated in the Civilian Protection Service, which aimed at reducing crime in the townships of Johannesburg (Goodhew 2000:260). He campaigned under the banner of the CPSA for a seat on the Native Representatives Council in 1937 and 1942 (Edgar 2005:34, 50). Mofutsanyana could read most African languages and has been described as ‘... quiet, shy to the point of diffidence, an intellectual and a thinker ...’ (Bernstein 1999:56).
The intellectual

This image of Mofutsanyana resembles a photograph of the Bulgarian communist leader Georgi Dimitrov (Figure 6), which appears in *Inkululeko*. Both images link to Viktor Govorkov’s 1940 poster ‘Stalin in the Kremlin cares about each one of us’, in which, ‘illuminated by the soft glowing light of a table lamp, Stalin sits at his desk with pen in hand, appearing deep in thought as he writes’ (Bonnell 1997:168).

Lenin was also often shown reading or writing, a pose which Clark (1997:76) interprets as ‘validating his self-appointed position as the legitimate interpreter of doctrine’. This form of representation corresponds to the depiction of medieval scribes copying manuscripts (Lamia 1998:477) with quills, and evokes the same associations of knowledgeable authority that these medieval images carry.

Some images of Stalin from CPSA propaganda of the 1930s and 1940s (Figure 7 and Figure 8) show him contemplatively drawing on or lighting a pipe.

This ‘pleasantly avuncular’ representation of Stalin ‘as kind and unpretentious’ was carefully cultivated in Soviet propaganda during the 1930s and heralded a move in which Stalin as the individual gradually displaced the heroic proletariat (Bonnell 1997:162).

The association of smoking as indicative of intellectualism and individualism emerged during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, as typified by photographs of individuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, George Orwell and Albert Einstein (Goodman 2005a:270-271). This association was the result of the late nineteenth century practice of elevating the appreciation and selection of tobacco, cigars and pipes to an ‘art’ form, which gave expression to individual taste, and which was
an ostensibly male activity (Goodman 2005a:153). The pipe as ‘one of the most elegant, intriguing and artful utensils for smoking tobacco’ received much praise in art and literature (Goodman 2005b:422), and intellectuals often credited tobacco-smoking with leading to ‘creativity and erudition’ (Goodman 2005a:270).

The influence of images of Stalin smoking is seen on the covers of the publications *An African speaks* (Figure 9) (Tchamase 1945:cover page), *Waarom ek ’n Kommunis is* (Why I am a Communist) (Figure 10) (Du Plessis 1945: cover page) and *The Communists’ Reply* (Figure 11) (CPSA 1947:cover page).

The authors, JEN Tchamase, D du Plessis and WH Andrews, exude an air of seriousness, implying that their words carry weight and are, therefore, deserving of readers’ close attention. The skill with which the portrait of each author is executed contributes to the persuasiveness of the visual argument. The photographic portrait of Du Plessis (1945) seems to offer empirical proof of the authenticity of his testimonial, while the illustrated representation of Tchamase (1945) is somehow less convincing.

Bolshevik thinking views the intellectual as a driving force behind communist revolution. The emphasis on the role of the intellectual is built into the distinction between communist propaganda and agitation. Communist propaganda targets the more ‘advanced’ segments of society, such as party members and the non-party intelligentsia, and involves a rigorous explanation of the history and tasks of the Bolshevik party, as well as the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.
On the other hand, communist agitation aims at educating the masses and mobilising workers to participate in bringing about a new social order.

Soviet propaganda was based on a ‘rational appeal’ due to the Marxist-Leninist ‘claim that it can be validated solely through an appeal on intellect’ and that it should not be ‘accepted even partly on trust’ as some ideologies and religions demand (Inkeles 1951:73). In 1937, Stalin charted a new course for the propaganda of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union whereby attention was shifted from the workers to the intelligentsia, with the result that the primary goal of party propaganda became the ‘inculcation of the intelligentsia with the principles of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by the party leaders’ (Inkeles 1951:50-51). Self-study became ‘the basic method for Marxist indoctrination’, as self-study limited debate and discussion, and the press was given preference over oral propaganda (Inkeles 1951:52). CPSA stalwart, Rusty Bernstein, remembers that ‘we all studied Marxism and read Lenin but we never debated it’ (Bernstein [sa]). According to Bernstein ([sa]), this avoidance of ideological disputes was as a result of the damage wreaked on the party by the ideological quarrels of the 1930s.

The CPSA started publishing the theoretical journal Freedom in the late 1930s, and the visual representation of the intellectual appears in CPSA printed propaganda of the 1940s. The resolutions adopted at the National Conference of 1944 reports CPSA membership numbers in terms of a breakdown which includes a category for ‘intellectuals’ (CPSA 1944:6). Correll (1946: 45) identifies the party intellectuals ‘drilled in Marxism’ as George Findlay, Dr George Sacks and Professor HJ Simons, Glyn Thomas, Michael Harmel, Sol Buirski, Moses Kotane, and Hilda Watts. Most of these intellectuals contributed articles to the journal Freedom.

Photographic and illustrated images of both Lenin and Stalin appear in the CPSA propaganda during the war, with those of Stalin predominating. The frequency of the appearance of images of Stalin steadily increases in the issues of Inkululeko from 1941 and peaks in the copies from 1943 and 1945. Typical depictions of Stalin in Inkululeko include head-and-shoulders portraits, which show a striking man, dressed in a military jacket, with a square jaw, handsome moustache and an impressive head of hair (Figure 12). Stalin is depicted as the paragon of virile masculinity; he is indeed ‘the man of steel’.

Figure 11: CPSA pamphlet, 1947. [UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: The Brian Bunting Collection].
Clark (1997:95) describes Stalin as ‘short, fat and bandy-legged with a pock-marked face, narrow forehead, and withered left arm’; however, this reality is not reflected in the large numbers of official portraits of Stalin which were created in the Soviet Union, some of which were produced in huge sizes. Officially sanctioned images of Stalin found their way into the CPSA’s printed propaganda and readers of *Inkululeko* could even order ‘fine photographs of Joseph Stalin’ in 1941 (*Inkululeko* 1941:11). Other representations in *Inkululeko* show Stalin lighting his pipe – a representation which was earlier described as being associated with intellectualism, individualism and accepted masculine behaviour – or pictured with Lenin. The practice of placing Lenin and Stalin within the same image originated in Soviet propaganda of the 1930s as an attempt to legitimise Stalin’s leadership by linking him to Lenin (Clark 1981:10). Certain images of Stalin assume iconographic features typical of Lenin, such as the outstretched arm and pointing finger as seen in Figure 13, which declares ‘Stalin speaks’ (Johannesburg District Committee of the CPSA 1943).

By taking on the iconographic features connected with Lenin, the association of Lenin as patriarch of the Soviet people is transferred onto Stalin. Bonnell (1997:165) notes that the title ‘Father’ is one of many used to describe Stalin in the 1930s, and that ‘the immortalization of Lenin was surpassed in the 1930s by the veneration of Stalin, reminiscent in its form and content of the adoration of the saviour himself’. Stalinism tapped into the Tsar-worshipping tradition which had been fostered in Russian peasant folklore since medieval times, and many images depict ‘Stalin as a benevolent patriarch showing him in the company of workers, soldiers or politicians upon whom he bestows his fatherly attention and words of wisdom’ (Clark 1997:94-95). In certain instances Stalin’s image is captioned with his military title ‘Marshall.’ After the War, images of Stalin in CPSA propaganda decreased considerably to between one and three appearances annually. Similarly, images of soldiers featured prominently during the War, only to disappear after peace was declared.

**Soldiers**

The linocuts from the 1930s represented soldiers in uniforms as enemies signifying only death, destruction and repression. Figure 14 depicts two monstrous soldiers – reminiscent of the work of the German Dada artist George Grosz – representing ‘Boer’ and ‘British’ imperialism standing guard over a crucified black Jesus symbolising the ‘people’.
In contrast, the CPSA’s World War II propaganda depicts soldiers as heroes. Two soldier heroes emerged during the war, namely the Red Army soldier and the African soldier. The Red Army, its soldiers, commanders and victories are extensively covered in the CPSA newspapers from the World War II period. *Inkululeko* (1943: 4) describes the Red Army as the ‘army of the people’, and informs readers on ‘why the army of the Soviet Union is so powerful and brave’. The Red Army soldier is literally depicted as red and the five-pointed star – the symbol of the Red Army – appears frequently as part of the uniforms of the soldiers in images and is used as a stand alone element in poster and pamphlet designs.

The image of the Red Army soldier in CPSA propaganda is imported from Soviet propaganda and conforms to stereotypical depictions of soldiers as heroes, as seen in Figure 15 (Cape District Committee of the CPSA 1941).

Soviet War propaganda is characterised by the style known as Socialist Realism, which typically creates heroes and heroines such as ‘tireless labourers, courageous Red Army soldiers, diligent schoolchildren or dedicated party activists’ (Clark 1997:87). Figure 15 exemplifies what Clark (1997:89-90) refers to as the ‘formulaic forwards-and-upwards look’ typical of Socialist Realism which ‘signifies a temporal overlap in which the present is infused with the spirit of the future’.

The CPSA’s support for the War became evident in the campaign to ‘[a]rm the non-European soldier’ (Roux 1948:317), as seen in the poster in Figure 16 (Seidman 2007:30), which depicts an African soldier dressed in
a khaki uniform and slouch hat and holding a spear, accompanied by the slogan ‘Give him a Gun NOW! For Defence and Victory’. Similarly dressed African soldiers appear regularly in issues of Inkululeko and in CPSA pamphlets – for example, on the cover of the pamphlet titled They Served Their Country (Figure 17) (Scholtz 1945: cover page).

Killingray (2010:71-72) states that during World War II, 123,000 black, coloured and Indian troops served in the Cape Coloured Corps, the Indian and Malay Corps and the Native Military Corps, which amounted to 37 per cent of the entire Union Defence Force. African soldiers served in a variety of non-combatant roles such as guards, drivers, labourers, stretcher-bearers, military policeman, construction workers and hospital orderlies (Gleeson 1994: ix). African soldiers were not armed with guns, but were instead issued with assegais and knobkieries (Grundlingh 1986:24).

Historically, South African whites strongly opposed Africans carrying arms (Killingray 2010:71-72). During the War, General Jan Smuts maintained this status quo in an attempt to defuse the political tension between his United Party and the opposition National Party, as the parties strongly disagreed on the issues of South Africa participating in the War and the participation and arming of non-European soldiers (Friend 1995:157).

A 1942 cartoon (reproduced in Vernon 2000:84) by cartoonist Victor Ivanoff for the Afrikaans newspaper Die Vaderland (The Father Land), comments on Smuts’s statement that African soldiers could be armed should South Africa be invaded. The cartoon reveals that the opposition to the carrying of arms by Africans was entrenched in a view of Africans as savages who were incapable of using firearms. The fact that spears, not guns, were considered appropriate weapons for African soldiers indicates a stereotypical view of Africans.
as warriors, which was perpetuated in the mainstream press.

The *Springbok Record* (Klein 1946:32), a picture book commemorating the service of volunteers during World War II, contains two pages on the contribution of African soldiers under the heading ‘Modern Warriors’, stating: ‘[a]lthough not armed with rifles, these Bantu soldiers loved the pomp and ceremony of parade ground drill. With assegais instead of rifles, spick and span of uniform, they strode proudly in the footsteps of their warrior forebears’. Chetty (2005:42-44) notes the practice in the photographic magazine *Libertas* of showing pictures of African soldiers side by side with photos of Zulu warriors which framed the soldiers as ‘Noble Warriors’ who preserved life instead of taking it.

The image of the African soldier in European uniform links with the stereotype of the ‘Native’ recruited into the colonial army and serving the interests of European colonisers (Pieterse 1992:82-84). The khaki ‘bushshirt’ and trousers with ankle boots was the summer uniform of the Union Defence Force from 1940 to 1945, and members of the Native Military Corps were distinguished by their slouch hats. Slouch hats originated in Australia, and were also worn during the South African War by Boer and British soldiers (Friend 1995:117). Khaki was selected as the colour for the British Army’s service dress in 1902 (Ugolini 2007), and became firmly associated with British armed forces. During the First World War, British posters inquired from young women whether their ‘boys’ were ‘wearing khaki’ (Jobling & Crowley 1996:114). A semiotic analysis of a cover of *Paris-Match magazine* by Barthes (1993:116), which reveals how the cover promoted French colonialism, could equally be applied to the image of the African soldier in Figure 17 if the words French and France are replaced with British and Britain:

> [o]n the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors.

The same sentiment is echoed in the British recruitment poster *The British Commonwealth of Nations, Together* (reproduced in Aulich 2007:184), which shows men from different nations marching together dressed in khaki. The khaki uniform serves to ‘display loyalty’ and ‘suppress individuality’ (Ugolini 2007:161) and
to ‘impress the beholder with the majesty of military office and induce young men to join the service’ (Callaway 1993:238). This attitude was a far cry from the attempts by Britain to safeguard its colonial sartorial codes, especially that of military uniforms (Klopper 2007:331).

The heroic stance of the trumpet-blowing soldier is typical of attempts by the communists to create African soldier heroes. Photographs appear in *Inkululeko* (1944:6) of African soldiers being awarded with ‘the ribbon of the Africa star’, a medal commemorating the North African victory. Such attempts at creating heroes out of African soldiers contrast starkly with previous sentiments expressed by the CPSA, for example, in a report on the proceedings of the Mendi Memorial Day which appears in a 1934 issue of *Umsebenzi* (1934:1). Mendi Memorial Day was held in memory of the 600 members of the ‘Native Labour Contingent’ who perished at sea on the transportation ship the Mendi during the First World War. The report states that:

> [t]hese Africans were fooled into going to fight for ‘King and Country’, they whose country had been stolen from them by the white imperialists ... were grossly betrayed; they fought and died for a cause that was not theirs ... when the next war breaks out, Africans ... must not be duped like they were in 1914-18.

Considered in the light of this sentiment, the CPSA’s glorification of African soldiers becomes ironic. It is also ironic that the khaki uniform and the slouch hat, signifiers for ‘British and Boer imperialists’, the prime enemies of the communists who are vilified in the cartoons of the 1930s, are drawn into service to support the communist cause in printed propaganda from the 1940s.

**Conclusion**

This article has shown that the impact of World War II on the CPSA and its production of printed propaganda was largely positive. During the War, party membership numbers increased, the audiences for party propaganda broadened and the volume and variety of printed propaganda grew. Perceptions of the party, as well as of its relationship with the South African State, improved considerably following the Soviet Union’s entry into the War on the side of the Allied forces. As an ‘ally’ of the South African government, the party followed an ‘accommodationist path’, which was characterised by a toning down of policies, opposition to strikes, emphasis on reform rather than socialism, and the avoidance of confrontation with the government.

The War saw the figures of the gentleman, intellectual, leader and soldier emerge and predominate in the CPSA’s printed propaganda. The emergence of the figure of the gentleman was ascribed to the development of closer ties between the ANC and the CPSA, and it was argued that the visual appearance of the gentleman expressed respectable values. The figure of the intellectual is related to the gentleman in appearance, and was described as projecting authority and showing the importance of rational thinking to the party and the role of intellectuals in furthering the party’s cause. Repeated representations of military leaders and soldiers clearly displayed the CPSA’s support for the War. Whereas images of Stalin, the leader, and the Red Army soldier framed this support as allied with the Soviet Union, the image of the African soldier dressed in khaki uniform aligned the CPSA with the South African and British governments. This association was ironic given that these governments were historically the enemies of the communists. The appearance
of the gentleman, intellectual, leader and soldier connoted respectability and conformity and contrasted starkly with the revolutionary character of the CPSA’s printed propaganda from the first half of the 1930s.

Notes

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2 Despite the CPSA’s position on strikes, the War saw a ‘heightened level of unrest, particularly strike action’ specifically owing to price inflation and its impact on economic growth (Alexander 2000:19, 22).

3 The most frequently depicted persons during the War were Edwin Mofutsanyana and then Alpheus Maliba, followed by Armstrong Msitshana and Dr Alfred Xuma.

4 See Edgar (2005) for a biography of Mofutsanyana.

5 Libertas was aimed at a white audience and focused on the white men and women ‘who were considered key to the war effort’ (Chetty 2005).


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‘Cloudless skies’ versus ‘vitamins of the mind’: An argumentative interrogation of the visual rhetoric of *South African Panorama* and *Lantern* cover designs (1949–1961)

Lizè Groenewald

Abstract

In the wake of recent national independence movements, renewed interest in the complex phenomenon of the nation has emerged; highly negative conceptions have been challenged by voices that seek to understand rather than dismiss expressions of nationalism and national identity in fields as diverse as sport, architecture, fashion, film, engineering, advertising, and currency design. The South African publications *Lantern* and *Panorama* were competing projects in a rhetorical exercise that grappled with constructed national identities in a pre-1994 South African community and, as such, these artefacts deserve interrogation. To this purpose I examine the cover designs of the journals – both to a greater or lesser degree state supported – between 1949 and 1961 in order to demonstrate how a consideration of rhetorical content not only reveals embedded ideologies, but also demonstrates the agency of graphic design in the strategies of propaganda and education as utilised by *Lantern* and *Panorama*, respectively. I problematise these concepts, and propose more nuanced readings than may be conventionally attributed to government-sanctioned visual culture from this period in South Africa’s history.

Key words: National identity; visual rhetoric; graphic design; publication design; apartheid; South Africa; photography; illustration; propaganda; education

Introduction

OUR COVER: Under a cloudless sky, the South African painter, JH Pierneef, brings the panoramic glory of the Golden Gate … to his canvas (description on inside cover of *Panorama*, May 1956) (Figure 1).

THE COVER: The composition, while abstract in mood, is symbolic of the complexity of advertising. It suggests a crescendo in art … (description on inside cover of *Lantern*, Oct/Dec 1958) (Figure 2).

Picture this.

In 1967, a 10-year old Afrikaans-speaking girl is tasked by her teacher to compile a report on South Africa’s harbour cities. Her classmates proudly proffer project books bulging with photographs gleaned from the popular South African magazine, *Panorama*.1 The girl has no images in her report: her parents don’t hold with cutting pictures out of anything except newspapers. While *Panorama*’s cheap, glossy pages easily pass muster as ‘newsprint’, the magazine is banned from the Groenewald household. Complaining to her mother, she is told: *Panorama* is Nationalist Party propaganda.
and it will not darken our door. Instead, the ball-and-claw bookcase in the sitkamer boasts issues of Lantern, a journal that is deemed apolitical, erudite and educational. Unfortunately, this elevated status precludes defacement, but Lantern is a dull publication and devoid of colourful vistas of the Durban seafront: no great loss, thinks the girl – bitterly.

Nonetheless, it is the 1958 October/December issue of Lantern (Figure 2) that sparked my interest in design. Preserved from scissors for more than a decade, an article co-written by the South African designer Ernst de Jong and his wife, Gwen, was still compelling enough in the early 1970s to prompt me to choose graphic design as career.2 In the late 1990s, I once again encountered Ernst de Jong, this time as a key figure in the design of South African paper currency, and consequently revisited his 1958 article in Lantern – still pristine on its ball-and-claw shelf. A quixotic impulse to break the taboo of my childhood led to an investigation of the rhetoric of both Lantern and Panorama, perhaps as an excuse to sample the forbidden fruit of the latter, but primarily to determine whether Lantern was as saintly – and Panorama as wicked – as I had been led to believe as a child.

Few studies of visual culture have ventured into the arena of mainstream and state supported South African publication design prior to 1994, the year of South Africa’s first democratic election and the consequent unseating of the Afrikaans-dominated Nationalist Party. The analysis of 1950s cover designs for Die Huisgenoot by Stella Viljoen (2006) is a rare example. Although
the developing field of whiteness studies legitimises the urge to ‘rethink, renegotiate and analyse all investments in whiteness’ (Van der Watt in Faber 2011:31), analyses tend to scrutinise constructions of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. Consequently, artefacts of popular white culture prior to 1994 are often relegated to the arena of the anecdotal or the stereotype. Moreover, nationalism in South Africa, as a field of intellectual enquiry, arguably labours under the influence of writers such as John Breuilly (1993:69-70), who claims that:

Nationalist ideology is a pseudo-solution to the problem of the relationship between state and society … It was … combined in a powerful but illogical way with purely political values … The net result was to transform certain important ways of understanding human affairs into a type of political ideology which is beyond critical examination [emphasis added].

A tendency exists, therefore, to draw a veil over the phenomenon, especially in Africa (Chipkin 2007:1). Adding to the difficulty, writers such as Anthony Smith (2003:121), who hold positive views of nationalism, might argue against the condition of nationalism in South Africa prior to 1994.4 Breuilly (1993:1, 7), for his part, refutes the argument that ‘nationalism arises ultimately from some sort of national identity or that it is a search for such an identity’; he understands the idea of the nation as an ‘artificial … project’. Since Lantern and Panorama were undoubtedly competing projects in a rhetorical exercise that grappled with
constructed nationalist aspirations in a South African community, the publications deserve interrogation in order to address what Ivor Chipkin (2007:1) refers to as ‘a gap in contemporary studies of nationalism’.

In this article I examine the cover designs of Lantern and Panorama – both to a greater or lesser degree state supported – between 1949 and 1961. To this purpose, I present a brief review of rhetoric as a function of communication design, followed by a background to Lantern and Panorama, and then proceed with ‘measuring the rhetorical content’ (Bonsiepe 1999:170) of the cover designs, where rhetoric is ‘utilized for the purposes of revealing embedded ideologies … as well as link[ing] design practice to theoretical reflection’ (Sauthoff 1999:112).

The new rhetoric: A commitment to the visual

In 1958 Chaim Perelman and Lucie Ohlbrechts-Tyteca published La nouvelle rhétorique: Traité de l’argumentation (reprinted in 1971 as The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation). The authors present a hefty theory of argumentation where the object is the study of discursive techniques that allow authors ‘… to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:3-4, emphasis in original). Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:4) make it clear at the outset that ‘it is good practice not to confuse … the aspects of reasoning relative to the truth and those relative to adherence’. Their treatise is a rapprochement of the theory of argumentation as conceived by Aristotle, in particular
Antiquity’s concern with ‘that which is probable instead of dealing with propositions which are necessary’. The authors wish to address this premise by emphasising that ‘... it is in terms of an audience that an argumentation develops’; their work, therefore, ‘is presented as a new rhetoric’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 4-5, emphasis in original).

Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca’s idea of a new rhetoric is taken up (although not always acknowledged) by writers in the design field. Gui Bonsiepe was one of the initial design theorists to demonstrate that verbal rhetoric could form the basis for visual rhetoric (Sauthoff 1999:129), but, notably, Bonsiepe (1999) does not consider the role of the audience in his celebrated paper. In 1995, Richard Buchanan – again – posits a ‘new rhetoric ... where the effort is ... to overcome the separation between words and things’ (Buchanan 1995:44-45, emphasis added). Buchanan’s ‘encompassing view of design as rhetoric’ (Sauthoff 1999:127) serves to inform, amongst others, Anne Tyler’s (1996) analysis that resurrects the importance of audience in ‘shaping belief’, Marian Sauthoff’s (1999) investigation of rhetoric as an interpretative strategy in graphic design and, most recently, Victoria Gallagher, Kelly Norris Martin and Magdy Ma’s (2011:30) examination of two ‘ancient’ rhetorical concepts – vividness and flourishment – in public sculpture. What emerges from this discourse is, firstly, that the disinterest in rhetoric observed by Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:5) in the 1950s had been reversed by the turn of the century; secondly, that persuasion is not necessarily

Figure 7: Kobus Esterhuizen (art director), 1953, cover of Lantern (3)2. The cover description states: ‘... the space-ship [is] the dream for tomorrow ... adventure of the mind now, adventure demanding spiritual courage in years to come’.

Figure 8: George Duby (art director), 1956, cover of Lantern (6)2. This is Duby’s first appearance as art director. The cover features an embroidery design by a Hungarian artist domiciled in South Africa.
an ‘underhand device’ (Sauthoff 1999:111); and thirdly, that the notion that information and persuasion are ‘oppositional modes’ is no longer tenable (McCoy 2000:80).6

Despite the enlarged discourse, Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca’s (1971) comprehensive overview of the process of argumentation remains an invaluable text. While Bonsiepe (1999:168) and Buchanan (1995:45) narrow their focus to one aspect of rhetoric – the expressive styling of visual material – Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca allow both designers, and critics of design, access to a detailed reflection upon the effectiveness of over 100 rhetorical techniques. The authors divide the argumentative process into the three traditional stages of rhetoric, namely, the framework (planning the argument), the starting point (choosing the appropriate vehicle for presenting an argument), and the techniques of argumentation (choosing an appropriate style of presentation) – divisions that are acknowledged by Buchanan (1995:44), although his concern is mainly with the latter. The greater complexity of Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca’s treatise, including their interrogation of concepts such as ‘propaganda’ and ‘education’, offers an analytical lens (set out in more detail later) that enables a nuanced and arguably unorthodox reading of rhetorical forms. In order, therefore, to bring fresh insights to the subject, I utilise this approach to interrogate Lantern and Panorama covers.

Figure 9: George Duby [art director], 1957, cover of Lantern (6)3. The cover illustration depicts the South African-born dancer Nadia Nerina in the role of The Dying Swan.

Figure 10: George Duby [art director] and Ernst de Jong [designer], 1958, cover of Lantern (7)3. This is the first issue of Lantern where the designer of the cover is acknowledged, and also the first cover designed by De Jong. A new tagline appears, identical in Afrikaans and English.
Limiting the view

*Lantern* and *Panorama* started regular publication in the decade following the ascendency to power, in 1948, of the Herenigde Nasionale Party in South Africa (*Lantern* in 1951, *Panorama* in 1956) and both journals received – *Lantern* reluctantly – state support. *Lantern* and *Panorama* continued to appear until the 1990s (the former ceasing publication in 1994, the latter in 1992) with the result that the two series provide insights into a national landscape for over more than 40 years.7

Since an analysis of more than 500 publications is beyond the scope of this article, I have selected for consideration only the cover designs of *Lantern* and *Panorama* that appeared from 1948 up to and including 1961, when the Union of South Africa became an independent republic and left the British Commonwealth.

