

**New masculinities in a vernacular culture: a comparative  
analysis of two South African men's lifestyle magazines**

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# ABSTRACT

Title: New masculinities in a vernacular culture: a comparative analysis of two South African men's lifestyle magazines

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## **Abstract:**

This thesis chronicles the emergence of men's lifestyle magazines within South Africa between 1997 and 2007. It aims to contextualize the emergence of these magazines within the broader South African context and position each magazine as representing a nuanced masculine ideal to the mainstream male readers. This thesis then offers a critical reading of two more marginal men's lifestyle magazines, namely, *MaksiMan* (2001-2007) and *BLINK* (2004-2007). These magazines are deemed marginal for two reasons. First, they had relatively small circulation figures. Second, their content was targeted at a niche cultural market within the South African population. *MaksiMan* was targeted at Afrikaans, Christian men while *BLINK* was targeted at upwardly mobile black men. Both, thus, valorised particular South African masculinities which are determinedly different from the globalized norm espoused by the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines such as *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*.

The construction and representation of a masculine ideal is examined in each of these two magazines. The manner in which femininity is represented in each magazine is also analysed as it is believed to contribute to the synthesis of a masculine ideal. Male generativity (both biological and professional) is,

furthermore, an important focal point of the analysis. Through an analysis of these three aspects of the masculine ideal – the relation to the feminine, paternity and professional mentoring – the study examines the representation of two strains of vernacular masculinity in South Africa. These are analysed against the set of international theories that suggest that masculinity is in a state of crisis. The South African context is investigated as a milieu that currently involves a significant amount of socio-economic change which would necessarily imply that identity formation (and in particular gender articulation) is in a state of flux. This thesis, in other words, comprises a (social) semiotic analysis of the representation of masculinity within *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* with the intention of unpacking the manner in which these magazines reflect the changing articulations of masculinity within contemporary South Africa.

**Key terms:**

*MaksiMan*; *BL!NK*; men's lifestyle magazines; masculine ideal; masculinity in crisis; black empowerment; religion; gender ideology; masculinity studies; media studies; magazine scholarship; visual culture studies; social semiotics.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and aims of the study

#### 1.1.1 Background

Since their inception in the early 1900s in America, men's lifestyle magazines, also known as men's general interest magazines (Nixon 1996) or glossy men's magazines (Dworkin and MacKinnon 1988: 138), have increasingly been the subject of analysis by researchers whose research is positioned at the point of intersection between sociology, media studies and gender analysis (Benwell 2003, Edwards 1997; 2003, de Gregorio Godeo 2005, Jackson & Brooks 2003, Morrell 2001, Nixon 1996, Pritchard 1993, Stevenson; Stibbe 2004, Whitehead & Barret 2001). Men's lifestyle magazines originate from men's apparel publications from the 1930s in the United States where fashion magazines were popular with the gentrified male. In the 1970s and 1980s a number of gay magazines drew attention to male grooming and style, feeding the emergence of what was termed the 'new man'. Sociologist Sean Nixon (1996: 125) explains that this 'new' breed of man, described by Benthan Benwell (2003: 6) as "feminist friendly, sensitive narcissists", appeared in three prominent areas: the design and retail of menswear, advertising targeted at men and men's lifestyle magazines.

The modern incarnation of men's lifestyle magazines, in other words, emerged in America in the early 1980s as a platform from which to target the new consumption driven male. This publishing phenomenon spread to Europe and the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s, but it was only in the early 1990s that the more laddish British titles such as *Loaded* emerged to re-define and challenge the by now staid traditions of the men's lifestyle press.

The first international men's lifestyle magazine to enter South Africa was *Men's Health* in 1997, followed soon by *FHM* and *GQ*. As in the case of the international titles, these magazines formed an important site for the articulation of facets of modern, post-apartheid masculinity in their concentration on the male consumer. Not unlike their international counterparts, these magazines have been extolled in the publishing sector for their commercial success and disparaged in academia for their potentially negative influence on the sensitive gender politics of the new South Africa (Viljoen 2005). At the forefront of such academic criticisms today is the concern with the globalising pressure of a world economy that threatens to exercise its pervasive influence in less than subtle ways. The horizontal or sideways identification or similarity between men's lifestyle magazines in disparate parts of the world is perhaps summed up as the objectification and commodification of both women and men, but this is a trite simplification of a complex and layered phenomenon.

Often overlooked by the body of research concerned with the men's lifestyle press is the fact that the contemporary manifestation of this genre is divided into two parts. First is what I will term the 'mainstream' men's lifestyle magazines, meaning the magazines popularly associated with the phrases 'glossy men's magazines', 'men's general interest magazines' or, most frequently, 'men's lifestyle magazines'. These magazines are now generally laddish but supposedly informative magazines that to varying degrees comply with the trope of subjects, images and icons typically considered to fall within the scope of the urbane, western man's 'general interest'. This taxonomy is dominated by *Esquire*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly (GQ)*, *For Him Magazine (FHM)*, *Loaded*, *Maxim* and *Men's Health*. While in South Africa they are considered 'top shelf' magazines, meaning that they contain sexualised imagery and therefore should be displayed above the eye level of children (this courtesy is frequently ignored by news agents), they are clearly distinguished from the magazines such as *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler*, since they eschew the 'soft' or not so soft pornography of those magazines.

The second group forms a more customised genre that caters to a particular cultural or racial niche market that presumably is not satisfied by the generalising tone of the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. It is this largely under-theorised genre that is

the focus of this study. In particular, two South African men's lifestyle magazines, *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, are the subject of this analysis as much for what they signify in terms of the presence of vernacular masculinities in post apartheid South Africa as for the texture that they bring to the genre of men's lifestyle magazines.

While there had been previous attempts at starting a men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa the first fully fledged men's lifestyle magazine to enter post apartheid South Africa, as mentioned earlier, was the American magazine, *Men's Health* in 1997.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 2000, the British 'ladmag' *FHM* as well as the American magazine *GQ* entered the race. All three of the local issues of these magazines occasionally borrow content from other international issues such as the British, Australian, French or American issues. Both *Men's Health* and *FHM* have been very successful in publishing industry terms, while *GQ* has stuttered but is fairly successful. *Men's Health* and *FHM*, in other words, compete for first and second place (Cooper 2006). In 2001, Carpe Diem Media decided to launch an Afrikaans, Christian men's lifestyle magazine in order to articulate the 'general interests' of the many South African men who speak Afrikaans as a first language and identify with Christian norms. *MaksiMan* was not immediately successful and was only ever read by a small population (the magazine was bi-monthly and had a circulation of 20 000 – 25 000, Briers 2006, Stander 2008). The inception of *MaksiMan* seemed to suggest that it was possible to break away from the hegemony of the mainstream formulae for publishing men's lifestyle magazines and persist with a more localised reading of South African masculinity. Unfortunately, however, the magazine was not sustainable and it shut down in 2006 due to a lack of advertising, seemingly indicating that this kind of departure from the mainstream formula of men's lifestyle magazines is not commercially viable. *BLINK* was founded in 2004 by Orlyfunt Holdings as an upmarket magazine aimed at young black males. The magazine shut down at the end of 2006, presumably due to financial restraints. The fact that the magazine was deemed a black empowerment project by the South African government and granted valuable start up capital seems to affirm the fact that it is possible to establish a men's lifestyle magazine which deliberately disavows the pat formulae that historically delineate this genre. But, in fact, it may only indicate that politicians are willing to listen to idealists

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<sup>1</sup> There were other magazines targeted at South African men such as sports magazines and soft pornography magazines but these were not lifestyle magazines.

claiming there will be readers for this kind of project even though they may be wrong.<sup>2</sup> The failure of the magazine to sustain itself again raises the question of whether this kind of break from mainstream taste is commercially viable and whether alternative masculinities can be successfully represented by the media.

This thesis argues that these magazines revealed two strains of vernacular masculinities and in so doing indicated certain variations of the masculine ideals available to men in the South African media. In South Africa there seems to be some measure of flux in the self-articulation of masculinity which may, in part, be caused by the socio-political changes brought about by the first democratically elected government. The implementation of a national mandate on employment equity in 1994 has (rightly) brought with it far-reaching shifts in the socio-economic demographics of the country. Affirmative action, implemented in virtually all spheres of industry, has meant that women and professionals of diverse races have gained access (or increased access) to financial and social power while white men have been subject to large-scale retrenchment and omission from the job market (Allanson, Atkins & Hinks 2002). In terms of both female and racial empowerment this fundamental shift in social status necessarily implies a re-articulation of the hegemonic relations involved in the societal delineation of gender, race and ethnicity, whether corporately or individually. As is to be expected in any new democracy, the identity crisis of the South African nation was followed by the ripple effect of multiple crises related to the delineation of self or selves in this new, post-apartheid 'imagined community'.<sup>3</sup> The post-apartheid South African context in general and *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* in particular may, in other words, have presented a new, hybrid slant on the old theme of masculinity in flux and the emergence and demise of *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* thus warrant closer analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> More is said about this governmental loan in Chapter Two (see 2.2.2).

<sup>3</sup> In his seminal investigation on nationalism and nationhood, political theorist Benedict Anderson (1983) amalgamates the notions of social and cultural nationalism in the central conceptualisation of an 'imagined community'. He describes this community as imagined because the members do not all know each other, and as a community because in the minds of each there is a shared image of their communion. Anderson (1983: 44-46) proposes that the sense of nationhood shared by an 'imagined community' is made possible by modern media that build a shared network of symbols throughout the nation, thereby establishing the basis for an emotional community.

## 1.1.2 Research questions

This study aims to investigate the representation of masculinity and the masculine ideals signified in two South African men's lifestyle magazines, *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*, against the socio-political supposition that contemporary (post 1994) South African masculinity is in a state of flux.<sup>4</sup> The following research questions are asked:

- Do *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* present simplified and two dimensional masculine ideals, in the manner that mainstream magazines have been charged of doing? Critics such as Benthon Benwell (2003), Gail Dines (1995), Sean Nixon (1996, 1997, 2003) and Annette Pritchard (1993) have highlighted the ways in which mainstream men's lifestyle magazines simplify and commodify masculinity. Although not the focus of this study, these sources created the conceptual foundation for this analysis.
- Are the male/female relations represented in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* of a diverse or multi-dimensional nature and do they consider the representation of female personhood as a conscious goal?<sup>5</sup>
- How is male 'generativity' (paternal and corporate or social fathering) represented in both magazines? Here too there are many different aspects of the masculine ideal that may be addressed but biological and professional generativity are considered important by this study because of the emphasis placed on generativity by the seminal research into masculinity by Anthony Clare (2000) and Robert Morrell (2001, 2005).
- Does the genre of men's lifestyle magazines, whether targeted at any culturally specific readership, secular or religious, fundamentally commodify and simplify masculinity to an aspirational type that undermines the personhood of men or, do *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* articulate a powerful and genuine alternative masculinity?

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<sup>4</sup> This supposition is based on the research of Robert Morrell (2001: 3) who claims that "[w]hile South Africa's political and economic systems have been changing, there have also been changes in gender relations".

<sup>5</sup> This is asked because the representation of the relationship between men and women forms an important component of the masculine ideal.

The history of political hegemony that forms the background to all research centred on the South African media after 1994 (Carter 1991, Landman 2007, Mans 2007) is an important setting to this research question but it is not the central focus of this study. Instead, this study attempts to isolate the post 1994 construction of masculinity within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* under the assumption that popular culture in all its forms plays a vital part in the constitution of modern masculine identities in South Africa. The reason the post apartheid context is singled out is because the men's lifestyle press had its South African origins in a New South Africa more receptive to global popular culture (see 2.1.1) and because the scope of this study does not allow for a comprehensive analysis of the pre 1994 construction of masculinity.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework and methodology

The overall methodology of this study is best described as pluralistic.<sup>6</sup> A few broad methodological frameworks may, however, be emphasised.

### 1.2.1 Masculinity theory and the masculine ideal

This section briefly introduces the masculinity theory that is pertinent to this study and forms the theoretical foundation of the analyses of *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*.

The subject of the self has long been salient in feminist thinking, for it is central to concerns about personhood, identity, the body, and agency that feminism must address (see Meyers 2004). Radical and psychoanalytic western feminists such as Andrea Dworkin (1983, 1988, 1993), Catherine McKinnon (1977, 1988, 1993), and Laura Mulvey (1975, 1987, 1989), all belonging to the so-called second wave of

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<sup>6</sup> Ihab Hassan (1986: 503) describes pluralism as the "irritable condition of postmodern discourse". My study may be guilty of this irritable condition but the pluralistic methodology of this study is a necessary evil since different approaches to the study of media need to be relied upon to gain a holistic understanding of the magazines under discussion.

feminism, drew attention to the fact that the personhood (individual identity) of women was being glossed over by the mass media in favour of shorthand stereotypes. Third wave feminists and post feminists such as Judith Butler (1990, 2004), Susan Faludi (1999) and Mary Stewart van Leeuwen (1990, 1993, 1998, 2002) furthered the cause of gender equality by arguing that men too are the victims of a patriarchal society and press, lending support to the men's movements of the 1980s and 1990s. As a result of this concern with male personhood, increasing numbers of researchers are focussing their attention on the representation of masculinity and manhood in various forms of popular culture (Nixon 1996, 2003, Pritchard 1993, Savran 1998, Warner 1985).

A number of ideas seem to emerge from the various studies of masculinity in South Africa and elsewhere (Butler 1990, 2004, Connell 1987, 1995, Morrell 1998, 2001). First, masculinity is a shared gender identity that is socially assumed rather than being a biological characteristic. Second, as Robert Morrell (1998: 607) points out, "there is not one universal masculinity, but many masculinities." In Connell's (1995: 72) view, these masculinities are not finite character types but "configurations of practice" that develop out of specific situations within an ever evolving structure of relationships. Third, race and class impact the shape that masculinities take within particular contexts and thus masculinities are also malleable with time. Fourth, subordinate and subversive masculinities may emerge among marginal or dominated communities and these may be in opposition to the dominant masculinity (Morrell 1998). The notion of hegemonic masculinity is derived from this last sentiment since it is clear in most contexts that hegemonic masculinity suppresses and silences minority masculinities, positioning these in relation to itself so that the vernacular hue of these other masculinities loses validity against the dominant masculinity (see 2.2). Hegemonic masculinity, in other words, needs to be deconstructed and denaturalized within a social context as something which is continuously synthesised and subverted. Focusing my research on a specific time and location allows me to analyse ways in which these processes unfold. This study assumes that *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* have their own gender regimes which in diverse ways contribute to societal gender relations.

This study examines two men's lifestyle magazines targeted at a niche South African market, two particular kinds of South African man both in opposition to the global

model of predominantly white, English speaking man. I attempt to denaturalize masculinity as a construction within these magazines. The question is subsequently asked whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* represent diverse masculinities, an appreciation for male personhood in other words, or whether they too represent a simplified and two-dimensional masculine ideal.

#### 1.2.1.1 The western history of the masculine ideal

Social analysts like George Mosse (1996) have traced the history of the modern ideal of masculinity in psychological as well as physical terms, commenting that this dualistic ideal is both a positive stereotype and a social role. Mosse (1996) interprets the western masculine ideal as the blend of middle-class, Christian norms – honesty, strength, courage and self-control – with an ideal of the male physique drawn from classical Greek philosophy and art (and the subsequent theories of eighteenth century art historian, Joachim Winckelmann). Mosse dates the origin of this western myth to the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. This process of gender rearticulation occurred alongside the rise of bourgeois society and slowly cemented the correlation between physical beauty and moral fortitude with the image of the male body itself becoming the ascendant code of manhood.

By the late nineteenth century, this ideal type was not only materialised in a popular preoccupation with sports intended consciously to build good bodies like those of gymnasts but also militarised so that the modern was typified by a ‘Greek’ physique, sober character, and unwavering nationalism. In spite of the emergence of various fin de siècle counter-masculinities (as well as the opposing forces presented by socialism, feminism, and the avant-garde), the normative, western masculine ideal remained steadfast, gaining a great deal of momentum from the war time rhetoric in Europe and America of honour, sacrifice and patriotism maintained by the media and psychological zeitgeist (Mosse 1996:107). Mosse (1996) deems this Ego Ideal to be a binding and directing force in modern, western history because of its ability to reconcile order and progress in the unifying image of the male. In the gendered trope

of historical imagination, the ideal male thus symbolises a healthy, well ordered society.

But the question of the masculine ideal is not only a political concern but is intimately connected to the construction of gender and gender ideals in families, places of work and other sites where social identity is shaped. In developing the theme of diverse masculinities, Robert Connell (1995: 77) has shown that there is a masculinity that is hegemonic – “one that dominated other masculinities and which succeeded in creating prescriptions of masculinity which were binding (or at least partially so), which created cultural images of what it meant to be a ‘real man’” (in Morrell 2001: 7). The existence of masculine ideals or, worse still, a single, dominant masculine ideal, thus implies that certain masculinities are better than others, leading to the marginalizing of individual character traits in favour of the model features of the prevailing masculine ideal.

Feminist historians such as Linda Nochlin (1991), Sherry Ortner (1974) and Griselda Pollock (1988) are, furthermore, quick to point out the problematic manner in which gender ideals reduce male and female ness to the binaries of subject/object, active/passive and culture/nature. This critique of the binary reading of gender typically implies that the gender of an individual is not secure, but measured on a sliding continuum according to the individual’s compliance with these criteria, thus leading to the notion of ‘gendered behaviour’ or the ‘performativity’ (Butler 1990:136) of gender. Judith Butler (1990:136) contends that acts, gestures and enactments are performative in the sense that “the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (italics in original). Through the analysis of ideal masculinities in men’s lifestyle magazines, this study suggests that performative behaviour (Butler 1990, 2004) is as powerful in a represented format as in ‘real life’ and, thus, that gendered tropes of all persuasions are performative.

This performativity of gender is amplified by the historical notions of idealised gender tropes that influence the construction of gender ideals within each period of history. Anthony Clare (2000: 71) believes that contemporary men carry metaphorical historical postcards around with them of what it means to be a western man. He deems these idealistic snap shots to be firmly rooted in nineteenth and early twentieth

century notions of ideal masculinity since this was a period of unparalleled achievement for men in virtually all spheres of society. While perhaps somewhat exaggerated, Clare's assumption is supported by theorists such as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987) as well as Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (1981) who emphasise the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an important influence on contemporary gender ideals. For this reason the middle class construction of masculinity within the global nineteenth and early twentieth century context is briefly touched upon at the start of Chapter Four in order to frame the historical context out of which contemporary strains of western masculinity may have emerged.

The presupposition that there is a masculine ideal in contemporary, western society is a powerful assumption against which to sketch the history of the men's lifestyle press in South Africa. Mosse (1996) treats ideal masculinity as both historically and personally amorphous or fluctuating as well as fairly contained in its morphology or fixed within a specific historical or social framework. This conceptualisation of gender as being simultaneously flexible and fixed is useful to this study because of the varying strains of vernacular masculinity that emerge from the study of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*. The ideal masculinities presented by the different men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa are both diverse and involve a measure of horizontal identification or commonality between the mainstream and marginal titles. The normative construction of a masculine ideal across all of the magazines is thus as important as the particular nuances presented by each magazine.

#### 1.2.1.2 South African enunciations of a masculine ideal

The suitability of applying Mosse's (1996) historical interpretation of the western masculine ideal to *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* is limited since it is the more colloquial or native aspects of masculinity that are under inspection in these magazines (although Mosse's delineation of a western masculine ideal is used to highlight the areas of likeness between the masculine ideals found in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* and that defined by Mosse). Masculine identity in the New South Africa is at best a composite, tangled affair – at worst fragmented and capricious. Either way, the masculine ideals that are

presumed to be constructed within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* must be influenced by a number of knotted identities since the process of constructing self in the New South Africa is necessarily informed by the diverse historical identities found within South Africa pre 1994. A number of researchers have investigated the coming together of cultural and historical influences on the construction of masculine identity in this post apartheid context (Hunter 2005, Niehaus 2005, Siders 2005, Walker 2005), but once again this historical backdrop is not the focus of this study. Instead, the focal point is masculine identity post 1994 even where these identities draw from past strains of influence.

In a study involving men's workshops, Ira Horowitz (2001) investigated the role of early socialisation on the formulation of masculine identity in post apartheid South Africa. The investigation invariably involved a crossing over of past and present formulations of masculinity as well as various paradigmatic conceptualisations relating to the formulation of masculinity. In raising the concept of culturally delineated etiquette, for instance, Horowitz found that men belonging to different racial and cultural groupings related to gender etiquette differently but the underlying motivation for most types of behaviour (that were seen in his study) were similar. Thus, in a workshop held in a government agency, an Afrikaner man suggested that he was taught, 'ladies first'. A black man who came from the Xhosa community then commented that in his culture the rule was 'men first'. The reason, he explained, was to protect women from a potential enemy. Horowitz (2001: 234) points out that while the discussion demonstrated that diverse South African cultures define masculine roles in different or even opposite ways, the underlying paradigm is frequently the same. In this case both rules were based on the assumption that women are weaker and need either protection or assistance. This is merely one, fairly inane example, but it serves to demonstrate the way in which Horowitz (2001) aided the men who participated in his study to identify the role that their religion and culture have played in socialising their notion of gendered behaviour.

Horowitz (2001) concludes that the most evident outcome of the workshops was the observation that early socialization results in men being privileged and women oppressed. This circumstance is contrasted with the aim of South Africa to transform itself into a human rights culture. The resultant analogy is that the contemporary

struggle for gender equality is not unlike the struggle to end racial inequality during apartheid. During a discussion of what 'gender equality' really meant, one of the participants in Horowitz's study noted that:

We took away equal opportunity, perhaps unconsciously. It's like the old regime taking away opportunities from certain people ... For me as a white man, I am feeling very sad ... I now understand equality of opportunity and choice for women. I thought I had the right answers, but I see I was acting on my own conditioning. I was still an oppressor even though I thought I was doing something different (in Horowitz 2001:sp).

The masculine ideals that emerge from this kind of workshop, in other words, demonstrate a new found critique of 'old' South African masculinity and attempt to reconcile the current gender identity with the ideals of the New South Africa, namely, justice, freedom and a respect for diversity in the face of the injustices of the past (Act 108 of 1996: 1).

It stands to reason, bearing in mind Horowitz's study, that the progressive masculine ideals emerging from the New South Africa are a composite of ('old' South African) cultural socialisation and new found political sentiment. The question is whether the two magazines under discussion show the tension between past and present sensibilities or simply assume that all their readers are on track with the new political attitude of gender equality and social sensitivity. This question is posed throughout this study with reference to the masculine ideals rendered by both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* and is contrasted with descriptions of a western masculine ideal such as that posited by Mosse (1996).

From Horowitz's analysis of contemporary South African masculine identity and other, similar studies (Beinart 1998, Breckenridge 1998, Burns 1998, Epprecht 1998, Glazer 1998, Hunter 2005, Mooney 1998, Niehaus 2005, Reid 2005, Siders 2005, Swart 1998, Walker 2005) it is clear that the South African situation is an intricate context for the articulation and exploration of masculinity. A study such as this one, concerned with masculine identity in two niche men's lifestyle magazines, should ideally investigate historical portrayals of African masculinity, colonial masculinities and the influence of American popular culture (whether popular culture that predominantly

depicts whites like cowboy and gangster films or African American visualisations like the imagery stemming from the Black Panther movement) on the local formulation of masculinities. The scope of this study does not allow for such a wide ranging approach but since different masculinities presumably feed the two dominant assumed identities in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*, the historical footprints of cultural and historical identities are, where relevant, referred to in the semiotic analyses of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

### 1.2.1.3 'Masculinity in crisis' and 'metrosexuality'

Two strains of thought or variations on the theme of ideal masculinity particularly impact the study of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa and *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* in particular. First, research surrounding new masculinity or metrosexuality is an important leitmotif throughout various investigations of men's lifestyle magazines because of the way these magazines challenge the traditional western assumptions about physical and psychological self interest being the exclusive right of women. Originating in Britain in 1994 with the utterances of social commentator, Mark Simpson, the term 'metrosexuality' refers to the disposition of modern, urbane men who embrace the dandified accoutrement of self beautification. Simpson (2004) describes the metrosexual as:

[A] young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis – because that's where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference.

Metrosexuality has, subsequently, become a part of the aspirational syntax of men's lifestyle magazines that aim to procure the support of high end advertisers; and in doing so endorse the connection between masculinity and consumption. This phenomenon is not overtly present in all the South African men's lifestyle magazines, but seems to be an important signifier in the redefining of masculine identity in this

context, particularly considering the fact that “modern forms of consumption privilege certain public masculinities as the subject of the look” (Nixon 1996:70).<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the set of theories established in the 1990s, collectively known as ‘masculinity in crisis’, infuse much of the research concerning why men read men’s lifestyle magazines and thus, implicitly, informs this study. Roughly following the time that men’s lifestyle magazines were reaching new circulation highs in the United States, such social theorists and popular writers as Robert Bly (1990), Anthony Clare (2000), Rosalind Coward (1999), Susan Faludi (1999), Roger Horrocks (1994), John MacInnes (1998, 2001) and Leanne Payne (1978) theorised various views of masculinity as pathological, defeated or collectively ‘confused’ (later theorists have continued this theme – see Malin 2005 and Piner 2001). Their assumptions were based on the analyses of statistics relating to crime perpetrated by men, depression and suicide which seemed to indicate that overwhelming numbers of men were engaged in violent or self-destructive behaviour. Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Rob Patman (2002) argue that if this crisis does exist, it is anchored in a variety of societal phenomena,

Includ[ing] the collapse of traditional men’s work, the growth of a technological culture which cannot be ‘passed on’ in any recognisable way between the generations, the rise of feminist consciousness amongst women, and, more abstractly, challenges to the dominance of the forms of rationality with which masculinity has been identified, at least in the [w]est.

In 2000, following on the research by Roger Horrocks (1994), clinical psychologist Anthony Clare (2000) published his influential social text, *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis*, in which he proposed that American men were, as he put it, “in serious trouble”.<sup>8</sup> The umbrella phrase for the cooperative theories that culminated in Clare’s popularised thesis is, thus, ‘masculinity in crisis’ and the body of knowledge

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<sup>7</sup> The homogenizing and commodifying of masculinity is particularly apparent in the articles and features that the mainstream magazines borrow from their international sibling publications.

<sup>8</sup> Clare posed two primary questions: first, he asked whether “phallic man, authoritative, dominant, assertive – man in control not merely of himself but of woman – was starting to die”. Second, he asked whether “a new man [would] emerge phoenix like in his place or whether man himself [would] become largely redundant?”

concerning a crisis in western masculinity is today well developed if not uncontested.<sup>9</sup> The phrase is, nevertheless, useful in exploring global and local trends in the delineation of contemporary masculinities. While not the subject of this investigation, 'masculinity in crisis' forms a subtle backdrop to the proposed analysis since it is assumed that the failure to fulfil a particular masculine ideal on a personal level may result in a crisis of identity (Reid & Walker 2005: 10).

A number of local nuances colour the study of various masculine ideals within the South African context. The HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa is amongst the highest in the world (roughly 499 000 people die of HIV/AIDS related causes a year – Wines 2005) and has cast a great deal of attention on sexuality in South Africa. The high levels of crime and violence in all strata of the South African population have also garnered the attention of public and private sectors alike and raised questions about the predominantly male gender of offenders. A number of organisations such as ADAPT, the White Ribbon campaign, and the South African Men's Forum have emerged in the past decade that work with men on creating a healthy society. Academic researchers too have taken an interest in male well being and in 1997 the first colloquium on 'Masculinity in Southern Africa' was held in Durban, resulting in the seminal collection of essays edited by Robert Morrell entitled, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (2001).

The idea of masculinity in crisis also takes on a local flavour in the struggle for individual and corporate identity that followed the first democratic elections in South Africa (demonstrating that there are as many different experiences of crisis as there are different experiences of ideal masculinity). In the American and British contexts, the emergence of (often times metrosexually orientated) men's lifestyle magazines in the 1980s seemed to have been one way in which the media responded to the so called crisis in masculinity. Men's lifestyle magazines in these contexts presented men with self affirming, consumption-driven shortcuts to their masculinity that cemented the various aspects of (new?) manhood. But, given the melting pot of idiosyncrasies that

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<sup>9</sup> The fissures in this collective taxonomy have been highlighted by, among others, Rosalind Gill (2005) James Heartfield (2002), and Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barret (2001), who question whether this is a valid social phenomenon or something of a moral dread invented by those who consider feminism to be threatening to a social system that prefers male power.

defined the South African context, the question remained whether South African men would be ready for the kind of 'answers' provided by the more media-savvy developed world.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.2.2 The socio historical context

Since the emergence of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa has not been documented in any official, academic format, the first objective of this study is to chronicle the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa from 1997 to the present. By documenting this history, a socio historical methodology is followed, similar to that implemented by Kate Brooks (2001), Peter Jackson (2001), Sean Nixon (1996, 2003), and Nick Stevenson (2001) to record the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in the United Kingdom and also by Bill Osgerby (2003) in the United States. In the South African context the 'straightforward' telling of history is made more complex by the role that apartheid played in attempting to define culture, race and gender.<sup>11</sup> This research necessarily locates itself within the rhetoric of post apartheid South Africa since the two magazines in question were both founded after 1994, when the first democratic elections were held.

### 1.2.3 Literature review as methodology

As a multidisciplinary study, this research combines literature focussed on socio psychological readings of 'masculinity in crisis' (Clare 2000, Coward 1999, Horrocks 1996, MacInnes 1998, 2001), sociological investigations into new masculinity (Craig 1992, Edwards 2003, Mosse 1996, Nixon 1996, Whitehead and Barret 2001) and theory centred on visual consumption (Duncan 1993, Fiske 1989, Freedburg 1989,

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<sup>10</sup> The manner in which South African men responded to the "more media-savvy developed world" is addressed in Chapter Two when the rise of men's lifestyle magazines is chronicled in the South African context.

<sup>11</sup> This political influence on gender identity links with hegemonic notions of masculinity as defined as white, heterosexual and middle class.

Kappeler 1986, Mills 1995, Mirzoeff 1998, Mulvey 1975, 1987, 1989, Nead 1992, Pollock 1988, 1992, Root 1996 and Stevenson 1995). The third methodological framework for this research is, thus, a literature review. In particular, I am interested in pairing notions related to cultural diversity, on the one hand, and popular constructions of masculinity, on the other. My interest in this conceptual alignment lies in the fact that the value of a culturally specific delineation of masculinity has been amply theorised by for example Robert Morrell (1998, 2001) and the conceptualisation of a global, western masculine ideal is, similarly, well articulated (even in the niche context of men's lifestyle magazines), but these two are seldom brought together in any kind of theoretical comparison.

This study draws from the critical assumptions of researchers such as Morrell (1998, 2000, 2001) who have explored the need for vernacular articulations of masculinity in local media. In the Introduction to his 2001 book entitled *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, Morrell attempts to represent something of the diversity of South African masculinity and thus refute the stereotypical casting of South African men as chauvinist. He tackles a broad spectrum history of masculinity in twentieth century South Africa and provides the reader with an analysis of the transition that diverse masculinities are facing in contemporary South Africa. Morrell (2001) proposes three responses to the layers of socio political transition occurring in post apartheid South Africa. These are the reactive or defensive, accommodating and progressive responses – all three, kinds of reactions evident in media bodies such as *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*. Morrell's research is centred on the investigation of men within the social and political context of South Africa. He does not examine the representation of men in the media or the ways in which the media reflect the transitional masculinities occurring in the country, though these are both aspects of South African men's studies that need urgent attention. Morrell's (2001) research on masculinity in the South African context is nevertheless invaluable to this study precisely because he highlights the need for various investigations into vernacular masculinities in South Africa. Morrell (2001) furthermore draws attention to the manner in which South African masculinities are in transition and new strains of gender identity might emerge over time. This study builds on the work of Morrell by investigating the representation of masculinities in two media entities. As Morrell would no doubt point out, the

masculinities represented in these magazine are not isolated identities but hybrid and interrelated.

Australian sociologist, Robert Connell's (1987, 1995) three fold model of masculinity is similarly a leitmotif throughout this research. Connell (1995: 73-76) maintains that masculinity is ordered in terms of its relation to power, production and cathexis (or emotional attachment), a thesis that may be deemed simplistic but is useful in terms of the way he emphasises the way masculinity interacts with its context. His analysis of the relational quality of masculinity is the backbone of Chapters Three and Four where masculinity is discussed with relation to the way it interacts with other people (women, children and colleagues). Connell (1995: 67-77) believes that gender is a way in which social practice is ordered and believes different definitions of masculinity follow different strategies to characterize the person who is masculine. The primary warning that Connell issues is that not only are there different types of masculinities but that masculinity is an individual and fluctuating form of identity characterisation. In terms of this study, then, it should be noted that there is no singular Afrikaans, white, Christian masculinity nor is there a black upwardly mobile masculinity. Yet these are types that warrant attention even if they are not finite and inflexible.

Bourdieu's (1991, 2001, 2005) delineation of masculinity and economy is also very helpful to this study in terms of defining masculinity within the broader context of society. Bourdieu's theorising of local and international space as analogous to margin and centre is useful to the conceptualisation of two kinds of men's lifestyle magazines, those that are mainstream and those that are marginal. I also refer to Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl Ann Michael (2000) who emphasise the need for a particular, localised visual rhetoric within the context of post apartheid South Africa.

Arran Stibbe's (2004) research on *Men's Health* is especially helpful in defining the areas where *Men's Health* represents a two dimensional image of masculine identity. Alan Cobley's (1997: 57) research on the history of black literacy in South Africa is useful in setting the scene out of which *BLINK* emerged while Nkhensani Mtebule's (2001) research on different kinds of black masculinity is also helpful in defining the potential readership of *BLINK*.

In relation to the investigation of religious articulations of masculinity, Leanne Payne (1985), Susan Faludi (1999), Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (1990, 1993, 1998, 2002) and Christina Landman (1994, 2007) were the critical sources referred to. All four of these women have an interest in religious delineations of masculinity and have researched this subject. In *Crisis in Masculinity*, Payne (1985: back blurb) addresses what she describes as the problems contemporary men are having fulfilling their obligations at home and at work. Payne writes from a Christian perspective to try to unpack the problems involved in this crisis and usher men to “wholeness”. In the process of addressing this crisis she comments that she regards both the church and feminists as those who relegate men and women to a class rather than considering them as individuals (Payne 1985: 139). Her approach is to encourage a shared headship within marriages where men and women can experience individual freedom (Payne 1985: 136-140). In a chapter of *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the Modern Man*, Faludi (1999: 257) investigates a kind of muscular Christianity that she believes “emerged at the turn of the century as a protest against an increasingly sentimental strain of Protestantism – and, ultimately, against an ‘emasculated’ church’s ineffectuality in the face of industrialism’s mounting ravages”. Faludi draws a parallel between this muscular Christianity and the preeminence of the 1990s Promise Keepers men’s Christian movement in the United States. Faludi’s investigation is focused on Christian men who seem to feel that they need new tools to understand and assert their masculinity. Her feminist analysis is both critically rigorous and sympathetic. It is helpful to my study because of her emphasis on the crisis that her subjects seem to feel within the contemporary family, work and church and the fact that societies like the Promise Keepers fail to fully answer this identity crisis. Her investigation leads her to believe that the Promise Keepers is essentially a commercial body that simply put merely offered men “but another communion with the marketplace”. This raises the question of whether *MaksiMan* too provided men with commercial answers to spiritual and social questions.

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen’s research on gender is centered on the examination of “processes such as socialization, work, religious participation and parenting with particular reference to the lives of boys and men” (Van Leeuwen 2002: 9-10). She maintains that she is for “mutuality rather than hierarchy in gender relations and for flexibility rather than rigidity in gender roles” (Van Leeuwen 2002: 9). As such her

research is concerned with various configurations of masculinity – past and present, intra- and crosscultural – and the ways in which these masculinities either support or inhibit mutuality. The relevance of Van Leeuwen's writings to my research is primarily to be found in the way she interrogates the relational quality of masculinity. Like Connell, Van Leeuwen approaches masculinity in relation to women, children and the work place and thus her articulation of gender roles is fairly holistic. Van Leeuwen provided me with an understanding of the ways in which feminist Christian theorists may interpret masculinity.

Christina Landman is also a Christian feminist. The aspect of her research that is relevant to my study is her articulation of the Afrikaans community as a male dominated culture in which women are subordinated (Landman 1994: 2). She also theorizes piety as a dominant attribute of the feminine ideal of the Afrikaner, Christian woman and this notion is very helpful in formulating the feminine ideal postulated by *MaksiMan* (see Chapter Three).

Another feminist researcher whose work is relied upon throughout my study is Nancy Duncan. Duncan (1996: 128) explains that, traditionally, spatial geographies are divided so that the public domain is thought of as male, and the private domain as female. Duncan (1996: 128) maintains that this gender based distinction between the public and the private is deeply rooted in the social structures of western society. According to Duncan the kinds of spatial structuring practices that might be found in men's lifestyle magazines, have often been employed to "construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference" in the interest of maintaining "traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures" (1996: 127-128). Both Chapters Three and Four address the gendering of space within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* and as a result Duncan's research in this area is invaluable.

The final area that warrants particular mention is that of literature that deals with the men's lifestyle press and theorises this within the broader context of visual culture studies. In this regard, Benthon Benwell (2003) and Sean Nixon (1996, 1997, 2003) were of great help in ascertaining the general theory on the mainstream men's lifestyle press. Benthon Benwell's *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* (2003) provides the reader with a general overview of the condition of modern masculinity as it

appears in men's lifestyle magazines. The book supports the view that "men's lifestyle magazines are both representative site and mobilizing force of crucial cultural shifts in masculinity. It also subscribes to the belief that popular culture, in all its forms and instantiations, plays a key role in the constitution of modern identities" (Benwell 2003: 7). Although the book is primarily focussed on modern, British, heterosexual masculinity it does provide a backdrop to the discourse surrounding men's lifestyle magazines which invariably influenced my own investigation into *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. Sean Nixon has written extensively on patterns of contemporary consumption in the western world. In particular, his *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and Contemporary Consumption* (1996) attempts to address the popularity of men's lifestyle magazines within the mid-nineteen nineties global culture. Again, Nixon is not directly useful in that his analysis is positioned within the United Kingdom and America but there are parallels to be drawn and his discussion of British popular culture proves helpful in analysing South African consumer trends.

#### 1.2.4 Visual analysis

Fourth, the study comprises a critical analysis of the visual interface of the magazines under discussion in the tradition of Barthesian semiotics. My own research within the dual disciplines of art history and popular visual culture has used the theoretical framework of the discourse surrounding representation. The thesis investigates the visual conceptualisation and representation of gender (see feminist and post feminist art historians, Carol Duncan (1993), Sara Mills (1995) and Laura Mulvey (1975, 1989)) and juxtaposes this with discourses centred on the language of power such as those of poststructuralists Scott Fabius Kiesling (2001) Michel Foucault (1970, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1988) and Stuart Hall (1980, 1997). In approaching this research from a feminist stance it becomes necessary to problematise this position. A critique of the various (divergent) feminist responses to masculinity in crisis, for instance, is a basic component of this research. The men's studies and masculinist discourses surrounding the representation of men and masculinity are treated in a similar critical fashion. The juxtaposition of these conflated discourses, the former relating to the visualisation of gender and the latter to language and power, is offered in order to

demonstrate the strategies employed in constructing gendered imagery since knowledge systems such as *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* are perceived as discourses which potentially construct social identities.

This accent on the visual may seem misplaced in a study situated within the discipline of media studies, but echoes the existing sociological interest in the visual as an important influence on contemporary society, particularly in relation to popular articulations of gender. This leaning is not only evident in the writings of sociologists like Robert W. Connell (1995), Tim Edwards (1997, 2003), and John MacInnes (1998, 2001) but also in the *Sociological Review's* recent publication of *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* (edited by Bethan Benwell, 2003).

Either way, as Eduardo de Gregorio Godeo (2005), Linda McLoughlin (2000) and Annete Pritchard (1993) have highlighted, the analysis of the visual stylistic and layout of magazines is an essential component of magazine scholarship within gender studies. In the case of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*, this emphasis on the stylistic is particularly pertinent since the expensive rrien of the magazines is tied to the aspirational tone of the masculine ideals emblazoned by both magazines. Where the scrutiny of the visuals contained in these magazines leads to an interrogation of the consumer politics behind popular paradigms, the investigation aligns itself with the Althusserian and Neo Gramscian readings of 'hegemonic masculinity'.

While interviews with the various editors of each magazine as well as industry experts were carried out, the research is primarily qualitative and no quantitative investigations were undertaken.

### **1.3 Contribution to existing body of knowledge in gender studies**

As mentioned previously, the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa from 1997 to 2007 has, as of yet, hardly been documented or interrogated in any known theoretical format. The masculinities that are reflected in these magazines are influenced by the homogenising influence of mass media that requires critical

problematizing and de naturalising within the South African context. While in the United Kingdom and America, for instance, much of the theory and methodology of this study are old hat, (Benwell 2003, Nixon 1996, 1997, Pritchard 1993) in South Africa, men's lifestyle magazines are a fairly new occurrence and are, subsequently, under theorised. This study attempts to contribute an analysis of the masculine ideals presented by *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* to the already growing research surrounding gender in contemporary South Africa.

#### 1.4 Outline of chapters

The discussion on masculinity in the men's lifestyle press starts with a historical overview of the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa after the first democratic elections in 1994 and up to 2007. Chapter Two splits this narrative into the mainstream magazines (*Men's Health*, *FHM*, *GQ*), and then *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* which are described as more marginal because they appealed to niche, culturally defined markets. This division is forced and perhaps not entirely helpful to an analysis that attempts to stress the measure of horizontal identification between the mainstream and more marginal magazines. But the division is useful in highlighting two points. First, the fact that the mainstream magazines preceded the marginal ones meant that more customised trends in gender identification emerged after the globalizing influence of western popular culture was well established. Second, the separation of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* from the broader genre of men's lifestyle magazines inverts the tendency in media studies to lend greater attention to more successful (profitable) media entities, under the assumption that they have greater societal impact.

In accordance with Bourdieu's (2005: 126-141) articulation of the differences between the 'global' and the 'local' or the mainstream and the more marginal, Chapter Two attempts to sketch the significance of both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* as potential expressions of vernacular masculinities. Morrell (2001: 5) highlights the fact that "[m]inorities, defined in race, class and ethnic terms or in terms of sexual orientation, all characteristically understand what being a man means differently from members of

the ruling class or elite." This chapter examines race and class as important determinants of masculinity and asks whether integrative forces, such as conservative religious culture and an indigenous culture, within *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* respectively are shaping new masculinities. Having said that, I believe that masculinities are fluid and should not be thought of as the possession of any one group of men. Morrell (2001) and others (Connell 1995, Gilmore 1990) have argued that masculinities are socially and historically created in a development that involves disputation between rival interpretations of manhood. The analysis of these two niche magazines is, thus, centred on the precept that cultural theory aims to stress the fissures and contestations in social stereotypes as they appear in diverse forms of popular culture. These fissures are seen as valuable since, in accordance with classic Marxist reasoning, contestations and contradictions have the potential to undermine dominant tropes.

In his analysis of the social organisation of masculinity, Connell (1995: 73-74) suggests a three-fold model of the relational structure of masculinity, distinguishing relations of a) power, b) production and c) cathexis (emotional attachment). Following this model (which is discussed more comprehensively in Chapters Three and Four) this study investigates two kinds of masculine roles. First the representation of the relationships between men and women in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* is investigated against the backdrop of Connell's formulation of "power" and "cathexis" as important aspects of masculine social interaction. Chapter Three, in other words, expands the emphasis on the masculine ideals emblazoned by *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* to include the relation between men and women and the power relations that might influence these interactions. In this chapter the connection between the representation of masculine selfhood and the Other is investigated in both magazines against the assumption that mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are generally assumed to simplify and objectify women and the manner in which men should relate to them. The question is asked whether *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* can depart from this often stressed trend.

Second, Connell's formulation of the influence of "production" on male social relations and identity forms the backdrop to an analysis of male 'generativity'. Mainstream men's magazines typically refuse to include reference to the role of father that certain of their readers might occupy, preferring instead to address men as eternally single.

These magazines do, however, make repeated reference to the expected business prowess or corporate success of their readers. Chapter Four investigates both the biological and corporate productivity of men as represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. This notion of fatherhood and social or corporate mentoring (including both mentoring and being mentored) as related concepts is brought together under the umbrella term 'generativity' and is the focus of this chapter. In both Chapters Three and Four, *MaksiMan* is examined before *BLINK* since it emerged on the South African publishing scene before *BLINK*.

Finally, in Chapter Five, the conclusions arrived at throughout each preceding chapter are recapped and re evaluated in a more comprehensive way. The shortcomings of the study are discussed as well as suggestions for areas of further research. The demise of the two magazines under discussion is also addressed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MASCULINE IDEALS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: THE RISE OF MEN'S GLOSSIES

Products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities: our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of 'us' and 'them'.

· Meenakshi Gigi Durham & Douglas Kellner (2001:1)

In 1979 Joe Dubbert adapted Betty Friedan's famous conceptualisation of sexual difference in order to expose what he termed the 'masculine mystique' (Dubbert 1979). Since then theorists (Connell 1987; 1995, Segal 1990) have used the concept of ideal masculinity to translate the popular feminist notion of the feminine ideal into masculinity studies. In doing so, these students of gender effectively communicated the idea that men too were subject to the homogenising machinations of the media and popular politics and that it was time to turn the attention of theorists onto the construction of masculine identity (see 1.2.1). It thus became evident to students of 'masculine' and 'feminine' types alike that the ascendancy of certain types of masculinity is sustained through the creation of a masculine ideal. Not unlike the feminine ideal, this masculine counterpart was perceived to be a dominant construction of manhood against which other forms of male identity are calculated and evaluated.

Although this study is primarily concerned with *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, this chapter briefly chronicles the rise of all six men's lifestyle magazines that emerged in post apartheid South Africa between 1994 and 2007 (the time in which both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* emerged and then shut down) and situates them within the theoretical discourse surrounding masculinity. This contextual

history is sketched in order to establish the socio-political and publishing framework within which *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* arose. While positioning the narrative of each magazine within the broader context of masculinity theory, the various vernacular masculine ideals presented by each magazine are considered as indicative of the nuanced yet homogenising aspirational tropes available to men in this strain of the South African media.

A central tenet that emerges from Robert Morrell's (2001: 33) significant collection, *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, is the idea that "there is no one typical South African man" but rather many diverse masculinities. Following this suggestion, the research undertaken here is underpinned by a two-fold question. First, how strongly do globalized media values dominate the post-apartheid economy and secondly, how strongly are these values modified differentially to target Anglo (white, English-speaking), Afrikaner and black professionals? (I also investigate the manner in which homogenizing trends may transcend or work around language or racial differences.) Two primary methodologies are followed in this chapter: the first being a narrative documentation of the circumstances that gave rise to each magazine. This narrative contextualisation is considered to be important since, in the words of Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (2001:1), "Media stories [whether in the media or about the media] provide the symbols, myths and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture." The second is a socio-semiotic analysis of the masculine ideal presented by each. While the magazines vary in cultural scope and circulation, the same attention and time are devoted to each. Through this largely equalizing study, the dominant and marginalized vernacular masculinities are, thus, juxtaposed in order to subvert the hegemonies normally inherent in a comparative analysis of this kind (that typically preferences the more mainstream publications over the publications with lower circulation figures).

If I treat the conceptions of culture, identity and gender as more static than they are, it is not in order to undermine the tenuous stuff of each of these categories but rather for the sake of communicative clarity. In discussing masculinity at all, we are 'doing gender' in a culturally particular way. It is, after all, necessary for

culture, identity and gender to be in conversation with each other as they are with the ever changing South African landscape. For masculinity, like culture, is an on-going multifaceted project that involves constant interaction between the individual and society. Masculinity as identity is, in other words, here deemed as both relational and personal. It is, thus, dependent on the active choices made by an individual as well as being connected to various societal institutions such as the men's lifestyle press which may, for instance, serve to construct consumption driven or 'profitable' masculinities.

In the following section I explain the Bourdieusque logic behind the separate handling of the mainstream and marginal magazines. Following this, I outline the social context out of which men's lifestyle magazines arose. Thereafter, I sketch the localised debate surrounding firstly the mainstream magazines and secondly the marginal magazines.

### **2.1. Mainstream masculinity and the men's lifestyle press in South Africa: *Men's Health, FHM and GQ***

In examining the social structures of the economy, Bourdieu (2005: 126) posits that one cannot conceive the relationship between the 'national' and the 'local', the 'centre' and the 'periphery' as a relationship between a global rule and its specific application, between conception and execution. Bourdieu (2005: 126) is adamant that the perspective achieved from the 'centres' of power evokes a view that encourages one to perceive, whether geographically or socially, "peripheral religions and forms of worship as magical rituals, regional languages as (provincial) dialects" and, one might add, certain strains of masculinity as more parochial than others. Bourdieu (2005: 126) may even be implying that these peripheral identities are seen as less important than the dominant ones. According to Bourdieu (2005: 126), diverse forms of the opposition between 'centre' and 'periphery' (or between global and local), have two definite outcomes. The first is that the effects of domination are cloaked to the extent that they "vanish beneath a semblance of descriptive neutrality" (Bourdieu 2005:

126). The second, emphatic outcome is that this insidious yet pervasive point of view establishes a hierarchy between the two opposing terms.

The reason, therefore, that *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* are discussed separately from *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* is in order to emphasise the central position occupied by these magazines within firstly, the South African media landscape and, secondly, the public construction of masculinities.<sup>1</sup>

While little research has been conducted on the influence of the mainstream western media on South African masculinity prior to the fall of apartheid it is clear that this influence exists. Herein lies an important aspect of the mainstream-ness of *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*, namely, their international roots. Two primary strains are evident from the genealogies of these three magazines, an old world, Anglo ideal based in the United Kingdom, and a new world, American ideal that draws from popular culture icons such as cowboys and gangsters. *Men's Health* and *FHM* seem to appropriate the casual appeal of American popular masculine ideals in their preference for extreme sports and an emphasis on physical adventurism and sexual health prowess. *GQ*, on the other hand, seems to hark back to a British, Bond-street type of city gentlemen who takes great pride in his mental prowess and mastery of social etiquette.<sup>2</sup> These affiliations seem to have little to do with where the magazine originated but capitalise on well-established tropes available in different genres of popular culture. The subtle nuances that relegate a magazine to a British or American trope are difficult to pin down and form overlapping connections within each magazine. The point is that both strains are sensed in all three magazines and as such cement their status as part of the aspect of South African media that I have described as 'mainstream'. South African masculinity in its mainstream form is, in other words a compromise between the Anglo and American strains of masculine identity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Manwees* is a new mainstream magazine but is discussed within the section on *MaksiMan* because of the fact that it targets a similar audience.

<sup>2</sup> With *GQ*'s recent (2006) rebranding they have become decidedly more laddish and this British poise is far less evident, possibly indicating that class doesn't sell as well in South Africa as in the United Kingdom.

The 'mainstream' magazines and the masculine ideals they represent established the taxonomy against which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* are defined. Whether the relationship between so called mainstream and marginal men's lifestyle magazines (and the masculinities they represent) is affable or oppositional, their existence and identities are certainly intertwined. The following section introduces the background politics and economics behind the inception of the six men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa. Thereafter the rise of *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* as the primary, meaning the best selling and therefore most mainstream, South African men's lifestyle magazines is chronicled.

### 2. 1.1. The inception of six men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa

In the United Kingdom in the mid 1980s, when publishers considered introducing a men's lifestyle magazine into the otherwise fairly stodgy British market, they were met with a fair amount of scepticism. Media theorists and marketers raised concerns about the consumption habits of the "typical British male", frequently invoking truisms relating to men as tricky and elusive media consumers who would be unwilling to pay for a glossy magazine (Nixon 1996:129). Amidst growing contention around the potential failure of a British men's lifestyle title, media practitioner Simon Marquis added his essentialist comment that such a publication was doomed to fail because,

While women become "friends" with their magazines there is an inbuilt resistance to the idea of a magazine that makes public and shares ideas about being a man. To men it is an unacceptable contradiction. Self consciousness is permissible, even attractive, in women; it is perceived as weak and unmanly in a man (Cited in Nixon 1996:129).

As it turned out, these sentiments were unfounded. Nick Logan's *Arena*, published by Wagadon and targeted at a market defined as style leaders and innovators, first appeared in 1986 while the more conservative first British edition of *GQ*, published by Conde Nast, appeared in 1988. The success of these two magazines in the United Kingdom indicated that the British market was indeed

ready for the new kind of masculine consumption sceptics had warned against. More or less a decade later, the same debate was taking place against the backdrop of the embryonic New South Africa. The apartheid oligarchy had come to an end, a democratically elected government was in place, sanctions were lifted and the stage was set for new media entities to capitalize on the enthusiasm of a people seeking to redefine themselves.

Up to this point there were no men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa but there were a number of so called soft pornographic magazines. Most notable among these was *Scope*, a local magazine seemingly modelled on Hugh Hefner's American soft pornography magazine, *Playboy*, founded in 1953. Like *Playboy*, *Scope* combined objectifying imagery of women with fairly 'serious' (critical and informative) articles, features and interviews on current events. The images of women in such magazines were censored during the apartheid years (with obligatory stars covering the nipples represented), but the content often went unnoticed and in this way these magazines seemed occasionally to serve as a platform for subversive or iconoclastic social commentary. While not the focus of this study, it is interesting to note that the cross over to democracy coincides with the dramatic circulation losses and eventual demise of a highly successful soft pornography magazine such as *Scope*.<sup>3</sup> The reasons for this may include the influx of international pornographic titles, the inception of local men's lifestyle magazines, the seeming flux in the articulation of masculine identity within the new cultural climate and the inevitable turning away from old identities that this new climate necessitates.

In South Africa at this time, the global crisis or flux in the self articulation of masculinity was compounded by the socio political changes brought about by this first democratically elected government. The 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights represents masculine identity in such a way that it makes clear the extent to which this identity draws from but also breaks with the past. Liz Walker (2005: 164) defines the Constitutional masculine ideal simply as a man "who is non violent, a good father and husband, employed and able to provide for his family".

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<sup>3</sup> *Scope*, in fact, rebranded itself in 1995 as a men's lifestyle magazine but without the pin up, centre fold style imagery that had been its mainstay, the magazine folded in 1996.

Yet, she goes on to argue that the transition in gender and power relations embodied in the Constitution has exacerbated a crisis in masculinity (2005: 161). She stresses the fact that different men respond to this crisis in different ways: “[w]hile ‘constitutional sexuality’ seems to have shut some doors for men by shrinking the ‘patriarchal divide’ (at least at the level of legislation), it has simultaneously opened up spaces and created opportunities for men to construct new masculinities” (2005: 161).

As mentioned in Chapter One, the implementation of a national mandate on employment equity in 1994 has also (rightly) brought with it far reaching shifts in the socio economic demographics of the country. In terms of both women and men of colour, affirmative action has led to a fundamental shift in social status which necessarily implies a re-articulation of the power relations involved in the societal delineation of gender, race and ethnicity, whether corporately or individually. As is to be expected in any new democracy, the identity crisis of the South African nation was followed by a number of smaller crises related to the delineation of individual identities in this new, post apartheid ‘imagined community’. The South African context may, in other words, present a new, hybrid slant on the old theme of masculinity in crisis or flux.<sup>4</sup> The theme of masculinity in flux permeates the story of the six men’s lifestyle magazines available in South Africa between 1994 and 2007.

