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South African Travel Writing and Bias

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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 Date: 25/01/2009

ABSTRACT

TITLE: South African Travel Writing and Bias

BY: Cassandra Shaw

DATE: February 2009

This thesis spotlights the travel and leisure magazine industry within South Africa. It contends that the travel writing genre is susceptible to a number of biases, both past and present, which ultimately affect the way its overall content is produced and presented to the public. This work was substantiated through a set of qualitative interviews with key professionals within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry, as well as through a theme-based content analysis of a number of local travel writing publications. This study adds to a rather extensive line of research written on the topic of travel writing regarding a number of older criticisms of bias including 'othering', escapism, and gendering. However, it also focuses on a number of more modern biases such as direct advertising, advertorial usage, as well as the acceptance of 'freebies' and barter agreements, none of which has been given much attention in previous research. The sheer existence of these and other biases within the modern South African travel and leisure magazine industry exhibits an absolute necessity of examination into such a topic, especially given the importance and overall influence that the travel writing industry has on a country's economic standing and overall image.

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Chapter One:

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction and statement of purpose

The tourism industry within South Africa is extremely important to the country's overall economy in terms of employment as well as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the International Marketing Council of South Africa (International Marketing Council of South Africa, 2008), the South African tourism industry accounts for over 7 % of the country's total employment, and its "contributions to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase[ed] from 4.6% back in 1993 to 8.3% in 2006": doubling its numbers in just over a decade.

As one of the mediums used to promote the tourism industry, travel writing comes in a number of different formats, such as novels, magazines, newspaper articles, videos, presentations, web-site productions, as well as travel guides. As a genre, travel writing has exploded into a ubiquitous industry upon which would-be travellers and escapists have grown to rely when planning their travels, or when looking for a break from their everyday lives.

The reason to use magazines instead of online material was based on the fact that it is more of a well developed and accessible form of the genre. Online based material was not analyzed because a large majority of the South African public is unable to readily access online content.

These magazines by nature are commercially driven and operate in a highly competitive market environment. Consequently, to sell their publications, the producers need to be mindful of their target audiences' interests (Kurtz, 1993: 355-378). In doing so, the overall focus of the magazine staff will be driven towards the desires of their target audience, which would indicate bias towards that which would sell.

Considering the important role that the travel writing industry plays in the country's local and international tourism, it is necessary to have a better understanding of potential bias in South African travel writing. This paper will add to the small amount of research done on the commercial aspects of local South African travel writing (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the travel and leisure magazine industry within South Africa, to first see if there are any biases present, and to see which forms these biases take. As found in past research, there have been a number of inherent biases present within the travel writing genre as a whole. These representational biases include that of racial bias and 'othering' (Coetzee, 1989; Crush, 2000; Dixon, 2007; Fowler, 2007; Hall, 2000; Pratt, 1992; Rizzo, 2007; Said, 1979; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006), gender biases (Clapp, 2004; Susan Kollin, 1997; van Eeden, 2006:), as well as escapism biases (Dixon, 2007; Fowler, 2007; Krist, 1993; Olsaretti, 2007; Rizzo, 2007; Said, 1978; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006). The commercial biases (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005) in terms of paid-for content and the genres use of barter agreements are also an area which has been analyzed; yet to a much smaller scale. This thesis will explore these forms of bias, and identify if there is evidence of these or additional bias within the travel and leisure magazine industry. The purpose of doing so would be to provide the academic reader with a better understanding of travel writing in South Africa, and to uncover the organizational complexities currently taking place within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry. This study will also expose a currently relevant and necessary area of research for media studies in general. If any indicators of bias are found, than future development of this thesis could be to educate the public of any potential bias and how to control for it. It falls outside of the scope of this paper to analyze whether the everyday reader understands or identifies any potential bias.

In order to achieve this, the following research will give detail of the tourism industry within South Africa, showing the importance that these publications have on the tourism industry. It will also offer a historical background of the South African travel writing genre as a whole, and a background into the South African travel and leisure magazine

industry and its target audience. In order to give a better understanding of bias, and how it has manifested itself within the genre in the past, this research will also look to the academic research associated with the topic. Next, it will concentrate on the research of the present study by explaining both the methods and the findings of a content analysis, as well as a set of qualitative interviews with key travel writing professionals within the South African industry. Finally, it offers its conclusions, and points to areas of further research.

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Chapter Two:

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM AND TRAVEL WRITING

Introduction

In order to exemplify the importance that tourism has on the South African economy, and to fully grasp the fundamental role that travel writing has on tourism, the following chapter will offer a short background on South African tourism. In addition to this, it will also detail recent changes and cast an eye on potential future developments in the travel writing industry.

South African tourism

After South Africa had been reprimanded for its political 'policies' during apartheid, the tourism industry within the country, and thus its effect on the economy, was quite low (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999: 23-24). At the time, "only the white minority could participate actively in the well-developed domestic tourism industry" (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999: 24). Since the end of apartheid these realities have changed, and South Africa "attract[s] large numbers of... tourists" (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999: 24).

The tourism market now accounts for a large portion of the South African economy. Ian Glenn (2008: 366) says that "South Africa makes more money from tourism as an industry than from any other sector". According to Julius Baumann (2008: 2), the Aviation and Tourism Editor of *Business Day*, South Africa had over 9.1-million foreign visitors in 2007, which was an 8.3% increase from 2006, and approximately a 45% increase since 1966. Baumann (2008: 2) goes on to say that tourist arrivals into South Africa surpassed "the global average of 6.6% [in 2007] and pushed SA [South Africa] from 29th to 28th position in the global tourism rankings." Audrey D'Angelo (2008: 7) of *The Star* states that Peter Bacon, "the non-executive chairman of Western Cape tourism authority Cape Town Routes Unlimited forecasts a continuing boom for the industry for this year [2008] and next [2009]" despite the present economic situation. She is hopeful that the 2010 soccer World Cup will help "put the spotlight on South Africa" (D'Angelo, 2008: 7).

The important role of travel writing

As a result of the growth and the influx in the South African tourism industry, there has been a steady increase and push for people to take up the craft of travel writing (Cape Argus, 2008: 4; Citizen, 2006: 3). This has been driven by the do-it-yourself travel and leisure guidebook¹ form of the genre, instead of just the traditional armchair travel style². Jonathan Crush (2000: 439) says that many travel writers are now writing step-by-step *Lonely Planet* types of narrative and adventures that describe the ‘dark continent’ in “obsessive and overwhelming detail”.

South African Tourism has decided to use these new forms of travel writing to their advantage in order to promote the South African brand to the global community. According to the *Cape Argus* (2008: 4), South African Tourism has teamed up with CNN International for the next three years in the hopes of promoting the country in the years leading up to the 2010 soccer World Cup, and thus encouraging further tourism to the country. The two corporations have started a website (www.mysouthafrica.tv) and have encouraged CNN international viewers to create their own web-pages in which they can post photos, stories, and videos depicting their experiences within South Africa (Cape Argus, 2008: 4). In order to convince viewers to do this, not only have they chosen to promote the *mysouthafrica* site on television, and on various social networking sites such as *Facebook*, *Flickr*, and certain blogs, but South Africa Tourism has also created a competition where the author of the best travel story gets a free trip to South Africa (Cape Argus, 2008: 4).

In addition to this, South Africa Tourism specifically handpicked eleven top journalism students from across the nation to attend an extremely competitive ten week travel writing program (Citizen, 2006: 3). The program was filled with various “presentations, workshops and assignments facilitated by some of South Africa’s leading travel writers” at the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (Citizen, 2006: 3). Moeketsi Mosola, from South African Tourism, believes that at present there are only a handful of professional travel writers within the country (Citizen, 2006: 3). Therefore, in the hope of promoting the craft, and thus the South African tourism industry as a whole, South

Africa Tourism decided to organize this new course in the hope of widening the sources from which new travel writing content could be taken (Citizen, 2006: 3).

The above expressed the importance that tourism has on the economy. It also indicated the role that the travel writing industry will play in promoting tourism in the future. With this understanding, what is now needed is a more detailed understanding of the history of the travel writing genre, as well as the travel and leisure magazine industry within South Africa.

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Chapter Three:

TRAVEL WRITING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

This section will give a background of the travel writing genre within South Africa. It will also look closely at the travel and leisure magazine industry within the country. In doing so it will describe why this form of the genre is the focus of this thesis' analysis.

Travel writing written on South Africa

Given the relatively long history of South Africa, there have been a large number of travel narratives written on the country. South Africa was visited by people from many foreign cultures, many of whom depicted their journeys around the country.

According to Dorothea Fairbridge (1918: 15), the first recorded foreign expedition to South Africa was taken in 600 B.C. by the Egyptians, who brought back “gold, ivory, and other precious commodities for the Pharaoh” Necho. Although they were not the same forms of travel writing seen today, Fairbridge states that their priests “and other learned men of the day” kept records of this journey, and shared them with the Greek historian, Herodotus³ (Fairbridge, 1918: 15).

Such documented exploration of the cape did not end with the Egyptians. The Portuguese, English, French, and Dutch also visited, and documented their visits throughout the area. When Sir Francis Drake sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in 1580 he recorded that “This cape is a most stately thing, and the fairest cape that we saw in the whole circumference of the earth” (in Fairbridge, 1918: 25).

In the seventeenth century, explorers began to illustrate their beliefs and experiences of the foreign land and its inhabitants back to their governments in Europe, with the intention of offering colonial recommendations for purposes of trade, religion, and so forth. In 1608 John Jourdain, Chief Merchant on the British East India ship *Ascension*,

wrote to England urging them to settle along the Cape of South Africa (Fairbridge, 1918: 29).

Saldania would beare any thinge that would be sowen or planted in it, as for all kinde of graine, whete, barlye, &c., besides all kinde of fruite, as oranges, lemons, limes, and grapes, &c. Beinge planted and sowne in due time, and kept as it ought to bee, if this countrye were inhabited by a civell nation, haveinge a castle or forte for defence against the outrage of those heathenish people and to withstand any forraine force, in shorte time it might bee broght to some civillitie, and within fewe yeares able of it selfe to furnish all shippes refreshinge, for the countrye at present doth abound with fishe and flesh in greate plentie
(in Fairbridge, 1918: 29).

Although the English at that time did not act upon Jourdain's recommendation, the Dutch in 1652, lead by Johan van Riebeeck, did (Fairbridge, 1918: 37) and laid plans for the Fort of Good Hope and the Company Gardens (Fairbridge, 1918: 37).

At this point in time, the travel writing genre world-wide was made up of many different narratives each detailing various encounters with the locals, with the great outdoors, as well as with early colonial life. Such narratives took the forms of diaries, letters (Hammerton 2004, 165-166), memoirs, photography, ethnographic studies, and travelogues, originating from a number of different authors within many different professions (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 302).

In an attempt at giving order, European colonizers documented and categorized all living species on earth (Glenn, 2008: 368). This originated with the Linnaeus System, a scientific cataloguing system for foreign plants, animals, and cultures (Pratt, 1992: 31).

It was not until the eighteenth century before a more serious and more recognizable form of the travel writing genre made its way back to Europe (Pratt, 1992: 41).

In her research comparing colonial discourse and contemporary photography, Rhoda Rosen (1992: 6) states that some of the first ethnographic photographic representations of Africa were taken not by traditional explorers like the twentieth century ones known

today such as Sir Edmond Hillary or Robert Falcon Scott, but rather were taken by Western soldiers who arrived in the country due to military expansion.

Mary Louise Pratt (1992: 43) states that one of the first written accounts of South African travel writing found throughout Europe was written by Peter Kob, a mathematician sent over to the colony in 1706. Although he was meant to carry out astronomical and meteorological research while in the country, he also wrote a detailed account describing the social realities of the Hottentot people (Pratt, 1992: 43).

The writings of Francois Levassant are also highly recognized within South African travel writing history. According to Glenn (2008: 368), Levassant spent the majority of his life writing about South Africa, its people, and its wildlife. Levassant travelled throughout South Africa between the years 1780-1784, and is credited with writing the “best-ever account” of the Gonaquois, “a small group of Xhosa” (Glenn, 2008: 368). He is also credited as being the creator of the most common style of travel writing found within travel and nature magazines throughout the globe today; “the story which is written in first person and includes maps and pictures (Glenn, 2008: 369). According to Glenn (2008: 371), if anyone were to read a story or article in a publication like *Africa Geographic* or *Weg!*... [they would be] using media forms he [Levassant] shaped.”

As colonies expanded, later forms of travel writing in the nineteenth century were written by various writers depicting their stay within the country for social, business, or historical recording purposes. The travelogues of Lady Anne Barnard, Henry Lichtenstein, and George Thompson exemplify early travel writing such as this.

Barnard, accompanied by her husband, Colonial Secretary Andre Barnard, lived in the Cape from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century (Morris, Linnegar, South Africa Ministry of Education, Human Sciences Research Council Social Cohesion and Integration Research Programme, 2004: 81). Although her writing took the form of personal diaries and were not influential at the time (due to her sex), Michael Morris *et al.* (2004: 81) state that Barnard’s account offers an important look into what the colony

must have been like during British rule. This was especially the case as she documented issues revolving around such things as “class and racial divisions, and on slavery” (Morris *et al.*, 2004: 81).

Lichtenstein (1928: xiv), a medical doctor and professor of natural history wrote a series of travel narratives depicting his time spent within the South African colony from the year 1803 to 1806. He wrote his portrayal of South Africa in the nineteenth century in order to provide a broad history of the country focusing on its topography, its politics, and its ethnography (Lichtenstein, 1928: xiv).

Thompson (1967: xvii-8), a British merchant and an eight year resident in the city of Cape Town, also wrote a series of travel narratives starting in the year 1823. Between attending the funeral of Napoleon *I* and returning home to live his last years in England, Thomas wrote about his travels throughout South Africa by horse and buggy while investigating business prospects throughout the colony (Thompson, 1967: xvii – 8).

At the time that these two and others like them were writing, travel and thus tourism was not as common as it is at present. Journey times were extraordinarily long (Hammerton, 2004: 162), and travel was complicated (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999: 14) and expensive, which would indicate that the average person simply could not consider such trips. Glenn (2008: 368-369) describes how Levaillant who was not a “wealthy tourist or... a funded scientist” had to convince “the treasurer of the Dutch East India Company, Jacob Temminick, to let him come out to collect animals and birds and to give him company support while he was [t]here.” Travel writing inevitably became associated as a form of ‘arm-chair’ travel in which the reader was able to fantasize himself exploring the far off and exotic corners of the earth while still staying within the comforts of his own home and limits of his pocket book.

As time passed “imperial travel gave way to mass tourism in the twentieth century” (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006:305). Although the far corners of the earth had been explored, documented, and developed to a large extent by the people of the past, the

desire to write about distant and undiscovered places still remained (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 305).

These same virginal features of exploration and the need to document newly developed colonies are still evident within the genre today. Many contemporary travel writers still write about their trying exploratory journeys throughout the African continent as if they were the first to document these experiences, and visit these countries (Crush, 2000: 439). Two travelogues of the twentieth century which exemplify this trend are Gavin Bell's *Somewhere over the Rainbow*, and Paul Theroux's *Dark Star Safari*.

After acting as a foreign journalist during the apartheid era, Bell (2000) decided to re-visit South Africa once the apartheid government fell. His aim was to investigate how the country was handling its newly developed political and social change (Bell, 2000: 1-4). Although he offered a picturesque depiction of the country's scenery, he emphasized the extent to which the country itself was still in conflict with itself, and as a result, needed to grow and develop into a functioning society (Bell, 2000: 301-302). His portrayal acts as if it was an early account of a newly discovered location.

Theroux's (2004) novel depicted his travels from Cairo to Cape Town. He too chose to visit the African continent that he had lived in many years before. He portrayed the continent as derelict, undeveloped, at odds with itself, non-functioning, highly dangerous, and everything opposite to the West. Although he considered South Africa to be much more developed and functioning than the rest of Africa (Theroux, 2004: 380), he still illustrated a 'savage' country that was filled with crime (Theroux, 2004: 377-378 & 403), people that were unable to get along (Theroux, 2004: 453-463), and a place which still housed a massive distinction between the rich and the poor (Theroux, 2004: 450 & 465). His writings on South Africa, and Africa as a whole, treated the continent as if it was a dangerous and undiscovered place filled with possible adventure, and acted as a refuge from the developed Western world.

Furthermore, most of the travel writing examples mentioned in this chapter were written by foreigners mainly for a foreign audience. While some wrote for future business, trade, and religious possibilities that the country offered, many wrote about, and documented in full, a place filled with exploratory possibilities, exotic landscapes, cultures, and social structures foreign to their own. As can be seen in later chapters, depictions such as these can lead to many of the biases which travel writers have been accused of in the past such as gendering, racial ‘othering’, as well as providing audiences with a form of imaginary escapism for their everyday realities. Chapters to follow will look to see if the local travel and leisure magazine industry still suffers from these biases of early foreign travellers.

Background into the travel and leisure magazine industry of South Africa

As it is now, the travel writing industry in South Africa is evident in an assortment of mediums. One of the most popular media of choice for South Africans is the travel and leisure style magazine. This is the form on which the present paper will focus.

For about fourteen years, *Getaway*, published by Ramsay Son & Parker (RSP) was the only travel and leisure magazine of its kind within the South African publishing industry (Penstone, 2003: 13). In 2005, from June to September, the publication sold on average 92 334 copies per monthly issue; leading the industry (Matthews: 2005: 11).