This timeframe represents an important period of becoming for South Africans, of the construction and elaboration (as well as contestation) of an official national identity. Isolating the covers from the contents of the magazines serves two purposes. Firstly, magazine covers are tasked with encapsulating a magazine’s identity, point of view and contents, but also with heightening the desire to acquire the product: they are, according to the editor of *Newsweek*, a ‘unique seduction point for readers’ (Brown cited in Haughney 2012:2). Within the context of this singular imperative, *Lantern* and *Panorama* covers, in themselves, call for scrutiny. From a practical point of view, the choice of covers provides a discrete and manageable sample that nevertheless allows for some reflection on editorial content, as is evident in the background that follows.
Lantern and Panorama: A background

Lantern launched its first trial issue in August 1949 (Figure 3); from its inception, the editor, Vivian Wood, employed professional designers to art direct its covers. The successive approaches of Wynand Smit (Figures 3, 4 and 5), Kobus Esterhuysen (Figures 6 and 7), George Duby (Figures 8 and 9) and Ernst de Jong (Figures 2, 10, 11) reflect design trends in Europe and the United States of America (USA), but despite these individual contributions, Lantern covers – with three exceptions (Figures 3, 12, 13) – invariably utilise illustration.8

Panorama, on the other hand, consistently – with eight exceptions (Figures 14 to 21) in a sample of 64 – uses full-bleed photography on its covers (for example, Figures 22 to 32). Although Panorama had a resident art director, Alan Cox, it is clear that the editor Otto Adendorff, founding editor and ‘father’ of Panorama (Maree 1981:sp), imprinted his personal vision upon the design of the journal. During a conversation with the author, Adendorff (2001) confirmed that the large format photo-essays of the North American publication Life had been the template for Panorama. When asked why he regarded photography as such a powerful medium, Adendorff (2001) replied: ‘It is more trustworthy. You believe it. You see the thing with your own eyes’.

While both publications chose for their mastheads signifiers that were identical in meaning in English and Afrikaans, Lantern alone is bilingual, featuring both official languages in one issue. Panorama was published separately in English and in Afrikaans (Adendorff 2001). Lantern has a modest, squarish format of 215 mm x 280 mm – printed on matte paper that, with its flat stitched binding, conveys a bookish appearance. Panorama – printed on glossy paper – utilises a generous portrait format of 260 mm x 340 mm. Panorama is stapled, not stitched, lending it an informal air and aligning it with newspapers rather than books.

The first experimental issue of Lantern was published by the Union Education Department (Van Zyl 1994:4), but subsequent issues were published by the independent Association for Adult Education – currently known as the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)9 – founded with the sole purpose of producing the journal. Although the state was again to become a patron in 1957 (Van Zyl 1994:13), Lantern’s early existence was an independent one; as such, it needed to charge a cover price (five shillings) and carried advertising. The Association obtained permission from the Treasury to have civil servants subscribe by stop order and, initially, free copies were sent to school-leavers (Van Zyl 1994:22). By 1954
there were 21,000 subscribers, who were (it might fairly be assumed) white, predominantly Afrikaans and probably exclusively South African. Lantern appeared only four times per year.

Conversely, Panorama was published and entirely funded by the State Information Office in Pretoria and never featured advertising (Adendorff 2001). Despite this subsidy, Panorama was not distributed free of charge. Although initially appearing once every two months, it soon increased its output to twelve issues per year. Panorama’s letters pages reveal an audience with cameras, leisure time, money to travel and, in many cases, a tertiary education. In 1991, the South African Communication Service (the successor to the State Information Office) conducted a survey (Profiel en behoeftes van die leers van Suid-Afrikaanse Panorama: ‘n Kernopsomming 1991) as to Panorama’s South African readership. Notably, many of the respondents had been subscribers since 1956. In 1991, the majority (58.1 per cent) of the respondents were (older) white males, predominantly English speaking with tertiary qualifications, and 41.9 per cent were (younger) white females, predominantly Afrikaans, without tertiary training. Despite the overwhelmingly positive response recorded in
the survey, Panorama ceased publication in December 1992.

The situation outlined above adumbrates the objectives of the two journals. According to Dr AJ van Zyl (1994:4) ‘[t]he name Lantern was chosen because ... [the journal] was conceived as throwing light on the subject of “adult education” ...’12 PJ Theron (1949:7), Director of Adult Education in the Union Education Department, writing in the first issue of Lantern, states:

Amidst directionlessness, superficiality and social disruption, so typical of our time ... there exists ... [a] thirst for knowledge to withstand the hard battle for survival, but also a desire for cultural enrichment to bring about a greater spiritual equilibrium ... In my opinion, there is no better time for the appearance of this journal.

Several special editions are dedicated entirely to a foreign culture: Belgium (Figure 6), the Netherlands (Figure 11), Israel (Figure 33), the USA (Figure 34) and Japan (Figure 35). Two editions provide dense texts on the tenets of Western civilisation, and the classical heritage of Rome and Greece (Figures 36 and 37). Lantern thus offered an outward-looking and eclectic ‘cultural enrichment’, constructing overt links with a European culture.

Panorama, on the other hand, emerged because of the need for promotional material at South African information offices overseas (Adendorff 2001). In the opening article of Panorama’s first issue, the editorial (Information please! 1956:2) outlines the aim of the magazine:

When the atomic bomb overtook the sword, the camera took over from the pen … The spreading of information is one of the most important activities of the State in the modern age. By common consent, it is the picture rather than the printed word that tells the story … [Panorama’s] purpose is to tell South Africans – and others – about South Africa, about its peoples, their...
way of life, their achievements, their country’s place in the world.

Panorama is inward-looking and self-valorising. Its purpose, according to Adendorff (2001), was to prove to the outside world that ‘we were not a backward African country’. This is made clear in an article, on the back cover of the first issue, that warns: ‘In case of war, the Union will have its own nuclear physicists’. In support of this claim, two full colour photographs display South Africa’s very own cyclotron.15 Another goal was to be positive: everybody was writing South Africa ‘down’; Panorama was ‘writing it up’ (Adendorff 2001). Summarising this approach, Adendorff (2001) referred pointedly to the metaphor employed on the cover of the first issue (Figure 1): As the artist JH Pierneef paints the ‘panorama of the countryside’, Panorama presents the country to its audience.16

The difficulty here is that an artist’s canvas crops the panoramic view. The new Penguin English dictionary (Allen 2000:1007) defines the word panorama as ‘an unobstructed or complete view of a landscape ... [or] a comprehensive presentation or survey of a series of events’. The views on Panorama covers are neither unobstructed, nor complete; they fail to contextualise...
their relentlessly positive reportage, and are selective in their portrayal of cultural experiences within South Africa despite Panorama’s claim to tell the story of South Africa’s ‘place in the world’.

**Attention from a wondering world**

Although the first printed record of the term apartheid appeared in 1929 (Giliomee 2003:454), the coming to power of the Herenigde Nasionale Party under the leadership of DF Malan signalled the consolidation of this ideology in the then Union of South Africa. In 1949, the prohibition of the Mixed Marriages Act became the first major piece of apartheid legislation, and in 1950, an amendment to the Immorality Act was passed to ban ‘sexual relations between blacks and whites’. This was followed by the Population Registration Act, designed to provide definitions of race, and the Group Areas Act, intended to restrict groups to their own sections of towns.

In 1952, parliament introduced a system of reference books for black Africans. Rioting led to the Public Safety Act, while membership of the African National
Congress (ANC) increased from 7,000 to 100,000. In 1953, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act was introduced and in 1956, coloured persons were removed from the general voters’ role. On 21 March 1960, a non-violent action by the Pan-African Congress erupted into a bloodbath at Sharpeville. A state of emergency was declared and South Africa was plunged into an economic crisis. However, by the end of 1960, Prime Minister HF Verwoerd had managed to secure a 52 per cent majority in a referendum to establish South Africa as an independent republic; in May 1961, this became a reality. In the same year, Nelson Mandela proposed the adoption of armed struggle to achieve black African aims.

In considering the events following 1948, Willem de Klerk (1975:241) remarks: ‘[N]ever have so few drawn such sharp critical attention from a wondering world’. De Klerk (1975:241, emphasis in original) regards the oppressive policies of the Nationalist Party government as a ‘… passionate, most radical will to restructure the world according to a vision of justice’; others regarded it more simply as an attempt to secure the future of white South Africans (Scholtz 1954:136).
It is the uncertain future of the ‘artificial project’ of this white nation that underpins the arguments of both *Lantern* and *Panorama*. For many, this future was predicated upon a national character that, in the 1950s, appears as a troubling question, hence Theron’s (1949:7) anxiety about the *sedelike verval* [moral decay] ‘so typical of our time’. Given the context, it is likely that Theron’s diatribe refers to the *volk*, or the white Afrikaner, as opposed to the South African population as a whole. The writings of GD Scholtz echo Theron’s misgivings and encapsulate the urgent need amongst Afrikaner intellectuals to secure cultural as well economic survival after 1948.¹⁹ Scholtz (1954:172), who finds no virtue in his fellow Afrikaners apart from their ‘brainpower’, sets out to demonstrate the shortcomings of his people in order to provoke a turnaround. Most pressing is the obsessive isolationist nature of the Afrikaner (Scholtz 1954:17). Scholtz (1954:28-31) decries the rancour with which the Afrikaner regards European culture, claiming that a severance of its ‘umbilical cord’ would be ‘fatal’ and pleads with some force that spiritual links with Western Europe should be retained by means of the study of foreign languages, European literature and ‘real’ art.
Scholtz (1954:63) also condemns the Afrikaner’s exploitation of agricultural land [roofbou] with the exclusive purpose of generating wealth. He paints a dire picture of the sub-continent of Africa as ‘The Great Uninhabitable South African Desert’ and calls for large-scale rehabilitation (Scholtz 1954:69). Scholtz (1954:78-80) slates the Afrikaner’s spiritual and cultural mores, declaring that the ‘strength of a nation [volk] cannot in the first place be measured in terms of its weaponry’. The time when respect for morals was a characteristic of the volk is past; this shift, according to Scholtz (1954:83), can be attributed to urbanisation and manifests itself in a loosening from the church, in materialism, a love of dancing, the cinema and rugby, too much sunshine and a weakness for titillating novels and popular magazines.

An overarching problem for Scholtz (1954:92) is the self-satisfied nature of the Afrikaners, most tellingly revealed in their belief that boeremusiek is high art (Scholtz 1954:96). Scholtz, in proposing a solution, demands considerable sacrifice: apart from relinquishing the cinema and rugby in order to study Latin, whites also have to wash their own dishes. As commendable as Scholtz’s ideals may appear, it should be noted that their purpose was to ensure white supremacy, ‘total segregation’ (Scholtz 1954:169) and
the eventual removal of all black Africans from South African soil.

Within the context of these conditions, both material and ideological in South Africa of the 1950s, it is of interest to study the letters pages of *Panorama* during this period. Mrs FW Hickling (1958:1), for example, writes from Sussex, in England: ‘The excellent articles and splendid pictures make for a greater understanding of your wonderful country’. A cursory glance at the covers of *Panorama* raises doubts as to whether ‘understanding’ is the aim of the publication, yet it has convinced its readers that the story it is telling is an accurate one. *Lantern* has no letters page, but its trial issue in August 1949 draws on the support of eminent citizens such as Advocate AA Roberts (1949:7) who distinguishes between the ‘masses of food’, provided by books and newspapers, and ‘the vitamins of the mind’ delivered by *Lantern*. Unlike *Panorama* – that seeks to demonstrate that South Africans uphold a ‘superlatively high standard’ (Information please! 1956:2) – *Lantern* aims to address the ‘urgent need’ (Roberts 1949:7) in South Africa for ‘mental pabulum’. A glance at *Lantern*’s covers suggests that this might, indeed, be what the publication achieves.
The medium as message

How did the covers of Lantern and Panorama set about gaining adherence to their arguments?

By utilising photography as a medium, Panorama urges its audience to believe in its ‘story’. Katherine McCoy (1990:11) points out that representational photography colludes in an ordered process based on ‘semi-scientific’ problem solving, where the goal is factual accuracy – a ‘precise record’, in the words of the constructivist designer Gustav Klutsis (in Roberts 1998:26). This notion of an ‘unobstructed’ view is enhanced on Panorama covers by the large format and the amount of space allocated to the South African sky (albeit not necessarily a cloudless one). South Africa exists as a sophisticated industrial entity with an abundance of nature and natural resources (Figures 22 to 32). There is no end of friendly fertile women, wealth, leisure, and good weather (Figures 38 to 41) – Adendorff (2001) confirms that Panorama offers sunshine as a unique selling proposition. Most importantly for Mrs Hickling’s understanding of South Africa when she gazes upon the covers of Panorama: black, coloured and Asian peoples are not in the picture.

Lantern’s decision, in turn, to feature illustration on its covers at first appears to contradict its claim to be ‘a scientifically planned journal’ (Roberts 1949:7). As
McCoy (1990:11) indicates, illustration was rejected by the ‘dead serious’ modernist designers who subscribed to the view that ‘photography would serve democracy, helping to construct a modernist polis’ (Bolton 1992:xii, emphasis in original). The medium offered ‘transparency and obviousness’ (Bolton 1992:xii) and transformed spectatorship from the realm of the spiritual to the non-elitist collective (Roberts 1998:22). This ‘illusion of neutrality’ (Bolton 1992: xiii, emphasis in original) reaches its apogee in the work of 1950s Swiss designer Josef Müller-Brockmann, who treats the photographic image as ‘an objective symbol’ (Meggs & Purvis 2006:365). Conversely, the potential for illustration as a subjective and coercive device is demonstrated in the work of the German designer Ludwig Hohlwein, whose posters concretised Adolf Hitler’s passionate radio addresses about the ‘German “master race”’ (Meggs & Purvis 2006:278).

The illustrations on the covers of *Lantern*, however, remain ambiguous and open to interpretation, suggesting concepts rather than dictating their reality (for example, Figures 42 and 43). By depicting the human figure in a non-specific way, Esterhuysen, for example, does not exclude any specific group of people from the pursuits explored inside the journal (for example, Figure 44). Notably, in the opening message in its first issue, the Honourable Minister Dr AJ Stals (1949:6) states that *Lantern*’s target audience is ‘iedere landsburger’ [each and every citizen]. De Jong Studios, tasked with responding to the somewhat controversial event of South Africa becoming a republic, depicts symbols of South Africa’s European heritage as ideological iconography diluted by its stylised treatment (Figure 46). It is of interest to compare Figure 46 to the *Panorama* cover celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Union of South Africa (Figure 47) where the signifiers...
of a big sky and youthful, all-white nation dominate the argument. As Richard Bolton (1992:xii) observes, for every claim postulating its objectivity, ‘there can be found an opposing claim emphasizing the difficult language introduced by the photograph, a language based in the realities of framing, juxtaposition, and surrealism’. In this instance, it is the Lantern cover that occupies a position of neutrality with regard to current events and arguably facilitates an agreement amongst citizens that terminates in ‘reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another’ (Habermas 1979:3).

A cursory examination of Lantern and Panorama covers thus supports my parents’ judgment, namely that the former responds to the paradigm of visual communication design in which ‘information is noble’, while the latter falls foul of the condition in which ‘persuasion is distasteful’ (McCoy 2000:80). However, if ‘[d]esign can never be neutral’ (Sauthoff 1999:123), it must be conceded that Lantern, too, sets out to persuade, but it appears to engage with what Perelman and Ohlnbrechts-Tyteca (1971:51) refer to as ‘epistemic oratory … [in which] the speaker turns educator’. Panorama covers, on the other hand, appear aligned with the practice of propaganda that is typically taken to encompass the dissemination of information of a ‘biased or misleading nature’ (Propaganda 2011).

Perelman and Ohlnbrechts-Tyteca (1971:513), however, are critical of the distinction between judgements of
reality (that is, truth) and value judgements (subjective versions of the truth). If truth is to provide understanding, the criteria of truth must be free of all ambiguity and therefore be ‘beyond discussion’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:513). Panorama can only be condemned as ‘untruthful’ if every person in its potential audience has agreed to the exact terms of truth. But, if this were possible, then ‘critical argumentation becomes entirely incomprehensible’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:512). If Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca’s premise is applied to the arguments on the covers of Lantern and Panorama, the question that must be asked is not whether these arguments are ‘noble’ or ‘distasteful’, but whether they do what is necessary to increase the mind’s adherence (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:4). In order to reflect upon this question, the three stages of argumentation, as proposed by Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca and realised on the covers of Lantern and Panorama, is considered below.

The framework of the argument

All argumentation aims at gaining the adherence of minds; to gain maximum advantage in argumentation, consideration must be given to the framework
within which any attempt at persuasion takes place – in this case education and propaganda. Since it ‘is indeed the audience which has the major role in determining the quality of argument and the behaviour of orators’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:14–16), Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:51) argue that a clear distinction should be made between these concepts. The educator is commissioned by a community to be the spokesperson for the values the community recognises. Educators are those who, in a society, defend the traditional and accepted, not the new and revolutionary, values. Education does not always express truths; rather, it defends values that are not a matter of controversy in the group. Propaganda, on the other hand, ‘profits from the spectacular aspect of the visible changes it seeks to ... bring about’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:54): notably, the original Congregatio de propaganda fide was an organisation that had as its objective the conversion of non-believers to Roman Catholicism (Allen 2000:1116) – a ‘spectacular’ change.

Following from this understanding of the terms, it becomes clear that Lantern, for all its aspirations to educate, should be recognised for its propagandistic nature. Although eventually part-sponsored by the state (it
continued to carry advertising), *Lantern* was initially an independent undertaking by a small group of people who only relinquished their independence when the alternative would have been the termination of the journal. As such, the volk had not commissioned *Lantern* to be a spokesperson for the values the community recognised – values which, following from Scholtz’s observations, were diametrically opposed to those propagated by *Lantern*.

*Lantern* laboured to reverse Afrikaner isolationism by regularly featuring articles, artworks and literature from Europe as well as dedicating several issues to overviews of foreign countries; its bilingual format, rather than accommodate an English audience, encouraged white Afrikaners to acquire a ‘foreign’ language. The covers echo the intellectual, often abstract, nature of the content that eschewed any reference to what the volk – according to Scholtz – really found compelling. *Lantern*, therefore, sought to bring about spectacular change.

From this realisation, it is but a short step to understanding that *Panorama* served to educate its audience, not to convert them. As a state publication, the journal had been given a mandate by South African voters to defend the traditional and accepted values of the community. *Panorama* covers may not accurately reflect conditions in South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, but they accurately communicate existing
beliefs about these conditions. In this regard, *Panorama*, almost by design, counters every concern that Scholtz raises; the very first issue of *Panorama* calls upon ‘weaponry’ – Scholtz’s (1954:78-80) *bête noir* – to verify the strength of the nation. Scholtz, and *Lantern*, were fighting the more difficult battle in that they were attempting to convert, not reaffirm. How did *Lantern* rise to this challenge?

The starting point of the argument

In planning an argument, the speaker chooses an ‘appropriate vehicle’ (Buchanan 1995:44) for presenting propositions to a specific audience, which devices may include the use of facts, existing values, frequency, inertia, providing evidence of support for the speaker, generating presence, and presenting data in great detail.

The starting point of argumentation presupposes a form of prior agreement between speaker and audience (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:67). Thus, whether an audience accepts something as a fact is determined by the speaker’s perception of the audience. *Panorama* confidently presents its ‘unobstructed’ views as facts on its covers, because it presupposes that its audience will accept these views as facts. By utilising illustration, *Lantern* avoids, for the most part, any claim to factual information on its covers, challenging its readers to interpret data rather than be passive receptors of beliefs, attitudes and values.
A persuasive speaker, on the other hand, appeals to existing values in order to induce the audience to make certain choices (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:75; Tyler 1996:105). Rather than proposing new values, Panorama emphasises beliefs already existing in the audience. The argument of white supremacy was not a revolutionary idea in 1956, neither was the notion of South Africa as a country with unlimited resources. Lantern, however, is attempting to instil new values; from the earliest issues it pointedly acknowledges a flourishing human culture in Southern Africa prior to European settlement, and voices concerns over the region’s ecology. As such, it has chosen a hazardous starting point for argumentation, a condition amplified by Lantern’s rarity.

According to Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:88), frequency is used to facilitate a passage from the normal to the norm, from what is done to what should be done. This condition is implemented by Panorama when it increases its publications to 12 issues a year. By inundating its audience with reaffirming images, Panorama effectively drowns out opposition. Lantern appears only four times a year, and consequently runs the risk of being regarded as an exceptional phenomenon – ‘an argument against th[e] situation’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:89).

All audiences are opposed to new proposals; however, the disinclination to change can be to the speaker’s advantage and in many cases ‘a speaker has no firmer support than psychical and social inertia’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-TYTECA 1971:105). Inertia operates in favour of the existing state of affairs and Panorama exploits this condition. Not only does Panorama argue against change, but its covers also seldom depict white South Africans at work; activity, when depicted, is for the most part recreational (for example, Figure 48). Lantern, on the other hand, wishes to exhort its audience to action – to study, to lose weight, to travel, – and relinquishes another discursive advantage.

Panorama’s appeal to inertia on its covers is supported by its letters page. Chad Atkins in Surrey writes: ‘The impression gained from Panorama articles of progress in all parts of the Union is almost overwhelming’; Leslie Krajcsovics from Vancouver: Panorama is ‘doing a wonderful job’; a South African abroad: ‘As I read through Panorama … all I can think about … is going home’. Acclaim for the covers themselves comes from Roy Rudden in Durban: ‘Congratulations on the latest Panorama. The cover alone must have sold thousands of copies’ (Figure 51) and Piet Pessimis in Pretoria: ‘Congratulations on your Golden Cover Girl in the January issue’ (Figure 52). Panorama provides evidence that countless members of the audience are in agreement with the speaker, thereby further increasing
adherence to its propositions (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:104).

Lantern has no letters page, and it also avoids presence. Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:116) posit that ‘[b]y the very fact of selecting certain elements … their importance and pertinency to the discussion are implied. Indeed, such a choice endows these elements with a presence, which is an essential factor in argumentation’. However, the authors point out that presence must not be confused with fidelity to reality. The presence of the cloudless sky on Panorama’s covers does not have to be true to act upon the audience’s sensibilities. However, suppression of presence is an equally noteworthy phenomenon (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:118). By lessening the presence of one’s opponents, for example, one ensures that the opposition becomes an abstraction, and, therefore, unnecessary. This is a crucial starting point for Panorama’s argumentation: only white persons have presence on their covers.

A close connection exists between presence and emotion (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:147): in order to create emotion, it is essential to be specific. General notions and abstract schemes have hardly any effect on the imagination. Roland Barthes (1982:91) postulates that ‘photography has a power to convert … [because] it constitutes an anti-intellectual weapon’. By avoiding intellectual hurdles, by being specific, Panorama is
able to evoke emotion. Conversely, Lantern covers avoid concrete presence. The emotive experience of attending (or participating in) an orchestral performance is absent from in De Jong’s January/March 1958 cover design (Figure 10), which reduces a complex phenomenon full of human drama to a whimsical line-drawing. As such, the cover does not act directly upon the sensibilities of the viewer; by lessening presence on its covers, Lantern itself becomes something of an abstraction.

An impression of reality is, furthermore, conveyed by ‘piling up all the conditions’ of an act; Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:145-146) point out that utopias are always described in great detail. In constructing its utopian vision, Panorama employs large scale, full-colour photography that provides the most accurate detail possible. In contrast, Lantern chooses to reduce detail by using illustration. The examples in Figures 53 and 54 both refer to articles on South Africa’s game parks, but while the elephant (on the Panorama cover) is experienced as if through the eyes of an awe-struck tourist, the lion (on the Lantern cover) remains someone else’s pretty drawing – a second-hand experience.

In summary, Panorama proceeds by arguing from apparent facts, regularly reinforced, while Lantern retreats into absence and ambiguity; Panorama exploits inertia, calling on its readers to validate their own values in a
letters page, while *Lantern* strives to shatter inertia without any support from converts in its audience; *Panorama* manipulates the data on its covers in order to evoke emotion, but *Lantern* covers elicit a deferred intellectual response compounded by the lack of detail on its covers.

Having thus established their frameworks and the starting point of the argument, the journals proceed to implement ‘the appropriate stylistic embodiment of [their] arguments’ (Buchanan 1995:44) on the covers.

**Techniques of argumentation**

In the third, and final, stage of argumentation, persuasive speakers employ a variety of techniques; those considered here are use of contrast, threats of loss and waste, hyperbole and litotes, and the perfect being as model.

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:247):

The idea that something is good, especially if this something exists and if inertia is at work, is easily expressed by the idea that it is the best, that better could not be found.
To this purpose, *Panorama* presents an enthusiastic description of present circumstances in comparison to some other, less attractive, alternative – a typical utopian model. This argument lessens the effort to modify circumstances since, clearly, the loss of happiness would be considerable. By drawing on utopian tropes the highly detailed, apparently factual, narratives on the covers of *Panorama* stimulate imaginative thought, a quintessential ingredient in the emergence of nations (Wegner 2002:xvii). *Lantern*, on the other hand, offers no enthusiastic description of the present. It locates its argument in the realm of the timeless and the universal (for example, Figures 2, 10, 34, 44 and 45), abstract concepts that, perversely, ‘have hardly any effect on the imagination’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:147) at all.

Linked to the idea of a desirable present is its binary condition: the threat of waste (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:279). The optimism of the *Panorama* covers exhorts the audience to keep going, to fall into step and carry forward a condition that already exists. A feeling of potential loss is suggested: all this, literally the sum of the covers, will be wasted if the enterprise is given up. *Lantern* occasionally utilises this rhetorical technique by visualising that which may be forfeited if no education occurs (for example, Figures 3, 7, 36), ignorance being an important instance of loss. The argument of waste is thus also ‘an encouragement to knowledge, to study’ (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:280) – a central tenet of *Lantern*’s vision.
Hyperbole, in particular, serves the purposes of unlimited development by drawing the mind beyond that which is possible; hyperbole, according to Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:29), is ‘fired with brutality’. Panorama’s audience is aware that not all women in South Africa are beautiful (and white) and that not every day in South Africa is a sunny one, but the perfection presented by the relentless full-colour imagery persuades the audience to believe that maybe the majority of women and days are thus. Similarly, the audience is aware of poverty, soil erosion and drought as a reality of the South African experience, but Panorama’s larger-than-life agrarian idylls (Figures 23 and 55) persuade the observer that misfortune is the exception, abundance the rule.30

Litotes, on the other hand, when it seeks to establish a value, relies on something that falls short of that value. It can be argued that Lantern chooses litotes as a deliberate rejection of hyperbole and its associations of brutality (e.g., Figures 7, 34, 44 and 46). Perelman and Ohlbrechts-Tyteca (1971:292) suspect that litotes carries more power than is generally admitted; its usefulness, however, depends on a situation where the audience is aware of the hyperbole that is being rejected and
that the audience rejects the brutality of the hyperbole in turn – as did my parents.