Because of sanctions imposed on the apartheid society, South Africa was late in arriving at the fiscal trends that emerged in the western global economies during the 1970s and 1980s. This meant that the increased globalisation of production, establishment of new forms of flexible manufacturing (differentiated goods for segmented consumer markets) and the so called, just in time process of production, that characterised other international markets during the 1970s and 1980s only really manifested in the South African economy in the mid 1990s, after the fall of apartheid. Since these trends were already well established elsewhere in the global sector, it didn’t take long for manufacturing processes in

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Crisis’ is perhaps too strong a word to describe the changes taking place in the delineation of gender in South Africa. The term ‘flux’ is probably a more accurate and less dramatic indication of the local situation. The term ‘crisis’ is, nevertheless, used from time to time in this study to refer to the body of research that is associated with this phrase.

South Africa to become increasingly marketing led with a tighter integration of the stages from production to point of sale. Each stage in the production process of diverse endeavours became linked with design, distribution and retail and 'flexible specialisation' (as seen in the manufacturing of local, designer clothing lines such as Hilton Weiner and Jenni Button) replaced the old post Fordist models. Against this backdrop of tailor made marketing schemes, a preference surfaced for subcontracting based on innovation through co operation and knowledge sharing between firms (Nixon 1996:21, Ameringen 1995).<sup>5</sup>

In this vein, the scene was set for men's lifestyle magazines and the profitable partnerships these would forge with the kinds of international designer brands seeking to make an entrance into the virgin territory of South Africa. In addition to the cash cow that men's lifestyle magazines promised to become, the discourse of enterprise that marked this new economic playing field directed the gender politics of visual culture in South Africa. It, furthermore, comes as no surprise that the first magazine to enter the South African market would do so not only in tandem with a number of key global brands but in the name of a redeeming moral virtue, namely, to bring health to a situation marred by the maladies of the past.

#### *2.1.1.1. Men's Health*

The past decade of research into male well-being in the western world is marked by the consistent finding that the high mortality rate for men is not simply related to their biology (Courtenay 2000, Helgeson 1995, Waldron 2000). The fact that in the United States, men, on average, die more than six years younger than women has been attributed by studies such as that conducted by Will Courtenay (2000) and Vicki Helgeson (1995), to harmful behavioural factors such as smoking, poor diet and excessive consumption of alcohol (as well as more taboo phenomena such as the increased rate of eating disorders amongst men). What

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<sup>5</sup> A key issue here may be the decline of local manufacturing, especially of clothing, and the influx of international brands.

makes Helgeson's study interesting is the correlation drawn between these practices and masculine identity. She claims that "a sizeable portion of men's excess mortality is linked to ... men's roles, and gendered patterns of socialization." In post apartheid South Africa this pathological reading of male health is further tainted by negative political connotations, ideologically associated with (white) men who are seen as the former beneficiaries of the apartheid system (a reality illustrated by the fact that affirmative action attempts to rectify the discrimination of the past) . Masculine identity in South Africa is affected by the political shift from a patriarchal regime of oppression to a system that attempts to represent and valorise the disenfranchised. In effect, white men carry much of the blame for apartheid and have subsequently become the symbols of a past of infamous hostility and domination. The global interest in male well-being and the health of a corporate male self image is thus a valid concern in the current South African climate.

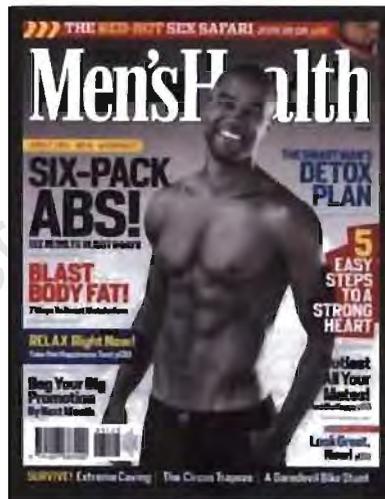


Figure 1: *Men's Health*, March 2008

As if responding to the awareness surrounding male health sparked by the local crisis in masculinity, Media 24 (a division of the South African media conglomerate, Naspers) launched *Men's Health South Africa* in 1997, more or less following the format of its American predecessor. *Men's Health*, published by Rodale Press, began in the United States in 1987 as an annual, before becoming

a quarterly and then a bi-monthly magazine focussed on "health, fitness, stress, sex and nutrition" (Spira 2003: 1). After having succeeded in the United States (and later Europe – 36 editions are now available worldwide) for a decade, becoming the men's lifestyle magazine with the largest worldwide circulation (Stibbe 2004, *Men's Health* magazine 2006), *Men's Health* finally entered the local market, proving that even in South Africa, health was no longer a purely female concern. Ex *Playboy* editor Paul Kerton was the first editor and the magazine entered South Africa in order to fill the gap in the market for a magazine that addressed men on their health (Richter 2006).

The American *Men's Health* brand was built on the classical idealisation of the male body and seemingly on the platitude that a healthy body equals a healthy mind. As was the case internationally, the local covers formed an integral component of this brand strategy, with black and white photographs of brawny, smiling, non-celebrity men personifying Winckelmann and Pater's articulation of ideal beauty as "rest in motion" (see Mosse, 1996, for an explanation of Winckelmann and Pater's theory).<sup>6</sup> At the time, *Men's Health* was almost exclusively concerned with exactly what the title suggests; men's health and fitness. The image of a buff male torso seemed a fitting espousal of the magazine's philosophy and cunningly differentiated the magazine from the laddish thrust of other men's lifestyle magazines set to appear on the scene. It also included more fashion features than its overseas predecessors. Elsewhere in the world, *Men's Health* entered a market chock full of men's lifestyle magazines and accordingly positioned itself as health and fitness orientated. In South Africa, it was the first magazine of its kind and thus Kerton decided to capitalise on the absence of men's fashion magazines by means of the abovementioned strategies.

After 2000, *Men's Health* had to diversify its interests to compete with the local editions of *FHM* and *GQ*. In order to rival the titillating inflection of *FHM* and *GQ*,

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<sup>6</sup> The cover models are generally not well-known personalities, but professional models. The anonymity may serve to underscore the ideal that you are your body. It may also make it easier for readers to identify with the men on the covers. They are photographed in black and white without their shirts on and all sport fabulous 'six packs'. This use of men on the covers as opposed to female models has the effect of distinguishing the *Men's Health* brand from all the other men's lifestyle magazines as well as communicating a less laddish tone and attitude.

the current *Men's Health* includes more features centred on sexual knowledge as well as more sexualised images of women. Furthermore, in an astute attempt to procure the interest of more male (and female) readers, the magazine launched in 2006 a do it yourself supplement for pragmatic metromen entitled *Men's Health Living*. Nevertheless, the content of the original magazine is primarily centred on fitness with divisions such as 'Health', 'Nutrition' and 'Fitness' and features such as '100 Age Erasers' (*Men's Health* December 2003: 164) fondly recalling eighteenth century hygiene movements.

The masculine ideal presented by *Men's Health* is, thus, a fairly conservative reading of masculinity that places emphasis on the physical health and strength of men as a metaphor for general well-being. This ideal affirms Connell's (1995:45, 54) notion that true masculinity is "almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies" since "bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct". In the burgeoning New South Africa, a context sorely in need of assurance in terms of its well-being, *Men's Health* capitalised (and continues to capitalise) on Mosse's (1996) notion of the (bodily) masculine ideal as indicative of a healthy society.

Arran Stibbe (2004:34) argues that the American edition of *Men's Health* is steeped in traditional or dominant masculine ideology (that naturalises male power) and fails to challenge the discourse of hegemonic masculinity in the interest of *real* health, meaning holistic health that is sensitive to differing personality and body types. In Stibbe's (2004) view, *Men's Health* emphasises a one dimensional view of masculinity in which men are portrayed as physically and emotionally in control. With relation to the South African edition too, Stibbe's critique calls into question the extent to which the magazine favours hegemonic masculinity or so called health over the actual psychosexual well-being of their readers, presuming that actual, individualised health could not be reduced to the kind of singular, collective ideology maintained by *Men's Health* in South Africa. Since the magazine entered South Africa in tandem with a number of luxury

American brands<sup>7</sup> it was clear from the outset that the image of masculine well-being would be clothed in consumerism, thereby undermining any counter-cultural view of masculinity as independent of mainstream consumption.<sup>8</sup>

*Men's Health* South Africa further fails to address any one of the number of diseases that are a serious threat to South African health and well being. The lack of articles dealing with HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and other specific 'unhealth's' might indicate that the unspoken construction of masculinity in *Men's Health* is of an affluent, heterosexual, white male, not really at risk of diseases associated with African-ness or homosexuality.

Whether the magazine actually cultivates healthy readers or even stimulates any kind of diverse discourse on what this might mean, it has certainly garnered a healthy circulation (now dropping slightly). With the readership defined as "affluent, ... sophisticated, upscale males" (average age 31, LSM 8+, 74 % male and 26% female, Richter 2006) the current monthly sales of the magazine is 77 353 (ABC January – March 2008), making it *FHM's* (80 098 ABC January to March 2008) primary competition as the best selling South African men's lifestyle magazine.<sup>9</sup>

#### 2.1.1.2. *FHM*

*FHM*, along with *GQ*, only entered the South African race for the attention of male consumers in 2000. The international bestseller *Maxim* also launched a local title in 2000 but folded before the end of the year. The South African editions of *FHM* and *GQ* were launched in precisely the same month with

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<sup>7</sup> Kerton reportedly felt that one of the indicators for *Men's Health* in going into new markets was whether global luxury brands like Calvin Klein were entering those markets too but it may be true that it was equally important for Calvin Klein to have the vehicle to advertise their products.

<sup>8</sup> Capitalism offers a range of masculine ideals but these are all commodified, meaning that they undermine the individual personhood of a particular male in favour of a consumer-driven type.

<sup>9</sup> According to the latest AMPS figures (2008) *Men's Health* has a readership of 871 000 and *FHM* has a readership of 737 000.

December/January editions of both magazines hitting the shelves in the consumer mayhem surrounding the millennium. *FHM* was published by UpperCase Media (a joint venture between Media 24 and EMAP – UCM also publishes the tabloid *Heat*), while multinational publishing conglomerate Condé Nast Independent Magazines (Pty) Ltd founded *GQ South Africa*. Where *Men's Health* was the burgeoning platform for targeting the broader South African, male consumer market, *FHM* and *GQ* established more niche platforms from which to target men who consider themselves to be happily laddish or aspiringly sophisticated respectively.

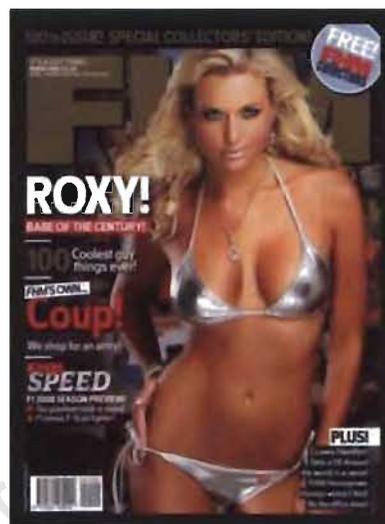


Figure 2: *FHM*, April 2008.

The differences between *FHM* and *GQ* in South Africa are perhaps larger than they may first appear. At first glance, both, for instance, employ glamorous women in provocative, come hither poses on the all important covers. Upon closer inspection, however, there are marked differences. These differences are closely related to the brand strategy upon which each magazine is built for where *GQ* is built on lofty tones and wishful thinking, *FHM*, like its British antecedent, seems to shun all forms of aspirational rhetoric in favour of outright laddishness.

Founded by Chris Astridge in the United Kingdom, *For Him* (as the magazine was initially entitled) was at first disseminated through high street men's fashion

outlets, expanding to newsagents as a quarterly by 1987. Whilst the magazine was at this point primarily concerned with fashion, this was to change when James Brown's *Loaded* entered the British market. With its sensual, no nonsense content and photographs *Loaded* changed the tone of the lad mag genre and compelled *For Him* to harden its editorial approach (other titles such as *GQ* and *Esquire* were forced to harden their editorial approach too). In 1994 the magazine, published by the consumer media division of British publishing giant EMAP, introduced a 'sports supplement', went monthly and changed its name to *FHM* soon after it went international. It currently publishes 27 international editions per month.

The first editor of *FHM* South Africa was marketing man Neil Bierbaum, who more or less followed a toned down version of the international *FHM* recipe, meaning that the South African edition of the magazine also published sports trivia, used a locker room dialect and a plethora of objectifying images of already famous women (primarily models, actresses and musicians)<sup>10</sup> in order to lure a young, male readership and eventually become "the most successful men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa" (Cooper 2006). Inspired by the now defunct but once widely read *Scope*, UCM publisher Kim Brown, proffers that "[y]ou have to give the market something they want" (Derby 2006). The readership is LSM 7+, AMPS average age 28 of which 30% are women (although the majority of the female readers do not purchase the magazine but read it second hand) (Cooper 2006). When asked to describe the average reader the current editor, Brendan Cooper (2006), sketches him as an everyman who, in his words, likes to "sit on the couch, drink beer with his mates and talk kak (shit)."

Former *Directions*<sup>11</sup> and *SL* editor Cooper took over from Bierbaum in September 2002 and with him came a number of subtle editorial changes.<sup>12</sup> According to

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<sup>10</sup> Cooper maintains that *FHM* makes use of women on the covers as well as inside the magazine who are already famous for some reason but, presumably not all the readers would recognize them as famous. The magazine, furthermore, certainly serves to make certain models more famous than they already are.

<sup>11</sup> Emerging in 1994 (from a water sport magazine) *Directions* attempted to be something like a men's lifestyle magazine but was in fact more of a sports magazine. It borrowed much of its brand identity from the UK *FHM* and with the inception of the local *FHM* the copycat magazine folded in April of 2000.

Cooper (2006), he firstly improved the design of the magazine so that it became a more direct read with easier access points. Competing for the attention of the readers (who on average are about three years younger than the *Men's Health* and *GQ* readers) is an increasingly abstruse endeavour and since iPods, satellite television and an assortment of other publications are in the running for male attention, Cooper deemed it important to guide the reader so that each feature speaks for itself. Thus the design and layout are now more direct with fixed features like 'Reporter' and 'Sex Confidential' sporting new hard to miss banners.

Secondly, the new editor endorsed the down to earth tone of the magazine by including more South African colloquialisms such as 'kief', 'okes', 'miff' and 'jislike'. With the subtitle, "it's a guy thing", Cooper continued to employ the editorial mantra: "sexy, funny, useful, relevant" but did so with a decidedly local flavour. In retrospect this was a smart and fortuitous move, considering the looming threat of an Afrikaans men's lifestyle magazine entering the South African market, now realised in Wilhelm du Plessis and Mike de Villiers' new title, *Manwees*, launched on the 28th of June 2006.

What, furthermore, differentiates the magazine from its competitors is its unabashed sense of plebeian self. Cooper disdains the aspirational quality of *GQ* that dares to prescribe to men which kind of suits they should don, women they should date or cars they should drive. Rather than add more consumer pressure to their media savvy audience with 'must have' features, the magazine thrives on reader driven stock inserts like the popular 'Homegrown Honeys' competition that features countless South African beauties and the 'Grossest Pics Ever' mainstay, which more or less speaks for itself.

The question of the masculine ideal presented by the South African issue of *FHM* is thus answered in two ways: firstly, by the sense of laddish naughtiness the magazine espouses and secondly, by the feminine ideal so overtly maintained throughout the magazine. Here too the object seems to be good, 'innocent' fun since the women are scantily clad but almost never naked (Cooper 2006).

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<sup>12</sup> The current editor is Hagen Engler. Engler has more or less continued to manage the magazine in the editorial style introduced by Cooper.

Cooper (2006) is clear on the fact that South African men are a pretty conservative bunch and as such do not take kindly to "nipples or swearing". Though stocked to the brim with semi naked, pouting, big haired, big chested women the pages of the South African *FHM*. thus carry no nipples or curses.<sup>13</sup>

While the magazine is, in other words, quite guilty of the usual charges held against top shelf magazines (the objectifying of women, stereotyping of male sexuality and dumbing down of male interests), it nevertheless appears as a refreshingly honest take on a particular kind of masculine identity and therefore seems quite at peace with its own hegemony. Perhaps the most perceptible area of psychosocial concern is the fact that increasing numbers of women read the magazine, presumably for the same reason that men ostensibly read *Cosmopolitan*: in order to understand the opposite sex better. If this is indeed the reason the magazine has such a wide female readership then it can emphatically be said that the view of both men and women that they will find there is two dimensional at best and grossly stereotypical at worst.

#### 2.1.1.3. *GQ*

The oldest of the magazines, *Gentlemen's Quarterly* was launched in the United States in 1931 as *Apparel Arts*, a fashion quarterly for men. The title of the magazine changed to *GQ* in 1957 and although it became a monthly magazine in the 1970s it still primarily concentrated on fashion and attracted a large gay readership. In 1983, the then editor, Art Cooper, introduced articles and features of a more global scope, aligning the magazine with the men's lifestyle genre and a larger heterosexual (and metrosexual) readership (Nixon 1996).

In the first issue of the South African edition, editor Daniel Ford (2000) commented "This is it then. At last, a classy, intelligent magazine for South African men." As a motive for purchasing the magazine he added, "[O]nce you're

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<sup>13</sup> In *FHM*, *Men's Health* and *GQ* female models are generally photographed looking at the camera in a way that connotes their consensual participation in their objectification.

looking great, real style is about how you choose to live. And which magazine you read" (*GQ South Africa* Millennium issue 2000:14). Not unlike *Playboy* in the 1950s in America, which catered to the needs of the more educated, sophisticated, middle class male (Dubbert 1979:268), *Gentlemen's Quarterly South Africa* was founded in order to capitalise on the increasing consciousness about style, urbanity and 'new masculinity' or metrosexuality amidst upwardly mobile South African men after the first democratic elections in 1994.



Figure 3: *GQ*, March 2008

Unlike *FHM*, *GQ* is built on the fundamental premise that its readers are aspiring to more in life and see the magazine as a short hand means of achieving the necessary information needed to attain their social goals. Where Cooper (2006) describes the average *FHM* reader as "cheeky and full of shit ... not on the fast track to becoming the next CEO", the *GQ* reader appears, as far as can be discerned from their content and articles, to be something of a modern day *flâneur* (the demographics of their readership is LSM 7+, "urban males, aged 18 to 45 with post matric qualifications [and a fairly high income]", *GQ South Africa Psychographics*).

*GQ* differentiates itself from *FHM* by creating a brand that encapsulates 'class' and sexualised display. It, for instance, fluently couples saucy pinups with up market advertisements (Mercedes, Tag Heuer, Armani), and in so doing,

materialises sexuality. Subtle references to the genteel customs of old (hunting and hand tailored suits) are employed to remind the reader that gentlemen are their demographic, thus encouraging aspirational branding and dressing up sexist stereotypes in a classy *savoir faire*. Upon paging through features on everything from boardroom to bedroom etiquette (and the two are frequently coupled) it becomes apparent that *GQ* is a 'how to' guide on personal branding. Today gentility does not depend on birthright, but on personal branding and *GQ* enables its readers to brand themselves more favourably. The masculine ideal presented by *GQ* is defined more by its many biographical features on Fortune 500 celebrities (rigorously chronicling their rise to fame) than by the equally prevalent features on sex or the latest South African models.

Where *FHM* runs the now famous competition to gauge who their readers consider to be the sexiest women in the world, *GQ*, to their credit, used to publish an annual calendar that included the sexy renderings of a number of local and international artists. (The calendar was stopped due to their advertisers' discomfort with the pin-up connotations associated with a calendar of virtually naked women.) In this way, *GQ* teases the boundary between art and pornography, but never quite sustains the kind of real discourse or intellectual substance that would lend it subversive or artistic credibility. Instead the magazine seems to create a sense of chauvinist exclusivity and clubbish camaraderie by enforcing a limited definition of masculinity based on sexual conquest, high flying corporate culture and extreme sports. Sleek and modern design, a cognitive and discreet tone, celebrity journalists and mostly subtle humour create a sense of dignified responsibility and maturity. But while the background image of a Jeep may be replaced with that of a Jaguar, the indulgent display of women as sexualised visual pleasure and the consumer driven tone are not so different from that found in *FHM*.

The real difference between these two magazines seems to be their circulation figures. With current monthly sales figures of 30 927 (ABC July – December 2007), *GQ* is no threat to *FHM* and is deemed by some to be something of a

failure in the South African magazine industry.<sup>14</sup> The magazine has, however, under the influence of the current editor, Craig Tyson, returned to a monthly publication (with an additional three issues of *GQ Cars* being published every year), having lapsed to a bi-monthly for a short period. At R34.95 *FHM* is the most expensive men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa and makes most of its money from off the shelf sales, giving *FHM* the highest Retail Sales Value (RSV) in the country.<sup>15</sup> *GQ*, on the other hand, generates more income from advertising than magazine sales and has been known to adapt its contents in order to accommodate the sensibilities of its up market advertisers. *GQ*, thus, seems to represent quite neatly the kind of magazines which Nixon (1996) describes as being founded in order to provide a platform from which advertisers can access a particular niche audience.

Apparently in a bid to rectify the vast gap in readership figures between *GQ* and *FHM*, Tyson decided to realign the magazine in 2006 with the core values of style, entertainment and sophistication. While the objective was, apparently, to make the design or format easier for the reader to follow (Tyson 2006), one cannot help but feel that the result is a raunchier, more laddish *GQ*. While it is easy to understand the temptation of mimicking the *FHM* formulae, one cannot help but wonder whether Tyson is not sabotaging the only claim to differentiation he had. Either way, it is currently quite difficult to tell the difference between *FHM* and *GQ* from the covers and this, after all, is a powerful persuader in determining those all important news stand buys. When asked to comment on the magazine's circulation being lower than that of *FHM*, Tyson (2006) replies that as a sophisticated read, *GQ* does not follow the tits and bums approach to publishing and is therefore not aiming to reach the mass market. But Tyson's glib response belies his apparent denial regarding the similarity between the covers

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<sup>14</sup> According to the latest AMPS figures, *GQ* has a readership of 320 000. It should be noted that unlike *GQ*, both *Men's Health* (published by the Naspers affiliate, Touchline Media) and *FHM* have the financial backing of Naspers, the largest media conglomerate in South Africa. *FHM*, for instance, only turned a profit three years after its inception meaning that it relied on the heavy investment of Uppercase Media, also affiliated with Naspers (Spira 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Retail Sales Value gauges a magazine's cover price multiplied by its frequency and its news stand circulation. *Men's Health* and *GQ* rank 11<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> in terms of RSV (Derby 2006).

of *FHM* and *GQ*, a fact that may be indicative of the horizontal identification between these two mainstream men's lifestyle magazines.

*Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* all boast that roughly a third of their readers are black, yet, true to the homogenising influence of the men's lifestyle magazine format, not one of these titles addresses their readers as multiracial, includes features on multiculturalism or even a representative sample of 'black' subjects and models. Instead, *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* all present a narrow view of the South African population that in its lack of political substance and tonal diversity recalls a pre 1994 picture of masculinity. In this picture, to be 'mainstream' means to be white and middle class as if this is the dominant demographic in South African social structure. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that the magazines are not upfront about their target market, but pretend to be speaking to the affluent male population as a whole, when they are, in fact, more racially exclusive than this. In contrast to the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines that address a white audience without ever calling them this, the more fringe magazines like *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* seem more honest in their deliberate exclusivity.

## **2.2. Men on the margins: *MaksiMan* and *BLINK***

The analysis of the (mainstream) representation of masculinity in *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*, serves to underscore Bourdieu's (2005: 126-141) sense that the field of local powers is hierarchically divided between the 'global' and the 'local', 'mainstream' and 'margin'. Bourdieu (2005: 126-127) describes the tension between these as resulting in a pull, on the part of the peripheral entity, between submission and resistance:

[P]eripheral actions are conceived as the mere mechanical application of central decisions, the local administration being there only to *carry out* orders or implement bureaucratic 'circulars'; or, without the two being mutually exclusive, these actions may be conceived as representing 'resistance' on the part of the private interests of local ('provincial') particularism to central measures [emphasis in original].

When translated from the context of governmental economy into the territory of media studies, Bourdieu's statement is equally valid. The men's lifestyle magazines that operate on the margins of the magazine industry and society both extend the trope of the mainstream men's lifestyle press and resist it.

As is seen in this section, *BL!NK* and *MaksiMan* extended the trope of the mainstream men's lifestyle press by positioning themselves within the well established, international format of men's lifestyle magazines and thereby continued the reduction and commodification of masculinity. On the other hand, these magazines resisted the globalising rhetoric of mainstream magazines like *Men's Health* and *GQ* by addressing their readers who belong to a niche group of South African men, who are happy to define themselves as part of a particular cultural minority. For Bourdieu (2005: 127), *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* might then have represented the 'local' or 'external' outposts that through their vernacular tone marked the transition from 'general interest' to 'particular interest'. Since the positions of domination, subordination or equivalence to each other are attained by virtue of the access they afford to the goods or resources (capital) which are at stake in the field (Bourdieu 1991: 229-231), it is vital that each magazine is examined in terms of its relationship to its status as commercial product. Where the mainstream magazines seem to be unashamedly commercial – using upmarket advertising, fashion tips and advertorials to further this consumerist status – *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* were far less likely to put forward a commercial identity, preferring instead to represent themselves as providing a service to their communities. This is not to say that they were situated outside the framework of mainstream consumerism – they were too closely related to the major glossies for that. It is merely to say that they appeared to be more concerned with social and cultural capital and less concerned with economic capital than the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines (this is particularly true in the case of *BL!NK* since the magazine presumably attempted to please its influential sponsors).

Having said that, the two magazines were aligned with mainstream ideals in that both seemed nervous about addressing difficult social issues that were topical in

South Africa. One might, for instance, expect that where *Men's Health* neglects to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic that *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* would fill the gap. This is, however, not the case and for the most part the magazines avoided such unhappy subject matter, a fact which might indicate that the masculine ideals presented by both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* were sterilised of any African connotations too reminiscent of unpleasant realities.

In the case of *MaksiMan*, it also seems apparent that the magazine was influenced by American models of what Christian men's magazines might look like. The editorial team of *MaksiMan* looked at a number of local and international magazines including the widely popular American magazine, *New Man* (Stander 2007). *BL!NK*, on the other hand, may have been influenced by the genre of African American magazines to which *King*, *Black Men* and *Mybrotha* belong but this is not particularly evident in their style or content since *BL!NK* is not nearly as laddish as these American publications. Neither *MaksiMan* nor *BL!NK* bought articles from these international publications, preferring instead to generate their own, more indigenous fare.

The following section chronicles the rise of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* within the South African context and briefly sketches the ways in which each magazine attempted, first, to resist the globalising or culturally generic view of masculinity presented by the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and, second, to deviate from the two dimensional nature of the masculine ideal that formed a common matrix throughout these magazines. Since the manner in which interpersonal relationships (between men and women as well as between men and work colleagues and children) is addressed in Chapters Three and Four, this chapter centres on the formulation of masculine identity in itself.

### 2.2.1. *MaksiMan*

The first Afrikaans men's lifestyle magazine was founded in 2001 by Carpe Diem Media under the title *MaksiMan* (literally translated, MaxiMan). Not only was this

a departure from the traditional use of English as the communicator of globalising new masculinity, but, as editor Hennie Stander points out, the magazine was also the first Christian men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa (De Wet 2005). The magazine was thus created in order to reach a sector of the market that was not being specifically targeted by other magazines namely, Christian, Afrikaans speaking men (De Wet 2005). The target market and demographics of readership was thus "25-38 year old educated and affluent yuppies" (Stander 2007). The exact LSM of the magazine was not defined by the editorial team but presumably fell around 7+ (Briers 2006). Stander (2007) contributed articles to the Christian women's magazine, *Finesse* for many years and in this capacity learnt that female readers were concerned about the spiritual and emotional well-being of their husbands. Out of this need, *MaksiMan* arose and was described by Stander (2007) as a vehicle for encouraging (predominantly white) South African men who were in a state of crisis because they had lost their political voice and were feeling dislocated from the country.



Figure 4: *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006.

The fact that the magazine was in Afrikaans is thus vitally important to the branding and conceptualisation of the magazine as it provided a space for Afrikaans men to see themselves in a context that had to some degree deemed Afrikaans politically unpopular. Jakes Gerwel (2008:2) has commented that,

The Afrikaans language has of course historically played a central role in the formation and conception of an "Afrikaner identity" and appears to continue doing so for those that have these concerns. There are different interpretations of this history of the linking of language and Afrikaner nationalism, some portraying the picture of pure love of language leading to a nationalist movement, another point of view interpreting it as a political movement usurping the language that was widely and even primarily spoken by others outside of the political movement for narrow nationalistic purposes. Whatever the truth, the Afrikaans language became a powerful rallying point for the Afrikaner nationalist movement.

The language may, in other words, be associated with a past of oppression and nationalistic politics. The question of whether the language can be freed from this association and whether, indeed, it has any kind of future in the new South Africa is not the concern of this study but does feature as a backdrop to the study. In spite of the current revival in Afrikaans music and the blossoming of Afrikaans arts festivals, the language has far less political (and nationalistic) appeal today and may be facing a slow demise. According to Gerwel (2008: 4),

In public life [Afrikaans] is no longer as significant as it was. As a language of academia it is steadily eroding. The Afrikaans language schooling that fed the language growth is diminishing. These are the developments, one suspects, that are amongst other things feeding the sense of embattlement in the midst of those worrying and articulating about "the Afrikaners" and "their" future.

Gerwel's (2008: sp) observation is relevant to *MaksiMan* because the fact that the magazine was in Afrikaans offered readers a sense that there were still public spaces that were Afrikaans. This was a powerful affirmation of identity through language although I suspect not all of the readers of *MaksiMan* would have identified themselves as Afrikaners. The fact that there are so many black, and particularly "Coloured", speakers of Afrikaans in South Africa has always complicated the language based claims to identity for Afrikaners. Added to this is the fact that many white Afrikaans speaking South Africans feel uncomfortable calling themselves Afrikaners. What this means for this study is that since *MaksiMan* did not address its readers as Afrikaners but simply as Afrikaans speaking South African men this too will be the strategy employed in the study.

For the purposes of this study the readers of *MaksiMan* will, in other words, be addressed as Afrikaans speaking South African men.

Feminist writers Susan Faludi (1999) and Mary Stewart van Leeuwen (1990, 1993, 1998, 2002) have theorised the conceptualisation of masculinities within religious contexts (such as the Promise Keepers movement in the United States), but the South African situation is naturally nuanced in a localised way. The construction of masculinity within the Afrikaans speaking, 'Christian' community, for instance, is emphatically informed by the theologies of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is, historically, the dominant religious persuasion of Afrikaners (Gliomee 2003, Stander 2007). The magazine did not, however, make overt reference to the Dutch Reformed tradition or any other denomination for that matter, preferring to treat religion as a guide to ethical behaviour.<sup>16</sup> It seemed to avoid contentious doctrinal or theological issues in favour of life style orientated features and articles that attempted to provide answers (albeit fairly obvious ones) to questions such as how to be a good husband or father ('Jou vrou' and 'Jou kinders' – 'Your wife' and 'Your children' were regular features) and whether the Christian masculine ideal includes ambition or a hunger for success ('Soete droomwêreld' – 'Sweet world of dreams', *MaksiMan* November/December 2005:22-24).

Not only was the masculine ideal presented by this magazine more tentative than that extolled by *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*, meaning that it was not quite so boldly maintained as the norm for all self respecting men,<sup>17</sup> but this version of masculinity includes the relationship to significant others. The secular, mainstream men's lifestyle magazines discussed previously all silently but emphatically omit almost all references to wives and children, preferring instead

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<sup>16</sup> The Dutch Reformed Church supported the apartheid regime and the patriarchal nature of this institution and subsequently faced something of an identity crisis post 1994, possibly adding to the flux in Afrikaner masculine identity. The difficulties faced by the church in trying to align itself with the ideals of the new democracy echo the potential emergence of new Afrikaner masculinities in a post apartheid context.

<sup>17</sup> The tentative nature of the masculine ideals extolled by *MaksiMan* may be related to the defensive tone of white, Afrikaner masculinity in the New South Africa since, as has already been stated, white, Afrikaner men are considered to be the major beneficiaries of the former regime.

to depict their subjects and readers as eternally uncommitted. Through the construction of this simulacral male fantasy world,<sup>18</sup> *sans* wives and children, the magazines presumably facilitate the guilt free perusal of the many inviting women libidinally represented on their pages. In a similar vein, mention is seldom made of the love interests of women quixotically featured in men's lifestyle magazines presumably in order to create the impression that they are fantastically available.

In her seminal essay, *To be two*, analytical feminist, Luce Irigaray (2001:17), muses that where women almost always privilege the "relationship between two", men typically prefer a "relationship between one and the many, between the I masculine subject and others: people, society, understood as *them* and not as *you*" (emphasis in original). Whilst being a simplistic generalisation, Irigaray's point is useful in explaining the abundance of women all represented as available within the context of a magazine such as *FHM* and the need for men to be represented as unattached. In contrast to this trope of eternal and thriving bachelorhood, favoured by *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*, *MaksiMan* consciously drew the attention of their readers to their partners and cultivated a culture of accountable responsibility.

The anti-escapist rhetoric employed by *MaksiMan* (including the articles on cultivating a healthy family life) coincided with the brotherly tone of Christian men's movements internationally. Writers like Faludi (1999), Stewart Van Leeuwen (1990, 1993, 1998, 2002) and the pop psychology best selling author, John Eldridge (2001), have interpreted the notion of masculinity in crisis within the Christian context and found that Christian men too suffer from an often severe sense of collective confusion regarding their identities and what it means to be a man in the modern day context and church. A magazine like *MaksiMan*, thus, had the potential to answer to the general rhetoric of *Christian* masculinity in crisis in a similar (optimistic and pragmatic) way that *Men's Health*, for

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<sup>18</sup> Creating an artificial milieu within the magazine is a strategy employed by most men's magazines. One of *Playboy's* advertising directors, Howard Lederer, explained in 1967 that the magazine deliberately "takes the reader into a kind of dream world. We create a euphoria and we want nothing to spoil it. We don't want a reader to come suddenly on an ad that says he has bad breath. We don't want him to be reminded of the fact, though it may be true, that he is going bald" (Dubbert 1979:268).

instance, responds to the widespread readings of secular masculine behaviour as unhealthy.

*MaksiMan's* editorial team did not seem to engage consciously with the crisis or flux that may or may not have been plaguing their readers, nor were the articles that pretended to deal with such issues aggressive or 'serious' enough to have provided fruitful answers. For the most part, the magazine followed the light, entertaining tone employed by the majority of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and thus may have left a reader truly seeking answers to the stereotypical masculinities available to him in the market place quite unsatisfied. It may have been a conscious decision on the part of the magazine's editorial team to give their readers a space where they can relax and find a refuge from serious questions but if this was the case then one cannot help but wonder whether this approach was consistent with the ostensible religious philosophy of *MaksiMan*. When asked about this lack of meaty, theological articles, Stander (2007) replied that "*MaksiMan* is not a Christian magazine, it is a magazine aimed at Christians". Perhaps because of this confused brand identity – it was neither a theological nor a populist magazine – this bi monthly publication only had sales of between 20 000 and 25 000 (Briers 2006, Stander 2008).

Eighty percent of the people who bought *MaksiMan* were women (Stander 2007). As mentioned previously, according to Stander (2007), the female readers of *Finesse* were concerned that their husbands were in a state of crisis and bought the magazine both to read themselves and in the hope that their husbands would read it. Not only did this purchasing demographic have a powerful influence on who would and would not advertise in *MaksiMan* but it also influenced the content of the magazine. Stander (2007) explains that the editorial team of *MaksiMan* attempted a number of tactics to make the magazine less attractive to women and more attractive to men. These included using more "crude language", more photographs of scantily clad women and more stories of a violent or grotesque nature (such as articles on violent crime). Stander (2007) is quick to add, however, that these strategies were not without their consequences for inevitably such tactics were criticised by many readers as jarring with the moral incentive maintained by the magazine. It was, in other words difficult to

maintain a balance between a Christian tone and popular readability. Presumably because of the difficulty of this challenge in terms of their readership demographic the publishers decided to close the magazine down. In 2007, however, *Finesse* brought out a Father's Day issue called *Finesse Man*, but it was not very successful and the publishers decided not to repeat the process.

The question that remains is why the magazine failed to sustain itself. In answer to this question, one might suggest that *MaksiMan* was confused about its role as a Christian magazine – not knowing whether to address issues in a serious theological manner or in a light and entertaining fashion. On a pragmatic note the fact that the majority of their buyers were women complicated the magazine's potential to lure advertisers since advertisers could not sell 'male' products to a female audience nor could they advertise 'female' products in a men's magazine. When asked about the demise of the magazine, the editor Hennie Stander (2008) is emphatic that the sole reason for the demise of the magazine was the reluctance of advertisers to advertise in the magazine. He explains that while the magazine had healthy circulation figures (between twenty and twenty-five thousand per month) the costs of running a magazine cannot be covered by the sale of the magazine alone. Advertising is needed. Stander (2008) maintains that it was his experience that advertisers were reluctant to associate themselves with a Christian magazine, thinking this might offend consumers from other religions. He further maintains that advertisers were discouraged by the fact that the buyers of the magazine were primarily women. But he is quick to add that he does not consider *MaksiMan* a failure, arguing that it served a purpose while it lasted. Stander now has a blog on the Carpe Diem website that draws scores of readers. Last year the blog had 350 000 readers in December alone. In order to access the blog readers go through the Carpe Diem site where they can purchase various books and magazines published by the company. When asked whether he will use this opportunity to address more serious topics in a more serious way Stander (2008) shrugs and comments that people don't want to get deep in this kind of forum. They have enough of that in real life. In this blog, in other words, Stander addresses the same kind of light but topical issues that were addressed in *MaksiMan* but does so from a personal point of view. This thesis, however, investigates the magazine as it appeared before it shut down.

The magazine may have been quite progressive in its acknowledgement of female partners in the lives of its readers (especially since it is the partners who in most cases bought the magazine), but was decidedly escapist in the apparent demographic of the readers it addressed. Little reference was made to 'brown' Afrikaners or the political contention around Afrikaans as the former language of oppression or the disputes surrounding who may be described as an Afrikaner. In this way the magazine undermined its own voice of resistance in the Bourdieuesque (2005) sense of the word by suppressing the presence of an other Other (both in terms of race and class). Stander (2007) is emphatic in pointing out that the editorial team attempted to include a black or brown personality in almost every issue but the fact remains that fewer than five percent of their readers were brown. *MaksiMan*, in other words, presented its readers with a predominantly white, Afrikaans, nominally Christian, middle class masculine ideal.

Another Afrikaans men's lifestyle magazine entitled, *Manwees* (roughly translated as 'Being a man') appeared on South African shelves on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2006 with an initial monthly print run of 30 000. Edited by former *De Kat* editor Wilhelm du Plessis and published jointly by Du Plessis and Mike de Villiers, the magazine embodies Naspers mogul, Koos Bekker's sentiment that people have the desire to read in their home language. According to Du Plessis (*Being a man... in Afrikaans* 2006),

South Africa has needed a men's magazine that caters for the needs of Afrikaans men between 25 and 45 for quite some time ... That's why we believe it is such a relevant publication – Afrikaans men have long been overlooked and that is why we will be offering them a quality product in their own language that will keep them informed, entertained and hopefully enthralled.

*Manwees* has been launched, perhaps strategically, at a time when Afrikaans speaking South Africans seem ready to put up a fight for the right to go about their business in Afrikaans (whether in universities or more informal sectors). Comments Du Plessis (*Being a man... in Afrikaans* 2006), "We want the magazine to be a reflection of how Afrikaans as a language is blossoming in

magazines, in music, on radio and on television. It is no longer a deadly sin to be Afrikaans speaking and old stereotypical connotations of the language and her speakers are thankfully dying a long overdue death!" Clearly, this magazine and its editors are not shirking away from the politicised contention surrounding the language but rather are capitalising on it. As such, it makes sense that *MaksiMan* has not been able to survive, particularly since a magazine like *Manwees* is so sure of its place in the South African market and the masculine identity it represents. *MaksiMan* is simply too confused about its role in the South African social scape and this may be a powerful contributing factor to the demise of the magazine.



Figure 5: *ManWees*, March 2008.

### 2.2.2. BLINK

A politicized black elite emerged in the early 1900s in South Africa amidst a context of increasing segregation. A vital tool of this elite was literacy. In researching the provision of library services for blacks in South Africa in the pre-apartheid, nineteenth and early twentieth century context, Alan Cobley (1997: 57) makes the point that even as a traditional black elite was “being marginalized and

undermined in the face of new economic, social and political realities, a new ... [black] elite was emerging which was the product of the efforts of Christian missions." Copley's (1997: 57) research illuminates the fact that this new elite – Christianized, educated, and westernized – utilised the expertise and principles they had learnt through the missions to relaunch and redirect the black struggle. Instead of armed resistance to white hegemony, the new black elite campaigned for civil rights within the new union as the first move toward empowering the oppressed black majority. Against this backdrop literacy proved to be an important weapon, "not only because it could take the struggle beyond local, regional, and even national boundaries, but also because reading informed the ideological discourse out of which a new ... [black] nationalist movement grew" (Copley 1997: 58). Their operation was taken to a new level with the formation of the South African Natives National Congress (later renamed the African National Congress) in 1912 (Odendaal 1984).

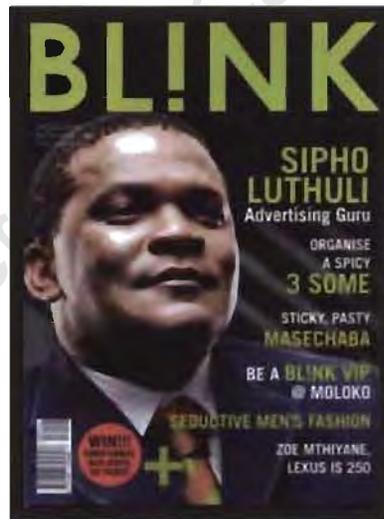


Figure 6: *BLINK*, August 2006.

Copley (1997: 75) explains that after the 1948 election of the National Party Government, the implementation of the party's apartheid policy necessitated a reconsideration of many divisions of public provision for blacks. The report of the

Eiselen Commission on Native Education published in 1951 was to lead to the near ruin of the liberal humanitarian system of education established by mission schools. The report supported the new state sanctioned system of "Bantu Education" (Cobley 1997: 75, Troup 1976). Under apartheid policy, more than ever, the access to library facilities on the grounds of race was controlled at a national level through the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1956. Under this Act control would become more authoritarian than ever before, meaning that for black South Africans literacy and education became equated with resistance to the apartheid regime.

The ushering in of the African National Congress as the first democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994 meant that the country was radiant with the hope of a period of opportunity and equality for different racial groups. It would, however, take some time before this development would be felt in the different sectors of commerce, education and legislation. Ten years after the African National Congress came into power, a small publication emerged, targeted at an educated black, male reader who could by his mere readership of this magazine resist the unambiguously ideological framework of apartheid. This magazine would also become a "seminal means of confirming the (by now) permanent presence of black South Africans in urban environments, authorizing their urban status and legitimizing, while cultivating, changing modes of social respectability and responsibility for South Africa's growing black middle class(es)" (Laden 2003: 193-194).

The first edition of *BL!NK*, the latecomer of the early men's lifestyle magazines, was launched in October of 2004 by Orlyfunt Holdings as an upmarket magazine aimed at young black males. Here too, the South African context provides its own narratological twists, as *BL!NK* was launched, (amidst much political disputation), with a R3.5 million loan from the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) as a Black Empowerment project (Loxton 2005).<sup>19</sup> The magazine was the brainchild of

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<sup>19</sup> The resultant contention around *BL!NK* culminated with the NEF coming under fire in parliament when Ben Turok, a member of parliament for the African National Congress, stated that he thought it was unacceptable that the NEF had granted the loan to a magazine which contains "nothing but disgusting pornographic pictures and articles" (Loxton 2005). This was a

BLINK Lifestyle Trading (Pty) Ltd Chief Executive Officer Vuyo Radebe but in its infancy was edited by 28 year old Siphiwe Mpye. According to Mpye "most men's issues in S[outh] A[frica] are not universal, they are race specific" which is why the magazine aimed to "paint a new face for the black man" who is still frequently associated with "abuse and desertion" (McCloy 2005).

In discussing the initial objectives of the magazine, Mpye (2006) tendered that the primary incentive behind the founding of *BLINK* was:

to show the rest of the country that the affluent black male has not only emerged, but will, given time, increasingly be the backbone of [the South African] economy ... we had also realised and wanted to show this man to be about much more than soccer, BMWs and bling. We wanted to show that he was also passionate, compassionate, intelligent, worldly, sensitive, politically aware, discerning etc.

Mpye, thus, defined *BLINK*'s target market (and their masculine ideal) as "a thinking man who [is] every bit an (sic) African as he is worldly ... [A man who is] well read, he challenges outmoded perspectives and is not afraid to stand alone in his conviction. Of course he just so happens to be tasteful and confident" (McCloy 2005). *BLINK*, in other words, both articulated the emergent identity held by black professionals as assertive confidence (a reflection of new power relations in society) as well as presenting itself as a defence against charges of this new class being made up of 'affirmatives'. With the demographic being described as age 25-35, LSM 7+ and predominantly black, Mpye (2006) classified himself as a *BLINK* man, even after he had left the magazine to pursue other areas of the media industry (and had been replaced by Thami Masemola).

Thus, the alignment of the magazine with progressive and enlightened views of black masculinity that attempted to challenge hegemonic representations of black men raises the question of whether *black*, post apartheid masculinity was in crisis. Australian socio psychological pundit and feminist, Lyn Segal (1990:168-204), has examined the stereotypical rendering of black masculinity from the

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premature and prejudiced concern. The launch of the magazine proved Turok's statement completely unfounded.

perspective of white masculinity.<sup>20</sup> Segal (1990:169) postulates that behind the social construction of "subordinated masculinity" one finds more evidence of the "conflict and chaos at the heart of the dominant ideal of masculinity". In lieu of her research and other investigations like it (Bertelsen 1998, Hunter & Davies 1994, Nyquist 1983) that emphasise the competitive aspect of diverse masculinities, one is struck by the earnest differences between *BL!NK* and the other men's lifestyle magazines available in South Africa. Segal (1990:169), for instance highlights the manner in which black masculinity is viewed and sketched through the eyes of white masculinity (as well as in contrast to it) as not really about men at all – "a child rather than an adult, a body not a mind".

In addition to this colonialist reading are the many contemporary interpretations of black masculinity as pathological, leading to implicit associations with domestic violence and crime (Gray 1995). In South Africa, such negative associations can in part be traced to the era of apartheid when black, male youths in urban areas were typically represented in the press as inherently violent, disturbed and irrational mobs, thus allowing the state to justify the brutal actions of the South African Defence Force (Mtebule 2001: 5). In response to this demonising representation (particularly in the national media) the tendency arose for young, black men to identify the then masculine ideal with the collective struggle of liberation politics (Carter 1991). This comrade identity provided young, black men with the hope of being regarded as 'men' and thus the possibility of extraditing oneself from a system that reduced black men to the status of 'boys' (Mtebule 2001: 5). But it also led to conformity and undermined individual responsibility, self criticism and differences of opinion (Ramphela 1992). Nkhensani Mtebule (2001: 5) points out that between the late 1970s and late 1980s, young black men were thus fighting a double war, both to be recognized as equals and as individual men.

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<sup>20</sup> Segal's (1990: 168-204) analysis is useful to this research because of the manner in which she foregrounds the reality of different races existing alongside one another. It should be noted, however, that as Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (2005: 3) have argued, "[t]he study of sexuality in Africa has been shaped by [the] false dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'" and Segal's perspective occasionally promotes this polarity.

Stereotypes of immaturity (alongside allegations of illiteracy) make evident the need for radically new representations of black, South African masculinity that leave room for individual idiosyncrasies. The typical masculinities available to young black men today fall into a number of diverse but intertwined categories. Three contemporary types, identified by Mtebule (2001: 9), seem pertinent to the construction of a collective consciousness that may have appealed to the *BLINK* market. It should be noted that, although useful in detailing the *BLINK* readership, these types are themselves constructions that border on being stereotypical. The types identified by Mtebule (2001: 9) are the amagents, the Y generation and the ama bourgeoisie. Taken from the word 'gentlemen', the amagents are the contemporary version of the bo tsotsi sub culture prevalent in Soweto between the 1950s and 1970s. The amagents are regarded as being made up of black, urbane (township) men who make a living out of organised crime and have a notable taste for "flashy cars, materialism and beautiful women as defining possessions of 'the man'" (Mtebule 2001: 9). Named after the popular black radio station and magazine (and the international generational term), the Y generation have of late been berated by the African National Congress for being politically and academically apathetic, being more concerned with kwaito and street parties than the manner in which they can contribute to local politics (Mtebule 2001: 9). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, 'ama bourgeoisie' is the colloquial term for the black middle class that spear headed the exodus from the townships to the suburbs where they epitomise the highly charged divide between the black haves and have nots. None of these types form the sole readership of *BLINK*, but by constituting, in some small way, the collective understanding of black masculinity in South Africa they do feed the discourse regarding masculinity evident in the magazine.

Antithetical to the simplistically negative aforementioned versions of black masculinity (past and present), *BLINK*, unlike the other men's lifestyle titles, emphasised the cognitive prowess and ethical ideology of its readers.<sup>21</sup> In reference to the localised stereotypes of upwardly mobile black South Africans, Mpye, for instance, boldly remarks, "if you are not in touch with yourself and you

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<sup>21</sup> Although clearly a different project, *BLINK* does seem to draw from older black magazines like *Tribute* in its appropriation of a socially ethical tone.

find validation in your material possessions, then you are not a *BL!NK* man” (McCloy 2005). Through such didactic proclamations, the tone of *BL!NK* recalls the political intonation of black philosophers such as Aimé Césaire, Steve Biko, Frantz Fanon, and Malcom X, who through their racially conscious pedagogy emphasised the possibility for taking ownership of the processes that govern identity in the wake of an oppressive ideological system.

With thoughtful, critical features on black, South African intellectuals (‘A love letter to black intellectuals,’ *BL!NK*, March 2006:56 59), seditious African artists (‘The subversive palette,’ *BL!NK*, March 2006:64 65) and articles that honestly grapple with responsible black identity (‘Modern male identity,’ *BL!NK*, March 2006:14 16) forming the mainstay of the magazine, *BL!NK* not only successfully challenged the stereotypes about black masculinity, but manhood in general. It would, therefore, appear as though black male identity was differentiated from white male identity within *BL!NK* through an emphasis on political responsibility that underscored the Afro-centric nature of the magazine. In her important analysis of black consumer magazines as an apparatus of change within South Africa, Sonja Laden (2003: 194) expresses the belief that most mainstream black, South African magazines such as *Drum*, *True Love* and *Tribute* “construct an entire range of ‘virtual’ cultural options that are potentially, if not always factually, realizable”. She maintains that this range of options is not simply imposed on the reader from above, but is “discriminately filtered and ‘chosen’ by their proponents, and more or less consciously processed into a newly relevant cultural repertoire, which often presents itself as typically ‘South African’” (Laden 2003: 194). Laden’s observations applied to *BL!NK* as well since this magazine employed content that was both didactic and aspirational and pointed to a masculine ideal that was so noble as to almost be considered a “virtual cultural option” (Laden 2003: 194). If there is any criticism to be expressed in terms of the masculine ideal that was presented by the magazine it is that it still painted a fairly monolithic portrait of black masculinity. Through the absence of homosexual voices, for instance, the magazine naturalised the othering of homosexuality within the black community, again drawing into question the possibility of representing the complex, hybrid and fluid nature of gender within a men’s lifestyle magazine. Similarly, the multicultural nature of South Africa was

rarely recognised, with the content generally glossing over the issues related to ethnic diversities in South Africa. Addressing ethnic stereotypes and tensions or even just difference seems vital to the project of realistic discourse in the South African context. Having said that, the women featured in the magazine were represented with individual poise, personhood and, since they were rarely featured in scant clothing, there was none of the “body fascism” (Nead 1992) that seems to underpin the editorial style of men’s lifestyle magazines as a genre. Indeed, Mpye (2006) cited one of the goals of the magazine at its inception as “bridg[ing] the divide between the sexes”, an ideal sorely missing in *BL!NK*’s competitors.

The primary reason for the failure of the magazine seems to be that the market was not ready for a magazine of this nature. In an interview with the then editor of *FHM*, Brendan Cooper in 2006, I asked Cooper what he thought about *BL!NK*. He said that the magazine was ahead of its time and would therefore not survive. In retrospect these words seem almost prophetic and raise the question of why the market was not ready. Clearly, due to the dismal after effects of the Bantu education system that was widely implemented during apartheid, the emergence of a black male intelligentsia was slow and possibly quite meagre. The black wealthy class is definitely increasing but the number of black men that want to critically engage with serious issues in an intellectual manner may still be relatively low. Still with circulation figures of 35 000 the magazine had more readers than *MaksiMan* and finding advertisers didn’t seem to be too much of a problem. The distribution of the magazine was, however, sporadic at best and the magazine was only available at certain book stores and supermarkets. The re emergence of the black lifestyle magazine, *Tribute*, may also be a contributing factor to the demise of *BL!NK* since many of the readers of *BL!NK* may have decided to purchase *Tribute* instead of *BL!NK*. When asked why he thinks the magazine had to close its doors, Thami Masemola (2008), the last editor of the magazine (and new managing editor of *Tribute*), seems to place the blame on managerial inexperience and logistical problems:

Possibly the main reason *BL!NK* failed was in its conception. The business plan could have possibly taken a few things into account, which

it did not. Expected ad revenues were overestimated, costs underestimated and circulation figures too optimistic. Unrealistically so for a brand new and independent title. Perhaps this was the fault of industry inexperience on the part of the founders. Secondly, other factors that came into play affected the proper running of the magazine, factors such as distribution challenges, marketing misdirection and a general magazine market decline.

Indeed *BLINK* challenged the expected formulae of what a men's lifestyle magazine is by pushing the content beyond the usual rhetoric of sex, sport and financial success. Perhaps this is why, as a monthly, it was not commercially viable. The fact that the magazine was launched out of Black Employment Equity, governmental or non-commercial funding is important in terms of reflecting on its demise. This gives it both a sense of belonging to but being beholden to a certain historical movement and moment. Its failure too then casts a dark shadow on the nature of Black Employment Equity enterprises and their weaknesses.

### **2.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to sketch the rise of six men's lifestyle magazines that emerged in South Africa in the wave of the post 1994 consumer fervour. Toward this end each magazine was analysed in order to determine something of the philosophy that differentiates it from or identifies it with the other men's lifestyle titles available in South Africa and determines the extent to which it reflects the different pockets of masculine identity found in South Africa. In each case the niche objectives, demographics of the readership, identity crises potentially faced by this target market as well as the editorial tone of the magazine were juxtaposed with the masculine ideal the magazine seems to extol. The investigation of the masculinities represented by the South African men's lifestyle magazines was informed by the underlying assumption that all of these magazines, whether mainstream or marginal, present a simplified and two dimensional masculine ideal.