In terms of language and culture, Media 24 saw a “gap” in the market, and decided to launch a similar travel and leisure magazine in 2004 entitled *Wegbreek* (Penstone: 2003: 13). Media 24 believed that their bimonthly magazine (Maughan: 2005: 6), written in Afrikaans, would appeal mainly to the Afrikaans audience, unlike *Getaway*, which was an English magazine that appealed more to an English speaking audience. It was decided that *Wegbreek* would include more budget and family-based holidays as opposed to the more pricy alternatives offered by their competition *Getaway* (Penstone: 2003: 13).

Due to the similarity of titles, Ramsay Son & Parker, in 2004, accused *Wegbreek* of trademark infringement, claiming that their title and their content made it confusing for their reader. They believed that *Wegbreek* was confusing the *Getaway* audience into

thinking that it was the Afrikaans version of *Getaway* (Maughan: 2005: 6). Their accusation was based upon the fact that the direct English translation of *Wegbreek* is 'breakaway', and that the rival publication was producing content within the pages of its magazine that was similar to that of *Getaway*'s (Maughan: 2005: 6). The South African courts, in 2005, ruled in favour of Ramsay Son and Parker (RSP) stating that "the average South African would regard *Wegbreek* as a close translation of *Getaway* 'and... the [High Court Judge Mr. Justice Abe Motlala] agreed with the contention that 'Wegbreek, like *Getaway*, will be of interest to persons who want to 'Wegbreek' or getaway from their daily toll or the routine of the suburban resident" (Maughan: 2005: 6). After the verdict, *Wegbreek* was made to destroy all material bearing the name *Wegbreek* and to either change the name of their publications' website or to shut it down completely (Maughan: 2005: 6).

Since then, there have been a number of publications which have emerged within the industry such as *Africa Wild*, *South Africa Country Life*, *Drive Out*, and *Explore South Africa*. Media 24, after their legal battle, and having learnt about the potential for a competitive publication in the travel and tourism industry, produced a replacement for *Wegbreek* entitled *Weg*, as well as an English counterpart entitled *go!*.

In 2006 *Weg* and *go!* combined led the market with circulation figures of 112,124, and continued to lead the market in 2007 when their figures remained high with 96,776 (Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa, 2008: 4) *Getaway* and their Afrikaans counterpart *Mooiloop*'s combined circulation figures were 79,457, and in 2007 they remained high with numbers up to 89,536 (Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa, 2008: 4). No other publication within this genre came close to these numbers. For instance, in 2007, *South African Country Life*, a publication which focuses mainly on more rural holidays and travel writing pieces finished with 40,196 which was only about half of the circulation figures that these other two publications had (Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa, 2008: 4). Despite such a difference, these figures show the growth within the travel and leisure magazine industry especially alongside the growth of the South African tourism.

Who does the travel and leisure magazine industry serve?

The following section will indicate to whom the South African travel and leisure magazine industry gears their publications. In later sections this will help to demonstrate whether or not any bias exists within the travel and leisure magazine publications that were analyzed, and if so, how it manifests.

Despite the importance that local and foreign tourism has on the country's economy, the role that the travel writing genre has on tourism, as well as the fact that the South African population is so diverse, the travel and leisure magazine industry speaks mainly to one demographic audience. According to an aggregate of statistics of five travel and leisure magazines⁴ taken from the All Media Product Survey (AMPS) (2008A), white affluent men living in cities are the publication's primary readers. The thesis demonstrates this by analysing readership by location, income, race, gender, and language.

Figure 1 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) indicates that a high majority of readers who purchased their own copies of travel and leisure magazines live in metropolitan areas, cities and large towns. These numbers show that the travel and leisure magazine publications may try to base the content of their stories around themes and locations that appeal to the interests of their readers who live within cities. These statistics will prove to be of more assistance in further chapters when this thesis tries to determine the level of bias pertaining to escapism that exists within the travel and leisure magazine industry.

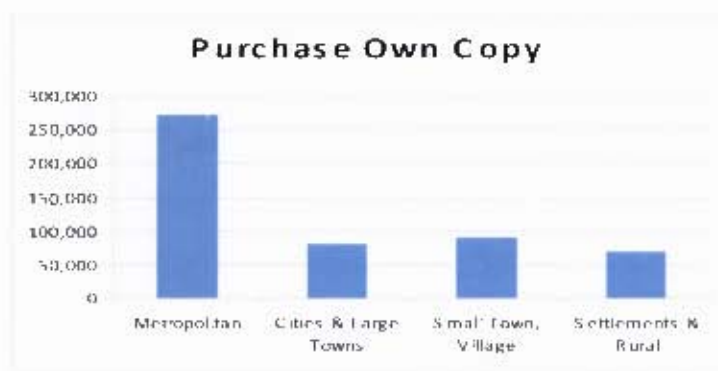


Figure 1: Home of Readers Who Purchased Their Own Copies
Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

Figure 2 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) suggests that middle and high income groups make up the largest readership. However, high income groups within South Africa tend to purchase the publications more often than any other income group, whereas middle income groups tend to read these publications more through borrowed copies. These statistics point out that although both middle and high income groups enjoy reading the escapist content of these magazines, the publications receive more direct profit in terms of overall copies sold from higher income groups.



Figure 2: Readership and Income, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

In order to give a more detailed set of statistics that explain what accounts for a 'high', 'medium', and 'low' income, Figure 3 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) illustrates the average income of audience members who bought the publications. These statistics show that there are higher incidences of people who purchase these publications that earn R11000 to R20000 and above, than any other income category. Again, these statistics may reflect that these publications are written for those audience members who fit within a more affluent demographic.



Figure 3: Purchasers of Publications and Detailed Income, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

Figure 4 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) indicates that the race of the large majority of the readers is white. This is the case not only in overall readership, but also in terms of readers who actually purchase the magazine. It is clear from these statistics that this demographic drives the magazines commercially.

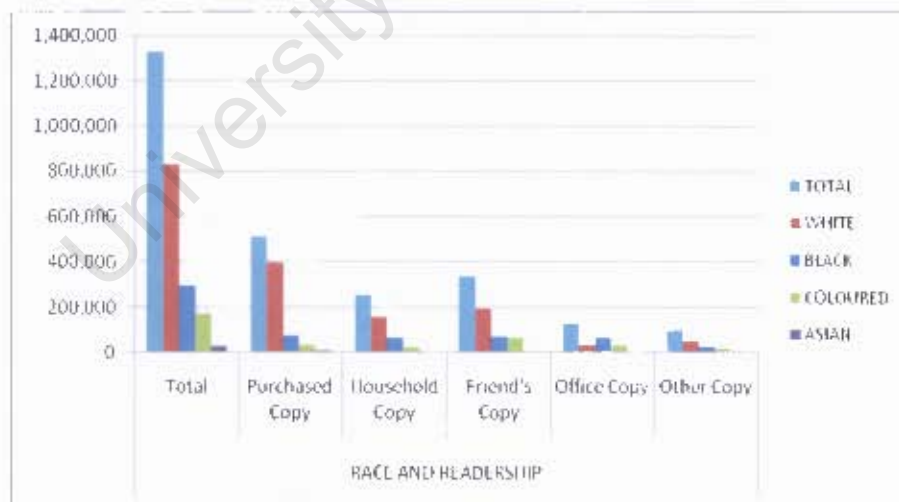


Figure 4: Readership and Race, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

In terms of gender, Figure 5 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) indicates that although the readership of these magazines is quite evenly spread amongst men and women, it seems that men purchase the magazines more than women, who tend more to read

borrowed copies. Moreover, this would indicate that men contribute more to the bottom line of these publications.

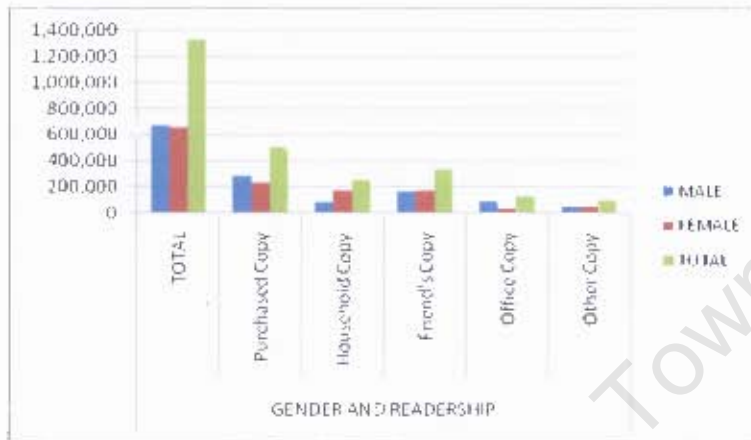


Figure 5: Gender and Readership, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

The numbers in Figure 6 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) could reflect why the purchasers of these magazines seem to be mainly men. They could also act as an explanation if editors and advertisers were found to gear their publications more towards men than women (see Chapter 9). According to these statistics, men usually play a larger role in deciding about vacations than women.

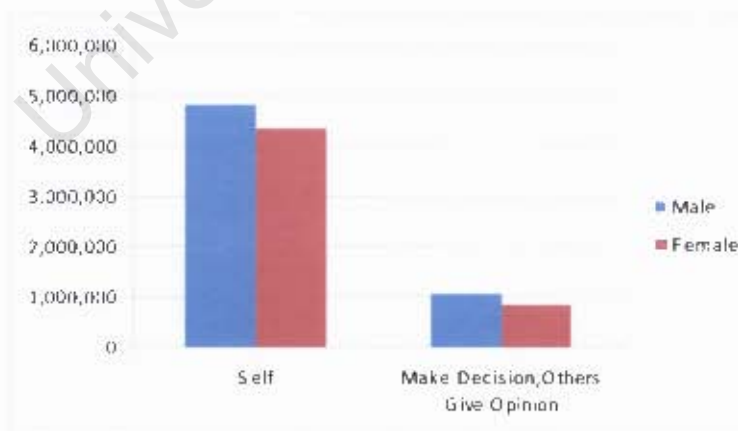


Figure 6: Gender of Holiday Decision Makers, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

Figure 7 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) demonstrates that the common language spoken by the average reader of these publications is Afrikaans. It is clear from the

above statistics that the main target reader for the industry as a whole is a white affluent man. However, specific publications choose to target either English or Afrikaans readers as well. These magazines which are written in only one of these languages over another reflect this.

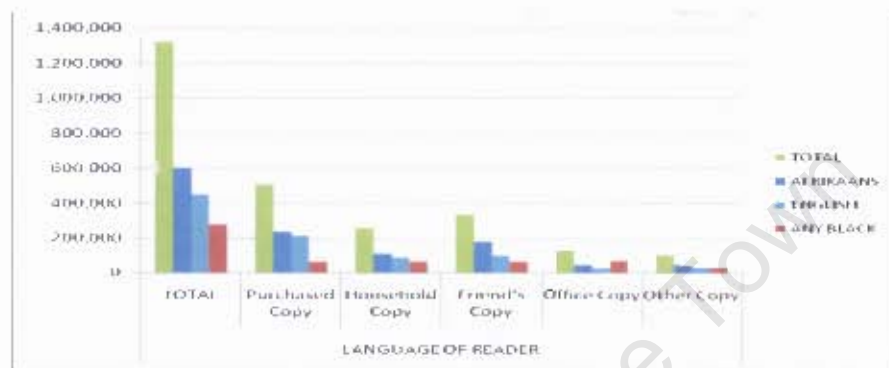


Figure 7: Readership and Language, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

Furthermore, the statistics above demonstrate that the white affluent male, in both readership, and purchasing history, is the demographic that supports the South African travel and leisure writing industry. Considering that this demographic drives the publications commercially, it is therefore likely that these publications would be inclined to write with this market in mind. Given the global trend of the print and leisure magazine industry to alter their style of writing, and be conscious of their overall content in order to appeal to their audience's interests (Kurtz, 1993: 355-379), this fact does not seem unlikely.

As can be seen from the content analysis later in the thesis, outdoor activities seem to be the primary focus of these publications. In order to give a perspective of this demographic against the total population's size, it is necessary to note how much of the actual population partakes in outdoor related activities.

Figure 8 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) illustrates that 8% of the overall population of South Africans from the LSM of 6-10 participate in outdoor related activities. It is important to note that 53% of all those who participated in these activities were black, whereas only 27% of those who participated in outdoor activities were white. Relative to

population size, the white population partakes in more outdoor activities than blacks do. It is interesting to note however, that there are nearly twice as many blacks with the LSM of 6-10 than whites that are participating in outdoor activities; yet these publications are not targeting the larger black affluent market. LSM1-5 for all races has been excluded because the incomes of these groups are so low that these numbers would have no bearing to this thesis.

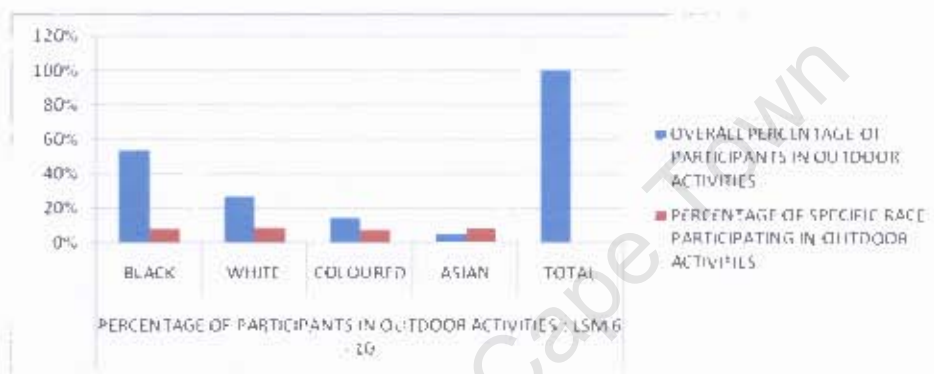


Figure 8: Percentage of Participants in Outdoor Activities.

Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

As the classification of 'outdoor activities' is very broad, this thesis thought it important to explain what type of outdoor activities each racial group seems to have an interest in. According to the statistics in Figure 9 (All Media product Survey, 2008A) the majority of the black population who took an interest in outdoor related activities, enjoyed organised sports much more than travel style activities such as hiking and walking, adventure, and water sports that were featured within the publications sampled. In relation to population size, the white and black population seems to have the same amount of interest in travel-style activities. This factor will be important in upcoming chapters that deal with a racial bias and 'othering'.

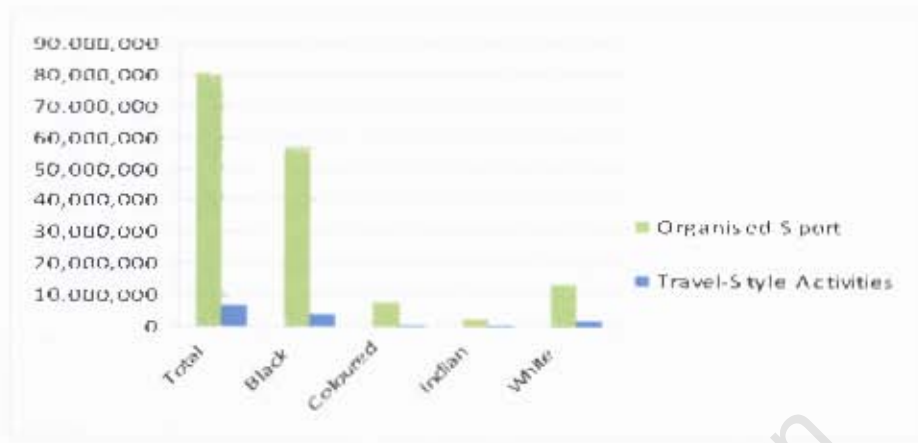


Figure 9: Outdoor Interests and Race, Source: All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A

This section allowed for a better understanding of the travel writing genre, and the travel and leisure magazine industry found within South Africa. It highlighted the genre's history within the country, and also gave a closer look into the travel and leisure magazine industry and its overall commercial market. The next section will illustrate a sample of academic research that has been written on the topic of travel writing.

Chapter Four:

BIAS IN THE TRAVEL WRITING GENRE

Introduction

The following chapter will give a brief background into the academic research previously written on travel writing and bias. This will be done in order to provide an understanding of the biases that have been associated with the travel writing genre, and how they have manifested in the past. This understanding will be useful to better identify their potential existence when later analyzing the current content of the travel and leisure magazine industry.

The largest and most established amount of research done on travel writing and bias deals with the genre's association to three subjects. These subjects relate to 'imagined geographies' and escapism (Crush, 2000; Dixon, 2007; Fowler, 2007; Olsaretti, 2007; Rizzo, 2007; Said, 1978; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006), 'othering' and race (Coetzee, 1989; Crush, 2000; Fowler, 2007; Hall, 2000; Pratt, 1992; Rizzo, 2007; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006), as well as gender (Clapp, 2004; Susan Kollin, 1997; van Eeden, 2006). These biases will be discussed first.

The travel writing genre, and in particular the travel and leisure magazine industry has recently been associated with a few potential commercial biases. These biases have been linked in academic research to advertising, advertorials, as well as 'freebies' and barter agreements (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005). These biases will be discussed secondly.

Escapism

In many studies, researchers have demonstrated the tendencies of travel writers, both past and present, to rely on idyllic descriptions, imagined geographies, and attention grabbing tactics (Said, 1978; Crush, 2000; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006; Fowler, 2007; Rizzo, 2007; Olsaretti, 2007; Dixon, 2007) in order to appeal to the audience's beliefs of the

world, and their desires for escapism; the wish to experience something different from every day reality.