Particular behaviour may serve to establish a general rule; it may also inspire an audience to action (Perelman & Ohlbrechts-Tyteca 1971:362). Panorama, somewhat unexpectedly, uses relatively few persons whose prestige confers added value on the arguments of the magazine (e.g., Figures 1, 40 and 58), but this forbearance is seen as a rhetorical device in itself: in order to increase its credibility, Panorama avoids both the use of what may be perceived as an artificial technique, and the negative impact of a fall from grace of the perfect being.

Lantern, in its avoidance of presence, might be expected to completely eschew perfect beings, but some do appear. The January/March 1960 cover is Lantern’s tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of the South African Union (Figure 57), while Panorama’s July 1961 cover pays homage to the establishment of a South African republic (Figure 58). Both covers feature photographic portraits. The portrait of CR Swart – South Africa’s first state president – is a calculated risk for Panorama. It embodies all the trappings of political coercion, pushing itself upon the audience in terrible, paternalistic detail. Barthes (1982:93) refers to this type of photography as ‘the tyranny of an ideal’. Here argument by model intersects with argument of waste: had the 1960 referendum swung the other way, this splendid symbol of sovereignty would have been lost. On the Lantern
cover, however, the faces of the founding fathers of the Union have been reduced to a decorative texture within a grid redolent of mathematical forms and architectural schemas, perhaps signifying the impotence of human agency in the face of universal laws.

In summary, *Lantern* rejects conventional techniques of persuasion, such as *Panorama*’s seductive references to utopia and its use of hyperbole, turning instead to litotes as a means to differentiate its voice, even when utilising more compelling techniques such as argument by a perfect being.

**Conclusion**

In the pursuit of their goals, did *Panorama* and *Lantern* do what was necessary to increase the mind’s adherence? Arguably, yes. *Panorama* was immensely popular and undoubtedly contributed to positive, albeit blinkered, perceptions of South Africa. *Lantern*, by rejecting hyperbole, forfeited popularity but gained adherence from a select audience that identified with its reductionism. Both publications appeared for the best part of 40 years; *Panorama* was removed from the South African cultural landscape for ideological reasons; *Lantern* merely faded away, a doomed victim of its inverted rhetoric.

Was *Panorama* as wicked and *Lantern* as saintly as I was led to believe? The answer with regard to *Lantern* is fairly straightforward; conclusions about *Panorama* are more complex. *Panorama*, between 1956 and 1961, regularly featured essays on coloured, Indian, and, especially, black African cultures. However, because of the latter’s absence (with two interesting exceptions, January and March 1960) from the covers, the material inside the publication operates as a picturesque and/or valorising backdrop to the ‘superlatively high standard’ of South Africa’s white community. Nevertheless, despite its commitment to sell apartheid as ‘separate development’ (Adendorff 2001), *Panorama*’s role in documenting a broader African culture should not be dismissed out of hand. For example, in October 1961, this state-funded publication ran a prominent article on the Mapungubwe find, belying more recent accusations that the apartheid regime suppressed information about the Stone Age site (Maree 2000:12). It is also of interest that *Panorama*’s English-speaking devotees – rather unexpectedly – outnumbered its Afrikaans readers.

For its part, *Lantern*, in the cover designs of Ernst de Jong, exposed South Africans to graphic design of an international standard. The vision of the journal lives on in SAASTA, whose aim remains the advancement of ‘public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa’ (Overview [sa]). Ironically, 60 years after the launch of its assault on the ‘directionlessness, superficiality and social disruption’ of the nation, SAASTA’s adversaries remain much the same – although Facebook™ may conceivably have replaced boeremusiek as national icon of high art.

**Notes**

1 Although the full title of the magazine is *South African Panorama*, it was generally referred to as *Panorama* and for the purposes of this article the latter signifier is, therefore, used.

2 Notably, the article by the de Jong is entitled *Design in advertising*. Although the term ‘graphic design’ was first used in the 1920s, the profession was still referred to as ‘commercial art’ well into the 1970s. The *Lantern* article legitimises the field as
a profession, both by using the term ‘design’ and situating itself in a culturally elevated editorial environment.

3 Stella Viljoen (2009), for example, subsequent to her work on Die Huisgenoot, examines male identities in men’s glossy magazines in the ‘new’ South Africa.

4 Smith (2003:12) separates the notions of nation and ethnic community; whites in South Africa arguably fall into the latter category. Smith also denies that German National Socialism is a form of nationalism ‘because its creed of racial inequality is incompatible with the nationalist vision of a plurality of unique and free nations’ (Breuilly 1993:3).


6 Bonsiepe (1999:167) declares that ‘[i]nformation without rhetoric … is a pipe-dream … [and] the notion of impartial objectivity … a myth’; Sauthoff (1999:123) concurs that ‘[d]esign can never be neutral’.

7 Information regarding publication dates, contents, formats, names of designers and editors was gleaned from the journals themselves.

8 For the purposes of this study, the descriptor illustration includes photomontage. Where an existing illustration or artwork has been photographed (for example, Figure 21), the covers are also regarded as illustrative.

9 In 2001, when this research was initiated, the Association was known as the Foundation for Education, Science and Technology (FEST). FEST changed its name after being incorporated into the National Research Foundation (NRF) in 2002 (Overview [sa]).

10 According to Adendorff (2001), this was a deliberate strategy to increase the credibility of the publication; however, prominent persons in South Africa, as well as South Africans living overseas, received complementary copies.

11 The survey received 6,825 responses, of which 6,247 were analysed. Criticism, such as it was, mainly targeted distribution. Seven per cent of respondents complained that the publication was too luxurious and glossy; 5.1 per cent objected to the English version of Panorama being a literal translation from the Afrikaans; 13.3 per cent disapproved of the ‘onverbloemde [undisguised] propaganda’. Conversely, a positive comment reads: ‘Excellent propaganda for South Africa …!’ The survey was distributed in June 1991, 15 months after the release of Nelson Mandela from the Victor Verster Prison.

12 Van Zyl was director of the Pretoria College for Advanced Technical Education in the 1940s (Khuswayo 2005:312), and chairman of the Association of Colleges for Advanced Technical Education in the 1970s (A survey of race relations in South Africa 1972). He had a particular interest in adult education.

13 ‘How to iron a shirt’; ‘Petrol from coal’; ‘Come travel to Holland’.

14 It was eventually translated into ten languages, including Italian, German, Spanish, French and Chinese (Adendorff 2001).

15 A cyclotron is a particle accelerator used to produce radio-active isotopes.
16 It is ironic, given its commitment to the photograph, that *Panorama* draws on the metaphor of painting and illustration, the preferred medium of its counterpart, *Lantern*, as a framework for its argument.

17 For the purposes of this article, the factual account of the political events in South Africa 1948-1961 is drawn from the Reader’s Digest *Illustrated history of South Africa* (1994), edited by Dougie Oakes.

18 The term *coloured*, in a South African context, is somewhat problematic; usually taken to mean ‘people of mixed descent’ (Oakes 1994:531), it was, and remains at the time of writing, an official racial classification distinct from ‘white’, ‘black’, or ‘Asian’.

19 For a comprehensive overview of writings on Afrikaner identity during this period, see Van Jaarsveld (1981:1-72). Scholtz occupied an eminent position within the Afrikaner intellectual sphere and his publication *Het die Afrikaner ’n toekoms?* (Does the Afrikaner have a future?) (1954) reflects National Party leadership’s opinion in the early 1950s.

20 *Boeremusiek* is informal folk music that is primarily intended as an accompaniment at social dancing (What is Boer Music? [sa]).

21 The notion that whites had to reduce their dependence on black labour was a tenet of what Giliomee (2003:482) refers to as ‘the apartheid theorists’.

22 Roberts liberally sprinkles his message with Latin quotations. Conversely, the opening message in the same issue of *Lantern*, from the Honourable Minister Dr AJ Stals, reflects an Afrikaans idiom redolent of its humble rural origins. The disparity probably exasperated Scholtz (who no doubt read this issue of *Lantern*).

23 This ideal of mutual trust and accord is reinforced by the fact that throughout its existence *Lantern* retained both the Prime Minister as well as the Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition as patrons.

24 Informal research suggests that few, if any, English South Africans were aware of, let alone read, *Lantern*.

25 Viljoen (2006:26) reports that by the 1950s readers of another South African magazine, *Huisgenoot*, were judging the publication to be too removed, too set upon good taste and intellectual pursuits; consequently, ‘standards had to be lowered to cater for popular tastes’.

26 *Panorama*, despite its inward-looking content, evokes American self-aggrandisement. Adendorff had been South African Director of Information in the USA and the influence of this country’s media culture on the editorial content of *Panorama* arguably played a major role in the popularity of the publication amongst South Africans.

27 Of the six covers (during the period 1951-1961) that reflect productive activity, two (January 1960; June 1961) depict South Africans of colour – coincidentally the only covers to depict persons of colour. The January 1960 cover (Figure 47) depicts a young coloured girl painting at an easel; it is a singular image, even in terms of the entire (1956-1990) series of *Panorama* covers, and was the second to last issue of *Panorama* before Sharpeville. The June 1961 cover (Figure 48) depicts mining headgear with two small figures, one white, one black, in the foreground. This would be the last
depiction of a non-white South African on Panorama covers for several years.

28 As, ironically, it does in Smith’s cover of South African Panorama 4(9), 1959, which is arguably the reason that Adendorff and Cox never employed this highly stylised approach again.

29 Also compare Figures 9 and 52.

30 This having been said, Panorama covers in this sample display few images of farms and crops, the latter arguably being too suggestive of labour. Two covers depict deserts (for example, Figure 55), but as picturesque tourist destinations, not drought-ridden wastelands.

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‘I participate, therefore I learn’: A process of co-creative graduate supervision in design research in Cape Town

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Abstract

Changing pedagogical contexts require a responsive attitude with regard to design research supervision. This article elaborates on experiences and lessons learnt through a co-creative approach to supervision, which draws on an empathic understanding of members in a learning space at a higher education institution in Cape Town. The Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW) was initiated in 2009, at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), to support postgraduate students within the design departments and to improve supervision capacity. It embraces a collective learning approach while critically re-interpreting the interaction between supervisors and postgraduate students. A narrative methodology and an interpretivist position were adopted to examine and describe the value and meaning of the DRAW forum to participants. A significant finding that emerged from the study is that the co-creative, group supervision approach to design research breaks down power differentials and enhances both the supervisor and student learning experiences in a specific community of practice.

Key words: Collective learning; Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW); empathy; openness; postgraduate supervision

Now, from time to time that tribe met like this in a circle. They just talked and talked and talked, apparently to no purpose. They made no decisions. There was no leader. And everybody could participate. There may have been wise men or wise women who were listened to a bit more – the older ones – but everybody could talk. The meeting went on, until it finally seemed to stop for no reason at all and the group dispersed. Yet after that, everybody seemed to know what to do, because they understood each other so well. Then they could get together in smaller groups and do something or decide things (Bohm 1996:9).

Introduction

The Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW) was initiated at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in early 2009. Its aims were to provide an academic and social support forum for postgraduate students who often experience isolation in the academic context (Samara 2006:116), and to improve limited supervision capacity within the design departments of the Faculty of Informatics and Design. Alternative models of supervision were required to boost existing capacity, by augmenting the traditional and resource intensive one-to-one supervisor-student model (Samara 2006:115).
An increase in postgraduate student research numbers and ‘the central importance of supervision for the successful completion of research degrees’ (Hockey & Allen-Collinson 2000:346) requires a flexible and responsive attitude with regard to supervision practices. Information about supervision in the art and design disciplines in particular ‘is almost negligible, particularly in the case of practice-based research’ (Hockey & Allen-Collinson 2000:346). Following Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2000:346), and reflecting on how the nature of design research and supervision had changed over the last decade or two, a number of aspects pertinent to group supervision and peer-learning were identified in the DRAW forum which are explored in this article. They include the influence, value and meaning of co-creative graduate supervision practice that this forum offered to participants.

**Group supervision in postgraduate research**

Research supervision has been the focus of studies looking at various aspects of supervision practice such as the roles, strategies and styles, as well issues of gender and power in the student and supervisor relationship (Samara 2006:116). In addition, supervision as a means of support in the wider academic community and to neutralise loneliness in research is of increasing interest (Samara 2006:116). In this context, postgraduate studies and collective forms of supervision were looked at closely. Group supervision models which encourage a collective learning ethos are examined by Samara (2006) and De Lange, Pillay and Chikoko (2011) in education, and Ratkić (2009) in the research area of skill and technology.

Advantages of group supervision include the ‘advancement of supervision skills, the impact it has on students’ writing process and the facilitation of students’ enculturation into the particular discipline’ (Samara 2006:115). For example, Masters students participating in group supervision sessions at a university in Norway supplied their research texts with specific questions to others in the group. Peer feedback is then provided under the guidance of a student group leader and comments are kept concrete and constructive to accommodate the sensitive nature of the process. A time frame and clear structure are adhered to, and a reflective period is built in at the end of each session to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the session (Samara 2006:119).

Within a South African context, De Lange et al. (2011:18) explore a collaborative supervisory experience involving doctoral students at a South African university. The cohort model of doctoral supervision entails a seminar programme offered over six weekends per year, consisting of presentations, discussions, critique, feedback by peers and reflection. The cohort model is described as making a big contribution in ‘… developing scholarship and reflective practice in candidates, in providing support and supervision, and in sustaining students towards the completion of their doctorates’ (De Lange et al. 2011:15).

The dialogue-seminar method, in particular, was refined as a way to incorporate reflection into the professional practice of postgraduate students at a university of technology in Sweden (Ratkić 2009:99). Participants attended the dialogue-seminars as (working) doctoral students wanting to use their own research to change and improve practices at their work places. The skill and technology research area is devoted to case studies involving ‘professional skills, epistemology of practical knowledge, and methods for sharing tacit knowledge within organisations’ (Ratkić 2009:100).
The ‘dialogue-seminar method’ involves the reading of texts and the subsequent discussion and ‘reflection on practice of research’ (Ratkić 2009:99). A written reflection of the texts is produced and members in the group share the reflection by reading it aloud. This produces qualified conversation: ‘The flow of thought in the dialogue-seminars is anything but straight’, which is intentional (Ratkić 2009:106). The free-flow of thought helps students to connect the content dealt with in the seminars to their own experience. In addition, the reciprocal nature of the method is favoured by postgraduate students – and especially mature students – who prefer participatory rather than prescriptive educational methods (Ratkić 2009:100).

**Design research and supervision**

Non-prescriptive methods are also favoured by postgraduate design students, but not necessarily participatory group methods, since the designer/researcher may favour working independently and frequently does so. In supervising design research, cognisance ought to be taken of the fact that the discipline of design draws from many different fields. Jonas (2000:44) refers to the possibility of design research as a groundless field. This implies that it has no real foundation and it borrows, possibly opportunistically, from whatever field seems appropriate at the time.

Along the same vein, Nelson (2009:111) writes: ‘With design, so often associated with the tangible regimes of manufacture, we enter the borderless’. Although it can be a disadvantage, being ‘borderless’ also offers advantages. Consequently, depending on the particular aspect of design which is researched, different disciplines may be drawn upon to enrich that aspect. ‘The field of design embraces the profession, the discipline, and a shifting and often ambiguous range of related cognate fields and areas of inquiry’ (Friedman 2003:508), rendering design research almost the chameleon coloured by the disciplinary branch it is sitting on. Since Jonas’ (2000:44) groundless field comments, however, when he also referred to ‘design as its own ground’, design as a discipline had consolidated its foundations to a large degree.

Researchers such as Buchanan (2000), Friedman (2003), Love (2000; 2002), Margolin (2007), Manzini (2009) and Vezzoli (2007) are changing the approach to design, design research and design education. They are active in emerging and specialist areas such as social design, philosophy of design, Design for Development (DFD) and the Design for Sustainability (DFS) fields. Friedman (2003:508) asserts that design fulfils a general evolutionary role in the environment and that ‘designers take on increasingly important tasks, design has greater effects and wider scope than ever before’.

Regarding the sustainability agenda, design is an important player and a powerful voice in promoting change. This can be seen in an increasing number of global and local initiatives that are actively promoting change such as the educational *Learning Network on Sustainability* (LeNS)-Africa project which aims to target ‘… an audience of lecturers and students from various design disciplines in order to orientate them towards pedagogic and didactic applications of Design for Sustainability and Product-Service Systems’ (Bergevoet, Maina, Kankondi, Chisin & M’Rithaa 2010:1105). The LeNS-Africa project was launched on 7 September 2009 and provided an opportunity to embed the sustainability agenda in the DRAW forum from its inception.

Fletcher (2008:120-130) challenges designers to take responsibility by adopting and promoting more sustainable practices so as to ameliorate the damage the profession has occasioned on the planet. This is needed.
since designers have often contributed to wasteful production and consumption lifestyles the world over (Thackara 2005; Manzini 2009; Vezzoli, Ceschin & M’Rithaa 2009). Furthermore, the challenge extends to focus on the centrality of people in design, and, in turn, the role of communities in formulating and mainstreaming more sustainable lifestyles (Manzini 2009; M’Rithaa 2009).

Sustainability in design may be defined as the satisfaction of human needs in a responsible way which will least compromise future generations’ ability to satisfy their own needs (Vezzoli 2007:13). It is a necessity to guide postgraduate students to think and act in terms of design solutions and interventions which are the least harmful and the most sustainable in future.

**Supervision and learning in the DRAW context**

In design education, as in business, design thinking has become an indispensable part of innovation (Lee & Breitenberg 2010:55-56). In the DRAW context, we associate it with relevant design theories to help frame our problems and responses to the frequently ‘wicked’ problems that design seeks to ameliorate (Buchanan 1992:14-15). Design thinking and the designer’s role in the expanded field of design (Friedman 2003:509) are used as tools in the forum to assist in meaning making as well as to originate products, artefacts or services. These tools are ontologically aligned to various expressions of socially conscious design, such as DfS and DfD agendas.

Although DRAW Masters students come from various design disciplines, for instance Surface and Fashion design, Graphic design, and Industrial design, their practice-based research and full dissertations are frequently of an interdisciplinary nature. Some student research titles are included to illustrate the multidisciplinary, yet socially responsive range of topics originated in the workgroup. The contribution of their research projects, however, is not covered in this article.

DRAW participants develop their research projects from a personal, situated perspective (Lave & Wenger 1991), guided by social design and the Ubuntu philosophy. Although not a requirement for the postgraduate programme, both social design and Ubuntu are embraced as DRAW principles. Most students show a passionate interest in DfS and DfD and in the advancement of the topics. Bergevoet et al. (2010:1111) state that DRAW could ‘champion the creation of a research niche area around DfS that will take advantage of expansive DRAW membership’. The common interest in DfS created an understanding among participants during the initial workgroup sessions, which, in turn, developed into a collective learning experience.

**Format of a DRAW meeting**

DRAW participants arrive for the session and set out eats and drinks. Topics that participants have requested for discussion that is, research methods or specific design-related theories, are put on the agenda for action. Depending on the activity, the conversationalist presenter briefs the participants and hands out reading material, proposals or chapters, and continues with leading the discussion or doing the presentation. Others in the group are ‘able to reflect on what can be learnt from the research experiences of their peers, and apply that to their own work’ (De Lange et al. 2011:23-24). The floor is then opened for conversation and participants are encouraged to relate the topic under discussion to their own research, if suitable. This is done by contextualising their respective research in terms of
the methods, theories or philosophies discussed, frequently in a free-wheeling fashion as described by Ratkić (2009:106). The open style of debate and conversation is conducive to forming connections between concepts and from this collective sounding board participants will, in turn, source and share relevant material at the next forum.

**The research approach**

The largely subjective nature of research in art and design (Nelson 2009:89,113), lends itself to a qualitative, descriptive research methodology. Since we (the authors and supervisors facilitating the collaborative DRAW conversations) were interested in exploring the social and academic support aspects which the DRAW forum offered students and supervisors, a narrative method was decided upon to describe the workgroup experiences from different perspectives. Here we follow Berger and Luckman (1966:130), who argue that it is important to have access to and understand participants' separate social framing of reality, and to examine topics deeply through non-prescriptive conversations based on holistic understanding which, in turn, is anchored in lived experience. Narrative inquiry is ‘grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology …’ and it concentrates on ‘the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences’, looking to bring perceptivity that matches the intricacy of human existence (Trahar 2009).

Located within the narrative paradigm, we (the authors) adopted an interpretivist position. The interpretivist supervisor/researcher is central in making meaning of the world and events in it. We were simultaneously trying to construct meaning as participants in DRAW (one author with the dual role of doctoral student and supervisor) and from our position as supervisors in the forum. Living the DRAW experience for two years resulted in tangible data collected (discussed below) and also intangible nuances observed in the group (atmosphere, body language and mood) which informed and enriched the data. Lived experience reflects the phenomenological position that describes an experience from the participants' point of view and credits experience and the senses to interpret and make sense of things (Leedy 1997:166). Nelson (2009:101, 104) un-tangles the strands of lived experience and the largely subjective nature of research in art and design by stating that it (subjectivity) is par for the course in that discipline:

> Hence the goal of the research ... is rather subjectively determined. But the goal of the research is not the only element which is subjectively determined

and

> Artists do not always know their goals till they work through a project to the end. Art is highly provisional until it is complete. Poetry and music are surely the same. You can imagine some scholars looking upon the whole process as quite un-structured. You do not know what you want until you have finished. Some method that is! (Nelson 2009:104).

What art and design have in common is certain grounding in subjectivity, and as Nelson (2008:98) argues, creative strivings partner well with ontological notions. In creative endeavours ‘research is about you as much as the medium’ (Nelson 2009:98). Designers think, write, visualise, create and make sense. Design research is a composite of sensory experience, conceptual and theoretical experience and knowledge. Scholars with a different disciplinary grounding may, therefore, find design and art research methods unscholarly because of the centrality of the researcher in the project and
the weight given to lived experience and the senses (Nelson 2009:104). Yet it is precisely these aspects that constitute art, design and creative practices.

**Research methods**

We explored the influence, value and meaning of the DRAW forum and group supervision practices in a study that was conducted from March 2009 until March 2011. The DRAW forum is run in an informal manner, meaning that sessions are semi-structured to allow for last-minute requests not on the agenda, and postgraduate Masters students and supervisors join the sessions they choose. The authors are supervisors in the forum and either one or both are present at the sessions. The sessions are convened every week and each lasts about three hours. The agenda is posted weekly in advance (since February 2011) by the blog administrator who is a postgraduate student belonging to the group. The research methods can be divided in two sections, the recorded sessions and the questionnaires, with narrative inquiry underpinning both methods.

**The recorded sessions**

Conversations, themes and narratives that unfolded during the sessions were recorded by one of the authors (doctoral student/supervisor) over the period March 2009 to March 2011. The recorded sessions were randomly chosen (usually based on attendance) and their structure roughly followed the group supervision models described by Samara (2006:115-129) and De Lange et al. (2011:15-30) and the ‘dialogue-seminar method’ described by Ratkić (2007:99). Reflective journal writing methods were used as a personal record of the sessions (see Appendix 1 for an example of a reflective journal writing entry) and they became the basis for the thematic narratives which the questionnaire was based on (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire). Reflective journal writing was chosen since it is fulfils many functions. Boud (2001:9) describes it ‘as a form of reflective practice … as a device for working with events and experiences in order to extract meaning from them’. Boud (2001:9) asserts that reflective journal writing in its various forms help us make sense of the world ‘and how we operate in it’. It can also be used to record events and experiences with a view to understanding them more comprehensively. The journalised sessions were subsequently discussed by both the authors in conversation during informal meetings and during the DRAW sessions in dialogue with the students.

**The questionnaire**

In January 2011, all members (numbers fluctuated but at that stage there were 20 students as well as a guest supervisor) were invited to participate in the study through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to establish the extent of social and academic support that the workgroup provided members with, and the meaning that group supervision held for them. Some of the founding members were preparing for examination submission then, while others started their research activities in 2011. This presented a good opportunity to take stock and explore the influence of the forum at respective stages of research, especially with a view to finishing students. A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire was posted on the DRAW blog for members to respond to in their own time. Twelve members completed the questionnaire by April 2011, including six local and five international students, and the guest supervisor.
The questionnaire responses were grouped, categorised and coded manually (Huberman & Miles 2002) and are presented according to the thematic narratives which first emerged in, and were recorded during, the journalised sessions (see Appendix 3 for an example of questionnaire coding, May 2010). The questionnaire responses were also discussed by students and supervisors in an exit focus group of three hours (see Appendix 4 for an exit focus group entry). Again the discussion was documented using reflective journal writing by the doctoral student/supervisor. Pseudonyms were used to protect student identities in the text: Batman (founding member 2009), Colette (new member 2011), Comic Sans (existing member 2010), Faizal (founding member 2009), Fatima (founding member 2009), Hendrik (new member 2011), Jasmine (founding member 2009), Jean (new member 2011), Mignon (new member 2011), Rose (new member 2011), Vera (founding member 2009) and Zinzi (guest supervisor since 2010). Permission was obtained to use the DRAW photograph (Figure 1). In the next section the thematic narratives are qualified and discussed, namely social DRAW, philosophical DRAW and supervisory DRAW.

Social DRAW:
An interdependent homespace

DRAW postgraduate participants indicated that the thematic narratives identified in the workgroup formed ‘pillars’ of support. The pillars of support were identified as: interdependence reinforcing social DRAW (see Figure 2), Ubuntu reinforcing philosophical DRAW (see Figure 3), and co-creation reinforcing supervisory DRAW (see Figure 4). Together, the pillars of support provided a focal point for their research activities and created a platform for opportunity.

Interdependence was seen as an important social support pillar in the workgroup and developed for a number of reasons. Strong interpersonal relationships were formed from the start since sharing and listening to peers with similar concerns helped members to ‘overcome issues of insecurity and isolation, [particularly] during the first months of study’ (Batman, Fatima, Vera & Jasmine 2011). Regular interaction with each other makes support possible because all DRAW members are ‘going through the same process’ (Vera & Jasmine 2011).

Participation in the sessions moulded the interaction of members into an interdependent ‘space’, a conceptual and physical space which Zinzi (2011) describes as a ‘homespace’ (see Figure 2). The homespace welcomes everyone doing their postgraduate studies into a conducive atmosphere. This atmosphere is characterised by an informal physical space where members are seated around a table, and a conceptual space of openness and debate. A recent study by De Lange et al. (2011:23) focusing on a cohort model of doctoral supervision, touched on the idea of a homespace in their discussion of ‘a “home” for opportunities and space to talk informally, to present their work, to give and receive critique and also to write …’. Openness emerged as an
important factor during interactions in the workgroup and away from the workgroup. Being open to others ensures that DRAW is a forum ‘where people talk very freely’ (Zinzi 2011), that it ‘remains an egalitarian platform’ (Vera 2011), and that ‘everyone is equal’ (Rose 2011). Also, seeing ‘eye-to-eye’ softens hierarchy in the group and encourages collegiality: ‘it is a collegial meeting place in which the lecturer-student dichotomy is broken down’ (Zinzi 2011).