A number of general conclusions emerged out of this chapter. The first is that, while a target market does seem to have emerged that marketers and media owners can conceptualise in non-racial (cosmopolitan or metrosexual ?) terms – meaning that this identity attracts white, black (including brown) and Indian readers – the dominant target market of the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines is an affluent, white, South African male. For while the dominant South African discourse of nation building would like to conceptualise the existence of a hybrid or non-racial identity, the more financially successful men's lifestyle magazines (*Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*) all present their masculine ideal, albeit on a discursive or subtextual level, as white. This white masculine ideal does not on any level resist the discourse of a unified South African maleness, but neither does it engage with what a unified identity might mean or 'look like'. It does not necessarily draw on the old pre-1994 patriarchal identity, but replaces this trope with yet another, that of the globalized, cosmopolitan, non-racialized (but white) male.

The second, analogous, summation that emerges from this study is that in spite of the more or less 'mixed' demographics of the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines (*Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* all have a black readership of between 20% and 30%) and the commercial formulation of a unified target market (in advertising, for instance), there nevertheless seem to be identifiable white Anglo, Afrikaner, and black male identities that magazines still appeal to, a fact underscored by the emergence of *BLINK* and *MaksiMan*.

The third conclusion to arise is that while the various magazines under discussion in this chapter each present a nuanced slant on ideal masculine identity, a definite masculine ideal is evident in each. *Men's Health* places emphasis on holistic well-being, *FHM* on laddish good fun and self-acceptance and *GQ* on the aspirational effort of (especially stylistic or fashion-conscious) self-actualization. *MaksiMan* is a magazine that attempted to reconcile ideal masculinity with a Christian world view and *BLINK* ostensibly challenged negative stereotypes surrounding black masculinity with an ethical and socially responsible, black masculine ideal. Each, in other words responds or responded to a particular aspect of the South African crisis in masculinity, whether this crisis

is real or chimerical. Having said that, not all South African men read one of the men's lifestyle magazines available, perhaps indicating that there are men who do not identify with any of the masculine ideals available in these magazines.

Stephen Whitehead (2002: 45-46) has pointed out that studying gender or masculinity in the South African context is a doubly charged endeavour because of the history of racial inequality that defines this country. The resultant political correctness endemic in the so called New South Africa (1994 – 2000) further complicates any analysis that attempts to foreground stereotypical trends in gender construction within the public domain. In his comprehensive analysis of masculinity, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*, Whitehead (2002:46) underscores the importance of treating masculinity as an entity situated on the threshold between the personal and the political.

As if to echo Whitehead's sentiments, the South African government in July of 2006 introduced new regulations to the Films and Publications Act making it an offence to sell pornographic publications like *Hustler*, *Loslyf* and *Playboy* at garages, local cafes or magazine stores. It is thought that this restriction may inadvertently influence the content of men's lifestyle magazines that will fall within the ambit of the law if the articles in a particular magazine are deemed to border on pornography rather than sex education (Naidu 2006). The extent to which this restriction will be enforced and, thus, the influence it will have on men's lifestyle magazines is as yet unclear but it again highlights the fluctuation that exists within the public sector regarding sexuality and the representation of it.

The fact that masculinity is in flux in South Africa may mean that men are more susceptible to the homogenising influence of men's lifestyle magazines but it also means that the role that these magazines may play in articulating vernacular identities is amplified. It is unclear how wide the gap is between how identity is constructed in media representations and 'lived reality'. What is apparent is that shifting power relations after 1994 have contributed to untidy disjunctures marking the field of gender studies in contemporary South Africa. Finally, if "[Masculinity is a] vexed term, variously inflected, multiply defined, not limited to straightforward descriptions of maleness" as Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and

Simon Watson (1995:2) have asserted, then South Africa with its unique cultural inflections is fertile ground for the analysis of the many masculine ideals that form part of the fabric of the new and not so new South Africa.

In the following chapter, the masculinities represented in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* are investigated in terms of their relationship to women or significant others, since this bond is indicative of the way these magazines situate men within family and society.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE REPRESENTATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN *MAKSIMAN AND BLINK*

### 3.1 Introduction

Robert Connell (1995: 73-74) is an Australian sociologist who has investigated what he terms the social organisation of masculinity. By this he means that in order to study masculinity, it (masculinity) may be conceptualised as a three-fold model that represents the relational nature of masculinity. Through this model, Connell (1995: 73-74) distinguishes masculinity as being involved in relations of a) power, b) production and c) cathexis or emotional attachment. This division of the relational aspect of masculinity implies that men are involved in the lives of other men as well as women and children. Masculinity can, thus, not be studied in isolation but must be contextualised in terms of the way it interacts with the feminine. According to Connell (1995: 73-74) masculine interaction with the world may, for academic purposes, be divided into these three categories. The first deals with power relations between men and women. The second deals with the way men interact with each other and women within the professional context and the third refers to the complexity of the set of relations that emerges from emotional (or sexual) attachment. All three of these relational categories – power, production and cathexis – are pertinent to a discussion of women since all three relate to the construction of femininity in the same way that they relate to the construction of masculinity.

Following Connell's formulation of "power" and "cathexis"<sup>1</sup> as important aspects of masculine social behaviour and roles, this chapter investigates the manner in which women are represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, as well as the representation of the relationships between men and women in these magazines. The focus of this chapter is the manner in which men relate to women on the pages of *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. Since men's lifestyle magazines – whether mainstream or marginal – generally exclude the representation of homosexual relationships, this chapter is centred on heterosexual relationships between men and women and the heterosexual representation of women within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. The manner in which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* represent women and the relationships between men and women is, thus, an important element of the construction of a masculine ideal within each of these magazines and therefore integral to this study.

The merit of Connell's approach, and its suitability for this study, is that he stresses the inherently relational quality of masculinity (1995: 68). He furthermore emphasises that masculinity does not exist except in contrast to femininity (1995: 68), which raises the question of how or from what vantage point one should define and frame masculinity and femininity. The "power relations" which Connell (1995: 74) speaks of refer to the hegemony of the masculine over the feminine within the contemporary western context. Connell (1995: 74) explains this relation (meaning the overall subordination of women and dominance of men) as the main axis of power in the contemporary western gender order. While the influence of patriarchy is pervasive, it has been and is constantly being challenged and even reversed in particular instances (predominantly under the influence of feminist thinking). Connell (1995: 74) believes that these reversals and resistances mean continuing difficulties for patriarchal power. He comments that such resistance "defines a problem of legitimacy which has great importance for the politics of masculinity" (Connell 1995: 74). The second relation that Connell (1995: 74) addresses is that of production relations. While this does have

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<sup>1</sup> Power and cathexis are explained in greater detail later in this section.

an indirect influence on the manner in which men and women are represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* it is not dealt with here but rather forms the focus of Chapter Four (see 4.2).

In terms of "cathexis", Connell (1995: 74) explains that the practices that shape and realize desire are an important aspect of the gender order. Accordingly, one might pose political questions about the power relations behind sexual roles and the relationships these imply: whether these relationships are consensual or coercive, whether pleasure is equally given and received (Connell 1995: 74). Feminist studies have, furthermore, drawn attention to the connection between heterosexuality and men's position of social dominance (Dworkin 1983, 1988, MacKinnon 1977, and Dworkin and MacKinnon 1993).

The question posed by this chapter is whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* represent hegemonic power relations in their depiction of women within a men's magazine or whether they employ more subversive strategies in order to undermine patriarchy and represent women with individual personhood and power. Chapter Three, in other words, expands the emphasis on the masculine ideals emblazoned by *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* to include the relation between men and women and the power relations that might influence these interactions. In this chapter the connection between the representation of masculine selfhood and the Other is investigated in both magazines against the assumption that mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are generally assumed to simplify and objectify women and the manner in which men should relate to them. The question is asked whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* can depart from this often analysed trend (Dines 1995, Pritchard 1993, Viljoen 2005).

A number of themes recur throughout this chapter and thus need contextualising. The first is the reputation that the mainstream men's lifestyle press has for objectifying women. This is dealt with in the following section (3.2). The second theme that foregrounds the analysis of the representation of women in *MaksiMan*

and *BLINK* is that of the construction of a feminine ideal within both of these magazines.

The first and second wave feminist interest in women's right to have control over their own bodies was furthered by third wave feminists who voiced a concern with the representation of women and their bodies. Radical feminists such as Andrea Dworkin (1983, 1988, 1993) and Catherine MacKinnon (1977, 1993) have argued the importance of stressing the power relations within heterosexual sex roles, while psychoanalytic feminists such as Laura Mulvey (1975, 1987, 1989) have stressed the power relations within the representation of sexuality in the popular media. In 1975 Mulvey formulated the notion of 'male gaze' in her ground breaking article, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema", which appeared in the Autumn issue of *Screen* magazine. In this article Mulvey argues, in Lacanian terms, that the male spectator experiences pleasure in looking at other people's bodies as sexualized objects.<sup>2</sup> While her conjecture was presented primarily as a theory of film spectatorship, it has subsequently been applied to various forms of popular media where the scopophilic gaze may operate (see Viljoen 2006). Mulvey's delineation of the male gaze implicates the camera as the device that objectifies the body, meaning that even female spectators can be guilty of looking with the male gaze. The question is whether portrayals of women in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* still make them objects of the gaze or whether these portrayals differ from those found in the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. Mulvey's concern with the objectifying look may also be connected to another set of feminist theories, those relating to the construction of a societal feminine ideal.

In 1997 Marianne Thesander wrote *The Feminine Ideal*, a book in which she attempts to unpack the various idealizations of the female body throughout western history. Thesander argues that there is no neutral body – that even the

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<sup>2</sup> Mulvey's theory primarily relates to the way women are represented for men but can also be applied to the way women look at women. More recently, the introduction of metrosexuality into the media has meant that Mulvey's notion of male gaze may be applied to the way men look at men. This is still a relatively undertheorized phenomenon, however, and not within the scope of this section.

naked body belongs to a cultural order (1997: 12). The sander, in other words, stresses the fact that western society has a changing but not imprecise idea about what constitutes the ideal version of the feminine at any given point in history. This is an important notion within the context of this chapter since it underscores the point that men's magazines, as examples of contemporary media, not only present the reader with a masculine ideal but also a feminine ideal – and that the two are related. This then is the point of this chapter: to better understand the feminine ideals put forth by *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, meaning the idealized notions of feminine identity presented by these magazines, in order to gain a more holistic understanding of the masculine ideals they support.

The third theme that forms an important backdrop to this chapter is that of the gendering of space (the first theme was the objectifying representation of women in the mainstream men's lifestyle press and is dealt with in 3.2 and the second theme was the construction of a feminine ideal). Gender theorist Nancy Duncan (1996: 128) explains that, traditionally, spatial geographies are divided so that the public domain is conceived of as male, and the private domain as female. Duncan (1996: 128) maintains that this gender-based distinction between the public and the private is deeply rooted in political philosophy, law, popular discourse and recurrent spatial structuring practices that "demarcate and isolate a private sphere of domestic, embodied activity from an allegedly disembodied political sphere that is predominantly located in public space". According to Duncan "such spatial structuring practices," as might be found in men's lifestyle magazines, have often been employed to "construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference" in the interest of maintaining "traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures" (1996: 127-128). The predominant functions of these public and private spaces have, thus, traditionally been gendered in western social formations such as the popular media "with the public space of power, politics and language represented as a male preserve and the private space of domesticity, caring and the body represented as the female equivalent" (Woodward, Hayes & Minkley 2002: xxi).

In her investigation of these spheres, Jessica Benjamin (1988: 197) argues that the public sphere, in which caring and recognizing others' needs is impossible, depends on the private sphere to "cooperate" with the public domain. Benjamin's (1988) thesis is relevant to this chapter because it raises the question of an interconnectedness or cooperation between the so-called private and public domains as represented within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. If the public and private domains are gendered within these two magazines, then it seems necessary to ask whether these domains overlap or are engaged in cooperation or whether they are positioned as oppositional (or even antagonistic).

In their important work, *Deep HiStories. Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa*, Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (2002: xxi-xxii) draw a parallel between the gendering of space and what they refer to as a continuum of voice and silence. In this study these authors point out that the concept of voice has become a sedimented trope, particularly in (feminist) literary criticism and historical studies (Woodward, Hayes & Minkley 2002: xxi). They argue that in the "customary hierarchization of voice and silence, voice is situated at the apex, silence at the lowest point" (2002: xxii). They equate finding a voice or claiming a voice with the empowerment of the speaker whereas silence or the silenced speaker is equated with disempowerment. "the danger of silence being that you will be said" (Woodward, Hayes & Minkley 2002: xxii). What they propose, in other words, is a theoretical move beyond the unquestioning and undifferentiating use of the voice / silence binary. They, hereby, suggest that theorists should scrutinize how they situate manifestations of voice, silence and what lies in between along the axis of empowerment. According to Woodward, Hayes and Minkley (2002: xxi), voice / silence is, then, a construction that needs updating, a practice of representation that requires examination. Within the context of this chapter this means that the representation of women in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* should be interrogated for their placement on the voice / silence continuum. The question is asked, whether women are represented within these

magazines as having a (public) voice or whether their silence is what affords them access to the pages of these otherwise male magazines.

These three themes form the foundation upon which the analysis of the representation of women takes place within *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*. To recap, the first theme is the representation of women as visual pleasure. This depiction of women as 'eye candy' is particularly prevalent in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and is discussed in greater detail in the next section. The second theme is that of the feminine ideal as a theoretical construct within which the representation of women can be analysed. This chapter relies heavily upon this notion that an ideal form of gender may be implicitly communicated by media entities such as men's lifestyle magazines. The third theme addressed in this section is that of the gendering of space. The ways in which men and women are represented as belonging to a particular special domain are investigated in this chapter. Each of these themes infuses the point of departure for this analysis. Each of these themes is addressed within the broader notion that gender relations are informed by power and cathexis as defined by Connell (1995: 68).

This chapter is divided into two primary sections. The fact that *MaksiMan* is a Christian magazine necessitates an investigation into the Christian feminine ideal. Thus, the analysis of the representation of women in *MaksiMan* that comprises the first half of this chapter is preceded by an investigation into the conservative, religious construction of a (global and local) Christian feminine ideal. Second, the analysis of the representation of women in *BL!NK* is preceded by an investigation into the liberal construction of a (global and local) black, western feminine ideal. In both of these analyses, the written content of the magazines as well as the visual or photographic content are scrutinized. Before these two sections, however, the representation of women within mainstream men's lifestyle magazines is briefly sketched.

### 3.2 Men and women in the mainstream men's lifestyle press

This section briefly examines the conventional representation of women in the mainstream men's lifestyle press in order to determine whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* draw their notion of the feminine (and its relationship to the masculine) from the mainstream men's lifestyle press or articulate an alternative representation of the feminine. This overarching background is briefly sketched because it establishes the context out of which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* emerged.

Two questions are posed by this section. The first is: how do mainstream men's lifestyle magazines traditionally represent women? According to theorists such as Benthon Benwell (2003), Gail Dines (1995) and Annette Pritchard (1993), who have theorised the construction of gender roles within men's lifestyle magazines, the answer to this question is three fold. In the first place, as mentioned previously, magazines such as *FHM*, *GQ* and *Men's Health* typically represent a visually idealised femininity. The women that appear within the pages of these magazines are, almost exclusively, represented visually. These women are typically young, beautiful and scantily clad which underscores the notion of women as Mulveyan "visual pleasure" or what in layman's terms might be referred to as "eye candy". The models are, furthermore, typically 'touched up' or 'Photoshopped' so that they are physically flawless, encouraging an unrealistic feminine ideal in which women are the perfect(ed) embodiment of male fantasy.

In the second place, these magazines are typically described by the critics above as objectifying women. Very little would, for instance, be said (whether in the form of articles, interviews or captions) about the women photographed and displayed in magazines such as *FHM* and *GQ*. What brief references there are to these women usually include sexualising trivia such as the fact that the model might like mud wrestling or that she is currently single. So the written text that accompanies the full page photographs of posing women is represented as less important than the visual

display of the models' bodies. It is the visualisation of sexual fantasy and visual pleasure that is then the real subject of these photographs and the function of women within mainstream men's lifestyle magazines.

Although complex and varied, the iconographic codes that are typically used in such photographic spreads or 'shoots' may be narrowed down to three rudimentary conventions: the codes of 'form', 'fetish' and 'gaze'. Each of these codes is briefly discussed in this section.

The 'form' which most of the women are photographed in harks back to the 'classical pose' of the reclining nude prevalent in erotic artworks, particularly prior to the mid-1900s. This pose displays the model in such a way that her body becomes an object of what Clive Bell (1924) termed "significant form", meaning that she is displayed as an aesthetic object. This may seem contradictory, but this is exactly the point, that the representation of a woman can be both erotic or aesthetic artistic as well as objectifying. The mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, in other words, recalling nineteenth and early twentieth century erotic art, represent women as both sex objects and unattainably beautiful forms, there for admiration in a kind of stylised ideal. In the terms of art historian Kenneth Clark (1956), she is nude rather than naked. The March 2008 issue of *GQ South Africa*, for instance, features a photo shoot with *Desperate Housewives* star, Eva Longoria (figure 7).

On page 69 Longoria is photographed sitting in a pose that is typical of canonical erotic art such as Edward Weston's *Nude* (1936) which features a woman in more or less the same position. In this photograph, the photographer seems to have strategically arranged Longoria so that the composition of the photograph would appear to be artistic or stylised. Longoria has one leg positioned over the other in a pose that both conceals and draws attention to her crotch. Her hands lightly touch her face and foot and her back is upright. The overall effect of the composition is very pleasing. The blank backdrop seems to underscore the fact that the subject of the image is Longoria's sculptural body. The April issue of *FHM* features a photo

shoot with the celebrated South African surfer, Roxy Louw. Here too Louw, like Longoria, is arranged with aesthetic sensitivity (figure 8). Louw is photographed reclining on a red leather couch in the manner of a canonical nude such as Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) or Manet's *Olympia* (1863), both of which feature models reclining against red beds. Louw's one arm rests on the couch while her other is placed lightly on her leg. The general impression created by the image is that of a goddess nonchalantly reclining on a chaise longue. The point is that in both images the composition of the photograph positions the models as aesthetic objects or examples of "significant form". The image of Longoria from *GQ* is, in keeping with the aspirational tone of the magazine, a more sophisticated image but even that of Louw in *FHM* recalls the reclining nudes of the art historical past.

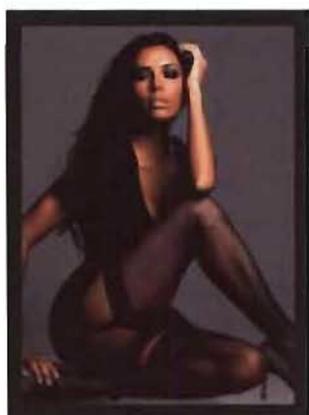


Figure 7: Eva Longoria, *GQ*, March 2008: 69

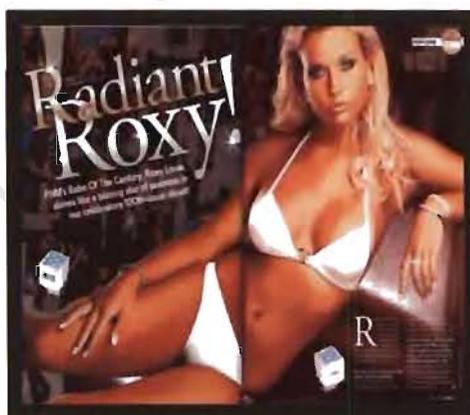


Figure 8: Roxy Louw, *FHM*, April 2008: 82-83

Although fetish is typically associated with the representation of particular body parts, the use of exotic clothing or make up, it may also be hinted at through more subtle indicators like the setting in which a model is photographed or the props used in the shoot. The fetishistic quality of the images in many mainstream men's lifestyle magazines also has ties to their art historical predecessors since these images make use of the trope of exoticism which further constructs women as Other. In this regard, fetishizing props such as exotic locations, animal skins, jewellery or flowers

may contribute to the sense of othering which makes the model seem less commonplace and therefore more sexually stimulating. In the photograph of Longoria, for instance, fishnet stockings and suspenders are used to fetishize and sexualize Longoria since both of these items are popular codes of sexual fetish. The snakeskin shoes she is wearing similarly create a sense of the exotic which, coupled with the fishnet stockings and suspenders, positions Longoria as visual pleasure. In the image of Louw, similarly, jewellery is used to represent the idea that Louw is arranged for maximum visual pleasure. The kind of weighty 'bling' she is wearing would not be worn with a bikini under normal circumstances, implying that she too is an object of visual pleasure, designed to attract the attention of the viewer. In both cases, props such as clothing and jewellery are used to lend a sexualised or even a fetishistic quality to the images since they position the models as sexual objects.

One would expect that this fetishizing practice would also involve the photographing of black models as a continuation of the theme of the Other but in fact this is rarely the case. For the most part, magazines such as *FHM* and *GQ* rarely feature photo shoots with black models, indicating an interesting departure from the theme of the Other and, perhaps, implying that in South Africa 'mainstream' still means 'white'. According to *FHM* editor, Brendon Cooper (2006), this racial exclusivity is largely due to the fact that readers seem to prefer photo shoots with white models, presumably because this is who they can relate to. The "Homegrown Honeys" feature similarly takes a seemingly ordinary girl next door and transforms her into the typically fetishized ideal beauty. Props such as stiletto heels, exotic jewellery and the customary consensual stare frame these 'ordinary' women into the fetishized feminine ideal. Connell (1995: 74) comments that when one considers desire "in Freudian terms, as emotional energy being attached to an object, its gendered character is clear". The practices that shape desire within mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, in other words, are thus an aspect of the gender order. In terms of Connell's (1995: 73-75) formulation of power relations, the women

represented in these magazines are disenfranchised by the objectifying gaze and in this way become part of a hegemonic gender order.

The authoritative 'stare' of the models, what Camille Paglia (1995:65) terms their "steamily consensual" stare, echoing the gaze of the viewer, is the third code. This use of eye contact with the viewer is a convention employed by the first photographic pornography of the early twentieth century (known in Paris and throughout most of Europe as *academies*, the term used for the photos rather than the place of production). In photographic pornography this convention serves to emphasise the visual consent of the model and thus her willing participation not only in the photograph but also in the fantasies of the viewer. In both the examples mentioned previously this gaze is evident. In the photograph of Longoria, her stare is seductively accentuated by her hand which draws the focus of the viewer to Longoria's eyes. In the photograph of Louw the effect is similar. She stares confidently at the viewer. In both cases the models' eyes have been accentuated by the smoky make up on their eyes. In both cases their gaze is steamily consensual.

Whether consciously or not, mainstream men's lifestyle magazines typically appropriate and pastiche the codes of 'form', 'fetish' and 'gaze' in numerous variations from popular and high visual culture (most apparently and perhaps paradoxically from canonical erotic art and photographic pornography) and in this way objectify the women that appear on their pages.

Finally, the third response to the question of how mainstream men's lifestyle magazines represent women is that they simplify womanhood to a singular (objectifying) feminine ideal that denies the varied and complex personhood of diverse women. This actuality is most evident in the fact that these magazines generally include no female voice other than that of their "agony aunt" or "sex scribe" as *GQ* calls theirs. These women are appointed to address the (usually sexual) questions of male readers and in doing so represent the apparently homogenous female population. Their tone is generally playful and flirtatious and in

this way mocks or undermines the seriousness of seemingly speaking for all women and being the lone female voice in an otherwise male context.

The second question posed by this section is how mainstream men's lifestyle magazines represent the relationship between men and women. Based on what has already been said about the representation of women within these magazines, it does not seem too farfetched to describe the representation of the relationship between men and women in these magazines as recalling the object/subject, active/passive binaries. The sexualised display of women necessarily relies upon the traditional roles that masculine and feminine play within the modernist dichotomy of subject/object. Historically, women have been positioned as the object. With relation to the masculine subject, this categorization works to further weaken the agency of the object by labelling the object as Other and, in this case, furthermore positions the woman as the object of the male gaze.

Laura Mulvey argues that within patriarchal cultural systems the "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" (1992: 27). Mainstream men's lifestyle magazines typically focus on the male reader as the 'protagonist' in every visual narrative and also assume a male spectator: "As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence" (Mulvey 1992: 28). These magazines, in other words, present men as active, controlling subjects (the "bearer of the look" in Mulvey's terms) and treat women as passive objects of desire or spectacle for men.

It may be argued that mainstream men's lifestyle magazines serve a particular function within the popular rhetoric of modern sexuality and that they are not as 'harmful' (or objectifying) as many feminists would have one believe. Certainly, it seems fair to say that the women represented in these magazines are glorified even if this is done in an objectifying manner. A third question that emerges from

this kinder perspective on the men's lifestyle press is whether men's lifestyle magazines respond to or deal with the increasingly feminist interest in the representation of gender in the popular media (du Preez 2005, Herbst 2005, Viljoen and Viljoen 2005).

Benwell (2003: 16) maintains that the "omnipresence of a certain kind of sexism and misogyny in lads' magazines lends weight to the thesis that their ideology is, in part, motivated by a backlash to feminism."<sup>3</sup> Benwell (2003: 16) furthermore reveals a disturbing new trend within the men's lifestyle press which is "openly misogynistic, albeit apparently humorous, and has a very explicit anti feminist agenda". He cites various examples taken from men's lifestyle magazines such as the article entitled, "A Lady Equals an Accident: Three reasons why the fairer sex should stay in the back seat" (Benwell 2003: 16). Benwell (2003:16) warns that although it is difficult to assert that a couple of articles and features are indicative of an emerging trend, this kind of content rightly prompts a certain kind of feminist vigilance about the content and power of men's lifestyle magazines. He muses that the "masculine discourse in such magazines is not always simply characterized by irony that is harmless and playful" (Benwell 2003:16). A common motif of the more laddish men's lifestyle magazines is, furthermore, the adoption of what have been termed "new sexism" discourses (Benwell 2003: 20, Gough 2000). Although I could not find examples of this new sexism in the issues of *GQ* and *FHM* referred to in this section, it is possible that it does appear here. While not the subject of this section it is perhaps worth noting that these discourses involve the legitimation of male power in new and creative ways, typically by means of the strategic and subversive accommodation or negotiation of liberal, progressive or feminist discourses (Benwell 2003: 20). The mainstream men's lifestyle press, in other words, responds to the feminist concerns surrounding these magazines in a number of ways, most of which are not open and serious responses but rather subversive.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that this thesis has been rejected by certain theorists on the grounds that a rejection of feminism is less concerned with men's responses to women than it is centred on a rejection of the feminist friendly 'new man' (see Benwell 2003: 16).

This section has briefly introduced the question of how mainstream men's lifestyle magazines represent women in order to establish the trope out of which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* emerged. The rest of this chapter is concerned with the representation of women (and their relationship to men) within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. The following section investigates the presence of a Christian feminine ideal within *MaksiMan*.

### **3.3 The representation of women in *MaksiMan*:**

The question of what a potential feminine ideal might be defined as within Christian media is, in part, the focus of this section. Added to that is the question of whether an *Afrikaans* Christian feminine ideal may be nuanced in a particular way within contemporary *Afrikaans* Christian media or a magazine such as *MaksiMan*.<sup>4</sup> The following section briefly addresses these two questions as a theoretical introduction to the semiotic analysis of the representation of women in *MaksiMan* which follows. Connell's (1995: 71- 76) three fold model of gender relations infuses much of this analysis since it is essentially focussed on the relationship between men and women in *MaksiMan* and therefore emphasises the relational quality of masculinity.

#### **3.3.1. A Christian feminine ideal**

According to the Evangelical gender theorist, Patricia Ennis (2003: 47), it is important for Christians to refocus their attention on femininity as opposed to

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<sup>4</sup> The examination of an *Afrikaans*, Christian feminine ideal is indebted to the research of Hettie Mans (2007) who has investigated this phenomena within two South African Christian women's magazines.

feminism: "We've heard the word 'feminist' quite often in the last couple of decades, but we haven't really heard much about the deep mystery that is called femininity". While I disagree with Ennis – and believe the many 'how to' books on Christian femininity undermine her statement – her interest in femininity does seem to demonstrate the contemporary, evangelical belief that men and women should adopt different roles within society and the family and that these may be consolidated in dual feminine and masculine ideals. In her important essay, *The gift of femininity*, Elisabeth Elliot (1998: sp), the much celebrated missionary wife and foremost source on Christian femininity, wrote that "femininity is not a curse. It is not even a triviality. It is a gift, a divine gift, to be accepted with both hands, and to thank God for." According to this line of thinking, Christian femininity and a Christian feminine ideal are two finite and accessible ideals that should be striven for by every Christian woman. Some time before Elliot wrote on the matter, John Piper and Wayne Gruden (1991: 33) commented that,

The tendency today is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness or femaleness. But this depreciation of male and female personhood is a great loss. It is taking a tremendous toll on generations of young men and women who do not know what it means to be a man or woman. Confusion over the meaning of sexual personhood today is epidemic. The consequence of this confusion is not a free and happy harmony among gender free persons relating on the basis of abstract competencies. The consequence, rather, is more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more emotional distress and suicide that come with the loss of God given identity.

Piper and Gruden's statement is typical of the evangelical belief that gender roles and identity must be cemented or prescribed. The questions that emerge from the belief that gender roles are fixed are, thus, what these roles are based on and what the characteristics of these gender roles are.

Patricia Ennis (2003: 47-55) attempts to answer these questions in an article posted on the website of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, an organisation dedicated to guiding Christians in their pursuit of understanding and

assuming a biblical gender identity. Like many others, she believes that a biblical sketch of ideal femininity is to be found in Proverbs 31:10-31 (Ennis 2003: 48). According to Ennis (2003: 48), this passage of scripture "provides a biblical foundation for the development of principles by which Christian femininity can be portrayed":

A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.  
She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.  
She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.  
She gets up while it is still dark;  
she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.  
She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.  
She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.  
She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.  
In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.  
She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.  
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.  
She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.  
Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.  
She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.  
She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
She can laugh at the days to come.  
She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.  
She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Her children arise and call her blessed;  
Her husband also, and he praises her:  
'Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.'  
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.  
Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gates.

· Proverbs 31:10-31 (New International Version 1978: 742-743)

In Ennis' view the Proverbs 31 passage, cited above, points toward eleven characteristics that comprise a biblical feminine ideal. These are being virtuous, trustworthy, energetic, physically fit, economical, unselfish, honourable, lovable, prepared, prudent and God-fearing. Ennis (2003: 48-55) expounds on each of these characteristics at great length, providing careful justification for her ideas from the scriptures.

The other much disputed attribute of the Christian feminine ideal is her willingness to submit to the leadership of her husband. In an article posted on the website for the Young Ladies Christian Fellowship, the author, Lanier, comments that "[i]n Christ and in His relationship with His Bride the Church we see the ideal of masculinity and femininity. He nurtures and protects. She reverences and adores. He stoops to serve her. She is raised to a position of honor by her acceptance of his leadership." From this vantage point the role division is clear: it is the man's role to lead and the woman's role to follow.

Male headship or the belief that women should submit to their husbands seems to stem from the idea that the original role differentiations for the two sexes can be biblically traced back to the standards in Eden before sin interrupted marital relationships (see Genesis 2:7-32). Ennis (2003: 55) comments that "[t]he original, specific roles for male and female were corrupted, not created, by the fall". She goes on to clarify that Genesis 2:18 reports God's final act of creation was the woman, to be a "helper fit for him" (literally a helper like man that would be his companion). John MacArthur (1997: 19) explains that,

When God saw His creation as very good (1:31), He viewed it as being to that point the perfect outcome to His creative plan. However, in observing man's state as not good, He was commenting on his incompleteness before the end of the sixth day because the woman, Adam's counterpart, had not yet been created. The words of this verse emphasize man's need for a companion, a helper, and an equal. He was incomplete without someone to complement him in fulfilling the task of filling, multiplying, and taking dominion over the earth. This points to Adam's inadequacy, not

Eve's insufficiency (cf. 1 Cor. 11:9). Woman was made by God to meet man's deficiency (cf. 1 Tim. 2:14).

While MacArthur's explanation seems kinder to women than most given by those who defend the notion of male headship, it still underscores the idea of women's primary purpose (and the goal of their creation) as being the support of men. Gilbert Bilezikian (2007: 2), writing for the more progressive of the two Christian organizations centred on gender, Christians for Biblical Equality, takes an even more enlightened view of the notion of male headship. He explains that the principle of male headship is largely based on the passage of scripture in Ephesians 5 (verses 23-24) which states that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Bilezikian (2007: 1-3) believes that this verse has been taken out of context and needs to be understood in terms of the original meanings of the words used. In particular he believes that the term, 'head' is used in the New Testament to mean service to another and not authoritative leadership:

When the New Testament metaphor of headship is understood generically and is protected from corruption by meanings foreign to the text, it describes perfectly the relation of Christ to the church and of husband to wife as servant life givers. The fall had made of Adam a ruler over women (Gen. 3:16). Christ makes of husbands servants to their wives in their relationship of mutual submission (Eph. 5:21) (Bilezikian 2007: 3).

In spite of the more progressive view of writers like Bilezikian (2007: 1-3), it is difficult to reconcile this idea of a Christian gender identity with contemporary gender discourse which is primarily concerned with the delineation of the sameness of men and women, not the differences between them. The Christian feminine ideal held by at least some Christian theorists and commentators seems to sketch a portrait of femininity that is loving, submissive, beautiful, honourable and industrious in terms of the home. Of course the notion of a Christian feminine ideal is further complicated when it is positioned within a specific cultural context like that of white Afrikaans speaking South Africans.

Christina Landman (1994: 1), director of the Research Institute for Theology and Religion, brings this concern for the delineation of a Christian feminine ideal into the South African, and in particular the Afrikaner, sphere. She believes that the Afrikaans community may be divided into a dominant male culture and a feminine subculture (Landman 1994: 1). She, in part, attributes this division to the fact that in her opinion, "... local Calvinism was, of course, as sexist as it was racist" (Landman 1994: 2). In the opinion of sociologist Cherryl Walker (1990:318), contemporary Afrikaans women are happy to exercise their power indirectly without questioning the principle of male hegemony. Walker (1990) believes that the Dutch Reformed Church, with its fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible and rigid grasp of a patriarchal ideology, still has a powerful hold over the creation of identity in the South African context. Almost as a response to Walker's concerns, Landman (1994: 2) argues that this Afrikaans, Christian subculture cultivates a certain piety in Afrikaner women. She identifies piety as an important characteristic in Afrikaner women's religious identity. Landman (1994: vii) maintains that Afrikaner women are being held hostage both socially and politically by this religious piety. She, furthermore, contends that such women are the hostages of Afrikaner history and history books that sketch a portrait of Afrikaner women as pious and self sacrificing to the extreme. By way of an example, Landman (1994: vii) refers to the iconic tale of Racheltjie de Beer who famously took off her clothes and put them on her brother while they were lost during a storm so that he could stay warm. Landman (1994: vii) refers to de Beer's resultant death as iconic of the self sacrifice that has become synonymous with Afrikaner femininity. She (1994: vii) conversely cites survival as the trait associated with Afrikaner men.<sup>5</sup>

Based on Landman's reading of Afrikaner gender identity, one might relegate feminine sacrifice to the intimate domestic sphere. As highlighted by McClintock, (1991: 109) Afrikaner femininity is not militant or connected to politics but is

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<sup>5</sup> It may be noted, however, that the time Boer women spent in concentration camps during the Anglo Boer war also left women as victims survivors so this is not an exclusively male characteristic.

related to private suffering and piety. In an article entitled, 'This is how the church can heal women', in the Afrikaans daily newspaper *Beeld*, Landman (2007: 6) explains that she believes that South African women are suffering from "identities of failure". She comments that while some hold high positions in the public sector, many feel as though they are failing in the private sphere "where womanhood is still defined by submission, cleaning up after others and being perfectly beautiful" (Landman 2007: 6). Within this traditional, private domain the feminine ideal, in other words, implies that the woman is defined by her relation to the male, namely as wife and mother. For Landman, the piety involved in being an Afrikaner wife and mother served a number of functions within past Afrikaner culture and was connected to the various social paradigms within which women were defined:

In the first place they believed in a demanding male God who wished to be pleased and empowered those who succeeded in doing so. In the second place they acquiesced in submissiveness to men in order to gain the favour of the male dominant culture. Thirdly and consequently, on competing for the favour of this dominant culture they were, and still are, disloyal to one another. In the fourth place, the restrictions in their subculture led them to be extremely suspicious of other cultures ... . [T]his piety of self hate and submissiveness enabled men of the dominant culture to use female piety not only to keep women from participation in public life, but also to engage them, often unknowingly, in male nationalist struggles (Landman 1994: 3).

Landman (1994) believes that Afrikaner women did not reap the benefits of feminism during the apartheid years and are still the victims of an oppressive subculture.<sup>6</sup> Landman (1994), in other words, contends that contemporary Afrikaner women, like their predecessors before them, are subject to an oppressive need to be seen as pious. While it seems fair to say that the post apartheid South African context is one that promotes a pluralistic reading of culture and identity, in Landman's (1994) opinion the globalisation that has

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted, however, that in certain instances, where their motives aligned with that of the apartheid regime, women did have agency within their societal position. Ian Glenn (1996), for instance, has documented the manner in which literature written by women influenced miscegenation legislation during apartheid.

entered South Africa has not overshadowed the historical influence of religion and culture in the lives and identity construction of contemporary Afrikaner women.

In contrast to this view, Hettie Mans' (2007: sp) examination of two Afrikaans Christian women's magazines reveals an increasingly global delineation of the feminine within these magazines. While Mans defines the Christian feminine ideal found within *Leef* and *Finesse* as based on the following characteristics: "piety, self sacrifice, suffering, acquiescence, religiousness, and fiery patriotism", it is also evident from her study that these magazines define the feminine in increasingly secular terms. The women represented in *Leef* and *Finesse* are not portrayed as typically Afrikaans, whatever that may mean, but as typically feminine in a more general sense. Van Zoonen (1994: 30) describes the typical contemporary femininity upheld by the global media as: "submissive, available and dedicated." Indeed, these are the 'feminine' characteristics found by Mans (2007: sp) in *Leef* and *Finesse* with very little indication of the cultural identity of the women represented.

Clearly there are a number of diverse interpretations or variations on the theme of a Christian (Afrikaner) feminine ideal. Still, though the ideal may be simply that, traces of her may shape the gender identity of Afrikaner, Christian women. The question posed by the following section is what kind of women *MaksiMan* represents and how it does this. Are these women diverse and varied or do they fall into a particular typology, whether secular and global or religiously local? In particular, this section attempts to investigate the depiction of the relationship between men and women within *MaksiMan*. Throughout this investigation, the notions of mainstream and Christian femininity form the backdrop to the analysis of femininity within *MaksiMan*.

### 3.3.2. A semiotic analysis of the representation of women within *MaksiMan*<sup>7</sup>

Based on Nancy Duncan's (1996: 128) notion of the gendering of space, this section is divided into two: an analysis of the representation of women in the public domain and then an analysis of the representation of women in the private domain. As mentioned earlier, Duncan (1996: 128) maintains that, traditionally, spatial geographies are divided so that the public domain is conceived of as male, and the private domain as female. In this section the analysis of the representation of women in *MaksiMan* is divided between the public and private domains in order to examine whether the magazine did in fact position women within both spheres or simply within the private. Since the magazine was primarily targeted at male readers,<sup>8</sup> the articles address men as their target audience and only inadvertently deal with or refer to a feminine ideal. Thus, it should be noted that the observations about the representation of women are made from suppositions that are made from reading between the lines. The following section examines the representation of women within the public domain in *MaksiMan*.

#### 3.3.2.1 A semiotic analysis of the representation of women within the public domain in *MaksiMan*

The public domain may be conceived of as the space in which women function as professionals. It comprises the space woman might occupy outside of the

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<sup>7</sup> Since both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* have folded, general observations about these magazines may be written in the past tense. The analysis of the articles is, however, written in the present tense.

<sup>8</sup> As mentioned previously, the majority of *MaksiMan's* readers are female. The magazine is, however, targeted at men and the editorial team constructs the magazine as if their readers are men. Thus, I too will address the representation of women in the magazine as if it is men who are reading it.

home where they function in a capacity other than wife, mother or daughter. *MaksiMan* did feature women in their capacity as individual professionals although much more was said about their role as wife and mother than as working woman. Nevertheless each issue seems to include at least one feature or profile of a working woman and in doing so underscores the individual personhood of women as something that stretches beyond the home.

The majority of women featured were from the entertainment industry, whether actresses from Afrikaans soap operas, models or popular Afrikaans musicians, women, in other words, who professionally were the objects of the gaze. The January/February 2005 issue featured the actress, Diaan Lawrenson, who acts in the Afrikaans soap opera, *7de Laan* (7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) on the cover of the magazine. Inside there was a three page article featuring the actress. The interview was conducted by Emile Joubert and the reader's initial introduction to Lawrenson, other than the flattering full page photograph, was primarily physical:

Koel raak egter gou warm wanneer Diaan Lawrenson in die plek instep. 'n Lyf wat 'n perdeby sal laat bloos. Blonde hare. Modelfyn gelaatstrekke. Baie mooi arms, terloops. 'n Elegante, walsrige stap tot by die tafel waar sy jou met 'n ferm handdruk groet (January / February 2005: 13).

Things quickly warm up when Diaan Lawrenson walks into the place. A body that would make a wasp blush. Blonde hair. Model fine features. Very beautiful arms, incidentally. An elegant, waltz like walk right up to the table where she greets me with a firm handshake (January / February 2005: 13).

Following this objectifying introduction, Joubert quickly assumes the role of a floundering, love sick schoolboy making ample reference to the way he stumbles and fluffs his lines in front of the beautiful twenty six year old actress. The incentive behind the interview, the reader soon discovers, is to get Lawrenson to offer her opinion on the various male types that men might be classified as.

These, one is told, are "die bad boy",<sup>9</sup> "die skaam, stil tipe", "die grapmaker" and "die intellektuele denker" ("the bad boy", "the shy, quiet type", "the joker", and "the intellectual thinker"). Thus men are effectively reduced to these four stereotypes. Joubert (January / February 2005: 13) sketches each stereotype in detail, as if the reader might be in doubt as to what each title means, then refers to Diaan to comment on her level of attraction to each type. Her response to the first type, the bad boy, is as follows,

*MMM. Wel, ons meisies noem dit die D faktor, soos in D vir Danger. In die geheim is alle vroue seker op die een of ander wyse aangetrokke tot 'n bad boy. Weet jy waarom? Nie soseer die styl en die voorkoms en die koelhouding nie. Nee. Hy is bekoorlik omdat jy weet jy hom nooit joune alleen sal kan maak nie. Dié ou bly buite bereik, dáárom droom jy oor hom, oor hoe dit sou kon wees – ás dit maar net kon wees!*

MMM. Well, we girls call it the D factor, as in D for Danger. In secret, all women are probably on some or other level attracted to a bad boy. Do you know why? It's not necessarily the style and appearance and cool attitude. No. He is attractive because you know you will never be able to make him yours alone. The guy stays out of reach, that's why you dream about him, about how it could be ... if only it could be! (January / February 2005: 13)

What seems surprising is that *MaksiMan* seemed to be suggesting that the bad boy persona is the one women really seek. This seemed to undermine the model of Christian manhood that is faithful, devoted, selfless. Furthermore, Lawrenson's opinions get presented as the perspective of all women as she presumes to speak for "we girls", the apparently homogenous female population. This is a typical gimmick of mainstream men's magazines, to present the ideas of one celebrity as representative of the position taken by all women. Through this kind of simplification of the complexity and diversity of female thought and opinion, the magazine used Lawrenson to shed light on the otherwise dark matter of male types.

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<sup>9</sup> Unlike the "shy, quiet type" and "the joker" which are referred to in Afrikaans, the "bad boy" is referred to in English. This use of English, adds an American inflection to the typology that may remind the reader of Hollywood interpretations of this character from Marlon Brando to Brad Pitt.

When asked which of the four types of men is her favourite, Lawrenson (January / February 2005: 14) sagely remarked that she cannot limit herself to one masculine type since she is seeking a little more diversity than that. But two definite no's for her are "*chauvinisme en selfsugtigheid*" ("chauvinism and selfishness"), commenting that she has absolutely no time for men who do not respect women. In response to Lawrenson's remarks, Joubert (January / February 2005: 14) articulates his (chauvinistic) surprise at her intellect: "*Wel, nederig oor haar intellek mag sy wees. Maar daar is 'n bultende brein binne daardie blonde kop. Praat en redeneer oor die TV-wêreld, teater en menslikheid. Sy gesels vlot oor swaargewigletterkunde.*" ("Well, humble about her intellect she may be. But there is a bulging brain beneath that blonde head. She speaks and debates about the TV world, theatre and humanity. She discusses heavy weight literature with ease.") At the end of the interview Joubert is so impressed with Lawrenson that he is left with no option but to ask her whether she has a romantic attachment. When she replies that she does not, he determines, with mock gallantry, to pick up the bill.

The article was of course meant to be light reading and is after all quite entertaining. But one is left wondering why the entire article deals with such frivolous subject matter that so determinedly avoids dealing with Lawrenson's position within the public domain. Clearly the interview is centred on Lawrenson as an object of desire rather than her role as career woman and serious actress. Furthermore, Joubert's sense of surprise at her wit and intelligence does seem somewhat narrow minded and conveys the idea of a *MaksiMan* world in which beauty and brains are mutually exclusive. The article, in other words, chose to feature Lawrenson because of her position within the public domain but then proceeded to ignore her career and sketch her as an expert on dating and men, concerns that situate her within the private domain. Still, through celebrities like Oprah and Dr Phil, talking about issues like dating has become 'public ised' and no longer belongs to the realm of the purely private. At least Lawrenson was

described as a woman who knows what she wants and how to get it and is not sitting quietly next to the phone waiting.

In a similar vein, the September / October 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* presented the reader with a feature on Jenna Worlock after she was named the fittest woman in the world. Here too, Worlock was presented with trivial questions like, "Wat verkies jy, Milkybar of Top Deck?", "[Hou jy van] rollercoasters?", "[Verkies jy] Coldplay of Westlife?, Ferrari of Williams?, Brad Pitt of Richard Gere?" ("Which do you prefer, Milkybar or Top Deck?", "Do you like rollercoasters?", "Do you prefer Coldplay or Westlife?, Ferrari or Williams?, Brad Pitt or Richard Gere?") and so on. In fact not one of the questions put to her relates to her accomplishment as a top athlete. Such ridiculous questions may serve to indicate that there is more to her than her work but they also seem to undermine her accomplishment. Surely, as a superb athlete, her fitness routine would be interesting to male readers? The trivialising tone of the feature is further underscored by the fact that the article is headed, "Wat jy nie van vroue geweet het nie" ("What you didn't know about women"). It was a regular feature that pretended to inform men about the public achievements of women. This particular feature, however, reminds one of the "voice / silence" continuum formulated by Woodward, Hayes and Minkley (2002: xxi – xxii). By preventing Worlock from addressing issues related to her claim to fame the interviewer not only trivialises her achievement but also silences the authoritativeness of her 'voice'. She is presented as a fun, fly by night success rather than a serious member of the public domain, leading one to wonder whether on some level her success threatens male physicality.

The many issues of *MaksiMan* that form the subject of this analysis are filled with examples of articles that pretend to be about women in the public domain but in fact trivialise or even objectify the subjects of these features. The January / February 2005 issue included an article by acclaimed film critic, Leon van Nierop. In this article van Nierop chronicles the story of how he took a blonde, female

friend to see the romantic comedy, *In Her Shoes*. The film stars the leggy blonde beauty, Cameron Diaz, whose physical attributes impress van Nierop to such a degree that he struggles to focus his eyes "*om elke duim van haar liggaam ordentlik te sien*" ("in order to see every inch of her body properly") (November / December 2005: 40). But things between him and his friend soon turn sour when he starts to tell blonde jokes and gesture towards his appreciation for Diaz: "*Net een waagmoedige grynslag van my en ek moes hoor hoe dikwels blondines onder die tong van moedswillige bleeksiele moet deurloop*" ("Just one courageous chuckle from me and I had to hear how often blondes are demeaned by deliberately annoying idiots") (November / December 2005: 40).

The eventual outcome of the lengthy report is that the 'real' woman van Nierop took with him to the cinema is sketched as an up tight, humourless feminist while the object of his affection, Cameron Diaz (affectionately referred to as Cammie), is painted as a willing and sensuous screen goddess. In order to drive home the point that this is a situation that most men can empathize with, van Nierop employs a conspiratorial, fraternal tone and frequently employs references to sports to cement this sense of male camaraderie:

*Kan ek julle broeders 'n woordjie in die oor fluister. As julle lekkergoed vir die oë soek, Cammie is lekkerder as 'n hele boks vol Smarties. ... Ek het na dese weer na In Her Shoes gaan kyk, maar het die keer eerder my pêle saamgeneem. Hulle het harder gekreun as wanneer Percy Montgomery die bal tussen die pale deurklits. En harder gejuig as toe ons die Wêreldbeker gewen het, toe Cameron haar bikinitoppie losmaak om haar lyf 'n bietjie son te gee.*

Allow me to whisper a word of advice into you brothers' ears. If you are looking for eye candy, Cammie is nicer than a whole box of Smarties. ... I went to see *In Her Shoes* a second time but this time with my buddies. They groaned louder than when Percy Montgomery places the ball between the goal posts. They cheered louder than when we won the World Cup when Cameron loosened her bikini top to give her body some sun (November / December 2005: 40).

The article ends with van Nierop (November / December 2005: 40) musing that "*blondines gee vir manne soos ons die meeste pret. Maak nie saak wat enige vrou sê nie*" ("blondes give men like us the most fun. No matter what any woman says!") In this way van Nierop addresses his male readers as part of an exclusive club that in the privacy of their own magazine is fully entitled to make objectifying remarks about women or, as in this case, blonde screen muses. He also paints a portrait of real women as unnecessarily up tight and conflicted while filmic characters such as the one portrayed by Diaz are pleasingly uncomplicated and there to fulfil the male viewer's desire for "visual pleasure".

Of course this technique is amply employed by the mainstream men's lifestyle press that makes it its business to create a space where men are freely permitted to stare at women and share in the objectifying remarks and 'praise' of male reporters and commentators. On these pages, women are displayed as willing participants in their onlooker's male gaze (and whatever fantasies may result). The question that arises within *MaksiMan* is whether this laddish preoccupation with women as visual pleasure can be reconciled with a Christian ethos or the moral tone of the magazine. As will be discussed in the following section (3.3.2.2), the male readers of *MaksiMan* were, for the most part, addressed as if they were married. As a result, the feminine ideal most strongly put forward by the magazine was that of a happily married woman. And yet, when it comes to the portrayal of women in the public domain, they frequently referred to women in the entertainment industry and subsequently they were sketched as glamorous, single and to be looked at. This contrast between women who occupy the private domain and those found in the public domain sabotages Jessica Benjamin's (1988) notion that private space should be convincingly integrated into public space. The lack of cooperation between the public and private feminine ideals sketched by *MaksiMan* thus raises the question of whether mothers and wives can function effectively within the public domain or whether the Christian, Afrikaans feminine ideals espoused by the magazine necessarily imply a split between the private and public domains.

Another report that seems to emphasize the split between women who occupy the public and private domains is a feature article in the May / June 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* about a prostitute living and working in Pretoria:

*Sy is die vrou by wie jy plesier kan gaan koop in 'n goeie woonbuurt in Pretoria. Noem haar wat jy wil, die plaaslike hoer, prikkelpop, koket, sekswerker, slet, nimf of prostituut. Maar op die oog af lyk sy maar net soos nog 'n doorgewone vrou.*

She is the woman from whom you can buy pleasure in a well-to-do suburb of Pretoria. Call her what you will, the local whore ... coquet, sex worker, slut, nymph or prostitute. But in person she looks just like any other ordinary woman (May / June 2005: 19).

An article about a sex worker may seem like a feature that belongs in a discussion of the private domain but in fact the author, Teresa Coetzee, goes to great pains to emphasise the fact that the subject of the article is an independent working woman. What is more interesting is that the public domain which this woman belongs to is contrasted with that of the private domain by the underlying argument that the men who are her customers are there because they have been neglected by their wives. In answer to her title as prostitute, the subject of the article comments, "*Nee, ... ek is nie 'n prostituut nie. Noem my dan eerder maar 'n sekswerker. Of die plesierkoningin, want ek gee vir mans wat hul vroue hulle nie kan gee nie*" ("No, ... I am not a prostitute. Rather call me a sex worker. Or the pleasure queen, since I give men what their wives can't give them") (May / June 2005: 19). Later in the interview she muses, "*Vyftig persent van die mans wat my kom besoek, kom nie eens vir die seks nie. Hulle soek iemand wat kan luister na hul huweliksprobleme*" ("Fifty percent of the men who come to see me don't even come for the sex. They are looking for someone who can listen to their marital problems") (May / June 2005: 19). Through these remarks the argument is made that when women do not take care of their husbands in the private domain, men will seek fulfilment in the public sector.

Whether this concept is designed to serve as a warning to the female readership of the magazine or as a justification of trespasses committed by the male readership is difficult to say. It is, however, clear that the author of the article, a woman herself, wants to draw a connection between the private (or secret) and public spaces and wishes to place a sense of moral pressure on the wives of male readers at the heart of this connection. In defence of the article, one might reflect that if the magazine were truly 'laddish', the last person who would be given human qualities would be a sex worker. *MaksiMan* did, in other words, succeed in presenting this woman with personhood and due respect, a consideration that possibly indicates that the magazine was not conventionally laddish. This kind of sexualised feature is not the only type of profile to be found in *MaksiMan*. There are also more straight forward representations of women who occupy the public domain.

The May / June 2006 issue of *MaksiMan*, for instance, features an article in which four South African celebrity women were asked to share one life changing experience with the reader. Yet again the women featured are a sportswoman, model, singer and actress. No political or business leaders are featured, raising the question of whether the magazine prefers to sketch public women as belonging to more entertaining and exciting careers as opposed to being engaged in more 'serious' occupations. The recurring thread that emerges from almost every narrative is the sense that each woman was initially shy and conservative and through some or other life changing rite of passage had to learn how to handle herself in the secular world.

Anita Olckers, an international model, tells how her generation is still "*vasgevang in die tradisionele, konserwatiewe opvoeding van Afrikaner standaarde*" ("caught up in a traditional, conservative education of Afrikaner standards") (May / June 2006: 34). She explains how she countered this upbringing by going against the wishes of her parents and becoming a model. Olckers comments that to this day the hardest thing about her job is being so far away from home for so much of

the year. Karen Botha, a South African long jump champion, tells a similar story involving her going away from home to train in America. She comments that she barely spoke English at the time and was very protected: "*Ek was 'n tipiese Suid Afrikaanse tiener wat in 'n beskermende omgewing grootgeword het en moes toe vir die eerste keer in my lewe my eie potjie krap*" ("I was a typical South African teenager at the time who grew up in a protected environment and had to, for the first time in my life, survive on my own") (May / June 2006: 34). Both of these narratives as well as the other two communicate the cross over of each of these women from the protected and sheltered private domain to the harsh reality of the public sphere. This kind of narrative not only places emphasis on the average Afrikaner home as a place of refuge and shelter but sketches a portrait of good, healthy, Christian, Afrikaner femininity as something which initially emerges from a protected and sheltered or innocent environment. It is also apparent that none of the women featured refer to their spouses, indicating that the separation between the private and public domains remains intact.