In their research on Mongolian travel writing, David Tavares and Marc Brosseau (2006) exemplify the genres audience's desire for escapism and the unknown. They explain that since the Victorian era, travellers have needed reassurance that a foreign destination, beyond their every day urban reality, still exists, and that they can travel to and explore it, at anytime (Tavares and Brosseau, 2006: 304-305). They discuss how the driving force of the genre is hungry for content that provides evidence proving that the world is still "heterogeneous, unfathomable, bewildering" (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 305), and despite the effects of globalization and the readers' own reality, still maintains possibilities of adventure and exploration or 'frontier'. In order to do this, Tavares and Brosseau (2006: 305) exemplify how travel writers, in relation to Mongolia, continually depict the country with an imagined geography filled with "mystery and myth". They even go as far to say that travel writers consciously ignore and leave out any descriptions of Mongolian cities, because they feel that their readers do not wish to read about urban settings and environments similar to their own because this would go against their need for escapism. Doing so would affect the readers' previously held beliefs of a country, and would thus be opposite to the imagined geographies of discourse that have developed over time (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 310).

In a recent interview with the South African *Sunday Times*, Paul Theroux, a novelist and successful travel writer was quoted saying that "Travel writing is...literary indulgence...[it can be filled with]...creative mendacity, pointless heroics and chronic posturing" (Roberts, 2008: 15). In other words, Theroux mentions that travel writers often use 'stunts' or dramatized depictions of a location or adventure (Theroux, 2008: 15) like those mentioned by Tavares and Brosseau (2008) in order to gain attention, and to appeal to their audience, their desires, as well as their imagination.

In his research about Frank Hurley and other early twentieth century Australian travel writers, Robert Dixon (2007: 64) also exemplifies this. He emphasizes how the writers of

live travelogue performances in the past, were continually altering their presentations in order to fit “the tastes of their local audiences, the social status of different theatres, and the professional interests of particular host institutions” (Dixon, 2007: 64. This example demonstrates how travel writers relied on their own creative licence in order to appeal to the audience and their unique interests and desires.

In his journal article, Gary Krist (1993) offers a comparative analysis discussing both good and bad examples of travel writing. His research exemplifies how travel writers “use artificial obstacles” (Krist, 1993: 595) and tend to base their stories around a journey which has at times used older as well as more challenging means of transportation in order to capture their readers’ attention (Krist, 1993: 595-596). Doing so allows the reader to escape from his every day reality and imagine a place that is different from his own.

William R. Siddall’s (1987: 310-315) sociological research which analyzed and compared various modes of transportation and experiences, indirectly offers an explanation as to why people prefer older and thus more difficult routes. He states that older or more simplistic modes of transportation like horse and buggy, horseback, as well as more strenuous physical modes of transportation, that romanticize the past, tend to link travellers to their surroundings and as a result improves their travel experience (Siddall, 1987: 310). He goes on to say that more modern modes of transport such as cars or airplanes “isolates” (Siddall, 1987: 315) and separates travellers from the excitement of their journey. In doing so, the traveller receives little satisfaction from the experience (Siddall, 1987: 309-311). Tactics such as these “artificial obstacles” (Krist, 1993: 595) ultimately grab the reader’s interest by offering them an alternate reality to their own.

Another example of a researcher who demonstrates the use of imagined geographies within travel writing is Corrine Fowler (2007). Fowler conducted a content analysis of both travel writing and news media coverage. She focused on how journalists, once being denied access to Afghani borders during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001, turned to travel writing in order to set a background for their stories (Fowler, 2007:

155-156). She found that the result “prioritized drama over understanding, ignoring the immediate social and political background to [the] 2001 [military] conflict” (Fowler, 2007: 156). Such an example not only identifies the differences between the two news and travel writing genres, but it also reflects the travel writers’ creative licence, stylistic techniques, and use of ‘imagined geographies’ within their stories. In this case, an attempt at critical journalistic coverage was overtaken by an unrealistic impression of the exotic from within the travel writing genre.

Similarly, Paulo Daniela Smecca’s work (in Alessandro Rizzo, 2007) also accused travel writers of embellishment after analyzing historical British and French travel narratives, as well as modern travel narratives within the *Lonely Planet* series’ representations of Sicily. Smecca (in Rizzo, 2007: 202-203) testifies that the traveller takes on the role of translator and inevitably transforms his setting in the hopes of forming a pleasant representation for his readers. In order for them to do this, Smecca claims that travel writers continually rely on images “of the ‘exotic’, the ‘sublime’ and the ‘picturesque’” (in Rizzo, 2007: 202-203) ultimately giving into a desire and need for something different.

Alessandro Olsaretti (2007: 250) attests to this commonality in his analysis of four separate historical travel writing pieces. He explains how British audiences not only desired to experience the exotic, different, and distant places (Olsaretti, 2007: 247) but that due to different societal elements and audience expectations, the writer’s description of landscapes and their inhabitants had to be done as if they were within a painting or some other theatrical form of entertainment (Olsaretti, 2007: 253). These representations then, demonstrated the genre’s tendency to rely on picturesque portrayals and attention grabbing tactics in order to appeal to their historic audience’s interests of the foreign and exotic.

Once again, Dixon (2007) points out similar occurrences in this regard. He states how Frank Hurley, an early travel writer, used literary methods comparable to ones used within the movies and “music halls” of his time in order to grab his audience’s attention

(Dixon, 2007: 16). Dixon goes on to give examples of these occurrences by pointing out the titles Hurley used within his stories such as “Capital of the Swamps...Where the World is a Long Way Off...The Mighty Fly River...Jungle Storms...Head-Hunters’ Citadel...Gruesome Human Relics...Victims’ Stuffed Heads... Hurley’s Thrilling Exploration...[and] Time and Space Abolished” (Dixon, 2007: 74). These exciting titles would have acted as an attention grab by appealing to the audience’s own sense of adventure and thus escapist desires.

Furthermore, these research examples demonstrate the tactics associated with the travel writing genre that have been used in order to appeal to the audience’s desires for difference and escapism. As these tactics of offering strictly idyllic portrayals, ‘imagined geographies’, and ‘artificial obstacles’ have been used in the past, research into whether or not these tools are still exercised today, within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry needs to be undertaken. Given the exploratory themes expressed in these publications, and the popularity that these publications have with people who live in metropolitan and urban areas, research into this topic is called for.

Race and ‘othering’

Another prevalent criticism of bias that is found within the travel writing genre is its representation of race in regards to the foreign ‘other’. In his book, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall (2000) looks to Michel Foucault and his notions of knowledge and power. He states that commonly held beliefs are spread by society through members (Hall, 2000: 49-50) and that these beliefs ultimately “organize conduct, understanding, practice... the regulation of bodies, as well as whole populations” (Hall, 2000: 51). Hall goes on to say that commonly held beliefs inevitably lead people to classify others with predetermined characteristics, notions, (Hall, 2000: 252 & 259) and stereotypes. These classifying practices are the basis of the act of ‘othering’.

J.M Coetzee (1989) and Pratt (1992) describe how this sort of discourse has occurred since early colonial exploration, and was found to be present in both colonial literature, and colonial scientific practices. Chapter 3 states how these early forms of travel writing were used in order to describe and document a foreign experience. In this regard, J.M. Coetzee (1989) focuses on early colonial explorers interpretations of their dealings with the South African Hottentots. Coetzee states that travel writers have continually depicted the Hottentot natives as being underdeveloped, lazy, uncouth, and extremely idle in comparison to the writer and the people of the Western world (Coetzee, 1989: 22). Coetzee offers these excerpts from traveller's reports of Hottentots in 1652:

The local natives have everything in common with the dumb cattle, barring their human nature....[They are handicapped in their speech, clucking like turkey-cocks...A number of them will sleep together in the veld, making no difference between men and women...They smell fiercely, as can be noticed at a distance of more than twelve feet against the wind, and they also give the appearance of never having washed.
(in Coetzee, 1989:12)

According to Coetzee, examples like the above emphasize the extent to which the Hottentots were always “counted more among the dumb [vulgar] beasts than among the company of reasoning men” (Coetzee, 1989: 22); and were thus the societal ‘other’. In order to explain this, he states that early travel writers continually used similar categorical structures and tactics in framing their stories.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, Pratt (1992: 31) describes that this form of scientific categorization related to the Linnaeus system. She stated that these “eighteenth-century classificatory systems created the task of locating every species on the planet, extracting it from its particular, arbitrary surroundings (the chaos), and placing it in its appropriate spot in the system (the order – book collection, or garden) with its new written secular European name” (Pratt, 1992: 31). In other words, these categorized systems saw the need to bring order to the ‘other’, non western world, and its inhabitants; whether they be animal, plant, or human.

Although they do not have South Africa as their focus, many other theorists such as Said (1978), Rizzo (2007), Fowler (2007), Tavares et al (2006), Coetzee (1989), Crush (2000), and Dixon (2007) all point to an ‘othering’ bias that exists within early to present travel literature.

Edward Said’s (1978) work attests to the existence of an ‘othering’ bias by discussing the concept of ‘Orientalism.’ According to Said, the West has created a discourse of ‘othering’ towards Eastern countries by depicting their inhabitants and their locations as the binary opposites to themselves.

In her research, Fowler (2007: 160) also explains how travel writing both new and old has continually ‘othered’ the foreigner. Fowler states that Western travel writers have commonly associated Afghans with a “ruthless past... [and] a pathological predisposition towards violence.”

Tavares and Brosseau (2006: 308) indicate how contemporary travel pieces focusing on Mongolia tend to ‘other’ Mongolians by depicting them as strictly nomadic herdsman reminiscent of early man, and thus different to what one would expect a person to be within the modern western world. This was done, despite the fact that Mongolian cities are also filled with typical urban and westernized individuals.

Smecca demonstrates this with his analysis of how historic and modern travel writing not only treats Sicilians to a very large degree as the societal ‘other’ (in Rizzo, 2007: 202), but that travel narration is a “dynamic and distorted instrument for representing the other” (in Rizzo, 2007: 205). He describes his findings of how travel writers have stereotyped Sicilians as “fierce and passionate characters... [with] sudden bursts of violence and wild gesticulation” (in Rizzo, 2007: 204).

In her study of gendered colonial discourse in relation to contemporary advertisements and past colonial adventure, Jeanne van Eeden (2006: 6-7) attests to this discourse of the black African ‘other’. She states that stereotypes of gender and racial difference were

established in order to reiterate “white racial superiority” (van Eeden, 2006: 7). When speaking specifically of the early colonial travel experiences to Africa, van Eeden says that Africans were “fetishised in fantasy images” (van Eeden, 2006: 7) and were turned “into extras on their own continent, [and] into stage props...in the great undertaking being performed by Europeans” (van Eeden, 2006: 6).

Similar illustrations of ‘othering’ were also found within Crush’s (2000) study of post-apartheid South African travel writing. Crush found that South African travel writers, writing about African areas outside of their country, continually used colonialist references and styles of writing within their depictions (2000: 439) of ‘the dark continent’ (2000: 438) despite their country having just gone through a democratic change years prior. In other words, despite geographically being a part of the same African continent, the South African writers wrote as if the rest of the African continent, and its cultures, were completely foreign, problematic, and a burden to them (2000: 438). According to Crush, the common theme in these works were that Africans, apart from South Africans, were abnormal, and lived in misery, poverty, absolute confusion, and political chaos (Crush 2000, 443-447). Similarly, he found that the locations and cities in which ‘other’ Africans dwelled were ultimately condemned by the travel writers due to the large number of people living within them, who were considered unfavourable (Crush, 2000:444). Crush offers some examples by H. Wende, M. de Villiers, and S. Hirtle:

I began to see how horrible life in Luanda had become.
The evidence of decay, war and neglect was everywhere
...rusting hulks of cars and shipping containers littered
the...sandy soil that were once parks; mounds of rotting
garbage...mini-lakes of raw sewage...that children were splashing
around in – leading to massive outbreaks of cholera and malaria...The
smell of it all was awful
(in Crush 2000, 444)

The beaches...look beautiful, but they aren’t really. They’re
filthy and poisoned, like much of the land with human detritus.
There is a dreadful smell of decay everywhere. Naked children
wander the streets...on the beaches the fevered ones lie, dying
alone. Corpses are rolled by the incoming tide, and...things...
not yet corpses

(in Crush 2000, 444)

Crush states that like past colonial writers, modern travel writers often describe highly inhabited and busy cities as unfavourable, but depict open and vast expanses in a more positive light (2000: 443). He states that in doing so, they 'other' the "parasitic" (Crush 2000, 438) inhabitants of these places by emphasizing how their land and their people would be better off without them.

What is more, these depictions of a particular place analysed by Crush, show how travel writers not only 'other' the land's inhabitants, but also the land itself by associating sickly inhabitants with a dying urban landscape. Furthermore, this is not saying that if, for example, a city is destroyed due to civil war that travel writers must describe this city as if it is pristine and in good working order when it is not. Rather what it is emphasizing is that if a destination is in absolute decay and ruin, 'othering' occurs when its inhabitants are compared to the negative characteristics of the city, as well as when their sheer existence is put at blame for the condition of the city.

According to Smecca (in Rizzo, 2007), this stylistic association of 'othering' is not uncommon. In his findings, he demonstrates how travel writers have transposed these 'othering' stereotypes of the local inhabitants onto the Sicilian landscape itself by describing how it as "the very essence of Italy,' a mixture of 'history and passion, beauty and destruction" (in Rizzo, 2007: 204). These travel writers have glamorized the Sicilian landscape and directly associated its physical characteristics with that of its 'othered' inhabitants' characteristics.

Tavares and Brosseau (2006) also emphasize the extent to which travel writers treat a foreign setting as the 'other'. They demonstrate this by explaining how travel writers, focusing on Mongolia, continually add to existing imaginary geographies which depict the country as a place without time (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 309). In doing so, they point out various methods used to portray Mongolia as the 'binary opposite' (Tavares & Brosseau, 2006: 306) of the writers themselves, their readers, as well as their mundane Western realities. Although the western world has advanced, and is shown as a place of

normality, the eastern world, in particular Mongolia, is continually depicted as a timeless place of fantastical mystery much like J.M. Barrie's *Never Never Land*, in that it has not progressed or been affected by global industrialization or commercialization.

Dixon's (2007) research indirectly exemplifies travel writings 'othering' towards a particular location as well by referencing Frank Hurley's piece regarding his travels to New Guinea:

New Guinea is a land stranger than the exaggerated romancing of fiction. There are still vast unexplored regions within the heart of the island, where prehistoric creatures dwell, unchanged and far removed from what we call civilization... Finding it impossible to proceed on foot, I equipped a second expedition with seaplanes and set out on what surely was the strangest of the many adventures of my life. After many harassing experiences in the air, owing to the turbulent conditions above the swamps, we at last reached the realm of this lost world. We might have been flying above the desolate plains and swamps of the planet Mars (in Dixon, 2007: 75).

In this excerpt Dixon offers an example of Hurley's writing which it can be argued, 'others' New Guinea and its people, representing them as foreign, strange, primitive, and uncivilized. Moreover, the idea of the exotic, the exciting, and the unfamiliar, even when looking at a physical location, can at times be manipulated into an 'othered' association of difference.

Researchers have also shown the expressions of 'othering' within travel writing images. Dixon (Dixon, 2007: 71) indirectly exemplifies this in Figure 10 of Frank Hurley's *Pearls and Savages* 'coloured glass lantern slide'



Figure 10. "Frank Hurley, title for *Pearls and Savages*, coloured glass lantern slide, NLA Frank Hurley Collection, PIC FH/801" Source: (in Dixon 2007, 71)

This image indirectly illustrates the 'othering' tactics used by past travel writers who put difference on display and segregate the writer or explorer from those whom he or she writes about. In this image, Hurley is presumably the Caucasian male (aided by his guide and his binoculars), in the top left hand corner peering at the other individuals in the image who are depicted by their own difference even to one another. His presence, his clothing, and in particular the inclusion of his binoculars and informative guide, demonstrates the 'othering' difference between him and the other individually different people within the photograph. Each is depicted as his opposite in terms of skin colour, culture, and traditional fashions. Hurley and the other faces are the only focal points within the image, a factor which demonstrates the motivations of the photo that they are different from him, and from one another. The inclusion of his binoculars and his informative guide demonstrates how the other people within the image are subjects needed to be peered at, looked at, and analyzed from afar.

Furthermore, the above research provided example which demonstrate the existence of the 'othering' bias found within the genre of travel writing. Although 'othering' seems inherent within the notion of travel, these authors have indicated that the descriptions of the 'other' (a destination or its inhabitants), are inaccurately formed through aid of 'imagined geographies' (Said, 1978; Tavares and Brosseau, 2006; Crush, 2000), and

colonial discourse (Coetzee, 1989; Crush, 2000; Hall, 2000; van Eeden, 2006). This existence of ‘othering’ within the genre clearly indicates its need for analysis. Doing so will allow for a better understanding of if, how, or why it may still occur within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry of today.

Gender

Gender bias is also an issue that has received a lot of scholarly attention in the travel writing genre. One of the main and perhaps oldest debates on this topic has to do with women’s historical existence and role within travel and travel writing. Some theorists believe that as a subject, women are classified as an ‘other’ because of colonial discourse, and its classification of women being an inferior sex (van Eeden, 2006: 352-354). Other theorists believe that women have always played a strong role within colonialism, and within the industry itself in terms of authorship, feeling that a gender claim such as the ones above are unsubstantiated (Kollin, 1997; Clapp, 2004).