Participants concurred that the DRAW space is a safe space but can also be a challenging space; a private as well as a public space. Mignon (2011) responded that she had attended only a couple of meetings, but they can be intimidating at first, and Rose (2011) stated that the conversations and discussions are of such an intellectual nature that she did not always understand them. When only a small and intimate group is present and the readings and discussions are informal, members agreed, the space feels private; when the group is big and includes visiting scholars, paper presentations and mock defences, it becomes a public space. Members have to negotiate their way between the two spaces and, with time, enculturation into the discipline and the group eases this negotiation. This is consistent with Samara (2006:115) who asserts that one of the advantages of group supervision is the facilitation of ‘students’ enculturation into the particular discipline. Supervisors fulfil a key function in this induction process, according to De Lange et al. (2011:22), since they guide students over time to ‘become part of the academic community through enculturation’.

From an academic development perspective, acquiring the right academic language to describe research and encouragement from the group helped Fatima (2011). When she first joined the DRAW forum, she had a limited command of English and was unable to express herself or explain her research in any coherent fashion. She commented: ‘I found confidence in this environment because I learnt how to discuss my research, and answer the criticizers!’ Fatima (2011) asserted that DRAW participation readied her for her first international conference in New Zealand, and her academic development was linked to the value that the DRAW workgroup added. Before the conference she presented her paper several times to the workgroup, and the discussions which followed helped her to refine the presentation which, in turn, built confidence. In harmony with this, De Lange et al. (2011:26) advance that a group programme enables the growth of collaborative knowledge in research as a means to grow individual knowledge, which provides ‘particular kinds of learning opportunities to support the movement of the student form novice to expert’.

Feedback from peers was highlighted as very useful because supervisors may seem to ‘be pushing students too hard’ at times (Zinzi 2011). Peer-feedback had an equalising influence and contributed to the concept of group supervision. Vera (2011) maintained that ‘around-the-table discussions with input from others encouraged deep discussion of each of our research topics’. She also noted that the interdisciplinary, multi-national and multi-cultural group provided feedback from different points of view and different fields of knowledge which inspired and enriched her research. Although founding members agreed, a participant noted that some new students find it hard to deal with critical feedback from peers precisely because they are peers and not supervisors (Colette 2011). This is borne out by Samara (2006:119): ‘… other group members are advised to formulate their comments concretely, cautiously, and to refer to the positive elements in the text, as group supervision can be a sensitive process for some’.

Support and a willingness to contribute to other members’ research were significant factors to Jasmine (2011). She identified committed
participation during sessions and sharing information in whatever form members were able to, as significant contributors to research success. Engaging with others’ research is a valuable tool in developing the individual student’s ability to express themselves on research matters in an academic environment to develop their own ideas (De Lange et al. 2011:23). Jasmine (2011) also endorses the fact that ‘listening only is fine too’ and that attentive listening forms an important part of participation. Listening improves a person’s ability to put him or herself in the other’s shoes and thereby building empathy (Jasmine, Vera, Fatima & Rose 2011).

The value of social activities to induct new members into the group was acknowledged. Particularly the sharing of food and drinks was highlighted as an activity which supported cohesion in the group and strengthened relationships (Vera, Jasmine, Fatima & Batman 2011). The impact of friendships and relationships formed in DRAW was explained by Fatima (2011) in the following way:

As an international student, I do not think that I was able to find a space better than DRAW where I found my best friends who supported me during my research journey; as I thought I was alone I had someone to rely on, as I thought I had a question which I was too shy to ask I got the answer there, as I thought I had a big unsolvable problem they support me to find a solution.

The need to express identity and culture in the DRAW group was facilitated by narrative approaches. The wide interpretation of narrative in the group included telling stories, doing PowerPoint™ presentations, participating in focus groups, in-depth interviews and producing art work. All of these methods were research tools which, according to the participants, told stories from a personal perspective. In this way, participants had the opportunity to use their life experience to contribute to discussions, and life stories validated their individual input. Vera (2011) advanced that ‘storytelling made it possible to show my point of view from my specific background and culture in the workgroup discussions’.

Hendrik (2011) argued that storytelling ‘can easily become emotional and has no basis in empirical research; academic arguments and common sense seem better tools in research’. Hendrik (2011) does, however, acknowledge that ‘narrative is an excellent hook to draw people in’. It is more engaging when narrative approaches are used to explain complex concepts and design issues, since the researchers’ topics are contextualised in a personal way. Figure 2 provides an overview of the social support pillar.

**Philosophical DRAW: Ubuntu and the spirit of communalism**

Students struggled more to identify philosophical and theoretical underpinnings in the workgroup sessions, compared to the social underpinnings. **Ubuntu** and the spirit of togetherness were nevertheless seen as a very important philosophical pillar in the workgroup. The **Ubuntu** philosophy is closely associated with the way that DRAW is run and is used in this social and
collegial space as a tool to help students become sympathetic participants even when they criticise (Zinzi 2011). Moreover, its spirit of communalism made Batman (2011) realise that ‘discovery of similarities in others’ triumphs and struggles helps us to relate to and empathise with them and deal with those aspects within ourselves’.

Although the principles of Ubuntu are associated with African roots and expression, its inclusive ethos is accessible and applicable widely. Venter (2004:150) argues that ‘the notion of Ubuntu and communalism are of great importance in an African educational discourse’. Furthermore, the multi-cultural and multi-national composition of the participants required an understanding of each other on an advanced level in order to benefit from participation in the group. The collaborative principles of Ubuntu helped in shaping that understanding: ‘I participate therefore I am’, or the well-known ‘I am because we are’ (M’Rithaa 2009:3). Participation in the group became an anchoring activity as members strove to come to grips with their research.

With regard to other theories and philosophies discussed in the DRAW sessions, and whether they helped students make meaning of their research as a learning event, four members indicated ‘no response’. These questionnaire responses were in marked contrast to discussions in DRAW when theoretical and conceptual frameworks were used elegantly by students to argue points of view. Design for Sustainability, Design for Development and Participatory Design were regularly singled out in the sessions as important theories and methods. One new participant stated that the underlying principles of research were explained by study leaders and seasoned researchers but that theoretical frameworks, the ‘why, value of, and reason for’ lack in discussions (Hendrik 2011). The contradictory data in this section point to a difficulty at times in reconciling theoretical and conceptual frameworks with the personal learning event, and possibly the fact that the social support structures took precedence.

The difficulty of not linking theory/conceptual frameworks with learning was emphasised in student responses to preferred learning approaches, the interpretation of aspects of reality, and questions about the ‘deep/surface’ learning metaphor (as posed by Webb 2007:197, 206) and discussed in the workgroup. Four members gave no response to this question. That is, they did not relate the notion of deep or surface learning (or both), or the interpretation of aspects of reality to their research. One participant indicated that she used neither learning approaches because her research is still ‘a work-in-progress’ (Comic Sans 2011), indicating that (for her) learning happens retrospectively upon reflection. Vera (2011) asserted that she was ‘mostly searching for in-depth interaction and meanings’ in her research. Another participant indicated that he used both approaches because of the nature of his research, which he described as ‘a topic of knowledge acquisition and learning or education’ (Hendrik 2011). Five members found theories useful to frame their research and Jean (2011) stated that ‘…[theories] allowed me to see depth and width of design as a practice more clearly, and to contextualise my research in terms of a broader canvas’.

A spirit of communalism helped personal contextualisation in the group which included the iterative process of discovering the self in ‘the other’ (Webb 1997:197). Two founding members of DRAW agreed that finding ‘commonness’ in each other despite different backgrounds, cultures and personalities leads to building trust in the group. Building trust and finding commonality takes time and requires respect for diversity. Jasmine (2011) feels that members ‘rely on each other because
we trust each other and recognise commonness’. Comic Sans (2011) advanced that an openness and understanding of each others’ research topics, for example, an interest in environmental design and in DfS, resulted in strengthening commonality in the group. Using the groups’ varied skills and knowledge for problem-solving and improved understanding transcends scholarship development since ‘freedom to comment supports the identity of an independent scholar whose “difference” is respected and valued within the learning community’ (Scardamalia & Breiter in De Lange et al. 2011:23).

The value of shaping the research process through an empathetic understanding of strengths and weaknesses was articulated by most members, and Jean (2011) explained that ‘understanding strengths and weaknesses allows students to tailor their practices to their strengths which results in a stronger personal research capacity’. Challenge and contestation in the higher education discourse ‘requires openness to the views of Others’ (Webb 1997:201). It is in the spirit of openness that empathy flourishes, recognising strengths and weaknesses in the group means drawing on different abilities and an empathetic understanding makes asking for guidance easier (Zinzi 2011). She observed a more lateral appreciation of each member’s contribution and also that students appreciated multiple responses to their research questions. Zinzi (2011) and Fatima (2011) both added that students were able to distil feedback, raise concerns and defend their position, which means that ultimately students are able to take responsibility and are in charge of their own projects. Figure 3 provides an overview of the philosophical support pillar.

Supervisory DRAW: Co-creative supervision practices

Co-creation was seen as an important supervisory support pillar in the workgroup. Group supervision models which encourage a collective learning ethos (Samara 2006:115-129; Ratkić 2009:99-109; De Lange et al. 2011:15-30) resonate with the co-creative perspective. Members in the DRAW forum commented on changes in pedagogical contexts, student/lecturer interaction and supervision practices, and identified several factors responsible for the changes. Among these were a growth in university postgraduate education globally, a multinational postgraduate fraternity, an overall relaxation of formality in the academy, the fact that postgraduate research is characterised by collaboration, and that no right or wrong answers exist in research. These factors are borne out by Samara (2006:116, 117), Murphy, Bain and Conrad (2007:219, 224), Ratkić (2009:100, 101), and De Lange et al. (2011:19).

The concept of a multi-national and multi-cultural student body, and the question of how teaching and learning is accommodated amidst the notion of ‘global citizenship’ is interrogated by Tsolidis (2002:213) as she explores inclusive pedagogies appropriate for global citizenship in the context of an increasingly internationalised and multi-cultural student cohort. Tsolidis (2002:213) argues that we have to place our students’ best interest at
heart and ‘prepare them for a future where global citizenship is assumed’. To do this, educators need to ‘develop ways of teaching to the cultural fluidity which characterises globalization’ (Tsoidis 2002:213). Co-creative supervision and collaboration in the DRAW forum attempt to speak to cultural fluidity and globalisation.

Co-creation implies that supervisors do not fulfil a dominant or overly authoritative role anymore, according to the DRAW participants (see Figure 4). Rather, they function as ‘discussants’ and ‘understanding guides’ (Zinzi & Faizal 2011). Guiding creates a space for all participants to lead with comments, critique and guidelines. The student/supervisor relationship is dynamic, including their roles. The student becomes more knowledgeable during the development of the research process, and he or she brings that new knowledge into the group as the expert on the topic: ‘roles open up and reciprocity happens’ (Zinzi 2011).

This is consistent with Lave and Wenger’s (1991:29) argument of legitimate peripheral participation which gives way to full participation over time. Learning in this sense is a process of social participation (not so much knowledge acquisition by individuals) and the situation impacts greatly on the process (Lave & Wenger 1991:29). Reciprocity and the flat power structure in DRAW results in a balanced interaction between supervisors and students which, in turn, leads to an enhanced learning process because students do not feel intimidated (Jasmine 2011). Members stated that the open, flexible and informal approach to supervision and the fact that supervisors share their own research activities in DRAW, also enhances the learning process.

Peer-learning was actively encouraged and was identified by members as a strength in the group. The interaction of local students and international students provided a richer background, expanded content knowledge and lived experience to the advantage of all. Vera (2011) indicated that her participatory/co-design approach to research is based on the lessons learnt in DRAW: ‘A mutual learning experience is a strong strategy to make a real change … in design research, designers arrive at collaborative solutions to design problems’. Peer support also provides psychological comfort which makes the Masters journey less lonely, according to Batman (2011), Vera (2011), Faizal (2011) and Fatima (2011). Figure 4 provides an overview of the supervisory support pillar.

Consolidating the DRAW model

As can be seen from the narrative data presented in the previous sections, aspects other than subject matter expertise during supervision are significant contributors to learning and research advancement. Particularly with postgraduate research, autonomy in owning and managing the research project and taking responsibility is key. From the authors’ perspective – as reflective practitioners – strength and direction was drawn from the collective DRAW experiences. The sessions offered moments
of insight, enjoyment and professional growth as we explored group supervision based on collaboration, dialogue and regular interaction. The consensus among participants was that the DRAW forum created an atmosphere in which an empathic understanding of others was realised. Inasmuch as students developed ‘care’ and ‘authentic openness’ (Webb 1997:197) over time, so did the supervisors. A seamless conflation of supervision and learning activities occurred as supervisors too engaged in collective learning. With regard to the development of empathy and an understanding of the ‘life-world of “the Other”’, Webb (1997:197) advances that:

The history of hermeneutical understanding has emphasised the exploration of the role of the researcher within the research situation and the intensely human element contained in the development of empathy. The process is intricate, self-reflective and progressive. It requires time and the development of … “care” and “authentic openness” to the Other.

Openness was possible initially because participants perceived themselves to be in the same boat, and an understanding developed around mutual research interests which were consolidated over the two years that members participated in the forum. The DRAW community was ‘created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise’ (Wenger 1998:45). In this community, care and authentic openness had to be nurtured and maintained. This was achieved through DRAW members being actively involved in dialogue as conversationalists. It is in the role of conversationalists that Webb (1997:197) argues that understanding grows as each person ‘discovers and re-discovers him- or herself in “the Other”’.

In addition, the narrative technique of ‘listening and holding the space’ or ‘leading from any chair’ (Kaos-Pilots [sa]:[sp]), supports conversationalists in their exploration. It is open, tentative and intuitive, and is used to promote enculturation of members into a community of practice (Samara 2006:15) and to equalise power differentials in a group. The process reflects a critical pedagogic approach, an approach which aims to break down hierarchical structures that result in power differentials between lecturers and students (Trahar 2009). Any member of the group can lead activities, and the default position of supervisor/authority as leader is shared. The technique, consequently, consolidates activities and cohesion within a community of practice, and was introduced to the authors during a leadership workshop facilitated by the KaosPilots presenters in March 2010 and March 2011.

The narrative technique is in keeping with the ‘dialogue-seminar method’ (Ratkić 2009:99), group supervision practice (Samara 2006:116) and the cohort model described by De Lange et al. (2011:15). Supervision as a group activity carried out in a community of practice, offers advantages. Apart from facilitating enculturation into a particular discipline or group, De Lange et al. (2011:27) maintain that ‘alongside the traditional one-to-one supervision relationship [community supervision] opens up other voices’. It helps the transition from newcomer to experienced member and the ‘movement of student from novice to expert’ (De Lange et al. 2011:26). In DRAW this was done by encouraging participants to lead sessions with narrative and individual subject expertise. In the topic origination phase, biographical significance of the topic and immersion in the research process was emphasised. Pedagogical learning approaches supported various stages of the research. For instance, the ‘deep approach’ to learning which focuses on a holistic perspective and is meaning-making was primarily used, complimented by the ‘surface approach’ which is concerned with attention to detail and the studying of new material (Webb 2007: 205, 206, 207).
Figure 5 provides an overview of the consolidated DRAW model. The unnamed circles represent potential to engage with other communities in the university and away from the university. With some DRAW members eventually returning to home countries, these circles may well be populated with alumni and industry fields.

**Conclusion: Real change happens when there is a strong strategy**

The DRAW forum was initiated at the CPUT in early 2009. It aimed to provide an academic and social support forum for postgraduate students who often experience isolation in their research, and to improve limited supervision capacity within the design departments. The aims were realised since the DRAW forum increased supervision capacity. This was achieved by sharing the load between the two supervisors and postgraduate students. All the forum participants negotiated and
re-negotiated the format and styles of supervision which developed as open-ended, inclusive and empathetic activities. Roles were unpacked and exchanged as participants experienced being expert at times and novice at other times, as roles changed from newcomer to established member. The flat power structure of the forum strengthened this reciprocal relationship in this community of practice, since it broke down power differentials.

The social support pillar in the DRAW forum was based on interdependence among the members and gave rise to:

- an empathetic home-space
- openness
- egalitarianism
- collegiality
- academic development
- sharing food and drink
- participation and
- narrative conversation.

Ubuntu and the spirit of togetherness were seen as important philosophical support pillars in the forum. The uncompromising foregrounding of socially responsive design models such as DfS and DfD, underpinned by the Ubuntu ethos, represented a strategy to promote sustainable design. Change in design to make it more sustainable can only become a reality if the agenda is actively promoted in the academy, in the community and in industry. With the DRAW focus on encouraging holistic learning approaches, sustainability, building commonality, empathy and taking responsibility, a strategy for social change is advocated via the graduates entering industry or returning to home countries and practising design there. Interrogating these concepts in the university is part of the work of DRAW, since the workgroup embodies design thinking as a practical change agent.

Co-creation emerged as an important supervisory support pillar. As DRAW participants we concur with Nelson (2009:111) that the designer’s vision ‘meshes with, or grows out of, an apprehension or intuition of how activities might better be served or realized’. As a community of practice, we used our intuition actively in the co-creative activity of group supervision to guide candidates to the successful completion of their research degrees. Five of the seven founding DRAW members were capped with their Master in Design degrees in the September 2011 graduation ceremony. Another graduated in April 2012, and the remaining forum members will be guided to completion through the DRAW support structure. Borrowing from Böhm (1996:9), we gathered in a circle and talked. We knew what to do because we understood each other well. Each session and each member offers scope for healthy introspection. This has resulted in DRAW remaining an open, empowering and mutually supportive space that continues to contribute towards a tolerant, inclusive and discursive dialogue. And through the spirit of reciprocity and respect that underpins the Ubuntu ethos, ‘we participate, therefore we are …’.

**Future directions**

The DRAW forum is continuing in 2012 with its seminars based on conversational and narrative methods to support postgraduate students. Opening the forum up to other disciplines in the Faculty of Informatics and Design, namely Public Relations and Information Technology, will add yet another dimension of interdisciplinarity, complexity and collaboration to one of the
biggest Design Faculties in South Africa. This different context with a wider audience may offer insights from alternative perspectives. In this way, the forum will continue to deepen the personal and professional insight of the participants by respecting and valuing ‘difference’ in the learning community (De Lange et al. 2011:23).

Notes

1 This paper was originally presented at the Design, Development and Research Inaugural Conference at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Bellville, Cape Town, 24-26 September 2011.

Student research titles in DRAW include:
- De Flamingh, F. 2011. The role of textiles in sustainable South African residential architecture.

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of Design, Curtin University of Technology. [Title listed in table of contents of Proceedings but not published].


Appendix 1

Example of a reflective journal writing and documentation: May 2010:

Drawing the line: When students design learning and supervisors eat cookies

The questionnaire for DRAW members, data of which is to be used in the above paper written for the CPUT Design, Development and Research (DDR) conference that we are hosting in September 2011. Yes, supervisors too need to reflect on their practice and write about it. So do students, please take time to think about your responses and know that now the shoe is on the other foot! Depending on your answers, you will be busy for about 30 minutes. Please sign after completion on the form for consent.

As designers we use terms such as ‘design thinking’ and ‘design’ to describe what we do when we make meaning of the world through our practice, or when we produce artefacts, products and services. When we extend that space to include design research, we also make meaning of our world in a different way. Now we may concentrate more on underlying concepts and theories to help us frame our problems and responses. One of these spaces in our case is the DRAW space, where we share common goals and vision.

1. Social DRAW:

- What do you like about the DRAW space?
- What do you not like about the DRAW space?
• Which of the social activities in the group supported you during your research, and which of the social activities hindered your progress?

• How would you describe the social DRAW space in terms of the friendships and relationships that members form?

• If inter-dependence is one of the social DRAW pillars, what would you say are the other pillars?

2. Philosophical DRAW:

• The terms ‘deep learning and surface learning’ refer to different learning styles. Webb (1997) states that students fond of a deep learning approach try to understand and make meaning from a learning event (as opposed to memorising information without contextualisation). Have the theories and philosophies discussed in DRAW sessions helped you to make meaning of your research as a learning event? If so, in which way, and which theories in particular?

• The ‘surface’ learning approach also has its place, Webb (1997) argues. This is more concerned with the obvious (and mechanical) as opposed to underlying concepts and holistic understanding. Were you aware of using these two different approaches in your research, and, if so, explain how and why you made use of them.

• In the DRAW context, do you think that an empathetic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of members in the group shaped the research process of the candidates in a particular way?

• Empathetic understanding hinges on a person’s ability to put him- or herself in the other person’s shoes. Cochran-Smith (1997) links this, in turn, with story-telling and making one’s voice heard. Were you able to use story-telling to make your voice heard in DRAW, and did you use narrative in your research as a tool? Can you recall a specific example?

• What role did story-telling play in the DRAW sessions?

3. Supervisory DRAW:

• In a changing world supervision (and the way students and supervisors interact) cannot remain unchanged. In your opinion, which factors are responsible for changes in student/lecturer interaction and supervision?

• Do you find that supervisory practices are different in the DRAW/CPUT context to supervision in other countries where you did research?

• The DRAW sessions aimed to create a space where conversations and collective learning were deployed as a research method. Did this method add value to your personal research strategy, and, if so, how did it help? In turn, did you add value to others’ research strategy, and, if so, how did you do that?

• What was the supervisors’ role during the DRAW sessions?

• What would you like to have seen more of from the supervisors during DRAW?

• What aspects of supervision did you like during the DRAW sessions?
• Webb (1997) argues that an empathetic understanding of others requires time and the development of care and authentic openness to the ‘other’. This, in turn, leads to discovery of him- or herself in the ‘other’. How do you understand this concept and do you think that DRAW succeeded in achieving this or not? Why do you say so?

• As postgraduate students, did you feel at times that you were experts in the group and that the role of expert and novice rotated? How did it happen?

• Any additional comments that you would like to make to offer insights into the DRAW research experience?

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to complete the questions!

Biographical details will be kept confidential and identities will be protected. Names do not have to be supplied if you wish not to.

Alettia and Mugendi
Exit interviews 11.5.2011

- The success of presenting is that in doing a wider scope and different feedback is encouraged. Comments can clear the air and improve quality.

- DRAW really prepared us for an presentation and is a microcosm of the real world conference setting. The other space which looks itself well to the different projects we have.

- DRAW is a family away from home and many members are friends.

- DR fact that we are all equal and feel free to say whatever – no hierarchy.

- Internationalization: inter-cultures (tolerance) with all members.

- We are the true rainbow nation: contain diversity, personalities, knowledge.
Abstract

Dialectic relationships exist between architecture and emergent architecturally informed disciplines. Interior design constitutes such a discipline and is considered a critical case study. The main problem is to investigate the ontology of interior design by considering its affiliation with architecture. With the use of Julia Kristeva’s construct, the abject, a synopsis of architectural and interior design theory is read to ascertain the dialectic and overlapping relationship. Through heuristic enquiry an ontological analysis of interior design (with reference to essentialist aspects of architecture) is made. The Manichean dialectic is employed to produce qualitative descriptions that portray the disciplines as discrete ‘others’. Architecture is a normative profession which considers interior design as a part of itself.

Key words: Abjection; architecture; interior design; ontology

Introduction

Although the subtext is not said out loud, it still is clear: interior design is inferior to architecture. In spite of many postmodern/poststructuralist reassessments during the last thirty years, the duality that places architecture as the dominant term in a binary opposition with interior design remains largely undeconstructed (Havenhand 2004:33).

This indicates the necessity to examine the dialectic relationship that exists between interior design and architecture; the article recognises this and aims to explore the status quo. It will argue for self-consciousness and self-confidence. Lucinda Kaukas Havenhand (2004:33, 38) argues that since interior design occupies a truly marginal position it has the potential to offer ‘more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world’ and that it can only reach this potential when it discontinues to emulate architecture and explores its ‘otherness’. The perceived assumptions regarding interior design’s role as ‘other’ to architecture must be investigated.

The main problem addressed in this article is to investigate the ontology of interior design by studying its relationship with architecture. The paper accepts the device known as the ‘other’ as a mechanism to study identity and to understand dualistic relationships, as...
is evident in the work of Edward Said (2003) and Homi K Bhabha (1994) (on postcolonialism) and Simone de Beauvoir (1953) (on gender). In his article *Problematizing exclusion*, David Sibley (1998) argues that a form of exclusion might occur when marginal groups try to create spaces where a form of autonomy can be established. Sibley (1998) further investigates the possibility that while knowledge of minorities may be used to deconstruct the myth of the abject ‘other’, it may also be a tool to control or colonise the marginalised group.

This article takes cognisance of Gloria Anzuldúa’s arguments against dualism, oversimplification and essentialism of hybrid identities in *Borderlands* (Elenes 2005: 359), but specifically utilises and exploits the dualism between interior design and architecture. It does not aim to offer new insights into the nature of the ontological construct denoted as the ‘other’, but it views the lack of application of this device to understand professional relationships (particularly amongst closely related disciplines) as a lacuna in existing architectural theory and ontology. We aim to offer new insights in this area, and an attempt is made to understand the binary oppositions related to the relationship between the disciplines: the public and the private; exteriority and interiority; rationalism and intuition; inherent materiality and applied decoration; and so forth. To inform the inquiry the process of ‘abjection’, as proposed by Julia Kristeva (1982), is taken as a starting point. Abjection is the process whereby an object is expelled from a subject without attaining a separate ‘otherness’; ‘[t]he abject is an impossible object, still part of the subject [but unabolishable]’ (Grosz 1992:198). It is the premise here that interior design is architecture’s abject ‘other’. An ontological understanding of the disciplines may enable a better informed future professional framework which not simply aims to define legal boundaries for their professional practices.

**Methods**

In its concern with the nature of being, ontology is suitable for application in an inquiry about the character of interior design as being. The concept of the impossible object (‘abject’) has direct impact on the relationship between architecture and interior design. The phenomena representing this relationship may be studied to understand the nature of the relationship between, and the very being of, the disciplines. The article follows a liberal plural meta-theoretical approach. This concept was developed by the political theorist, William Galston in *Liberal pluralism* (2002) and *The practice of liberal pluralism* (2005). Although liberal pluralism allows for value judgements and moral statements, we do not attempt to offer judgements on interior design or architecture, and recognise that both disciplines have valuable traditions. The ‘other’ is used as device to make sense of the complex and overlapping identities of the disciplines in question. The purpose is to illuminate possible professional boundaries and attempt to delineate greater autonomy, while not denying complex and relational traditions.