From all of the articles discussed above and many not referred to it is clear that *MaksiMan* is not really concerned with the integration or cooperation between the public and private domains. On the pages of *MaksiMan* these domains remain largely separate and are rarely occupied at the same time by one woman. Most of the woman featured are thus relegated to the one or the other domain and emphatically convey the codes of that space. Having said that, however, it is refreshing to note that women are represented as having a place within the public domain, even if that position is frequently sexualised. It is also interesting that women who are 'famous' are expected to show wisdom about the intimate issue of relationships. This is probably a general cultural phenomenon since in the public media women like Oprah or Madonna are expected to enlighten the general public on issues such as sex or dating, rather than general women having the discussion with each other, or asking the women concerned. It does, however, indicate an area of intersection between the private and public domains, since women in the public domain are considered to be experts on

private matters. What strikes one is that none of the women really seem to be in the public realm in any relation to men – nor do they talk about the problems of having a male boss, handling gender issues in the workplace or the problems of balancing family and work pressures. This may lead one to assume that the magazine's editorial team are frightened of finding out that women grapple with real concerns regarding their place in the public sector, concerns which male peers might be able to aid women in overcoming. It may also indicate that the editors of *MaksiMan* don't want to acknowledge that men and women are more alike than they might think. The following section investigates the manner in which *MaksiMan* represents women in the private domain.

### 3.3.2.2 A semiotic analysis of the representation of women within the private domain in *MaksiMan*

Unlike in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, where men are predominantly addressed as single and reference to wives and children is infrequent, *MaksiMan* seems to assume that the majority of their readers are married or in a committed relationship. The private life of the women represented in the magazine typically relates to their marriage, the person they are dating or the home they are involved with. Mostly, women are mentioned in articles that address the needs of men regarding the women in their lives. These references to women are generally embedded in articles that either address a topic of concern for men like stag nights (January / February 2005: 20) or keeping their sex lives stimulating (September / October 2005: 40) or are found in the regular features focussed on men's relationships with their partners entitled, "Your wife" and "Sex matters".

Another way in which women are referred to within the private domain is in articles on or profiles of celebrity men. These men are interviewed because of their status or achievements within the public domain. In almost every profile

these men refer to the women in their lives and the support they are given by these women. In a feature on the celebrated actor and director, Mel Gibson, for instance, the reader is soon told: *"Hy is een van die min mense wat, ten spyte van sy roem en miljoene vroulike aanhangers, 'n Hollywood huwelik laat werk"* ("He is one of few people who in spite of his fame and millions of female fans has a Hollywood marriage that works") (January / February 2006: 24). The reader is further informed that, *"Hy en sy vrou, Robyn Moore, is nou al vir 25 jaar getroud en hulle het sewe kinders"* ("He and his wife, Robyn Moore, have been married for 25 years and have seven children") (January / February 2006: 24). This kind of collective reference to 'women and children' positions women within the private sphere where they are charged with the care of the household and children. Writing about the notions of motherhood and nation building amongst Afrikaner women, Jacques Swart (2007: 29) comments that within the Afrikaner, Christian context the role of women is defined by selfless motherhood. This ties in with Patricia Ennis' (2003: 48) interpretation of the feminine ideal from Proverbs 31 being intimately related to unselfishness. It also connects with Christina Landman's (1994: 2) belief that piety is an important part of the Afrikaner, Christian feminine ideal.

These references to the self-sacrificing, supportive role of women within the home are abundant in *MaksiMan*. In a similar interview with radio celebrity, Johan Rademan, in the November / December issue of *MaksiMan*, he tells the reader, *"My vrou verstaan dat my werkure lank en veeleisend is"* ("My wife understands that I have to work long hours and that my work is demanding") (November / December 2005: 50). He adds, *"Dis ongelooflik om so 'n lewensmaat te hê wat jou werk verstaan"* ("it is incredible to have a life partner like this who understands your work") (November / December 2005: 50). Whether in articles on former Springbok captains, Francois Pienaar (September / October 2005: 11), and Joost van der Westhuizen (May / June 2006: 54-55) or other celebrities like Johan Rademan (November / December 2005: 50) almost every article that features a particular man who has achieved success in the

public domain makes some reference to his supportive wife and family. This perhaps indicates a certain amount of humility in terms of the celebrity being featured but it also says something about the feminine ideal upheld by these men. Clearly they endorse or support a notion of private femininity that is focused on supporting the men in their lives. Even Joost van der Westhuizen who is married to a very successful and presumably busy celebrity wife, demonstrates a sense of dependency on her. When asked about his stress relief habits he answers that the best way for him to relieve stress is to spend some time talking to his wife about what is bothering him (May / June 2006: 54 55). Collectively these references paint a picture of the private feminine ideal as a woman at the heart of a happy and contented home. But this is not the only kind of reference to the woman who occupies the private domain.

As mentioned earlier, *MaksiMan* is filled with numerous articles that address topics that men might be struggling with on the private front. The January / February 2005 issue, for instance, features an article that attempts to deal with the issue of whether or not it is acceptable for a Christian man to have a stag party. The title of the article is "*Rampartye – goeie ding?*" ("Stag parties – a good thing?") and the subtitle reads, "*n troudag is tradisioneel die gelukkigste dag in die bruidspaar se lewe, maar die ramparty vooraf kan soms hierdie geluk bederf*" ("a wedding is traditionally the happiest day in a married couple's lives, but the stag night that precedes this can spoil this happiness") (January / February 2005: 20). The opening paragraph proffers,

*Opper jy die word 'ramparty' in 'n famieliegeselskap of enige geselskap wat pas 'n troue gehad het of een in sig het, en jy haal jouself baie vurige kwinkslae op die hals. Dis asof 'n hewige woestynstilte toesak onder die manne en jy word byna deur menige vroulike familielid verwurg.*

When you use the word 'stag night' in a family setting or amongst a group that has recently had a wedding or is planning a wedding you are definitely inviting scathing remarks all around. The men become as silent as the grave and you just about get strangled by the female family members (January / February 2005: 20).

The article takes a fairly sober look at what is typically thought of as a rite of passage amongst secular wedding parties. Three South African celebrities are interviewed in the article and all respond that the kind of stag night that involves copious amounts of drinking and strippers is not only in poor taste but deeply disrespectful to your future wife. Says celebrity doctor and television presenter, Michael Mol, *"die tradisionele mite dat jy jou laaste aandjie van vryheid moet geniet voor jy vir altyd vasgeketting word, is vernederend vir jou aanstaande bruid, en, om heeltemal eerlik te wees, as dit is wat jy van die huwelik dink, is jy dwaas om net daaraan te dink om te trou!"* ("the traditional myth that you need to enjoy your last night of freedom before you are forever shackled is demeaning to your fiancée, and, to be quite honest, if this is what you think of marriage, you are stupid to even consider getting married!") (January / February 2005: 21). All three celebrities interviewed do, however, indicate that they endorse the kind of stag party where good male friends get together and bond before the bridegroom commits himself to his future wife. The article, in other words, seems to want to propose a new tradition in terms of stag nights, a tradition that makes of stag nights a time of good, clean fun. In a separate block above the article the following is written:

*Maar die eeu het gedraai en die 'ou' ramparty is besig om sy skoene te ontgroeï en skurwe beeld af te skud. Vir dié wat bietjie meer oorspronklik is, het die eens uitgerafelde affêre verander in een wat in sy volle glorie kan oorvertel word aan geslagte kinders, kleinkinders en die bruid – of so sê hulle! Vergeet van al die 'laaste nag van vryheid' stories. Hedendaagse rampartye is vol van oorspronklikheid en styl. Vir 'n ware onvergeetlike 'jonkmansfees', beplan dit deeglik en vroegtydig en raak kreatief. En moenie die speelgoed vergeet nie! Ons praat van visstokke, gewere, jetski's, gps'e, duikpakke, quadbikes, gholfstokke, kand's en vir die erg gemaklikes, sateliet TV's wat op songrag werk in die boendes en 'n selfoontjie wat die bruid gerus kan stel. Wie het in elk geval 'n vreemde vrou nodig vir vermaak as jy vir die res van jou lewe, na jou bruilof, jou eie een lewenslaank gaan hê? Wie het 'n oordosis drank nodig om 'n partytjie op te kikker as jy reeds saam [met] jou beste mansvriende kuier?*

The tide has turned and the 'old' stag night has not only outgrown its shoes but thrown off its rough and ready image. For those that are a little more original, the once boisterous affair has changed into one that can be retold in all its glory to generations of children, grandchildren and the bride – or so they say! Forget about all the 'last night of freedom' stories. Contemporary stag nights are defined by originality and style. For a truly unforgettable 'young man's fest', plan it properly and well ahead of time and get creative. And don't forget the toys! We're talking about fishing rods, guns, jet skis, gps's, diving suits, quad bikes, golf clubs, canoes and for the really relaxed gents, satellite TVs that work on solar power in the middle of nowhere and a cell phone to put the bride's mind at ease. Who, in any case, need a strange woman to entertain you when you're going to have your very own woman for the rest of your life? Who needs to overdose on alcohol to get a party started when you are already with your best mates? (January / February 2005: 21)

The message is clear: male bonding is in, debauchery is out. The moral impetus behind Christianity is clearly felt in this rebuttal of the traditional stag party.

The second half of the article presents male readers with tips on how to throw a (Christian) stag party for a friend. The author suggests that the host take this opportunity to remind the bridegroom that "in sy vrou gaan hy binnekort 'n kosbare fontein ontdek" ("in his wife he will shortly discover a precious fountain") and that "die beste tyd van sy lewe nou voorlê saam met 'n fantasie vrou wat die Here vir hom uitgesoek het" ("the best time of his life is lying ahead of him, a time he will share with a fantasy wife that the Lord specifically chose for him"). The reader is told that he should remind his friend that marriage does not signal the end of his male friendships or family bonds. Each piece of advice is supported with scriptures which mostly come from the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 5:7-23, 23:30-35, 27:10 and 30:18-19). The reader is also cautioned that this is an opportunity to encourage the bridegroom, not give him cause for guilt. The article ends with the following words, "*Simpel macho tradities by so 'n geleentheid is so uit soos die Springbokke se Grand Slam drome vir 2004. Goeie vriende wat die Here dien, vier hul vriendskap en die komende huwelik stylvol. Hulle weet immers die Here is ook by hierdie manne ding die Eregas*" ("Stupid macho traditions at this kind of event are as out as the Springboks' Grand Slam dreams

for 2004. Good friends who serve the Lord celebrate their friendship and the coming marriage with style. They know that the Lord is also, after all, the honoured guest at such an event) (January / February 2005: 22).

Finally, the article seems to emphasise the tension that exists between male bonding rituals, celebrating a 'godly' marriage and the Christian dictum that one must live in the secular world but also be separate from it. This last belief is blatantly communicated throughout this article where Christians are asked to find a new, more moral interpretation for a secular ritual even if this more moral interpretation is blatantly consumerist.<sup>10</sup> The article furthermore points out that as Christian men it is important to support one another and hold each other accountable to a Christian ideal. With relation to the feminine ideal, the author of this article makes it clear that by celebrating marriage in a more moral way men are protecting their future wives from the humiliation and degradation that secular women must suffer. In this way the author draws a line between secular and Christian men and women and indicates that a life of mutual respect and servanthood is at the heart of a Christian marriage.

A regular feature in the magazine is an article entitled, "*Seks dinge*" ("Sex Matters"). This feature generally deals with particular sexual concerns the reader might have and attempts to answer these in a comprehensive way. Sometimes a specific issue is addressed by a celebrity or regular contributor but at other times a professional is called upon to answer particular questions. The September / October 2005 issue includes such a case. Dr. Elmarie Craig, a sexologist, is called upon to answer two questions. The first is, : "*Hoe breek ons roetine seks?*" ("How do we break routine sex?"); the second is "*Hoe kan mens genoeg aandag aan jou intieme lewe gee met 'n nuwe baba in die huis?*" ("How can you give enough attention to your intimate life with a new baby in the house?"). Both questions

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<sup>10</sup> It is noteworthy that the substitute pleasures suggested in the article are fairly high tech and generally involve spending a fair amount of money.

address what are presumably real concerns for male readers even though the authors of these questions are not revealed.



Figure 9: *Seks dinge*, *MaksiMan* September – October 2005:40

In answer to the first question Dr. Craig suggests that a good Protestant work ethic is needed to keep the romance alive: *"Dit is wel moontlik om 'n vervulde en opwindende sekslewe met net een persoon vir die res van jou lewe te hê as jy bereid is om moeite te doen. Dit vat commitment, tyd en energie om ding vars en interessant te hou"* ("It is possible to have a fulfilling and exciting sex life with just one person for the rest of your life if you are prepared to make an effort. It takes commitment, time and energy to keep things fresh and interesting") (September / October 2005: 40). This statement not only indicates that men must take some of the responsibility for keeping sex exciting but also positions this advice within the context of marriage. The good doctor clearly emphasises the fact that a happy sex life is something that is the consequence of a happy marriage and that it is possible to maintain a stimulating sex life for the duration of this relationship. The photograph that accompanies this article features a young couple gazing longingly into each other's eyes (figure 9). There is no indication that they are married since their hands are not visible but in conjunction with the article the

reader is given the impression that this is probably a married couple. This kind of overtone would, of course, be completely unheard of within the secular mainstream men's lifestyle press and is, therefore, an interesting anomaly within *MaksiMan*.

Dr Craig goes on to give six practical tips on how to work at keeping your sex life stimulating and exciting. These include predictable suggestions like trying new positions and including romantic gestures in your daily routine. In the manner of most advice columns (especially in mainstream lifestyle magazines), the advice seems to reduce a complex issue to a six step set of answers that make the solution to a mundane sex life seem easily accessible. On the other hand, the answer to the second question does honestly and pertinently address the tension between having a family and remaining sexy to your partner. Here Dr. Craig presents the reader with advice that is quite practical, if somewhat prone to defining new mothers in terms of their hormones:

*Na 'n swangerskap vat dit ook 'n hele rukkie voor 'n vrou se hormoonvlakke weer gestabiliseer het en sy weer gemaklik voel met haar liggaam. Dit is dus baie belangrik dat julle sensitief moet wees vir mekaar se behoeftes en dat julle dit moet respekteer. ... Beplan goed en bestee julle tyd sinvol want afwagting kan soms net so stimuleerend wees as wanneer iets spontaan gebeur. Gebruik soms 'n baba oppasser of beplan rondom die baba se roetine, want eers wanneer julle slaappatrone herstel word, sal julle libido vlakke weer normaliseer.*

After a pregnancy it takes quite some time before a woman's hormone levels return to normal and she feels comfortable with her body. It is thus very important that you must be sensitive to one another's needs and that you must respect this. ... Plan well and spend your time in a meaningful way because anticipation can be just as stimulating as when something happens spontaneously. Make use of a baby sitter or plan around the baby's routine, because it is only once your sleep patterns return to normal that your libido will follow suit (September / October 2005: 40).

Dr. Elmari also encourages men to take some of the responsibility in terms of child care, stressing the manner in which the mother might show her gratitude:

"As pa bietjie opstaan vir baba in die nag, sal ma beslis beter slaap en baie meer uitgerus en dankbaar opstaan in die oggend" ("If dad gets up for baby in the night, mom will definitely get a better night's sleep and wake up well rested and grateful in the morning") (September / October 2005: 40).

The tone employed by Dr. Craig is more that of concerned mother figure or agony aunt than sex scribe and is in stark contrast to the sex columnists employed by the mainstream men's lifestyle press.

In magazines like *GQ* and *FHM* the women (such as Kate Taylor for *GQ* and Dominika for *FHM*) who present men with sexual advice or answers to their sexually related questions are almost always sexualised themselves (figure 10). These columns are usually accompanied by saucy photographs of the authors and assume a playful, naughty tone rather than that of a maternal care giver. The mainstream men's lifestyle magazine's sex columnists furthermore tend to encourage men to treat women as objects rather than equals with emotional needs and complexities. The mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are, in other words, designed to facilitate escapism rather than offer actual advice and their sex columnists too contribute to this sense of an unreal world in which women are simply there for the taking.



Figure 10: Sex confidential,  
*FHM*, April 2008:44

In contrast to the sex columnists in the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, Dr. Craig in the September / October 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* presents the reader with realistic and sensible advice which is not overly sexualised or dressed up. Her suggestions are simple and practical and make women seem real. She addresses men as if they need to work at relationships and share the burden of family life rather than presenting them with an unreal picture of relationships. What she does have in common with the sex scribes from *GQ* and *FHM* is that she too presumes to speak for all women as if they can be easily summed up in her brief reflections. Nowhere does she indicate that different women respond to different kinds of actions differently but rather turns womankind into a homogenous entity in much the same manner that the sex columnists from the mainstream magazines do.

But *MaksiMan* does not only deal with these kind of obvious questions, it also attempts to address more philosophical or theological questions. The January / February 2006 issue, for instance, includes an article entitled "*Die God kompleks*" ("The God complex") which has a subtitle that reads, "*Soms vat manne die magsding 'n bietjie te vêr*" ("Sometimes men take the power thing a little too far") (January / February 2006: 18). The article opens with the author, Jan Douw, relating a recent experience. He visited a photographer friend who made objectifying remarks about the models he photographed: "*Hy vertel my van elke shoot, elke model in detail, en ek smile maar net as hy by sy ekstrakurikulêre aktiwiteite kom, Ek maak asof dit te wonderlik is, maar in my binneste frons ek verskriklik*" ("He tells me about every shoot, each model in detail and I just smile when he comes to his extracurricular activities. I make as if it is all wonderful but in my innermost being I'm frowning") (January / February 2006: 18). Later, while they are listening to music, his friend confides that the secret to having these women is that you have to be in control: "*Die trick, deel hy my mee, is om absoluut in beheer te bly. Jy moet elke model besit, haar total afhanklik maak van jou. Dan is sy putty in jou hande*" ("The trick, he confides, is to maintain absolute control. You must own every model and make her

completely dependant on you. Then she'll be putty in your hands") (January / February 2006: 18). The real crux of the article comes when the author then reflects upon the observations made by his friend: "*En dit laat my dink: Wat is dit met mans en totale beheer, totale mag? Wat is dit omtrent mag wat 'n doodnormale Jan Alleman in 'n tiran laat verander?*" ("And this gets me thinking: what is it with men and complete control, complete power? What is it about power that turns an ordinary Joe Soap into a tyrant?") (January / February 2006: 18).

From there the author proceeds to cast all men as either having "*OJ Simpson sindroom*" ("OJ Simpson syndrome") or being "*Hitlers in wording*" ("Hitlers in the making") (January / February 2006: 18). Generalisations such as the statement that "*dit lê in die onderbewussyn van elke manlike kreatuur op die aarde om in volle beheer te wees*" ("it lies in the sub consciousness of every male creature on earth to be in full control") (January / February 2006: 20) abound and undermine the critical turn of the article. The rather superficial and sensational article ends with a reflection on what happens to men who are denied power:

*Wanneer mans egter verhoed word om hul dominante rol te speel, hetsy dit by die huis, die werk of in sosiale kringe is, is hulle geneig om op ander, soms minder aangename maniere hierdie mag te probeer herwin. Die ergste voorbeeld hiervan is verkragting, wat deurgans beskou word as 'n daad van mag eerder as 'n seksuele daad.*

When men are prevented from fulfilling their dominant role, whether at home, at work or in social settings, they are inclined to try and reclaim this power in other, less than pleasant ways. The worst example of this is rape, which is consistently perceived as an act of domination rather than a sexual act (January / February 2006: 18).

This statement seems to undermine the author's concern about the hunger for power that some men have and endorse the belief that men should be given power within the public and private domain. With these two sentences Douw seems to underscore the notion that men who have been denied power are dangerous and therefore men should be given power. This strange logic is

further confirmed by his belief that the existence of pornography can be blamed on feminism since it is feminists who took power from men: *"Op 'n minder gevaarlike skaal het die pornografie industrie sy bestaan aan liberale feministiese bewegings te danke. Weerens gaan dit nie bloot oor seks nie, maar eerder oor 'n gevoel van beheer wat herstel word by die man"* ("On a less dangerous scale, the pornography industry exists today because of the liberal feminist movement. Again, it is not simply about sex, but rather about a sense of power being restored in the man") (January / February 2006: 18). This statement is not backed up in any way or elaborated upon and as such seems to link the magazine to a fear of modern women or at the very least indicates a misunderstanding of feminism.

What the statements regarding rape and pornography do, however, seem to indicate is that the author feels that men are indeed entitled to some sort of authority over women particularly in the private domain where sex resides. Douw seems to feel that contemporary men have been disenfranchised and are therefore exhibiting signs of pathological control or domination over women. Within the context of an Afrikaans, Christian men's lifestyle magazine these observations are coloured in a particular way and strongly smack of a South African, white crisis in masculinity. In terms of the feminine ideal espoused by the magazine, this concern with a loss of power (particularly in the private sphere) may lead to the appropriation by the magazine of a more submissive type of feminine ideal, one that is less likely to threaten the power of the man in her life.

There are many other articles that deal with this pathological side of men's relationship with their partner. The September / October 2005 issue, for instance, features an article that seemingly deals with adultery. The article is entitled *"Die affair"* ("The affair") and more or less tells the story of a man who had an affair with his secretary. It is a seductive sketch of how a man can "fall into" an affair. It is, however, somewhat predictably followed by a moralistic chastisement. The

article, in other words, substitutes scriptural rebuke for practical advice on how to avoid getting into an affair:

*Sonde kom bied hom ongevraag vir jou aan; dis waar. Maar as dit gebeur, moet jy die hasepad kies, en sommer dadelik ook. Dit was immers God se raad aan Kain in Genesis 4:7, en in Jakobus 4:7 staan: "Staan die duiwel teë en hy sal van julle af wegvlug." Want jou kop is 'n wonderlike ding wat enige verkeerde ding sò kan draai dat dit vir jou reg lyk. Hoe anders kon koning Dawid dan ooit met sy sonde met Batseba en sy moord op Uria saamgeleef het? Gaan lees gerus weer die verhaal in 2 Samuel 11.*

Sin presents itself to you without you having asked for it; it's true. But when it happens you should flee the situation as fast as you can. That was, after all, God's advice to Cain in Genesis 4:7 and in John 4:7 it says: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". Because your mind is a wonderful thing and can justify almost anything. How else could King David have lived with his sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uria? Go and read the tale again in 2 Samuel 11 (September / October 2005: 42).

This is the last paragraph of the article. It is an unconvincing slap over the wrist after a very tempting narrative of betrayal and seduction. What is more is that one expects that this kind of article should include practical advice on being accountable to a friend or speaking openly to your wife but instead of realistic advice the reader is left with vague and unconvincing scriptural references. This kind of heavy handedness and lack of finesse is quite typical of the articles in *MaksiMan* and is perhaps the result of the magazine's struggle with its purpose. On the one hand it presumes to want to give biblical guidance but on the other it attempts to take on the format of a fun and light hearted men's lifestyle magazine.

This ambiguity is also apparent in terms of the representation of women in the private sphere. On the one hand the magazine seems to want to present a fairly conservative view of women as supportive partners and submissive, non-threatening wives (recalling Connell's belief in 'power' as the cornerstone of male/female relationships). On the other hand the magazine seems to want to present itself as progressive and contemporary and features many photographs

of young, trendy looking women who seem to represent a more progressive view of gender relations. This tension is aptly reflected in one of the "Jou vrou" ("Your wife") features that regularly appears in each issue. The January / February 2005 "Jou vrou" ("Your wife") feature, poses the question of whether married men can be friends with women other than their wives. The question alone seems archaic but the reader may be surprised to find a very conservative response to the question. The question is posed to a celebrity actor and his wife and both more or less agree that men should find friendship and accountability from their male friends and not turn to women for friendship. Leigh Rautenbach, the wife of television actor and film star, Francois Rautenbach, comments:

*As die [getroude] man egter 'n vriendin het sal hy nie konflik sien as 'n geleentheid om aan sy huwelik te werk nie, want dit sal soveel makliker wees om by sy vriendin te gaan troos soek wanneer vroulief hom teen die mure uitdryf! Hy sal dalk selfs begin wonder waarom sy vrou nie meer soos sy vriendin kan wees nie – iemand wat nie sy manlike wysheid en motiewe bevraagteken nie, en wat nooit kla oor sy kouse wat oral rondlê nie! Dit plaas die man in 'n gevaarlike situasie, want dit sal 'n bedreiging inhou vir sy huwelik.*

If the [married] man has a female friend he will not think of conflict with his wife as an opportunity to work on his relationship because it will simply be so much easier to seek comfort from his female friend when his wife is driving him up the wall! He might even start to wonder why his wife can't be more like his female friend – someone who doesn't question his male wisdom and motives, and who never complains about his socks lying all over the place! This places the man in a dangerous position and seriously threatens his marriage (January / February 2005: 40).

From this excerpt it is clear that Mrs Rautenbach not only holds a very limited definition of male/female friendship but also of men and women in general. She completely ignores the fact that men might have professional friendships with women they work with that do not threaten their marriage nor does she take into consideration the fact that a man might be mature enough to have a friendship with a woman without divulging all his marital problems to her. She seems determined to define men in the most irresponsible and unrestrained terms possible and in this way demeans both genders. Her statements also hint at the

kind of Afrikaner or religious piety mentioned by Christina Landman (1994: 2) who identifies piety as an important part of the Afrikaner, Christian feminine ideal. Leigh Rautenbach seems to appropriate an almost inflated or exaggerated piety as part of her strategy towards protecting her marriage and ensuring a healthy relationship with her husband. Here one encounters an important part of the private feminine ideal espoused by *MaksiMan*. It is as if the editorial team of *MaksiMan* wants to suggest that within the private domain it is the responsibility of woman to protect their marriages from outside threats such as their husbands having relationships with other women. This is a theme found in many instances in the magazine and ties in with Patricia Ennis' (2003: 48) idea that, in line with the model set out in Proverbs 31, women are to take on the role of manager and keeper of the private domain. Leigh Rautenbach's almost defensive piety (and the over zealous manner in which she attempts to defend the sanctity of marriage) is furthermore in line with the fact that above all else the feminine ideal from Proverbs 31 is described as being God fearing. The article ends with tips on how to be each other's friends, again supporting the fact that mature men should not have friends with women other than their wives.

Other "Jou vrou" ("Your wife") features include such obvious discussions as how to keep your marriage alive (September / October 2005: 39) and what women really want in a man. The articles are generally quite clichéd and don't offer any particularly fresh or revolutionary insights. For the most part, then, the articles in *MaksiMan* that make reference to women who occupy the private domain or refer to the relationship between men and women within the private domain are honest attempts to address the difficulties faced by men who are married or planning to get married (such as how to keep the romance alive or avoid having an affair). Though honest and earnest, the articles do not move beyond the level of conservative and obvious answers and one feels that the reader might be left unsatisfied. Scriptural references, furthermore, are used as awkward and preachy afterthoughts and could be integrated into the arguments of each author in a far more thoughtful or theologically challenging manner. The articles and

answers offered by the magazine are, in other words, not that much more helpful than those provided by the articles on sex and relationships in the mainstream lifestyle press though obviously a great deal more conservative.

The magazine also seems to want to explain women to their male readers but like the mainstream men's lifestyle press ends up reducing women to two dimensional robotic types in the process. According to *MaksiMan* most women will respond to the clichéd actions suggested by the magazine (the kind of wine and roses suggestions found in all short hand manuals on romance) with characteristic and predictable precision. Given the diverse and dynamic nature of relationships this simply cannot be the case and, perhaps, it would be more honest and helpful to just say so. The magazine does, however, attempt to provide men with the space to reflect upon the role of men and women within contemporary marriages and this must surely be a good thing.

The following section comprises a quantitative analysis of the photographs of women that appear in *MaksiMan* as yet another means of examining the ways in which the magazine represents women as well as the relationships between men and women. Both the public and private domains are again examined.

### 3.3.2.3 A quantitative analysis of the photographic images of women in one sample issue of *MaksiMan*

In his seminal text, *Gender Advertisements*, social theorist Erving Goffman (1976:10) explains that all photographs may be described as either private or public. Private photographs "are those designed for display within the intimate social circle of the persons featured in them – pictures taken ... in order to commemorate occasions, relationships, achievements, and life turning points, whether of a familial or organizational kind" (Goffman 1976: 10). Public

photographs are “those designed to catch a wider audience – an anonymous aggregate of individuals unconnected to one another by social relationships and social interaction, although falling within the same market ... or outreaches of appeal” (Goffman 1976: 10). The photographs that are found within *MaksiMan* are for the most part a kind of hybrid of the private and public strain since they are mostly public photographs that attempt to mimic private scenes.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the photographs in *MaksiMan* are simply portraits of celebrities and these fall into their own category, but the rest are predominantly public photographs that represent a kind of reproduced or artificial construction of a private moment. Goffman (1976: 13-14) refers to the way in which actors and models can be used to create a real feeling scenario, “allowing the viewer to make relatively reliable inferences as to what had led up to the activity represented and what was likely to have followed. Goffman (1976: 11) explains that to consider photographs – whether private or public – it is necessary to consider the question of perception and reality. Most of the photographs that accompany articles and features on particular issues in *MaksiMan*, for instance, are the kind of pictures that can be said to be arranged, rigged or set up, implying that models and scenic props, real enough in their own right, were arranged to evoke wrong inferences as to ‘who’ had been photographed and in what role they were captured. A photograph of a father and child, for example, will rarely be a photograph of an actual father and child but rather two models enacting a role and the viewer of the photograph or reader of the magazine may be willing to suspend disbelief within the confines of the magazine. The result, Goffman (1976: 14) maintains, “is a *picture* of a covertly contrived scene; the picture is an actual one, but it is not *actually* of the scene it portrays” (emphasis in original). Media theorist John Berger adds that if “the public photograph contributes to a memory, it is to the memory of an unknowable and total stranger. The violence is expressed in that strangeness” (Berger 1980: 52).

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<sup>11</sup> Since the advertisements found in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* are found in other magazines too and not exclusively in these magazines they are not semiotically discussed here but are included in the quantitative analysis.

The above is true of photographs in almost all mainstream and marginal magazines and not particular to *MaksiMan* or *BLINK*. This raises the question of why a magazine like *MaksiMan* does not attempt to include more 'real' looking photographs. Goffman (1976: 21) yet again stresses that the "females depicted in commercially posed scenes have straighter teeth and are slimmer, younger, taller, blonder, and 'better' looking than those found in most real scenes." This is true of the photographs of men and women in *MaksiMan* – they are definitely very attractive and thus present the viewer with an ideal physicality. "What is common to commercial scenes and rare in life may yet be commonly part of the ideals and fantasies of many actual people" (Goffman 1976: 22).

But it is not only the beauty of the models which is noteworthy but also the quantities of photographs of men and women and the facial expressions represented in the photographs. Since the visual presence of women is an important part of the branding of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines it seems appropriate to investigate the manner in which women are present visually in *MaksiMan*. What follows is a brief analysis of the visual representation of men and women in one random issue of *MaksiMan*.

There are twenty six photographs of women in the October – December 2006 issue of *MaksiMan* and one illustration of a woman. The same issue of the magazine contains fifty three photographs of men. Four of the photographs of women are from advertisements while five of the photographs of men are from advertisements. All the rest of the photographs accompany articles, features and editorial inserts. Ten of the photographs include men and women together, mostly in some kind of intimate embrace (figure 11) but some simply show them dining together or walking together. One of the twenty six photographs of women includes a child (figure 12) but all of the others are without children. This is in comparison with four (or eight percent) of the photographs of men (figure 13 & 14). The magazine, in other words, seems to place a fair amount of importance

on the relationship between men and their children, a visual emphasis wholly lacking from the mainstream men's lifestyle press (see 4.2.1).



Figure 11: A couple in an intimate embrace, *MaksiMan* October – December 2006: 40



Figure 12: A woman and child (bottom, left), *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006: 26



Figure 13: A father and son, *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006: 29



Figure 14: A father and son, *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006: 69

The actual semiotics of facial expression is also, perhaps, relevant. In the photographs of women, thirteen (or forty eight percent) of the women are looking away from the camera. The fact that thirty four (or sixty four percent) of the photographs of men show them looking away may indicate that the magazine seems to want to underscore a more humble, unaffected look in their models,

both male and female. What is noteworthy is that in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines most of the photographs of women and, in particular the photo shoots with a renowned model, emphasise the model's consensual stare, making her seem like a willing participant in her own objectification. The October – December 2006 issue of *MaksiMan* does, in fact, include a photo shoot with acclaimed model and *GQ* favourite Kerry McGregor. There are two full page photographs of the model that accompany an article on twenty things to be proud of as a South African. Rather than the lusty pouts and consensual gaze with which she is usually photographed in the mainstream men's lifestyle press, here she is photographed looking away from the camera in both instances (figure 15 & 16). In the first photograph she is on a motorcycle and in the second is wearing a rather racy red dress but neither could be described as particularly fetishistic or overly sexualised. In both McGregor seems rather modest and her facial expression is serious and reflexive, perhaps indicating a more serious side of the model. Either way, it is clear that *MaksiMan* rarely employs photographs of women or men that are openly objectifying or sexualised. They do frequently employ photographs of couples that are quite sexy (usually to accompany articles on affairs of the bedroom) but again these are not generally sexualised in a tawdry way. It is also noteworthy that it is not only the photographs of women that show them turned away from the camera but also the majority of the photographs of men, again possibly emphasising the ideals of humility and modesty as well as an unaffected air of spontaneity rather than confident self awareness.

The most overt discrepancy between the photographs of men and women is to be found in the number of photographs in which men or women are smiling. Twenty four of the twenty six images of women show them laughing or smiling, that is eighty nine percent of the photographs of women (figure 17). In contrast to this only thirty (or fifty seven percent) of the photographs of men show them smiling or laughing. Clearly it is evident that in both cases the magazine would like to promote a sense of happiness or contentment through the photographs

they employ. It is noteworthy, however, that almost all of the photographs of women show them laughing or smiling as if the feminine ideal espoused by the magazine is that of a happy, contented, light hearted (yet pious?) woman. The three photographs in which the woman featured is not smiling is the photo shoot with McGregor, mentioned above, where she is photographed in a more serious mood. One may also draw the conclusion that a more serious image is created for men while a more light hearted, happy image is constructed for women. This representation of the women in the magazine as cheerful does not necessarily undermine or contradict the notion of the feminine ideal as pious. Rather, one might say that the feminine ideal espoused by *MaksiMan* is both ideologically pious or supportive of the masculine as well as being positive or cheerful in a visual sense.



Figure 15: Kerry McGregor looking away from the camera, *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006: 17



Figure 16: Kerry McGregor looking away from the camera, *MaksiMan*, October – December 2006: 18

Only one issue of *MaksiMan* was analysed in this section but the findings are more or less consistent with what has been found in the other issues under discussion in this study. In conclusion, the photographs are fairly balanced and although the women appear more light hearted or visually cheerful and the men

more serious, there are few other differences worth mentioning. The following section investigates the representation of women in *BLINK*.



Figure 17: Women smiling,  
*MaksiMan*, October –  
December 2006: 62

### 3.4 The representation of women in *BLINK*

The question of what a potential black feminine ideal might be defined as historically is, in part, the focus of this section. Added to that is the question of whether a South African black feminine ideal may be nuanced in a particular way. The following section briefly addresses these two questions as a theoretical introduction to the semiotic analysis of the representation of women in *BLINK* which follows.

#### 3.4.1 A black feminine ideal

When investigating the history of a black feminine ideal it is apparent how much of the literature that addresses this type is centred on the physical. Rather than delineate characteristics such as piety, kindness or subservience (as in the Afrikaans, Christian feminine ideal) the emphasis seems to be on the physical attributes of the ideal black woman. The first part of this section thus traces the legacy behind this emphasis.

In order to answer the question of what a black, western feminine ideal might look like, it is first necessary to trace the historical legacy of the trope of ideas and icons related to black femininity in the recent past. The rise in the status of science and in particular medical science in the nineteenth century had dire consequences for the construction of black feminine identity. Sander Gilman is a researcher in the medical school of Cornell University who has done extensive research on the ways in which black women were stigmatised by nineteenth century medical science. Gilman (1985: 204-241) contends that much of the attention of medical researchers in the nineteenth century was focused on black women. In particular, medical scientists seemed to have a macabre interest in the Hottentot female. According to Gilman (1985: 206) the Hottentot became representative of the black woman in general. In 1810 the Hottentot woman Saartjie Baartman, also called Sarah Bartmann and known as the Hottentot Venus, was exhibited in London to the apparent scandal of the British public. According to Gilman (1985: 213) the state's or the public's objection was as much to her lewdness as to her status as an indentured black. Of particular interest to the public and medical research alike were her enlarged buttocks or steatopygia which soon became the sign of not only her sexual deviance but that of all black women.



Figure 18: Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863

Gilman (1985: 204) explains that the success of this stigma associated with nineteenth century black women is not just thanks to medical science but also the arts which seemed almost instantly to echo the stereotypes of scientific racism in their iconographic typologies. Most infamous is the painting by Edouard Manet of the prostitute, *Olympia* (figure 18, 1863). Behind the bed of the naked Olympia is a clothed black maid apparently derived from a model named Laura (Gilman 1985: 206). The black female attendant, bringing the flowers of a presumed suitor to Olympia, has been seen as a reflex of both the classic black servant figure present in the visual arts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as a representation of Baudelaire's *Venus noire* (Gilman 1985: 206). The point, however, is that the iconographic coupling of these two women is indicative of the idea that both prostitutes and black women belong to the caste of deviant sexuality. Gilman (1985: 212) comments that the "relationship between the sexuality of the black woman and that of the sexualised white woman enters a new dimension when contemporary scientific discourse concerning the nature of black female sexuality is examined." According to Gilman, (1985: 213) medical researchers like Georges Cuvier deemed the black female to be different in every way. Cuvier described her physiognomy, her skin colour, the form of her genitalia all as inherently different: "In the nineteenth century, the black female was widely

perceived as possessing not only 'primitive' sexual appetite but also the external signs of this temperament – 'primitive' genitalia" (Gilman 1985: 213).<sup>12</sup>

Gilman's (1985: 204-241) research suggests that medical examiners of the time created a kind of continuum relating physiology to notions of attractiveness. The naming of biological markers was used to validate European/white supremacy and African/black inferiority as central to scientific racism. On the one end of the continuum was white, western woman with fine features and a fair complexion, representing beauty in its highest (Aryan) form while the Hottentot Venus, with a flat nose, coarse hair and enlarged hips was at the lowest end:

[I]n this view of mankind, the black occupied the antithetical position to the white on the scale of humanity. This polygenetic view was applied to all aspects of mankind, including sexuality and beauty. And the antithesis of European sexual mores and beauty is embodied in the black, and the essential black, the lowest rung on the great chain of being, is the Hottentot (Gilman 1985: 212).<sup>13</sup>

Integral to this taxonomical racism was the notion of skin colour and hair texture as indicative of beauty. The fairer the skin and the straighter the hair, the more beautiful the woman. The darker the skin and coarser the hair,<sup>14</sup> the uglier. Similarly, black skin and features became associated with mannishness while the contrary was true of white or fair skin which was associated with femininity.

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<sup>12</sup> Researchers like Ian Glenn (2008) have argued that the nineteenth century also saw black women glorified and idealized especially in the travel literature of the time. This may be true but the dominant portrayal of black women in scientific literature was disparaging (Gilman 1985).

<sup>13</sup> This taxonomical racism is also evident in François Le Vaillant's famed drawing of the enlarged labia of a Hottentot woman.

<sup>14</sup> Physical anthropology with its emphasis on racial origins and typologies has been key in perpetuating the science of race. Zimitri Erasmus (2000: 380-381) points out that South Africa was among the 'human laboratories' for physical anthropologists. Erasmus quotes an anthropologist called Gates who apparently concluded that along a continuum "the hair form of the Bush[men] is peppercorn ... that of the Hottentots is generally tufted or matted [while that of] the Bantu types is woolly". This kind of classification is indicative of the scientific racism of the past.

In the United States the relationship between skin tone and privilege or positive association appears to have emerged during slavery. According to Verna Keith and Cedric Herring (1991: 761), the historical evidence indicates that whites placed greater economic value on slaves of mixed parentage and used skin tone or degree of visible white ancestry as a basis for the differential treatment of bondsmen. In his contested and controversial study of the black bourgeoisie, E. Franklin Frazier (1957) maintained that mulattoes, blacks with white progenitors, led a more privileged existence when compared with their 'pure black' counterparts. According to Frazier (1957) and Keith and Herring (1991: 760), during slavery, these fair-skinned blacks were at times emancipated by their white fathers. After slavery, their kinship ties to whites gave them an advantage over other blacks in obtaining education, higher status occupations, and property (Keith and Herring 1991: 760). So one's position in the community ultimately reflected the amounts of 'white blood' in his or her ancestry, and patterns of stratification in the black community included considerations of skin tone (Keith and Herring 1991: 760).

According to Keith and Herring (1991: 760), research conducted before and during the civil rights movement suggested a continuing relationship between variations in skin tone and the life chances and outlooks of black Americans. They (1991: 760) explain that fair-skinned blacks had higher levels of attainment than darker blacks on virtually every dimension of stratification. During the 1960s, however, American blacks experienced unprecedented social and economic progress and reform. Keith and Herring (1991: 760) comment that, "racial differences in education, income, and occupational standing narrowed significantly. A surge of black nationalism proclaimed that 'black is beautiful', and skin tone [and the quality of hair] declined in importance as a basis of prestige within the black community".

Nakedi Ribane (2006: 26) notes that in South Africa in the sixties, skin colour was still very much a determinant of status and prestige. She remembers that the

1960s saw the advent of skin-lightening creams in South Africa. Most of these creams, still widely available today, contain hydroquinone, a bleaching agent that can cause irreversible skin damage and even lead to skin cancer; some creams contained mercury which can be lethal (Mornpei 2002: 41). Ribane (2006: 26) maintains that the damage done by these creams cannot be emphasised enough, for they left untold emotional and physical scars in the black community:

In the South Africa of that time, social hierarchies were clearly structured along the lines of skin colour. Opportunities of all kinds were dished out in terms of "whiteness" rather than merit. Based on the notion that the lighter you were, the better, even light-skinned blacks went for the lighteners in a big way. The lighter and more "coloured" looking girls were always the preferred choice in beauty contests, performing arts and modelling (Ribane 2006: 26).

Ribane's (2006: 26) reflections draw attention to the fact that defining a black feminine ideal, even in the sixties, was a challenging endeavour since the existing ideal seemed to want to defy blackness all together. Zimitri Erasmus (2000: 381) believes that in South Africa this heritage of racial prejudice "has meant that whiteness and 'degrees of whiteness' have been regarded as the yardstick of beauty, morality, and social status." As mentioned earlier, hair texture also plays an important role in this heritage. Erasmus (2000: 383) notes that hair straightening became a popular practice amongst middle class black women in South Africa in the early 1960s. Erasmus (2000: 381) believes that a complex body politics foregrounds hair as a signifier because it can be changed by cultural practices such as straightening: "[i]ndeed, across various black communities in South Africa, hair straightening, alongside skin-lightening, has long been part of black cultural politics and practice" (Erasmus 2000: 381).

Journalist and social commentator Puseletso Mornpei (2002: 41) believes the situation in South Africa today is not that different from what it was in the 1960s. She feels that the majority of upwardly mobile black women in South Africa experience pressure to conform to a western ideal of beauty; to alter their

appearance to make them look less 'ethnic': "In order to have easier access to economic resources, some black women have to alter their looks so that they don't alienate colleagues or bosses by looking too 'ethnic', or clash with the corporate image, which excludes dreadlocks or an Afro hairstyle" (Mompei 2002: 41). Mompei (2002: 41) believes that,

The concept of beauty has assaulted us all, black and white. But for some black women, 'ideal' beauty (blonde, blue eyed, tall, thin) has been something so remote and skewed, very few could dream of coming close to the ideal without undergoing some kind of physical ordeal. Skin lightening and hair relaxing are two of these. (Mompei 2002: 41).

Mompei (2002: 41) traces this legacy of body fascism back to colonialism. She believes that colonialism "enforced certain ideas, one of which was that, because white women were the most protected, valued and respected group of women in colonial societies, white female beauty is the 'ideal'. Since black women couldn't be white, the best they could do was to 'look' white (Mompei 2002: 41). The fact is that while the majority of women world wide are not white, it is still a white feminine ideal that is the dominant image upheld by the western media. In an article dating back to the late nineteen nineties entitled, 'Whitewashing black beauty', feminist writer Gaye Davis (1997: 73) bemoans the lack of racial diversity in the contemporary South African media: "The diversity of women's looks is generally not represented. Magazines, TV, film or whatever, there's no one who looks like you. We had to find out about an Afrocentric look from watching music videos on TV. The look is African, but we had to learn about it from American rap stars."

Davis' (1997: 73) comments underscore the difficulty of exploring black feminine identity within a South African context still under the influence of apartheid censorship and racial exclusivity. "White perceptions of blackness are still deeply entrenched after decades of legalised racism," says Gail Smith of the Gender Studies unit at the University of South Africa (Davis 1997: 74). She believes that "there are rigid norms and stereotypes to conform to if you want to make it in the

South African imagination as a black woman" (Davis 1997: 74). The visual range of black female celebrities in the public eye is also fairly limited. The most popular black women's magazine available on the South African market is *True Love*, one of the few magazines that features local black actresses and television personalities (rather than black models).<sup>15</sup> But black women are seldom seen on the covers of the mainstream South African women's magazines. A quick perusal of the magazine stands in local news agents communicates a great deal about the segregation in the magazine industry. On one shelf are the local black magazines, which are increasingly having to make room for newcomers like American owned *Ebony*.<sup>16</sup> On another are the top selling mainstream women's lifestyle magazines, which also increasingly face the challenge of foreign owned newcomers like *Elle* and *Marie Claire* entering the market. These magazines target a market that although predominantly white has black readers that comprise up to thirty percent of their demographic ([www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/39/22946.html](http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/39/22946.html)). Virtually all of the women on their covers, however, are white. In a country where the only possible growth lies on the other side of the colour divide, one would expect to see more black women on the covers of so called white magazines.

Roz Wrottesley, a former editor of *Fair Lady* explained in the late nineties that sales frequently dropped when black women were placed on the cover of *Fair Lady*, particularly in the rural areas where the magazine was sold (Davis 1997: 74). The logic was that because black readers tended not to buy the magazine

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<sup>15</sup> Then editor, Khanyi Dhlomo Mkhize says *True Love* magazine sees a marked drop in sales when black *models* (as opposed to black celebrities) are used (Davis 1997: 74). There seems to be a particular kind of prejudice behind this preference. Comments Dhlomo Mkhize, "There are a number of myths about models that the masses believe – that they're promiscuous and have low morals. In the black community, being a model isn't necessarily seen as being successful." (Davis 1997: 74). For the readers of black South African women's lifestyle magazines it would then appear as though being a model is not necessarily an admirable feminine ideal. And yet, according to Davis (1997: 74) being beautiful, thin and well dressed is definitely part of the feminine ideal.

<sup>16</sup> *O* magazine is targeted at both black and white readers – forty percent of the readers are black – and features a photograph of Oprah Winfrey on the cover of every issue. This is one of the few magazines targeted at both black and white readers that consistently makes use of a black woman on the cover.

regularly, the target market remained those white readers who did (Davis 1997: 74). Fear of alienating existing markets at a time when circulation is critical prevents many editors from taking the risks ([www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/39/22946.html](http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/39/22946.html)). Today the situation has changed very little. In April of 2008 the Nigerian-born supermodel Oluchi Onweagba claimed that the South African editions of *Glamour* and *GQ* magazines – which belong to the Condé Nast Independent Magazines stable – refused to have her on their covers because she is black. In an article in *The Times*, covering this debacle, a *GQ* insider revealed that the magazine had never had a black model on its cover while the current editor of *Glamour* Phina Fenster remarked, “It is not about colour, but who my readers relate to at the time” (Mphuthing and Pather 2008:sp). According to the AMPS figures of 2008 both magazines have a black readership of about thirty percent. If the editors of these magazines wish to increase the number of black readers they may very well have to make use of black models on their covers.

According to an article featured in *Business Daily Africa*, the fashion industry internationally is not interested in black models unless they are doing a “jungle theme, in a grass skirt holding a spear” (Palmi 2008: sp). The author of this article, Renato Palmi, maintains that fashion insiders believe that there are now fewer black models seen on ramps and in fashion magazines than there were in the 1990s. According to Palmi (2008: sp), this new debate has overshadowed the “Size Zero” furore, which questioned the promotion and relevance of extremely thin models. Of the 101 shows and presentations held during the 2007 New York runway season, more than a third did not feature any black models (Palmi 2008: sp). During the 2007 Paris Fashion Week, only one black model appeared, with only two on the programme at the Milan Fashion Week (Palmi 2008:sp). In addition to the obvious absence of black models from the runway circuit, Palmi raises the concern with the preference for western-looking black models at fashion shows. A British editor for a women’s supplement, Adenike Adenitire comments that “The black models you see here in the United Kingdom have

features that are less ethnic, and more 'anglicised'" (Palmi 2008: sp). Lisa Jane Owen, Director of a South African model agency, Models International, concurs that her clients frequently look for "western looking black models" (Palmi 2008: sp). Clearly, it is difficult to find African looking black models in the fashion industry meaning that black women only really see other black women within so called exclusively black spaces – a fact which brings to the fore the old binaries of centre and periphery, mainstream and margin.

Historically, the physical components of the black feminine ideal may, thus, be described as the various features that mask the 'blackness' of a particular woman and make her seem more 'white'. These features would include being slim, tall, fair skinned and having sleek or straight hair. This ideal has recently been undermined by the inclusion of models like Alec Wek into the lexicon of black beauty but the most powerful norm still seems to be that of the traditional notion of a more westernised black beauty. The question that is addressed in the following section (3.4.2) is what kind of black feminine ideal *BLINK* represents as the physical ideal for their male readers. But it is not only the physical attributes of the black feminine ideal that are important to this study. Even though the delineation of physical beauty seems to be a very important part of the black feminine ideal, it is supported by emotional and character driven attributes as well.

Khumisho Moguerane is a sociologist at the University of Pretoria. She maintains that the contemporary black feminine ideal is defined by three components within the South African context. The first of these is a cultural essence without which, she says, one's African-ness and female-ness are in question (Moguerane 2008). Moguerane (2008) describes this first characteristic as an ethereal, spiritual quality that she says is expected of black South African women. She maintains that local, upwardly mobile black women are expected to project a kind of connectedness to their African roots that deems them spiritually centred and mature in the eyes of other women and men (Moguerane 2008). According to

Moguerane (2008), this connectedness with a cultural essence is difficult to pin down to one particular trait or attribute but is manifested in seemingly superficial characteristics like having an innate sense of rhythm, knowing how to cook traditional African food, having a love for jazz or soul music and wearing so called ethnic or African jewellery or clothing. It is also manifested in the contemporary trend to wear your hair in its 'natural' state. Moguerane (2008) muses that in her experience black American women are typically excited to meet a black woman from Africa because they feel that through them they can reconnect with a kind of dormant ethnicity within themselves. Moguerane (2008) comments that, whether in South African or American women, this expectation of cultural centeredness does not replace the usual western expectation placed on women (such as not being too aggressive or ambitious) but rather wraps these western ideals in the language of cultural integrity or ethnic centredness.

The second attribute which Moguerane (2008) identifies as an important part of the feminine ideal of black women in South Africa is that of strength. Moguerane (2008) believes that slave narratives and literature by black feminists (such as Alice Walker) stereotype black female protagonists as women of untold strength who have the capacity to shoulder the kind of difficulties that other women simply couldn't bear. Tamara Beauboeuf Lafontant (2003: 111) believes this stereotype or association is relevant to the American context too. She explains that,

While white women [in the American context] have fought against assumptions of their passivity and weakness, Black women have had to contend with the myth of the strong Black woman, a historically complex distillation of images derived from two sources: the rationalizations of a white slave holding society and Black culture's attempt to define womanhood for itself (Beauboeuf Lafontant 2003: 111).

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (2001) further contends that the social and material challenges faced by many black women has been closely tied to perceptions of their emotional and spiritual strength. Whilst this belief in the strength of black women may seem like a positive attribute and therefore not 'harmful', Moguerane

(2008) believes that this notion places unnecessary pressure on black women in South Africa and is an unhelpful stereotype in terms of defining themselves individually. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2003: 114) comments that,

While in some ways an affirmation of women's capabilities, particularly within a society that associates femininity with passivity and weakness, the strength of Black women is often an ironic inversion of their deviance and a reflection of Black culture and white society's failure to take seriously Black women's oppression.

Moguerane (2008) refers to the popularised stereotype of black women as African goddesses or earth mothers who often are expected to raise more than one generation of children single handed and in doing so project the kind of African essence or cultural responsibility expected from black South African women. bell hooks (1981: 66) comments that this stereotype promotes the notion of the black woman as a "longsuffering, religious, maternal figure," loved for "her self-sacrificing self-denial for those she loves." In her analysis of the power of black African women, Ngcongco (1993: 5) argues that in order to understand the ethos behind the self-sacrifice it is necessary to review the delineation of a 'good woman' in traditional African culture. Ngcongco (1993: 5-6) describes this 'good woman' as follows:

A good woman cooks and does laundry for her husband, she sees it as her husband's right to make major family decisions, she may not argue with him, nor want access to the kind of benefits or pleasures as he has. While, for example, her husband may visit his parents or friends without her consent, she must get his permission to do the same. She is expected to work as hard as possible, but may not express her thoughts freely if these challenge her husband's. Should she be inclined to think and act independently, she is seen to be treading on man's territory. If she is single she is responsible to her parent or older brothers who sanction major decisions for her.

Like Moguerane, Ngcongco (1993: 6) sees that upwardly mobile black women have to wrestle with their African roots and the influence of western media and a potentially western education. Ngcongco (1993: 6) explains that the western

education that most black women in South Africa receive teaches them "independence of thinking and attaches value to people developing their fullest capabilities." She further states that this kind of education motivates South African black women to press for their liberation (Ngcongco 1993: 6). Ngcongco's (1993: 5-6) observations stress the complex struggle that black women in South Africa face as they climb the social ladder. Moguerane (2008) reflects on this sentiment by saying that in a post-apartheid economy, educated black women have to manage the tension between being aspirational leaders and professional role models in society and remaining connected to their roots or cultural heritage and feels that this is a complex tension to live with.<sup>17</sup>

The third characteristic that Moguerane (2008) identifies as an important component of a black feminine ideal for South African women is that of sensuality. Moguerane (2008) comments that this sensuality is juxtaposed with the notion of white women as cold and sexually repressed or emotionally reticent. In contrast to this image of white women as cold, black women are expected to project a kind of sexual generosity or inviting sensuality.<sup>18</sup> This sensuality is not only connected to the African essence mentioned earlier but also to the role that black women are expected to play as mothers. Fertility and sensuality are thus effectively coupled to form a typology of nurturing African sexuality (Moguerane 2008). The flip side of this ideal is the association of lewdness or deviant sexuality which is associated with 'bad' women and can be traced back to nineteenth century scientific racism.