In her study detailing colonial gendered discourse, van Eeden (2006: 352) states that travel and exploration, since the colonial era, has always been a masculine act. She holds that travel itself is linked to a “metaphorical feminization of land” (van Eeden, 2006: 352), where the chosen empty geographical landscape is seen as virginal, undiscovered, and unspoilt (van Eeden, 2006: 353). However, she sees the explorative desire to explore as a form of “penetration into a suggestively feminized... locale” (van Eeden, 2006: 353). Van Eeden says that the concept of travel has always been a way in which men, being placed within an undiscovered geographical setting, have been offered an arena in which to test” (van Eeden, 2006: 352) their masculinity. After analyzing the Land Rover advertisement⁵ which was recently banned by the South African Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for using racial and gendering stereotypes, she goes on to express how elements of the gendered discourses above are still evident today; especially within the industries of tourism, advertising (van Eeden, 2006: 353), and travel literature (van Eeden, 2006: 354).

As a result of gendered colonial discourse such as this, many theorists state that travel writing was traditionally thought of as a male genre (Clapp, 2004: 62). Although a few female writers were working within the industry, it has been claimed that female travel writers wrote with a biased “feminine perspective” and a “feminine voice”, which ultimately affected their choice of topic and writing style (Clapp, 2004: 67).

Elizabeth J. Clapp (2004) demonstrates this debate of the gendering of stories within her research. She does this by offering a content analysis of the travel writings of Mrs. Anne Royall, an early female American travel writer. Clapp states that Royall’s work and role within the early travel writing genre goes against the notion of gender bias, and the idea that female stories were gendered (Clapp, 2004: 61-73). In fact, she concludes that Royall was not the only exception. Clapp felt that there were others like Royall who did not fit into these stereotypical judgments regarding female writers and their work (Clapp, 2004: 61-73).

Susan Kollin (1997) also speaks against the existence of gender bias, and the tendency for women to gender their travel writing stories. She does this by analyzing various Alaskan travel narratives written by women. Kollin’s focuses mainly on two specific travel writers each of whom wrote at significantly different times. Elizabeth Beaman wrote in the late nineteenth century, and Anne Morrow Lindebergh wrote in the early twentieth century (Kollin, 1997). Although Kollin gives a few examples of how these women, at times, felt that their gender inhibited them in relation to their audience, and their subject matter (1997), she goes on to express how these two very strong white women, and others like them, were not oppressed in terms of being allowed to write within the travel writing genre. Instead she says that white women, through their narratives, were able to help the colonial expansionist cause as a whole, and were thus just as strong in this movement if not stronger than men (Kollin, 1997).

Furthermore, this debate illuminates the existence of a gender bias within the travel writing genre. This was shown in three ways: women as a travel writing subject, women and the production of stories, as well as women being deterred from working as travel

writers due to their sex. This existence then demonstrates a need for further examination into whether or not such a bias occurs still today; this will be done by examining the South African travel and leisure magazine industry.

Commercial realities of contemporary leisure travel writing

Three other criticisms that have been spoken about in past academic research relating to the travel writing genre are that of direct advertising, advertorials, the 'freebie' and the barter agreement (Glenn, 2008: 373; Lazar, 2005: 80-81). Each of these commercial realities has the possibility to produce bias.

As information media has expanded, the tourism industry has come up with more ways to advertise its product to the global community. According to John Fraim's (2000) research on the ubiquity of modern day advertising, the methods of modern day advertisers are evolving. Although he is not speaking directly in regards to travel writing, he references the media in general, which given this study's focus of travel and leisure publications, makes his findings relevant to this case. Fraim (2000) states that for the first time the media as opposed to corporations, are seeking out money-making strategies; especially on the Internet. He analyses media conglomerates who offer both online journalistic coverage and advice in regards to any given topic, as well as direct web links to their own companies in order to make money from the product mentioned within their journalistic coverage (Fraim, 2000). His research also uncovered how media sources are now being paid transaction fees when one of their advertisers makes a sale off one of their web pages (Fraim, 2000). Fraim (2000) warns that coupling commerce and criticism could make it impossible for future writers to criticize the world around them if there is no longer any money in being the societal watchdog.

Ben H. Bagdikian (2000) also warns against the current linkage between advertising and editorial content in his study of *The Media Monopoly*. He emphasizes that because the amount of money paid by advertisers to print and broadcast media far surpasses the amount of money generated from readership through subscriptions and sales costs, that "Newspapers and magazines have...entered a stage in which immediate desires of

advertisers have higher priority than the desires of readers” (Bagdikian, 2000: 138). He goes on to say that because of this the media companies have begun to adapt their content and the way in which they write their stories in order to fit the needs of advertisers, and have thus adopted the advertisers’ ideologies as their own (Bagdikian, 2000: 149). Bagdikian (2000:133-149) explains that this is dangerous because advertisements and the news are now never without bias, and that a link between the two has had led to several societal costs. He warns that the fusing of advertising and editorial content has already created a “loss of diversity of information and ideas” and that the news has become “bland” as a result (Bagdikian, 2000: 138). Bagdikian (2000: 133) goes on to say that the controversy that is meant to appear within the news has currently been “bleached” out in order to serve the advertisers’ best interests, a fact that is most alarming given the commonly held notions that the news media are meant to be and are believed by many to be relatively unbiased and value-free.

In his research on South African media and its advertising practices, Adrian Hadland, Lesley Cowling and Bate Feliz Tabi Tabe (2007: 65) authenticate Fraim and Bagdikian’s views by emphasizing that “Advertisers [in South Africa] can and do influence copy, and...[that] editors and journalists [now] operate with this in mind.” They state that advertisers like to position their advertisements on a platform that creates a ““buying mood”” (Hadland *et al.*, 2007: 15), and emphasize that South African journalists and editorial staff are aware of this. Hadland *et al.* (2007: 15) say that many modern media organizations currently introduce and promote ad space to possible advertisers that “link editorial content to advertising” while still making their final product “attractive to both readers and advertisers.” In other words, this research warns that there is currently a lack of separation between “editorial and advertising functions at many magazines” (Hadland *et al.*, 2007: 65). This fact is alarming especially as Hadland *et al.* (2007:65-66) mention that South African magazines are without regulatory bodies in regards to advertorial usage. Furthermore, through this research one is quickly made aware of the fine line that currently exists between what is hard journalism versus what is paid for content.

Although these discussions of Fraim (2000), Hadland *et al.* (2007), and Bagdikian (2000) look to a broader aspect of the media, their research raises trust issues for travel writing when taking note of the existence of holiday advertorials, corporate based travel brochures, and free online travel advice.

Carol Lazar (2005:80-81) also speaks about the direct relationships between advertisers and journalist staff within South Africa. She says that travel journalism is “one of the fields of journalism [that is] open to exploitation” (Lazar, 2005: 80). Lazar (2005: 81) states that “In South Africa, small markets and financial constraints mean that most newspapers and magazines have limited financial resources and, in the field of travel, journalists are rarely sent off on investigative trips paid for by their publication. Every publication does, however, receive travel invitations... [or] ‘freebies’”. She goes on to say that tourism authorities and other members belonging to the tourism industry often ask journalists or editorial staff to sign a ‘barter agreement’ (Lazar, 2005:81) which “is a written agreement...stating that in return for a travel trip, the journalist (or publication) undertakes to provide copy about the destination, mention of the hosts involved and so on” (Lazar, 2005: 80). She feels that because of these problems within the industry, and because the occupation of travel writer is so vague, that “it is difficult to prescribe uniform standards” (Lazar, 2005: 80) despite there clearly being a need for them.

Glenn (2008) also speaks about the industry’s usage of ‘freebies’ and the common mentality that if a party invites and pays for a writer’s trip, then a writer will feel a need to pay them back. He states that, “The truth is that travel journalists are almost always non-paying guests, treated like royalty. And it would be difficult, rude even, to look a gift horse in the mouth” (Glenn 2008, 373). He goes on to say that most travel writing in general is written like a form of PR. According to him, “many journalists find themselves playing both sides of the fence - moving from journalism to writing PR” (Glenn 2008, 373). He goes on to say that despite a few of the travel and leisure magazine publications within South Africa such as *Getaway*, *Weg*, and *go!* whose intention is to act more as a guide for their readers as opposed to treating their readers as consumers, even these publications will end up contributing to the ‘sell’ factor of the

tourism industry “through [the] expensive equipment and guides to exclusive places, present[ing] nature as a fairly exclusive product” that they exemplify within the pages of their magazines (Glenn, 2008: 373).

Furthermore, both Lazar (2005) and Glenn (2008) look directly at the tourism and travel writing industry within South Africa. In doing so they demonstrate a need to investigate it further, as the exchange of free travel for editorial content seems to run rampant within the country. Glenn’s article also points out a need to analyze a potential demographic bias in terms of these publications providing content (editorial and advertorial) that can only be enjoyed by some.

These commercial biases are more modern, having emerged within the travel writing genre recently. Their existence as well as how they manifest themselves needs to be studied further. This will be done by analyzing these biases and their inner workings within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry.

Chapter Five

OVERALL METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This next section will discuss the framework behind the research completed within the present study. Doing so will give the reader a better understanding into how this thesis sets out to analyze any biases that currently exist within the travel and leisure magazine industry of South Africa.

Research Problem

As this thesis has pointed out, most academic research has only investigated the travel writing genre as a whole. The most common forms of research to date on travel writing emphasized the genre's standing criticisms of bias: 'othering', gender, and escapism. There have also been some recent studies on the commercial side of travel writing (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005).

Most attention has been focussed on analyzing the role of the travel writer as a foreigner depicting a foreign land. The academic research then applies to travel writing content created by travel writers writing about a foreign destination. This area of research neglects to focus on content produced by locals for locals, and whether or not the biases associated with foreign travel also occur within local travel writing. As a result there is little research which focuses on how the local travel writing industry caters for their audiences' tastes in order to sell their publication. This being the case, there is very little research focusing primarily on local travel and leisure magazine publications (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005).

Also, there has been little research to date that has focused on the genre's most recent biases linking it to the modern commercial industry (Glenn, 2008; Lazar, 2005). This factor is surprising given that advertising, advertorial content and barter agreements are becoming commonplace within most, if not all publications. A lack of research in this

regard is troublesome considering the implications that it could have on journalistic production, coverage, and content. This is especially relevant to the commercially driven travel and leisure magazine industry that this thesis analyses.

Due to the importance that tourism has on the South African economy, and the role that travel writing has on tourism, a study which focuses primarily on the media to which the tourism industry has given a lot of attention is beneficial. It will uncover which of the 'othering, gendering, escapist, and commercial biases, if any, these publications choose to use in order to sell their product to the South African people. This will ultimately allow for the opportunity to examine the ways in which the travel and leisure magazine industry speaks to their audience and their audience's individual needs.

Given the statistics provided by the *All Media Product Survey (AMPS)* (2008A) discussed in Chapter Three relating to a potential bias of readership, a study of the biases within the travel and leisure magazine industry will be of particular interest. This is especially the case given South Africa's history and 'othered' past in terms of apartheid, as well as their current challenges of xenophobia, HIV-AIDS and crime.

In order to uncover which biases are prevalent and why, the present research project, unlike the ones done in the past, focused on all forms of bias. It looked heavily into the familiar categories of representational bias such as race and 'othering', gender, as well as escapism. Similarly, it also focused on the commercial biases such as direct advertising, advertorials, and barter agreements, which have begun to flourish within the modern print and media industries. The purpose of this thesis was to answer the following research question and sub questions:

- 1) To what extent is representational and commercial bias present within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry?
 - a. Are there more males than females working as travel writers?
 - b. Is the content gendered?
 - c. How big a role do advertisers play in the production of these magazines?
 - d. Are the advertisements chosen specifically for the target audience?

- e. Are the stories written in order to appeal to escapist desires?
- f. Is there a racial bias or 'othering' present in the content?
- g. Is there a racial bias in the selection of travel writers?

The theoretical perspectives that this thesis will follow are detailed in the following section.

In order to investigate the research questions above, this study first conducted a content analysis of various South African travel and leisure publications currently sold throughout the country. This method of research provided the study with a concrete sum as to how many times these criticisms could be made of South African travel writing, as well as to what extent some themes and methods were used over others.

This study also included a number of interviews with various key professionals within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry. In order to properly analyze a few of the images within the travel writing stories, an image, photographic specialist, and lecturer whose work deals primarily with representational issues of gender and sexuality was interviewed. In keeping with part of the theoretical aspects of this paper, the interviewee also gave a short semiotic analysis of a few of the images found within the magazines analyzed. In addition to this, a number of prominent local travel writers, editors, and photojournalists, each of whom currently work within the South African travel writing industry, were interviewed. This was done in order to get a better understanding of how the industry operates and whether or not the ideas held within the Framing and Agenda Setting theories are relevant here. It will uncover the publication staffs methods of choice, as well as their intentions as to why or why not they chose to partake in some of the criticized commercial practices discussed in previous chapters.

Although this study would have been furthered by interviewing the readers of these publications in order to get an understanding of how they read or interpret these biases, the scope of this dissertation did not allow for it.

This study will also conduct an examination of the photographs found within the travel writing stories. It will provide a short semiotic analysis of the photographs as well as count the race of people that are participating in what is depicted within the stories in order to investigate any representations of 'otherness' that their exclusion or inclusion might symbolize. It will also count the number of times a particular race is represented within a photograph as, or part of the 'tourist attraction'.

Framing and Agenda Setting

Erving Goffman's notions of framing (Baran, 2002: 281), and Walter Lippmann's notions of agenda setting (Baran, 2002: 316), are two very similar theoretical perspectives and as such, their association with this study's methodology needs to be discussed in unison.

Framing is the concept that the media frames or 'highlights only the most meaningful actions' (Baran, 2002: 283) within their work. Agenda setting is the view that, although the media are unable to tell their readers "what to think", they can, through their publisher's, editor's, or writer's choice of topic, easily tell their readers "what to think about" (Baran, 2002: 316). Both studies emphasize the media's influence in the creation and production of media coverage.

In relation to this study, these theories draw attention to a few of the biases mentioned within the research question regarding escapism, gender bias, as well as the use of barter agreements said to be used within travel media. Each of these biases can be seen as framing or agenda setting tools used to assist with sustaining profit and encouraging continued readership.

Although it is difficult to unveil the direct intentions of the publishers, writers and editors themselves, this study, through the aid of a content analysis focused on quantifying the amount of times such biases, highlighted by these theories, actually occurs within a given medium. In order to overcome this difficulty, this study also relied on the interviews taken with travel media professionals. Drawing on Hadland et al (2007) regarding "paid

for content” within South African print media, which found that the accusations that these theories entail does in fact exist within print media today (Hadland, 2007: 65), the present study and its similar methodology of content analysis looked to uncover how often this occurs within South African travel writing magazines and why.

If it is found that those within the industry continually sign barter agreements or use paid for content, which could potentially promote and provide a slanted, biased, and unrealistic representation of certain places, people, or events, than the theoretical concept of framing stories or the industry having a commercial or social agenda will be relevant to the South African travel and leisure magazine industry. This could also have implications for their use of writers in terms of their gender, or race, and whether or not they are chosen based upon these attributes. It could also have serious implications in terms of the overall content and theme of their publications and whether or not they are used in order to maintain their current demographic of readers.

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Chapter Seven

CONTENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Why a Content Analysis?

There were a number of strong arguments in favour of using a content analysis despite some believing that it can be overly subjective due to a researcher's own interpretive biases (Deacon, 2007: 180-181). As a research tool, it allowed this study to analyze the travel and leisure magazine industry and its content directly from primary sources. It also made an examination of large amounts of material from a number of different sources a possibility. As a result of these attributes, this method not only allowed for comparisons to be made within the medium, but it also allowed for this researcher to pinpoint any recurring themes or trends (Deacon, 2007: 183). This factor was particularly important to this research project, as its sole purpose was to uncover any recurring themes of bias that were found within local South African travel writing. What is more, the content analysis allowed for a direct investigation into a primary message sent from its producer or sender. In this sense, although the content analysis could not directly conclude the intentions of the senders themselves, it was able to quantify and analyze the content, as well as provide a "hypothesis about" (Deacon, 2007: 182) the intentions of the 'text's producer" (Deacon, 2007: 182). This was important when investigating how often and why certain themes may recur more than others.

Sample

The sample chosen for this thesis included South African travel writing, focusing on South African locations, and found within South African travel magazines. The magazines sampled were *go!*, *Getaway*, *Drive Out*, *Explore South Africa*, *Africa Wild*, and *Country Life*. Each of these magazines is available to the local South African consumer. Some are also available in hardcopy or PDF format to the international consumer (Explore South Africa, 2008a; Fox, 2008).

By focusing on a specific portion of local travel writing, as opposed to analyzing local travel writing as a whole, the findings were much narrower and more representative of a particular branch of the genre. The opposite would have been confusing given the distinctions between normal forms of the genre and the magazine industry that this study chose to examine.

The research itself was done within South Africa in order to allow for better access and availability of analyzable material. If this paper were written in another country about South Africa, this would have proven more difficult.

The choice of using local South African publications was done in order to fit the aims of the research questions, which look to analyze the travel and leisure magazine industry of the country.