A heuristic enquiry into the nature of interior design will enable us to evaluate material from the empirical world (theory created by architects and interior designers, direct quotations and depictions of the disciplines in the popular media) to produce qualitative descriptions about the being of interior design. All heuristic enquiries pursue a question which is closely related to one’s own identity and selfhood (Moustakas 1990:40). We will value the personal and the experiential in both the research and writing; even in phenomenological observation, the observer cannot be removed. In using this method we claim the right to subjectivity. The research is dependent on the personification of the professional identities of the disciplines in question.
This article is presented as object-relations oriented criticism, and follows a subversive strategy which allows for the self-identification as interior designers. (Refer her to Karen Burns (2010:256) stating ‘innovative writing has become a woman’s sign of her otherness’, she continues ‘that it is too easy for feminist work to play the Other’. In this paper we will try to depart from the male/female notion of ‘otherness’ by stating that interior design is architecture’s ‘other’.) To initiate the argument, the experience and roots of abjection are discussed. Following this, an ontology of interior design will be established. It may be argued that within the realm of the ‘other’ it will be necessary to establish an ontology for architecture against which interior design may be measured. This is not necessary. Firstly, an architectural ontology falls outside the scope of this article; secondly, the ‘other’, as device, may be employed by referring to essentialist aspects of architecture. To conclude, interior design will be stated as architecture’s abject ‘other’.¹

The experience of abjection

[The other] is not unknown but unknowable, refractory to all light. But this precisely indicates that the other is in no way another myself, participating with me in a common existence. The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in each other’s place; we recognize the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with Mystery. The other’s entire being is constituted by its exteriority, or rather its alterity, for exteriority is a property of space and leads the subject back to itself through light (Levinas 1989:43).

Abjection relates to the process of the separation and differentiation of identities; it is not only applicable to the individual, but also to the collective (Lloyd 2004:141). Identity formation is an ‘attempt to overcome a lack, as a process of desire for the power of the other, that produces the image of the self’ (Neuman 1999:8). In understanding the process of establishing professional identity, the process of abjection is a valid device. Abjection is discussed from two points of view: firstly, it is considered from a positive viewpoint as the process whereby the ‘same’ : ‘other’ conceptual pair gains separate identities. It is, therefore, the process whereby a new identity is established. During the process the abject is the incomplete object; it has only one quality of the object – ‘that of being opposed to the I’ (Kristeva 1982:1). This is in opposition to the conventional discussions of abjection that describe it as negative and ugly, and leads to the second, and traumatic point of view where ‘[t]he abject is what threatens identity’ (Oliver 1993:56). Abjection is considered traumatic because it represents an unfinished process of ambiguity.

The abject is neither subject nor object (same or ‘other’); it makes the impossible identity of each clear. The abject signifies the precarious grasp that the subject has over its identity and boundaries (Grosz 1992:197-198). Architecture’s own identity is precarious; in answering its own ontological questions it is met with disagreement (Shepheard 1995:15). Interior design is a discipline that threatens and questions the identity and boundaries of the architectural profession.

Individual and collective identities are not only created in the difference between the ‘same’ : ‘other’ conceptual pair, but also in the ambiguity ‘where one is other to oneself, and in the recognition of the other as like’ (Norton in Neuman 1999:8). Abjection is above all other things ambiguity. It does not separate the object from the subject, but it acknowledges the perpetual danger to the identity of the subject (Kristeva 1982:1).
In the separation of identities abjection blurs the boundaries:

I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be ‘me’. Not at all another with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be (Kristeva 1982:10).

There are ‘pollution powers’ at work on the boundary between the disciplines of architecture and interior design. Here we refer to Mary Douglas (1966:112):

But there are other dangers to be reckoned with, which persons may set off knowingly or unknowingly, which are not part of the psyche and which are not to be bought or learned by initiation and training. These are pollution powers which inhere in the structure of ideas itself and which punish a symbolic breaking of that which should be joined or joining that which should be separate.

This ambiguity and lack of definition is the abject. Interior design and architecture are abject ‘others’; to refer to a group as abject represents it as something that is alien to the collective (Sibley 1998). The abject can only exist while abjection is in process. On completion the abject will collapse into the object (Kristeva 1982:210). This reiterates the positive aspect of abjection: it is the process whereby the ‘same’ : ‘other’ conceptual pair separate and gain individual identities.

For the purposes of this article, abjection is referred to as a construct employed to understand how the disciplines are differentiating and establishing separate identities. While the process of abjection is incomplete, the subject/object is not able to exist as either same or ‘other’. It is this fluid process that makes it impossible for interior design and architecture to exist as discrete professional practices. An attempt will be made to highlight the dualistic aspects of their identities.

An ontology of interior design

[The interior] exists between the physical, the poetic and the phenomenological. The interior domain is the place of dwelling, dreaming, belonging, sanctuary, memory and association, and a metaphorical stage set in which we act out life, simultaneously saturated with artefacts of conspicuous consumption in a world deeply concerned with sustainability. It is a platform on which to benchmark fashionable social mores, project social status and a lab in which to test ethnographic methods and patterns of use, behaviour and ritual (Milligan, Hollis, Milton, Plunkett, Hay & Gigli 2007:20).

Interior design is often criticised because it lacks a deep, comprehensive body of theory and history. For example, in the preface to A philosophy of interior design, Stanley Abercrombie (1990:ix) states that during a debate in 1987, an argument was made against the licensing of interior designers. Interior design could not be considered a true profession since it lacked a body of theory. A number of writers developed theories for interior design after Smith and Tate’s (1986:560) statement that interior design is preoccupied with ‘vision and touch’. The discomfort amongst interior designers regarding this concept indicates a reluctance to be associated with decoration. This discomfort is rooted in the concept that decoration is superficial when compared to functional or spatial aspects. Furthermore, it builds on an inferiority complex that links decoration to femininity and spatiality to masculinity. A stereotypical dualism exists that associates women with the body and decoration and men with technology and the shaping of nature (Clegg & Mayfield 1999:3).
Interior design should not be criticised for its decorative aspects. Decoration is a critical aspect in any conversation about interior design (Attiwill 2004:62). For this argument, ‘vision and touch’ are considered decorative elements. When interior design preoccupies itself with vision and touch (which are very closely related) this is born out of deep concern for the user of space. The distinction between interior design and decoration creates an allegiance with architecture where interior design cannot be separated from it. The interrelated histories of both disciplines are well documented in sources such as *Architecture and interior design* (Ball 1980), *Modern architecture since 1900* (Curtis 1996) and *A century of interior design, 1900-2000* (Abercrombie 2003), but if interior design follows a strategy to align itself with architecture, it will strengthen its supplemental role. In contrast, Havenhand (2004:40) suggests that interior design should embrace its dissimilarity:

In a new strategy for interior design that celebrates its marginal feminine position, and therefore a wider, more complete, and more robust view of interiority, issues such as materiality, sensuousness, decoration, nurturing, self expression, desire and mothering which have been de-emphasised in a male, rationalist, architectural framework would be brought to the foreground.

The choice of materials can give an intervention a temporal aspect; in addition, ‘[t]he designer is more inclined than the architect to experiment with new materials’ (Scott 2008:174). Interior design deals primarily with the experiential and temporal aspects of space. It deals with the body in space, and it does so in a practical way, concerned with space usage, anthropometrics, ergonomics and comfort; but it also deals with a deeper philosophical way of understanding the way the user will experience space, the way people interact with space, understand space, and intuitively are in constant dialogue with space. The concept of ‘vision and touch’ is not merely a superficial way of dealing with trends and fashion.

In Baxter’s (1991) article, *Thirty years of growth in the literature of interior design*, a body of literature about interior design from the period 1961-1991 is suggested. The article states that works like *A philosophy of interior design* (Abercrombie 1990) undermine the idea that interior design lacks a scholarly body of theory (Baxter 1991:249). Although *A philosophy of interior design* is used as a source for this article, a review of the text indicates that it relies on the description of the most universal aspects of interior design. This can be contrasted with older texts in architecture (from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier), as well as recent interior design theories. The most notable work in recent interior design theories is *On altering architecture* (Scott 2008), which offers a theory and vocabulary for the design work that responds to, and alters, architecture. It is an attempt to argue against the hegemony that declares architectural work to be of more value. Increasingly, the disparity between the theoretical approaches of architects and interior designers is diminishing as the latter consider the impact of culture on the design process (Baxter 1991:249). Suzie Attiwill (2007) and Luis Diaz (2007) start to speculate on the possible objects of an interior design history and canon.

In our opinion, attempts to create a history for interior design that pre-empts that of architecture is a device which undermines the contemporary professional practice of interior design. This might be achieved by referring to cave paintings or other prehistoric interventions in ‘found space’ (e.g., William Turner (1981:8) refers to 25,000 year old cave paintings at Dordogne. The objectives of prehistoric spatial interventions and interior design in the twenty-first century are not comparable).

In Western architectural history, Malnar and Vodvarka (1992:4) trace the professional specialisation in the
interior realm to the Rococo period, which was a result of the financial position of the petit aristocracy. The interior had become financially and symbolically important enough to warrant specialist attention (Málár & Vodvarka 1992:18-19). At this stage interior design work was performed by architects. Recognition of interior design as a discipline separate from architecture is a twentieth century phenomenon (Gürel & Potthoff 2006:218).

Interior decoration has its origins in the involvement of women in the nineteenth-century arts and crafts movement (McNeil 1994:632). At the turn of the twentieth century, decoration was considered an appropriate occupation for women, with academic programs in interior decoration established in the home economics departments of American universities (Gürel & Potthoff 2006:210). Charles Rice (2003:144) states that an awareness of the interior as distinct from architecture emerged at the end of the ‘first part of the nineteenth century’, thereby affirming Massey’s (2001:142) opinion. This leads to interior decoration’s distinct professional identity, which is considered to be antagonistic to the architectural profession. After the Second World War, the profession of ‘interior design’ emerged. Designers usually received formal (graduate) education, and ‘increasingly worked on non-domestic commissions, as the commercial sector realized the value of good interior design’ (Clegg & Mayfield 1999:10).

Despite its technical and spatial aspects, interior design is still viewed, by both men and women, as a ‘feminine’ discipline (Clegg & Mayfield 1999:11). In the broader construction of public and private spaces, the ‘inside’ is still associated with women; this causes interior design to remain on the feminine side of the gender dualism despite the discipline’s orientation towards public, commercial and industrial spaces (Clegg & Mayfield 1999:11). The association of interior design with femininity and architecture with masculinity is clear in the following description of an interior design student who has technical interests: ‘[she] found herself frustrated by the presumed associations of femininity despite her own preferences for the architectural’ (Clegg & Mayfield 1999:11, emphasis added).

The origins of interior design as an applied art are rooted in architectural practice, but it is developing into an interconnected but independent discipline (Baxter 1991:241). This discipline can be distinguished from interior decoration and architecture because it is a discipline of spatial performance and experience and not a discipline of composition or style (Pringle in Attiwill 2004:6).

There is a conceptual lacuna between architectural and interior design theory, where architectural theory prioritises the ‘building’ or the ‘object’ over the ensemble (Milligan et al. 2007:20). ‘[A]rchitects design buildings from the outside; the inside is fallout’ (Gürel & Potthoff 2006:220). Beyond a very brief first impression, interior design is an amalgam of elements experienced individually (Abercrombie 1990:143). During the experience of an interior space the observer has to be inside the space from whence it is then impossible to experience the totality. The experience of interior space relies on a sequence of partial understandings of viewings of the space. The sequential partial understanding of interior space is the phenomenological agent that prohibits interior design from being a discipline of composition:

Unlike architecture, interior design has never been based on formal visual composition, but always on an understanding of experiential reality and meaning of form. Such experiential reality is emotion based and embodied (Solovyova 2008:3).
Composition and style are intricately linked in architecture. To achieve consistency and coherence in architecture, allegiance to a particular style is an effective device: "the great developments of architecture and design in the last century were manifestations of such allegiances" (Scott 2008:174-175). Architectural style is the product of the design process; it is not a concept based on classifying features of design; a consistent way of doing results in a consistent style. In a broader sense, style is consistent with a collective adoption of organising principles. Changes of style can be observed when dominant principles are no longer productive and the architectural community's way of doing changes (Rowe 1987:109-110). Kurtich and Eakin (1993:407-408) state that during times of stylistic change the fashion in design becomes trendy without substance; a trend will only develop into a style if it matures into an expression of the current culture. Since the 1990s, the literature of interior design has pointed to a shift away from the study of trends (Baxter 1991:249). Style is not a device that is available to the interior designer. In interventional design, the designer must follow other paths than the search for cohesive composition. The means to achieve contradiction and confrontation in the composition may be more appropriate (Scott 2008:174-175).

Scott's (2008:xv) definition of 'pure' architecture, the making of a new building on a cleared site, is used to construct the following argument. For architecture, a major source of decision-making and form giving is theoretical discourse. To be valid, a theory should have a community of subscribers that represents shared principles worthy of emulation. Architectural theory is generally concerned with the ontological question, 'What is architecture?', and the utopian question, 'What ought to be?' (Rowe 1987:115). Architecture is utopian in its nature. The answer to the question lies in utopia as a project. In this instance, 'utopia' is meant in its broadest, idealistic meaning. In 'utopia as a project', the work of architecture is directed towards construction that would overcome the crisis and antagonism of contemporary life (Tarfuri in Cunningham 2001:169). If utopia is achieved, if the State is functioning perfectly, there will be no alteration work necessary in architectural work. Buildings will either remain as they are indefinitely or be demolished, '[t]hrough forethought and prescience, buildings would remain unchanged from the moment of their inception up to their eventual demise' (Scott 2008: 1).

Different points of view define architecture's role in the relationship between inside and outside. For Robert Venturi (1966:88-89), architecture happens on the boundary between interior and exterior:

Designing from the outside in, as well as the inside out, creates necessary tensions, which help make architecture. Since the inside is different from the outside, the wall – the point of change – becomes an architectural event. Architecture occurs at the meeting of interior and exterior forces of use and space.

Opposed to Venturi's notion is the idea that 'interior' and 'exterior' simply describe opposite sides of the same wall (Gordon 1974:viii). In one description the wall is the architecture; in the other the spaces on either side of it. The architect's self-image relies on the conviction that s/he is a 'problem solver'. The problems on both sides of the wall are subject to the same functional analysis and rules of harmony and visual order (Gordon 1974:viii). Although Venturi (1966) recognises the difference between interior and exterior space, Gordon (1974) proposes the same approach to solve the problems of both. This establishes the idea that in the design of interior space, architecture is reliant on composition and style. The modes by which interior space is produced are different for the two disciplines under discussion.
The interior created by an architectural envelope is an oppressive and exclusive space (Irigiray in Smith 2004:93): ‘In other words, the interior is inferior and limited by the architectural form that contains it’ (Smith 2004:93-94). Conceptually, the interior space is contained and constrained by the architectural envelope. Rice (2003:145) refers to an enclosed space provided by architecture in which furnishings and domestic objects may be inserted to create an interior. Interior design is, therefore, merely the act of insertion within the architectural envelope. The perceived inferiority of interior design is seated in this fact. It is a construct that the discipline is inferior since its sites of intervention are dependent on architecture. Interdependence does not indicate hierarchy. Approaches in interior design thinking should not see the interior space as an empty container to be filled with ‘interior design’, because it would imply that the discipline is inferior to and defined by architecture (Smith 2004:100).

Interior designers have responded to the concept of the oppressive and exclusive architectural space in a number of ways. For Tate and Smith (1986:wiv-xv), ‘interiors’ are distinguished from ‘spaces’ when they are fully enclosed and have ceilings, and ‘interior design’ is the creation and organisation of interior spaces. A progressive and recent description that tries to break down the boundaries between inside and outside is that of Ellen Klingenberg (2006:22), who holds the opinion that interior space is not specifically inside a building: ‘[i]t could be under the sky but it is not architecture either’. In our opinion, the first description is too restrictive and the second too general. Klingenberg (2006) is unable to define the discipline and its field of expertise, but she opens the discipline to scrutiny and self-definition. Neither of these descriptions adequately answers the threat of architectural containment and conscription.

Attiwill (2004:3) offers an appealing point of view:

The question of interior and exterior are still pertinent and potent but they are dynamic, changing relations rather than one of permanence defined by built form. Interior design then becomes an activity of organizing material spatially and temporally.

For Christine McCarthy (2005:119), habitation related to interiority is not literal but projected across space, scale and time: ‘This preoccupation addresses how one might occupy a dollhouse … and how the two dimensions of an architectural drawing, a shadow, or a computer screen might be spatial and interior. Interiority touches, but is beyond, three-dimensionality’.

The temporal and experiential aspects are pertinent in Attiwill and McCarthy’s descriptions. The interior becomes a space of interconnectedness, not containment (Smith 2004:94). The discipline should be careful not to become too general and undefined. Interior space should be contained in some way. This containment should be more specific than saying that ‘the horizon is an interior’ (Colomina in McCarthy 2005:114).

To consider interior design in a holistic manner it can be described as such: the term (interior design) is used in an inclusive manner to incorporate all work concerned with the design of interior space; an entire building designed to contain integrated interiors, the completion of space in existing architecture or the adaptive re-use of existing buildings (including additions) with a focus on interior space. Interior design is considered holistically to include ‘interior decoration’ and ‘interior architecture’, as ‘interior design’ describes both the product (‘interior space’) and process (‘design’) of the discipline. Interior design is a space making discipline that responds to found space; the product must be contained in some way (for a full discussion on the semantic issues
relating to the title of the discipline, refer to König 2011).

For both interior design and architecture, the criterion that design must engage its audience is a precondition for achieving other goals (Rowe 1987:147). The goals of the work might differ for interior design and architecture, but without communication between the work and its audience these goals cannot be met.

Paradoxically, interior design has its origins both from within architecture (the interior is an indisputable aspect of architecture) and from without (as a ‘women’s profession’ based in the applied arts and homemaking).

In its spatiality, studio education and knowledge of construction and structure it is similar to architecture; as a discipline outside architecture, interior design brings intellectual capital and a worldview that is dissimilar to that of architecture. Rice (2003:146) describes the abject relationship in this manner: ‘The interior is thus caught between being both a part of architecture, at the same time it exists apart from architecture’. It is in this dissimilar similarity that the roots of abjection lie.

**Contested identities**

The domain of interiors constitutes a point of tension between practicing architects and interior designers. Design of interior spaces is a significant part of the architectural profession (Gürel & Potthoff 2006:217).

This section deals primarily with the writings about architecture, in lieu of reference to architectural objects. The relevance of this method is illustrated in the texts *Ex libris: Archaeologies of feminism, architecture and deconstruction* (Burns 2010:242-265) and *Following Hélène Cixous’ steps toward a writing architecture* (Frichot 2010:312-323).

The abject relationship between architecture and interior design is revealed in two ways: firstly, interior design is not considered as a separate discipline and is thus neglected in the architectural discourse; secondly, interior design may be acknowledged, but aspects that are significant in its ontology are considered as a source of pollution which deteriorates architectural practice. Rice (2003:145) offers two alternatives to describe the relationship between interior design and architecture: the interior realm is either collapsed back into architecture or considered wholly outside it.

In the first instance of contestation, interior design is not considered a distinct discipline, since the design of interior space falls within the scope of architectural work. The interior domain falls within this scope, and as such, interior design is considered as part of the architectural profession. The implication is that interior designers are people who ‘practise just a little bit of architecture’ (Giattina in Hughes 2003:45). An example is found in the text *Writing spaces*. Crysler (2003:1) presents the interdisciplinary character of the built environment professions in his introduction when he mentions ‘disciplines such as architecture, planning, geography, and urban studies’. It is interesting to note that Crysler (2003:203) fails to mention any disciplines that primarily deal with the creation of interior space. In his conclusion he states that ‘the categories of “world”, “territory”, “nation”, “city”, “settlement”, “architecture”, “room”, and “body” are increasingly difficult to separate’. When discussing space, the text does not exclude interior space or the body’s relationship to space (’architecture’, ‘room’, and ‘body’). The discrepancy that is evident in the exclusion of the discipline of interior design, while interior space is included in a discussion that states that ‘the idea of the architect
as a singular author is more popular and widespread than at any other time’ (Crysler 2003:202). Interior design is not respected as a discrete discipline.

Even though the interior may be regarded as a secondary aspect, it is still considered part of the architectural realm. When interior designers claim that interior design is a distinct discipline, it forces architects to experience the abject: ‘I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be “me”’ (Kristeva 1982:10). This represents an instance where the act of the disciplines differentiating and establishing separate identities causes distress.

In the second, more sinister, manifestation of the abject relationship, interior design is acknowledged but significant aspects of its ontology are considered as a source of pollution.

The ‘image’ can be considered as a case in point, where both disciplines establish norms and standards against which deviants are stigmatised, according to Augé’s (1998:58) principle. When image making is present in architectural practice it is considered to be something which reduces the integrity of the profession.

In a criticism on the contemporary professional practice of architecture, Zaha Hadid (1993:27) offers the following:

The new role of the architect is to comply with competitively asserted standards of efficiency, to cater to commercial clients, increasingly with the objective of representing corporate identity or else of satisfying the fluctuating standards of good taste. The profession is thus torn into two distinct aspects: on the one hand, architecture becomes a pure technique, as if it were a branch of engineering; on the other hand, it becomes image production, as if it were a branch of advertising. It is in the rise of this second role which is the half-conscious background to the recent flourishing of ‘experimentalism’ in architecture.

This statement is noteworthy when compared to Crysler’s (2003:202) description of a new form of interdisciplinarity:

Architectural practices are increasingly forming working relationships with advertising agencies, marketing consultants, and media strategies in a new form of ‘professional interdisciplinarity’ geared towards developing architecture as an integrated part of product “theming”.

Both authors consider the influence of corporate identity on architecture. They are specifically concerned with the influence of the image on architecture. Hadid (1993:27) is especially critical of this aspect since it leads to the deterioration of the architectural discourse. This repeats Tate and Smith’s (1986:560) perception that architecture is about ideas, in contrast, interior design is about ‘vision and touch’ (image). In Hadid’s (1993:27) view the inclusion of the image in architecture is a form of defilement which leads to the deterioration of discourse.

In the preface to On altering architecture, ‘pure’ architecture is defined as the production of a new building on a cleared site (Scott 2008:xv). Scott (2008:11) elaborates that the purpose of pure architecture is to create buildings that are fitting to the nascent principles of a particular time and place. Reiterating Patrik Schumacher’s (2002:5) notion that ‘theory offers implicit utopia’; ‘pure’ architecture relies on utopian ideology. Architectural imagination is an implicitly utopian practice (Coleman 2005:236). When pure architecture is created, it is done with the intention to improve the world to the best ability of people at the time of its creation.
Rem Koolhaas (in Scott 2008:56) claimed that owing to the declining rate of new building against the growth of alteration, the ‘end of architecture’ will occur at the point on a graph where the two lines would cross. To counter this, Koolhaas proposes that the city should be zoned into areas where new architecture should be built, which will remain unaltered for a hundred years, after which it will be demolished and replaced with new buildings. This solution would be the end of alteration, and to a large extent, the end of interior design.

This introduces a further point of difference between pure architecture and the design of intervention. In order to be ‘pure’, architecture must establish a new building on a clear site. To exist, architecture is dependent on one of two forms of destruction: firstly, if a building already exists, architecture must first be destroyed to allow new building to take place; secondly, if architecture is to inhabit a greenfield site it requires the destruction of the natural environment. Interior design does not require destruction for its existence. This highlights a second failure by architecture in terms of its own principles: to ultimately exist, architecture must destroy something in the environment (either natural or built), this while it is a discipline that is founded on utopian principles to improve that same environment.

Architecture stigmatises interior design as a discipline that is concerned with the cosmetics of interior space; in contrast, interior design feels that architecture cannot create interior space that is positively centred on human experience (Kurtich & Eakin 1993:462). The idea that architecture is unable to adequately deal with interior space was expressed in 1877 by Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman (in Gürel & Potthoff 2006:219) in *The decoration of houses*:

Architects [sic] task seems virtually confined to the elevation and floor-plan. The designing of what are today regarded as insignificant details, such as moldings, architraves, and cornices, has become a perfunctory work, hurried over and unregarded; and when this work is done, the upholsterer is called in to decorate and furnish the rooms.

Kurtich and Eakin (1993:461) elaborate on this point by stating that architects can plan buildings well, but they do not study and develop the interior spaces. This is especially evident in architect’s drawings that are devoid of furniture and finishes and indicate a lack of awareness of interior design. In contrast, in her design for E.1027, Eileen Grey considered the divans to be ‘indispensable’ and drew them directly on plan (Rault 2005:169).

The issue of scale is one of the most obvious points of differentiation between the design disciplines. The interior dimension is experienced more intimately than architecture, and this makes interior scale smaller than exterior scale (Malnar & Vodvarka 1992:20). As mentioned previously, in Crysler’s (2003:1) analysis of disciplinary discourses he specifically mentions ‘architecture, planning, geography, and urban studies’. In his conclusion, scale is identified as a point of differentiation in the ‘space’ disciplines (Crysler 2003:202):

... I would suggest that if there is a fault in the model of interdisciplinarity that has developed until now, it is rooted in the reluctance of the ‘space’ disciplines to communicate with each other, and hence reinforce the scale politics of spatial analysis that continues to divide the field as a whole.

If interior design were added to Crysler’s discussion it would inevitably be the discipline which operates on a smaller physical scale than architecture. This opinion is
This article indicates the temporal aspect of interior design's ontology. It introduces a shorter time scale as a point of differentiation from physical scale. Although there will be areas of overlap, interior design products are, in general, physically smaller and survive for a shorter period of time than pieces of architecture. In our opinion, the combined effects of a small-scale design project that only survives for a short time is that the work is considered less important, less complex, and, therefore, easier to execute and inferior to architecture.

Architecture in itself is a discipline that is difficult to define. It is a 'weak discipline' and efforts to make the practice comprehensible depend, in part, on the acceptance of utopia as project (Coleman 2005:236-7). Diaz (2007:168) states that architecture has no 'objective logic'. To the layperson, architecture is indistinguishable from other methods of designing buildings (for example, engineering); the specificity of architecture is based on its theory. Architecture has a fragile 'monopoly of expertise' and architectural services are marketed by using the image of professional practice in the competitive arena of professional services (Crysler 2003:200-201). Interior design, as a discipline, enters this competitive market, and its own strategies of legitimisation and professional practice undermine that of architecture; the tension between the disciplines emerges from this situation.