Although untested and fairly recent (and subjective), Moguerane's (2008) interpretation of a contemporary black feminine ideal sheds light on a subject matter otherwise fairly under-theorized. Very little, if anything, has been written about the experiences of contemporary, upwardly mobile, black South African

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<sup>17</sup> This same ethos of balancing societal 'success' with a sense of connectedness to the past is seen in the narratives of successful men discussed in *BLINK* magazine in Chapter Four (see 4.3.2).

<sup>18</sup> The epitome of sensuality in white western ideals may be related to being single, not maternal.

women and the expectations that are placed on them by unspoken cultural norms which is why Moguerane's thoughts are very helpful. The popularity of scheming, Machiavellian, anti-heroic female characters from black soap operas like *Generations* may indicate that there are other types of female personas that are popular with black women. Moguerane's articulation of popular tropes of black South African femininity are, however, seminal to the analysis of feminine identity in this chapter. The question that remains is to what extent Moguerane's (2008) articulation of a black feminine ideal is reflected in *BLINK* and presented as the ideal for their readers. The following section investigates the representation of women as well as their relationship to men in *BLINK* magazine.

### 3.4.2 A semiotic analysis of the representation of women in *BLINK*

As in the case of the analysis of the representation of women in *MaksiMan*, the investigation of *BLINK* is divided into the public and private domains. The following section investigates the representation of women in the public domain within *BLINK* magazine. Thereafter the representation of women within the private domain is investigated. In both cases the representation of the relationship between men and women within these domains is central to the analysis.

#### 3.4.2.1 A semiotic analysis of the representation of women within the public domain in *BLINK*

*BLINK* frequently referred to women as part of the public sector and each issue featured at least two thorough profiles, articles or interviews with women. The magazine also often made use of female journalists, which was a practical

endorsement of the need for women to be given a public voice. The November / December 2005 issue of *BL!NK*, for instance, includes five articles about women and five articles written by women. The articles about women include a feature on musician, "KB" Motsilanyane (November / December 2005: 24-27), interviews with some of the female staff at *BL!NK* (November / December 2005: 28-32), a profile of international songstress, Jill Scott (November / December 2005: 42-44), an article on celebrated South African actress, Pamela Nomvete (November / December 2005: 78-79), a feature on American diva, Mariah Carey (November / December 2005: 83-84) and an article on the British women, Marsha Ambrosius and Natalie Stewart of Floetry fame. As in the case of *MaksiMan* the magazine seems to prefer stars from the entertainment industry like singers and actresses but unlike *MaksiMan*, the articles and interviews found in *BL!NK* are in-depth and dealt with the actual profession of the celebrity featured rather than posing trivial or unrelated questions.

The January / February 2006 issue of *BL!NK*, for instance, features a profile of famed model, Lerato Moloji. The article was written by then editor, Simphiwe Mpye, who initially assumes a kind of school boy tone in his frank expression of his admiration for Moloji. Mpye makes no secret of his appreciation for Moloji's physical attributes as he stumbles upon her changing her clothing. The bashful Mpye quickly comes to his senses and realises he must look away: "But I am a professional, I remain unfazed and, like clockwork, I politely look the other way". Unlike the profile of Diaan Lawrenson found in the January / February 2005 *MaksiMan* and discussed in the previous section, this author presents his subject as an individual who has professional stature and demands respect rather than a curiosity to be trifled with. Mpye seems to recognise that while it is Moloji's job to pose and be on display, he needn't take advantage of this situation.

The article chronicles the ups and downs of Moloji's career with the kind of honest forthrightness that sketches her as a human being rather than an abstracted and flawless image. Mpye explains how Moloji was infamously booted from New

York's Elite Models' books for allegedly being too fat to be a model. In response to this unfortunate incident, Moloji recalls how she learnt to embrace herself as she is and not aspire to an unhealthy body image. As one of two runners up in the 2000 Face of Africa competition, Moloji's sense of centeredness seems to stem from her status as a woman of Africa who embraces her slightly fuller figure as part of her African identity. In conjunction with this connectedness to her roots another tension emerges, that of the dialectic between the western and African aspects of her identity. On the one hand Moloji describes herself as "a bit of a tomboy" (January / February 2006: 21), a typology which typically stems from the mainstream western men's lifestyle magazines which frequently sexualise the notion of tomboyish sensuality. On the other, Moloji describes herself as a mother and in this way aligns herself with one of the central aspects of the African feminine ideal:

Motherhood has had the most tremendous effect on me and changed me so much. From the pregnancy itself; carrying her made me see things differently. It gave me a better understanding of why I was put on this earth (January / February 2006: 23).

Through this admission, Moloji communicates the way in which motherhood pulled her back to her spiritual or existential self, which she had possibly moved away from throughout her journey as an international model. The photographs of Moloji that accompany the article, however, show her in western fashions, seated on a de Stijl style chair, surely a powerful symbol of western (Modernist) beauty. In this way Moloji is situated somewhere between the western and African worlds and the message is made clear that these identities are easily reconcilable.

*BLINK* did not only feature articles on women from the entertainment industry. The January / February 2006 issue of *BLINK* features an article on Heather Sonn entitled, "Keeping women on top" (January / February 2006: 67). Sonn is the chief executive officer of the Legae Securities firm, deputy chief executive officer of Wiphold, a women's empowerment agency and daughter of Franklin Sonn, the

first ever New South African ambassador to the United States (appointed by Nelson Mandela when he was president of South Africa). It is a frank and informative interview that challenges the reader with Sonn's new ideas about practising business in contemporary South Africa. The interviewer poses questions relevant to Sonn's position in the public sector such as what her work ethic is and what her vision for Wiphold is. In this way she is represented as a serious contributor to South Africa's public sector and her position is not trivialised by frivolous questions about her exercise regime or taste in films. At no point in the article did the author, Gerhard Foster,<sup>19</sup> ask her about her personal life or refer to the significant others in her life. It is, thus, rather surprising that when Sonn is asked if she has any pearls of wisdom to share with the readers that she voluntarily addresses the relationships between men and women in the private domain:

I find that many men are often attracted to confident, successful women, but once they have them they are not quite sure what to do with them. It is largely due to the conditioning socially. Women generally respond in one of two ways. One: they comply with what is traditionally acceptable, thinking that all men will require the same thing anyway. They become clever and delightful extensions of their male partners, believing that they are meant to be the companions of men. Men then become frustrated, claiming that this is not what they signed up for. Increasingly, however, women are working with their men to find real equality in their partnerships. The rewards are great, especially those we face professionally and socially in our dynamic world today. The second response is that women will aggressively carve out a space for themselves in the relationship. We have a huge amount to learn from each other in partnerships personal, intimate and professional. We have to learn to get and stay real (January / February 2006: 68).

Through this didactic monologue it becomes clear that Sonn is acutely aware of the difficulties of being a successful woman who not only has to engage with men in the professional sphere but desires to do so in the personal sphere too. She sheds some light on the diverse ways in which women respond to the challenges

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<sup>19</sup> The fact that the journalist is white is indicative of the diverse spread of journalists and interviewers used by *BLINK*. In this regard as in the gender demographic of staff, the magazine seemed to support diverse contributors.

of engaging with and relating to men and highlights the fact that these relationships take concerted effort in order to work. Sonn's observations highlight the fact that men and women need to meet each other half way in relationships in order for them to work. She uses the equalising term, 'partnership' to describe the relationship that she considers ideal and in this way represents the notion of men and women as equal. This kind of frank acknowledgement and realistic aspiration is typical of the gender discourse found in *BLINK* that presents men with honest and thought provoking narratives about the complexities of being a contemporary woman in South Africa.

The article on Sonn is the kind of feature that presents a female perspective on success, South African business and relationships with men. *BLINK* did, however, occasionally address issues like male/female relationships from a male perspective. The regular 'Conversations' feature is the ideal platform for this kind of discussion. It is a feature in which the conversations of three or four black men were recorded as they shared their thoughts on a particular topic. The April 2006 issue's 'Conversations' feature is entitled, "Embracing the modern woman" and records the dialogue of Bobby Sishuba, an entrepreneur, Nkululeko Mbele, an owner of an entertainment company and Xolisa Hilita, an attorney.

The subtitle of this feature reads, "In contemporary South Africa, the progression of women has mushroomed in earnest in the political and economic sphere. This has generally been hailed as a good thing, but how have men really reacted to it?" (April 2006: 16). Initially the men seem positive about the extent to which women have entered the corporate sector. Sishuba enthusiastically comments that:

Women have moved on from traditional roles which limited them to the household, to now being in the workplace, the corporate world. The pros of this are such that the output of a company, corporate South Africa, is now a mixture of male and female input which is a positive thing. We don't have a male dominated society anymore, the views expressed in South Africa mostly incorporate everyone (April 2006: 16).

Mbele and Hilita, however, are not so sure about the advantages of women increasingly leaving the domestic sphere. As if echoing Moguerane's (2008) belief that African women's cultural essence is in part communicated through their ability to cook, both men bemoan the phenomenon of women who can't or won't cook. Mbele frankly states, "It's a beautiful thing that women are doing it for themselves, but when not cooking for example, they start viewing it as not their responsibility anymore because they are in the workplace. ... when I ask for a meal and it's an issue, then that's a problem" (April 2006: 16). Hilita apparently agrees: "nowadays some women can't even cook. Now I'm not saying that a woman's place is in the home, but really, sometimes you will go to a woman's house and it is upside down, dirty and you wonder, is there a man or a woman living here, I think it goes down to how women balance their roles in society" (April 2006: 17). Mbele and Hilita's sentiments seem to reflect these men's conflicted sense that while change is a good thing they are loath to give up the benefits of a patriarchal system in which a woman's role is in part defined by taking care of her man. Both of these men seem to connect the identity of womanhood with household tasks such as cooking and cleaning and in so doing reveal their reluctance to convert from a traditional model of gender roles.

The men are also apparently concerned with the effects of affirmative action which demands that a certain quota of women be employed by big corporations. The consequence of this system is that in many instances black men must compete with black women for particular professional positions. In this regard, Hilita frankly admits that "[w]hen you go for a job interview, you always have to consider that there might be a woman applying for that same post, who is better than you. For a lot of men, that might be intimidating" (April 2006: 17). Hilita's statement reflects the shift in the hegemonic structure of business and industry in South Africa over the past ten years. During this time the "social organization of masculinity" (Connell 1995: 73-74) may have changed, implying a shift in the cathexis or emotional relations between men and women. As mentioned

previously, Connell (1995: 73-74) deems this kind of change as implicit in any society where power relations have altered dramatically.

Later in the discussion the men cite an increase in violent crime as a direct consequence of women's increasing presence in the corporate sector, a situation which directly reflects Connell's (1995: 73-74) thesis that power relations between individuals impact on society as a whole. Sishuba explains that:

One of the negative reactions to the progression of women is increases in murders, rapes and general violence. Now there is of course more than one explanation for these phenomena, but one of the strongest ones has been men's inability to deal with the shifts in roles in the home (April 2006: 17).

Apparently in agreement, Hilita lends his voice to this surprising explanation by attempting to sketch a scenario of spousal misunderstandings:

For example, if a woman has a late meeting, when she comes home she might be accused of having an affair, which might lead to violence in some cases. This is symptomatic of a lack of understanding of changes in dynamics and could also be insecurities because we are not only competing amongst ourselves, but also with women which was never the case in the past (April 2006:17).

The connection that Sishuba and Hilita make between domestic violence and women's increased presence in the public domain demonstrates the consequences of this profound shift within the black community. Both of these men seem convinced that many men are threatened and confused by their wife or partner's transition from the home to the public sector. Furthermore, these admissions indicate that the shifts in the South African socio-economic structure has direct consequences for the relationships between men and women and may have led to an increased incidence of distrust and even violence between these two parties. This sense that the empowerment of women is related to contemporary male violence echoes the sentiments found in *MaksiMan* that seemed to imply that feminism is to blame for violence. This combined

connection between female empowerment and male violence in both magazines seems to indicate that South African men are uncomfortable with the increased power of women.

Nevertheless, whether representative of the sentiments of most black South African men or not, the frank discussion between these men demonstrates that *BLINK* is a space where honest conversation takes place. Within the confines of a men's magazine that has predominantly male readers, these men clearly felt comfortable enough to make the kinds of admissions documented above.<sup>20</sup> The 'Conversations' feature is, in other words, a safe space for men to engage with critical social issues and even experience catharsis as they saw their ideas voiced by other men.

While in the 'Conversations' feature men were given the platform to voice their concerns about the changing gender dynamics in South African society, elsewhere in the magazine women were given a voice. The first place where the readers of *BLINK* were confronted with a female presence was on the page devoted to the profiles of contributors. Around page eight of every issue listed between two and four people who contributed to that particular issue in a specific way. This list frequently included women which positioned women on an equal footing with their male peers. Each profile was accompanied by a photograph so the fact that a particular contributor was female was immediately apparent. The November / December 2005 issue of *BLINK* lists four contributors: Sello Rasethaba, Vuyo Radebe, Zwelakhe Tshabangu and Phiona Okumu. In the profile of Okumu, the reader is told that she studied commerce at Rhodes University, was the former deputy editor of *YMag*, is currently a free lance journalist working in London and has interviewed soul and hip hop stalwarts like Raphael Saadiq and De La Soul. This brief biographical information sketches a portrait of Okumu as a serious professional rather than a token contributor. For

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<sup>20</sup> The fact that *MaksiMan* did not contain the same frank and honest discussion may be related to the readership of the magazine having been predominantly female, a situation that the authors, editors and editorial team of *MaksiMan* were overtly aware of.

this issue, Okumu is asked to interview a soul band and as such her brief fell within her area of expertise, further legitimising her presence in the magazine. Most importantly, she is not asked to comment on the band as a woman nor to represent the ideas of women but simply to interview the band in her capacity as professional music journalist.

Later in the same issue of *BLINK* women are again given a platform to voice their opinions in a professional capacity. Since this issue marked the one year anniversary of the magazine, ten members of the editorial team were asked to share their experiences of the past year. Five of the ten employees featured were women. These include: Joonji Mdyogolo, the magazine's copy editor; Mpho Nkomonde, the fashion and lifestyle co-ordinator; Pinky Madlingozi, the art director; Dineo Mokgoasi, the creative director and Lebo Legodi, the office administrator. A black and white photograph of each woman's face appears next to her statement and name. The women were featured amongst the men and they didn't appear to be positioned in any kind of order or rank. Having women on the editorial team of a men's magazine is not unusual. Most men's lifestyle magazines include women on their editorial teams. The difference between mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and *BLINK* is that while in most mainstream men's lifestyle magazines these women remain silent contributors, never openly referred to, in *BLINK* they are not only profiled but given the space to share their professional experiences. In this way they are first, represented as meaningful contributors to the public domain and second, represented as equal to the male members of the editorial team.

None of the women profiled in this feature refer to the fact that they are women working at a men's magazine except for Pinky Malingozi who mentions the fact that she thought of the "hunky and successful men" she might meet as a professional perk. All of the women refer to *BLINK* as a creative family where they felt like a valued member of the team. Says Joonji Mdyogolo, the copy editor: "In a year we've come to know each other more intimately than colleagues

who have worked together for years. We've met each other's loved ones, dined and partied and laughed together. ... I hope we never lose that camaraderie and ability to laugh as *BLINK* throws life's challenges our way" (November / December 2005: 29). From Mdyogolo's statement it is clear that she felt accepted and valued within this team and that there was a sense of equality or "camaraderie" between all the members of the *BLINK* team.

*BLINK*, in other words, seemed to create a space where women were not only represented as worthy contributors to the public domain but also as friends and equals. It is refreshing to think that this is the case within a men's lifestyle magazine, particularly since this sense of inclusivity did not seem forced or contrived. The following section examines the representation of women and their relationship to men within the private domain.

#### 3.4.2.2 A semiotic analysis of the representation of women within the private domain in *BLINK*

Like *MaksiMan*, *BLINK* included a number of features that addressed the ways in which men and women interacted in the private domain. For the most part, however, *MaksiMan* seemed to address men as if they were married or in a committed relationship and *BLINK* seemed to take a more open ended approach. In *BLINK* men were addressed with a greater sense of their diversity in terms of relationships. Thus the articles did not assume that men were married or necessarily wanting to get married.

One article that did address marriage was that of the 'Conversations' feature from the January / February 2006 issue. The discussion is entitled, "The oldest tradition in the book" and deals with the cultural practice of paying a bride price or *ilobolo* (January / February 2006: 16). The panel includes Bimba Nkopo, a

director of a marketing company who is married; Sisa Sidumo, a car dealer who is engaged; and Thami Masemola, the then managing editor of *BLINK* who is also married. Sipiwe Mpye, the then editor of *BLINK* poses the questions. The first question posed by Mpye reads as follows, "In these modern times, especially with Westernisation and urbanisation, why is it that a tradition as old as *ilobolo* has survived and is still being practiced?" (January / February 2006: 16).

Masemola is the first to respond and seems keen to underscore the value of tradition: "The fundamental thing is that black people are a cultural people, traditional people. We like to keep our habits, so to speak. *iLobolo* has survived because whatever we do, wherever we go, we keep our blackness" (January / February 2006: 16). Nkopo seems to agree: "*iLobolo* is a fundamental essence of who we are. It differentiates us from any other race. It gives us structure – where we are coming from, where we are going. It almost gives us a connection to ourselves" (January / February 2006: 16). Both of these positions sketch a portrait of this practice as an important part of the cultural heritage of black men and women and in this way demonstrates the belief that black men and women in South Africa should remain connected to their African-ness, their roots.

South Africa is, however, a place of changing socio economic structures, and Mpye raises the possibility of certain wealthy women paying for their own *ilobolo* because they make more money than their prospective spouses. To this, the men respond with total indignation. Masemola comments,

I'm a man of pride, so even if my wife was Halle Berry and had her own money, I would still expect to pay my own way. Even if you hid it and it seemed as if it came from your bank account, the two of you would always know that she paid her own *lobolo*. As a matter of pride and manhood, that's just wrong (January / February 2006: 17).

Again Nkopo is in complete agreement, "The mere premise of the woman taking over your role is the beginning of destruction. You are almost baking a pie that is going to flop, because all the ingredients and the structures of that pie are, from

the get go, twisted" (January / February 2006: 16). Again both of these men take a fairly traditional stance on the subject and from his statements, Sidumo seems to agree. What this says about women is that in the private domain men still seem to hold onto the traditional customs and practices that represent the man as the provider and the woman as a consumable or object. One can only speculate as to why this was so but possibly the rigid hegemony of tribal culture was harked back to in the private domain.

Perhaps the tradition of *ilobolo* is one that is designed to bring families together and indicate the worth of a bride but as Nkopo points out, it can easily become a practice that places a price tag on women's beauty and expertise: "The problem is that we are attaching monetary value on to something that is not based on money. ... If we continue to base things on price, we are going to have women walking around with price tags and that is not what it is meant to be" (January / February 2006: 17). Nkopo's statement illustrates the manner in which these men were trying to grapple with the tension between their African cultural roots and the western world in which they find themselves. It is an honest and frank discussion that again demonstrates that *BLINK* is a safe space for men to voice their opinions. The discussion finally seems to lead to the conclusion that *ilobolo* is a cultural practice that defines manhood and womanhood within the African context but that it should not become a bidding war. Again, the discussion reminds one of Moguerane's (2008) belief that South African men are looking for women who are in touch with their roots. Whether or not women feel comfortable with this practice does not even enter into the discussion and one wonders whether the three men would or could be attracted to the kind of woman who refuses bride price.

Motherhood is another aspect of feminine identity that features in *BLINK*. August is the month in which women's day falls and in the August 2006 *BLINK* the then editor, Thami Masemola, adds the following comment at the end of his editorial: "To all the mothers who have brought up their sons to respect and care for other

women, we say halala! To all the women who triple as friends, fathers and providers in their homes, this month is truly yours" (August 2006: 8). It is a clear message about womanhood in South Africa in a magazine focused on manhood. Through these words Masemola acknowledges the many homes where men are abusers or absent husbands and fathers. In the face of this acknowledgement Masemola seems to be challenging men to be better sons, fathers and husbands. As a post script he adds the following quote by Timothy Leary: "Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition" (August 2006: 8).

On the last page of the same issue Masemola offers another tribute to motherhood. In an article entitled, "Beat down!" (August 2006: 96), Masemola tells the story of a young boy who after having disobeyed his mother is told he must receive a beating. The boy decides to run away from his mother's wrath only to return hours later. His mother has not forgotten his disobedience and punishes him before offering him a dinner of Rajah curry, cabbage and *pap* (porridge). Through this brief narrative Masemola paints a picture of women as the sole source of discipline, a role traditionally held by fathers. Masemola does not even mention the presence of a father, hinting at the reality that most homes are held together by single mothers. He ends the narrative by musing, "Ah mothers. We love them so much!" (August 2006: 96). The essay is, in other words, a positive sketch of motherhood even though it portrays some of the difficulties faced by many contemporary South African women. *BL!NK* does not refer to motherhood nearly as frequently as *MaksiMan* but through narratives such as this one it represents the fact that this is a seminal aspect of womanhood in South Africa, lending the magazine a kind of moral tone. This kind of narrative also reminds the reader of *BL!NK* of the humble roots of most black South Africans, a function which is all the more poignant considering the fact that most of the *BL!NK* readers are presumably fairly affluent.

The magazine does, however, represent different kinds of womanhood, a fact clearly in evidence in an article in the August 2006 issue. The article is entitled,

"Dating everyone except the *BLINK* man" and is essentially an interview with three upwardly mobile black women who have veered away from typical *BLINK* men in their choice of partner. The introduction reads,

All their lives, these beautiful *BLINK* women pictured themselves strolling down the isle with a gorgeous and successful modern version of Shaka Zulu. Their not so Kosher dating experiences dating the *BLINK* man has led them into the arms of partners outside of their childhood ideals (August 2006:17).

The women interviewed are Karabo Lenkoe, a body cosmetics entrepreneur who is dating a woman called Thando; Angie Kibi, a foreign exchange consultant who is dating a Congolese man and Tony Ntombela, an assistant pictures editor who is dating a white Frenchman. All three openly voice their real satisfaction with their current partners in comparison with the '*BLINK* men' that they have dated in the past. Dineo Mokgoasi, the interviewer, asks them to elaborate about what it was that they didn't like in upwardly mobile South African black (*BLINK*) men. Lenkoe comments that such men are "chivalrous at the beginning of the relationship but the caring and nurturing wears off after a couple of months when they've 'clinched the deal' and you are officially theirs" (August 2006: 17). A little while later she adds that "most men are clingy in relationships. They don't realise that you are an individual with other things to do outside the home, besides keeping it clean" (August 2006: 17). Ntombela believes that the *BLINK* man is generally a "mommy's boy who can't make a decision without consulting his mother on our personal matters" (August 2006: 17). Kibi says what makes her partner different from most *BLINK* men is that,

He's not always complaining about money, nor is he a woman beater. He trusts me and doesn't cheat on me or get any funny phone calls from women at strange hours of the night. We talk about everything and I'm his best friend. He really respects me and my family and treats my daughter as his own. He's spontaneous; he cooks for me and doesn't hit on my friends (August 2006: 17).

From these comments it is clear that the women have experienced black South African men as selfish, philandering, disrespectful and narrow minded. This perception of black masculinity is in line with the negative stereotypes frequently associated with black masculinity (discussed in Chapter Four). The honest appraisal from these three women may, thus, help black male readers to be critical of themselves and their own behaviour and sympathetic towards the complaints of the women.

When asked what message they can give readers about what they are looking for in a man, two refer to respect as a key component of a healthy relationship. Ntombela simply comments, "Respect women. Don't cheat, and make me feel special. Respect your women and spoil her even when you're broke" (August 2006: 18). Kibi agrees, "Respect us and our families. Love us. Stop beating on us and abusing our kids. Respect my friends and don't hit on them" (August 2006: 18). Again these comments paint a fairly dismal picture of *BL!NK* men as cheating abusers who disrespect women and children. It is a harsh image but one which these women clearly feel strongly about. Finally, the interview is honest and forthright and I think quite helpful to men who might really want to understand what the concerns and aspirations of progressive black women are concerning relationships. The article represents women that are in stark contrast to the feminine ideal espoused by the discussion on *ilobolo* since they seem happy to break with the traditions of the past. These women seem to be in touch with themselves and their roots but are also forward thinking and progressive. The inclusion of a woman in a taboo lesbian relationship in the discussion, for instance, is a brave move that demonstrates *BL!NK's* attempt to push the boundaries of their readers. In this way the magazine seems to want to expose their readers to reality even if it may seem threatening. It is to *BL!NK's* credit that they are willing to publish an interview that is first of all, openly critical of their readers and second, represents women that have so consciously swum upstream. By giving these women a platform to grapple honestly with their concerns around so called *BL!NK* men they allow the magazine to present itself

as a place where women are given a voice. On the continuum of voice and silence identified by Woodward, Hayes & Minkley (2002: xxi xxii), *BLINK* positions women as having voices that need to be heard and respected.

The tension between what men and women think about themselves and each other is referred to in other places in the magazine too. Each issue, for instance, features a double page spread of two articles that are entitled "He said" and "She said". The one article is written by a man and the other a woman and both address a particular topic from their own vantage point. The August 2006 He said / She said is about whether women are more romantically interested in moneyed men. George Hill, the male author, believes that women are indeed more interested in men who have money. He sketches a scenario in which he arrives at a place of business in a three piece suit and snappy shoes and is given lusty stares from all the women who see him. The next day when he is back in his jeans and t shirt, none of the women, apparently, give him a second look. The conclusion that he arrives at is that women appreciate him more when he seems to project a moneyed image:

I looked like I stepped straight out of a boardroom after just having concluded a multi million Rand deal. I certainly looked the part. Men and women looked at me differently. The men gave me that look of respect, while the women gave me that smile reserved for secret lovers or potential lovers. All of this because I had the air of money about me and possibly because I looked really good. After deep contemplation I came to the conclusion that these days love is simply not enough. Everybody out there is looking for what someone else can do for him or her before they enter into any sort of relationship with the other party (August 2006: 74).

In response to this pessimistic view of love in the modern South African context, the female author, Joonji Mdyogolo attempts to shed some light on an otherwise dismal picture. Mdyogolo concedes that Hill is right that upwardly mobile contemporary black women do frequently go for the rich beneficiaries of Black Employment Equity (BEE) but explains that there are mitigating factors that contribute towards this trend. She maintains that it is difficult for successful and

progressive black women to find men who are not threatened by their success and that powerful BEE types tend to be more open to dating ambitious women: “woman at that level struggle to find mates. They are seen as too competitive, not woman enough. It has become easier for men with money to attract women as it has become difficult for successful women to find men” (August 2006: 75).

Mdyogolo’s comments again hint at the fact that the average *BL!NK* man is not as progressive or forward thinking as one might have hoped. She too, like Moguerane (2008) and the three women in the previous interview, indicates that men prefer women who are not too ambitious or successful in the public domain. It seems that many of the female contributors to *BL!NK* hold the perception that *BL!NK* men, meaning upwardly mobile, educated black South African men, are still infatuated with the idea of a women who is more active in the private domain (cleaning, cooking and raising children) than in the public domain. Whether this is true or not, it is refreshing that *BL!NK* allows this message to come across so clearly. In this way the magazine creates a platform for honest discourse and critical engagement with the difficult stuff of changing gender dynamics in post apartheid South Africa.

The magazine time and again proved itself unafraid to deal with sensitive or ‘private’ issues. It also seemed more than willing to allow women to voice their opinions on a range of topics. The November / December 2005 issue of *BL!NK*, for instance, features an article entitled, “The only time you’ll ever say no to sex” (November / December 2005: 88). In this article, Molao Molao asks the question whether women could be bad at sex and if so how. The subtitle to the article reads, “What makes a woman a bad lay, considering that you can get off even if she is just lying there? Molao Molao did the logical thing and asked women” (November / December 2005: 88). Molao asks fifteen of his female friends whether they believe women could be bad in bed and finds their responses more or less evenly split between those “who thought women could be terrible in the sack and those who thought that it was impossible for a woman to be bad in bed”

(November / December 2005: 89). It is refreshing that Molao asks women as opposed to men and in this way validates the sexual voice of women.

Overall, the article represents two sides of the story. On the one hand Molao represents the idea that women could indeed be bad lovers but on the other he acknowledges that it takes two to tango and that “if you aren’t putting in the effort, then she isn’t going to either” (November / December 2005: 89). Another frank acknowledgement is made when Molao admits that it is possible and not unusual for men to fake an orgasm. This admission too turns the tables on the staid sexual typologies and puts a new spin on old narratives. The photograph that accompanies the article also breaks with tradition. Instead of a naked woman being photographed, the image shows a semi naked man reclining on a bed with a clothed female model only partly visible in the foreground (figure 19). This image underscores the way in which *BLINK* attempts to create new tropes and break old ones, especially in the private domain.

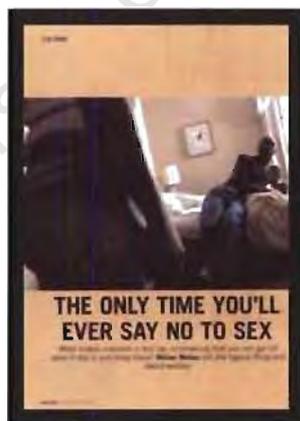


Figure 19: *BLINK*,  
November/December  
2005: 88

Another example of the way in which *BLINK* challenges sexual stereotypes is an article in the March 2006 *BLINK* entitled, “Good vibrations” (March 2006: 68). It is

authored by a 'Ms G' and attempts to address the way vibrators can add to the pleasure experienced between a man and woman during sex. In this way the author challenges the traditional view that vibrators or dildos are solely useful to women who do not have a regular sexual partner and are willing to pleasure themselves. The article frankly addresses the fears men have about being 'replaced' and explains how a vibrator can be used as a tool for better sex between two lovers rather than as a replacement for men:

So "BIG Boy", performance anxiety is now a thing of the past, take the pressure off; it doesn't matter if your erection is a bit wobbly (and, yes, all men experience this at some point for a variety of reasons) using a vibrator on a woman's clitoris is the easiest way for most women to reach orgasm every time (March 2006: 68).

But the article not only explains why this tool can be beneficial for women during sex but also explains the benefits in terms of male pleasure: "The constant motion can be stimulating for men as well as women, on all areas of the body ... they feel fabulous on nipples, the perineum (the smooth, hairless bit between your scrotum and bottom) and elsewhere too!" (March 2006: 69).

In this way Ms G demystifies an object which could not only be intimidating for men but steal their thunder when used in a conventional way. The fact that *BLINK* uses a female author to address such a sensitive and private topic and then allows her to give almost scientific advice on how to use this gadget challenges the old binary that men are the purveyors of sexual and technological knowledge and women the receivers of this know-how. Again *BLINK* seems to be a magazine willing to challenge stereotypes and create platforms for informative and honest discussion between men and women. This relational dynamic is a refreshing take on Connell's (1995) articulation of power as the foremost determinant of male / female relationships for in *BLINK* the hegemonies of the past are convincingly toppled through the magazine's earnest attempt to create spaces for open discussion. Even where the discussion represents an outdated feminine ideal or demonstrates that *BLINK* men are not as progressive as they

seemed, the fact that honest opinions are being voiced by both men and women subverts the traditional hegemony of men as all powerful. By giving women a critical voice within the public domain and challenging men on private issues like staid ideas about sexual dynamics, the magazine also effectively subverts Duncan's (1996) delineation of private space as feminine and public space as masculine. The magazine, in other words, convincingly represents women and men as more or less equal within the pages of the magazine, a fact which makes the magazine unique in the class of South African men's lifestyle magazines.

The following section comprises a quantitative analysis of the photographs of women that appeared in *BLINK* as yet another means of examining the ways in which the magazine represented women as well as the relationships between men and women. Both the public and private domains are again examined.

#### 3.4.2.3 A quantitative analysis of the photographic images of women in one sample issue of *BLINK*

As mentioned earlier, Erving Goffman (1976:10) argued that all photographs may be described as either private or public (see 3.3.2.3). Goffman (1976: 10) describes private photographs as "those designed for display within the intimate social circle of the persons featured in them – pictures taken ... in order to commemorate occasions, relationships, achievements, and life turning points, whether of a familial or organizational kind" (Goffman 1976: 10). He describes public photographs as those photographs "designed to catch a wider audience – an anonymous aggregate of individuals unconnected to one another by social relationships and social interaction, although falling within the same market ... or outreaches of appeal" (Goffman 1976: 10). In the first half of this chapter it was found that the photographs within *MaksiMan* were for the most part a kind of hybrid of the private and public strain since they were mostly public photographs

that attempted to mimic private scenes. *BLINK*, on the other hand rarely made use of contrived or posed photographs that pretend to capture private moments (a father and son on the beach or a wife and husband in the bedroom) and instead included a great many more candid shots taken at celebrity functions as well as photographic fashion shoots of models posing in the latest trends, photographs, in other words, that would be described by Goffman as overtly public.

The August 2006 issue of *BLINK*, under discussion in this section, for instance featured two candid tabloid style photographic spreads. One was a two page spread of photographs of celebrities at the Vodacom Durban July horse race (figure 20). The other was a double page spread of the after party that *BLINK* hosted for the Durban July the following morning (figure 21). Both spreads included informal shots of various black partygoers looking like they were in a particularly celebratory mood. As in such spreads in tabloid magazines, both features allowed readers to feel like they shared in the festivities and were kindly included in the fun. The photographs were also fairly aspirational as they encouraged the notion of a black upwardly mobile fashionable class in South Africa who, whether VIPs or not, were invited to these events and were thus firmly part of the 'IT' crowd.



Figure 20: Snapshots of celebrities at the Vodacom Durban July, *BLINK*, August 2006: 12-13

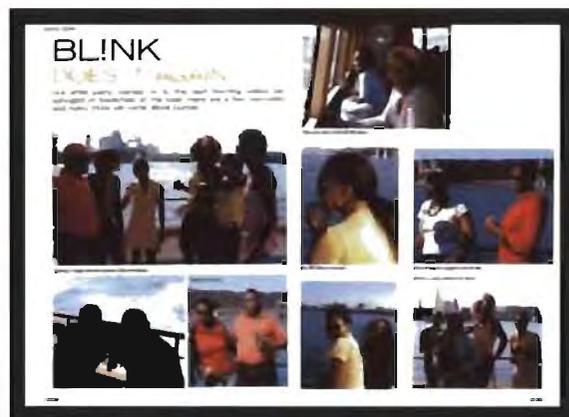


Figure 21: *BLINK* afterparty, *BLINK*, August 2006: 14-15

As for fashion shoots, the August issue included a spread entitled, "Seductive pieces" (August 2006: 36). The spread included four photographs that take a full page each and one that stretched across two pages. In each of these photographs a man and a woman were photographed together. In the four single page spreads they are fully clothed and interact in a sensual but not tawdry or tasteless manner; they simply create a kind of sexy tension between the two models in each photograph. The fifth, double page image was slightly saucier (figure 22). The female model lies reclining on a bed wearing pink lingerie while the male model, who is looking at her from across the room, seems to be undoing his pants. He is topless. Behind them the curtains are drawn open and palm fronds can be seen in the dusk creating an exotic setting for this charged image. The female model touches her leg lightly with long red fingernails in a manner reminiscent of what Goffman (1976: 29) refers to as the "feminine touch". Goffman (1976: 29) describes the way women gently or lightly touch themselves in advertising or fashion shoots as the feminine touch, a code indicative of feminine sensuality. He positions the effect of "just barely touching", as seen in this image, as oppositional to the kind of utilitarian grasping or holding associated with male hands. The image is thus indicative of bourgeois femininity (Goffman 1976: 29). The magazine did, in other words, include the occasional sexy photographic shoot but these were usually very restrained and by no means as overtly saucy or objectifying as the photographic spreads in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. The women used in the shoots also appeared to be more 'average' looking. This is not to say that the women were not beautiful and slim but they did not seem to have unusually large breasts or artificial hair or unusually light skins. They simply appeared to be naturally beautiful black women. Again this is in stark contrast to the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines where the artificiality of the model's (airbrushed) skin, hair and physical attributes seem to be part of the fetish or appeal of photographic shoots.



Figure 22: 'Seductive pieces',  
*BL!NK*, August 2006: 40-41

All in all there were seventy photographs of women in the August 2006 issue of *BL!NK* magazine. The majority of the photographs in the magazine were of 'real' women, not models. As a result they were a very diverse bunch indeed and almost every hair style, skin colour and body type was represented. In fact, the photographs seemed far more representative of real women than those found in most women's lifestyle magazines. None of the women were photographed with children and twenty three of the photographs (or thirty three percent of the photographs) were with men. For the most part then, women were photographed alone which may indicate their iconographic independence and freedom, particularly since most of these were real women. Thirty four (or forty nine percent) of the women were photographed looking away from the camera. But, where in the 'staged' photographs in *MaksiMan* this seemed to connote modesty, in *BL!NK* it seemed to merely be the consequence of women being photographed while talking or focusing their attention elsewhere. The majority of the women (fifty one percent), however, were looking directly at the camera. Forty six (or sixty six percent) of the women were smiling in the photographs again possibly implying a feminine ideal in which women were happy and contented. It is also possible, however, that since many of the women being photographed were aware of the camera that they were smiling for its benefit. Of all the seventy photographs of women in this issue only six (nine percent) feature women who were somewhat scantily clad. All of these were in staged or contrived photographic shoots like the one discussed earlier. It should be said

that for whatever reason these did not feel nearly as objectifying as the photographs found in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. This is probably because the models did not appear to be obviously touched up or airbrushed, they were not photographed with fetishistic props and the context of the magazine as a whole was certainly less objectifying.

In comparison with the seventy photographs of women, there were only sixty images of men of which one was a sketch of a man walking with a boy. There were no other images of men with children. It may seem strange that the magazine had more photographs of women than of men but actually this is true of most mainstream men's lifestyle magazines too. Men apparently like to look at photographs of women. The fact that most of the photographs of women were of real women as opposed to models again may indicate that *BL!NK* men were less inclined to view women as visual pleasure. In fourteen (or twenty four percent) of the photographs men were looking away from the camera, meaning that the majority of the men photographed (seventy six percent) looked confidently at the viewer. This possibly indicates that *BL!NK* represented a masculine ideal that was confident and upfront as opposed to modesty or humility being an important part of their masculine ideal. Only twenty three (or forty percent) of the men photographed were smiling, yet again indicating a more solemn and proud masculine ideal (figure 23).



Figure 23: A solemn look, *BL!NK*, August 2006: 20

Visual images of individuals have the potential to represent a group to which the individual belongs, especially when there is little diversity in the images presented. Mariamne Whatley (1988: 137), a researcher from the University of Wisconsin, believes every portrayal of black people carries more weight than that of white people because whites are "allowed more diversity in representation". The fact that *BLINK* included photographs of so many real women and men as they were (apparently not touched up or manipulated) means that the magazine made a significant contribution to the representational diversity of black men and women in South Africa. In this way the magazine created a platform for the diverse visualisation of the upwardly mobile classes of black South Africans. Whatley (1988: 137) adds that photographs themselves have more of an impact on a viewer than a drawing or illustration would, since it is seen as an objective representation of reality, rather than as an artist's construction. Perhaps then, it is a very good thing that *BLINK* included so many photographs and in particular, so many photographs of real women. Black women are frequently exoticised in the mainstream men's lifestyle press so it is refreshing that *BLINK* created a space where men could see real women represented.

This section has attempted to undertake a quantitative analysis of the photographs of women and men that appeared in *BLINK* as yet another means of examining the ways in which the magazine represented women as well as the relationships between men and women. The following section comprises a conclusion to this chapter and a revision of the theoretical framework within which it is positioned.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter investigated the manner in which women were represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* as well as the representation of the relationships between

men and women in these magazines. The manner in which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* represented women and the relationships between men and women were sketched as an important contributor to the construction of a masculine ideal within each of these magazines and therefore integral to this study. Following Connell's (1995: 73-74) formulation of "power" and "cathexis" as important aspects of masculine social interaction and Duncan's (1996) delineation of space as socially gendered, this chapter examined the representation of women within both the public and private domains within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*.

In the analysis of the representation of women in the public domain in *MaksiMan* it was found that while *MaksiMan* included features on women in the public domain, these were mostly women from the entertainment industry and that in most cases the articles trivialised their public roles by focusing on irrelevant issues such as what kind of music they liked or men they dated. In this way the articles seemed to undermine the position that these women occupy in the public domain and silence their public voice. In the analysis of the representation of women in the private domain within *MaksiMan* it was found that a great deal was said about women's role in the private domain. The private feminine ideal was sketched as a woman that is married, supportive of her husband's career and more or less submissive to him, although this word was not used. This ideal was found to be fairly two-dimensional and not representational of the diversity or complexity of women. The photographic representation of women within *MaksiMan* was found to be fairly staged and idealised but not objectifying or sexualised. The sentiment was raised that it would be helpful to the project of representing a healthy feminine ideal if more 'real' women in 'real' settings were photographed (as was the case in *BLINK*). There were more photographs of men than of women and in both the photographs of men and women it was found that modesty and humility were apparently important characteristics communicated by the photographs.

In the analysis of the representation of women in the public domain in *BLINK* it was found that *BLINK* included many articles, features and interviews that represented women in the public domain. It was further found that each of these features seemed to deal with the status of these women in the public domain in a serious way. Women were also included in the editorial team of the magazine and used as journalists to cover particular issues or interviews within the magazine. Women were, thus, allowed to have a loud and clear public voice within *BLINK* magazine. In the analysis of the representation of women in the private domain it was found that many so-called '*BLINK* men' preferred a traditional or more conservative reading of the private feminine ideal while many upwardly mobile black women were looking for men that were more progressive or forward thinking than the average *BLINK* man. This critical discourse proved that *BLINK* created a platform for honest and open discussion between men and women on both public and private issues with relation to these genders. Women were, thus, allowed a critical voice within the private domain too. The photographic representation of women within *BLINK* indicated that the magazine embraced 'real' women since each issue of the magazine included photographs of 'real' woman that were not touched up or air-brushed. In keeping with the tradition of men's lifestyle magazines the magazine had more photographs of women than of men but very few of these seemed objectifying or sexualised in a crude way.

Finally, this chapter attempted to unpack the manner in which *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* represented women and the relationships between men and women because this is an important aspect of the masculine ideal espoused by the magazines. The following chapter investigates the manner in which both magazines represent the generativity of men.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## GENERATIVITY

### 4.1 Generativity and masculinity

The introduction to this chapter touches on three overarching themes. First this introduction considers different definitions of generativity and explains how this term is used within the context of this study. A brief examination of nineteenth and early twentieth century masculinity is, thus, the second theme addressed by this introduction as the nineteenth and early twentieth century western masculine ideals are considered by key theorists to have a significant influence on the contemporary construction of masculine identity. Finally since the socially transcribed gender roles in society have, broadly speaking, become less fixed (particularly since contemporary western women are far more invested in the public sphere) it is possible that the generativity aspect of masculine identity may be affected by these wide scale changes. The third theme examined by this introduction is, thus, the manner in which 'crisis' may infuse the generativity of western men. While this section serves as a broad introduction to key western themes and is therefore largely global in its scope, the discussion is brought back to the South African context in the subsequent semiotic analyses of generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*.

Generativity refers to any nurturing, altruistic action that engenders novel or more mature ideas, products, art works, systems or individuals. It means conceiving or creating out of a desire to think beyond oneself (even if only in an attempt to propagate one's ideas or in a bid to establish a measure of personal longevity).

John Kotre (1984) has defined generativity as broadly consisting of four variants. The first is *biological generativity*, which includes deciding to have children, bearing them or adopting them and taking care of these children. The second is *parental generativity*, which involves child raising activities that nurture, teach and initiate children into a family situation. There is also *technical generativity*, which involves the instruction of particular skills and the passing on of facilities, knowledge and experience. In the last place is *cultural generativity*, which refers to the mentoring of a junior with the intention of propagating a social system. Erik Erikson (1958), deemed generativity to be the principal developmental task of adulthood. Erikson (1958), who developed a theoretical schematic of personal development, considers generativity (versus stagnation) to be the seventh out of eight stages in this sequence of personal growth.

Kotre's (1984) and Erikson's (1958) models echo Freud's and Tolstoy's supposition that the two chief functions of the adult human being are to love and to work. Erikson (1958) goes so far as to suggest that the level of maturity that a man attains may be related to the degree to which his external life is characterised by mature love (the nurturing of someone other than themselves) and mature work (creativity and productivity) (Clare 2000: 170-171).<sup>1</sup> Drawing on Kotre's (1984) and Erikson's (1958) theories as well as Robert Connell's (1995: 73) three fold model of masculinity, this chapter investigates the representation of generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*. Rather than examine the four categories of generativity formulated by Kotre (1984), biological and paternal generativity are conflated to form one trope (of fatherhood) which is theorised in terms of Connell's (1995: 74) view that there are "power relations" that impact gender. Technical and cultural generativity are similarly conflated to form one category which is analysed against Connell's (1995: 74) belief that "production relations" play an influential role in the delineation of gender.

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<sup>1</sup> This model may result in a classist classification of mature masculinity but is relevant within the context of the magazines under discussion since they appeal to more or less the same social group or class.

Within the context of this chapter, the term 'generativity' is, thus, used to refer to two aspects of male creation or generation namely, the role of biological father or paternal figure (including surrogate fathers) and the role of professional, corporate or social mentor. These two forms of generativity are highlighted because they are the two most obvious strains of generativity to be found in the men's lifestyle press and because they centre on the two most seminal spaces men occupy, namely, the home and the work place. In doing so, the traditional notion that public space is male while private space is female is denaturalized within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. As in the previous chapters, both aspects of generativity are examined for their contribution to the masculine ideals presented by these two men's lifestyle magazines since it is fundamentally the construction of localized, modern day masculine ideals that interests this study. A primary question that informs this chapter is the extent to which the generativity aspect of the various masculine ideals found in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* are in a state of crisis.

As stated in Chapter One, masculinity theorist, Anthony Clare (2000: 69), believes that contemporary men carry an image of manhood or a masculine ideal in their mind's eye which, while forged over a number of centuries, flowered in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period of "unparalleled male achievement in science, technology, biology, medicine, exploration and imperial expansion." When one refers to the legacy of man, one is not only referring to a genetic inheritance but to a set of social expectations, the cultural perception of what it means to be a male. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it meant to be ascendant, to be the source of great ideas, systems and structures in the public sector and the uncontested patriarch in the home.

The notion of generativity or indeed creativity was, thus, not merely a feminine concern but also connected to different aspects of the masculine. Even in the seemingly oppositional disciplines of art and science, for instance, men (those who deemed themselves conventional and those who may be described as anti

establishment) were united by a common sense of productivity or creative generativity. In their analysis of the nineteenth and early twentieth century notion of the artist, for instance, feminist art historians, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (1981: 82-83), examine the development of a nexus between artistic creativity and male sexuality. They cite such remarks as that of Flaubert, who described the artist as "a 'fouteur' who feels his sperm rising for an emission" (Parker and Pollock 1981: 83). Parker and Pollock (1981: 82-83) maintain that this line of thinking has its roots in the Renaissance when artists were advised to be continent and chaste so as to preserve their 'virility' for their art. Such notions, however, persist to the Modernist period, and thus the Dutchman, Vincent van Gogh, advised a fellow artist: "Eat well, do your military exercises and don't fuck too much, and because of not fucking too much, your paintings will be all the more spermatic" (Parker and Pollock 1981: 83) and the Spaniard and so called father of Modern art, Pablo Picasso, boasted that "[p]ainting is something you do with your balls" (Jones 1993: 127). Clearly, creativity and productivity were imbued with a kind of phallic significance wholly removed from the realm of the feminine. Indeed, Clare (2000: 69) points out that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the

stereotype of the successful man did not just embody a succession of positive, virile attributes – strength, power, authority, decisiveness, rationality, calmness, discipline, resourcefulness – it existed in the presence of an opposing cluster of attributes – fragility, weakness, vulnerability, emotionality, impetuosity, dependence, nervousness – the stereotype of the typical woman.

This was, in other words, a period in history when the line between the delineation of masculinity and femininity was most unambiguously drawn.

One might be tempted to think that since women were the ones actually capable of bearing children that there would be a certain power, however illusive associated with this ability. Instead, the reproductive organs of the woman were deemed the source of her frailty and hysteria. In his 1900 presidential address,

George Engelmann (1900: 9-10), the President of the American Gynaecological Society sympathetically declared,

Many a young life is battered and forever crippled in the breakers of puberty; if it crosses these unharmed and is not dashed to pieces on the rock of childbirth, it may still ground on the ever recurring shallows of menstruation, and lastly upon the final bar of menopause ere protection is found in the unruffled waters of the harbour beyond the reach of sexual storms.

Furthermore, since women's reproductive functions were deemed incompatible with education, women posed little threat in the professional work place or natural sciences, where education served as a rite of passage and women were, thus, largely relegated to the home and (domestic) work that took place in the home (Smith Rosenberg & Rosenberg 1973). In 1897, in an address to the New York Odontological Society Dr Charles Fayette Taylor (1879: 4-11) noted that "[w]hile education in men makes them self controlling, steady, deliberate, calculating, thinking out every problem, the intellectual being the preponderant force, the so called 'higher education' for women seems to produce the contrary effect on them." Within the context of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, simply being a woman meant being in a state of constant suspended or latent malady and resisting this fate was equally deemed odious (see Parker and Pollock 1981: 105-106). Nevertheless, because of powerful social changes, many critics argue that where it was once femaleness that was synonymous with pathology, now it is masculinity (Clare 2000: 69-100).

In Chapter Two (2.1.1.1), the social and medical concerns surrounding male health in the contemporary, twenty-first century context were briefly chronicled to frame the discussion of the introduction of the men's lifestyle magazine, *Men's Health*, into the South African milieu. It was noted that smoking, poor diet and excessive consumption of alcohol are but a few of the harmful behavioural practices of western men, that on average American men die six years younger than American women and that western men are a great deal more prone to

violent behaviour than women (Courtenay 2000, Helgeson 1995, Waldron 2000). In truth, men still yield a great deal of societal power: they largely govern the strongholds of influence, the boardrooms and corner offices of the developed and developing world, they still mostly preside over the drafting of national legislation and the implementation of policies and they still dominate the stock markets and banking systems (Bland 2002, Goldberg 1993). But, the tide is turning and if, as Clare (2000: 69) suggests, work used to define masculinity, male identity must be affected by the fact that no work is currently deemed uniquely male.

Thus, Clare (2000: 69) draws the rather dramatic conclusion that “[m]en today are in shock” since “[a] revolution has occurred”. Whether Clare (2000: 69) is overstating the situation or not it is clear that, broadly speaking, within the western context women are no longer bound to the home or reduced to their reproductive capabilities. In fact, the scale of gender transformation in the western world is fairly tangible since more women work today than ever before. By analysing seven labour market indicators, the *Global Employment Trends for Women 2004* finds that there has been an “explosive growth” in the female workforce. In 2003, 1.1 billion of the world’s 2.8 billion workers, or forty per cent, were women, representing a worldwide increase of nearly 200 million women in employment in the past ten years (*Global Employment Trends for Women 2004*). According to Duncan Innes (2001:sp) of the *Innes Labour Brief*, in South Africa forty per cent of skilled, technical, academically qualified and junior management positions are held by women, forty three per cent of middle management positions are held by women and twenty per cent of senior management positions. According to South African journalist, Lisa Koningkramer (2006: 23), South Africa has come a long way since the inception of the new democracy in 1994. It currently has the third highest proportion (75 per cent) of companies employing women as senior managers, compared to a global average of 59 per cent. Koningkramer (2006: 24) also points out that thirty per cent of South African parliamentarians are women, placing South Africa eighth globally in terms of gender equality in government (prior to the 1994 elections South Africa was

ranked 141<sup>st</sup> which illustrates the commitment of the democratic government to gender equality). While these statistics do not necessarily point to a crisis in masculine identity they certainly indicate a shift in the territorial hegemony of the masculine, meaning that men are no longer the sole proprietors of the public sector.

This statement raises the question of whether a similar shift has occurred in the private domain of the home and family. While this is dealt with more thoroughly in section 4.2, it might be noted that men have potentially been removed from the process of procreation by scientific advances in artificial insemination. Furthermore, increased divorce rates in the west seem to affect men (and their role as fathers) more negatively than women since women more frequently get custody of any children a spousal couple may have had (Clare 2000: 80-82). In other words, with relation to male generativity today, both corporate and paternal generativity are infused with the threat of crisis since men have been forced to share whatever exclusive societal power they formerly had through legislative measures such as affirmative action and employment equity and a more general social awareness regarding gender equality.

The question that arises from this study is how male generativity is represented in *Maksiman* and *BLINK*. Do these magazines, for instance, acknowledge and engage with the changing positions of men and women in the work place and home or do they perpetuate a simulacral hyper-reality where men maintain their nineteenth century ascendancy? This chapter is concerned with this and other related questions but is principally focussed on the representation of male generativity in *Maksiman* and *BLINK*. The representation of fatherhood or paternal generativity is discussed first as it appears in both magazines under discussion (4.2). The appearance and depiction of professional and social mentoring or corporate generativity is discussed thereafter (4.3).

## 4.2 Paternal generativity

This section investigates the representation of paternal generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* bearing in mind Connell's (1995: 74) notion that there are "power relations" that impact the delineation of gender roles within society. Connell (1995: 74) argues that patriarchal power relations continue to play a role in society and as such impact not only the roles men occupy within the home and public sphere but result in a "problem of legitimacy which has great importance for the politics of masculinity". The potential persistence of patriarchal power relations is examined within this section as it pertains to the ways in which men engage with paternity.

In the last two decades the practice of fatherhood or male parenting has increasingly garnered interest from researchers, policy makers and the media. Much like the interest in women's increasing presence in the work place (see Clare 2000: 69-100), this attention seems to transcend geography and culture (Russell 2001: 52). Throughout the world there are now international conferences, work place workshops, forums and websites dedicated to understanding the practice of fatherhood.<sup>2</sup> The ways in which these diverse endeavours may interpret fatherhood are as numerous as the projects themselves but certain correlations in terms of the delineation of fatherhood may be drawn. It has, for instance, been suggested that there are six core domains of fathering that emerge from these studies:

- 1) employment and family financial support;
- 2) day to day care of and interaction with children;
- 3) child management and socialization;
- 4)

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, many researchers consider broad gender shifts in society (such as feminism and changing maternal employment trends) as being a primary reason for the current interest in the practice of fatherhood. Lupton and Barclay (1997: 1), for instance, maintain that the primary drivers of the focus on fatherhood in Australia are "the second wave feminist movement, the entry of larger numbers of women into the workforce, their continuing participation in paid employment after having children and a decrease in the size of families" (see Russell 2001: 57).

household work; 5) maintaining relationships between care-givers; and 6) parental commitment / investment (Russell, Barclay, Edgecomb, Donovan, Habib, Callaghan & Pawson 1999).

These categories assist researchers in defining the practice of fatherhood and thus outlining what precisely it is that they are investigating.