Travel and leisure magazines were chosen as a medium because they contain many benefits for this study that other travel writing media, such as books, do not. For instance, each magazine contains a large amount of varying stories, sources, and travelling experiences. Magazine stories are generally shorter and thus allow for a quicker and a more representative analysis, if read in abundance. Although travel writing books would have been interesting to research, their length would have resulted in less variety of materials analyzed. What is more, this research wanted to analyze the commercial realities found within travel and leisure publications due to the previous research that has been done on the topic by Glenn (2008) and Lazar (2005). If travel books were chosen as a medium, this measurement would not have been applicable. Finally, there has been a number of content analysis' of magazines in previous studies which allows for multiple frames of reference in terms of creating a functional coding schedule.

Time Frame

Most magazines are released on a monthly or a quarterly basis. The average South African magazine such as *go!*, *Getaway*, *Country Life*, *Drive Out*, *Africa Wild*, and

Explore South Africa holds eight stories pertaining to South African travel content. This study analyzed each of these publications between the months of April and May of 2008. Just under a thousand pages were analyzed. Given the number of themes measured, this range of sources and content should offer a legitimate analysis of the research questions.

Sampling Unit

The sampling unit for this research project will be theme-based, focusing on each of the individual biases of escapism, race and ‘othering’, gender, advertising, advertorials, as well as ‘freebies’ and barter agreements. The unit of analysis is both visual and textual content from within the travel writing publications.

Coding Schedule

In trying to uncover any existence of bias within South African travel writing, the coding schedule for this study is composed of a number of themes relating to the four main criticisms of bias.

Escapism

In order to search for the theme of escapism within the publication’s content, a number of tests relating to text and visuals have been administered. Recurring themes and locations of adventure were measured first. This was done by counting the number of times a story took place within and outside of a large city. The categories used for this measurement were ‘urban’, ‘rural and outdoors’, and ‘other’⁶. This test was administered for both text and image based content. These tests were done in order to see if the publication promoted the audience’s desire for escapism; to disassociate the reader from reality for a brief moment and to imagine what it is like travelling to a different or far off destination away from the city in which they live, and their city lives.

Another set of tests measured the type of content found within the text in order to quantify the publication’s usage of bias in terms of writing stories appealing solely to the audience’s desire for escapism. The first test measured the amount of times a story made

reference to South Africa's political past of apartheid; something which most South Africans are not proud of, would like to escape mentally from, and would not like to remember. The categories used in this test were either 'yes' or 'no'. A story was said to have contained reference to the country's political past if it spoke about any political issues, parties, or politicians⁷ that were present before Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1994.

The next test which measured the publications' display of escapism quantified the number of times a story related to modern issues found within the South African news. Any time a story made reference to HIV or AIDS, crime, contemporary South African politics, or the Eskom electricity crisis⁸, this test counted it. The results of this test will indicate the extent to which these publications make reference of any recurring modern day news headlines. If there are high numbers of instances where these headlines have been mentioned, it will indicate that these publications do not use methods that feed the audiences' desire of escapism. If there are few numbers of instances where these headlining stories have been mentioned, then these findings could indicate that these publications tap into their audience's desire for escapism.

This last test measured the overall feeling of the story. This was done in order to indicate how often the publication provided positive and idyllic descriptions of the places visited and thus wrote their story based upon the reader's anticipation of escapism. In order to do this, this test counted the overall portrayal of the destinations visited. In other words, it quantified the amounts of times a story gave positive or negative portrayals of a destination, as well as if it offered any constructive criticism. Although this test is inconclusive in the fact that it is based on the researcher's own impression, it does give light to the publication's selection of positive trips over negative ones.

Race and 'othering'

While attempting to uncover various forms of 'othering' mentioned by Coetzee (1989), Fowler (2007), Pratt (1992), Rizzo (2007), Said (1978), and Tavares and Brosseau

Chapter Six

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Semiotics

Semiotics according to Jonathan Culler (1976: 8) is “the general science of signs and the systems of signs.” Originating from the work of Ferdinand Saussure, semiotics suggests that language is made up of signs that communicate by working in connection with other codes and conventions of signs (Culler, 1976: 19). The basis of semiotic theory is that “a sign is the union of a form which signifies [the ‘signifier’]...and an idea signified [the ‘signified’]... [which] exist...as components of the ‘sign’” (Culler, 1976: 19). To clarify, Deacon (2007: 137) uses an example of the ‘sign’ star. The word star separate from any societal representation is just a word or a ‘signifier’. Only once a societal representation such as a famous person i.e. ‘the signified’ is added to the ‘signifier’ does it finally become the ‘sign’ that it is associated with, i.e. a star being a famous individual (Deacon, 2007: 137).

Initially semiotics was limited to the study of language, in which case certain words like the ones described above were analyzed and their associated meanings were expressed (Chandler, 2007; 14). However, there have been a number of researchers such as Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss and so on, who have expanded semiotic theory by introducing newer subjects and thus codes (Hall, 2000: 37-38) relating to sounds, objects, images, and even gestures (Chandler, 2007: 2). With this expansion came newer modes of analysis like denotation and connotation (Hall, 2000: 38), or encoding and decoding (Deacon, 2007: 140) that have resulted in a wider scope of focus and possible examination subjects.

Due to this range of analytical reference, semiotics, will work well to explain any ‘otherness’ that may or may not be prevalent within South African travel writing. Through the partnership of a semiotic and content analysis, certain signs referencing racial and gender inclusion will be measured.

(2006), this research project analyzed both the visual and textual content. This was done by measuring the representations of all South Africans.

The first test measured what the race of the writers were in order to see if there was a racial bias in regards to the travel writing occupation and the selection of travel writers. The categories mentioned in this test were 'Black', 'Asian', 'Coloured', 'White', or 'Undefined'.

The second test done in order to decipher if a racial or 'othering' bias exists within the travel and leisure publication industry focused on the visual imagery of the magazine content. This was done in two ways. The first part of this test counted the race and the amount of people participating within the activity or journey depicted in the textual content of the story. This test indicated if there is a racial or 'othering' bias in terms of inclusion within the target audience. The second test measured the race and number of people within the photographs who were not taking part within the activity or journey depicted within the textual content of the story.

Gender

In order to uncover issues of gender and the gendering of stories mentioned in research by Clapp (2004), van Eeden (2006) and Kollins (1997) this study counted how often a story was written by a male or a female. This test will indicate whether or not the gender bias which has commonly been associated with the genre applies within the travel and leisure magazine industry.

In terms of content, another test that was used in order to uncover a possible gender bias counted the number of stories that featured traditionally male activities. This test will indicate whether or not magazine staff writes more towards their male audience. The categories which were traditionally associated with men were 4 x 4, gliding, hunting and safari, mountain climbing, hiking, and white water rafting. Although it is difficult to determine in this modern society what classifies as a male or female activity, this study used categories that were traditionally associated with men in the past.

Lastly, the type of activity that took place within the story was compared to the sex of the writer in order to find out if the travel writers gender their work. If women were found writing similar stories to that of men, then this bias of gendering would not apply. If however, women were found writing about the roles that were not traditionally associated with males such as eating out, spending the day on a farm, going on a road trip, or writing a historical piece, this gendering bias could apply.

Advertising and Advertorials

Both Hadland *et al.* (2007) and Badgikian (2000) emphasize the extent to which print and media staff have begun to introduce and make more hospitable environments for their potential advertisers, and how these modern day advertising tactics now affect what is being printed within a number of publications as a result. Given the fact that the travel and leisure genre is so specialized, these tactics may also be common within the travel and leisure magazine industry. In order to see if Hadland et al (2007) and Badgikian's (2000) findings are common in the South African travel and leisure magazine industry or not, the present study came up with a couple of tests that closely examined advertisements, advertorials, as well as the story's textual content.

In order to determine the role that advertisers play within the travel and leisure magazine industry, the total number of advertisements were measured in relation to the total number of pages within a publication. This same test was done in terms of counting the total amount of advertorials.

The next test calculated the importance given to ads over text or image based content. This was done by measuring how much actual space these direct advertisements were allocated in comparison to text, and image based content, in and around the stories analyzed.

A past study done on print media by Meredith Minkler (1987: 169) exemplified the importance of studying ads and editorial content by analyzing whether or not magazine publications and their advertisements produced related messages. The present study will

adopt a similar test in order to see if the themes of the advertisements ring true to the methods of the publication by targeting one demographic over another despite there being an existence of others. This will be done by counting the types of advertisements within the publications. If the advertisements are geared towards more of a male affluent audience (like the one that the AMPS suggest reads these magazines most) then this advertising bias exists. Advertisements that will be associated mainly with a male affluent audience will contain male toiletries and clothing, expensive motor vehicles, expensive safari resorts and accommodation, as well as expensive electronic gadgets. This same test will be carried out on advertorial content.

Also, drawing on Robert Buckman (1990), Susan M. Alexander (2003) and Frederick Schiff (1996) the present study briefly focused on story placement. Buckman's (1990: 138) research using content analysis touched upon the possibility of assessing a story's significance to a bigger cultural agenda by analyzing where it was placed within a publication. Alexander's (2003: 535 & 549) qualitative content analysis did the same by assessing the magazine's cover and stories in order to reveal a dominant message. Schiff's (1996: 195) research on dominant ideology within Brazilian tabloids wanted to see if producers of the media try to "influence" or "frame [their] news stories." This research paper followed similar methods in the hopes that they could help to uncover any prioritized messages or tactics within the publication that were associated to our chosen themes of bias and in particular that of advertising.

The last test in this section wanted to determine how often barter agreements and 'freebies' were used within the industry. This section of the study counted the number of times a story directly indicated whether or not the publisher paid for the trip themselves, if they accepted a free trip, and lastly it counted the number of times there was no mention of either.

Chapter Eight:

INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As the content analysis does not necessarily indicate the intentions of the publishing staff, the present study has also included a set of interviews with a number of key professionals within the travel writing industry.

Also, because a good portion of the questions of the content analysis relate to the imagery that is included in the pages of the travel magazines, an image specialist from the University of Cape Town was interviewed in order to get a better understanding of what these images could represent.

Sample

The samples for this section are the key professionals chosen to be interviewed within the travel writing field. Each individual has a minimum of three years experience within the travel and leisure magazine industry, not to mention a great deal of alternative experience within media itself. In total six professionals were interviewed.

Not everyone interviewed currently makes their sole living as a travel writer. Three of the individuals are currently editors, or deputy editors for some highly regarded travel publications such as *Weg, go!*, *Getaway*, *The Saturday Star* Travel section, and *IOL* travel. Others consider themselves to be photojournalists, and some of the individuals have had their travel writing and photos published in their own paperback format sold at retail book stores.

Although each person has a different profession, they all at one point or another acted as a travel writer or journalist. Most of those interviewed still act as travel writers in addition to their other jobs. Despite a few of them having worked as freelance travel journalists for a few years, all of those interviewed are currently full time employees of

some of the most reputable and well known travel publications within South Africa, as listed above.

Also, due to the fact that gender is one of the biases being analyzed, especially in regards to the amount of male versus female writers, and also the possible gendering of stories within the travel writing industry, it was essential that a fairly equal number of males and female professionals be interviewed.

Time frame

The interviews took place between June and October 2008 within the city of Cape Town; where the head offices for most of these travel writing publications are located.

Sampling Unit

The sampling unit for this section of the research project was theme based focusing on each of the individual biases of escapism, advertising, gender, race and 'othering'. The unit of analysis in this case is the interviewees' experience within the travel writing publication industry.

Coding Schedule

In addition to asking a few background based questions, the rest of the coding schedule is similar to, and follows the same techniques found within the coding schedule of the content analysis. It will be organized into the six categories of bias: escapism, race and 'othering', gender, advertising, advertorials, and 'freebies' and barter agreements.

Escapism

A number of questions were asked in order to uncover the overall intentions and methods of the travel writing publication staff in regards to their usage of escapism. The first few questions were asked to better understand the writers' and editorial staff's methods and intentions when writing their stories. They were also asked in order to see if travel writers felt that their role was to fulfil their audiences' need for escapism, or if their role was rather to provide detailed information about a given destination.

In order to accomplish this, the professionals were asked what they felt the difference was between hard news journalism, and travel writing. Another question with this in mind was whether or not they felt that travel writing was meant to be more informative or more escapist and attention grabbing.

This section also set out to identify which writing styles were used by the writers and whether or not it was done in order to appeal to their publications' target audience and their desire for escapism. The result of these findings may indicate a reliance on more informative content or a greater 'story-telling' element. This was done by asking what writing techniques would compose a good travel writing story.

It is important to identify if the audience's desire for escapism affected the writer's overall interpretation of a destination, and if this would also affect whether a story would be published or not. To investigate this, the professionals were asked if a writer was allowed to portray a true depiction of a place regardless if it were negative or positive in nature. In this regard, they were asked how much freedom the writer has, as well as whether or not their journalistic licence changed if they were freelance writers and, or, contributing readers.

Lastly, because images are numerous within travel writing content, and also because images can be a determinant of an escapist and a racial or 'othering' bias, the individuals were asked how important they thought the visual was to the story; was it more important than the text?

Race and 'Othering'

In order to measure for racial and 'othering' biases within the travel and leisure magazine industry, the professionals were asked if they believed that such a bias currently existed. If the interviewee was aware of a racial bias or 'othering' within the industry, they were asked what they do, or what they would do in order to overcome it. The results of finding bias may be subject to the amount of controlling for bias that the writers do when creating the initial content.

Gender

In the hopes of uncovering the extent of male presence within travel writing in terms of males versus female writers, and if the content published was gendered, the professionals were asked a couple of questions relating to gender and whether or not their sex was an issue within their industry.

Each person was asked if they thought that the travel writing genre was predominantly male or female. This question would uncover a gender bias if there was a majority of one sex over the other within the field.

They were also asked if they felt it was common for the industry to make their writers gender the content of their stories. In this sense, it asked if women predominantly write about traditionally feminized topics such as cooking, art, and family based holidays, and whether men predominantly write about traditionally masculine topics such as extreme and physical adventures, and 4 x 4 trips.

Advertising, Advertorials, 'Freebies', and Barter Agreements

In order to uncover how big a role advertisers play in the production of these magazines, as well as to uncover if the advertisements used were chosen specifically for the target audience, this study focused on a few interview questions relating to direct advertisements, advertorials, and barter agreements.

The first set of questions was designed in order to pinpoint the intentions of the editorial staff when it came to their reasoning behind using direct advertisements within their publications. It also focused on how much power advertisers have in the production of the magazines. The first question in this section asked how the destinations and the types of stories were chosen. It also asked to what extent advertisers affect the written content published within a magazine. A question regarding why the editorial staff used advertisements at all was also asked; was it done in order for the publication to survive or was it done in order to generate extra income?

The next section of questions dealt with advertorial usage. The first question asked the editorial staff members what their policy was on advertorials, and whether or not they use them.

Questions regarding the industry's usage of 'freebies' and barter agreements were raised in the following ways. Firstly, to understand the publication's reasoning behind the usage, or non usage of 'freebies' or barter agreements, this practice was discussed.

Secondly, the extent to which these tactics are employed by those magazines making use of them was also discussed.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Nine:

OVERALL FINDINGS

Introduction

Due to the fact that the content analysis was not able to indicate the overall methods or intentions of the editorial staff, the use of interviews was necessary in terms of understanding the findings of this paper's content analysis. The findings of both this thesis' content analysis and set of qualitative interviews with key professionals is joined together below.

Escapism: Images

According to the findings of this research, images seem to play a large role within the travel and leisure magazine industry. They capture the reader's escapist interests, and they are able to show the reader a visual depiction of the story described. In an interview conducted with image specialist Jean Brundrit, a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Photography at the University of Cape Town on 2007-06-30 she says that all of the images within a magazine hold information. According to her, an image "is an extension of the ideology of the publication [itself and that]... Images will support their marketing campaigns [by] engaging the target group in a broader sense" (Brundrit, 2008).

When asked about whether or not images themselves could be altered in order for the publication to get a certain point across, Brundrit (2008) stated that "Photography has a proud history of manipulating the image to fulfil the desire of the photographer; right from the beginning of photography... Sometimes we arrange the photo in a way that it becomes an improvement of what the reality actually is." In other words, photos can be manipulated by their creator in order to look more appealing, and in some cases are altered so much that the final copy often looks very different to, and better than the original setting in which the photo was taken. Although this sort of direct manipulation was not uncovered by Brundrit, she did say that the techniques used, and the subjects chosen for the pictures analysed, were highly calculated (Brundrit, 2008). Brundrit (2008) said that most "wildlife photography is shot either in the morning, or the early evening when the light is gentle and yellow" in order that the setting be "presented in the

best possible light so that people will want to visit [that place].” She went on to say that some photos can give off a sense of nostalgia in regards to older buildings, and also give off a sense of comfort and luxury to promote this action as well (Brundrit, 2008). While looking at a few of the photographs analyzed within this study’s content analysis, Brundrit (2008) said that a lot of the photos were clearly shot early in the morning and late afternoon in order to get the desired effect of warmth and glowing light. Brundrit (2008) said that today “we see everything... in colour and high gloss...it seduces the viewer, and is visually [more] appealing.” She also mentioned the large number of images which focussed on older buildings that could give off a feeling of nostalgia for a happier moment in time for the viewer (Brundrit, 2008).