This section was dependent on essentialist depictions of architecture; it was stated in the Introduction that this device is used purposefully. In no way should this be construed as meaning that we are unaware of the contradictions evident in architecture's ontology. For example, the reader can refer to the dualist discussion of the romantic and rational traditions in architecture in Wojciech G Lesnikowski's (1982) *Rationalism and Romanticism in architecture*. In order to employ the abject to understand the relationship between the architectural disciplines, certain generalisations are necessary.

In summary, we wish to quote Gwendolyn Wright (1977:306):

> As long as architects, male and female, continue to deny the biases of their profession, individuals can only hope to offer adaptations and small scale improvements.

**Conclusion**

This article established an ontology of interior design which compared the being of interior design with that of architecture. It was postulated that the modes of production of space differ for the disciplines, but that the disciplines have certain similarities. Architecture and interior design have contested identities. Interior design's strategies of legitimisation and its professional practice undermine that of architecture; the tension between the disciplines emerges from this situation.

The 'other' is used as a device to argue for an ontological separation of interior design and architecture in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of their professional boundaries. In response to the 'interior design': 'architecture' pair there are typically two reactions, both of which support the ontological pair that prohibit the abject from collapsing, thus barring interior design from gaining an independent, non-supplemental identity.

The first response is an attempt to correct the inherent perceived inferiority of interior design to architecture. In this attempt, interior design emulates architecture.
and places emphasis on points of similarity. The discipline might even attempt a name change and call itself ‘interior architecture’. This position does not dislodge the connection of interior design with the supplemental; furthermore, it may lead to the de-emphasis of aspects of differentiation, especially the decorative aspects of the discipline. This may leave the discipline impoverished.

The second response was purposefully employed as a tactic in this paper. In this case, the Manichean dialectic is used to differentiate the disciplines by placing emphasis on points of variation. Representations are created through the juxtapositioning of two essentialist entities. This tactic is dangerous. Firstly, the two essential entities become inseparable and define what is significant about each other dialectically. Here, a distorted sense of the ‘other’ may lead to a distorted sense of the self. The ontologically opposed pair also leads to a situation where points of similarity become embarrassing. In this case, aspects of similarity will be de-emphasised, which may also leave the discipline impoverished.

We wish to offer the following alternative to contribute to the collapse of the abject, which will leave interior design and architecture with independent and autonomous, albeit complementary and overlapping, identities: Interior design should develop a body of theory that is neither dependent on emulation nor on dialectic emphasis on points of difference, in order for interior design to reach a theoretical position where the discipline can act as itself, regardless of difference or similarity. The concept of liberal-pluralism allows scope for such a position. The ontological pair must be deconstructed, in other words, the dependent relationship must be broken. This will be achieved in a response where interior design neither emulates, nor differentiates itself, from architecture.

The deconstruction of the ontological pair requires a combined response that must be applied with circumspection and care. This response is reliant on elements from the two responses that reinforce the ontological pair. It would, therefore, require constant vigilance and balance to prevent the over-application of one method which will reinforce the ontological pair. It is in the nature of the disciplines that the boundary between them is indeterminate. If it was easy to differentiate the disciplines and establish a clearly defined professional boundary, the research question addressed in this article would be irrelevant.

Interior design is architecture’s ‘other’.

Notes

1 Burns (2010:242) used a similar method when she considered writing as the silent other to architecture often assumed and seldom imagined. In our opinion, ‘writing’ as concept is too broad, Burns’ concept refers to architectural writing specifically. As a closely related discipline, interior design is more suitable for comparison in this manner.

2 The origins and manifestations of gendered connotations are documented in the works of McNeil (1994), Braham (1999), Clegg and Mayfield (1999) and Hanna (1999).

3 Rice (2003:150) describes ways in which architecture tries to claim the interior as part of its own affects by: a) placing emphasis on the design of the interior simultaneously as to the exterior of the building; b) describing the arts and crafts movement as chiefly relating to the interior arts; c) describing Art Nouveau and Jugendstil as the ‘liquification of the interior’ and d) utilising modernist ideas to
conceptualise interior space as projects of the avant-garde, amongst others.

4 Once a culture institutes norms and standards it will recognise deviants and stigmatise them (Augé 1998:58).

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References


Dirty alien shadow-selves: Delving into the dirt in District 9

Cheryl Stobie

Abstract

Beginning with a discussion of the concept of dirt, including synthetic dirt, as contextualised by film critic Peter Brook, I raise pertinent ideas from the work of Nicolas Bourriaud about contemporary visual art. I then move on to an analysis of the representation of literal and synthetic dirt within the science fiction film District 9, directed by Neill Blomkamp (2009). Using Istvan Csicsery-Ronay’s work on the implications of the significance of the encounter with the alien as the ultimate contact zone between self and other, I concentrate on the physical, emotional and aesthetic effects achieved as the central protagonist of District 9 moves from a human to an alien embodiment. I chart the progress of the body-horror and ethical development entailed in this change of state, making reference to ideas first developed by anthropologist Mary Douglas. The viewer’s responses are shown to be complex and muddy, composed of warring impulses of revulsion and admiration. As the central character, Wikus, becomes an alien his body becomes a rich symbolic ground. His increasingly leaky, abject body reflects ideas which can be interpreted universally, but more specifically within the South African context reveal anxieties about the cohesion of a minority group. I conclude by analysing the end of the film, which is moving, future-directed and insistent on the significance of art in society.

Art was intended to prepare and announce a future world: today it is modelling possible universes (Bourriaud 2002:13).

Introduction: dirt and Brook’s ‘Rough Theatre’

In this article I explore the significance of the concept of dirt, including synthetic dirt, as applied to the South African film, District 9 (Blomkamp 2009). I begin by commenting on my use of the metaphor of dirt, including the term, synthetic dirt, which originated in electronic music, but which has been applied by Peter Brook to drama, and can equally be applied to film. I then proceed to apply three theoretical strands to District 9, using Nicolas Bourriaud on aesthetics, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay on science fiction, specifically representations of aliens, and Mary Douglas on anthropology, in order to reveal the effects of conceptualising the film through the lens of types of dirt, including synthetic dirt.

The central concept of significant, symbolic dirt which I employ in this article is explained in a chapter entitled ‘Rough Theatre’ in the book, The empty space, by influential theatre and film director, Peter Brook (1996:79):

> If we find that dung is a good fertilizer, it is no use being squeamish; if the theatre seems to need a certain crude element, this must be accepted as part of its natural soil. At the beginning
of electronic music, some German studios claimed that they could make every sound that a natural instrument could make – only better. Then they discovered that all their sounds were marked by a certain uniform sterility. So they analysed the sounds made by clarinets, flutes, violins, and found that each note contained a remarkably high proportion of plain noise; actual scraping, or the mixture of heavy breathing with the wind on wood: from a purist point of view this was just dirt, but the composers soon found themselves compelled to make synthetic dirt – to ‘humanize’ their compositions. Architects remain blind to this principle – and era after era the most vital theatrical experiences occur outside the legitimate places constructed for the purpose … The Rough Theatre is close to the people … it is usually distinguished by the absence of what is called style.

Brook’s (1996:79) discussion of metaphoric dirt forms part of his analysis of the crucial role played by popular or ‘rough’ theatre, in which he contrasts its qualities: lowbrow, comedic, obscene, anarchic and militant, with the attributes of ‘serious’ theatre: highbrow, legitimate, artistic and conventional. Brook’s (1996:79) concept of dirty, rough theatre does not imply mindless, crowd-pleasing works; instead, it refers to gritty, challenging drama. In the field of film, the distinction would be between arid, over-intellectualised art-films, and popular, but grounded and demanding, films. The incorporation of dirt in a theatrical work, then, may be conceived of as an antidote to the pure, rarefied, abstract and ethereal; its representation of the concrete, corporeal and contaminated ensures vitality within a play, or, by extension, other artworks, such as films. Synthetic dirt is a subset of dirt; it is deliberately added to a work to impart
the flavour of roughness: ‘[s]alt, sweat, noise, smell’ (Brook 1996:78). The vitality imparted by including dirt is specifically associated with the properties of being human, and implicitly calls into question what it means to be human, and what the connection is between humans and dirt. These considerations are illuminating in analysing the science fiction film District 9, which incorporates literal and symbolic dirt in its mise-en-scène, and which amalgamates a number of genre frameworks and varied camera techniques, thus eschewing the purity of a single form.

While the long quotation above contains the only reference to the concept of synthetic dirt in Brook’s book, in the rest of the chapter ‘Rough Theatre’ he discusses the use of roughness in theatre in terms of appearance, intention and reception, emphasising the positive contribution of dirt:

[o]f course, it is most of all dirt that gives the roughness its edge; filth and vulgarity are natural, obscenity is joyous: with these the spectacle takes on its socially liberating role, for by nature the popular theatre is anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional, anti-pomp, anti-pretence. This is the theatre of noise, and the theatre of noise is the theatre of applause (Brook 1996:81).

The dirt alluded to by Brook (1996:81) is an objective correlative connoting both filth and fertiliser. It achieves its effects by choices made by the director and actors with regard to such issues as settings, costumes, overall vision, appropriate acting and interpretation of the meaning of the play; these effects ideally lead to an engaged, active response on the part of the audience. Brook’s chapter, ‘Rough Theatre’, provides a number of contextualisations which resonate interestingly with issues explored in the film District 9. The empty space by Brook conceives of four different types of theatre (which are not necessarily watertight compartments, and which are to be seen suggestively, rather than programmatical y) from the viewpoint of actor, subject, audience and director. Deadly Theatre (Brook 1996:9-41) is often, but not necessarily, commercial, and is vacuous, glib, formulaic, uninspired and moribund; Holy Theatre (Brook 1996:42-64), which deals with metaphysical exploration and transcendence, reveals the invisible made visible; and Immediate Theatre (Brook 1996:98-175) is self-reflexive and responds to the pressing issues of the day, ideally leading to a memorable catharsis. The category which is pertinent to my discussion, Rough Theatre (Brook 1996:65-97), is a popular, down-and-dirty, physical, anarchic form characterised by invention, ideas, laughter and coarse vigour.¹

Brook (1996:84) observes that the most compelling comedy, one of the forms of Rough Theatre, employs archetypal characters in mythic situations which are reflective of current social situations. The plot-line may entail travel into the unknown and involve a simultaneous expansion of the psyche as the result of a wish for change or transformation. For Brook (1996:86-104), the prime exemplar of Rough Theatre is Bertolt Brecht, whose alienation effect entails a disruption of the spectator’s comfortable identification and an appeal for the spectator to assume responsibility for internalising the significance of what is being viewed in terms of society’s capacity for change. Brook (1996:89) makes passing reference to the alienation effects on the viewer of Charlie Chaplin’s mixture of sentimentality and affliction, pointing out that the disruption of simple stock responses is difficult to achieve. In theatre and in film, the incorporation of Brook’s (1996:78-119) notion of the Rough, including dirt, synthetic dirt and alienation effects, make possible gripping artworks which allow for uncomfortable questioning.

The drama of District 9 chimes with Brook’s (1996:84) suggestions about compelling comedy and Rough Theatre, displaying dark humour and stereotyped characterisation, whilst exploring the effects of contact with
Figure 3: Aerial view of the setting of the film, in the informal settlement of Chiawelo, Soweto. (© Sony Pictures)

Figure 4: The encounter with the alien depicted in computer-generated and concentration camp imagery. (© Sony Pictures)
otherness, a theme of relevance for South Africa in terms of the legacy of apartheid and in terms of outbreaks of xenophobia, but also a theme of universal applicability with regard to the treatment of refugees, migrants, prisoners and the poor. In viewing *District 9*, we are presented initially with a stock comedic character, Wikus van de Merwe, brilliantly portrayed by Sharlto Copley. Wikus is first seen as the epitome of the bumbling, self-satisfied white male South African bureaucrat. Yet the characterisation deepens and becomes archetypal, as Wikus becomes an outlaw and an alien, and is forced into a quest involving his bodily integrity and sense of self; his humanity, signalled by his unchanging love for his wife; and his changing affiliations, signalled by his friendship with Christopher Johnson. The science fiction genre in which the film is conveyed is often portrayed by purists as an example of a low or debased form, not to be taken seriously. However, I would argue that much science fiction provides trenchant social commentary, and that *District 9* allows for a complex response on the part of the viewer, typical of Brecht’s alienation effect — whether or not this was the director’s intention.

**Bourriaud’s ‘Relational form’ and *District 9***

It is important to acknowledge the status of *District 9* as dramatic spectacle, but it is also vital to focus on the significance of the visual qualities of the film. While Brook’s reputation for stunning visual effects in his television, cinema and opera work suggests his awareness of the importance of the visual in the contemporary world, Bourriaud concentrates specifically on visual culture in the book *Relational aesthetics* (2002), particularly in his chapter ‘Relational form’. Although he privileges the art exhibition as ‘the place that produces a specific sociability’ (Bourriaud 2002:16), many of his comments on contemporary artistic practice and its cultural potential are suggestively applicable to *District 9*. Coming from a materialist intellectual tradition, Bourriaud (2002:12) sketches a history of the twentieth century in which North-South dynamics loom large:

> [I]nstead of culminating in hoped-for emancipation, the advances of technologies and “Reason” made it that much easier to exploit the South of planet earth … and set up more and more sophisticated subjugation techniques … So the modern emancipation plan has been substituted by countless forms of melancholy.

The global politics of exploitation and oppression, as well as self/other and margin/centre oppositions alluded to here, likewise form the backdrop to *District 9*, with the history of South Africa providing a particularly trenchant example of oppression within the borders of the country, and the encounter with aliens showcasing gruesomely graphic subjugation and extermination. The film reveals emancipation to be illusory, and melancholy to be rife. Nonetheless, Bourriaud (2002:13, emphasis in original) insists on the importance of sustaining a vision of transformation; he refers to a contemporary trend in the art world of ‘learning to inhabit the world in a better way, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution.’ He elaborates that ‘the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real’ (Bourriaud 2002:13, emphasis added). As my epigraph makes plain, Bourriaud (2002:14) should not be assumed to be anti-utopian, although he views grandiose socialist utopianism as ‘Messianistic’ and a destructive myth. The emphasis in his sentence above is on active engagement on the part of the contemporary artist, who has a duty not simply to create alternative modes but also to model what it means to live afresh in possible realities, enacting ‘everyday micro-utopias’ through the use of ‘imitative strategies’ (Bourriaud 2002:31).
These creations turn ‘the setting of [the artist’s] world (his links with the physical and conceptual world) into a lasting world’ (Bourriaud 2002:14). Bourriaud’s (2002:14) view of the artwork embodying grounded realities but suggesting effective modes of behaviour is consonant with Brook’s depiction of a Rough Theatre, including and transcending the dirt of everyday experience.

Instead of following an artistic model of opposition and rebellion, as proposed by earlier avant-garde artists, Bourriaud (2002:13-14) sees artists as implicated in society, and thus they can act as transitional agents between a commodified existence and alternative, less mechanical modes of engagement. As his chapter title, ‘Relational form’, implies, visual artwork in contemporary times is inter-subjective; it foregrounds the theme of ‘being-together’ (Bourriaud 2002:15), and requires both in-depth engagement on the part of individual viewers and collaborative meaning-making by communities. Bourriaud (2002:14, 15) conceives of relational art as stemming from global urbanisation, resulting in a city model of cultural forms, and also resulting in a shift from art as a space to be traversed to ‘a period of time to be lived through’, like a film narrative. As Bourriaud (2002:15) further notes, a prime means of evoking relationality in an artwork is through the use of the semiotic power of the image to generate empathy and connection. Some potent semiotic devices used within District 9 include billboards demarcating zones for aliens, dirt in various aspects, depictions of the body, both human and alien, and flowers. As Bourriaud (2002:15) points out, images such as ‘flags, logos, icons, signs’ can generate emotions of empathy, sharing and bond in a group – however, it must be noted that in addition, they can generate negative emotions of disgust, fear and antagonism to others. Bourriaud (2002:14-18) places contemporary art in the zone of the interstitial, and within this zone he emphasises the significance of human gestures of connection in representations, in dialogic relationships with prior formations, in ethics and as expressions of desire. The end of a film always provides a potent concentration of imagery, and later I shall analyse the final effects on the viewer, in terms of symbolism, bond, relational gestures, triangulation, desire for change, and melancholy.  

District 9 represents an individual’s paradigm shift from his own historically and culturally inculcated prejudices to a more progressive and sympathetic viewpoint. This occurs in an alternate reality contemporaneous with our own present, against the dystopian setting of a Johannesburg overhung by an alien spacecraft. The aliens are being moved from the eponymous District 9, the name of which is evocative of the infamous destruction of District 6, to a concentration camp further from the city. The historical associations raised by the spectre of District 6 include the systematic injustices of the apartheid era, segregation, social engineering, forced removals, expropriation, eviction, evil laws, compliant enforcers, dehumanisation and social breakdown. The reference to concentration camps is a reminder of the camps that were used by the British during the Anglo-Boer War to incarcerate Boers (mainly women and children) and Africans, thus implying a repetition of inhumane confinement starting before the apartheid era, continuing during this period in the form of townships and homelands, and persisting in the post-apartheid present of the film, and, by extension, this country’s actual present.

Science fiction films which fit into Brook’s (1996) conception of the Rough are effective in presenting viewers with an imagined alterity and its social ramifications, and the most radical ones take up the challenge of relational aesthetics posed by Bourriaud (2002:11-24), suggesting inter-personal bonds and ways of living that
are better than those of the past and the present. District 9 is a place of dirt and squalor, whose occupants, both human and alien, are initially viewed as debased by the central protagonist, Wikus van de Merwe, and the viewer alike. Wikus’s becoming-alien and his capacity for connection are accompanied by a seismic shift of consciousness, which may be paralleled by the viewer’s own imaginative entry into the domain of the other. As is typical of thoughtful science fiction, the film is characterised by an engagement with ‘the existing real’ in terms of its genre of production, its socio-political context, its representation of the abject body, and its emotional effects on the viewer. One of the prime ways in which these engagements can be observed is by reference to literal and synthetic dirt.

In terms of form, District 9 deviates from conventions of purity in various ways. It does not slot cleanly into one film genre, but mixes a number of genres, including science fiction, most obviously, and also allegory, body horror, fugitive action, conversion from one point of view to another, the buddy movie and a love story. Adjusting to the requirements of responding to these different modes demands adroitness and a receptivity to changing registers on the part of the viewer, which is appropriate to the themes of the film. In addition, the film intersperses hand-held camerawork of purported interviews and other ostensibly documentary footage with conventional cinematic techniques. This combination juxtaposes the reflexivity and intimacy of the documentary style with the broad sweep of the cinematic, thus imparting a polyvocality to the film and a blurring of the modes of the private and public, aware and oblivious, minor and major keys, and past and present. With regard to the science fiction framework, director Blomkamp deliberately goes against the grain of contemporary shiny, sanitised or saccharine Hollywood renditions, instead filming in Chiawelo, a part of Soweto abandoned after its inhabitants were moved to RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing. The gritty social realism of the squatter camp setting (consonant with the ideas of dirt discussed in relation to Brook’s Rough Theatre) grounds the film in South African realities of racism and xenophobia, and issues a rebuke to glossy, anodyne science fiction. The immediacy and psychological depth of earlier films such as Alien (Scott 1979), Aliens (Cameron 1986) and Blade runner (Scott 1982) are evoked, re-injecting the human trace of synthetic dirt which has been erased from many current, slick science fiction films, such as those directed by Michael Bay or Steven Spielberg, or those which sacrifice challenge for profit, or foreground sterile Computer-generated Imagery (CGI) technology at the expense of political or philosophical questioning.

Dirty alien shadow-selves

District 9 promotes political and philosophical questioning on the part of the viewer by its focus on the significance of the encounter with the alien, which forms the ultimate contact zone between self and other. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay (2007:1), author of Some things we know about aliens, comments, ‘[a]liens are our shadows, and we are theirs’. They are encountered unexpectedly, through means of ‘technoscience’ (Csicsery-Ronay 2007:1), posing a category crisis for humans on account of their legal and social status, and their call upon conflicting conventions of hospitality and self-preservation. Csicsery-Ronay (2007:1-2) notes that in English, unusually, as compared with usages in other languages, the term ‘alien’ refers both to humans from another area, and extraterrestrials. This slippage makes even clearer Blomkamp’s allegorical point about the difficulties of overcoming prejudice and bridging the divides of privilege and (for example) racial, cultural, linguistic or culinary alterity. In the second sense of the
word, extraterrestrial aliens often combine technological expertise and bestial characteristics, exacerbating the anxiety provoked by the encounter. Csicsery-Ronay (2007:5) notes that because the human species possesses qualities which are unique, it is necessary to create an other against whom humans can gauge their kind: ‘[t]he alien is the fictive event horizon of a parallel singularity from which we may derive what we are’. Although the difficulties of entering alien consciousnesses are profound, three types of representation which assist in this imaginative process are perceptual, sympathetic and symbolic (Nagel cited by Csicsery-Ronay 2007:8). All of these effects: the physical, emotional and aesthetic, assist the viewer of District 9 to undergo a process of creative engagement with the other which mirrors that of Wikus.

The ambiguity associated with the aliens in this film derives from, on the one hand, the graphic effects of body-horror as Wikus becomes alien, portrayed in terms of metaphors of dirt as his body loses its human integrity and is utterly transformed into insectoidal difference. This inexorable, literal dehumanisation leads to visceral reactions of revulsion, fear and identification from the viewer. On the other hand, however, aliens are shown as having similar emotions and aspirations as humans, and Wikus’s ethical growth is portrayed as he sloughs off barriers of conditioning and becomes more sympathetic, both in himself towards others, and to the viewer. In the remainder of this section I itemise the film’s trajectory of Wikus’s physical alienation, and in the next section I examine its significance in terms of Mary Douglas’s anthropological work on purity, dirt and danger.

Wikus’s bodily integrity is threatened when he is squirted in the face with black fluid from an iconic, phallic cylinder. Theatrically, the handling of the potent object has mythic and fairy-tale resonances, evoking Eve and the apple, and Bluebeard’s key. In a twist on the gender dynamics usually found in such tales of curiosity associated with sexual knowledge, Wikus is infected and symbolically feminised in the encounter. This cross-gendering effect intensifies the anxiety provoked in the viewer by the visual image of foul pollution coded with stereotyped colour associations. The contaminating moment is marked by Wikus’s physical and emotional reactions: he gasps, coughs, swears and tries to cut filming of this section of the mock-documentary recording his handling of the eviction of the aliens. His façade of control is ruptured. The magical liquid, both rocket fuel and transforming agent, marks the aliens as technologically advanced, although the viewer is not allowed the comfort of any simple identification with the aliens. In fact, as Csicsery-Ronay (2007:18) notes, ‘ugly invading aliens who possess technology superior to ours … draw not on disgust for the primitive, but hysterical fear of the morally depraved but technically advanced other’. The threat that such aliens pose feeds into a racist mindset, which depends upon dehumanising the other, who is perceived in terms of imagery of dirt.

The appearance of the cylinder is a visual echo of the tubing used by the aliens to convey rotting cow juices to nourish their developing eggs; tubing which Wikus previously blithely disconnected to effect an ‘abortion’ of ‘the Prawn’s’ illegal procreation’. This scene conveys both the aliens’ revolting, insect-like alterity, and Wikus’s callousness. Visually, the aliens’ bodies, although bipedal, are a cross between insects and crabs; their mouthparts look like squirming worms or tentacles; and their eyes have no melting expression to tug at the heartstrings like ET. Their behaviour as filmed in the early documentary-style footage is angry, impulsive and violent. Most disgusting of all is the representation of a nursery of large numbers of fertilised eggs growing on putrescent meat, like maggots, instead of individual babies developing inside the sanctity of the
maternal body. Human pregnancy, with its ideal associations of clean, personal nurturing, is implicitly contrasted by the image of multiple young battenning on filth, sparking conservative associations with uncontrolled breeding habits epitomising excessive sensuality and lack of restraint. Yet Wikus’s moralistic commentary on the scene, his ordering that the shack housing the eggs be destroyed by fire, his breaking off a feeding cylinder to give to a colleague as a memento of his first ‘Prawn abortion’, and most of all, his delight in drawing the camera-operator’s attention to the sound like popcorn popping, as a result of the baby aliens’ exploding in the fire, all horrify the viewer. As a result, the viewer’s response is complex and riven, as visceral disgust towards the aliens’ obscene habits and ethical abhorrence directed at Wikus’s genocide war with one another.

Although Wikus excites the viewer’s revulsion at this stage of the film, our engagement through the genre of body horror in the unfolding process of utter physical change maintains identification and sympathy with the character. Body horror evokes a frisson through its hyperbolic, displaced signification of common corporeal processes, such as altered states of consciousness, puberty, old age, illness and death. Body horror relies heavily on imagery of dirt to convey its effects, as the boundary between the body and the outside is breached in various ways. So Wikus’s allegorical physical dissolution
begins: he shamefully vomits in public, after having rebuked an alien for public urination; he has a leakage of black fluid from his nose, pointed out by his colleagues; his fingernails become loose and he twists two off with his teeth, thus participating in his metamorphosis; he enacts the nightmare scenario of entering his darkened house and confiding in his wife that he thinks he has lost control of his bowels, to be greeted by guests shouting ‘Surprise!’ as the lights are turned on; sound is hallucinogenically distorted, showing his distress and tenuous grip on consciousness; he vomits again, this time on his celebratory cake at the surprise party celebrating his promotion to officer in charge of alien evictions; he passes out; his left (sinister) hand is converted into a crab-like claw. These effects signal loss of bodily control, and humiliation in work and social situations. Wikus is disorientated, and filled with melancholy, fear and terror. The characterisation, consonant with Brook’s Rough Theatre, effectively uses graphic depictions of dirt and dissolution to convey significant psychological battlegrounds, and in addition, symbolically places Wikus in the position of the exploited, melancholy victim of global power dynamics as referred to by Bourriaud (2002:12).