One question that emerges from these investigations is whether this amplified interest in fatherhood is directly related to a deep-seated shift in the level of involvement of fathers and the emergence of a 'New Father' who is very involved in the everyday care of his children. In an overview of fatherhood in the United States of America, Natasha Cabrera, Catherine S Tamis-Le Monda, Robert H Bradley, Sandra Hofferth and Michael E Lamb (2000: 128) maintain that "paternal involvement, responsibility, and care have increased over the past three decades". This is not only their finding but also that of others. Research conducted by Joseph Pleck (1997) as well as that undertaken by Jean W Yeung, John F Sandberg, Pamela E Davis-Kearns and Sandra L Hofferth (1998) support the idea that the practice of fatherhood has changed in the United States. Similar studies conducted in Australia, however, provide a somewhat different picture. Russell and Bowman (2000) are convinced from their study that there is almost no evidence to suggest that a gender redistribution of family work has occurred. Rather, their findings show that, on the whole, fathers are not spending any more time than they always have on their family and children. In this study mothers reported spending an average of 6 hours and 46 minutes a day on child-care activities in 1992 and 6 hours and 7 minutes in 1997. Fathers reportedly spent 2 hours 31 minutes on child-care activities in 1992, and 2 hours 24 minutes in 1997. Having said that, Russell and Bowman's (2000) study of a national random sample of 1,000 fathers established that in comparison with fifteen years earlier, fathers were spending more time *alone* with their children. This same study showed that fathers, their spouses and family workers had the perception that the current generation of fathers are closer to and spend more time with their children than previous generations of fathers did.

Studies such as the one conducted by Anthony McMahon (1999) and Ralph LaRossa (1997), however, present alternative perspectives on the recent appearance of a 'New Father' within western society. Their research comprises an analysis of a mixture of mainly Australian, British and American data on men's involvement in child rearing and household chores and indicates that little has changed in terms of male parenting practices. They feel that researchers and social commentators have been overly optimistic about the extent of change in western fatherhood. While investigating American data on the changing nature of fatherhood La Rossa (1997: 3) thus argues that "while it may be gratifying for men in the late twentieth century to believe that they are the first generation to change a diaper or give a baby a bath, the simple truth is that they are not". This perspective is supported by Burgess (1997: 38) who argues that "[f]rom every historical period fathers are revealed as being deeply attached to their children, and struggling with many of the same issues which worry fathers today". Finally, as Russell (2001: 54 55) argues, it is almost impossible to provide a definitive answer to the question of whether there has been a fundamental change in the level of male parental involvement due to the paucity of data and the lack of consensus about what the appropriate measures of father involvement should be.<sup>3</sup> A question that may, however, shed light on this issue (and links with section 4.3) is the impact of professional globalization, and particularly the extent to which contemporary business people travel, on fatherhood.

The process of globalization has caused an increase in and severe competition for capable employees and for market share based on higher product quality at lower prices. As a consequence the job demands experienced by many employees and especially managers – most of whom are fathers – has also changed significantly. There is, for instance, an increasing demand for employees to travel and to be accessible during twenty four hours of operations,

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<sup>3</sup> The analysis of studies that investigate father involvement briefly reviewed in this section is largely taken from Russell's (2001) own study on the increased interest in male parenting among scholars.

whether in person, telephonically or via email. In a recent study conducted by Graeme Russell (2001), senior managers at a particular international corporation said they worked an average of sixty six hours a week, and that in the past three months they had spent an average of thirty days away from their home context, ten of which were overseas. Of the fathers in this corporation, only 52 per cent said it was possible to have a good family life and still get ahead, and only 30 per cent were satisfied with the degree of balance they had between their work and family or personal life. Russell (2001: 63) further points out that professional globalization has also meant that companies have a greater need to ensure higher levels of productivity and expand market share by having flexible workforces able to relocate quickly in response to changing market and business demands. The globalization of the professional workforce, in other words, places increased pressure on employees, which is a great strain on the demands of parenting. Granted this is a small sub set of the total male population, but this sub set falls within the reader demographics of both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* since both magazines are targeted at the upwardly mobile class of South African males.

Various countries have responded to this kind of professional strain on fatherhood by promoting active fatherhood through innovative amendments to state policies, specifically regarding state legislated paternity leave. In the Scandinavian countries, for instance, dramatic extensions have been implemented in terms of existing paternity leave. Such extensions encourage men to be primary caregivers for their children. In Iceland, both parents are allowed to take up to six months of leave, a system that was introduced over a decade ago and recently amended to nine months. While on leave parents receive 80 per cent of their salary in compensation and are protected from being fired. This leave must be utilized before the child in question reaches the age of 18 months. It is shared between parents so that three months are attributed to each parent individually and three months are to be shared between the couple

as they choose. Studies show that on the whole between 80 and 90 per cent of men have used their parent leave fully or partially.

In studying the current South African situation, Jacqui Gallinetti (2005) has shown that South Africa's laws and policies relating to paternity have not yet followed the example set by social welfare states in the north. Modest attempts have been made to extend the leave available to fathers but, as Morrell (2005) points out, this was not explicitly intended to improve paternal involvement in childcare. Rather, the attempts emanate from equity arguments generated by the country's human rights culture. Fathers can now, for example, take 'family responsibility' leave to attend to serious family business – but as Morrell (2005: 3) indicates, this comes nowhere near to the Scandinavian system. Whilst trade unions and other civil society organizations valiantly attempt to raise the debates about paternity leave, there are many reasons why fatherhood has not yet become a policy issue in South Africa. There are, for instance, many other claims made upon the over-stretched social agenda of the state. To fully appreciate the specific context in which middle class fatherhood has been experienced and understood in South Africa, one needs to consider three sociological phenomena that inform the context of fatherhood in the country.

First, the HIV / AIDS pandemic has undoubtedly weakened family structures and brought renewed attention to the issue of fatherhood. Morrell (2005: 7) indicates that adult deaths have continued to rise since 1998, with shifts in the age distribution being caused by a considerable increase in the deaths of young adults, especially young women. In the instance of women between the ages of 20 and 49, there has been a 190 per cent increase in deaths from 1998 to 2003 (Morrell 2005: 7). The incidence of the so called 'AIDS orphans' – estimated in 2003 to number 360 000 children (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAID, 2004) – testifies not only to the deaths of mothers but also to the absence of fathers. Much of the burden of care for children displaced by the impact of HIV / AIDS, furthermore, falls to women, including older women. Potentially more South African fathers

could step into the breach and care for their children. According to Morrell (2005: 7), Demographic and Health surveys indicate that South Africa has the lowest rate, in the African countries examined, of maternal orphans living with their surviving parent – 41 per cent compared to 65 per cent in Zambia, for example. By all accounts HIV / AIDS is not a pandemic restricted to the poor but has dire social consequences for all members of the South African population and the way familial roles are defined within this population (Arndt & Lewis 2000, Dorrington, Bourne, Bradshaw, Laubscher & Timaeus 2001). For middleclass men or families specifically it may, for instance, imply taking care of poorer family members or HIV / AIDS orphans.<sup>4</sup>

The second significant influence on the social context in which (in this case, black) South African fathers find themselves is the practice of *ilobolo* or bridewealth. Mark Hunter (2005) picks up on the theme of absent fathers by focussing on the decline in marriage among African men in particular South African situations. He has shown that high rates of unemployment even among middle class men have contributed to declining rates of marriage. Since men are unable to pay *ilobolo* they cannot meet the traditional expectations of a man who hopes to get married. Hunter (2005) points out that these men are thought of as men without *amandla*, put differently, they are men without power or diminished men. According to South Africa's Central Statistics Services, about 42 per cent of children lived with only their mother in 1998, in comparison to one per cent of children who lived with their father at the time. Morrell (2005: 7) points out that from a longitudinal birth cohort study in Soweto, Johannesburg it is clear that father support for children is questionable if a couple is not married, and grows weaker over time. Only twenty per cent of fathers who were not married to the child's mother at the time of the child's birth were in contact with their children by the time the child reached the age of 11 (Morrell 2005: 7). It is evident from such

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<sup>4</sup> While not the focus of this study it may be interesting to investigate whether men are looking after HIV / AIDS orphans and if they are not doing this, why they are not doing so. It should also be mentioned that the HIV / AIDS pandemic seems to primarily impact black South African families as opposed to white families. Still, since it is a national problem one would expect to find a discourse on HIV / AIDS in both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*.

studies that the cultural practice of *ilobolo* too places added strain on black men who want to be committed husbands and fathers.

The third factor that colours the landscape in which South African middle class men find themselves is unemployment and retrenchment. While unemployment affects South African men of different races and cultures (Kingdon & Knight 2001), retrenchment is particularly targeted at white men. In 1998, the South African Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) was passed deeming it necessary for all corporate sectors to implement a process of employment equity whereby women, individuals of diverse races and people with disabilities could be empowered within the public domain. This legislation means that many white men have been demoted from prominent management positions into less high flying positions or have been retrenched completely (See *Retrenchment 101: A user's guide*, 2008). While in most cases individuals who have been retrenched (most of whom are men), walk away from their occupations with generous 'packages', they frequently struggle to find new employment and end up taking up positions that are well beneath their level of expertise or staying at home for long stretches. Since (middle class) masculine identity is frequently linked to professional occupation and a measure of success in the public domain, men who have been retrenched typically struggle with low self esteem, depression, a sense of powerlessness and varying degrees of resentment. The impact of retrenchment is not limited to the man in question but affects his family who need to redefine their husband or father according to his new situation and demeanour. This shift is compounded by the fact that white men were the ascendant group during the apartheid regime and the most overt beneficiaries of this past system. It thus stands to reason that white South African men, under the new democratic South African dispensation, would feel the most marginalised in terms of new found hegemonies. It should be noted that employment equity, affirmative action and the resultant widespread retrenchment has not directly impacted all white men in the corporate sector and many white men still enjoy positions of great privilege and power. The threat of retrenchment is, however,

pervasive and affects all white men in the corporate, professional and state sectors and those attempting to enter into them.

The three sociological phenomena discussed here are not the only factors to complicate the South African milieu – other global factors such as high divorce rates and ensuing custody battles, abuse, abandonment and addiction are also persistent – but all three these particularly South African phenomena significantly impact the delineation of fatherhood within the national context. The HIV / AIDS pandemic, the practice of *ilobolo* and racially motivated and gendered retrenchment all contribute to the complex context within which fathers may or may not practice the six core domains of fathering (financial support; day to day care of children; child socialization; household work; maintaining relationships between care givers; and parental commitment / investment: Russell, Barclay, Edgecomb, Donovan, Habib, Callaghan & Pawson 1999). But it is not only 'real life' practices and circumstances that influence the context within which fatherhood operates but also the representational realm of the media.

Jeanne Prinsloo (2005: 132) highlights the fact that in South Africa both locally generated and imported media (such as television programmes and advertisements) infrequently depict men in parental roles. She (2005: 132) argues that not only do the media fail to foreground fatherhood but they also provide violent masculine role models. Prinsloo (2005: 134 135) suggests that this is because men continue to be characterised in the public rather than the domestic realm:

Media representations locate the father in the public spheres of the workplace or in the contexts of physical endurance and challenge ... In contrast, the 'good' mother is defined by her ability to care for and nurture her family and sustain intimate relationships with them.

In reviewing diverse kinds of research on the subject of the media's representation of fatherhood, Prinsloo (2005: 143) identifies two issues, namely

the limited representation of fathers quantitatively, and then the limited repertoire of roles for fathers. She (2005: 143) furthermore explains that one of the consistent findings in relation to 'adult television' is that men are more frequently portrayed than women, but are less likely to inhabit situation comedies (sitcoms) and soap opera genres that are located in the domestic realm, illustrating the fact that dominant patriarchal power relations are dependent on the dichotomy between the private and the public.

This absence of the representational father is sorely felt in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines where readers are rarely if ever addressed as fathers and very little reference is made to the fatherhood of men profiled or interviewed. There are also no specific features or inserts dedicated to the subject of fatherhood or the practice of being a parent. While many of the readers of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are presumably fathers, one would not think so when reading the magazines themselves. As mentioned earlier, mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are concerned with creating a space for upwardly mobile men where they are free from the constraints of marriage and parenting and can solely focus on sex, sport, cars and an aspirational view of business. The question that concerns this section is whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* convey a similar absence in terms of the representation of men as fathers or whether they indeed address this aspect of masculinity and the particularity of being a father within the South African context.

#### 4.2.1 Paternal generativity within *MaksiMan*

In examining Christian perspectives on marriage and paternity, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (2002: 246-247) observes that the Christian masculine ideal is traditionally related to the idea of man as warrior, an image that relates more to guarding one's interests than taking care of them (which sounds an awful lot like

women's work). She (2002: 246-247) notes, however, that there is another image of what a real man might be, the image of the good steward, the man to whom the care of things may be entrusted. She muses that it may be time for modern society to recover this image and to regard the good steward as being – in the long run –

even more manly than the vigilant warrior. The good steward is one who promotes the biblical state of *shalom*, whose literal meaning is that every thing is in its rightful place. This means that each sphere of life is given its proper due: science, art, worship, government, commerce, and family life are kept in proper balance, each to fulfil its rightful calling, with none being allowed – in either personal or corporate existence – to swallow up or marginalize the others (2002: 246-247).

Van Leeuwen's balanced view of male identity offers a logical ideal. It thus seems fair to suggest that *MaksiMan*, as a magazine aimed at Christian men, would espouse a similar image of male stewardship. In this view, men would take parenting as seriously as their health, marriage, work and faith. It is therefore not surprising that unlike mainstream magazines that almost emphatically deny the parental role of many of their readers, *MaksiMan* takes a fairly head-on approach to dealing with paternity.

References to fatherhood abound in *MaksiMan*. In fact, considering the fact that the editor of the magazine describes their readers as "25-38 year old educated and affluent yuppies" (Stander 2007), and presumably many of these so-called yuppies are single, it is surprising to find quite so many references to fatherhood. In some cases these are casual references to the fatherhood of subjects profiled or interviewed but in many cases there are direct references to the fatherhood of the reader. These more direct references take two primary forms and are discussed in the following sections. The first form in which readers are addressed as fathers is a fixed feature entitled "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children"). The fact that the magazine has included this feature as a permanent fixture of the magazine demonstrates their commitment to encouraging men to be better, more balanced

fathers. The second form in which readers are addressed as fathers is general articles dealing with fatherhood. The following two sections analyse these two forms of articles individually.

#### 4.2.1.1 A critical analysis of the "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children") feature in *MaksiMan*

In describing the thinking behind *MaksiMan*'s editorial focus, editor Hennie Stander (2007) explains that the magazine is centred on the "holistic man". When asked what this means, he posits that the magazine deals with the things that are most important to men, namely "wives, children, work and relaxation". The "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children") feature is, in other words, designed to address directly the role of father that many modern men occupy or will occupy at some point in their lives. As stated earlier, it clearly attests to the magazine's commitment to promoting healthy parenting amongst its readers.

Each "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children") feature is centred on a particular theme and addresses this theme through a didactic narrative or article as well as practical advice or tips presented in point form. The May / June 2006 "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children") is entitled "*Leer om te luister*" ("Learn to listen") and comprises an article by Abri Erasmus in which he discusses the importance of taking stock of your own life and listening to the sound advice of valued friends. The article chronicles the story of a man named Sam who was "*in sy veertigs, oorgewig, oorwerk en sonder 'n gereelde oefenprogram*" ("in his forties, overweight, overworked, and without a regular exercise programme"). Sam was confronted in love by his board of directors,

*Mense wat nie net na die belange van die maatskappy omgesien het nie, maar wat lief is vir hom. En vir Sam was dit tyd vir 'n keuse: Hy kon so*

*aangaan, want hy doen dit al vir baie lank, of hy kon stop. En hy het. En dit alles het begin toe hy die twee kante van sy storie moes skryf.*

People who were not only concerned with the interests of the company, but who loved him. For Sam it was time for a choice: He could continue as he had been going because he had after all been living that way for a long time, or he could stop. Which is what he did. And it all started when he needed to write the two sides of his story (May / June 2006: 58-59).

After this brief introduction to Sam's situation, the article proceeds to inform the reader about the manner in which Sam's mentor advised him to write up two stories: one chronicling the logical conclusion to his current life; the other chronicling his ideal future. In the first story Sam dies of a heart attack due to stress and poor health. He leaves his wife and three children behind and chronicles the difficulties they face without him – financial pressure, loneliness and the absence of their father and husband at key social events.

Following this, Sam writes up a more positive second narrative in which he with great difficulty makes key changes to his lifestyle. In this narrative Sam has learnt the value of balance, a healthy diet and regular exercise. *"'n Pa wat nog lank sy gesin kan versorg, saam met hulle op vakansie kan gaan en tyd langs die sportvelde kan spandeer"* ("A father who can take care of his family for a long time, go with them on family holidays and spend time at his children's sports games") (May / June 2006: 58-59). By writing down these two narratives Sam realises that he must make a critical choice in his life. He does so by deciding to avoid the piteous outcome of the first narrative by implementing the changes undertaken in the second narrative. The article ends with three steps which readers can take to bring about the necessary changes in their own lives:

1. *Neem 'n tydjie af en vra jou vrou, vriend/e en jou dokter vir hulle earlike opinies. Maak 'n goeie voorraadopname.*
2. *Skryf die een kant van jou storie. Oorweeg alles en werk dit jou storie in. Besluit dan of dit is waar jy will hê alles moet eindig. As dit nie is wat jy will hê nie ...*
3. *Skryf dan die ander kant van jou storie. Skryf met geloof en vertroue dat jy kan groei na die plek wat jy weet die beste is. Maak dit dan*

*prakties en planmatig. Vra 'n mentor om jou hierin verantwoordbaar te hou.*

1. Take some time off and ask your wife / friends and your doctor for their honest opinions. Take stock of your life.
2. Write the one side of your story. Consider every aspect of your life and work it into your story. Then decide if this is where you want everything to end. If it is not what you want then...
3. Write the other side of your story. Write with faith and trust that you can grow to a place which you know is best for you. Then make this practical by writing up a plan of action. Ask a mentor to keep you accountable to this plan.

While the article may be helpful to men who find themselves in a similar situation to Sam and whilst it is clearly an honourable endeavour to help men who are stuck in a rut, one cannot help but note that the register employed to convey this message is rather child-like. One wonders whether an unsophisticated, almost naïve, narrative such as this one could be successful in convincing grown men that they need to take stock of their lives, and write up divergent narratives for their future. Is the power of the piece precisely its simplicity or is this an example of an article that misjudges the serious (but not dramatic) tone needed to address mature individuals? Finally, one is left feeling somehow patronised by an article that seems to provide trite answers to a complex and difficult issue, namely how to inject balance and health into your life for your own sake but also that of your children. What the article does get right, even if inadvertently, is communicate the crucial notion that the health and well-being of a father is essential to the health and well-being of his family, an idea sorely missing from mainstream men's magazines. What is, furthermore, quite interesting is that readers are told to change their lives for the sake of their children, a strategy which emphasises posterity. The article seems to suggest that fathers should work hard to give time to their children, both now, and in terms of preserving themselves for the future.

*“Leer om te luister”* (“Learn to listen”), the article discussed above, occupies roughly a page of the magazine. It is accompanied by a large photograph of a father piggy-backing a young girl who is presumably his daughter (figure 24). On

the right of the article is a list of *"Dinge wat pa's moet onthou"* ("Things fathers should remember") (May / June 2006: 59). These include fairly clichéd tips such as *"alle ouers maak foute; probeer net om nie die selfde foute oor en oor te maak nie"* ("all parents make mistakes; just try not to make the same mistakes over and over again") and *"behalwe vir kos en klere, het kinders net twee dinge nodig – onvoorwaardelike liefde en disipline"* ("In addition to food and clothing children need two things – unconditional love and discipline") (May / June 2006: 59). This emphasis on discipline is a fairly common theme throughout the different articles and features in *MaksiMan* that deal with fatherhood. From the emphasis that the magazine places on discipline, one gets the idea that disciplining children when they misbehave is an important aspect of male, Christian parenting. The November / December 2005 *"Jou kinders"* ("Your children") is, for instance, entitled, *"Elke ding op sy tyd"* ("Every thing in its own time") (November / December 2005: 60-61). The subtitle reads, *"Speel is goed, solank jy hulle leer wat die perke is"* ("playing is good as long as you teach them what the boundaries are") and echoes the sentiment espoused by the article that disciplining your children is an essential component of parenting and in particular fatherhood.<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes the *"Jou kinders"* ("Your children") feature is divided into *"Jou dogter"* ("Your daughter") and *"Jou seun"* ("Your son"), with the *"Jou seun"* ("Your son") feature usually taking up considerably more space. The September / October 2005 feature is divided in this way and the "Your son" section is authored by South African rugby star, Schalk Burger (senior). The introductory paragraph reads,

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<sup>5</sup> This raises the question of whether the father has to do discipline so that the mother doesn't have to – but the magazine does not address this issue directly, it merely places an emphasis on discipline as an important part of the father's parental role.



Figure 24: Father and child,  
*MaksiMan* May – June  
 2006:58

*'n Kyk van bewondering in jou seun se oë, is iets wat meeste pa's meer as enige iets op hierdie aarde will hê. Want om te weet dat jy nie net jou seun se beste vriend is nie, maar ook sy rolmodel is seker die bevredigendste gevoel wat jy ooit as ouer sal ervaar.*

A look of admiration in your son's eyes is something most fathers want more than anything else in this world. Because to know that you are not only your son's best friend but also his role model is probably the most rewarding feeling you will ever experience as a parent (September / October 2005: 44).

The article on raising sons starts with Burger confessing that he did not by any means raise his children by the book. It is thus difficult for him to hand out advice so he reduces his advice to seven tips that apparently make sense to him – now more than ever. These include: being friends with your son and allowing him to talk about anything, love (although it is noted that the love between a father and son is a little different since *"ons is darem nie sissies nie"* "we are not sissies"), leadership, tenacity, honesty, trust and the ability to have fun together. After explaining each of these points, the article ends with Burger stating that *"As jy jou seun se held will wees, is dit tyd dat jy hom soos 'n man en nie 'n seuntjie behandel nie."* ("If you want to be your son's hero you need to treat him like a

man and not a little boy") (September / October 2005: 45). This kind of tough talk is again quite typical of the "*Jou seun*" ("Your son") feature and is often accompanied by references to sport – especially rugby (September / October 2005: 44 45, May / June 2005: 46 47) – and hunting (May / June 2005: 12) but does not overshadow an understanding of the sensitivity needed to raise children whether boys or girls. Beneath a proud photograph of Burger with his two sons and a daughter, in bold print, appears the text: "*Pa feit: seuns met liefdevolle, betrokke pa's is meer geneig om te presteer en 'n goeie selfbeeld te hê*" ("Father fact: boys with loving, involved fathers are more likely to achieve and have a good self image") (September / October 2005: 44).

But *MaksiMan's* commitment to aiding men in their relationships with their sons goes beyond the limits of the magazine itself. In May 2005 the magazine hosted father and son days which men could attend with their sons. The event cost R100 which is relatively little considering that the acclaimed Christian author Rodney Seal was the speaker for the event. Such initiatives further confirm the magazine's ardent commitment to male parenting and in particular the establishment of a healthy male culture through future generations of Christian men and boys.

This commitment to paternity is not limited to the parenting of boys but also includes strategies for raising daughters. The language used to frame the parenting of girls is, however, somewhat different since instead of references to competition and achievement this role is typically cloaked in references to princesses (September / October 2005: 44) and winning the heart of the girl (May / June 2005: 47). The September / October issue includes a column of advice on how to transform the world your daughter occupies into a magical kingdom, since she is after all a princess. Among these tips is the suggestion that the reader listen to his daughter: "*Fokus op dit wat sy glo en ondersteun dit om haar selfvertroue 'n hupstoot te gee*" ("Focus on what she believes and support it in order to give her self confidence a boost") (September / October 2005: 44). This

piece of advice underscores the sense created in most of the "*Jou dogter*" ("Your daughter") features that girls tend to have low self esteem and need to be treated with care and support. At the same time, the next piece of advice is that the reader should not over protect his daughter: "Warn her against the evils of the world, but leave the choice up to her" (September / October 2005: 44). This piece of advice illustrates the tension communicated by the magazine between the supposed frailty and sensitivity of girl children and the harsh realities of the world. Having said that, the article also recommends that fathers take their daughters to work with them in order to expose her to the outside world and work environment. Here a more progressive sense of gender is achieved but one still wonders if the mere gendering of advice is not in itself enough to sabotage any healthy advice that may emerge from this feature. On the other hand, advice which seems clichéd to some might be quite helpful to others and the mere presence of parental advice in a men's lifestyle magazine is in itself rather revolutionary.

Finally, the reader is advised to discourage their daughter from going on any kind of diet. This too is a recurring theme in the "Your daughter" features since an emphasis is typically placed on the need to discourage girls from focussing on their bodies or appearance in an unhealthy way. This is sound advice given the statistics concerning eating disorders amongst girl children but again this advice does raise concerns about the gendering of parental behaviour. It is clear from the features on both sons and daughters that the magazine does deem there to be a difference between raising boys and raising girls since advice regarding these is at times separated. Further one might have some concern regarding the emphasis that seems to emerge on the raising of boys as if this is somehow more important or more worthy of attention than the endeavour of raising girls. (Why, for instance, did Burger only give advice about raising a son when he has a daughter too?)

Finally, through this feature, the magazine seems to support two notions: first it encourages the sense that fatherhood is a significant and important aspect of Christian, male identity and that it deserves attention and critical energy. Second, it supports the notion that different skills and techniques are required when raising boys and girls and that on some level the process of raising boys is more important or worthy of attention than the process of raising girls.

The following section investigates the representation of fatherhood in general articles dealing with this subject.

#### 4.2.1.2 A critical analysis of general articles in *MaksiMan* dealing with fatherhood

A regular feature in *MaksiMan* is the "*Man met spyt*" ("Man with regret") feature, which generally chronicles a mistake made by a particular man for which he now demonstrates the appropriate amount of regret or sorrow (thereby presumably invoking the Christian principle that remorse is followed by forgiveness). The May / June 2005 "Man with regret" features an article entitled "Story of grace" in which "*n man vertel van vergifnis ten spyte van sy ontrouheid*" ("a man tells of forgiveness in spite of his infidelity") (May / June 2005: 32). The article is written by Brink Gardner and the tale begins with the birth of a baby boy in a hospital outside London. We are introduced to the story through the child's grandfather who tells us with great emotion of the pride and remorse he felt when he found out that the child was a boy and would carry his name (and that of his male ancestors five generations back), Hermanus Combrink Gardner. The reason he felt remorse and sadness is, we are told, because the child was born into a legacy of spiritual brokenness. The child's great, great grandfather was apparently married five times, his great grandfather committed suicide and his

grandfather, the author of the article, was engaged in an extramarital affair for a really long time.

With tenderness and a convincing sense of remorse Gardner describes how he was the victim of a negative spiritual legacy as well as his own wrong choices and selfishness. He says the pain of the past was related to fathers and grandfathers who *"nie iets verstaan het van die Vader se Meesterplan vir die lewe van 'n man nie"* ("did not understand the Father's master plan for the life of a man") (May / June 2005: 32) and did not know how to represent the Triune God to his wife and children. It is clear from the narrative dictated by Gardner that he underwent some kind of conversion experience or moment of revelation which he attributes to the patience and child-like faith of his wife who through years of rejection did not give up hope in God for the restoration of her marriage. Gardner then describes how at the foot of the Rockies in Colorado he asked his son for forgiveness for the hurt and rejection he experienced from his father and how together they cried and forgave each other in this powerful moment. He goes on to say that he wishes he could have introduced his own father (who committed suicide) to his great grandson and said to him, *"Dis 'n seuntjie en hy dra jou name, my Pa"* ("It's a boy and he bears your names, my father") (May / June 2005: 32). The article ends with Gardner recalling that the healing his family has experienced all began with *"die geboorte van 'n ander seuntjie in 'n ander millennium ... Jesus van Nasaret!"* ("the birth of another boy in another millennium ... Jesus of Nazareth!") (May / June 2005: 32).

Through this narrative it becomes evident to what extent multi-generational characteristics or legacies play a role in *MaksiMan's* delineation of fatherhood. Clearly stories that bridge the gap between one generation and another have a particular significance to *MaksiMan's* construction of paternity, specifically in the case of a male lineage. In many of the interviews with celebrity figures, for instance, these individuals will refer to lessons they learnt from their parents (and specifically their fathers) and hope to convey to their children and in particular

their sons (see November / December 2005: 50). The other important theme that emerges from this narrative is the magazine's honest acceptance of the fact that men make mistakes whether in their marriage or faith or both and need to address and acknowledge these head on. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the insert that accompanies this article is, thus, an insert entitled "*Hanteer jou spyt so:*" ("Deal with your regret in this way:") (May / June 2005: 32) which provides men with practical tips on how to deal with their remorse.

In an article entitled, "*'n Pa maak ook foute*" ("A father also makes mistakes") (January / February 2006: 66 67), a similar sentiment is conveyed. In this feature Abri Erasmus asks a couple of more or less well known fathers what they would have done differently if they could do it over. Erasmus starts the article with an analogy between fatherhood and playing golf in which he observes that being a father is a lot like playing golf – occasionally one hits a good shot but most of the time you're just trying to stay out of the rough. As is often the case in *MaksiMan*, sport, in other words, serves as an entry point into the difficult business of fatherhood. Erasmus observes that it would be great if amateur golfers could get insider tips from great golfers and that in a similar vein he thought it might be helpful to get parenting tips from a number of celebrity fathers. (The logical gap is interesting – why is a celebrity father a good father?). Nevertheless, towards this end Erasmus interviews people like Lieutenant General Chris Serfontein and old Springbok rugby player Hendrik Truter who voice regrets like not spending enough time with their children when they were little and not listening to them enough. Next to the article is a short insert with eight tips on how to be a "*Wen pa*" ("Winning dad") (January / February 2006: 67). The subtitle reads, "*Om 'n held vir jou kinders te wees is iets waarna die meeste pa's streef. Dis nie altyd maklik nie, want jy bly nou maar eenmaal h mens wat foute maak. Hier is vir jou 'n paar wenke om die beste pa te wees wat jy kan.*" ("Being a hero for your children is something most dads strive for. It's not easy though because you are after all a human being who makes mistakes. Here are a few tips to help you be the best dad you can be.") (January / February 2006: 67). The article is

accompanied by a full page photograph of a man with a young boy on his shoulders, playing in the sea.

Through articles such as the ones discussed in this section *MaksiMan* makes fatherhood accessible as well as communicating practical ways for fathers to rectify the mistakes that they may have made. Perhaps, however, one can only really evaluate the representation of fatherhood in the magazine by examining it against the six pronged delineation of fatherhood discussed at the start of this section.

#### 4.2.1.3 A brief examination of the representation of six aspects of fatherhood in *MaksiMan*

To recap, the six aspects of fatherhood highlighted by the diverse sources on contemporary paternity were: 1) employment and family financial support; 2) day to day care of and interaction with children; 3) child management and socialization; 4) household work; 5) maintaining relationships between care givers; and 6) parental commitment / investment (Russell, Barclay, Edgecomb, Donovan, Habib, Callaghan & Pawson 1999).

With relation to the first aspect of fatherhood, employment and family financial support, every issue of *MaksiMan* includes a number of features including "*Jou geld*" ("Your money") and "*Jou werk*" ("Your work") that seem to place an emphasis on the father as financial provider for the family. Whether this is the sole responsibility of the man is not clear but in many of the interviews with corporate or social leaders these figures situate themselves as the financial providers and their wives as primary care givers (see 4.3.1.1). Either way, whatever the concerns may be around situating men as the sole financial providers, there is certainly not the sense that *MaksiMan* is shirking this

responsibility. The magazine does, however, ignore the societal phenomenon amongst particularly white middle class men of retrenchment or unemployment. This may, in part, be due to the fact that retrenchment is not a wide spread phenomenon but since it has seemingly had an impact on the image of white male hegemony it could have emerged on a rhetorical level within the magazine. Again, when asked about this, the editor made it clear that this kind of 'depressing' subject matter (and presumable HIV / AIDS falls into this category too) does not sell magazines.

The second and third points are more or less related and thus the "day to day care of and interaction with children" as well as "child management and socialization" may be taken as one category. With relation to this aspect of male parenting, *MaksiMan* seems to place a fair amount of responsibility with the father. In a feature entitled, "*Gesonde kindergewoontes*" ("Healthy habits for children") (May / June 2006: 59), for instance, readers are told that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children develop healthy habits that have a positive effect on their health and hygiene. The subtitle reads, "*Help jou kind dus van kleins af om die regte gewoontes aan te kweek... en pa, hier kan jy maar jou gesag laat geld*" ("Help your child from an early age to learn healthy habits ... and dad, here you are welcome to make your authority count!") (May / June 2006: 59). The insert includes helpful tips on the sleeping habits of children as well as the kind of diet they need to follow, indicating that these day to day aspects of child-raising are not only the concern of the mother but also of the father.

The fourth aspect of fathering, namely household work, is probably the facet of fathering that is most absent. The magazine makes almost no reference to the need for fathers to help out around the house with cleaning or laundry or cooking. This may be as a result of the fact that a full-time house help or domestic worker is to be found in most middle class homes, but of course this does not excuse the fact, it merely explains it. Occasionally recipes are included in the magazine

but the reader is seldom addressed in these as if he (or she) will be the one doing the cooking. These recipes, thus, seem more like good ideas for someone else to implement than suggestions for the reader to implement. This is, in other words, the area of fatherhood where *MaksiMan* is the most culpable.

In handling the fifth area of fathering, "maintaining relationships between care givers, the magazine creates the definite sense that being in a marriage and having children is a team effort and requires both parties to be completely committed. Whether in interviews with societal leaders or articles on parenting, the mutuality of the endeavour is always stressed. In fact, the big concern here is that the magazine makes almost no reference to divorced or separated fathering, thereby buttressing the popular illusion that Christian marriages are less likely to end in divorce – a notion completely dispelled by sociological research (see Van Leeuwen 2002: 189-208). Why precisely the magazine chooses to deny this blatantly obvious aspect of contemporary paternity is a mystery except that the editor is undeniably sensitive to depressing articles not being popular with his readers (Stander 2007). Clearly this is a huge gap in the thinking of the magazine and its effective contribution to healthy paternity in South Africa.<sup>6</sup>

The final aspect of paternity that frequently appears in studies of fatherhood is "parental commitment or investment". Through the many articles dedicated to "*Jou kinders*" ("Your children"), "*Jou seun*" ("Your son"), and "*Jou dogter*" ("Your daughter"), it is abundantly clear that the magazine is seriously committed to the project of parenting on the part of their male readers. Throughout these articles and features, the magazine demonstrates a keen understanding of the parental commitment or investment that is needed to raise healthy and happy children. In so doing the magazine, whether consciously or not, subverts the norm established by mainstream men's magazines that disregards fatherhood as an important part of the masculine ideal espoused by these magazines. *MaksiMan*,

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<sup>6</sup> One possible answer to this gap in the magazine's parental discourse is that the editors had quite a shrewd sense that they were focusing on quite conservative Afrikaans families and particularly the mother as buyer of *MaksiMan*.

in other words, establishes a powerful alternative image of masculinity from that generally presented by mainstream men's magazines.

The following section investigates the representation of male paternity in *BLINK*.

#### 4.2.2 Paternal generativity within *BLINK*

As mentioned in Chapter One, the primary target market of *BLINK* is young, black, middle class South African men who are interested in the process of renewal taking place within the new democracy. The magazine is, thus, concerned with the development of a new identity – on a personal and national level – for black men who were oppressed and demeaned under the apartheid regime. Presumably this project of ideological and psychological reconstruction should relate to all aspects of masculinity including paternity or fatherhood as a key component of male identity.

At the start of this section on paternal generativity, three phenomena were listed as critical influences on fatherhood within the South African context. These are the HIV / AIDS pandemic, the cultural practice of *ilobolo* amongst black men and the impact of unemployment or retrenchment amongst specifically white, middle class men. Through the analysis of the representation of fatherhood in *MaksiMan* it became clear that none of these issues were addressed with relation to fatherhood anywhere in the issues of *MaksiMan* examined. This indicated that the magazine, for whatever reason, was on some level ignoring important aspects of the cultural delineation of fatherhood within the South African situation. Since *BLINK* overtly attempts to address masculinity within the culturally specific project of democracy in South Africa, the question arises whether this magazine too will ignore the influence of HIV / AIDS, *ilobolo* and retrenchment on fatherhood in South Africa.

The following section investigates the representation of fatherhood within *BLINK* magazine against the socio political backdrop presented by contemporary South Africa. When paging through the magazine it is clear that fatherhood is not addressed in *BLINK* to nearly the same extent that it is addressed in *MaksiMan*. Perhaps this indicates that *BLINK* is more closely aligned with the mainstream norm of treating the magazine's readers as eternally single or unattached. Alternately, it may indicate that the magazine is unconcerned with the critical need for black middle class men in South Africa to redress the absentee fatherhood promulgated by the apartheid regime through its system of migrant labour. Under the apartheid system the economy was built on a structure of migrant labour and territorial segregation. For black people in South Africa this meant severe control of their movement, of where they could live and where they could work. For many it meant a more or less permanent separation from their families. Every person, black or white had to live in an area designated as their 'own area' (Bernstein 1985). For the white minority this meant most of the country including the areas where almost all economic activity was based. For the black majority it meant living either in a Bantustan, or a white owned farm, or in a black township 'near a white town' (Bernstein 1985). For many black women in domestic work it meant living on the white employer's property in separate accommodation. For many black men it meant near permanent separation from their wife and children, leading to at least one generation of children who were raised (often by grandmothers) more or less in the absence of fathers and sometimes in the absence of mothers (Bernstein 1985). It is unclear why *BLINK* does not directly address the significant legacy of the migrant labour system but perhaps it is more important to focus on the way in which *BLINK* does address fatherhood.

*BLINK* does address fatherhood in three primary ways. The first is as a metaphor of change, the second is as a tool of intergenerational interaction and the third is through casual references to the children of celebrities profiled or interviewed. Each of these is discussed individually in the following sections.

#### 4.2.2.1 A critical analysis of the representation of fatherhood as a metaphor of change in *BLINK*

The significance of change within the so called New South Africa is that it represents a move from the old to the new, a move, in other words, from the oppressive and racially biased old regime of apartheid to the equality and freedom of democracy. Against this backdrop fatherhood seems to emerge in *BLINK* as emblematic of change since being a father (whether in biological or political terms) necessarily implies commitment, sacrifice and dedication on the part of the parent. In the launch issue of *BLINK*, Benedict Maaga, a model of new South African black masculinity, swoons about fatherhood: "I was lucky enough to attend the birth [of my first daughter]" (November 2004: 15). He describes the experience as "one of those rare privileges", a "truly emotional" and "life changing" experience (November 2004: 15). In the same issue, television presenter and the man on the cover of the launch issue, Zam Nkosi, similarly affirms fatherhood: "It is a pleasure to be a dad, it's an incredible opportunity to learn, it's to learn emotions, realisations, it's a lot" (November 2004: 27).

Neither of these proclamations seems unusual or politically significant, but in fact they are both. Robert Morrell and Linda Richter (2005: 2) have pointed out that not all South African fathers are proud to be fathers or want to participate in the lives of their children. Conversely, it is their belief that most South African men do not seem especially interested in their children. This is evident from the fact that statistically it is clear that South African men seldom attend the births of their children, don't always acknowledge that their children are their own, and many fail to participate in their children's lives. In the early 1990s, of the 22 000 children born in Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital in Johannesburg, half had no male support of any kind (Erasmus 1998: 205). When a sample of 171 Pedi

women were asked if they wanted the fathers to be present at the birth of their children, most said 'no'. Of the third who said 'yes', many said so because they felt that the presence of the father would ensure that they were not blamed if anything went wrong with the birth (Chalmers 1987).

Within a cultural context where absent or negligent fathers form the norm it is refreshing to hear Maage and Nkosi embrace their role as father with such obvious appreciation for the responsibility and pressure that this role implies. In the January / February 2006 profile of Vuyani Ngalwana, it is apparent that Ngalwana had an absent father and that he hopes to rectify this absence with his own children. Thami Masemola, the writer of the profile, says the following:

As a man whose father left when he was just a little boy of three or four, it's particularly important to [Ngalwana] that his son, one of two kids aged 12 (Simthandile) and 7 (Mpho), has a role model in his life. "He's still around," he says of [his] father. "I don't want to have anything to do with him; I'm a bitter person (in that regard), I don't forgive easily. When I was in high school it really hurt to see other boys being with their fathers, that whole family environment."

Ngalwana's pain around his own absent father and his subsequent commitment to his own children (and in particular his son) seems indicative of *BLINK*'s representation of fatherhood as a significant aspect of contemporary, responsible black masculinity within the South African context.<sup>7</sup> Since *BLINK* is a magazine targeted at upwardly mobile middle class black men and hopes to illuminate what progressive African masculinity is all about, these statements by Maage, Nkosi and Ngalwana demonstrate that responsible and active fatherhood is an essential part of what *BLINK* describes as "The key to being a man". It then seems fair to suggest that within the progressive and enlightened context of

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<sup>7</sup> The phenomenon of absent fathers amongst black South Africans is addressed by other black magazines too. The August 2007 issue of *True Love* magazine, for instance, includes an article entitled, "A daughter's wish" (2007: 64) which addresses the issue of having an absent father from a woman's perspective. The subtitle reads, "The bond between fathers and daughters is something special to cherish. But what do you do when you've never known your father?" (August 2007: 64).

*BLINK* magazine, fatherhood is represented as more than a familial privilege – it is also an important part of the responsibility that all bear of building a healthy new country, where the mistakes of the past can be rectified. Committed fatherhood, within the middle-class black South African community, is then a way of resisting the destabilising effect of apartheid which separated men from their families through migrant labour. In the new, democratic South Africa, one might, in other words, say that it is an important aspect of nation-building for black men to be good fathers. In the November / December 2005 anniversary issue of *BLINK*, the then editor, Siphwe Mpye, compares the growing pains experienced in the first year of *BLINK*'s existence with those experienced in the first year of raising his son: "The journey [with the magazine] has been that much sweeter because in the same period of time I have watched my son go from being an almost-walking baby into a tricycle-riding, cheeky bundle of personality". Through this analogy, Mpye affirms the notion that within the context of *BLINK*, fatherhood, like the magazine itself, is a worthy and important contribution to a healthy South Africa.

But there is another side to the discussion of fatherhood in South Africa and that is the implications of the high level of divorce for fatherhood. In a national survey of young people between the ages of 18 and 32, men and women were asked to rank what they considered to be the distinguishing characteristics of adulthood. More than 70 per cent of young South Africans, of all racial groups and both genders, ranked aspects of parenthood in their top four defining features – Capable of supporting one's family (72.7%); Capable of keeping one's family safe (72.2%); Capable of running a household (71.8%); and Capable of caring for children (70.1%) (Morrell and Richter 2005: 5). The results clearly indicate that parenthood and family are important to young South Africans, and young men are increasingly speaking out about their desire to be good fathers. Yet, despite the widely held idea that being a father and providing for one's children is important, many South Africans neglect their parental duties. In Umlazi, Durban, for instance, only 7000 out of 67 000 people (the vast majority of them men)

ordered by the court to pay maintenance complied in 2002. In the same year, district courts received 372 000 complaints of maintenance default (Morrell and Richter 2005: 5). It is not only those who are unable to pay who default. Echoing international trends, there are many cases of men who refuse to pay maintenance, largely because of conflict with the children's mother. Such high profile figures as footballer Lucas Radebe and Metro FM DJ Glen Lewis are named as defaulters by Morrell and Richter (2005: 6).

What this indicates is that while *BLINK* seems to be attempting to stimulate positive rhetoric regarding fatherhood in South Africa, not enough is said about the dire situation in which most children find themselves. Since the magazine appears to want to establish a culture of responsible civil engagement, it seems that establishing the facts around fatherhood in South Africa would be a good start, something which is not done. What is more typically represented in *BLINK* is the idea that fatherhood is a tool of intergenerational interaction as is discussed in the following section.

#### 4.2.2.2 A critical analysis of the representation of fatherhood as a tool of intergenerational interaction in *BLINK*

As in *MaksiMan*, there is a definite sense of intergenerational reference in *BLINK*. This kind of interaction or reference to either younger or older generations usually takes two forms within *BLINK*. First, celebrities or social leaders profiled or interviewed in the magazine like to refer to the black fathers (and mothers) and grandfathers (and grandmothers) of South Africa who fought the evils of apartheid whether from exile or from within the country to establish the new democratic South Africa. Reference is frequently made to the positive character traits (loyalty, tenacity and strength) that individuals gained from their

parents and the struggle they were involved in. In an interview with celebrated South African actress, Pamela Nomvete, the star for instance muses:

My parents are my role models, so my chutzpah is both genetic and learned behaviour ... My mother and father both had plenty of chutzpah. As exiles, raising kids to live normal and well-adjusted lives, they could not afford to be spineless victims of a system that tried to dehumanise our family.

This tribute to the strengths of Nomvete's parents is a common theme in *BLINK* and is echoed in many interviews and profiles where celebrities draw attention to the legacy of strong leadership and political resistance which black South Africans should apparently be grateful for. In such narratives an emphasis seems to fall on the fact that the characteristics demonstrated by those in the struggle – strength, courage, loyalty and perseverance – have been passed on to future generations but need to be consciously acknowledged and reinforced by these younger compatriots. In "A love letter to black intellectuals", Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi, a South African studying in the United States of America, stresses the value of learning from those who formed a part of the resistance. Ramoupi bemoans the fact that he needed to go to America to study African history and voices his own desire to study under an older generation of black, African intellectuals: "I wanted to be taught by people who look just like my parents, uncles and grandparents. In short, I needed a black perspective – an African viewpoint" (March 2006: 57). Through such statements it becomes clear that *BLINK* serves as a unifying force between the older (so called 'boomer' and 'silent') generations and the contemporary ('X'er' and 'Y') generations who in South Africa may have been separated or divorced from one another by political imprisonment, exile, migrant labour or a host of other factors related to the pitiless nature of apartheid. The point is that the magazine seems to establish a kind of rhetorical bridge between different generations by paying tribute to the fathers (and mothers) of the struggle.

Second, whether consciously or not, *BLINK* seems to reflect the idea that as the black South African middle class, their readers are responsible for passing values such as strength, courage, loyalty and perseverance – values espoused by the struggle – on to future generations. In this way the magazine seems to communicate the sense that it is the reader's responsibility to 'father' the youth. Various means by which this political and cultural paternity may be enacted are suggested but the point is that the readers of *BLINK* and the black middle and upper classes need to take responsibility for the upliftment and education of black youths and need to ensure that they take pride in their identity. In a profile on former celebrity DJ, Bob Mabena, he stresses the need for black intellectuals to make sure that "our children will grow black, informed and proud" (March 2006: 27). But this responsibility is not just related to intellectual power, it is also connected to economic strength. In a conversation about black empowerment in the November / December 2005 issue, cultural commentator Bongani Madondo voices the opinion that the wealthy need to invest in black education:

The ways of changing it for future generations is for the black millionaires and billionaires to do what the Rockefellers and the Du Ponts did in the US and the Oppenheims in South Africa, and create grants and bursaries for black students. It is important that black people invest in black education and black intellectuals (November / December 2005: 68).

There is also the sense that the leaders of the resistance – the Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandelas of South Africa – were global players who made an international name for themselves and for the country and that the contemporary youth should be encouraged to do the same. In the "Conversations" feature for March 2006, Mandla Sibeko, the director of black empowerment group, Born Free Media, comments "We want to operate as global citizens. Our kids need to be exposed to as many ways of living as possible and not be shy to interact with cultures across the globe. The whole world is uniting and our kids are part of those moves" (March 2006: 16).

*BLINK*, in other words, clearly supports the notion that black middle class and upper class readers need to take up a kind of paternal role and invest in the future generations in the same way that the leaders of the resistance brought about the current state of democracy and unity. The point, however, is that unlike mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, *BLINK* does make reference to both the youth of today (the children of celebrities or social leaders being interviewed) as well as the fathers and grandfathers of yesterday.

#### 4.2.2.3 A critical analysis of the casual references to the children of celebrities profiled or interviewed in *BLINK*

Mainstream men's magazines frequently include profiles of or interviews with social leaders and celebrities. These typically make no reference to the spouses or children of the interviewee but instead tend to focus on the profession or claim to fame of the person in question. In the previous section it was mentioned that in the profiles of social leaders in *MaksiMan* constant reference was made to the family lives of the person being profiled. Indeed, from the critical analysis of a number of interviews and profiles in *MaksiMan*, it was ascertained that familial happiness or health and paternal commitment is an important part of the overall and perceived success of an individual. Similarly, within *BLINK* most interviews with and profiles of celebrities or social leaders include references to the spouses and children of the subject. Whereas in *MaksiMan* the subject usually introduces the reader to his family quite early on and continues to refer to them throughout the feature, in *BLINK* the references to spouses and children tend to be more of an afterthought. These references are generally less comprehensive than those found in *MaksiMan* and are therefore mere mentions rather than forming an integral component of the article itself. The names of the children are usually listed and mention is frequently made of the occupation of the spouse but beyond

that very little is said unless the subject is divorced in which case this is usually mentioned.

In the article on Bob Mabena (discussed further in 4.3.2.1), for instance, we are told near the end of the article that Mabena is the father of five. The children's names are listed as Reneilwe, Clementine, Kamogelo, Sihle and Dimakatso. In the profile on Bongo Maffin star, Tshepo Seate, the reader is informed that Seate has two children, both five years old (twins) going to preschool and "acting like grown up ladies" (April 2006: 29). In this case the names of the girls are not given but Seate speaks fondly of parenting. These are merely two examples but they form a fairly representative sample of the way children seem to feature in the profiles on celebrities and social leaders. In both cases the children are referred to as individuals and a significant part of the parent's life and responsibility but are not necessarily integrated into the substance of the article or brought up by the subject themselves (as in the profiles in *MaksiMan*). Whereas mainstream men's lifestyle magazines predominantly neglect to refer to the children and spouses of the subjects featured, *BLINK*, in other words, very decidedly includes them in their profiles.

Since paternity then seems to be included as a potential aspect of the masculine ideal presented by *BLINK*, the question arises whether the magazine represents the six pronged complexity of fatherhood discussed at the start of this section. As in the case of *MaksiMan*, one can only really evaluate the representation of fatherhood in the magazine by examining it against this six pronged delineation of fatherhood.

#### 4.2.2.4 A brief examination of the representation of six aspects of fatherhood in *BLINK*

To reiterate, the six aspects of fatherhood highlighted by the diverse sources on contemporary paternity were: 1) employment and family financial support; 2) day to day care of and interaction with children; 3) child management and socialization; 4) household work; 5) maintaining relationships between care givers; and 6) parental commitment / investment (Russell, Barclay, Edgecomb, Donovan, Habib, Callaghan & Pawson 1999).

In many of the articles and profiles that refer to the children of a particular celebrity or social leader reference is made to the responsibility – both emotionally and financially – of raising children. The first of the six aspects of fatherhood is thus fairly well represented. In the profile on Tshepo Seate, for instance, Seate reflects on the cost of raising his two daughters:

I've had to cut back on a number of things that I personally like. I'm a big gadget freak and whereas before I wouldn't hesitate to buy something like a PlayStation, these days I must think about them [the girls] first. Just the other day one had to go to the dentist and that cost a lot of money (April 2006: 29).

Following this, the author of the profile comments, "So no PSPs for him at this point in time, not when doctor's bills, food, clothes, school fees and other fatherly goods are around to be paid for" (April 2006: 29). Clearly from both Seate and the author's comments there is an understanding of the financial responsibility that a father has in terms of providing material needs for his family. Like *MaksiMan*, *BLINK* represents a model of fatherhood that takes account of the first aspect of fatherhood listed.

Unlike *MaksiMan*, however, very little mention is made of the other five aspects of fatherhood within *BLINK*. No references could be found in the issues under

discussion to the day to day care of children, child management or household work and the only references to socialisation are the many allusions to the sense of political or cultural pride and awareness that must be instilled in future generations. As discussed earlier in this section, this concern with the cultural heritage of black, South African children and their pride in their blackness is a common theme in many of the discussions of both culture and child rearing. What is noteworthy here is that almost no mention is made of the other, more pragmatic, responsibilities of a father. *BL!NK* seems wholly unconcerned with the everyday tasks requiring the emotional investment of the father such as child management and household work. And, while references to "maintaining relationships between care givers" are made from time to time (see 3.1), the "parental commitment / investment" of the father does not seem to be as great as that upheld by *MaksiMan*. *BL!NK*, in other words, is more prone to addressing paternity as an aspect of the masculine ideal espoused by the magazine than most mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, but is less centred on the family and fatherhood than *MaksiMan*. It is difficult to say why this is the case. As mentioned earlier, *BL!NK* might be more closely aligned with the mainstream norm of ignoring or glossing over the potential fatherhood of many of their readers. Alternately, it may indicate that the magazine does not want to directly redress the absentee fatherhood promulgated by the apartheid regime through its system of migrant labour. One might even speculate that patriarchy is so established in black male communities that raising the issue would alienate readers. These are all, however, mere conjectures and it is possible that the magazine's editorial team simply did not consider taking a more aggressive stance in terms of responsible and active fatherhood being reflected on their pages.

Finally, both magazines seem to represent a more realistic view of masculinity – a view that includes paternity – to their readers than the majority of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and in so doing may be said to present an alternative view of masculinity to that presented by the mainstream men's press. In particular *MaksiMan* seems to represent an integrated and holistic view of

paternity that challenges the notions that men in the first place want to be seen as eternally single and in the second place want to forget about their responsibilities to their children. *BLINK* too presents a refreshing view on paternity through the emphasis it places on the intergenerational passing on of (political and social) knowledge.

On the other hand, neither *MaksiMan* nor *BLINK* seems to want to address the prevalence of single parent homes, divorced parents or the role that step parents and significant others play in the lives of children. Indeed many of their readers may be involved in (whether inadvertently or not) parenting children that are not their biological children but the biological children of a woman (or a man) they are involved with or the children of a relative. No reference to this kind of relationship or responsibility is, however, made in either *MaksiMan* or *BLINK* and indeed this is quite disappointing in terms of these magazines presenting an honest reflection of fatherhood within the contemporary South African context. Fathers that are absent due to divorce is also not mentioned. If men, and in particular fathers, are wrestling with their roles, responsibilities (what is expected from them) and identity within the new, democratic South Africa then certainly the fact that these supposedly progressive and honest magazines fail to address the diverse kinds of parenting that exist within the South African context may contribute to the sense of displacement or disenfranchisement (crisis, in other words) that such men may experience.

In Connell's (1995: 74) terms, the lack of references to diverse kinds of fatherhood undermines the "legitimacy" that men may feel within the contemporary South African context and therefore the impact that this absence may have on the "power relations" that influence gender relations may be negative. It is difficult to guess at the kinds of negative influences this lack of legitimacy may have but suffice it to say that where men are not being validated in the responsibilities they are taking upon themselves they are more likely to question, neglect or altogether shirk these responsibilities. The endorsement of a

return to patriarchal attitudes is also a likely consequence of men's lifestyle magazines that will not overtly attack the absentee fatherhood of the past or the hegemonic delineation of masculinity that marked the apartheid era. Simply put, men's lifestyle magazines must address the problems of the past if fatherhood in the New South Africa is to be healthy and constructive, otherwise the legacy of absentee fatherhood and hegemonic gender relations may continue into the future.

Having said that, it is nevertheless important to recognize that by addressing fatherhood at all both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* have come a long way from the narrow delineation of masculinity represented by the mainstream men's lifestyle press. Furthermore, paternal fatherhood is not the only kind of generativity represented by these magazines. In fact, both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* seem consciously to pursue a masculine ideal that is seriously concerned with corporate and social generativity.