In an interview on 2008-08-12, with Toast Coetzer, a travel journalist for *go!* magazine, he stated that “the stories’ [initial] attention grab is the visual,” and that as a result, the pictures are very important. After picking up a copy of his publication’s latest magazine, and pointing to a picture of one of their writers standing out on the ledge of a secluded mountain range, Coetzer (2008) stated that “you can’t really describe a beautiful picture in words. In some cases you can only use pictures to do that.” While being interviewed on 2008-08-01, Esma Le Roux, a journalist focusing mostly on written content, stated that the “words in an article probably have more depth, but if there is not a great picture, the person probably won’t read the story [because] it [the photo]’s the entry point.”

Due to the large responsibility that the photographs within the publication have in terms of needing to appeal to the reader’s desires for escapism, this content analysis measured the amount of space allocated for imagery, text, and advertising in and around the stories analyzed. The numbers regarding overall content were surprising. Originally it was thought that the most content would be text. Yet, as shown in Figure 7, the space given to imagery outnumbered the space given to text by fifty three per cent. Advertising accounted for seventeen per cent, and text accounted for only thirty per cent. This result is important in that it demonstrates the responsibility that imagery has on attracting the reader’s sense of escapism towards a certain article. This finding also gives the images more weight in terms of importance when analyzing their content. For later sections

regarding advertising, this result indicating that advertisements were allotted over half the amount of space than text, is also interesting, as it pinpoints the predominant role that advertisements and advertisers have on the publication's survival and overall income.

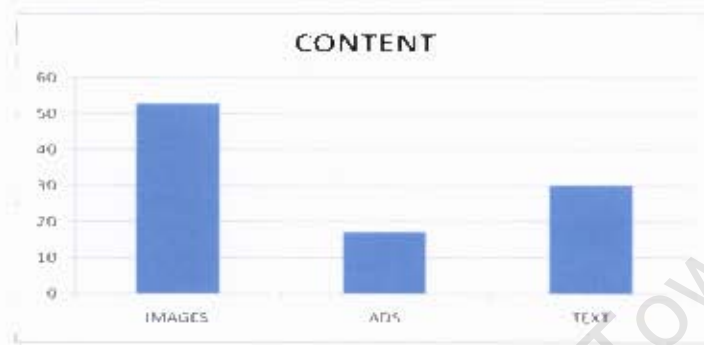


Figure 11: Overall Content Found in and Around the Stories

These findings exemplify the large role that imagery plays in terms of the publication and its overall requirement to seduce the audience by appealing to their interests and possible sense of escapism.

Many of the professionals attested to the large space allotment given to imagery over text. Coetzer (2008) states that there are certain sections within his publication such as a new wildlife photo section, (which takes up eight pages), as well as the reader's photographic advice section, (which takes up about five to six pages). Despite these sections being without normal travel writing content, they are filled with 'user generated content', and having them really "adds a lot of value to the magazine" (Coetzer, 2008).

Justin Fox, a renowned travel writer within the country, and the Deputy Editor of *Getaway* magazine, is also an advocate of having a large emphasis on image based content. In an interview taken on 2008-07-04, Fox explained that since his contributions as an editorial staff member, *Getaway* has recently changed its format and size solely to allow for bigger pictures. He says that the larger pages have allowed them to keep bigger pictures without the magazine looking as cluttered as they felt it did in the past. This move to change the entire shape and format of the magazine emphasizes the importance that visually appealing images that seduce the reader and appeal to their escapist desires

have on the publication (Fox, 2008). Coetzer (2008) said that on most trips the team includes both a journalist and a photographer in order to ensure good images. He went on to say that sometimes they even buy photographs from a stock library in order to publish the best images possible for their magazine (Coetzer, 2008).

After interviewing Bun Booyens (2008), the current, and founding Editor of *Weg* magazine on 2008-07-16 about his standpoint towards the use of images within his publication, he said that “sometimes a small evocative picture can stop you dead in your tracks”, but that caption writing is just as important, if not more. He even went as far as to say that “caption writing is an absolute art. It can pique your interest and give you a compelling urge to know more” (Booyens, 2008). Moreover, there seems to be some calculated reasoning into why there are so many images within South African travel writing. According to some of the key professionals within the industry, images and their captions work solely as a way in which to appeal to their reader’s escapist desires. In maintaining their reader’s attention, and thus appealing to their need for escapism, these publications are able to hold the reader’s interest, and convince him to purchase their product continually in future.

Escapism: travel writing and objective writing

The escapist genre of travel writing and the more informative genre of news media seem to be two very different entities. When each individual was asked about what they felt the differences between travel writing and the more generic forms of reporting were, a number of them agreed that the travel writing genre was far more subjective, and offered a greater chance for the writer to be more creative than normal reporting does. Bun Booyens (2008) stated that travel writing was “closer to storytelling than to reporting.” Fox (2008) agreed with this and stated that, “classic fact-driven news writing is irrelevant in a well written travel piece [and that] employing fictional techniques is essential to good travel journalism.” Fox (2008) goes on to say that some of the key characteristics of a good travel story are that “it’s written in the first person, it’s humorous, it’s chatty, it goes for the unexpected, it develops the writer’s persona, it shares emotions, it seeks out the drama in a situation, and it uses direct speech.” Le Roux (2008), a travel journalist at

Weg magazine stated that “in travel writing you are asked for your own opinion. It’s not like the news where the news happens and you have to run along and report on it.” In this instance, one is quickly made aware of the differences between regular news reporting and travel journalism. Travel journalism does not seem bound to the same codes and stylistic techniques that promote a more objective based writing framework like generic news reporting does. Instead it revolves more around the use of storytelling and entertainment that skims over the everyday realities of a destination in order to appeal more to the reader’s escapist desires.

To emphasize this trend of the travel and leisure magazine industry to write their stories in order to appeal more to their audiences’ escapist desires, the content analysis of this thesis did two tests. The first test quantified the number of times a story referenced any modern headlines found daily within the South African news. The headlines that this research sought within these publications were HIV and AIDS, crime, contemporary South African politics, poverty, as well as the Eskom electricity crisis. Although there was a wide range of stories analyzed, there were very few references to any of these headlining stories. HIV and Aids was not mentioned at all, despite its prevalence within all areas of the country (urban or rural), poverty and crime were only mentioned once, the Eskom electrical crisis was mentioned twice, and contemporary South African politics was mentioned three times. Despite the high profile of these headlines within the news, it can be assumed that most readers would not want to be reminded of them when trying to escape their daily realities while reading these magazines. Considering the negativity of these headlines, it is no surprise then, that there is very little reference to them. The limited reference of current headlines is again indicative of these publications’ bias towards articles that appeal to their targeted audience, the reader’s escapist desire being the driver for this.

Considering the gravity of South Africa’s political past, it is something of which most people do not want to be continuously reminded. This is especially true in regards to media that can be used as a form of escapism. The second test (shown in Figure 12), for news and political content focused on mentions of political past. It was found that there is

very little mention of South Africa's history, and any mention is slight. Only six per cent of content made any reference to South Africa's political past. As per the now established trend it would seem that publishers are biased towards articles and content that does not focus on South Africa's political past.

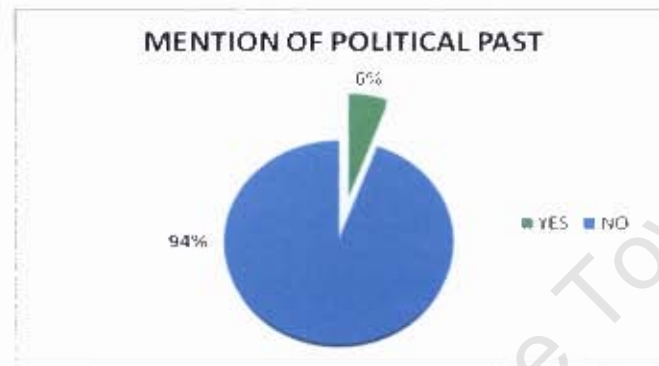


Figure 12: Mention of Political Past

As it seems, travel journalists have more freedom in terms of how their stories are told; travel writers seem to "have the license to be more creative", as Carol Lazar, Senior Assistant Editor of the Saturday Star travel section and IOL travel section, stated on an interview taken on 2008-09-12. Perhaps then this creative license is what has been criticized in the past, as storytelling and objective news reporting are two very different things. One bases itself on fact and hard evidence, and separates itself from bias as much as possible, whereas the other is creative, fictional, and could be found with a number of built in biases directly from the writer's own imagination and stylistic techniques. If in the genre, the line between the two is not predetermined or set, then it would be very difficult for a travel writer to position his work. Perhaps this difference between the two led to the examples found within Tavares and Brosseau's (2006) piece. Here the writers created their own independent and sometimes almost magical realities, which the critics found different from anything that the average person living or visiting Mongolia would experience.

Escapism: guide versus story

In terms of offering useful information, versus narrative based story telling, opinions in the industry seem to be split. Fox (2008) feels that there has always been a battle between writing for armchair travellers or for active travellers. He believes that “every magazine is different” in that each publication will choose its own technique (Fox, 2008). Some may choose to write more for an audience looking for a form of escapism, where as some wish to write more for the audience looking for detailed and accurate travel advice. According to Booyens (2008) “there’s [always] a trade off between narrative and guide” magazines. At present this seems to be an issue within the industry, as the two key players *Getaway* and *Go* are doing the opposite from one another. Fox (2008) explained that *Getaway* has chosen to change their previous style of writing which offered more fact driven stories than literature based stories. He went on to say that they have recently started offering fact boxes and footnotes at the end of each story instead; a technique which they feel will benefit their publication in the long run. Booyens’ (2008) and some of his staff (Le Roux, 2008; Coetzer, 2008), emphasized how their publication offers more of the informative do-it yourself travel stories, which they feel works well for them.

When the professionals were asked whether they felt a travel piece should be more informative, or if it should rather be more attention grabbing, the answers seemed to vary. Although the majority of them spoke about the importance of being accurate, trustworthy, to always check your facts, and to maintain editorial integrity, they also spoke about the importance of writing an exciting story. For instance, Le Roux (2008) stated how she feels that “people buy travel writing [mainly] to escape on the couch more than to [actually] travel. You are giving people an experience... otherwise they might as well read a brochure.” After being in the industry for over twenty years, Carol Lazar (2008) stated that although a story must be 100 per cent informative, “if the story isn’t going to be attention grabbing then you might as well not write it... [she] think[s that] a story should be attention grabbing...that doesn’t mean sensationalist but it means seductive, appealing, or imaginative.” Coetzer (2008) offered a similar opinion. He stated that “you could be in a perfect place, but if a photographer or a writer can’t write a good story, it ends up being very dull. You have to be able to make it interesting even if in a

weird way. That's where the skill of the writer or photographer comes into play" (Coetzer, 2008). These findings indicate that storytelling, and the ability to seduce the readers' attentions in order to entertain and appeal to their interests of the exotic is key to the craft of travel writing.

Escapism: positive or negative portrayal of stories

The last measurement of escapism relates to the overall portrayal of the destinations visited. It is assumed that most readers would want to read about a positive and enjoyable trip, as opposed to one that creates a negative impression. Therefore, the test depicted in Figure 13 was done in order to measure the amount of positive and enjoyable trips that were written as opposed to ones written that created a negative impression. This test found that over fifty per cent of stories written depicted a positive outcome, under forty per cent of stories offered constructive criticism, and fewer than ten per cent of stories offered a purely negative portrayal. Such findings would again indicate a bias on the part of the publications towards the submission of positive and enjoyable adventures in order to appeal to their audience's escapist desires. When asked about the apparent obligation to write positive stories, Coetzer (2008) said that "readers won't go to a place where there is a 'non-story'... [there is] no point in writing about the bad ones... we want to encourage people to travel, so we will obviously write about the good places". Fox (2008) stated that his job was to help promote the travel and tourism industry in South Africa, and that to "nit pick and find the negative is not [his] brief." When asked the same question, Lazar said that her publication tends to write positive stories to promote travel and tourism within South Africa. However, if they had an extraordinarily bad trip then they would write about it whether it be about crime on the roads, or theft at the airports.

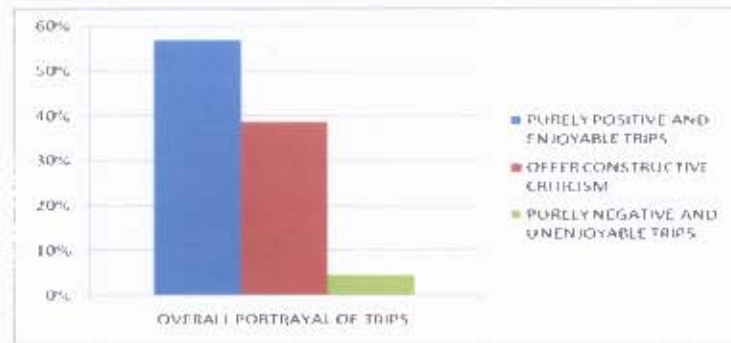


Figure 13: Overall Portrayal of the Trips

Escapism: Setting of stories

The first test to measure escapism within the travel and leisure magazine industry was to analyze where most stories were set. Since the themes of these publications are to travel and experience other areas within the country, it is natural to assume that readers would be interested in stories set outside of their everyday metropolitan or city environment (see Chapter 3). The results, shown in Figure 14, support this in so far that over eighty per cent of stories are based on rural and outdoor destinations. Furthermore, the demographics coupled with these findings could indicate a bias towards articles written that would appeal more towards the escapist desires of the publication's target audience.

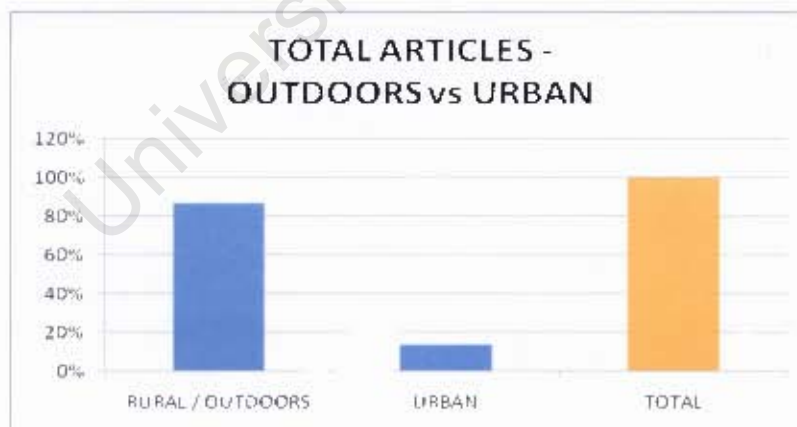


Figure 14: Total Number of Articles - Outdoors and Rural vs. Urban

The second test was similarly administered in order to measure escapism within the industry. The differences between this and the previous test have to do with the type of content measured. While the last test measured text, this test measured the imagery found within the magazines. Given this study's earlier findings which found that imagery has a

huge presence within these publications, the type of image portrayed would strongly indicate the interests of readers. The strong trend to place photos within the publication that appeal to these interests would only make sense. Figure 15 depicts this trend in that this research found that over 80 % of photos taken within these publications depict scenes in rural and outdoor settings. As before, it seems as if there is a bias towards imagery that appeals to the target readership and their desire for escapism.

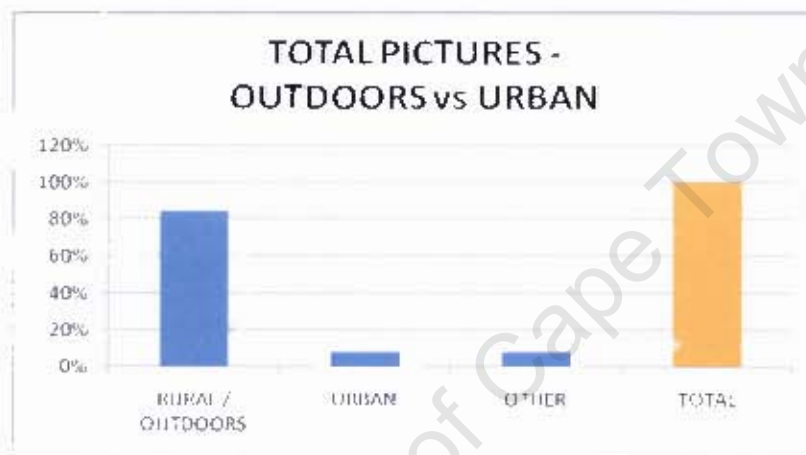


Figure 15: Total Number of Pictures – Outdoors and Rural vs. Urban

In terms of pictorial representation acting as a form of escapism, this study tried to deduce what sorts of images these publications displayed most often within these categories (see Figure 16). ‘Rural and outdoors’ is a diverse category. 51% of images featured not only the outdoors but mainly the ‘great outdoors’: wildlife and wide open spaces. 22% featured buildings, and only 23% featured local inhabitants. Portrayals of wildlife and vast open spaces could confirm the genre’s inherent escapism, and the readers wish to read about these ‘wild’ destinations so different from their own.

When asked about what the results of the content analysis which found that the majority of photographs recorded scenes of wildlife and expansive wilderness meant, Brundrit (2008) said that the publication could be trying to portray South Africa as a setting that is “inviting, pristine, untouched, and un-spoilt.” She went on to say that sometimes photographs like these “can give off the impression that if you visit [these places], that you are doing something special for yourself” (Brundrit, 2008). Likewise, she stated that

sometimes images can place a lot of emphasis on older buildings and how they stimulate the intention of “looking back in time when things were less complicated” (Brundrit, 2008).