To compound his affliction he becomes a valuable commodity as the security corporation Multi-National United (MNU) realises his potential as a human/alien hybrid and abducts him for experimentation: he is zipped into a body bag like a corpse; he is forced to use alien weaponry, which humans cannot operate, to shoot a pig (an unclean animal) and then an alien (considered by him at this stage unclean but not-quite-animal), an act which appals him and leaves him spattered with black alien blood; he is threatened with vivisection to determine his hybrid physiology; and after he escapes from the Mengele-like laboratory he is rendered an outcast by his father-in-law’s smear campaign accusation that he has contracted a highly contagious sexual disease because of prolonged sexual activity with aliens in District 9. The success of the poster campaign featuring a doctored picture of Wikus engaging in sex with an alien

Figure 6: Wikus symbolically dies, becomes an outlaw based on false accusations, and his body continues to metamorphose. (© Sony Pictures)
and the television news broadcast elaborating on this scam are testimony to the power of the visual image and the media to promote moral panics. Wikus’s metamorphosis continues as he consumes the aliens’ favourite food, canned cat food, and spits out a tooth, then pulls out another loose tooth. Boils erupt on his skin, and he painfully peels off a strip of his flesh to reveal the developing carapace beneath. He cries as he yearns for reunion with his wife, Tania, expressing his love and longing with the purest of the bodily fluids (which are socially categorised on a continuum of acceptability for display). In contact with the subculture of the Nigerians, he is mocked for his supposed ‘doggy-style’ intercourse ‘with a demon’, and is again viewed as a sacrificial offering, as Obesandjo craves his alien arm to eat in order to access alien powers.

To save himself from his pursuers, Wikus enters an alien exo-suit, and becomes a cyborg, as he has probes drilled into his brain which enable him to interact with the Transformer-like suit replete with weapons. When Wikus hears that his alien friend, ‘Christopher Johnson’, will be killed by the mercenaries working for MNU, in an ethically redemptive act he sacrifices his own safety to assist his friend; the cyborg body is frail in the face of the onslaught, and is shown anthropomorphically vomiting as it ejects Wikus. He is shown as a debased figure, crawling through the dirt, with one human eye and one alien eye signifying his abject, hybrid status. A mockumentary flashback pictures the uxorious Wikus lovingly rubbing his thumb over the photograph of his ‘special angel’, Tania, who in the present of the film is shown carefully unveiling a metal flower, which she believes has been made by Wikus, despite the scoffing of her friends. Confirming her belief, at the end of the film we are shown an alien in the dirt of District 9, crafting a flower from detritus – a characteristically kitsch but emotionally redolent artefact which epitomises the transcendence of mere dirt found in Brook’s (1996:79, 81) Rough Theatre, and which illustrates that Wikus-become-alien retains his previous emotional bonds and makes concerted relational gestures to keep them alive, even

Figure 7: Wikus shown as a debased figure, crawling through the dirt, with one human eye and one alien eye signifying his abject, hybrid status. (© Sony Pictures Entertainment)
while he embodies change and is mired in solipsism and melancholy.

**Impurity and danger**

Mary Douglas’s seminal anthropological text, *Purity and danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (1991, [1966]), is pertinent here. Various theorists, pre-eminently Julia Kristeva, have built upon the foundations of Douglas’s work, developing the notion of the abject, and since the 1980s a number of artists have incorporated the concept into their work. However, as the abject explicitly employs universalising psychology and is feminist in impulse, I find it more consonant with the themes and setting of *District 9* to apply Douglas’s original critical ideas to the film. Douglas (1991:116;121) analyses the significance of material entering or leaving the human body, which is classified in different contexts as either clean or dirty, either acceptable and life-enhancing or associated with defilement and taboo. She notes, ‘reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to non-order, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death’ (Douglas 1991:5). Hybrid forms are considered anathema to habits of categorisation; the body ‘provides a basic scheme for all symbolism’ (Douglas 1991:163-164); food should fit suitable categories; and anxieties concerning secretions or excretions past the borders of the body represent a need to conserve the cohesion of a minority group. Social danger may come from outside, inside, the margins or from an internal struggle, where ‘at certain points the system seems to be at war with itself’ (Douglas 1991:122).

Examining Wikus’s trajectory of metamorphosis through the lens of Douglas’s conceptions of purity and danger, one sees that his skin proves permeable to contagion, the entry point of which is his face, representing the most unique aspect of the individual’s personality. It might be noted that Wikus’s name, in full Lodewikus van de Merwe, has certain appropriate connotations with regard to his representativity. ‘Lodewikus’ is derived from the Old German words ‘hlod’, meaning ‘glory’, and ‘vig’, meaning ‘fight’ (Johnson & Sleigh 1975:131). To develop my suggestion of the significance of the choice of name for the film’s main character, his surname is a variant on that of the archetypal South African slow-witted anti-hero, while his first name suggests a symbolic battle being waged in his persona. After Wikus is infected, correct boundaries between the clean and the dirty, the human and the alien, that which enters the body and that which is expelled from it, and the socially appropriate and acts confined to the private realm, are all violated as he loses substance and betrays his increasing difference: his bodily expulsions of vomit, a black nosebleed and faeces are cogent reminders of the leaky and porous human physiology and the impossibility of maintaining purity or stasis. Body parts – nails and teeth – are painfully lost, while the change of hands to pincers reduces both dexterity and identity, causing such anguish that Wikus cuts off one of the offending appendages. Patterns of ingestion are also altered, and he greedily consumes cat-food, which is not fit for human consumption. As Douglas and many commentators, including scholars of post-structuralism, gender studies and post-colonialism have pointed out, the hybrid body, which in *District 9* occupies most of the screen time, constitutes a scandalous category generating suspicion, anxiety and hostility (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2000:24). Wikus’s near-death and rebirth clearly aptly symbolise his interstitial status, as does the claim that he has overstepped the bounds of group identity by engaging in unbridled sex with aliens, a bodily image suggesting mingled sexual fluids which represents the breaching of cultural norms.
So while it is possible to read the allegory of *District 9* as a universal conflict between self and other, the insistent, dirty setting in Soweto and the iconic coding of Wikus as having the body, name and point of view of a white, Afrikaans-speaking South African male, together invite us to see his leaky body and his shape-shifting as representing a culturally specific and painful loss of power and control. The film is racist and sexist in its assumptions, but it engages sympathy by its depiction of a triad of characters who display ethical standards and are prepared to respond positively to changing circumstances: Wikus, Tania and Christopher Johnson. Wikus, as the prime centre of consciousness in the film, loses bodily integrity, family, home and community. In the chronological beginning of the film he unthinkingly and publicly treats the aliens like dirt, and over the course of the narrative he metaphorically becomes dirt himself. He faces being sacrificed to corporate-government interests in the shape of MNU’s aspirations, or continental needs, in the form of incorporation by Obesandjo. He must embrace change as he fears annihilation and the obscenity of death. Technoscience provides no salvation for his dilemma; all he finally has to sustain him is his tearful and loving connection with Tania, whose name is a variant of ‘Anastasia’, a name considered particularly suitable for girls born at Easter-time, derived from the Greek word for ‘resurrection’ (Johnson & Sleigh 1975:14), and his hope for deliverance from his bodily imprisonment by his alien friend, Christopher Johnson, whose name, while imposed, is suggestive, as ‘Christopher’ means ‘Christ-bearer’ (Johnson & Sleigh 1975:45), and ‘Johnson’ references a masculine lineage, while ‘John’ means ‘the Lord is gracious’ and became a popular name thanks to two

![Figure 8: A melancholy figure who embodies change, Wikus connects with the best of alien culture, but retains his links to the best of his own flawed culture. © Sony Pictures](image_url)
New Testament characters, John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist (Johnson & Sleigh 1975:116). All three of these characters’ names have clear religious connotations, thereby deepening the existential nature of Wikus's bodily disintegration and quest for changed values.

The film shows the possibility of a shift of mindset and a rapprochement between human and extraterrestrial. Yet it also shows quite clearly class and economic divisions and the difficulty of trusting fellow humans who, diabolically, indulge in the ultimate taboo of eating the flesh of bipedal sentient beings – as do aliens. Further, it shows the height of romantic love in Wikus, which makes him see Tania as a ‘special angel’, belonging to a rarefied realm, worlds apart from the sex workers and female sangoma in District 9 and reminiscent of the social gulfs portrayed in Joseph Conrad’s Heart of darkness. At the end these stereotypes and contradictions are not reconciled, but hang in a murky balance. As Csicsery-Ronay (2007:12) observes, ‘[t]he alien reveals human beings to be a single species. If it reveals sexual, racial, and other differences within that species, these are not accidental differences, but constitutive. We are a Species that Is Not One’.

Douglas (1991:198-199) reveals that the vain search for oneness is at the heart of rituals and conventions of purity and danger, and that these practices are not static, but constantly evolving in response to various pressures. Similarly, over the course of District 9 Wikus moves from a position of unthinkingly relishing the destruction of alien eggs, to horror at being required to kill an alien, to an act of altruism towards Christopher Johnson, as empathy is forced upon him as his body changes. Although Christopher Johnson and Tania do not undergo physical metamorphoses which parallel mental shifts, they too show signs of development over the course of the film. Christopher moves from justifiable suspicion of Wikus to making a pledge to him to return from his home world, after acting to save his people, to reverse Wikus's bodily changes. The chronology of events is disrupted by the juxtaposition of before-and-after documentary-style segments, highlighting the differences in Tania, who at the beginning is diffident and easily led by her father, but by the end is more self-assured, insisting that the police return confiscated material relating to Wikus, so that she can maintain her material sense of him through these artefacts, including kitschy creations made by Wikus, of obvious sentimental value to her. All three characters show their steadfast loyalty to their loved ones or intimates. Christopher has a bond with his son and Wikus; Wikus has a reciprocal bond with Christopher and Tania.

The viewer, too, is required to make shifts over the course of the film. Initially we view the aliens as anarchic and debased, even though their plight is moving; however, a shift occurs when Christopher is shown mourning his dead friend, even though his own life is imperilled by his lingering by the corpse. Although human, Koobus Venter consistently reveals revoltingly brutal xenophobia, epitomised by his comment that he can’t believe he is paid to do such an enjoyable job; he loves watching Prawns die. So when he himself is killed, the viewer breaks species solidarity by feeling relieved, even if we are horrified at the spectacle of his being torn limb from limb and devoured by aliens.

Conclusion

At the end of the film an unrecognisable Wikus is left with the memory of a bond made with the aliens, through Christopher Johnson, and the promise of a return, which propels the film into the future and the hope of living in a better way; aliens ‘impinge on human existence and incite our longing either to be better
than we are, or at least not worse’ (Csicsery-Ronay 2007:11). And as guarantor of Wikus’s constancy, despite his transformation, we are given the emblem of a love-offering: the gift of a flower, with all of its wealth of symbolic associations, fashioned as the art of the possible, from dirt. To return to Peter Brook, whom I discussed at the beginning of this article, what we have here in dramatic terms is Rough Theatre, showing archetypal characters in mythic situations conveying current social crises, and showing the need to embrace change, agonising though this is. At the same time, emotional warmth and steadfastness are valued in the film, and these qualities are displayed visually through the medium of the artwork, as produced by Wikus and treasured by Tania. This calls to mind Bourriaud’s (2002:13, 31) conception, referred to earlier, of modelling ‘micro-utopias’ or ‘possible universes’ through art. The sight of clumsy alien claws fashioning a flower intended to convey love and a promise is moving. Wikus is in a state of triangulated suspension, only able to communicate obliquely with Tania, and hoping for a return to their former life; at the same time, his bond of friendship with Christopher suggests that life can never be the same again, even if the alien is able to return. Wordlessly, Wikus-turned-alien poignantly suggests desire, yearning and melancholy. The viewer is partly seduced by the sentimentality, but as Brook (1996:87-89) suggests, Brecht’s (1964:136) alienation effect demands a more rigorous response than simple sympathy and identification. It is also necessary to acknowledge the difficulty of Wikus’s battle, and the pain of crossing into impure dimensions in a quest for answers to the question of what mirror image the alien holds up to the human race in general, and South Africans in particular.

The success of the film as deeply meaningful dramatic spectacle, or Rough Theatre, lies in the viewer’s response to Wikus’s trajectory from his privileged position as self-satisfied collaborator in an unjust system to exemplar of alterity himself. This process is not glamorised or represented as a willing conversion. The ‘dirt’ of South Africa’s past forms the backdrop of this narrative, including colonisation, concentration camps, apartheid, racism, sexism, patriarchy, poverty and xenophobia. The unwitting inclusion of patterns of oppression such as racism and sexism in the film indicate the embeddedness of dirty habits of power. Yet as Brook (1996:79) suggests, even filth can act as fertiliser for changed states to occur. Wikus’s mind-shift is not total: he connects with the best of alien culture, but retains his emotional connection to the best of his own flawed culture. In Bourriaud’s (2002:12) terms, Wikus is awaiting emancipation to deliver him from his melancholy. It is a future of relationality between self and otherness, as well as between self and those-like-self, that the film proposes. By revealing the worst of human nature, the encounter with the alien, as Csicsery-Ronay (2007:11) points out, urges humans to reflect on their treatment of others, and ideally broaden their mental scope and act to create a better world. At the end of the film Wikus is changed and creative, yet he is solipsistic and in a suspended state, waiting for action from others. The denial of catharsis for Wikus or the viewer demands meaningful self-questioning about the possibility of collective rather than isolated mind-shifts leading to the elimination of social barriers.

Notes

1 Although any adaptation of Brook’s types of theatre to the cinema is highly personal, the following examples give the flavour of the categories as I would apply them to specific films or directors. Deadly films include Notting Hill (Mitchell 1999) and Twilight (Hardwicke 2008) and its successors in the series. A notable example of Deadly, formulaic science fiction
low on ideas or characterisation is Star wars (Lucas 1977), the first released film of the epic space opera film series, which became a pop culture phenomenon. Holy film directors include Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky, and two examples of Holy films in the science fiction genre are Contact (Zemeckis 1997) and The matrix (Wachowski & Wachowski 1999). Some Immediate films are Dirty pretty things (Frears 2002), Hotel Rwanda (George 2004) and the science fiction film Minority report (Spielberg 2002). Directors of Rough films include Jean-Luc Godard, Federico Fellini, David Lynch, Mike Leigh and Pedro Almodóvar. A key example of a science fiction film which fits into the Rough category is Blade runner (Scott 1982).

2 This attitude towards science fiction in general stems from memories of its manifestation in pulp magazines of the 1930s and 1940s, when it was frequently racist, sexist and lacking in challenging intellectual content, and had a large readership of adolescent boys.

Interestingly, in the field of literature, Margaret Atwood, who has won the Arthur C Clarke prize for science fiction, and who has three novels which clearly fit into this category, refuses to apply the term to her own writing. She claimed in a BBC interview that science fiction dealt with ‘talking squids in outer space’ (Langford 2003: ep). Such a claim is an attempt to rescue the author from the ghetto of science fiction, and place herself at the pinnacle of Literature with a capital L. As David Langford (2003: [sp]) points out, critics reviewing Atwood’s work, such as Sven Birkerts, Michiko Kakutani and Lorrie Moore, have clearly displayed their prejudices against science fiction. A further example of this prejudice is provided in a newspaper article about the death of science fiction author JG Ballard by his American editor at Norton, Robert Weil, who said, ‘His fabulistic style led people to review his work as science fiction. But that’s like calling Brave new World science fiction, or 1984’ (quoted in Howell 2009:[sp]). In response, famed science fiction and fantasy author Ursula Le Guin commented, ‘It is shocking to find that an editor at the publishing house that had the wits to publish JG Ballard (as well as the Norton book of science fiction) can be so ignorant of what Ballard wrote, or so uninformed about the nature and history of the science-fiction genre, or so unaware of the nature of literature since the 1980s, that he believes – now, in 2009! – that to say a writer wrote science fiction is to malign or degrade his work’ (quoted in Howell 2009:[sp]). Le Guin continued by mocking the hypocrisy of a literary establishment that concluded that ‘literary authors are incapable by definition of committing science fiction’ (quoted in Howell 2009:[sp]).

In the field of film, Lewis Beale notes with concern that producers think poorly of science fiction. They are prepared to finance potentially lucrative films which follow the Star wars template, and rely heavily on special effects at the expense of ideas and characterisation, designed to appeal to a mass audience; however, they run shy of adapting challenging material by authors such as Ursula Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Samuel R Delaney or Arthur C Clarke (Beale 2001:[sp]).

3 My use of the term ‘the viewer’ in this article is a convenient fiction, referring primarily to myself as viewer, but also including the community of those persuaded by my argument.

4 The Nigerian government banned the film, and demanded an apology from Sony (Nigeria ‘offended’ 2009:[sp]). Ato Quayson and others, in an eSymposium published in The Zeleza Post, have pointed out...
instances of racism in the depiction of Nigerians in District 9 (2009: [sp]). In District 9: A roundtable, Michael Valdez Moses, Lucy Valerie Graham, John Marx, Gerald Gaylard, Ralph Goodman and Stefan Helgesson discuss their perceptions of racism in the film. Sexism within the film can be seen in the marginal role played by women and the virgin/whore dichotomy of these representations. While the stereotyping of Nigerians and women in the film is to varying degrees offensive, it is important to bear in mind that the entire film relies on stereotypes.

References


Social media as a filmmaking narrative tool

Jodi Nelson

Abstract

This research is being conducted through a practice-led documentary film project, web platform and published case study. I am primarily interested in how the new paradigm shifts in digital technology and the democratisation of the filmmaking process allow filmmakers to connect to an ‘expert’ global niche audience with more immediacy through the internet, engaging virtual communities, crowd funding and fan building initiatives and a variety of social media landscapes. Textural and contextual significance in sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Wordpress and a host of other social media landscapes provide a rich source of material for a documentary filmmaker to utilise when creating a narrative. There are various important significances for utilising online text in this way that is visually, conceptually, socially, culturally and economically acceptable and unique in the storytelling medium.

In the case study, my film project entitled What does a 21st century feminist look like? (Nelson 2010), engages a global audience of online fans, friends and followers, asking these virtual strangers to participate in the production, creation and financing of the film. Utilising social networks, crowd funding initiatives, web blogs, viral video, virtual chat interaction and traditional modes of documentary practice, the aim is to create a documentary film that exemplifies feminism in its profoundly new image.

Key words: Feminism; documentary; film; social media; crowdfunding; virtual space; digital media

Introduction

Textural and contextual significance in sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, and Wordpress and a host of other social media landscapes provide a rich source of owned, recycled and original material for a documentary filmmaker to utilise when creating a narrative. It is now apparent there are various important significances for utilising online text and video in this way that is visually, conceptually, socially, culturally and economically acceptable and unique in the storytelling medium. With the new paradigm shifts in the film industry, cheap digital technology and the democratisation of the filmmaking process, filmmakers can now connect to an ‘expert’ global, niche audience with more immediacy through the internet; engage with virtual communities, utilise crowd funding support and fan-building initiatives through a variety of social media landscapes.

New practice methodologies

A traditional production methodology practically invented by the Hollywood studios, proves futile at best for small independent filmmakers to compete with. Before the age of YouTube, there were no opportunities for distribution or output without having to go through studios, production houses and sales reps: ‘... [W]e all have distribution. There are no gatekeepers anymore’ (Villers & Sarini 2011:26). However, most
independent filmmakers have little to no resources to execute a film like the big studios in Hollywood do; with their huge studio budgets, political backing, global media support and accounting practices, today it seems a waste to pursue an independent film production in this manner. A new media practice is finding its way through various technological means, such as database cinema, webdocs and participatory filmmaking. The bottom line ... is that the tools are there, the platform is there, they are starving for great material’ (Villers & Sarini 2011:26). This method is believed to enable audiences to articulate their experiences through the author’s artistic vision through participation and by using cheap digital technology and social media networks. It is also through this process that they (the audience) might possibly have just as much (or little) control as possible as the filmmaker. But, why would filmmakers want to practice film production in this way? ‘Quite simply; creative control’. Henry Jenkins (2003:283) states it represents the movement toward media convergence and the ‘unleashing of significant new tools that enable the grassroots archiving, annotation, appropriation, and recirculation of media content’.

According to Knudsen (2008:108), ‘[w]hat defines the documentary genre is also at the root of its limitations … here, I shall call for a different perspective on documentary form: not with a view to discussing what documentary is, but to make some suggestions of what it could be’. In creating a participatory film practice, my aims are to engage multiple social media communities such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Wordpress, YouTube, Kickstarter and IndieGoGo by asking potential fans to participate in the film project itself with a sense of creative and financial input. During the production, communities are asked to read the film site’s blog, watch podcasts, comment on news feeds and follow the project on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. These efforts are the practicalities necessary for audiences to participate in the film project itself. It ultimately is the creative input that provides the narrative framework for the project. This ‘allows us to traverse the globe, to convene for many causes, to converse intimately ... with many persons. Yet to accomplish these interactions we must sit, solitary, at the computer keyboard, interfacing deeply not with a human other but with Windows XP’ (Thorburn 2003:20).
Utilising all platforms of new media linked to my main website (Figure 1) to produce essay films, diary films, video confessions, domestic ethnographies and blogs is ‘varying the possibilities for the expression of subjectivity and the telling of life stories arise. Those variances depend, in some measure, on the medium of choice as well as the discursive conditions that prevail’ (Renov 2008:39). In this context, this medium serves as a rich valley of resources that can be integrated in the film’s narrative and production creativity. However, when attempting to construct a narrative thread by gathering content in this way, it does bring up many potential problems. In the case of my film project, it protects the narrative thread, but also the participants who provide sometimes intimate and personal material that the filmmaker then has to vet for many reasons other than just rich content. Rothwell (2008:155) implies that ‘recording a video diary, if you don’t want it to become public, is a risk; perhaps more so than a written diary, because the medium of video implies a mass audience’. Therefore, filmmakers must tread carefully when turning over creative control to a mass audience of this sort, not only for copyright reasons, but moral and ethical reasons as well. Filmmakers must maintain authenticity and certainly an air of creative authority, lest they lose control of focus, a weaving narrative thread and having a considerable amount of content to wade through. ‘Visitor-generated content experienced in a variety of trajectories by users’ offers a freedom of interaction with the material, but the journey is not without structure’ (Pettice 2011).

However, this medium does provide exciting possibilities for filmmakers and audiences alike, despite the potential ethical pitfalls, for the creative flow of information, access to resources and sharing of content and reflective discourse that can provide information to a community of collective individuals in which to contribute. Independent filmmakers, also who are limited on budget, time, geographic limitations and access to production technologies can gain a tremendous amount of quality production value by sourcing content in this way. Wading through recycled, or found footage, has its own challenges, but without the restraints and economic limitations filmmakers encounter when going through proper footage houses and libraries. This can be a very positive reinforcement for new forms and media aesthetics. ‘Found-footage filmmaking, otherwise known as collage, montage, or archival film practice, is an aesthetic of ruins’ (Russell 1999). Aesthetic ruins, perhaps, but a boon of media material available for consumption and reframing, nonetheless. Adversely, the ethics involved in this paradigm are due to the ease with which to re-frame the original content capturing from sites such as YouTube, where sharing, remixing and re-framing is the more likely outcome. This should be an exciting movement in the field of moving picture, not another hurdle for filmmakers to overcome owing to legality. However, there is a necessary ‘policing’ of utilisation of this content on a case-by-case basis, but that is difficult to monitor except by the case of those within the community itself. This is transparency at its best-case scenario.

By whichever way they (audiences) came into the community, the goal is to keep them there, involve them in the production efforts and keep them just as excited about the project. And to do that, there must initially be a transparency between the creator and the online community. This covers a multitude of scenarios such as copyright issues, ethical boundaries, life-rights, video-audio rights and original content ownership. However, the community is keen to forego complexities and by simply asking for permission seems to be fair. Rothwell (2008:155) states that the ‘key to the success of that relationship is that it demands a responsibility for the consequences of the filmmaking that go beyond the film itself’. Filmmakers should take the same precautions
and ethical delicacies they would in a traditional filmmaking scenario. The Internet and social media protocol just makes it more immediate and public, which puts the filmmaker at risk and at the centre of its responsibility. Without governing bodies, investors or studio figureheads to police a film’s substance, it is now up to the online communities to judge what is valid and acceptable.

Creating a film in an open-source and public way might possibly create fears of infringement upon creative ideas. However, sharing, commenting and creating content, which is moved virally amongst the members pervasively throughout the Internet, can certainly bring about intellectual property debates as each community, just as in live communities differ from location and status. Blagrove (2008:176) indicates that rather than imposing illegal piracy, they (filmmakers) welcome pirating and began distributing directly to the pirates themselves at production cost. There is more give and take in this new practice and this creates an element of fair use, since the community is freely giving away content. The filmmaker, however, must also make an effort to contribute in this way to encourage participation, as I discovered through my own practice. The more activity created by the creator and the more access granted to participants generates a greater amount of content creation and sharing via the social networks. It should be a win-win situation. Rather than feeling harpooned by copyright infringement, the idea is that filmmakers can feel empowered to create and share without fear of giving away their intellectual property.

In an effort to make art in a truly fundamental and independent way, filmmakers are now embracing this open-source, transparent, participatory environment. Many questions did, however, arise: Who is in control? Who is the auteur (author) (or original author/creator) with the vision? What happens if the film’s narrative thread goes off-track? Who are the performers and what ethical considerations are at stake by utilising material shared amongst the community? ‘Pragmatic interactions should not force preconceptions on others. Agreements for action should come from reaching positions of solidarity and working toward common purposes freely chosen’ (Arata 2003:218). This perspective towards transparency becomes one more tool to use; another creative instrument to enhance flexibility in its practical approach.

Virtual audiences

Kirsner (2009) emphasises that ‘the on-going conversation with your audience can be a source of inspiration, motivation and ideas. It’s this powerful new link with the audience that the old power players don’t understand’. Democracy and open source creativity has opened doors to filmmakers and storytellers alike with a multitude of technologies and affordable equipment never before seen. But it is not without legal and creative restraints that must be taken into consideration by the filmmaker and participatory audiences. Barry Stevens (2012), an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker, says ‘the documentary is defined by the frame. What you chose to leave in and what you chose to leave out determines how you build the frame’. It is not about just recording information, but rather an integration of what filmmakers want and the interaction with its subjects and what the film project gets. The film that emerges is a synthesis of this dynamic. Nyiro (2011) states ‘[p]articipation of the audience and interactivity is a continuously evolving phenomenon’. And during my practice, this was certainly the case. Creative, participatory production works in a much different way than in traditional autonomous practice. However, empowering the audience to become creators, also empowers the filmmaker in the truest sense. Gathering materials and
facilitating relationships becomes tools toward a new path to creation.