#### **4.3 Corporate and social generativity**

'Corporate and social generativity' essentially means the influence men have on the public sector. This influence may range from being responsible and ethical employees to socially conscious role models and leaders. What exactly this means within the contemporary South African context is difficult to say but presumably magazines aimed at addressing upwardly mobile South Africa men must grapple with the question of what it means to be socially responsible. This section investigates the manner in which corporate and social generativity are represented as important facets of South African masculinity in *Maksimán* and *BLINK*. Two theoretical and historical discourses help contextualise this discussion within the broader framework of masculine identity and economic production. The first is Connell's three fold model of the structure of gender

relations which sheds light on the influence of economic production and its gendered delineation on the nature of gender construction within western society. The second is a historical glimpse of the nineteenth and early twentieth century demarcation of social space as fundamentally gendered.

According to Connell's (1995: 73-74) three-fold model of the structure of gender relations, "production" constitutes the second relational model of masculinity. This model places emphasis on the economic structure of production and the manner in which labour is historically divided within this structure along gender lines. Connell (1995: 74) reminds us that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries even menial tasks were attributed to a worker on the basis of gender. He cites the example of an English village studied by the sociologist Pauline Hunt where it was customary for women to wash the inside of windows, men to wash the outside. Connell (1995: 74) proposes that equal attention should be granted to the economic consequences of the gendered division of labour, "the dividend accruing to men from unequal shares of the products of social labour". This is typically discussed in terms of unequal wage rates, but what Connell (1995:74) terms the gendered character of capital should also be noted. In Connell's (1995: 74) view a capitalist economy employing a gender division of labour is necessarily biased. Thus he does not consider it a statistical accident, but part of the social construction of masculinity, that men and not women still control the major corporations and the great private fortunes just as they did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

British sociologist Sean Nixon (1997: 299), points out that a central element in the nineteenth and early twentieth century production of a capitalist western economy was the robust demarcation of the public and private worlds. According to Nixon (1997: 299), the home became the site of particular and singular communities of which larger communities and eventually a nation are constituted. It was also a place removed from the world, especially the world of work. The suburban villa stood as the quintessence of this new middle class 'home'; safely

removed from the urban situation and its proximity to diverse classes, and offering what Nixon (1997: 299) describes as a flavour of the rustic. In Davidoff and Hall's (1987: 18) view, this division was realised through business and social reform. As mentioned in previous chapters, middle class men positioned their masculinity as a part of a public sector that was increasingly allied with masculinity; while the private, domestic domain became the limit of middle class women's sphere of action.

Davidoff and Hall (1987: 18) add that the domestic space was also important to men's masculinity since they moved between the home and public sector. Such men functioned with a powerful investment in domestic harmony as the reward for enterprise and public virtue (Davidoff & Hall 1987: 18). The important point for this chapter is that, as Nixon (1997: 299) asserts, the centrality of being able to provide for a household of dependants, and in particular a wife, manifested as a determined economic independence that was important to middle class men and by which they defined their masculinity.

As in the previous chapters, this introduction to the formulation of a western masculine ideal is relevant to the contemporary South African context because of the presumed influence of western tropes on the construction of vernacular masculinities. Both *Maksiman* and *BLINK* are, after all, modelled on the international western format for a men's lifestyle magazine and both are targeted at South African men who are comfortable within western paradigms and societal structures (such as a democratic political system and a capitalist economic system). Furthermore, since the western media (in the form of newspapers, magazines, films, internet and television programmes) are omnipresent in South Africa it seems fair to assume that western gender ideals may play a role in the construction of local identities. Bourdieu (2001: 7) stresses the need for such historical detours, commenting that the understanding of historical traces is indispensable in breaking the "relationship of deceptive familiarity that binds us to our own tradition". He considers the social construction of gender (the "sexually

characterized habitus”) to appear as the grounding in nature of the arbitrary division which underlies both reality and the representation of reality. As an example of this one might turn to Bourdieu’s (2001: 60) discussion of the differences in social status between the chef and cook, and the couturier and the seamstress. In both of these examples the principle of gender division elevates the masculine field of production to imbue it with a higher margin of social capital.

It is therefore not surprising that Clare (2000: 90) considers work to be the central social concern around which contemporary men define themselves since this is the area where they gain the most social status. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, however, the “territorial invasion” spear headed by women increasingly working outside the home may have thrown masculine identity into a state of flux (Clare 2000: 91). Again, Clare’s (2000: 91) belief that masculinity is in flux (or crisis) may seem exaggerated but perhaps it is fair to say that there are two sides to the nature of contemporary western masculinity both here, in South Africa, and abroad. On the one hand men still, broadly speaking, occupy the majority of powerful societal seats (and this should not be underemphasised by the introduction of a theory of crisis). On the other hand women are increasingly present in the corporate sector and public sphere, a fact which may necessitate the redefinition of masculinity. This two sided field of production, in which men are deemed both hegemonic and in a state of crisis should not be treated as a binary situation since this would undermine the integrated complexity of the circumstance. Rather than mobilize the concept that South African men belong to one or the other of these binaries, I want to suggest a more complex model of power relations – one which includes multiple lines of power and which positions different masculinities and femininities in relation to each other at different times (Nixon 1997: 300).

As has been stressed in previous chapters, in South Africa men’s lifestyle magazines are a recent occurrence and their rise is closely connected to a post apartheid economy and ethos. This section concerns the representation of the

corporate and social generativity of men in *Maksiman* and *BLINK* within the post apartheid context. In the following section the representation of corporate and social generativity is examined as it appears in *Maksiman*.

#### 4.3.1 The representation of corporate and social generativity in *Maksiman*

Corporate and social generativity are fairly interrelated within the pages of *MaksiMan* since the emphasis throughout the magazine seems to fall on a professional life that has an ethical underpinning and is socially aware. The representation of corporate and social life as a kind of intertwined ethic predominantly falls into two categories. First, aspirational profiles of men whom *MaksiMan* deems to be successful business and social leaders are a mainstay of the magazine and communicate the notion of generativity through literal social mentors. Second, through diverse articles and features *MaksiMan* stresses certain professional and social values as an important part of the responsible social behaviour of a Christian man. In this way the magazine takes on the role of mentor itself, directing their readers towards an ethical engagement with what it means to be a successful man in South Africa today. In both of these subtle reference is made to a Christian ethos that presupposes that the reader is concerned with understanding and implementing Christian ideals such as humility, hard work, a respect for others and social empowerment. In the following section these two examples of corporate and social generativity are explored.

##### 4.3.1.1 Corporate and social profiles

In each issue of *MaksiMan* there are at least two profiles of apparently successful social leaders. These range from sports stars like golfing stalwart Gary Player

(November / December 2005: 14) Olympic swimmer Ryk Neethling (May / June 2005: 15), evergreen cricket player Herschelle Gibbs (January / February 2006: 30) and world cup hero Francois Pienaar (September / November 2005: 11) to international film stars like Al Pacino (May / June 2005: 29) and Mel Gibson (January / February 2006: 22) to international and local businessmen such as best selling author Jim Collins (May / June 2005: 34) and South African PSG group mogul Jannie Mouton (January / February 2006: 38-40).

In most cases the subject's (usually humble) origins are sketched with an emphasis on the manner in which their parents played a role in establishing solid (Christian) values that influenced their rise to fame. The subsequent education, training and career milestones of the subject are detailed and the eventual achievement of success chronicled. This narrative usually serves to illustrate the potential for success that lies within each individual but in most of the profiles an emphatic accent is placed on values such as hard work, integrity and humility as important criteria for the accrual of corporate and social accomplishment. In one on one interviews, the interviewees typically highlight the role that a supportive wife and children played in them achieving what they have and frequently make mention of their faith. A kind of deterministic sense that they are merely living out the plan that God had for their lives is voiced by a number of the subjects and seems to be a common thread throughout the interviews.

In the case of, Johan Pretorius, for instance, Pretorius soulfully proclaims, "*Ek glo dat God h plan het met elkeen se lewens en as jy druk ervaar is dit deel van sy plan.*" ("I believe that God has a plan with each person's life and if you experience pressure it is because this is part of God's plan for you.") (November / December 2005: 48). Pretorius is a "*sakeman met sê*" ("businessman with a say"), as the subtitle to his profile explains, and the interview with him is apparently designed to give readers "*n kykie na die man agter die groot sukses in ons land*" ("a look at the man behind the great success in our country") (November / December 2005: 48). The introductory paragraph to the interview with Pretorius is as follows,

*Dit is seker elke man se droom om as uiters suksesvol bestempel te word... Om 'n sukses in ander se oë te wees en vir jou kinders iemand te wees op wie hulle kan trots wees en na wie hulle kan opkyk. Ons maak kennis met 'n man wat hierdie dinge reeds bereik het..*

It is probably every man's dream to be defined as utterly successful ... To be a success in the eyes of others and to be someone whom your children can be proud of and look up to. We make acquaintance with a man who has already achieved this ... (November / December 2005: 48).

Pretorius (November / December 2005: 48) initially describes himself in succinct terms: *"Ek is [ h] Christen, familieman en uitvoerende direkteur van Jobmates Phaika Labour Consultants"* ("I am [a] Christian, family man, and executive director of Jobmates Phaika Labour Consultants"). He expands upon this initial preface by stating that his family is his support system (*"steunpilaar"*) and that he will always be very grateful for their support. While it is commonplace to profile successful business leaders or other social figures in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines (particularly *GQ*) this kind of reference to the family of the subject is rarely found on the pages of mainstream magazines (see the following for profiles that do not refer to the family of the subject: *FHM* May 2006: 50-51, 84-85, *GQ* September 2006: 52-55, 64-67, 86-88, *Men's Health* April 2007: 66-67, 115-120). Such references to supportive family are perhaps further proof of the manner in which a happy home life forms a significant aspect of the masculine ideal of Christian men (as seen in 4.2.1). Says Pretorius, *"Ek is die trotse pa van twee wonderlike kinders, Rozelle en Johan, en bevoorreg genoeg om 'n lewensmaat soos Tersia te hê."* ("I am the proud father of two wonderful children, Rozelle and Johan, and privileged enough to have a life partner like Tersia.") This kind of tribute to the family of a businessman is typical of the *MaksiMan* profiles and frequently accompanies references to the subject's own family context when they were growing up. Thus, Pretorius (November / December 2005: 48) describes the low point of his life as the day his father died, explaining that not only was his father a very good friend and confidant but his role model. In this way, generational generativity – the process of passing on knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another – is stressed, a

process which is given a fair amount of attention in *MaksiMan* as the natural outcome of inter-generational relationships. Here too it is clear that the Christian ethos of sharing knowledge with (or 'discipling') a younger 'brother' plays a role since this kind of inter-generational relationship is framed by the familial connection that different Christians are to have towards one another.

When asked about the high point of his life thus far, Pretorius cites the opportunity to start his own company. This statement is followed by the real subject of the profile, a detailed explanation of how Pretorius started his business and in spite of the inevitable obstacles built it to its current glory: *"Ons het begin met een klein kantoortjie in die agtertuin van my huurhuis, wat 12 kontrakteurs gediens het. Vandag is ons 'n groot organisasie met verskeie takke regoor die land"* ("We started with one small office in the back garden of the house I was renting and serviced twelve contractors. Today we are a large organization with different branches across the whole country") (November / December 2005: 48). But he is quick to add that he did not achieve this success alone. Thus when asked to offer advice to future business leaders he stresses two principles. First, *"Jy is net so suksesvol soos die mense om jou. As ek vir enige opkomende sakeman 'n wenk kan gee sal dit wees om jouself met suksesvolle mense te omring"* ("You are only as successful as the people around you. If I can give any upcoming businessman a tip it would be to surround yourself with successful people") (November / December 2005: 48). Second, *"Respekteer alle mense op alle vlakke. Hierdie beginsels is baie belangrik vir my besigheid – deur elkeen te respekteer vir wie hy is, plaas jy jou in 'n situasie waar jy baie makliker die mense rondom jou verstaan"* ("Respect all people on all levels. These principles are very important in my business – respecting each person for who he is puts you in a position where you can understand the people around you more easily") (November / December 2005: 48). Once again the Christian norm of brotherly love emerges as a significant component of Pretorius' strategy for success. Whether or not he actually implements these principles, they seem to be the ideals he strives for and hopes to pass on to the readers of the magazine. Finally, when asked how he managed to get through times of particular work related

stress he simply comments, "deur aan die voete van God te bly" ("by staying at the feet of God") (November / December 2005: 48). Such overt references to religion are not common but do occur from time to time particularly when men deemed to be role models are asked to share the secret to their success. Whether direct or indirect, whatever references are made to religious beliefs rarely sermonize and generally feel quite natural. Through such forthright but informal references to religion *MaksiMan* fulfils its mandate of being a magazine aimed at Christian men as opposed to being an explicitly Christian magazine (Stander 2007).

After reading the entire profile the reader is left with a portrait of male success that has more to do with the people around Pretorius – his wife, children, father, colleagues – as well as his faith (and the so called plan of God) than his own will power or savvy. Yet one is left with the impression that Pretorius takes life seriously and strives for excellence in every area of his life. Perhaps this is not such an unusual picture of success but it is possibly a more holistic and a little less self aggrandising than similar profiles found in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines ( see e.g. *FHM* May 2006: 50 51, 84 85, *GQ* September 2006: 52 55, 64 67, 86 88, *Men's Health* April 2007: 66 67, 115 120).

Many of the profiles found in *MaksiMan* are similar to this one and represent an analogous masculine ideal. Since the magazine, however, tried to procure a younger readership after 2005 (Stander 2006), it increasingly included profiles of younger and trendier role models. One such example is a profile in the January / February 2006 issue of *MaksiMan* of television presenter, Paul Rothmann.

The profile is entitled, "n Man soos Paul" ("A man like Paul") and is subtitled, "Wat sou jy nie gee om soos hy te wees nie?" ("What wouldn't you give to be like him"), emphasising the aspirational role of profiles such as this one. Next to the article is a full page photograph of the brawny Rothmann wearing a brown t shirt with a digitised (stylistically pixilated) image of a springbok head (the mascot of the

national rugby team), almost as if to suggest that Rothmann represents a new breed of South African sports hero. The introductory paragraph reads as follows:

*Paul Rothmann is skaars 27 jaar oud, maar reeds 'n bekende naam in die vermaaklikheidsbedryf en seker die grootste rede waarom soveel meisies skielik in Pasella geesdriftiges ontaard het. Ons was aangenaam verras toe ons h skamerige outjie vol lewenslus agter die warm glimlag en goedgevormde spiere ontdek het.*

Paul Rothmann is hardly 27 years old, but is already a well known name in the entertainment industry and probably the biggest reason why so many girls have suddenly become Pasella<sup>8</sup> enthusiasts. We were pleasantly surprised when we discovered a shy ish chap, full of a zeal for life, behind the warm smile and well developed muscles (January / February 2006: 14).

This emphasis on the humility or shyness of Rothmann is highlighted again further in the article: *"daar is niks hoogmoedig in sy houding nie, eerder h effense skaamheid"* ("there is nothing proud about his attitude, rather something of a shyness") (January / February 2006: 14) and seems to place an indirect importance on the Christian value of modesty. Conversely, it should be said that the majority of the profile is devoted to his exceptional achievement in a number of areas (but this achievement is consistently and ardently juxtaposed with his humble demeanour). The heading to the first portion of the profile is *"Die presteerder"* ("The achiever") and, as in the profile of Johan Pretorius, it chronicles his life story up to this current point in time. Rothmann fondly recalls the time he spent at a distinguished Afrikaans boys school in Pretoria, *Afrikaans Hoër Seunsskool*, (which, incidentally is renowned as a bastion of Afrikaner identity), stressing his stunning achievements in rugby, swimming, karate and the school operetta. As a result he won the school cup for diverse achievement and reflects, *"[u]itdagings was nog altyd my kos en daarom het ek baie van sport gehou... nie noodwendig om met ander te kompeteer nie, maar eerder met myself"* ("[c]hallenges have always been my bread and butter and that's why I really enjoyed sport ... not necessarily to compete with others, but rather with myself") (January / February 2006: 14). He enrolled for a law degree at

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<sup>8</sup> Pasella is the name of a weekly Afrikaans magazine programme that appears on national television. Paul Rothmann is one of the presenters on this programme.

the University of Pretoria (another citadel of Afrikaner identity) and while completing his degree won a modelling competition which served as an entry point into television presenting. At the same time he took up Thai boxing and soon became the World Pro Karate Association (WPKA) champion. Of Thai boxing he says, "*Die gevoel in die kryt is fantasties – die adrenalien wat pomp en die kompetisie met jouself en die opponent*" ("The feeling in the ring is fantastic – the adrenaline pumping and the competition with yourself and your opponent.")

When asked if he has advice to share, he confidently states the following,

*iets wat my nog altyd gedryf het was uitdagings. Die lewe is vol uitdagings en mens moet elkeen aanvat. Jy moet nooit eendag terugkyk en spyt wees dat jy iets nie gedoen het nie. Ek dink die grootste uitdaging is om jou vrese te oorwin. As jy hoogtevrees het gaan spring valskerm, en as jy skaam is doen die operette. Die gevoel daarna is amazing!*

Something that has always driven me is a challenge. Life is full of challenges and one must embrace each one. You must never allow yourself to one day look back with regret about not rising to the challenge. I think the biggest challenge is to overcome your fears. If you have a fear of heights go parachuting, and if you are shy do an operetta. The feeling afterwards is amazing! (January / February 2006: 14)

This kind of gung ho zeal is echoed throughout the article and seems to communicate not only a youthful exuberance but also the sense that losing courage is not part of the masculine vocabulary. Again Rothmann urges the reader to "*[g]ryp die lewe aan... doen dit waarvoor jy die bangste is en lewe voluit*" ("*[g]rab life ... do the thing that makes you the most afraid and live life to the full*") (January / February 2006: 14).

But not all his advice is this pumped up. He also states, somewhat more pensively, that he believes each person is responsible for his or her own actions and that one should never place the blame for your actions on somebody other than yourself. His final sage words are that he believes every person should be treated with respect: "*jy hoef nie h persoon se gebruike goed te keur en van hom hou om goeie maniere*

*te openbaar nie*" ("you don't have to approve of somebody's practices or like him in order to exhibit good manners") (January / February 2006: 14). Such noble ideals echo those of Pretorius as well as many other role models profiled in the magazine. Together, these form a kind of didactic trope that seems to serve as a reminder that Afrikaner, Christian masculinity is about excellence, balance and, apparently, a respect for others.

No overt reference is made in the profile on Rothmann to his religious beliefs but when asked about the future he states that he would like to get married and have children and that he would like to do this with his girlfriend whom he met at Sunday school when he was a child. While it is entirely possible that Rothmann is something other than a Christian the symbolic tradition which seems to frame his life within this profile is undeniably Afrikaner and therefore one might say, Christian. It is therefore difficult to determine to what extent his sentiments and values – excellence, courage and a respect for others – stem from his Afrikaner upbringing, the predominantly Christian context within which he finds himself (as an Afrikaner) or simply a personal conviction. What is clear is that these values appear in almost every profile presented by *MaksiMan* and together communicate a masculine ideal that is driven and ambitious but demonstrates a (Christian?) sensitivity to the need for respect and consideration for others within the current South African democratic dispensation. Whether this is a Christian value or simply a humanitarian one is debatable but it does not appear with nearly the same conviction or force within the profiles of successful men in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines (see *FHM* May 2006: 50 51, 84 85, *GQ* September 2006: 52 55, 64 67, 86 88, *Men's Health* April 2007: 66 67, 115 120). Where mainstream men's lifestyle magazines emphasise the mechanics of rising to a position of status (the companies the subject worked for, positions he held and tactics used to get to the top), the profiles in *MaksiMan* place a far greater emphasis on integrity, family, faith, humility, a respect for others and excellence as the criteria for success. There is also the sense in most of the *MaksiMan* profiles that there is a greater force behind the success of an individual – whether this is God or simply a desire to live life well.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, success in the workplace seems to hold little value without a happy and healthy home life and this comes across very clearly in all the profiles presented in *MaksiMan*. This is certainly not the case in the profiles that appear in mainstream magazines since these seem exclusively concerned with the professional life of the subject and it is rare that any consideration is given to his personal life (see *FHM* May 2006: 50 51, 84 85, *GQ* September 2006: 52 55, 64 67, 86 88, *Men's Health* April 2007: 66 67, 115 120).<sup>9</sup> The one area of commonality between the profiles in mainstream men's magazines and *MaksiMan* is that women are almost never interviewed or profiled. It strikes one that the fact that these magazines are aimed at male readers should not imply that they would only be interested in reading about male role models. And yet this seems to be exactly what the editorial teams of both mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and *MaksiMan* are saying by excluding the occasional profile on a female role model. Is the masculine ideal maintained by these magazines so precarious or fragile that it is threatened by a feature on an equally successful woman or is it simply a case of creating a space where men are the ascendant minds and women are only present as visual pleasure? Either way, as stated in Chapter Three, it is troubling that women are not present in *MaksiMan* as independent minds and achievers but mostly as the wives and girlfriends of successful men.

The so-called corporate and social ethics espoused by *MaksiMan* are not only evident in the profiles of successful social role models, they are also infused in the many smaller features and articles on corporate success that together form the instructive 'voice' of the magazine. The following section looks at the many corporate and social values that consistently emerge from such articles.

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<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the stress on family and non-corporate values within *MaksiMan* has something to do with the hostility of a corporate environment that is regulated by employment equity. One might speculate that mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are simply reproducing an American or British model of corporate culture which assumes the corporation is a rational space of tactics and contention without taking note of the specific local dynamics and political issues in South Africa.

#### 4.3.1.2 Corporate and social values

There are three principal corporate and social values that are repeated time and time again throughout the many articles on lifestyle and professional success in *MaksiMan*. Through various articles, features and profiles these three values become a kind of leitmotif for the representation of the social success of a Christian man. The first is striving for excellence in your professional life, the second respecting those around you and the third maintaining a balance between your professional life and home or family life, between work and rest.<sup>10</sup> Each of these is presented in a didactic way that positions the magazine as a kind of mentor who offers the reader erudite, brotherly advice. Each of the three corporate and social values is discussed briefly in this section.

##### 4.3.1.2.1 Professional excellence

Within the pages of *MaksiMan* work is considered a serious matter. Whereas *FHM* frequently has features on how to waste time at the office (*FHM* June 2001: 72, 74), for *MaksiMan* work appears to be a source of great pride and worth. Says acclaimed radio presenter for *Radio Sonder Grense* (Radio Without Borders), Johan Rademan,

*My werk is elke dag opwindend, ek leer uit my foute en strewe na die beste. Ek is altyd analities oor my werk en dis waarop ek my sukses skoei. Hoe meer sukses ek in my werk behaal, hoe meer sukses kan ek deurgee na my vrou en kinders.*

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<sup>10</sup> For many, family life may not be synonymous with rest, but within *MaksiMan* the word 'rest' seems to be used to refer to time spent away from work which frequently implies that it is time spent with the family.

My work is exciting every day, I learn from my mistakes and strive to do my best. I am always analytical about my work and this self analysis is the making of my success. The more success I achieve in my work, the more success I can pass on to my wife and children (November / December 2005: 50).

Rademan is not alone in expressing the importance of work to his sense of success as both a professional and family man. This sentiment is reiterated in most of the articles and features, with a particular emphasis on the excellence Christian men should strive for. In the May / June 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* there are two articles to this effect. The first is a sort of profile of business strategist Jim Collins in which he not only meticulously chronicles his own process of writing a best seller but also provides the reader with tips on how to take your business "*van gewoon tot beste*" ("from good to great") (May / June 2005: 34). The most significant principle Collins underscores is his belief that it is not charismatic leaders and brilliant strategies that make businesses work but rather hard work and dedication, a notion that seems to be quite popular with *MaksiMan's* editorial team, since it appears in an array of articles over a number of issues.

On the very next page, following Collins' article, is a one page feature entitled, "*Hoe om buitengewoon te wees*" ("How to be extraordinary") (May / June 2005: 36). The "How to ... " feature is a regular occurrence in *MaksiMan* and deals with a broad range of concerns from how to spend more time at home (September / October 2005: 31) to how to give your bathroom a makeover (May / June 2006: 69). Whilst this feature highlights the aspirational quality of the magazine, it also embodies the didactic, brotherly tone of *MaksiMan* since it presumably does attempt to help the reader to achieve his goals (assuming he wants to spend more time at home or redo his bathroom). The feature starts by conveying the notion that most people merely survive life while a mere few manage to transform their lives "*van gewoon to buitengewoon*" ("from ordinary to extraordinary") (May / June 2005: 36). Five tips are given to help the reader achieve this goal: "*sien jouself as kreatief*" ("see yourself as creative"), "*besluit waarheen jy wil gaan*" ("decide where you want to get to"), "*leer, leer, leer*" ("learn, learn, learn"), "*bou jou integriteit*" ("build your

integrity") and "*kies die regte mense*" ("choose the right people") (May / June 2005: 36). In explaining each of these steps, apparently extraordinary individuals such as Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi and, of course, Jesus Christ are quoted to support the philosophy behind what is being said. At the bottom of the page, the following anonymous quote appears in inverted commas: "*Dit is nie altyd genoeg om bloot ons beste te doen nie, soms moet ons verder gaan en alles doen wat nodig is*" ("It is not always enough merely to do your best, sometimes you need to go further and do everything that is necessary") (May / June 2005: 36). Here again it is clear that excellence is an ideal worth striving for and that one must do everything in your power to achieve this.

The November / December 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* features an article that deals with the converse side of this argument. It is entitled "*Speel by die werk*" ("Playing at the office") and asks the question, "*Is dit eties om die maatskappy se toerusting vir persoonlike plesiertjies te gebruik?*" ("Is it ethical to use the company's equipment for personal pleasure?") (November / December 2005: 52). Where *FHM* offers an escapist route for their readers by making light of the workplace context, in this article *MaksiMan* offers a rap over the fingers for all those who would waste their boss's time and money:

*Speel en werk was nog nooit goeie stalmaats nie, al wil hulle ook graag 'n stal deel. Selfs suksesvolle sportmanne, wat op die oog af speel-speel miljoenêrs word, moet hard werk met discipline en toewyding om die suksesleer te klim*

Play and work have never been good playmates, no matter how badly they want to share a playpen. Even successful sportsmen, who seem to become millionaires easily, have to work extremely hard with a great deal of discipline and dedication in order to achieve success (November / December 2005: 52).

And the didactic reprimand only gets worse. Later in the article, a list of offences – writing personal emails at work, playing computer games or surfing the internet unnecessarily – is provided and readers are asked to score themselves in order to

determine how “guilty” they are of wasting office resources. Shortly thereafter, the statement is made that “*die werkplek toets jou karakter, ... slaag jy die toets nie hier nie dan sal jy ook sukkel met groter integriteitstoetse in jou lewe*” (“the workplace is the testing ground of your character, ... if you fail the test here then you will almost certainly struggle with more important tests of your integrity elsewhere in your life”) (November / December 2005: 53). The author of the article, Danie Vorster, quotes an American colleague who once told him that “[w]ith God, faithfulness in a little thing, is a beeeeeeg thing!” and urges the reader to “*neem vandag nog jou selfrespek en gemoedskrag terug [en]... dit sal jou vrymaak*” (“take back your self respect and dignity today [and] ... it will set you free”) (November / December 2005: 53). This kind of Christian speak – of behavioural habits that will “set you free” – appears in many articles but is awkwardly evident in articles such as this one that attempt to reprimand and teach the reader simultaneously. In such instances the generative or didactic role that the magazine takes on is quite obvious, almost to the extent that one wonders whether the reader is not annoyed at being spoken down to in this manner.<sup>11</sup>

The second value that makes a strong appearance on the pages of *MaksiMan* is a respect and love for others. This has already been discussed as a value held in high esteem by both Johan Pretorius and Paul Rothmann (in the profiles of successful role models) but is discussed in the following section as a more general value maintained by *MaksiMan*.

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<sup>11</sup> One also wonders about the dynamic implied by the fact that the majority of *MaksiMan's* readership is female. It is difficult to assess accurately the impact that this fact may have on the content of the magazine or the editors of the magazine. It does, however, raise the question of whether these female readers take comfort in the fact that their husbands are being reprimanded thus or are they too annoyed by this?

#### 4.3.1.2.2 Respecting and loving others

Not only is a respect or love for others a principle valued by both Johan Pretorius and Paul Rothmann but it seems to be an important value to most of the successful societal role models profiled by *MaksiMan*. Says Johan Rademan (November / December 2005: 50), *‘By my ouers het ek geleer om ander mense te respekteer. My pa se invloed om nie impulsiewe besluite te neem nie, maar om rustig daaroor na te dink, het sterk op my afgedruk’* (“I learnt to respect other people from my parents. My father taught me not to make rash decisions but to think things through quietly. This influenced me greatly.”) The concern with your fellow man is of course a strong biblical – and particularly a New Testament – principle since Jesus apparently gave his followers a so called ‘new commandment’ to love one another. In a profile of the former Springbok rugby team captain, Francois Pienaar, he raises the concern that there is often *“n vraagteken [wat] hang oor h belydende Christen wat finansiële welvaart beleef”* (“a question mark over practising Christians who experience a great deal of financial success”) (September / October 2005: 11). Pienaar does not elaborate on this point but presumably there is some pressure on wealthy Christian role models to demonstrate their desire to uplift others and in so doing to fulfil the ‘new commandment’. Pienaar explains that it is important for him to give something back to the community and that he has done so by establishing an organisation called The Mad Bunch which provides funding for children who are academically gifted but need financial assistance. While this kind of endeavour is regularly undertaken by secular celebrities and therefore not implicitly Christian per se, the empowerment projects highlighted in *MaksiMan* seem to be imbued with a kind of spiritual or moral significance that connects these projects, in the mind of the reader, to the subject’s Christianity. In this way, Pienaar appears to be a ‘good Christian’ because of the assistance he offers disadvantaged children.

This ideal of respecting or loving your neighbour is also expressed in the need for corporate or social leaders to mentor younger individuals in their field. The May /

June 2005 issue of *MaksiMan* features an article entitled, "Help ander groei" ("Help others grow"). This article makes the point that "een van die kenmerke van uitstekende leierskap is die vermoë om ander mense tot hulle volle potensiaal te help ontwikkel" ("one of the characteristics of exceptional leadership is the ability to help other people realize their full potential") (May / June 2005: 52). The author uses the New Testament characters Timothy and Paul as examples of what a mentor/student relationship might be like.<sup>7</sup>

*Timoteus was 'n jong leier, maar met die aanmoediging van Paulus kon hy in 'n volwasse leier ontwikkel. By verskeie geleenthede is hy die persoon wat die jong gelowiges help om vas te staan in hulle geloof en te verhinder dat hulle terugval in vroeëre nie Christelike gewoontes. Hy volg Paulus se voorskrifte om die ouderlinge en diakens as gemeenteleiers te ontwikkel. Paulus moedig hom aan: Hoe meer jy ander mense help ontwikkel, hoe meer help dit jouself om te ontwikkel.*

Timothy was a young leader, but with encouragement from Paul he developed into a mature leader. At various occasions he was the one who helped younger believers to stand firm in their faith and not to regress into earlier non-Christian habits. He follows Paul's advise to develop the elders and deacons as leaders of the community and, thus, Paul encourages him: the more you help other people to develop, the more you yourself will develop (May / June 2005: 52).

The article goes on to explain in a fair amount of detail precisely how one might mentor a junior in the work place, encouraging the reader to ask of themselves questions such as "Bemagtig ek die persoon genoeg?" ("Am I empowering this person enough?"), "Bemoedig ek die persoon gereeld?" ("Am I encouraging this person regularly?"), "Wat is die leerbare beginsels wat ek kan oordra?" ("What are the skills that I can convey to them?") and "Is ek self 'n model wat nagevolg kan word?" ("Am I a good role model for them?") (May / June 2005: 52). While corporate mentoring is a model of relational learning that has long existed in the secular world, the process documented here is once again imbued with a spiritual overtone. The author ends the article urging the reader to "[v]ertrou die Heilige Gees om jou innerlik sensitief te maak wie om verder te ontwikkel. Hy sal ook mettertyd vir jou

*die 'hoe' aandui*" ("trust the Holy Spirit to make you sensitive to who you should mentor. He will also, in time, show you 'how'") (May / June 2005: 52).

The ideal of respecting or loving others is, thus, manifested in the corporate or social need for tolerance towards people of other ethnicities, religious groups and sexual orientations (as stressed in the profile of Paul Rothmann, January / February 2006: 14). But it is also manifested in the ideal that successful Christian men somehow contribute to the South African climate of social awareness by empowering other people in some way (as in the profile of Francois Pienaar, September / October 2005: 10 11 and the article on corporate mentoring, May / June 2005: 52). Both of these interpretations of respecting or loving your fellow man are in line with the project of reconciliation upheld both on a national level – by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – and on a smaller, local level – by individuals who support the African ideal of *ubuntu* (or mutual societal caring and sharing).

Perhaps, noteworthy is the fact that the magazine's references to social empowerment (as in the profile of Francois Pienaar, September / October 2005: 10 11) rarely includes profiles of Indian, coloured or black men and subsequently paints a fairly one sided (colonialist even) picture of white, Christian, Afrikaner men assisting Indian, coloured and black disadvantaged 'Others', which only reinforces the hegemonic tradition of masculine identities in pre 1994 South African society. The resultant question is why *MaksiMan* doesn't paint a more representative picture of South Africa in which white and Indian, Coloured and black men work together to uplift the community? *MaksiMan* editor, Hennie Stander (2007), is quick to point out that the editorial team has tried very hard to include Coloured 'voices' in the magazine but the fact is that these voices are situated well on the margins of the magazine (as small inserts or features) and are rarely integrated in any comprehensive or convincing way.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps, then, the ideal upheld by *MaksiMan* of respecting or loving your neighbour is a fairly affected ideal that does not really

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<sup>12</sup> Stander (2007) presumably stresses Coloured people because they commonly speak Afrikaans whereas Indian and black South Africans rarely cite Afrikaans as their home language.

grapple with what this means for a Christian publication situated in contemporary South Africa. It is possible that *MaksiMan* still operates within a social paradigm that is concurrent with the past notion of white masculinity as hegemonic (and the norm) and therefore finds it appropriate to exclude Other voices.

The third and most emphatic value espoused throughout the many articles, profiles and features in *MaksiMan* is balance – in particular the magazine stresses the importance of maintaining a balance between work and family. The following section investigates the representation of striving for a balanced lifestyle as it appears in *MaksiMan*.

#### 4.3.1.2.3 Striving for a balanced lifestyle

The importance of maintaining a healthy, balanced lifestyle is the most pervasive corporate and social value espoused by *MaksiMan*. From the many articles and features on this subject it would appear that *MaksiMan's* readers really struggle with this aspect of their masculine identity. Perhaps the connection between workplace generativity and masculine identity is to blame for the difficulty that this demographic of the South African population – Afrikaans, Christian men – have with resting and spending time at home. Either way, it is clear that *MaksiMan* is intent on convincing their readers of the value of so-called 'Sabbath rest'.

A common theme in many of the articles on this subject is the notion of balancing work and family. In an article entitled, "*Balans vir jou lewe*" ("Balance for your life") (January / February 2006: 26), the author, Cornel Dunn, explains that while most men want to be successful in their work, in part because they want to be good providers (and this is to be applauded), for many men professional success and the process of making money has become an obsession. After citing a number of techniques that men can use to realign themselves with their families, he muses,

*"Die belangrikste faktor om balans te bepaal in 'n man se lewe is sy identiteit"* ("The most important factor in determining balance in a man's life is his identity") (January / February 2006: 27). This process of losing sight of the important things like family and getting side tracked by ambition and greed seems to be a central theme in *MaksiMan* and is echoed by numerous authors in different contexts. In an article entitled, *"Pa@werk...en @huis"* ("Father @work ... and @home") (September / October 2005: 8), editor Hennie Stander comments *"die groot geheim is net om 'n paar skuiwe te maak en bietjie nuut te dink, sodat ons ons drome kan najaag, sonder om ons vrou en kinders vir 'n paar rand te verkoop"* ("the big secret [to a healthy balance between work and family] is just to make a couple of simple shifts and to think a little out of the box. In this way we can pursue our dreams without selling our wives and children for a few rand"). Later in the article Stander offers the reader practical advice on how to go about this: *"Gesels met mekaar wanneer julle saam eet. Maak tyd na ete om jou kinders met hul huiswerk te help. Bad saam met jou vrou en gebruik daardie tydjie om die dag se gebeure met mekaar te deel."* ("Chat to one another when you eat together. Make time after dinner to help your children with their homework. Bath with your wife and use this time with her to discuss the events of the day.") (September / October 2005: 8).

The trouble seems to be that Afrikaans, Christian men struggle with an old fashioned Protestant work ethic and don't know where to draw the line. In the *"Hoe om..."* ("How to ...") feature from the November / December 2005 issue, the subject of how to relax at home is broached. The author confesses how in spite of it being very difficult for him to put his work aside and spend time with his family and friends, there may just be a reward in doing so:

*Ten spyte van die rugby en vriende wat kom kuier het, was dit vir my nogtans ontsettend moeilik om myself los te skeur van 'n sekere werkprojek waaraan ek bitter graag al my aandag wou gee. Ek het myself egter gedwing om heeltemaal van die projek te vergeet, en – siedaar! – teen die aand se kant, terwyl ek besig is om die Springbokke se oorwinning te vier met 'n drankie, skiet 'n idee my te binne hoe ek die projek kan aanpak op 'n nuwe manier.*

In spite of the rugby and friends that had come to visit, it was still extremely difficult for me to tear myself away from a certain work project that I desperately wanted to give all my attention. But I forced myself to forget about the project, and – hey presto – by that evening, while celebrating the Springboks' victory over a drink, I thought of an ingenious new solution for my project (November / December 2005: 45).

The article is accompanied by a modern black and white photograph of a young couple. The woman, smiling, is on the phone while the man, also smiling, is working on a notebook. Whether this is supposed to represent the happy integration of work and home life or simply form an attractive backdrop is unclear, but both look relaxed and the overall effect is quite convincing.

As with the previous corporate and social values, the importance of a balanced lifestyle is occasionally given a spiritual spin. In the "*Hoe om...*" ("How to ...") feature from the September / October 2005 issue, entitled "*Huistoegaan – tyd is vir rus*" ("Going home time is for resting") (September / October 2005: 31), the following statement is made: "*n Mens moet besluit hoe jy wil lewe en nie net hoe jy wil werk nie. Nog veel dieper, werk soos jy glo en glo soos jy werk*" ("A person needs to decide how you want to live and not just how you want to work. Much more significantly, work in the manner that you believe, and believe while you work!"). While a fairly superficial, almost trite, statement it does demonstrate the belief that the balance between work and family is not simply a matter of implementing a healthy lifestyle but also of exercising one's faith. Time management, thus, becomes a matter of 'good stewardship' not only of one's time and energy but also of the family that God has supposedly blessed one with.

Perhaps because of the implication that the effective administration of time is a vital part of the responsible Christian man's daily routine, *MaksiMan* is rife with articles and features on time management. In fact, the magazine has a regular feature, entitled "*Jou tyd*" ("Your time"), dedicated to the subject of efficient time management. The January / February 2006 "*Jou tyd*" ("Your time") is entitled, "*Ruk jou prioriteite reg*" ("Get your priorities straight") and boasts a full page photograph

of a foreboding hourglass. The feature predominantly consists of a Stephen Covey style list of instructions that will aid the reader in doing things that are important as opposed to urgent, but also includes lighter suggestions such as making time to relax (January / February 2006: 46-47). The November / December 2005 "Jou tyd" ("Your time") is entitled, "Maak tyd vir rus" ("Make time to rest") and is accompanied by a photograph of a modern metallic alarm clock. The opening paragraph proffers that taking time out to rest is "nie net goed vir jouself nie, maar ook vir jou werkgewer, kinders en vrou" ("not only good for you, but also for your employer, your kids and your wife") (November / December 2005: 43), yet again demonstrating the integratedness of family in almost all of the features.<sup>13</sup> In this feature another prevalent theme emerges, that of being positive about life and grateful for what you have. Next to a list of instructions on how to make time for resting and what you can do to help you relax, a quote by Brian Tracy appears in bold print: "Maak dit 'n speletjie daarvan om die positiewe in elke situasie te sien. 95% van jou emosies word bepaal deur hoe jy gebeure interpreteer" ("Make it a little game to see the positive in every situation. 95% of your emotions are determined by how you interpret events") (November / December 2005: 42-43).

This same sentiment of rest and a positive attitude being conducive to health and happiness is echoed in a number of features and articles. Near the back of the January / February 2006 issue is an article entitled, "Ontspan!" ("Relax!"). The subtitle reads, "Hou op stress en begin om die lewe te geniet" ("Stop stressing and start enjoying life") (January / February 2006: 76). Among the 11 tips provided on how to achieve this state of relaxation are the suggestions that the reader, "waardeer klein dingetjies – ruik weer die geur van rose of kyk na die skoonheid van 'n sonsondergang" ("appreciate the small things in life – smell the roses or enjoy the beauty of a sunset"),<sup>14</sup> and "Gee sonder ophou – Wees bereid om te gee sonder om

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<sup>13</sup> Presumably many if not most of the readers of the magazine have working wives – so 'making time for home' is not simply a matter of male choice, but of spousal negotiation. The kind of man who spends time at home may seem ideal to women, which yet again raises the issue of whether the magazine is writing a masculine ideal with their female readership in mind.

<sup>14</sup> The marked tone of *MaksiMan* is particularly evident in this feature. While much of the innocence of the author's suggestion (that the reader smell the proverbial roses and enjoy a

*iets terug te verwag. Jy sal verbaas wees hoe vervuld jy voel as jy iets goed vir iemand anders doen of gee* ("Give without ceasing – Be prepared to give without expecting something in return. You will be amazed by how good you feel after you have done or given something good for someone else") (January / February 2006: 76). These suggestions again underscore the Christian ethos (of humility, selflessness, responsibility or good stewardship and gratefulness to God) that is felt throughout *MaksiMan*. Not only are there occasional overt references to the reader's faith or religion but the notion of faith based living is woven into the magazine on a consistent subtextual level.

It is clear, then, that while the magazine shares a particular interest in successful societal role models with mainstream men's lifestyle magazines, the notion of success is defined in somewhat different terms within *MaksiMan*. Whereas mainstream magazines seem to define success in terms of mental, physical and professional achievement, *MaksiMan* places a great deal of emphasis on spiritual or religious integrity and familial well being in addition to professional accomplishment. These additional values seem to stem from the Christian tradition within which the magazine is situated, but may also, perhaps, be connected to the positioning of the magazine within Afrikaans or Afrikaner culture since the Afrikaner 'imagined community' is both God fearing and family centred.

This section has investigated the representation of corporate and social generativity as it appears in the Afrikaans, men's lifestyle magazine for Christian men, *MaksiMan*. The following section follows the same methodology in order to investigate the representation of corporate and social generativity in the English men's lifestyle magazine targeted at black South African men, *BLINK*.

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sunset) is lost in the translation, it is nevertheless clear that this kind of suggestion might well be meant satirically if it were found in a mainstream men's lifestyle magazine – so naïve and unsophisticated is the suggestion that it hardly supports the more hardened or callous image of masculinity typically espoused by mainstream men's magazines.

#### 4.3.2 The representation of corporate and social generativity in *BLINK*

While corporate and social generativity infuses much of the thinking behind features and articles in *MaksiMan* it seems to be the very *raison d'être* of *BLINK*. Nearly every article, feature and interview is centred either on teasing out the corporate and social generativity of the subject or on pondering the corporate and especially the social generativity that young, black South African men, *BLINK*'s readers in other words, should be engaging in. As seen in the previous section, for *MaksiMan* corporate and social generativity essentially means behaving with integrity and in an ethically accountable way, within both home life and professional life. Within *BLINK* there is a far greater emphasis on socio-political responsibility and the need for upwardly mobile, educated black men to be responsible to one another by actively contributing (both intellectually and practically) to the social construction of a democratic South Africa. This is largely the theme upon which every feature and article is based and forms a critical part of the branding of *BLINK*. This sense of social responsibility is also presented as a vital part of the masculine ideal espoused by the magazine. The slogan of the magazine is, "the key to being a man", and anyone who has read a copy of *BLINK* will almost certainly understand this to mean that it is social responsibility and accountability that is the key to being a man. This representation of the black masculine ideal as socially responsible may be read as self-promotion (or 'positive' racial stereotyping) but in fact it is presented as aspirational within the magazine, as being an ideal rather than the present reality.

The tone of the magazine is, furthermore, quite different from that of *MaksiMan*. *BLINK*'s predominant register is that of a critical and intellectual engagement with social and cultural concerns facing black South Africans. Whereas *MaksiMan* almost seems to employ a slightly naive and innocuous register urging men towards a healthy life philosophy through aspirational narratives of 'good, kind men', *BLINK*

takes a far more hard nosed approach and in so doing may ruffle a couple of politically correct feathers. The men interviewed as social role models, for instance, tend to speak frankly about concerns they may have around government legislation, say, or a particular social issue. The interviewers and authors, similarly, frequently provide a kind of critique of the person being interviewed or a subject addressed. No attempt seems to be made to assume a politically correct position or subdue a political stance. This makes for an honest, reflective and refreshing publication that seems earnest in its attempt to first, add to an informed political dialogue in South Africa and second to contribute moral social fibre to black male identity in South Africa.

The reader is made aware of both of these goals in numerous indirect ways throughout every issue. As in *MaksiMan*, however, the communication of these ideals is dealt with in the following sections in two primary formats. First corporate and social generativity is explored as it appears in aspirational profiles of societal role models. Second the over arching themes of corporate and social generativity that appear as leitmotifs throughout different issues of *BLINK* are examined.

#### 4.3.2.1 Corporate and social profiles

Every issue of *BLINK* contains at least two profiles of (black) men deemed to be social leaders or celebrities worthy of attention. The first is usually a South African while the second is typically a black international celebrity. In this way, local societal leaders are paralleled with global stars like Grammy winner Kanye West (April 2006: 74 76), Arsenal superstar, Thierry Henry (April 2006: 61) and Hollywood hero, Eddie Murphy (November 2005: 80 81), underscoring the *BLINK* sentiment that South African heroes are comparable with any in the world. In this section two profiles are examined, that of national pension funds adjudicator, Vuyani Ngalwana

(January / February 2006: 27- 29) and former radio personality Bob Mabena (March 2006: 24- 28).

The profile on Vuyani Ngalwana is entitled, "Not retiring yet" (January / February 2006: 27) and starts with an emphatic accent on his current success from his corner office and job as the pension funds adjudicator for the Financial Services Board (a job which has allowed him to "alter the future of millions and affect multi-billion rand businesses", January / February 2006: 27) to his suburban home and R620 000 Mercedes-Benz CLK 500. The article is accompanied by three colour photographs of him in a brilliant white suit and shirt, looking very debonair. Clearly Ngalwana is the very embodiment of contemporary corporate success, but this is not the context he came from. Ngalwana is described as a "township boy, through and through", but one who not only has managed to escape from this situation but deems it a situation well worth escaping from: "for him, township life is one to escape from; the 'keeping it real' concept that keeps black guys in ghettos is one that is totally lost on him" (January / February 2006: 27). Comments Ngalwana,

I don't understand how people can take pride in being in Gugs. You hear people romanticising township life, why should I romanticise Guguletu or Soweto? The fact that I'm here [in the suburbs] means I wanted to be here. It's my country; I can live wherever I want to live (January / February 2006: 27).

Ngalwana, thus, appears to be a man with a confident sense of self that does not answer to any cultural stereotypes that might belittle his success.

As in the profiles in *MaksiMan* a great deal of attention is given to his rise to glory. The story starts with Ngalwana describing his childhood alter ego as a loner always engrossed in some or other book or magazine (typically the *Reader's Digest*). He describes how during this period – the early eighties – township schools were in a state of upheaval with little or no learning taking place due to political strife. Being the responsible young man that he was, he apparently asked his mother to help him find a school that was stable enough to accommodate him and his ambition.

Ngalwana explains that this ambition was born out of an article that he had read in an old *Sunday Times*, regarding a 17-year-old former Eastern Bloc rural boy who was the youngest student at his university. Inspired by this story, he sought out the best A producing school in his area (which turned out to be the prestigious Bishops School (or Diocesan College) and wrote a letter to the principal requesting to attend the school. The principal, to his credit, agreed to meet with Ngalwana and eventually permitted him to attend the school on a full scholarship.

With more than a little acrimony, Ngalwana remembers how he felt when he first arrived at the school yard, his realisation of the extent to which Bantu education and the apartheid system had robbed him of not only a decent education but also “the best childhood years of his life” (January / February 2006: 27). After high school Ngalwana obtained a BA and an LLB degree from the University of Cape Town and then gained a postgraduate diploma and masters in Income Tax Law. When asked about the future, he muses that he would be interested in one day becoming the Minister of Justice, since he believes this department could use a massive overhaul. He is outspoken and articulate in both his criticism of the current African National Congress government (mostly that they are not pushing black empowerment enough, particularly within the justice system) and his hopes of participating in the solutions to these problems.

Already he has been described as something of a “troublemaker”, to use the parlance of the apartheid regime, in that he has caused ripples in the insurance community by changing the practice whereby administrators of retirement annuity funds, typically life insurance companies, “punish” people by charging them for reducing their premiums or opting to exit a particular administrator for various reasons such as affordability. But these professional Robin Hood tactics are not his only effort at improving the prospects for future South Africans. One of his passions, we are told, is speaking at schools to young people about his industry and the different facets of it, so as to at least get them interested in the economics of the country, if not to recruit them.

In addition to these contributions to the current fabric of South African life, Ngalwana seems concerned with the direct input he has in his children's lives, the more so because, like many (especially black) South African children, his father left his family when he was very young and thus he grew up essentially fatherless (January / February 2006: 28). For this reason, he says it is particularly important to him that his two children (and in particular his son) grow up with a strong role model in their lives. Here again, as in his concern for South African school children, we see the desire to establish some inter-generational generativity. Not only is Ngalwana a role model to the readers of *BLINK* but he is indirectly setting the example of what it means to be a role model for future generations and the need to engage with black men across generational boundaries. No mention is made, however, of his present relationship with his father or any desire on Ngalwana's part to mend relations with him.

Overall the profile of Ngalwana creates the impression that it is of vital importance for each black South African man to take his destiny in his own hands and strive for excellence on his own terms so that the apartheid project can once and for all be undermined and a new future realized. It is an inspiring profile and a tough act to follow, and yet it is one of many such stories covered by *BLINK*.<sup>15</sup>

The "*BLINK* man" for March 2006 is acclaimed former radio personality, Bob Mabena. The profile is entitled, "I'm the new Bob Mabena. Pleased to meet'cha" (March 2006: 25). As in the profile of Ngalwana the article starts by establishing Mabena's considerable success as the Business Development Executive of media giant, Primedia, an established and well-loved South African personality, father, husband and all-round mover and shaker: "[Mabena is a] 'metro man' – in the old sense of the word – he is. Metro = urban, driven, cosmopolitan, assured, always

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<sup>15</sup> Ngalwana seems to be the product of a fairly 'white' education but this is not the only kind of narrative found in *BLINK*. Many of the other men featured did not attend private schools but completed their secondary education at so-called township schools as is the case with Bob Mabena, the subject of the next profile under discussion.

seeking, always on the move, always in the mix, and really not only studio mixes, Mabena is much more than that" (March 2006: 25). As if to reiterate the point, the interviewer, Bongani Madondo, stresses the difficulty of trying to find a time in Mabena's jam packed schedule to interview him. Between his high profile job, photo shoots, parties and moving house, they eventually decide that Madondo should drop in at a party Mabena is throwing for a friend and interview him there.

From the cars parked outside – apparently an impressive assortment of the latest BMWs – Madondo may be excused for expecting that this will be a party "full of posers in golf shirts and women in strapless tops shimmering around" (March 2006: 25). He is, in fact, pleasantly surprised to find that this is not the case. The proof of this apparently lies in the music being played: "old style R&B ... of Atlantic Star and Mighty Clouds of Joy variety and not 'you remind me of my Jeep' modern soul crunk passing as Rhythm and Blues" (March 2006: 25). Furthermore, the laughter that Madondo hears in the background does not turn out to belong to "anybody you would have seen on the society pages of *BLINK* or *Style* magazines. It is Mabena and his old Atteridgeville pals, wrapped in stitches (sic), telling a variety of stories" (March 2006: 25). This is an important observation since staying in touch with your roots and humble (township) background is a significant and recurring theme in *BLINK*. As for the subject of the conversation amongst these old friends, Madondo comments:

It is male middle agey sonorities (sic) chat: traffic fines, the life on the fast lane they ditched just a few years ago, and of the current black middle class rap – white folks struggling to cope with their new rich, brash, black, and African rituals practising neighbours (March 2006: 25).

In this description we are given a lucid picture of the humour and self reflexivity needed to integrate oneself – yet remain grounded – into an essentially 'white' suburban context. It becomes abundantly clear that it is vital to surround yourself with old friends and keep the discourse about a 'new' life very honest. Within the black community, Mabena's career and public persona have always been affected

by his reputation for straddling the South African lines between so called black and "lily white" popular culture or even betraying the one for the other (March 2006: 25).

Mabena started his illustrious career in radio at the predominantly white radio station, called Highveld. From there he moved to the more representative adult contemporary station, Kaya FM where he occupied the most coveted slot, The Morning Show, and was a hit with fans, critics and advertisers alike:

Put it this way: in the way he handled social, political, economical Renaissance (sic) issues, fresh as morning dew music, and his irreverent, Don Imus meets Chris Rock odd commentary, butts (sic) of philosophical observation, and still remaining relevant to listeners dashing to work, Bob Mabena was, to be precise, lightning rod hot! (March 2006: 25).

But then Mabena made the critical mistake of leaving Kaya to return to Highveld, a move interpreted by many to be a stab in the back of black, South African popular culture. Presumably with some pressure from his Kaya fans, Mabena actually managed to make a very successful comeback to Kaya, only leaving the station in 2005 for the corporate sector. This move too was misconstrued by many to mean that Mabena had turned his back on his black listeners with even Madondo admitting that he has still not forgiven Mabena for this act of betrayal.

But Mabena apparently loves his new job and is frequently to be found at the office by 6 am. He, furthermore, sees his position at Primedia as an opportunity to think "aloud about the challenges facing the Africanisation of business and corporate culture as well as the fallacy of black economic empowerment in changing the entire economic reality of the country" (March 2006: 27). This is no simple process and Mabena is quick to add that Africanisation itself needs to be critically questioned: "what is it we are aiming to achieve, what are the timelines, how will that impact on people ... Is that sustainable, does it bring bread on the table, how can Africanisation bring in a totally new approach to the way we are doing business, how can we grow from it?" (March 2006: 27). These are difficult questions and Mabena is not suggesting that they be asked glibly. He does, however, take the

responsibility on himself to ask such questions and in doing so arrives at a model of corporate development embraced by many *BL!NK* interviewees: "Mabena's programme, it turns out entails understanding and respecting European – as in white – corporate culture as is" (March 2006: 27). He explains that it is necessary to then bring in

our way of doing things to it. We have to master the beast, the way the inner machine works. The greater part of all world economy succeeded based on its ... American capitalism models. Not all of it is bad, but clearly it served its time. There's a need for new thinking. Are we ready to take advantage of that? (March 2006: 27: 28).