Also, with regard to the high number of images that neglect to include local inhabitants, Brundrit (2008) said that this “could mean [that] there is un-spoilt uninhabited virgin bush waiting for your presence; to enjoy it...People may be seen as dangerous, so there is a lack of representation...”



Figure 16: Specific Types of Images Found in Articles

The findings of this section indicate that there is a bias of escapism present in the travel and leisure magazine industry. This is especially the case with the lack of textual references to unfavourable historical and modern day news headlines, as well as the overall choice of stories written about outdoors and rural settings over the readers' own urban and metropolitan cities. It was also found that images played a large role in fulfilling the reader's escapist desires as it is a highly representative tool, whose production and content is carefully premeditated.

Racial bias and 'othering'

For the most part every interviewee was aware of the potential bias of race or 'othering' within the travel writing genre. According to Fox (2008) "othering does happen, [and] it happens a lot." When trying to understand why it could occur, Le Roux (2008) said that "it's probably a natural inclination to subconsciously do it." She, and a couple of the other writers said that their visit to most of the destinations is not very long, so it is

difficult to really spend time and get to know the people and in some cases the destination itself (Le Roux, 2008). Others said that despite going to these places as journalists, it was very easy to “slip in and out of tourist mode” (Fox, 2008), which could account for why “othering” still happens within the industry today. The writer experiences and explains the exotic because it is different to him or her.

In terms of content, one would expect that the type of person depicted in pictures within the magazines would closely resemble the statistics about race of readership and writers. The type of picture included in the media does not indicate bias in the selection of these photographs, but more the racial-type of writer, and other ‘tourists’ in the scene. It is only natural for writers and journalists, to be shown partaking in the activity or scene they are investigating. The findings (in Figure 17) show that 95% of pictures depicting those partaking in the activity as tourists (the tourist here being the writer) were white. This is a strong indicator of the demographic targeted by the publication, because there are very few black people partaking in the activities indicated in the stories.

An additional, but rudimentary, indicator of the race of writers was a study of the writers who submitted articles in the sample of magazines analyzed throughout this paper. This is a sensitive undertaking as it may be prejudicial to decide on a person’s race and gender by their name. To account for this researcher’s own potential bias, the names analyzed are included in the Notes section of this thesis⁹. However, it may be possible to tentatively conclude from the list of writers that most are white. Therefore it would seem that these travel and leisure articles are written ‘for whites by whites’, biased in favour of the target market.

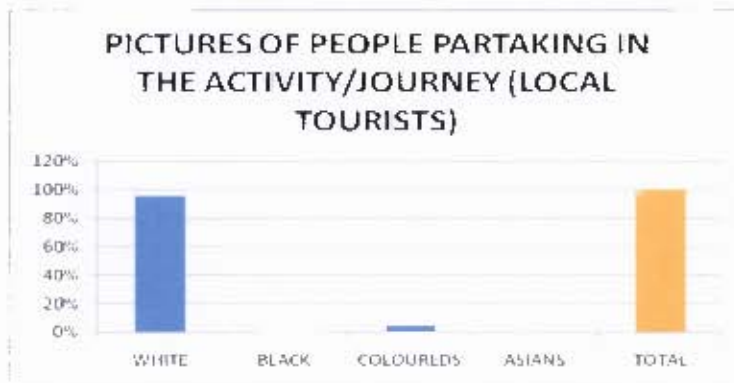


Figure 17: Race of People Partaking in the Activity Depicted in the Journey (Pictures)

A distinction can be made between those that have travelled to a destination (tourists) and those that reside in the place visited. Figure 18 shows that the racial type of people depicted as native in the pictures tend to be black. This may indicate racial bias or ‘othering’ because these people are seen to be the object of the traveller’s interest: a tourist attraction.

There seems to be awareness of this bias in the industry, and some writers try to control this. Fox (2008) said that in order to try and “fight it and edit it out”, his publication always tries to give the names and a bit of background information around the destination of those who live there. By doing this, perhaps certain ‘othering’ phrases like ‘us’, ‘they’, ‘we’, and ‘them’ become eliminated, everyone is well represented, and the exotic becomes the norm once understood properly. Although Coetzer (2008) was aware of ‘othering’ occurring within the genre, he stated that, “travel writing has changed significantly since Livingston”, and that most of the incidences of this bias were by foreigners visiting places outside of their country. He went on to say though that “often it’s not the ‘other’ but more so the destination. [As a writer] you may describe the dish, the eating, and the language” (Coetzer, 2008) as different, not the people.

However, some writers differ on this point. Lazar (2008) stated that she did not “think [that] there’s the ‘other’ [she] just think[s] people are different, and that’s the fascination of travel; that’s the excitement of travel.” Lazar (2008) believes that travel writing is about informing and preparing your reader. “When you go to Madagascar, you don’t

enter a house with your left foot because culturally it's not acceptable" (Lazar, 2008). According to her, travel writing and travel play an important role in understanding other people's culture (Lazar, 2008).

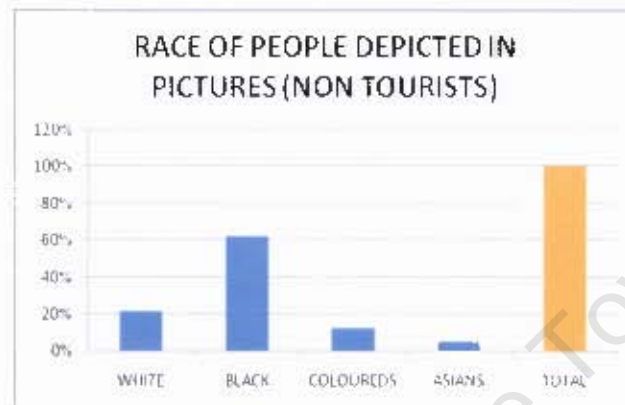


Figure 18: Race of People Depicted In Pictures Not Partaking in Depicted Activities

The figures pertaining to type of activity by race show that there are more black people by number partaking in outdoor activities than whites. Also, both blacks and whites had an equal interest in travel-style activities found within the publications. However, the readership of travel and leisure magazines remains predominantly white. With this in mind, it seems contradictory that most of the content of these magazines revolve around outdoor activities, but remain targeted towards the white demographic (see Figure 19). The scope of this falls outside this thesis, but the potential bias needs to be highlighted here. Are the outdoor activities that are written about not interesting to the black affluent population? Or, are these articles written in a biased way that would appeal more to whites? Coetzer (2008) alludes to this point when saying, "There is a black affluent market that is not tapped." He mentioned how he gets frustrated with the "pre-empted editing" that is used in order to satisfy their readers, and that he believes that there is a possibility that "if you write about new things [then] you'll get more readers" (Coetzer, 2008). He goes on to say that currently, "We underestimate what our readers are interested in and who our readers could be" (Coetzer, 2008).

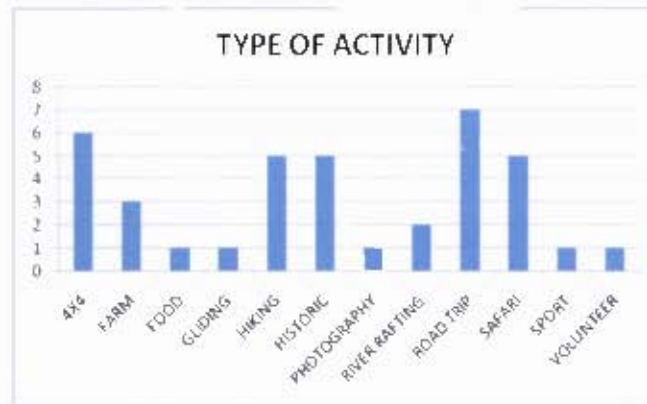


Figure 19: Type of Activity Depicted in Article

The results of the above study would indicate that there is a racial bias of 'othering' present in the travel and leisure magazine industry. This is indicated by the high percentage of white writers, and the fact that most visual content depicts mostly white people.

Gender

A few related questions were asked to key professionals in order to understand whether or not there is currently a gender bias within South African travel writing. The first question asked the professionals whether they felt that there was a gender bias within the industry. In other words, they were asked if they felt that their industry was predominantly male, female, or if there was an equal distribution of writers between the sexes. Le Roux (2008) stated that she would like "to think it was equal, but [that] as far as [she] know[s], there are more male writers" than female writers in her industry today. She felt that this was also the case with wildlife photography. However, she said that for her, the road to becoming a female travel writer was not hampered by prejudice. As long as "you know the magazine, and give the editor what they want it's easy", she said (Le Roux, 2008). When asked the same question Coetzer (2008) said that "it's not a macho industry"; in fact, he feels that it's quite balanced at present, especially within his office.

The content analysis quantifying gender was problematic and the sample contains an element of uncertainty. The first reason for this is that some of the stories neglected to reference any particular writer. Secondly, as discussed in the issue of racial bias, it is

difficult to assume the gender of writers based solely on their names.¹⁰ Because of these reasons, an ‘unidentified’ category was created. However, with the information that the analysis was able to quantify, this study found that trends relating to gender were slight. This was substantiated by two tests relating to content and magazine contributors.

The first analysis entailed a direct count of the gender of writers in the sample, and it was found that there were slightly more female writers than male (see Figure 20). However, any potential bias cannot be derived from this fact alone, without assuming that males or females are intrinsically biased. The nature of the industry, as stated above by Le Roux, does not seem to include gender bias against writers. Greater stock can be taken from the type of stories written by males and females respectively; then asking if the stories themselves indicate bias.



Figure 20: Gender of Published Writers

The second question relating to gender bias was in regards to the gendering of stories. In other words, it asked if the professionals felt that females were continually told to write about traditionally feminized topics, such as cuisine, fashion, or family oriented holidays over others. In this instance, Le Roux (2008) says that in today's industry, the types of stories that one chooses to write "depends more on your personality than it does on your gender." She stated that she has "done a lot of rough things with *Weg*" and it depends more on the interests of a person than their sex. For instance, she says that you may get "adrenalin freaks" who want to partake in extreme sports; "It's not like the stories I chose are more feminine" (Le Roux, 2008). She feels that "many of the travel writing magazines are male focused" (Le Roux, 2008). Le Roux (2008) mentioned *Drive Out*

and stated that most of the males in the pictures are men. She goes on to say however, that there is a current trend to write stories around women who partake in predominantly male travel writing roles such as 4 x 4 trips for women only. Le Roux explained that she was asked to speak on a radio show that wanted to interview female hikers. As a female travel journalist, she says that she does not agree with stories which focus primarily on one sex partaking in an activity over another (Le Roux, 2008).

In the content analysis, it was found (see Table 1) that male writers were responsible for content that can be viewed as traditionally male, although females made up a large and almost equal part of that writing. However, writing that can be seen as more feminine, or topics without gender were mostly compiled by women (see Table 2). This may indicate a gendering bias of stories. But this could just be representative of the higher number of female writers against male.

TRADITIONALLY MALE

ACTIVITIES

MALE	50%
FEMALE	40%
UNDEFINED	10%
TOTAL	100%

FEMININE AND GENDERLESS

ACTIVITIES

MALE	33%
FEMALE	61%
UNDEFINED	6%
TOTAL	100%

Table 1: Traditionally Male Activities

Table 2: Feminine and Genderless Activities

Coetzer (2008), a male journalist within the field says that although he was aware of gendering of travel writing stories in the past, he does not feel that it occurs to the same degree today. He explained that when he started in *Weg*, there were columns written by males, about what it was like being in the army. However, this has changed, and the only area in which he feels this still occurs is in car magazines, where he says that “women get compared with cars a lot” (Coetzer, 2008). Despite his feelings, he says he constantly gets his partner to read over his work in case it may accidentally come across as gendered or sexist. In this instance, he states that he also changes certain scenarios within his

stories such as that he ‘the man’ is not always in the driver’s seat, and that the woman is not always the one who prepares the food for the journey (Coetzer, 2008). When asked the same question, Lazar (2008) believed that she does not feel that there is any gendering of stories either, and she felt very strongly that “it should be that a man can go to a spa [write about it] and enjoy it as much as a woman can.

However, the findings suggest that the travel magazine industry in some ways is still gendered especially within certain aspects of it. Advertisements and advertorials carry a large weight in content, and provide an important source of income for the publications. Together with this and how well advertisements can be targeted towards a certain demographic, a gender bias in this regard towards men may apply. Although the majority felt that the stories within their publications were not gendered, they named a few in other elements of travel writing that were. Likewise, it seems that there is a reverse form of gendering of stories that has begun possibly in order to combat it from taking place within the present market. Also, as Coetzer (2008) has exemplified, some travel writers within the industry are aware of a not so distant gendering past, and still use methods in order to prevent the bias from occurring in the present.

It would seem that ‘sexism’ is not perceived to be a problem in the industry. Also, female writers are not segregated from partaking in those activities that can be viewed as traditionally male. Furthermore, it seems that writers are sensitive to the issue of gender bias and make a concerted effort to control their material as such. However, advertising within the publications indicate that the target is an affluent white male. Therefore bias exists in the type of story selected, but not necessarily in what the gender of the writer would be.

Advertising

This research found that advertising and advertorials play a significant role within South African travel writing magazines. The content analysis for this section found that advertising in and around the textual content accounted for seventeen per cent of all

travel writing content measured. This is significant considering that textual content only accounted for thirty percent which is just double the space allotted to advertisements.

All of the editorial staff agreed that advertising was necessary in order for their magazines to stay in print. Booyens (2008) spoke of the necessity of having advertisements within their publication. He believes that “the tempo of a magazine has a rhythm, and [that] your ads should do the same. If you are too much over the quota of ads you need to put in more editorials to make the reader think they are getting something out of it” (Booyens, 2008). He also believes that if there were no advertisements, his readers would ask them where they were. According to him, a healthy quota of ads versus editorial content would be 40% ads and 60% editorial content (Booyens, 2008). Booyens (2008) also stated that “Ads need to find a home where [they] are comfortable...for example, vegetable ads are not good for a hunting magazine; they have to fit.” He believes that “magazines should pick fitting and comfortable ads, that speak to [their] readers; otherwise it [could] destroy [their] magazine” (Booyens, 2008).

Given the importance that the pairing of advertisement to publication has, as well as what this implies for advertisers speaking to the magazines’ prime target audience, this section of the content analysis quantified which advertisements appeared most (see Figure 21). The findings indicated that there was a fairly wide variety, ranging from men’s deodorant to motor vehicles. Much of the product type would appeal to an affluent reader, and more specifically a male audience. The products are expensive, and almost always target males directly either in text or image. An example of such an advert depicted a man sampling a face cream product for men. This can be used as an indicator that the magazine is specifically targeted by advertisers for their readership demographic. These advertisements would in turn make the magazine more appealing for an affluent male audience. There is bias expressed here from the side of the advertisers to target content that is structured to appeal to their desired demographic. This highlights the fact that these magazines are managed to appeal to a particular demographic – and bias is present when the publication ensures they appeal to a specific type of reader.

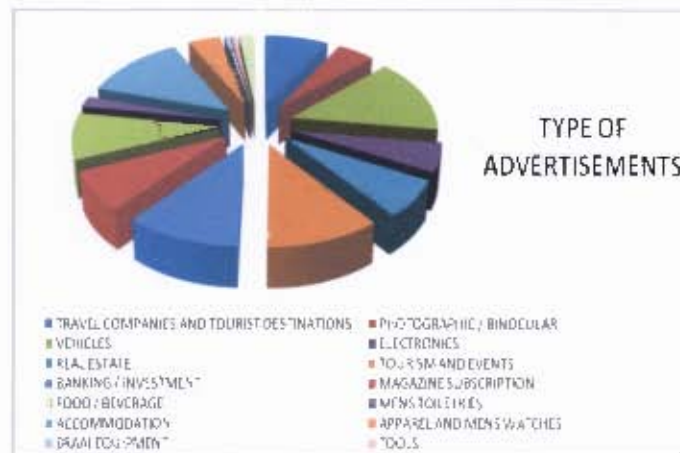


Figure 21: Type of Advertisements Published

To indicate the large role that advertisements play in travel and leisure publications, the amount of ‘classified’ advertisements were analyzed. These are advertisements that are found at the end of the magazine, and are separate from adverts, and advertorials which are found in the body. Over the sample publications, 20% of total content was classified advertisements. As a part of total income for the publication, the contribution from advertisements would be considerable. There may therefore be bias from a financial point of view to ensure that the magazine continues to suit the readership demographic sought by the advertisers.

When asked about these classifieds, Fox (2008) stated that they are their “bread and butter”. According to Fox (2008), this relationship, and the use of advertisements within the publication allow *Getaway* to stay in print, and to continue making money. Like many publications, his is run by a governing board, and according to him they need the help of advertisers because the “Grey-suits are looking for cash flow, and they want to see the bottom line” (Fox, 2008). Fox (2008) went on to say that *Getaway* has a very close relationship with their advertisers in the tourism industry, and that they help host an annual tradeshow, as well as various other events with many of them. He mentioned that *Getaway’s* relationship with their advertisers in the tourism industry is an “even closer relationship than you would have in most magazines... [because the tourism industry] directly supports us and expects us to support them” (Fox, 2008).

Advertorial Content

Quite a high number of advertorials were found in the sample of travel and leisure magazines; fifty six advertorials in a total of six publications. This indicates that a large amount of content is driven directly by parties wishing to advertise to the publication's target audience. There is strong bias indicated here. These articles focus solely on one 'product' (an activity, a tourist destination and so on), to the exclusion of other potentially better products, to the detriment of the readership. These can be misleading, and can be mistaken by the reader for actual critical coverage of a topic.