Juhasz (2008:304) states that ‘by empowering ordinary people to speak as experts, they question the basic assumption of dominant ideology, that only those already in power, those who have a stake in defending the status quo, are entitled to speak as if they know something’. Research shows that audience participation does, in fact, impact on both the audience and the filmmaker inherently by creating in this way. I found it can be a very positive experience for both. Instead of outsourcing functionalities to other resources in a traditional sense, filmmakers will need to become an all-encompassing expert in their respective fields and share that knowledge with the online community. Engaging online audiences, however, can blur the lines of what is and what is not a professional documentary film. YouTube provides a distribution platform, but virtual audiences do not necessarily interact in that space or seek out professional films, but rather passively view amateur content. ‘Renowned digital anthropologists like Mike Wesch have analyzed YouTube for its creative and grassroots potentials, but according to the so-called “90-9-1 rule”, that 90 percent of online audiences never interact, nine percent interact only occasionally, and one percent do most interacting, ordinary YouTube users hardly see themselves as part of a larger community’ (Uricchio 2011:11). How can filmmakers draw an audience into the reality of the situations being dramatised, ‘to authenticate the fictionalization? meaning to make “real” what is in fact fictionalized by the user ... what are audiences to make of films where real people apparently “play themselves” (or variations on themselves), or hybrids where a combination of actors and non-actors improvise in a documentary-like scenario?’ (Ward 2008:192). What is real and what is fictionalised has blurred the lines, not only for professional filmmaking content, but amateur fare that is rampant on sites such as YouTube. So much so that even shifts in perception of what is real and what is fiction has crossed over from traditionally defined documentary practice into the realm of fictional media. What are emerging are specific types of distribution formats and social network platforms, not YouTube, which are marketed directly to filmmakers for films, which must be carefully devised to reach the right audiences for specific film genres.

It is the creative author’s role to ensure that the participatory environment also abides by the community rules of transparency, honesty and attributes of authentic form. Ward (2008:192) continues by stating that notions of documentary performance are potentially controversial because people are not actually being themselves, which can be problematic for the authentication of the documentary film itself. How can the filmmaker assert to know what is factual or fictitious without seeing these participants in person; looking them in the eye? In my practice, this is where the control or authority lies within the filmmaker to ensure the narrative thread stays on track and that participants are doing just that; ‘participating’ and not performing. This might, perhaps, be a valid way for a documentary film to maintain credibility and value in the marketplace—when it is authentic, especially when being created in an online environment. A virtual environment where nothing is ‘real’ and engaging with online audiences presents a gap in this regard to ensure that content and shared media is original and ‘truthful’ in its submission, integration and presentation.

There is possibly also a greater embrace of innovation and experimentation in this method, which is needed in leveraging these projects with the ability to fail without showing loss of value within the community.
Technological shift

A profound new shift in mindset is needed within the realm of a new course of practice, even though outcomes are uncertain.

First, in organizing geographically diverse individuals around a common interest in watching or making documentaries, there are new forms of community; second, new means of creation and distribution...to seek to change people’s minds or reinforce a viewpoint; third, we have increased access to ‘dirty reality’ in the form of footage of current events and violent conflict; and fourth, video diaries and other moving images give us an increased range of intimate access to the lives of other people (Birchall 2008: 282).

Differences in workflow patterns, multiple means of gathering content, technical limitations in design and marketing, and a new creative approach while aiming for high production value, are all for consideration. Each one of these variations can compromise what is possible. Thousands of textual entries, news feed comments, tweets, sharing of videos and user-generated content (UGC) from YouTube and other rich video sites by community members can potentially fill the coffers of narrative possibilities. But it is then the challenge of the filmmaker to gather that content and create a narrative thread which may have taken on another form altogether during the production process. This was the case in my practice. Starting with a loosely based narrative theme, I then proceeded to gather materials that fit within the scheme of the film’s message and in post determined which were valid and necessary to the storytelling process. A story the filmmaker is still in charge of making.

To achieve a truly mobile production, it is believed that filmmakers must utilise numerous cheap digital technologies to produce the film. In my practice, I used equipment such as a flip camera, mobile video camera, DSLRs (Digital Single Lens Reflex camera) and Skype to capture original, captured and recycled content. This allowed flexible access to subjects uniquely qualified. This material captured was, however, outside the realm of online activity found in blogs, newsfeeds, tweets, web videos, stills and music clips.

The difficult decision a filmmaker utilising these types of technologies and online content materials and integrating them into the creative structure – with little to no crew, sound or lighting technicians – has to decide is if the story is more important than the aesthetic value of the film. Would the film’s outcome be any different with a full crew and top production equipment? How does the process differ with a single person and one
camera that can fit into a handbag? In my practice, I found some liberation in this practice of wielding cheap technology and utilising found media. However, there is a collective experience when working with a talented crew of filmmakers that add to the aesthetic value of a film’s intended outcome. There is liberation in both forms of practice. I believe the narrative thread or form of production determines the tools utilised.

In this case, social media sites such as a Facebook group (Figure 2) are used to provide a foundation for collecting textural, aural and visual material that would otherwise have taken significantly longer to collect in traditional practices. Documentary practice in this way becomes a way of working in a space in which all forms are subjective and in a constant state of flux. This space and textural language, together create inseparability from the media content, which are not merely captured media on the screen, but rather become multi-layered forms of technology, archived databases, curated social media sites and deep knowledge based blogs.

Collecting data via social networks can also provide a rich source of material that can be utilised in the traditional narrative fold. Text captured in running news feed conversations via Facebook and Twitter, for example, provide comments from the community that can be used in voice over, title cards and/or associated with archival footage in the editing process. Videos from YouTube, Vimeo and other video rich sites can also provide valuable footage (found footage or recycled media) created by amateur users, yet still providing unique vantage points into a never-ending amount of valuable subject matter. Utilising this content in an ethical and constructive way, without re-framing its meaning is ultimately the responsibility of the filmmaker. ‘The complex relation to the real that unfolds in found-footage filmmaking lies somewhere between documentary and fictional modes of representation, opening up a very different means of representing culture’ (Russell 1999).

Bill Nichols (Hight 2008:205) recognised a need for a three-part definition of documentary ‘... because [of] the slippage which occurs between the levels of production, transmission and reception within media practice’. Experiences with different modes of engagement with an online audience are also experienced differently from a traditional production standpoint. This can be as simple as gathering media material in non-traditional ways. Because of these new modes of practice and new forms of representation being experienced by both the creator and the viewer, what is the social role of documentary and how does it fit into our modern digital society? Does it re-frame the truth because of its new production paradigms? Henon (Joye 2009) states that ‘[i]n order to regain the audience’s attention, you need to be creative and look for alternative ways to communicate your message, next to the traditional news media’.
UGC is another source that has become the most pervasive amount of content, shared and streamed by community members so others can comment, share and view within the framework of the community. Birchall (2008: 280) notes that ‘by contrast, the easy availability of material to work with online is matched by the ease of remixing and redistributing’. This can aid the filmmakers who need open-source, archival clips in order to create a film narrative. Even though the found footage is not technically claimed as archival footage, or perhaps even original footage, the important aspect to the filmmaker is that it can provide rich content that is necessary in aiding the narrative thread. The question, of course, is does this delineate the value of the overall film? Or is UGC seen as valuable to the filmmaker and the community in the face of high license fees, royalty payments and huge academic fees for archival library access? Or does this even matter to the audiences? Although representational challenges are implicit in found footage to the sacrifices of aesthetics of individual authorship, creating a film in this new methodology allows filmmakers a greater freedom and perhaps a more personal satisfaction in the developing relationships between filmmaker and fans that might not be sustained in a traditional filmmaking-distribution methodology.

It is also important to note that just because technology is cheap, social media pervasive and artistic democracy entering the creative fold, it does not mean the value of the art or the filmmaker behind its creation should be valued any less. The reality of the new entrepreneurial filmmaker is not only making just a film project but also, rather, building a community of like-minded people who can support a film project and future projects – in essence, building a sustainable brand. This takes an inordinate amount of time, effort, management and technical trouble-shooting. Not to mention the technological knowledge and implementation necessary to connect all of these networks in a functional and significant way. Once they are functional and put into motion they should ideally self-perpetuate. However, it should be noted this is an on-going resource of time and labour that must be considered outside of creative production.

The potential benefits in making art in this way possibly far exceed the benefits, weighed against the immense amount of time and effort it takes to build an online brand and identity. Audiences can be fickle, but entrepreneurial filmmakers can have a distinct advantage over the big studios by creating art that is meaningful, economically sustainable and creatively autonomous, while building a loyal fan base (Figure 3). Challenges abound in measurable changes in these types of production practices and must be adhered to by utilising these online tools and cheaper production technology. How might this change the storytelling process when technological considerations must be made for a lack of financing and a large crew? The filmmaker is now essentially a ‘one person crew’ where every single shot, direction, post-production/editing, writing, producing, marketing and digital online development and
management are be achieved with the sole artist. Even though aesthetic compromises are also at stake, it is worth noting that with small cinema, mobile and online video distribution choices growing every day, there are many outlets of distribution that do not require a 35mm or HD production aesthetic to tell a story. Ultimately, the script is still at the heart of every film – it is only the methodology and system of delivery that has changed. Ted Hope (2010b) states, from his blog, that ‘the film business remains a single product industry. The product may be available on many different platforms, but it is still the same thing’. When audiences view in different mediums – such as on a computer, mobile phone, web or iPad – they have varied and different modes of engagement by the very nature of their special, mobile and technological impact on the viewer. So filmmakers must think carefully about choosing a good topic. ‘First comes the topic, then design’ (Knetig 2011:38).

A community of friends, fans, followers

Engaging virtual online audiences and exposing them to the filmmaker’s daily life, seems synonymous nowadays with making a film in this way. In making a production in this new way, however, it can be like killing two birds with one stone. Building a loyal following, while making a film, becomes synonymous with the potential success (or failure) of its release and visibility. Utilising social media to reach out to new fans can enable filmmakers to ask for a broader range of support, not just financially, but creatively and resourcefully. Accessing new resources in this way does have the added element of having to expose the filmmaker’s personal daily life (in some respects) in order to communicate with the community. There appears to be a sort of give and take, information sharing and feedback (whether warranted or not) that informs the artist during the process of making art.

Although the Internet is wide and vast, the small cinema can provide a unique intimacy; a personal sharing and collective understanding amongst different classes that cannot perhaps be as easily shared outside the realm of traditional practice and cinema viewing habits. Today access to video blogs, web videos and textual content shared by people all over the world, sharing new perspectives, input and discussions, are open, democratic, liberating, but also potentially dangerous – not only to a creative author, but to the audiences and participants involved. This is why it is important for authors to stick as close to the truth, through their own mirror, which then provides a unique perspective to viewers of other groups. ‘The various stylistic techniques used within different types of documentary, such as the interview, eye witness testimony, caught-on-camera footage, and reconstructions, also add to the ambiguity associated with documentary’ (Hill 2008:217).

As noted earlier, through my practice, I discovered the importance of establishing a transparent relationship early on with the online community to embrace a growing number of loyal followers. This ethical practice is adhered to in live societies and communities as part of on-going ethnographic practice and methods, and should act no differently in the online sphere.

The goal in building an online audience is to have them participate and visit – often as referenced here in my Twitter feed (Figure 4). If there is not something ‘in it for them’, they become apathetic and more difficult to bring back. Filmmakers are keen to embrace the unique and complex modes of interaction on social networks as a direct link to fans. Beginning with one social network, the likelihood of eventually branching out to other sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Linked In, Wordpress and beyond will establish a large coverage
of online space and potential viewers and participants for creative endeavours. Creating the aim of an integrated network of fans should proliferate the film’s intended goal of being seen. Audiences will (hopefully) share content within their own unique networks, which will further expand the community. This is time consuming work, as filmmakers need to ensure to answer every follower request, comment, post, podcast, newsfeed and tweet. This must be a calculated move on the part of the filmmaker and time consideration – just as with outlining a production plan – because in order to build an audience, two-way communication is necessary. And to be successful at it filmmakers have to be online constantly, engaging the community, commenting on ideas and posts as well.

Participation between audience and filmmaker enables each to develop a relationship that goes deeper than merely one from a consumer or isolated artist’s point of view. ‘Scholarly study of the social consequences of new media technology has frequently centred on the question of the potential fragmentation of society’ (Pavlik 1998). The (participatory) platform allows audience members to engage deeper than merely being a subject on the other end of the camera. It becomes a multi-way process, although the filmmaker as the auteur (author) and creator of the project should be driving the subject matter, its pacing and thematic criteria, which will yield an overall control and direction for the project.

Ultimately, through this creative process, filmmakers should realise there is only a certain degree of ‘control’ the community wants to be responsible for when creating a project. They will support the project and want to participate, but they want to be guided. It is up to the filmmaker’s discretion to keep them engaged and stay in the community to help it grow. There are so many modes of practice given the technology platforms provided, on which creator’s content is placed, shared and executed. Ultimately, the question lies in the perspective of truth, which now shifts once again in an online participatory audience. It is now thousands, perhaps millions of perceptions of the truth the filmmaker seeks to collaborate.
Petitto (Marmino 2011) states ‘[a]n important aspect in using new media is not only related to a matter of increasing membership ... rather it deals with the opportunity of amplifying the message towards the entire civil society, creating a deeper awareness of issues related to ecology and environment’. People are not just passively watching content; they are ‘like-ing’ it, commenting on it and sharing it through their own networks. By encouraging such activity through either specific calls to action or using advanced features like YouTube ‘Annotations’, filmmakers are able to potentially increase their chances of content being shared and discovered by a wider audience. Another YouTube tool is the ‘Subscription’ feature. By asking viewers to subscribe, filmmakers can potentially convert many subscribers into repeat viewers and guaranteed audiences for future videos.

It is in this way, asking for fans to participate, to do something (to actually propagate content on a creative project) that excites them and gives them a voice, which can effectively convert fans into a mobilised marketing team (Figure 5). Reward them by letting their voice be heard and include them in the film project creatively and, in turn, they (the audience) will potentially advocate on the filmmaker’s behalf. Pappas (2010) agrees when he states ‘to that end, no marketing dollar spent can match the value of personal endorsements and word of mouth from your biggest fans’.

Figure 6: Transmedia model by the Workbook Project, 2009. (www.slideshare.net/lanceweiler/social-media-for-storytellers).
What will be interesting for filmmakers at the early stages is attempting to engage a niche audience to join the Facebook page or Twitter feed. Choosing a topic or subject, then engaging a certain niche group of people with similar likenesses, will usually yield a strong following. Optimising content by creating smart titles, descriptions and tagging with relevant keywords was the key to automate this process, as these steps will also help viewers find content in online searches. Fans will likely flock to content that is creative, visually stunning, technologically accessible and uniquely framed towards their likenesses. Filmmakers will also find that each social media site has a unique audience reach. By strategically planning and implementing a digital campaign and utilising the technology available, filmmakers will be able to create an online brand, which will become the foundation for the participatory filmmaking methodology. That, in turn, will manifest an interactive database for which the foundation of the film project lies and fans can accumulate. Provided with on-going content (by the fans), filmmakers will also be rewarded with personal, direct accessibility to fans of the virtual communities. This, in turn, provides a valuable source of feedback during the production process. It also provides a multitude of content that can be re-purposed through other media outlets. ‘The strength of this new style of popular culture is that it enables multiple points of entry into the consumption process’ (Jenkins 2003:284).

The ‘fans’ can be rich with stories and contributions, readily available resources, providing UGC, crowd funding opportunities and are willing participants; allowing filmmakers to create art that is viable, relevant and most of all cheap, free and viral. Having the film aimed specifically towards a key, niche audience, is also important. Audiences can be keen to be involved and stay invested in the filmmaker for future projects for the long haul, if proper investment of time, energy and creativity from the filmmaker is maintained. For once the filmmaker is successful with one project and moves onto another, it can possibly risk losing the audience over content or lack of interest. The use of transmedia (Figure 6) or cross-media content can also let the audience know there is something in it for them, besides just the co-creation element of the film.

Crowd funding participation

A brief mention of crowdfunding initiatives, which are also key tools the filmmaker can embrace, with making a film in a participatory nature. This can be a key factor in the filmmaker’s legitimacy of creating a film project in this capacity. The community does, in fact, communicate amongst themselves and will certainly ‘police’ any activity that does not acquiesce within the group. This ‘policing’ by the community assures transparency, trust, authenticity and protection against spam and unwanted advantages a filmmaker, other community members or outsiders may seek to squeeze information and/or money out of its community for personal gain. Birchall (2008:280) states ‘authenticity is highly prized by audiences’. These new online forms should not be mistaken for lack of mediation simply because of technical constraints. Does the audience participating in the early stages of a creation raise expectations for the audience? What about for the filmmaker? Does it impact the artist’s methodology of creation itself? Can projects of this nature be achieved without sufficient funding? A resounding yes is possible. But filmmakers must be flexible and creative and willing to jump over challenging hurdles in the process. In my practice case, I utilised Kickstarter to fund its campaign, without any success. In the early stages of this company, there were no written rules or successful case studies. It has only been within the past six months (to date) where new case studies and ‘rules’ of how to create a successful campaign can come about on this platform. It has been due to the
frustration of this limited resource, however, that other like-platforms have spawned with less imposed restrictions for fund raising and, therefore, levelling the playing field for creative producers of content.

With the attraction of crowd funding sites such as Kickstarter and IndieGoGo, financial resources are now available for filmmakers who do not have access to rich uncles, mix with the Hollywood investor crowd, or can fund their projects across a mass of credit cards. Hope (2010a) mentions that expectations between buyers and sellers have changed considerably; this now includes audiences who are crowdfunding films as well as in the traditional sense. Hope (2010a) continues by stating that ‘[p]roducts are valued at different levels. We live in a new world. Our strategies must change with it’. The production and fundraising of a film in this participatory style is beginning to produce a more valuable, sustainable, niche-market product and is changing the traditional market structure of distribution and delivery for independent filmmakers outside of the Hollywood system. Even those working within the Hollywood system are engaging in these platforms to make ‘passion projects’ outside of traditional means. It is also providing a platform for artists in countries without the support of film communities, government subsidies or fundraising activities. This enables a global access to films and stories that might otherwise have never be told.

Still, further questions for scholarly and industry debates continue. Will participatory films be profitable? How can a filmmaker, who makes a film online for free, ever hope to see a profit, much less sustainability? Some filmmakers are willing to give away their films for free to gain publicity. Parks (2009) states that she has a problem with the free strategy, which is giving the film away for free, in essence, to gain numbers, eyeballs or promotional value: ‘The film business is already risky, and this adds on a whole other layer of risk. What if you give the film away and nobody cares?’ After a filmmaker engages in this strategy with no sales, the film has been exposed and it will be difficult to find a buyer/distributor to start charging people for the content that has already been offered for free. Where is the inherent value in this scenario? There can be a multitude of opportunities within this strategy, however, it has to be carefully calculated by the filmmakers, community and policy makers.

Conclusion

If participatory filmmaking is to be profitable, how will this change the open democracy of the ‘Wild West’ we see now in this new trend? Will it continue to be available and ‘free’ to all or be monopolised, packaged and sold as IPO (Initial Public Offering) to the highest bidder forcing filmmakers to go through yet another middleman to make their films? Will these online, participatory, transmedia interactions incentivise the audience to buy the finished product and any subsequent ancillary products associated with the creative product? What about future projects the filmmaker produces? Can there be added sustainability in this model? These questions and more that arise will continue to merit further questioning and research. With arts funding continuing to dwindle, like the reduction in grants and lottery funding, filmmakers have turned to crowd funding to finance their livelihoods – but will the audiences enable that to become a reality, or will the studio systems in place prevail? Hope (2010a) summarises it on his blog post 38 Reasons the Film Industry is Failing Today:

Creators, Distributors, and Marketers have accepted a dividing line between art and commerce, between content and marketing. By not engaging the filmmakers in how to use marketing tools within their narrative and how to bring
narrative techniques to the marketing, we diminish the discovery and promotional potential of each film.

For this very reason filmmakers must embrace the new technology and its participatory practices. Engaging social media and relishing in its deep well of potential, content consumption will potentially allow new avenues for creativity, profit and sustainability. It must be harnessed on the filmmaker’s own terms, however, or it will be found to be no different than ‘working’ for another production entity with expectations far beyond the filmmaker’s reach. It is becoming more and more a predominant way to make a film. However, filmmakers now have to presume they must be more than just the storytellers on many levels and become all encompassing creators, marketers and sellers. On a larger scale, projects in this realm will hopefully emerge, answering the question of how this new methodology of filmmaking relates to a wider economic, cultural, environmental and social scale.

References


Image & Text has been published annually since 1992 (primarily as a journal for design) and was accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training in 1997. Since 2011, it has been repositioned as a multi- and interdisciplinary journal that orbits around the nexus of visual culture. The aim of the journal is to draw perspectives from a broad field of interests and subjects: visual anthropology, material culture, visual arts, design culture, visualising sciences and technologies, art history, philosophy, fashion, media and film studies, architecture, literary studies, tourism studies, new media and cyber theory, and so forth. The grounding provided by visual culture studies as a comparative and enabling premise for all these approaches, subjects, interests, fields and theories is located in the global South, not only geographically but also critically.

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Jacques Lange is partner and creative director at Bluprint Design, publisher and editor of DESIGN> and www.designmagazine.co, and part-time lecturer in Information Design and Visual Communication at the University of Pretoria. Throughout his career Jacques has actively engaged in design practice, profession management, education, research, design promotion, policy advocacy and design journalism. His professional output has earned him many industry awards and his work has been featured in numerous international publications and exhibitions. He is an experienced industry juror, widely published author and speaker on design issues internationally. He is a past president of the International Council of Communication Design (Icograda, 2007-2009), founding co-chair of the International Design Alliance (IDA, 2005-2007), and advisor to various governmental institutions and NGOs. His research interests include the creative economy, talent mobility and creative diaspora, design policy, profession management, and contemporary design from lesser-known regions. Jacques is also one of the founders of Image & Text.

Jenni Lauwrens
Jenni Lauwrens teaches in the Visual Studies division in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria. She teaches students in the subjects, art history, visual communication, research methodologies and key texts in visual culture. Jenni has published in local and international publications on the relationship between visual culture studies and art history. Her research interests include the aims and protocols of visual culture studies and art history, art education, art historiography, spectatorship, embodiment, phenomenology, neuro-art history, neuro-aesthetics and
practices of seeing. She is currently working on a PhD on the historical and theoretical implications of the viewer's particular forms of embodiment.

Victor Margolin

Victor Margolin is Professor Emeritus of Design History at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is a founding editor and now co-editor of the academic design journal *Design Issues*. Professor Margolin has published widely on diverse design topics and lectured at conferences, universities, and art schools in many parts of the world. Books that he has written, edited, or co-edited include *Propaganda: the art of persuasion, WW II, The struggle for utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917-1936*, *Design discourse, Discovering design, The idea of design*, *The politics of the artificial: essays on design and design studies*, and *Culture is everywhere: the Museum of Corn-temporary Art*. He is currently working on a world history of design.

Nicholas Mirzoeff

Nicholas Mirzoeff is a Professor of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University, New York. After more than a decade of writing about and teaching visual culture, most recently at SUNY Stonybrook, Mirzoeff decided to join the Department of Art and Art Professions in order to create a cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary visual culture program. The new program in visual culture also signals the primacy of the visual image, he believes, which affects our lives to a greater and greater extent each day. Mirzoeff's recent book, *Watching Babylon: The war in Iraq and global visual culture*, enlarges upon this intriguing notion. His first book, *Silent poetry: deafness, sign and visual culture in modern France*, was about sign language and its relationship to painting. Mirzoeff is also the author of *An introduction to visual culture*.

Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie

Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (PhD Northwestern University) is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of California Santa Barbara and a specialist in classical, modern and contemporary African and African Diaspora Art history and visual cultures. He is the author of *Ben Enwonwu: the making of an African modernist* (University of Rochester Press, 2008: winner of the 2009 Herskovits Prize of the African Studies Association), and *Making history: African collectors and the canon of African art* (Milan: 5 Continents, 2011). Ogbechie was the 2010 Getty Consortium Professor and Fellow of the Getty Research Institute and a 2007 TEDGlobal Fellow. He is the director of Aachron Knowledge Systems, and founder and editor of *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*. Ogbechie also serves as a curator and consultant to many major international museums on the subject of African and contemporary art. His research is widely published and he has presented lectures at major universities and museums in the USA, Europe, Africa and Asia. (Photograph by Rod Rolle)

Georges Pfruender

Georges Pfruender is a Swiss national who has spent a significant amount of time living abroad in Africa, Asia, America and the Middle East. He received his Master of Fine Arts from San Francisco Art Institute in 1991. While continuing to produce his own body of work, for the past decade he had also been Director of the Fine Arts University Ecole Cantonale d’Art du Valais, Switzerland, President of the Swiss National Board of Art and...
Design. Vice President of the Swiss UNESCO Commission, and since 2009, Head of the School of Arts at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As artist and researcher he has participated in conferences, panels and residency programs in Europe, USA, South Africa, Venezuela, and Taiwan, and is presently involved in projects engaging artists in migrant communities of the inner city of Johannesburg. At the Wits School of Arts he has been responsible for the coordination of arts programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (MFA, PhD) concerning the disciplines of music, drama, fine arts, film and TV, digital arts and cultural theories.

Annette Pritchard
Annette Pritchard is Professor of Critical Tourism Studies and Director of the Welsh Centre for Tourism Research at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Annette has a long-standing interest in the relationships between places, representations and identities and she has published 15 books and over 40 papers on these connectivities. Much of her work is driven by a commitment to transformative research and she is one of the originators of the hopeful tourism agenda and co-chair of the biannual Critical Tourism Studies Conference Series. Annette was formerly Convenor of the Leisure Studies editorial board and her current editorial responsibilities include serving as joint Research Notes Editor of the Annals of Tourism Research. She is also an advisory board member of the Copenhagen Business School's Creative Industries Research Centre and a regular invited speaker at events and conferences.

Marian Sauthoff
Prof Marian Sauthoff is currently Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture at the University of Johannesburg. Prior to this, she was the head of the Department of Visual Arts and also chaired the School of Arts at the University of Pretoria. She completed her master's (cum laude) and doctoral degrees through the University of Pretoria. Prof Sauthoff is the founding editor of the accredited journal Image & Text: A Journal for Design, which she edited from 1992 to 2010. She has also served on the editorial board and as guest editor of a number of international journals. She has published extensively in her field of expertise and regularly acts as a peer referee for articles and conference papers. She has served as a member of advisory boards to industry and government and as an adjudicator for national and international design awards. Her career includes design consultancy and a period as a senior researcher at the Chamber of Mines.

Annie van de Oever
Annie van den Oever is Extraordinary Professor for Film and Visual Media at the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa. She is also director of the Film Archive and director of the Master in Film Studies at the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. She is an editor of several academic journals and book series in her field, among them: board member of Film and Media, Amsterdam University Press (since 2003); series editor of The key debates: mutations and appropriations in European film studies, with Ian Christie (Birkbeck College, London), and Dominique Chateau (Paris I, Sorbonne Panthéon); chief editor of the new educational books series for Film and Media studies (since 2011), and Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal for Media Studies NECSus (since 2011). Her last two books are Ostrannenie and Sensitizing the viewers, both published at Amsterdam University Press.