Mabena's model of Africanised success thus lies in an appropriation and re-articulation of western economic models so that they make sense within the South African context. This integration of western and African ways of doing is abundantly present in *BL!NK* and indeed is echoed in the fact that *BL!NK* is an Afro-centric magazine formatted according to western models of men's lifestyle magazines.

When asked about his own contribution to this Africanisation, Mabena frankly acknowledges that he is not proud of his contribution to South African popular culture:

My days at Radio Bop, Metro FM, Studio Mix and being the country's number one deejay for a long time were fraught with filthy Americanisms, bad cultural influence on the youth, inspiring them through music, towards foreign norms, a very sad perception of what a superstar is (March 2006: 28).

When asked about the future of the country and the entertainment industry, Mabena muses that he hopes future deejays don't follow in his footsteps but represent a more authentic picture of what it means to be African and South African. As if echoing the inter-generational concerns of Ngalwana he adds, "I am a big supporter of what Mathole Motshega's Kara Institute, cultural intellectuals and community bodies are engaged in, making sure our children will grow black, informed and proud". Mabena's repentant attitude to the "Americanisms" that made him

successful are indicative of *BLINK*'s seeming position that success within the South African context must not be achieved at the expense of cultural identity. The celebrities that are interviewed in *BLINK* seem to be chosen, in part, for their commitment to a model of economic success that does not undermine cultural integrity. The areas of slippage in this discourse of cultural honesty generate from the fact that within the context of the corporate sphere it is quite difficult to accurately delineate African as opposed to Euro-centric modes of thought. Mabena, for instance, praises western economic models but believes that these should be Africanised. He does not, however, stipulate what this means or how he has gone about achieving this himself. What is clear is that, in terms of popular culture, he feels strongly about the dishonesty of simply selling out to an American style. In many of the profiles of successful *BLINK* men the magazine does seem to highlight a kind of hybrid identity. Both Ngalwana and Mabena, for instance, seem to affirm their status as black (and African) but still leave room to embrace a western lifestyle, intellectual traditions, food, reading, or even music. The magazine, in other words, draws attention to the new breed of black masculinity emerging in South Africa, a masculinity that unites aspects of black African and white Euro-centric identity.<sup>16</sup> The article ends with Mabena commenting that finally, the thing that really matters is family and that he is grateful for his wonderful wife and five children.

As in the profiles in *MaksiMan*, a concern for family and the future generations of South Africa seems to be a strong component of the masculine ideals espoused by these magazines. Unlike *MaksiMan*, however, the masculine ideals presented by *BLINK* are critically defined by their political engagement with their social context. Men such as Ngalwana and Mabena embody the view that black South African men, and in particular those who are educated and informed, need to be critically engaged with their environment, that this is not only their responsibility, but their privilege. This sentiment is evident elsewhere in the magazine too. Since corporate

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<sup>16</sup> The significant manner in which African identity is embraced in *BLINK* is discussed in the next section (4.3.2.2.1).

and social generativity is not only communicated through aspirational profiles of societal role models, but also in more subtle allusions to social responsibility, the following section investigates two themes that have become the corporate and social leitmotifs of *BL!NK* as they appear in diverse articles, features and conversations.

#### 4.3.2.2 Corporate and social values

The corporate and social values presented by *BL!NK* are predominantly represented in the form of moral (political) mentoring with an emphasis on black empowerment. As seen in previous chapters, Robert Connell has pointed out that, “to understand gender we must constantly go beyond gender” (1995: 76). It is, thus, important that in order to form a comprehensive picture of masculinity within *BL!NK* one looks at the other aspects of cultural identity such as race and class. The two values discussed in the following section are first a pride in the reader’s black, African identity and second a willingness to stand up for what you believe in. As in the analysis of corporate and social values typically found in *MaksiMan*, these values position the magazine as a kind of mentor, guiding the reader towards improved social awareness and involvement.

##### 4.3.2.2.1 A pride in black, African identity

As seen in the profiles on Vuyani Ngalwana (January / February 2006: 27- 29) and Bob Mabena (March 2006: 24- 28), the notions of African identity or the Africanisation of culture are used to underscore the black, vernacular aspect of their South African-ness. They are not only South African, in other words, but black and therefore identified with many other peoples and ethnic groups from the African

continent. As is the case in most new democracies, language plays a vital role in delineating factions, allegiances and difference. The word, 'African' is thus loaded and charged with diverse meaning in diverse contexts. Within the context of *BLINK* to be African seems to mean being black and somehow related to the African continent, but it does not necessarily imply that the users of the term do not take particular pride in their status as *South Africans*. This section investigates the role that race (black ness and African ness) plays in *BLINK* and the construction of masculinity within *BLINK*.

The overall tone of *BLINK* is undeniably didactic – particularly with relation to taking pride in one's black identity – and nowhere is this more apparent than on the letters page. It is immediately perceptible, from reading these letters, that the readers have not only picked up on the moral fibre of the magazine but are immensely appreciative for the broader project of black empowerment that *BLINK* stands for. To this effect, Lerato Kojaona comments,

As black people we are engaged in a perpetual struggle for identity, where we have become consumers of other people's products. While we continue to rid ourselves of these shackles, it is comforting that we will have a magazine such as *BLINK* as a reference, and as a proof that we do matter and can become more than just consumers (November / December 2005: 10).

Not only does her observation support the need for the magazine on a pragmatic level, meaning that there is a market for it, but also on a more philosophical level. Black empowerment is represented here in this letter as a paternal project that carries the connotation of 'moral teaching' or an ethos of knowledge being conveyed from an older generation to a younger one. From other letters too it seems apparent that the discourse stimulated by *BLINK* is much appreciated and accepted as worthy discussion or advice rather than patronising finger wagging. In another letter, Lerato Kojaona comments,

After the closure of *Tribute* magazine we had this uneasy void where all magazines looked at things from somebody else's

perspective and never from our own. *BL!NK* has more than closed that void, and is a fresh voice that takes over from where *Tribute* left off. Well done (November / December 2005: 10).

In this letter we see the idea that *BL!NK* has taken over the popularization of the fight for political understanding and personal involvement in black empowerment from *Tribute* magazine (it has done so with a younger, more contemporary flair).<sup>17</sup> Presumably this relates to both the black ethos and didactic or paternal tone of the magazine. In the November / December 2005 letter of the month, Thung Thung Letele bemoans the prevalence of "presumptuous white intellectuals writing extensively on what it means to be a black man". Her short letter is a call to arms for all young black students to read "real African knowledge" in the form of Ayi Kwei Armah, Steve Biko and Mahmood Mamdani. Here too it is apparent that black readers must define their own destinies and in so doing be critically accountable to their intellectual forefathers.

This is the primary form of corporate generativity in *BL!NK*. Not aspirational advice on how to make it to the top of the corporate ladder or ten step answers to corporate etiquette, but lengthy discussions on the need to learn from the intellectual giants that preceded the readership and debates on the value of a black, male intelligentsia that can keep the black community ethically accountable for their actions. Every issue of *BL!NK* has a feature entitled "Conversations" in which a particular topic is discussed on the record by three or four black intellectuals. In the Conversations feature for the November 2005 issue, Simphiwe Mpye asks writer and cultural critic Bongani Madondo, Human Science Research Council researcher Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana and *BL!NK* Chief Executive Officer Vuyo Radebe to discuss the "dearth of black thought" in South Africa (November 2005: 20).

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<sup>17</sup> *Tribute* magazine re opened its doors in 2006. The new *Tribute* not only espouses the same corporate values as identified in *BL!NK* in this section but does so with relation to both men and women. An article entitled, "Strength in femininity" in the August 2007 issue, for instance addresses the fact that "women's role in South African industry is deeply embedded in [the history of South Africa]" (2007: 40). The magazine's website ([www.tributemag.co.za](http://www.tributemag.co.za)) also has a page dedicated to business news and advice.

The discussion begins with the question of what shape and form black intellectuals took in pre literate African society. Madondo suggests that both the shaman and political advisor to the chief were intellectuals of sorts and are still found today in the form of the priest and politician. Ndletyana on the other hand reminds the others that each tribe had an oral historian whose main purpose was to narrate the history of the community and he too was an intellectual of a kind. He also suggests that since the *imbongi* or praise singer was tasked with the responsibility of critiquing the chief and his elders that he too was an intellectual in the pre literate sense.

When asked what the state of black thought is in contemporary South Africa, Madondo responds that he is uncomfortable with the idea of black thought: "South Africa should be aiming for both black and white intellectual pronouncements, and this should be seen on its merit and not necessarily along colour lines" (November 2005: 21). Ndletyana replies to this by questioning whether there are any real black intellectuals in South Africa and opines that since "black society at the moment gives precedence to material accumulation" very little emphasis falls on intellectual thought. While such statements border on generalisations and are themselves subject to criticism, there is a great deal of worth in the effort made to discuss topics such as black intellectual life in a self critical manner. It also seems apparent that *BLINK* presents its readers with a genuine discourse on black, masculine identity and the cultural ideas and practices associated with this.

In the January / February 2006 Conversations feature, for instance, where *ilobolo* is being discussed, the emphasis again falls on ethnic identity. Comments Thami Masemola, the managing editor of *BLINK* and a married man,

The fundamental thing is that black people are a cultural people, traditional people. We like to keep our habits, so to speak. *iLobolo* has survived because whatever we do, wherever we go, we keep our

blackness – whether it is singing to ourselves or spanking our kids – that’s what black people do. We take traditions and keep them from generation to generation (January / February 2006: 16).

In this statement there is a clear sense of unabashed pride in Masemola’s status as black man. He does not shirk away from it, nor does he advocate trying to change or adapt the customs and traditions that accompany black South African culture. Rather, he embraces the tenacity of black, African traditions and seems to take pride in this cultural identity.

This sense of self-assured confidence in one’s ethnicity is an important aspect of the masculine ideal presented by *BLINK* but is accompanied by another prominent theme, that of standing up for what you believe in.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 Standing up for what you believe in

The fact that *BLINK* is centred on the process of encouraging black solidarity and ethnic identity in the South African context may lead one to believe that the magazine represents a one-sided or populist politics. In fact, while the tone is undeniably liberal, there is a strong sense that individuals are allowed their independent voices. The March 2006 issue contains a gripping article on the question of whether a true black or African perspective exists at any South African universities. The article is actually a letter written by a South African, Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi, reading his doctorate in African History at Howard University in Washington DC. It is a response to the November / December 2005 ‘conversation’ on black intellectualism and is a provocative analysis of institutionalised intellectual life in South Africa. The fact that *BLINK* has published the full four pages of the letter, unedited, demonstrates their commitment to encouraging critical black South African voices to say their say.

In essence, Ramoupi argues that,

To have a vibrant black intellectual life, it has to be institutionalised. You have to have institutions that promote black intellectuals. Good universities have to hire black intellectuals. Sadly this is not yet happening in our country. Why and how can the government intervene? It was the apartheid government that Bantusized the education of the black child, and it should be the post apartheid government of the people that must reverse that situation (March 2006: 58).

His argument is made with erudite flair and is very convincing. Finally he urges black intellectuals to come together and create an "Institution of Black Thought" where black men and women can discuss the matters concerning Africa, regardless of their political affiliations (March 2006: 59). The letter serves to emphasise the need for young black men to participate in the construction of cultural life in South Africa, but it also serves as a testimony of the value of independent thought and standing up for what you believe in. At the end of the letter, Ramoupi makes it clear that he is not in exile, he is returning to South Africa as soon as his degree is completed.

In the same issue of *BLINK* a Cape Town artist, Msawenkosi Xokelela, is profiled in an article entitled, "The Subversive Palette" (March 2006: 64). Xokelela is a sculptor, painter, graffiti artist and music producer and is outspoken about his disdain for political labels and institutional affiliations. His current preoccupation is a Naomi Klein style critique of contemporary globalisation that intersects with his critique of art historical classification in an interesting and vibrant way:

Globalisation is re colonisation, period. The fact that the west finds me most relevant when I am most desperate is insulting. The fact that in the west you are seen as edgier, 'freer' when you can show spontaneity by using found materials is insulting. Me walking around my neighbourhood finding cheap materials is not me being free, it's me being desperate (March 2006: 65).

Xokelela's honesty is refreshing and again his views are published as is. Next to the profile on him is a full colour image of a self portrait in which he affably, and

perhaps misleadingly, grins at the viewer. Either way it is clear from the features on Ramoupi and Xokelela that the magazine is committed to portraying individual perspectives and views even if they do for the most part fit into a fairly predictable left wing agenda. The feature on Xokelela brings another characteristic often found in *BLINK* to the fore, that of fighting against the odds. This seems to be sketched as a two fold concern. First, the idea seems to be presented that as an individual black man in South Africa it is one's responsibility to continue to fight against the consequences of the apartheid project (such as racial stereotypes and the large divide between the haves and have nots) in a particular way. This is seen in the individual beliefs and actions of characters such as Ramoupi and Xokelela. Second, this same call to arms seems to be made on a collective level. Thus, a sort of *ubuntu* or spirit of mutual caring is represented and many examples are given of a collective endeavour to support the new democratic dispensation.

The November / December 2005 issue, for instance, is an anniversary issue, and is therefore chock full of anecdotes and parables from the *BLINK* team that reflect on the shared toils of the past year. Each story seems searingly honest in its account of the difficulty the editorial team faced together in keeping the magazine afloat. The narratives are indelibly infused with the idea that *BLINK* is more than a commercial endeavour, it is a project that undermines the stereotyping and demeaning of black men under the apartheid regime. The confessional approach of the stories is typical of the kind of honesty that makes the magazine more openly didactic than most. In presenting honest descriptions of their situation they convey a messy but realistic feeling methodology for success. It is not the carefully constructed portrait of successful personas found in *GQ* or *Men's Health*, but for this reason it feels more trustworthy. Words like hard work and destiny are not used blithely and the reader is left feeling part of a noble effort to raise the bar for black South African men. In expressing his pride of the *BLINK* team, publisher Vuyo Radebe says they are living examples of the *BLINK* ethos, namely, to "define your own destiny". Again, against the many challenging tales that precede this statement, it is not read as a flippant remark,

but as a testimony of dedication, experience and *ubuntu*. In keeping with this African theme, the notion of standing up for what you believe may also be interpreted in another value promoted by *BLINK*: that of the value of mature experience.

The emphasis that the magazine places on individual experience is quite refreshing (says *BLINK* chairman, Sello Rasethaba, "without solid expertise and experience in management, even the best ideas can fail", November / December 2005: 8). The mainstream magazines (as well as *MaksiMan*) tend to highlight the corporate success of a person being profiled. The younger this success is achieved, the better. *BLINK*, on the other hand, seems to value experience for its own sake and thus frequently features personalities that have experience in a certain field but are not necessarily outstanding examples of financial success. The November / December 2005 issue, thus, features interviews or advice columns with experienced black professionals like multiple Louerie winner, Zwelakhe Shabangu (November / December 2005: 72-73), music writer, Phiona Okumu (November / December 2005: 94-96) and esteemed business consultant, Dr Magdel Shackleton (November / December 2005: 66-67). This issue also features an article in their 'business' section by the founder and chairman of stock brokers, Legae Securities, on managing your finances. In this article, Chief Lediga stresses the importance of knowing your financial worth. In true *BLINK* style, he also highlights the value of "owning a stake in a thriving BEE consortium" (November / December 2005:70). This is a concrete example of the sober, paternal advice offered by the life mentors that are amply available in *BLINK*. Each encourages readers to improve their own standing in society and, in doing so, to uplift the position of black South Africans in general.

In contrast to the ideal of independent individual achievement, a strong emphasis is felt in many of the articles and features on team work and group effort (or *ubuntu*). Where mainstream magazines highlight individual hard work, initiative and achievement (with occasional references to the support of wives as in

*MaksiMan*), the success stories in *BLINK* seem to reflect the worth of getting support from a broader group, generally implying the black empowerment community. In interviews with business leaders such as Thebe Ikalafeng (November / December 2005: 32), the Managing Director of Brand Leadership, the emphasis falls on what it means to be a black leader. Rather than chronicle his own success, Ikalafeng speaks of a black community of leaders as a group that have fought their way to the top collectively. In this way, each trailblazer interviewed refers to other innovators as if they are a small community who all know each other. References to peers and corporate mentors are made by referring to their first names only, thereby encouraging a familial feeling of collaboration rather than the competitive bearing the corporate world is infamous for.

The two values most resoundingly regarded by *BLINK*, in other words seem to be taking pride in your black or African identity and standing up for what you believe in. It should be added that both of these values are emphatically integrated into a certain regard for intellectual life and the ability to not only think critically but also enter into decisive discourse. In reflecting over the first year of the magazine's existence, Vuyo Radebe comments, "This past year has taught us a lot, but most of all it has taught us the importance of unshackled thinking" (November / December 2005: 8).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter started with an introduction of the definitions of generativity. It then sketched an overview of nineteenth and early twentieth century masculine ideals due to the belief held by Anthony Clare (2000) and others that contemporary western masculine ideals still hark back to this earlier model of masculinity in which private space is defined as female and public space male. The question

was, furthermore, asked whether masculine generativity may be in a state of crisis (or flux). This chapter then investigated the representation of two kinds of generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* magazines. First paternal generativity was examined. It was found that paternal generativity formed part of the masculine ideals espoused by both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* and is thus represented in diverse ways in both magazines. In *MaksiMan* paternal generativity is approached in dedicated features centred on raising children as well as being addressed by fathers interviewed and profiled in each issue of the magazine. In *BL!NK*, fatherhood was referred to in a more indirect way through an emphasis on intergenerational (socio political) generativity. Second corporate or social generativity was investigated. Here, it was found that *MaksiMan* endorses a strong ethical and morally conscious view of corporate and social generativity that is compatible with home and family life (although more or less exclusively male). It was also found that *BL!NK* represents a politically orientated view of corporate and social awareness and that the masculine ideal presented by the magazine is not only proud of being black and African but also engaged in the intellectual discourse needed to counter the demeaning image of black masculinity presumably supported by the apartheid regime.

In both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* it appeared that the nineteenth and early twentieth century models of masculinity (as anchored in the public sector and defined as patriarchal or hegemonic in the home) did not continue to exert the kind of influence on the representation of masculine generativity that Clare's (2000) analysis of contemporary masculinity suggested it might. This may contribute to the understanding of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* as magazines that situate themselves outside of the norm or mainstream delineation of masculinity. In both the analyses of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* it was, furthermore, found that the presumed crisis in masculine generativity theorised by Clare (2000) is not directly addressed but is indirectly referred to in places. This absence of the rhetoric of crisis may be a sign of the denial of the editorial teams of these magazines in dealing with contemporary gender concerns or their desire to create an escapist

space away from these realities (as is presumably the case in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines). I would like to suggest, however, that there is another side to this absence. Since both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* represent a view of masculinity that is not compliant with the 'mainstream' delineation of masculinity – it is more paternally orientated, more politically conscious and gender sensitive – it is possible that both magazines are addressing the crisis precisely by presenting more progressive masculine ideals. Whether this is the case or not, it is clear that the views of masculine generativity represented by these magazines are far more complex and layered than that found in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the representation of masculinity in two marginal men's lifestyle magazines, namely, *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. It is hoped that through the diverse strategies employed in the analysis of these magazines, that this thesis has offered an indication of the complexity of their signifying practices, and has demonstrated how they may be interrogated as a specific example of popular culture, to reveal its various ideological underpinnings. This chapter consequently summarises some of the issues uncovered by this thesis, and points out a few of its implications for a cultural politics in South Africa. The exploratory nature of this type of study precludes the positing of definitive empirical findings, but it is nonetheless possible to extrapolate certain conclusions in terms of the wider arena of men's lifestyle magazines in post-apartheid South Africa.

### 5.1 Summary of chapters

Chapter One traced the history of the men's lifestyle press back to the men's apparel publications of the 1930s in America. The modern incarnation of the men's lifestyle press was traced back to the 1980s in America when these magazines were used as a platform for targeting what Nixon (1996) identified as the new consumer driven male. Following this historical overview, the chapter posited that the men's lifestyle press would be divided into two different kinds of magazines, those that could be described as 'mainstream' and those that could be referred to as 'marginal'. The mainstream magazines are the publications that

target a wide male readership and represent a globalized masculine ideal, evident in numerous glossy men's lifestyle magazines internationally. The marginal men's lifestyle magazines, it was said, formed a more customised genre that catered to a particular cultural or racial niche market that presumably was not satisfied by the generalising tone of the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. It is this largely under-theorised genre that was the focus of this study.

The two South African men's lifestyle magazines that were the particular focus of this analysis are *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. The reason these magazines were selected is two-fold. First, as the only 'marginal' men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa at the time, they were the subject of this analysis because of what they signified in terms of the presence of vernacular masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa. Second, they were investigated because of the presumed texture that they brought to the genre of men's lifestyle magazines as a whole. Chapter One positioned these magazines within the post-apartheid economy and climate of social and gender flux.

Chapter Two was centred on a historical overview of the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa after the first democratic elections in 1994. Chapter Two split this narrative into the mainstream magazines (*Men's Health*, *FHM*, *GQ*), and then *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* which were described as more marginal because they appealed to niche, culturally defined markets. Following on Morrell's (2001: 33) idea that "there is no one typical South African man" but rather many diverse masculinities, the research undertaken in this chapter was underpinned by a two-fold question. First, how strongly do globalized media values dominate the post-apartheid economy and secondly, how strongly are these values modified differentially to target different groups of men as well as investigating the manner in which homogenizing trends may transcend or work around language or racial differences. The chapter utilized a two-fold strategy or methodology: the first being a narrative documentation of the circumstances that

gave rise to each magazine. The second was a socio-semiotic analysis of the masculine ideal presented by each magazine.

The first magazine to be discussed was *Men's Health* since it was the first men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa. The apartheid oligarchy had come to an end, a democratically elected government was in place, sanctions were lifted and the stage was set for new media entities to capitalize on the enthusiasm of a people seeking to redefine themselves and within this context, *Men's Health South Africa* emerged. Due to the various socio-economic changes brought about by the new democracy, South African masculinity seemed to be in a state of flux and *Men's Health South Africa* seemed to want to enter this climate with a clear sense of what healthy masculinity could be. Media 24 launched *Men's Health South Africa* in 1997, more or less following the format of its American predecessor. According to the editors, each issue focused on "health, fitness, stress, sex and nutrition" (Spira 2003: 1). The chapter argued that the masculine ideal presented by *Men's Health* is, thus, a fairly conservative reading of (heterosexual) masculinity that places emphasis on the physical health and strength of men as a metaphor for general well-being. This ideal, it was said, affirms Connell's (1995:45, 54) notion that true masculinity is "almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies" since "bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct". In the burgeoning New South Africa, a context sorely in need of assurance in terms of its well-being, *Men's Health* capitalised (and continues to capitalise) on Mosse's (1996) notion of the (bodily) masculine ideal as indicative of a healthy society.

The second magazine that was profiled was *FHM*, a magazine that, like its British antecedent, seems to shun all forms of aspirational rhetoric in favour of outright laddishness. The first editor of *FHM* South Africa was Neil Bierbaum, who more or less followed a toned down version of the international *FHM* recipe, meaning that the South African edition of the magazine also published sports trivia, a locker room dialect and a plethora of objectifying images of already famous

women (primarily models, actresses and musicians) in order to lure a young, male readership and eventually become "the most successful men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa" (Cooper 2006). In Chapter Two it was noted that what primarily differentiates *FHM* from its competitors is its unabashed sense of plebeian self. Cooper disdains the aspirational quality of *GQ* that dares to prescribe to men which kind of suits they should don, women they should date or cars they should drive. Rather than add more consumer pressure to their media savvy audience with 'must-have' features, the magazine thrives on reader-driven stock inserts that affirm a local-is-*lekker*' (local-is-nice) attitude whilst supporting the British magazine *Loaded's* articulation of masculinity as about cars, women and booze. The question of the masculine ideal presented by the South African issue of *FHM* relates to the sense of laddish naughtiness the magazine espouses as well as the (objectifying) feminine ideal so overtly maintained throughout the magazine. The masculine ideal might thus be best described in the words of editor, Brendan Cooper (2006), who sketches him as an everyman who likes to "sit on the couch, drink beer with his mates and talk kak (shit)."

The third magazine to be discussed in this chapter was *GQ South Africa*. The first issue of the South African edition emerged the same year as *FHM*, 2000. In the first issue the editor Daniel Ford (2000) commented "This is it then. At last, a classy, intelligent magazine for South African men." As a motive for purchasing the magazine he added, "[O]nce you're looking great, real style is about how you choose to live. And which magazine you read" (*GQ South Africa* Millennium issue 2000:14). The masculine ideal espoused by *GQ* was, in other words, entirely aspirational with features and articles all forming a kind of 'how to' guide to social and professional etiquette. Unlike *FHM*, *GQ* is built on the fundamental premise that its readers are aspiring to more in life and see the magazine as a short hand means of achieving the necessary information needed to attain their social goals. But under the pressure of competing magazines like *FHM* the content became increasingly laddish and the magazine is now more difficult to distinguish from *FHM* than it was at the inception of these two magazines. *GQ* apparently

differentiates itself from *FHM* by creating a brand that encapsulates 'class' and sexualised display and thus their masculine ideal is 'gentlemen' who are upwardly mobile men who deem themselves to be educated, classy and ambitious members of South African society.

The second half of Chapter Two dealt with the more marginal magazines, namely *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*. This section translated Bourdieu's (2005: 126-127) notion of the hierarchical separation between local and global economies into the territory of media studies. The men's lifestyle magazines that operated on the margins of the magazine industry and society, it was argued, both extended the trope of the mainstream men's lifestyle press and resisted it in the manner of Bourdieu's thinking. As was seen in this section, *BL!NK* and *MaksiMan* extended the trope of the mainstream men's lifestyle press by positioning themselves within the well-established, international format of men's lifestyle magazines and thereby continuing the reduction and commodification of masculinity. On the other hand, these magazines resisted the globalising rhetoric of mainstream magazines like *Men's Health* and *GQ* by addressing their readers as belonging to niche groups of South African men, who were happy to define themselves as part of a particular cultural minority. For Bourdieu (2005: 127), *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* might then have represented the 'local' or 'external' outposts that through their vernacular tone marked the transition from 'general interest' to 'particular interest'.

The first Afrikaans men's lifestyle magazine was founded in 2001 by Carpe Diem Media under the title *MaksiMan*. Not only was this a departure from the traditional use of English as the communicator of globalising new masculinity, but the magazine was also the first Christian men's lifestyle magazine in South Africa (De Wet 2005). The magazine was thus created in order to reach a sector of the market that was not being specifically targeted by other magazines, namely, Christian, Afrikaans-speaking men. The editor of the magazine, Hennie Stander (2007) contributed articles to the Christian women's magazine, *Finesse* for many

years and in this capacity learnt that female readers were concerned about the spiritual and emotional well-being of their husbands. Out of this need, *MaksiMan* arose and was described by Stander (2007) as a vehicle for encouraging (predominantly white) South African men who were in a state of crisis because they had lost their political voice and were feeling dislocated from the country.

The chapter chronicled the investigations of feminist theorists who have written about Christian men's movements in the United States of America. It found that nothing had been written about *MaksiMan*. The masculine ideal espoused by the magazine was found to be conservative, white, Afrikaans Christian men who aspired to leading a healthy, Christian life. Yet, it was noted that the masculine ideal presented by this magazine was far more tentative than that extolled by *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ*, meaning that it was not quite so boldly maintained as the norm for all men. In addition to this tentative quality it was also found that unlike the mainstream magazines, *MaksiMan's* version of masculinity included the relationship to significant others.

The sense of anti-escapist rhetoric employed by *MaksiMan* (including the articles on cultivating a healthy family life) coincided, it was found, with the brotherly tone of Christian men's movements internationally. Writers like Faludi (1999), Payne (1978), Stewart Van Leeuwen (1990, 1993, 1998, 2002) and John Eldridge (2001), have interpreted the notion of masculinity in crisis within the Christian context and found that Christian men too suffer from an often severe sense of collective confusion regarding their identities and what it means to be a man in the modern day context and church. A magazine like *MaksiMan*, thus, had the potential to answer to the general rhetoric of *Christian* masculinity in crisis in a similar (optimistic and pragmatic) way that *Men's Health*, for instance, responds to the widespread readings of secular masculine behaviour as unhealthy. *MaksiMan's* editorial team, however, did not seem to engage consciously with the crisis or flux that may or may not be plaguing their readers, nor were the articles that pretend to deal with such issues aggressive or 'serious' enough to

provide fruitful answers. This may be the reason the magazine failed, since it failed to either provide men with light entertainment or serious answers to questions relating to identity. According to Stander (2006) it was a deliberate strategy on the part of the magazine's editorial team to keep the magazine light but it was not sexy enough to stimulate the more laddish reader, nor penetratingly critical enough to satisfy the reader struggling with a real identity crisis. Clearly, if a magazine is going to target a niche cultural audience it needs to directly address the concerns of that audience (issues such as affirmative action, farm killings and emigration) in a serious, non-evasive manner. While this approach was not enough to keep *BLINK* alive, it may have been more successful in a Christian magazine where readers are presumably seeking sober answers to ethical and teleological questions.

The final magazine that was discussed in this section was *BLINK*. The ushering in of the African National Congress as the first democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994 meant that the country was radiant with the hope of a period of opportunity and equality for different racial groups. It would, however, take some time before this development would be felt in the different sectors of commerce, education and legislation. Ten years after the African National Congress came into power, a small publication emerged, targeted at an educated black, male reader who could by his mere readership of this magazine undermine an apartheid legacy of intellectual poverty. The first edition of *BLINK*, the latecomer of the five men's lifestyle magazines, was launched in October of 2004 as an upmarket magazine aimed at young black males.

According to Simphewe Mpye, the first editor of the magazine, "most men's issues in S[outh] A[frica] are not universal, they are race specific" which is why the magazine aimed to "paint a new face for the black man" who was still frequently associated with "abuse and desertion" (McCloy 2005). The magazine, in other words, attempted to present the educated black male population with a portrait of black masculinity that was uplifting and aspirational. It was found that

the articles and interviews in the magazine strategically highlighted successful black men as well as raised discussion about pertinent issues within the new social context of South Africa. Mpye, thus, defined *BLINK*'s target market (and their masculine ideal) as "a thinking man who [is] every bit an (sic) African as he is worldly ... [A man who is] well read, he challenges outmoded perspectives and is not afraid to stand alone in his conviction. Of course he just so happens to be tasteful and confident" (McCloy 2005). *BLINK*, in other words, both articulated the emergent identity held by black professionals as assertive confidence (a reflection of new power relations in society) as well as presenting itself as a defence against charges of this new class being made up of 'affirmatives'.

The critically engaging and brutally honest content that was lacking in *MaksiMan* was very present in *BLINK*. From the circulation figures of the magazine, however, it seemed that the market was not ready for this kind of taxing honesty and perhaps was more inclined to escape from the polemical reality of every day life into a more fun and entertaining magazine (like the black general interest magazine, *Tribute*). In addition to this content-driven problem was the fact that the magazine suffered under poor management and logistical problems, in particular involving inconsistencies with relation to distribution. Together these factors led to the demise of a wonderfully textured and honest magazine.

Chapter Three investigated the representation of the relationships between men and women in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. In this chapter the connection between the representation of masculine selfhood and the Other was investigated in both magazines against the assumption that mainstream men's lifestyle magazines are generally assumed to simplify and objectify women and the manner in which men should relate to them. The question was asked whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* can depart from this often stressed trend. In accordance with Duncan's (1996) delineation of space as socially gendered, this chapter examined the representation of women within both the public and private domains within *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*.

In the analysis of *MaksiMan* it was found that the magazine placed great emphasis on the role that women play in men's lives. In particular the role of these women in the private domain was given a great deal of attention. It was found that while *MaksiMan* included features on women in the public domain these were mostly women from the entertainment industry and that in most cases the articles trivialised their public roles by focusing on irrelevant issues such as what kind of films they like or food they prefer. In the private domain it was found that women were primarily cast as supportive wives and mothers who serve the needs of their families. This was found to be a fairly conservative and two-dimensional reading of women in the private domain that did not acknowledge the full diversity and complexity of womanhood. A semiotic analysis of the photographic representation of women within the magazine formed a part of this section.

In the analysis of the representation of women in the public domain in *BL!NK* it was found that *BL!NK* included many articles, features and interviews that represented women in the public domain. It was further found that each of these features seemed to deal with the status of these women in the public domain in a serious way. Women were also included in the editorial team of the magazine and used as journalists to cover particular issues or interviews within the magazine. Women were, thus, allowed to have a loud and clear public voice within *BL!NK* magazine. In the analysis of the representation of women in the private domain it was found that many so-called '*BL!NK* men' prefer a traditional or more conservative reading of the private feminine ideal while many upwardly mobile black women were looking for men that were more progressive or forward thinking than the average *BL!NK* man. This critical discourse proved that *BL!NK* created a platform for honest and open discussion between men and women on both public and private issues with relation to these genders. A semiotic analysis of the photographic representation of women in *BL!NK* also formed part of this section. As a whole this chapter served to highlight the ways in which the

representation of women and their relationship to men served to distinguish both of these magazines from the mainstream men's lifestyle press where significant others are generally ignored and men are addressed as eternally single. In the case of *MaksiMan* it was clear that the magazine espoused a predictably conservative and old fashioned view of women as the 'help meet' or support of men, a view which cast the magazine as out of touch with the emergent gender discourse in the New South Africa. In contrast to this, *BLINK* seemed to provide a soap box for 'real' women to voice their concerns about the slow progress in terms of gender perceptions in the black community. The magazine, in other words, gave the impression that upwardly mobile black women are well ahead of upwardly mobile black men in terms of embracing progressive changes in gender articulation within South Africa. In both magazines it was, thus, apparent that the male readers were presumed to be somewhat reluctant to assume a progressive or enlightened mien in terms of gender roles. Perhaps this is an area where both magazines failed. Instead of setting a progressive example and encouraging men to aspire to an enlightened gender attitude, they reflected the staid expectations of their readers back to them.

Connell's formulation of the influence of "production" on male social relations and identity formed the backdrop to an analysis of male 'generativity' in Chapter Four. Mainstream men's magazines typically do not include references to the role of father that certain of their readers might occupy, preferring instead to address men as eternally unattached. These magazines do, however, make repeated reference to the expected business prowess or corporate success of their readers. Chapter Four investigated both the biological and corporate productivity of men as represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. This notion of fatherhood and social or corporate mentoring (including both mentoring and being mentored) as related concepts was brought together under the umbrella term 'generativity' and was the focus of this chapter.

The chapter started with an introduction of the definitions of generativity. It then sketched an overview of nineteenth and early twentieth century masculine ideals due to the belief held by Anthony Clare (2000) and others (Duncan 1995) that contemporary western masculine ideals still hark back to this earlier model of masculinity in which private space is defined as female and public space male. The question was, furthermore, asked whether masculine generativity may be in a state of crisis (or flux). This chapter then investigated the representation of two kinds of generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* magazines. First paternal generativity was examined. It was found that paternal generativity formed part of the masculine ideals espoused by both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* and was thus represented in diverse ways in both magazines. In *MaksiMan* paternal generativity was approached in dedicated features centred on raising children as well as being addressed by fathers interviewed and profiled in each issue of the magazine. In *BL!NK*, fatherhood was referred to in a more indirect way through an emphasis on intergenerational (socio-political) generativity.

Second, corporate or social generativity was investigated. Here, it was found that *MaksiMan* endorsed a strong ethical and morally conscious view of corporate and social generativity that was compatible with home and family life (although more or less exclusively male). It was also found that *BL!NK* represented a politically orientated view of corporate and social awareness and that the masculine ideal presented by the magazine was not only proud of being black and African but also engaged in the intellectual discourse needed to counter the demeaning image of black masculinity presumably supported by the apartheid regime.

In both *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* it appeared that the nineteenth and early twentieth century models of masculinity (as anchored in the public sector and defined as patriarchal or hegemonic in the home) did not continue to exert the kind of influence on the representation of masculine generativity that Clare's (2000) analysis of contemporary masculinity suggested it might. This may contribute to

the understanding of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* as magazines that situated themselves outside of the norm or mainstream delineation of masculinity. In both the analyses of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* it was, furthermore, found that the presumed crisis in masculine generativity theorised by Clare (2000) was not directly addressed but was indirectly referred to in places. It was my feeling that both magazines were addressing the crisis precisely by presenting more progressive masculine ideals. Whether this was the case or not, it is clear that the views of masculine generativity represented by these magazines were far more complex and layered than that found in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines. Perhaps it may be said that this was part of the reason for the failure of these magazines, that men do not want to be confronted with the reality of their generativity (whether biological or corporate) in a men's lifestyle magazine but want to use this platform to escape from this reality. Perhaps, men are happy to read about good business practice in the *Economist* or *Mail and Guardian* but use the men's lifestyle press to help them to forget about this reality.

This section comprised a brief overview of the chapters that made up this study. The following section investigates the contribution of this study.

## **5.2 Contribution of study**

This study has attempted to investigate the representation of masculinity (and the masculine ideals signified) in two South African men's lifestyle magazines, *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*, against the socio-political supposition that contemporary (post 1994) South African masculinity is in a state of flux. Four research questions were posed by this study and this section will address the manner in which this thesis grappled with each question.

The first research question posed by this study was whether or not *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* presented simplified and two-dimensional masculine ideals, as critics charge mainstream magazines do or whether they revealed two strains of vernacular masculinities and in so doing indicated certain variations of the masculine ideals available to men in the South African media. Susan Hiller (1991: 11) has noted that "[t]he west's drive to conquer and exploit the lands of others has fused myth, history, and geography and has projected European speculations and fantasies about the 'other' on to real peoples". This cultural colonialism is overtly evident in the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines where localised identities are replaced with secular typologies that underscore the homogeneity of global aspirational masculinity. The masculinities represented within *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK*, conversely, formed an articulate counterfoil to the cultural poverty of the masculinity espoused by the mainstream titles. Throughout the analysis of *MaksiMan* it was found that the magazine challenged the crude masculine ideals represented by the mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and presented the reader of the magazine with a far more complex understanding of masculinity as influenced by religion, society and significant others. The magazine consistently asked pertinent and culturally loaded questions relating to the masculine ideal held by its readers (such as what a stag night should entail or how to be a good father to your daughter) and thus challenged the readers to broaden their understanding of masculinity in general and Afrikaans, Christian masculinity in particular. Where mainstream men's magazines seldom address the spousal or paternal roles of their readers, *MaksiMan* included fixed features dealing with "Your wife" and "Your children". In this way the magazine again challenged outmoded ideas about men's magazines simplifying masculinity to a single glamorous and unattached type. The editorial team of the magazine, furthermore, attempted to weave the notion of faith or religion into the portrait of masculinity that they presented their readers with, an effort which undermined the conception of masculinity posed by the secular mainstream men's lifestyle press.

*BLINK* magazine also addressed the relational and paternal responsibilities of their readers but, more than this, the magazine attempted to integrate cultural and socio-political concerns such as responsible approaches to *ilobolo* and black employment equity into their delineation of a black masculine ideal. By giving women a platform to engage with black masculinity, *BLINK*, furthermore, confronted its own masculine ideal with the concerns of women and allowed this formulation of masculinity to be shaped by contemporary South African women. The magazine was, in other words, critically engaged in the concerns of contemporary South Africans and encouraged a view of masculinity that was affected by these concerns. Whereas mainstream men's magazines encourage an escapist and fantastical masculine ideal, *BLINK* preferred to remind men of the realities of being a man in South Africa today, an approach which indicated that social responsibility and awareness was a critical component of mature masculinity. Both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, in other words, presented the reader with more than the mere two-dimensional masculine ideal espoused by the mainstream men's lifestyle press. In fact, both magazines effectively challenged this ideal by posing another alternative.

The second research question posed by this study is whether or not the male/female relations represented in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* were of a diverse or multi-dimensional nature and whether they consider the representation of female personhood as a conscious goal. In Chapter Three it was found that *MaksiMan* seemed to deem relationship with the feminine as an integral aspect of masculinity. Almost every celebrity or accomplished man interviewed or featured in the magazine referred to the woman in his life (usually his wife) and many women were interviewed and featured in their own right. This constituted a departure from the norm of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines where women are primarily present as visual pleasure. It was, however, found that the representations of women in *MaksiMan* (both in the public and private spheres) often lacked diversity and frequently failed to represent the full complexity of womanhood. In this way the magazine did indeed simplify femininity but not to

the extent that it is simplified in the mainstream men's lifestyle press. It seems fair to say that the editorial team of *MaksiMan* did not consciously set out to represent female personhood (even though the majority of the buyers of the magazines were women). This statement is made in the light of the fact that certain types of women (glamorous members of the entertainment industry and the wives of celebrity men) seemed to be represented more frequently than others. But perhaps the representation of female personhood was an inadvertent goal since the magazine frequently seemed to hold the idea that men's relationship to woman plays a pivotal role in defining their sense of self. The magazine did, in other words, represent a more inclusive and comprehensive feminine ideal than that found in mainstream men's lifestyle magazines but probably did not consciously seek to represent the full personhood of women. It was found that *BLINK* went to great lengths to represent this personhood. The magazine consistently included profiles on various diverse kinds of women and created platforms for women to voice their opinions on relevant concerns. *BLINK* also represented real women in photographic form, a strategy that lends a sense of reality to the magazine. *BLINK*, in other words, definitely both represented women in their diverse complexity and consciously sought to represent the fullness of female personhood.

The third research question posed by this study is how male 'generativity' (paternal and corporate or social mentoring) is represented in both magazines. Chapter Four was dedicated to the investigation of the representation of male generativity in *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. It was found in this chapter that both magazines defied the norm imposed by mainstream men's lifestyle magazines to ignore the paternity of men and addressed their readers as fathers and potential fathers. Where *MaksiMan* actually included regular features that overtly addressed concerns related to male paternity, *BLINK* addressed this in a more inadvertent way through narratives dealing with the paternal role played by particular celebrity men. With relation to corporate generativity it was found that both magazines referred to corporate mentoring. In both magazines this took a

moral form. In *MaksiMan*, the encouragement of righteous and ethical practices was highlighted as the primary goal of corporate generativity and biblical values were translated into professional values. In *BLINK*, the encouragement of social responsibility was represented as the primary goal of corporate generativity. Both magazines, thus, placed a moral spin on the mentoring of junior readers. Again the failure of both magazines raises questions regarding the ways in which both magazines sought to stimulate discourse regarding ethical paternal and business practices. Since both failed, it is possible that men prefer to address these issues in more private forums like the home, church or company boardrooms rather than in this public space. Here too it is apparent that men might want to escape from these realities when they pick up a men's lifestyle magazine.

The fourth research question posed by the study is whether or not the genre of men's lifestyle magazines, whether targeted at any culturally specific readership, secular or religious, fundamentally commodifies and simplifies masculinity to an aspirational type that undermines the personhood of men or whether *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* articulate a powerful and genuine alternative masculinity. From the answers to the preceding questions it seemed clear that both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* articulated a powerful and genuine alternative masculinity. If this is the case then it is possible that men's lifestyle magazines as a genre can offer the reader a realistic alternative to the commodified and two-dimensional masculine ideal most of them represent. Although *Men's Health*, *FHM* and *GQ* represent a fairly simplistic portrait of masculinity, *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* presented the reader with masculinities that were local, diversified and realistic. The fact that neither of these magazines survived financially does, however, indicate that advertisers as well as consumers are more drawn to a globalised, commodified and escapist rendering of masculinity than that presented by *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. This statement leads to the question of whether men feel uncomfortable addressing private matters like romantic relationships and parenting in such a public format. Perhaps they prefer not to consume a magazine that is specifically focused on

the uncomfortably personal business of refining and labouring on your masculinity.

On a more philosophical note, the need for the critical consideration of visual culture is at the heart of post-modern thinking, yet is frequently (and appropriately) slowed down by the (political) complexity of this culture, particularly in the South African context where identity is so pertinently contested within the historical framework of culture. In South Africa, there seems to be some measure of flux in the self-articulation of masculinity which may, in part, be compounded by the socio-political changes brought about by the first democratically elected government. This study has investigated the manner in which two marginal men's lifestyle magazines have created media spaces within which vernacular strains of masculinity could be articulated and represented for new South African men.

Simply put, the two contributions of this study are:

- 1) A brief overview of the rise of the primary men's lifestyle magazines in South Africa as well as the masculine ideals represented by each.
- 2) An in-depth analysis of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* as marginal South African men's lifestyle magazines with a focus on the way in which these magazines represented women and the relationships between men and women as well as the generativity of men.

Beyond these two outcomes, it may also be said that the study indicated that South African masculinity is indeed in a state of flux. Through the investigation of the failure of *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* it may also be concluded that although South African masculinity is in a state of flux, by and large, South African men prefer to read mainstream, more entertaining men's lifestyle magazines rather than marginal more serious magazines that address the socio-economic changes in society.

The study also comprised a literature review. In the literature study, this dissertation examined various theories centred around masculinity in South Africa in order to test the assumptions of this study against the seminal theoretical positions on this subject. The critical analysis of *Maksiman* and *BLINK* that is the backbone of this study complemented the literature study by demonstrating the manner in which these magazines articulated vernacular South African masculinities and reinvented the genre of men's lifestyle magazines. One of the foremost contributions of this study is, thus, methodological, since it presents a theoretical model that can be applied to other examples of popular culture. Relatively little has been written about the men's lifestyle press in South Africa and no studies have been undertaken that examine the ways in which these magazines formulate a masculine ideal. This study has, in other words, established a new mode of analysis within the broader context of investigating men's lifestyle magazines.

I hope that this thesis has delineated the need for a critical debate concerning men's lifestyle magazines in contemporary western culture, and trust that this discourse will treat the genre of the men's lifestyle press with a renewed belief that this genre can contribute to cultural definitions of masculinity in positive and constructive ways, while not shying away from the notion that elements of popular culture need to be treated critically.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

This study has focused on the only two marginal men's lifestyle magazines developed in South Africa. Since the emphasis of the dissertation fell on *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, other relevant areas of visual culture, referred to briefly in

the argumentation (such as women's lifestyle magazines), were not adequately investigated. The analysis was, furthermore, centred on the formulation of a masculine ideal within each magazine and, thus, the representation of the relationship between men and women as well as the generativity of men within the magazines was explored. The analysis of these two magazines was, in other words, primarily qualitative. The study did not undertake the quantitative investigation of reader sample groups, a consequence of keeping the study focussed and manageable.

It is apparent that the nature and scope of this type of study precludes finite conclusions, since the methodological approach cannot claim to be objective, as it is not based on empirical findings. Since the cultural production of meaning is a complex and layered process, it is difficult to postulate an objective reality. Nevertheless, this study may be justified and substantiated through the contextual dimension of the analysis which took into account the situation in which meaning was constructed. Although obvious, it may be helpful to emphasise that this study has been speculative and exploratory, and has simply attempted to stress the creation and distribution of potential meanings. It has strived to highlight some of the ways that ideological and cultural meanings are articulated in texts, and to indicate that texts such as *MaksiMan* and *BL!NK* need critical problematising and denaturalising.

Other theoretical positions (Marxism and structuralism, for instance), might have been employed as a point of departure, in which case different dominant and oppositional positions may have been revealed. A relatively new medium or phenomenon such as men's lifestyle magazines, nevertheless, warrants the amalgamation of existing strategies of interpretation (as was the case in this study) and, thus, the negotiated reading that underpins this study seems fitting.

#### 5.4 Suggestions for further research

There are four areas, specifically, that are the natural extension of this study: The first is the impact of the socio-economic changes in South Africa over the last decade on women. This study was, in part, focussed on the way these societal changes were represented in marginal men's lifestyle magazines but they surely impact on women too and, thus, a study of the women's marginal lifestyle press (including magazines like *Finesse*, *Leef* and *True Love*) might be quite useful. Within such a study it might be helpful to analyse the impact of 'masculinity in crisis' on South African women and examine whether femininity is in a state of similar flux.

The second area that seems to flow out of this study is the analysis of the representation of a masculine ideal within the women's lifestyle press, both mainstream and marginal. This study was focussed on the representation of the masculine (and feminine) ideals available to male readers in the men's lifestyle press but the representation of a masculine ideal within the women's lifestyle press warrants equal attention. While much has been written about the formulation of a feminine ideal in women's (and men's) magazines (see MacRobbie 1996, Viljoen 2005) there is no literature available on the representation of men within the pages of women's magazines.

The third area that may be suggested as the natural extension of this study is the analysis of masculinity in other areas such as entertainment and sport. Given how often these magazines seem to draw on sport and entertainment celebrities like Joost van der Westhuizen, or Bob Mabena it may be valid to investigate these magazines in terms of the way masculinity is represented within the worlds of sport and entertainment. In other words, in the broader culture, there are other powerful models of (Afrikaner and black) masculinity against which these magazines work.

The fourth area that may be pertinent to the broader analysis of masculinity in South Africa is the investigation of reader trends and the mechanics of the magazine industry. While this study primarily employed a semiotic strategy in terms of investigating *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*, more might have been said about the specific reader trends for each magazine. A more detailed analysis of the possible reasons for the failure of these magazines (poor management, domination of the market by oligopolies, new competitors etc.) may form an interesting future study.

## 5.5 Concluding remarks

This study has attempted to investigate the representation of masculinity in two South African men's lifestyle magazines, namely, *MaksiMan* and *BLINK*. The reason these two magazines were investigated is because of their status as marginal magazines that flowed out of but also stood in opposition to the mainstream men's lifestyle press. It was assumed that by analysing these magazines I might be able to discern whether vernacular strains of masculinity were being reflected by the contemporary media in post-apartheid South Africa. In the time that this study was conducted both of the magazines under discussion closed their doors. This section, in part, reflects on the contribution that these magazines made to the South African media-scape while they were in circulation as well as their shortfalls.

From the investigation conducted in this study it is clear to me that both *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* addressed a niche market within the South African social structure. In doing so both of these magazines affirmed and valorised a particular strain of vernacular South African masculinity. In the case of *MaksiMan*, the magazine failed to address the socio-political and spiritual concerns Afrikaans,

Christian men might be dealing with in a serious enough fashion. It also failed to present the reader with theological discourse that unpacks the biblical perspective on issues like divorce or racism, preferring instead to remain light and entertaining. Most of the articles in this magazine were fairly light and few really represented the difficulty of being an Afrikaans, Christian man in the New South Africa. On the other hand, the magazine did provide this demographic of men with a space where they could see themselves reflected in the media and in this way feel like they still have a place in South Africa. *MaksiMan* afforded these men a space where concerns like how to be a good husband and father were addressed openly and honestly and in this way an Afrikaans, Christian masculine ideal was represented to these men.

It is clear that while the community of white Afrikaans (Christian) men are struggling to find their own voice within the contemporary South African social scape, *MaksiMan* provided a platform for these men to project their concerns, hopes and dreams into the public sphere. In this way the magazine created a platform for the shaping of individual and group identity within the broader context of the imagined community. If it failed its readers this failure was due to the lack of a direct and open discourse that addressed the political problematics of fitting into the New South Africa. This concern might have been addressed in a way that gave the readers of *MaksiMan* moral guidance and spiritual leadership. There are a number of possible factors that might have inhibited the editors from assuming a more critically engaging tone. Among these are a fear of being 'too serious' or 'too political' or 'politically incorrect'. If one looks at the small readership of serious magazines like *Insig* then it seems likely that an in-depth or 'deep' South African magazine might not be viable. Added to this is the fact that men potentially expect to be entertained by a men's lifestyle magazine since this is a form of media that traditionally offers the reader a moment of escapism and respite from serious issues. The relative success of the Christian magazine, *Joy*, does indicate that there is a place for critical and actual discourse in magazines

but maybe men do not look for this kind of engagement from a men's lifestyle magazine.

Contrary to *Maksiman*, *BLINK* definitely addressed the concerns of upwardly mobile black men who were trying to carve a place for themselves in the New South Africa. This was a magazine that on almost every level effortlessly impressed. The critical content and forthright, topical discourse that was the mainstay of the magazine made it a challenging and provocative read. Through critical articles by men and women on issues like bride price, affirmative action and black masculinity, the magazine effectively presented itself as an honest and representative voice within the South Africa socio-political landscape. At a time when black men, like white men, were redefining themselves, this magazine offered insightful assistance in this process. Even in terms of its representation of the feminine ideal the magazine clearly broke boundaries and chartered new terrain for men's lifestyle magazines. Within *BLINK* women were given the space to raise their voices and assert their diversity and complexity as women, meaning that the magazine challenged the chauvinist attitude associated with most men's lifestyle magazines.

If *BLINK* failed in any area (other than logistics) it can, perhaps, be said that the magazine was too intellectually engaging and not visually stimulating enough. Men seem to want to escape when they read a men's lifestyle magazine and although I wouldn't have changed the content of *BLINK* I might have improved the design. The magazine was printed on relatively low grade paper and the design style was undoubtedly understated. I think this simplistic styling made sense in terms of the cognitive nature of the publication but it might have been more fun to read if it had been a little more glossy and visually entertaining. Since the western world is increasingly visually stimulating, readers have come to expect that magazines offer an easy visual interface in terms of their content. *BLINK* did not make their content sexy enough visually and this may have been a

mistake. Even serious readers prefer to read information that is syntactically stimulating and for whatever reason *BLINK* did not deliver in this regard.

It is my opinion, in other words, *MaksiMan* was not serious enough and *BLINK* was a little too (visually) serious. Either way, it is clear to me that the South African media is the poorer for the loss of these two magazines. In their wake a number of other men's lifestyle magazines have emerged that seem to get the recipe of popular-but-engaging right. *Manwees* was mentioned in Chapter Two and seems to appeal to the same readers that might have bought *MaksiMan*. It is an Afrikaans men's lifestyle magazine that serves as a kind of Afrikaans mainstream men's lifestyle magazine. The design of the magazine is entertaining and engaging and the content is typical of the content found in the mainstream men's lifestyle press. The magazine is filled with articles about cars, gadgets, health, sex and business and as such is a fairly typical men's magazine. Although the monthly sales figures are only 6978 (ABC, January – March 2008) it seems to be gaining popularity and will probably go from strength to strength. *BestLife* was brought out by the publishers of *Men's Health* in 2008 and targets, upwardly mobile South African men. It addresses serious issues like racism and the consequences of financial success but also offers the reader light entertainment and glossy visuals. The magazine is perfectly balanced on the line between 'serious' or 'critical' content and engaging and stimulating format. *BestLife* is a bi-monthly magazine with sales figures of 18766 (ABC October – December 2007). Both of these magazines are fairly straightforward mainstream men's lifestyle magazines and as such probably have a bright future.

What is also evident from the success of these magazines is that whatever the reasons for the demise of *MaksiMan* and *BLINK* it is sadly evident that South African men would rather read the popular fare of mainstream men's lifestyle magazines than the critical and engaging stuff of marginal men's lifestyle magazines. This may have something to do with the globalising trends being felt throughout the western world in which consumers prefer to purchase products

that align them with the visual imperatives of consumers the world over. On the other hand, it might simply be related to the fact that in a highly political and still struggling social economy like South Africa, men simply want a bit of escapist fun. Either way, it is my hope that both of these magazines will emerge again or that their legacy will continue in new magazines that attempt to address South African men as belonging to vernacular cultural identities.

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