As indicated by Figure 22 the advertorial content seems to primarily include expensive subject matter, to the exclusion of those unable to afford what is on offer. This form of content is biased as it does not offer objective insight into what 'product' may be best, but is subject to which advertiser is willing to pay more for the magazine coverage.

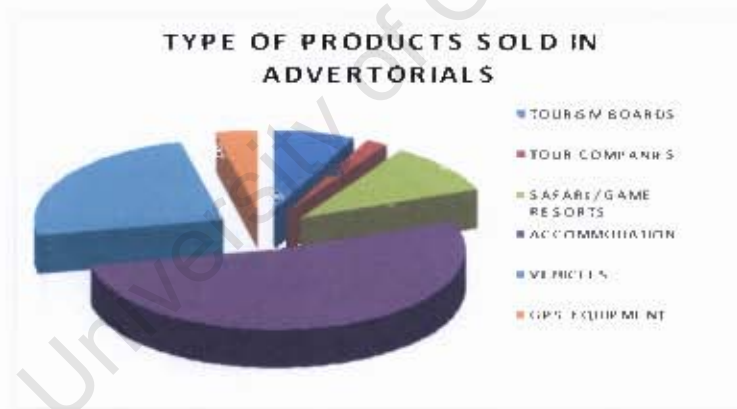


Figure 22: Type of Products Sold in Advertorials

In regards to their policies and general feelings towards advertorial usage within the industry, each of the professionals had a separate opinion. Fox (2008) explained that *Getaway* does not write advertorials, but that they write something similar to advertorials. He stated that, "we use vehicles for free from the manufacturers...the car is given to us for two weeks...and we test drive it for them" (Fox, 2008). Coetzer (2008) stated that he has had to write advertorials, even within *go!* and "can count the misfortune [of having to write them] on one hand." He stated that writing advertorials really limits your freedom as a writer because the advertisers have to check your piece to see if they like it before it

gets printed (Coetzer, 2008). Although his colleague, Le Roux (2008), stated that she felt that advertorials did not work, her editor Booyens (2008) stated that the use of advertorials was fine; and “that you can practice wonderful journalism through advertorials.” He believes that “Consumers are economically robust... can make their own decisions”, and feels that if [they see that it is] sponsored they know to take it with a pinch of salt.”

'Freebies' and Barter Agreements

According to Lazar (2005: 80), there is a large tendency for those within the industry to accept 'freebies' and to sign barter agreements. Similar to the bias that results from advertorial content, the use of such tactics does not always lead to an objective portrayal of events. It is difficult to accurately measure the industry's use of 'freebies' and barter agreements solely through a content analysis as most publications will not openly admit to these tactics. The only way to pinpoint these tactics is to count the number of times an article directly posts whether or not they have paid for their own travel and accommodation. This measure is flawed by the fact that, as mentioned, these tactics are not indicated by the publications. Figure 23 represents the results of this analysis. As shown by the findings, there is a large question mark hovering over the actual amount of 'freebie' and barter agreement usage.

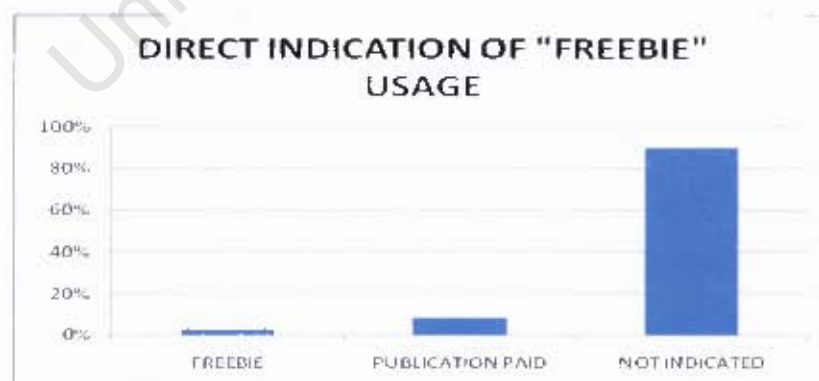


Figure 23: Indication of 'Freebie'

Despite the results of the content analysis regarding the industry's usage of 'freebies' and barter agreements, it was still a commonly recurring topic within the interviews.

According to the professionals, this topic is one of much debate. Each of the publications

and writers had their own policies regarding whether or not they use them and why. According to Fox (2008), the 'freebie' plays a big role in the generation of their magazine. Each month the editorial staff at *Getaway* chooses a certain theme around which their magazine and its stories will be based. Themes could include beach holidays, hiking holidays, city holidays, and so on. In order to choose the destinations that will fit into these themes, the editorial staff often turn to their files which contain a collection of invitations that they have received over the years from a number of tourist spots and places of accommodation. They then choose a few destinations that fit in with their monthly theme, and will most likely stay at those places for free, all inclusive (Fox, 2008). This method also applies with most of the gear that their journalists use along their trip. Fox (2008) stated that it allows them the ability to travel affordably, and that saving this extra money allows them to buy the best photographic equipment on the market, which in turn produces a better final product. Likewise, he also stated that if they accept invitations, then they know what to expect before going there, and that they know their job will be much easier and far more comfortable (Fox, 2008). In this regard, Booyens (2008) believed that some sort of regulatory board or code of conduct is called for, as there is a vested interest in travel. He stated that "There is a social contract between readers and the editorial staff [of a magazine], and that twenty Rand should buy them the loyalty of the editorial staff" (Booyens, 2008). He stressed the importance that a publication must inform their readers on their usage of 'freebies, and if they ever change their stance on this subject then the reader deserves the right to know about it. Booyens (2008) proudly stated that *Weg* pays for all of their own travel. He insisted that doing so was not a large expense, and the rewards outweigh the costs. He believes that if you become a part of the 'freebie circuit' then you lose touch with the main agenda, because you would not have chosen those destinations if you were not invited to them. He stated that the basis for the choice of destination for *Weg* was the potential interest of the reader (Booyens, 2008). On this topic, Coetzer (2008) agreed with his publication's standpoint and stated that it allows for travel journalists to write honestly about their destination. Lazar (2005: 80) has spoken greatly on this topic in the past, saying that the use of 'freebies' happens quite frequently within the industry, especially with freelancers. In terms of her publication, she states that due to the constraints of their budget, they

often use a lot of invitations or ‘freebies’. However, she made it clear that her publication never signs barter agreements (Lazar, 2008). Lazar (2008) said that they always make it clear at the bottom of each article if they have been hosted, if the trip has been paid for, or paid for in part. She says that doing so is very important because it lets their “readers know from whence we come” (Lazar, 2008).

In terms of finding out if these modern advertiser and editorial relationships actually affected the content written, the answers were staggered, depending on which company made it their policy of accepting ‘freebies’ or not. *Getaway*’s Deputy Editor, Fox (2008), said that “advertisers could cause a stir” when it came to content, but that their editorial team would most likely decide whether or not to drop the story, or write another version if that were the case. With the same question, Booyens (2008) firmly stated that advertisers do not affect the content found within the pages of *Weg* because they pay their own way and thus avoid these sorts of issues. According to Coetzer (2008) their “advertisers do not influence what [they] do, but rather [they] influence what [their] advertisers do. In other words, he explains that their stories are already written before they actually get their advertisers to sign on. For example, the advertising teams at *Weg* and *go!* try to get a hotel or tour operator from a similar location to the destination they wrote about to advertise within their magazine after the fact (Coetzer, 2008). Lazar’s (2008) reaction to this question was that she could not count the number of times that an advertiser had called her team expecting an editorial to be done on them simply because they paid for ad space within their section. However, she said that advertisers do not influence what is written within her publication, due to their policy not to sign barter agreements (Lazar, 2008). Lazar (2008) later stated that if there were a few ads running in their section relating to the same product, that her publication may decide to write a very broad editorial on that type of product without offering any favourites. The example she gave in this instance was that they may write a generic piece on cruise ships if one or more of the advertisers were involved in that part of the industry (Lazar, 2008).

The results of the content analysis and the interviews from this section on advertising found a number of biases present within the travel and leisure magazine industry. Once it

was found that advertisers have a large role in the production of a publication. it was also brought to light that the types of advertising used were geared mainly towards the publication's target demographic. This pairing of product type and demographic was not done by chance. Editors spoke freely about their close relationships with advertisers, and their calculated advertising methods geared towards their targeted audience.

These findings indicate that those within the industry are in fact affected by outside forces, and are often made to partake in the types of activities that this papers theoretical framework sets out. According to the professionals and the content analysis, the reoccurring themes uncovered by this study suggest that certain types of stories, images, and advertisements alike are continually highlighted by their producers. This content will then appeal to the genres current readership, keep their interests, and thus allow the magazines to sell and make a profit. Therefore in doing so they perpetuate the cycle of whatever biases this entails.

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Chapter 10:

FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Further research

Within the findings, this study has mentioned a number of ways in which further research could be undertaken in the travel and leisure magazine industry.

Perhaps the most interesting possibility for future study that this thesis proposes revolves around race. Research into this topic could attempt to uncover reasons for the affluent black population (LSM 6-10 group) not purchasing these travel and leisure magazines despite their similar interest in outdoor activities and travel-style activities. This study could also identify whether there is a possibility for a publication which focuses on black readers.

In regards to further research within the topic of gender bias, Le Roux mentioned that there has been a lot of recent content that focuses primarily on female-only activities. One could try to uncover the reason for this recent trend. Questions that this topic invokes include whether gender bias is still present within the industry, or if women need to read stories like this in order to empower themselves?

Another possibility relating to gender bias could be to analyze the representations of females within travel magazines which revolve around motor vehicle travelling, targeted towards the demographic that is predominantly male. Le Roux (2008) stated that a lot of these types of magazines commonly compare women to cars. It would be interesting to analyze the ways in which this is done, how often, and why this practice still occurs especially within today's gender conscious society.

Style could also be a topic for further research. One could potentially analyze which type of stories the average audience tends to prefer. In this regard, one could look primarily at either armchair travel writing, or practical do-it-yourself travel writing. The circulation

figures discussed in this study which indicated that *Weg and go!* combined, sell more copies than *Getaway* and its counterpart *Mooiloop* may point to a preference with the audience. Research into this may prove useful considering that many publications, *Getaway* included, feel the need to change their layout in order to satisfy one style over another.

Advertising and advertorials within the travel and leisure magazine industry could also be a topic for further research. A study that could be undertaken would be to analyze how the audience actually feels about large amounts of advertisements within the travel writing publications. Booyens (2008) believed that the audiences "view [them] as an essential part of magazines." He feels that if the advertisements disappeared that the audience would miss them, and ask the editorial staff where their advertisements were. A study like this could measure the audiences' threshold point to the number of advertisements in these publications. It may also uncover that audiences prefer more content or image based material because they feel that they receive more for their money, or that in fact the audience is actually immune to advertisements.

Another study could be done on whether or not the audience is aware of the fact that the many publications receive invitations or freebies from an advertiser. Research pertaining to this topic could analyze whether the audience prefers and trusts content which directly indicates that a trip had been paid for by the publication.

Also, the possible effects that the growing online travel writing industry is currently having on the traditional travel and leisure magazine industry is also another area for future study.

Conclusion

Travel writing is an important component of South Africa's tourism industry. The tourism industry is in turn an important driver of the South African economy. With travel and leisure magazines being a popular form of travel writing, this paper sought out elements that influence the type of content being published.

Until now there has been very little research into the affinity of the travel and leisure magazine industry in South Africa to house advertisements, advertorials, and its use of barter agreements. This is also the case with the genres most commonly criticised biases of gender, escapism, race, and 'othering'.

This thesis and its theoretical perspectives illustrated the high level of direct advertising and advertorials that exist within the South African travel and leisure magazine industry, a factor that is important considering the lack of a regulatory body in this instance. Direct advertising was found within every publication analyzed, and was treated as a necessity for its survival in most cases. A calculative pairing of advertisements to a publication's readership demographic was also found. In some instances, this dynamic between advertisements and travel writing content was described as an art form that if not well managed, would negatively influence a publication's readership statistics. Advertorials, and a recent development, 'the freebie', and barter agreements were also found to be contentious issues amongst the editorial staff of the various publications. Their existence within the publications demonstrates bias as articles are written positively because they have to be. This factor emphasizes the extent to which the industry frames and highlights certain aspects of a story. By doing so, the producers tell their reader what it is that they think they want to hear, in order to appeal to and keep their readership demographic.

The type of story on which the content focused was mostly outdoor and wildlife based. This indicates a trend towards a strong desire for escapism amongst readership. Through a semiotic analysis, image specialist Brundrit (2008) mentioned that visual images continually portraying specific themes have the ability to evoke certain thoughts and emotions within its audience. These themes would be perpetuated by the magazines in order to ensure the interest of the readership.

This thesis also brought forth issues regarding the bias of race and 'othering'. This was found in terms of a majority of white writers within the field, as well as a large number of

images that depicted mainly white participants in activities. It also questioned why the majority of those participating in outdoor activities (mainly the affluent black population) are not reading these publications. This could indicate that the outdoor activities chosen for the publications are not interesting to black people. It could also mean that the activities are written about in a biased way that does not appeal to the black population.

This thesis also found that a gender bias existed in the way that a story was selected. However, given the large number of female writers currently working within the field, this study found that a gender bias in relation to the sex of the writer did not exist.

Finally, the way in which South African travel writers and producers are aware of the current representational and commercial biases that currently exist within the industry and how they try to sensitively deal with them was also uncovered.

In closing, this thesis found that each of the biases mentioned in past research, do in fact exist within the travel and leisure magazine industry of South Africa. In order to reach these findings, the present study gave a background into the genre itself. It provided a brief overview of the genre's relationship with tourism, and the recent developments towards promoting the genre. It also offered a historical look into both the travel writing genre as well as the travel and leisure magazine industry within South Africa. In order to provide a working knowledge about the genre's past criticisms of bias, this thesis detailed the academic research written on this topic. The methods of a content analysis and a set of qualitative interviews and their findings were also described in full. Lastly, a number of suggestions to aid future research within this neglected topic were also given.

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Notes

¹ The 'guide book' is a form of travel writing where the reader takes the advice of the writer and uses it to partake in the physical act of travel themselves.

² The term 'armchair travel' refers to the escapist intentions of the reader. An armchair traveler will use the genre as a means to explore the world without leaving the comforts of their own home.

³ Herodotus was one of the very first travel writers living in the fifth century BC. According to Swarbrooke and Horner (1999: 14) he "traveled by sea to Egypt, Persia, Sicily and Babylon...[and] recorded his experiences in ways which both informed and entertained the reader"

⁴ The five publications that were aggregated from the All Media Product Survey (AMPS) 2008A statistics were *Getaway, go!, Weg, Drive Out, and South African Country Life*. Out of this thesis' sample, these were the only publications offered within the AMPS survey.

⁵ In 2000, Land Rover published a three page advertisement in over twenty South African magazines. The advertisement depicts a half naked Himba woman standing alone in a desolate Namibian setting. After a Land Rover Freelander is shown speeding past her, the woman's breasts are abruptly swung sideways, in the direction of the moving vehicle. At this point, the caption reads "The new more powerful Freelander...The only thing tougher will be deciding on which one you prefer" (van Eeden, 2006: 344). In 2001, the advertisement was regarded as a violation against the International Code of Advertising Practice, and each of the twenty publications was made to issue a retraction condemning the advertisement and its message (van Eeden, 2006: 344).

⁶ The category of 'unidentified' was used in the test measuring escapism through visuals. It refers to pictures that focused solely on things such as cars, plants, or other inanimate objects that did not fit into the other two categories.

⁷ This accounts for any reference of politicians and their actions taking place before 1994. A reference made about Thabo Mbeki, or Nelson Mandela in a present context, for example was not counted.

⁸ Late in 2007, it was found that Eskom, South Africa's electricity provider, had mismanaged the countries resources resulting in a national power shortage. (IOL NEWS, 2008b). In 2007-2008, the company carried out load-shedding solutions, which left much of the country without power for a few hours each week, and cost the country approximately R 50 billion (IOL NEWS, 2008a). This practice continued for a number of months

⁹ The following is the list of writers whose content was analysed within this study: Alex Cremer, Alison Westwood, Anim Van Wyk, Anita De Villiers, Anthea Forlee, Barrie Louw, Braham Van Zyl, Cathy Hofmeyer, Cheri-Ann Potgieter, Chris Marais, David Bristow, Dawie Vermey, Don Briscoe, Esmá Le Roux, Fred W Hasner, Geoff Levey, Gina Meintjes, Greg Penfold, Heather Dugmore, Helen Frazer, Huck Orban, Jaco Kirsten, Jacqui Latimer, Jazz Kuschke, Jeanne Liebetrau, Jo Kromberg, John Costello, Julia Lloyd, Julianne Du Toit, Justin Fox, Kenyon Clegg, Kerry Theobald, Kingsley Holgate, Leigh Stefanski, Leon Marais, Leonie Joubert, Lize Odendal, Marguerite Lombard, Marianne Heron, Marion Whitehead, Mark D Anderson, Michael Poliza, Mike Nunun, Nancy Richards, Peter Chadwick, Peter Pinnock, Raymond Travers, Richard Can Ryneveld, Razel Maritz, Rulan Heunis, Sarietha Engelbrecht, Scarlett Steer, Sharon Davis, Sibulele Siko, Talita Horn, Tania Griffen, Taryn Muller, Toast Coetzer, Yolandie Wirth

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