Fashioning Meaning:

The Graphic t-shirts of *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* as Alternative forms of Socio-Cultural Communication about South African Collective Identities

"Fashion – the prevailing usage of dress in any given period – is not just a covering of the body but a mirror of the social relationships and cultural values of an age"

(Brenninkmeyer, 1963: 1)

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Declaration - Plagiarism

I, Nonduduzo Simphiwe Siphosethu Ngcobo declare that:

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Dedication

Parts of this dissertation were written while at St Joseph's Psychiatric Hospital. I wrote these particular words of this dedication at a time where death seemed easier than life. The completion of this dissertation means that my life continues, no matter how hard that may to be. It only fitting that I dedicate my efforts to others like me.

This is for the ones whose smiles hide a thousand silenced tears, the ones whose heart wrenching cries feel unheard, and the ones who wear long sleeves in the heat to hide the scars of their mental pain, soothed by sharp blades. To the many that sought escape from an anguish filled life by silencing their beating hearts and the ones who feel 'happiness' by popping a prescribed pill a day:

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This is for you.

</div>

To the mother and father who lost their first-born son too soon, I could not choose life, I did not choose death; I chose to finish my work for you. Your strength saw me through.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the socio-cultural communication properties of the *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* graphic t-shirts. As a study located in the field of communication and informed by Cultural Studies, this research argues that the study of the creation of clothing reveals meaning about the collective identities who use certain clothing styles to express their identities. This research defines fashion as the creation of clothing styles that are reflective of the cultural narratives of certain collective identities (Barnard, 1996; Kawamura, 2005; Jackson, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). It contextualises fashion design as communicative tool used by designers to convey knowledge about the lived reality of their target market (Crane, 1999; Gick and Gick, 2007; Kazmierczak, 2013). Qualitative in nature, *Fashioning Meaning,* as the title suggest, is concerned with the meaning making process and is framed by inductive reasoning, which focuses on the process of the creation of meaning (du Plooy, 2007). It employs a qualitative content analysis that utilises semiotics as an interpretive tool for the analysis of the *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* t-shirts (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2007; Fourie, 2009). Semiotics as an interpretive tool is utilised to uncover the latent meanings of the four graphic t-shirts under analysis (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 2007). Semiotic theory further serves as a theoretical framework alongside the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006; [1980]) and the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.,* 1997). Using the Circuit of Culture interrelated moments of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity* (du Gay *et al.,* 1997); this research interprets the aesthetics of *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* graphic t-shirts as a form of text. The Encoding/Decoding model serves as a further interpretive and theoretical framework for the analysis of the encoding processes utilised by the above-mentioned fashion brands under analysis (2006; [1980]).

Keywords: Graphic T-shirts, Semiotic Theory, Circuit of Culture, Encoding/Decoding, Communication, Butan Wear, Magents Lifestyle Apparel

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Vision Boarding Research

The Graphic T-shirt as Reflection of Collective Identity

On the 23rd of October, 2015, South African youth from all lifestyles came together for a common cause through the Fees Must Fall movement (Barr, 2015)[1] (stylised under the moniker #FeesMustFall). The graphic t-shirt was not absent from the Fees Must Fall movement protest (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Durban Students Protest
Source: Jeff Wicks, *News24,* 23 October 2015

The graphic t-shirt has a rich history in South Africa as a political and social symbol that played a role in the public protest that formed part of the country's liberation struggles (Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012). In contemporary times, as seen during the Fees Must Fall Movement, university students hailing from all provinces took to their streets, marching in solidarity against the proposed fee increases for the year 2016 (Barr, 2015). This unity for a common goal resonated with all who were opposed to the fee increase that would strip the opportunity for

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[1] The Fees Must Fall movement began as a rally against the increase of student tertiary fees (Baloyi & Isaacs, 2015). The increase saw many students unable to afford higher education. Though certain financial aid is available for students, many students do not qualify because of their socio-economic bracket, leading to further exclusion (Barr, 2015).

education from many. This protest exhibited the South African "individuals' cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285), in short; South Africa's collective identity. South Africa, a country characterised by its tumultuous race relation, became, in that moment, a country united through a single cause. Collective identities, such as these, are expressed through cultural artefacts (Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Protest such as this, is one such expression of collective identity, and fashion such as the graphic t-shirt (see Figure 1.2) forms another (Polletta and Jasper, 2001).

Figure 1.2: Students are Marching to the Union Building in Protest of University Fees
Source: Lourenz Smith, *Instagram,* 28 October 2015

Introducing Fashioning Meaning as a Dissertation

The t-shirt forms part of fashion, which constitutes part of a society's material culture that is used to articulate politics and identity (Manan and Smith, 2014). The t-shirt used during the #FeesMustFall protests serve as a fragment of the narratives about the collective beliefs concerning equal access to education (see Figure 1.2). These aesthetics portrayed the social reality that united all those who identified with the cause. The aesthetics of the graphic t-shirt also reflected aspects of the wearer's sense of belonging, made visible on t-shirts bearing logos of specific political parties (see the EFF t-shirts visible in Figure 1.1). The protests are an example of how the design elements of the graphic t-shirt reflect a specific collective identity that forms part of the collective identity of South Africa as a whole.

The word 'fashion' is derivative of the Latin, *factiō*, which refers to the act of creation or a collective of individuals unified towards a singular cause (Sanborn, 1927; Barnard, 1996; Ayto, 2005; Kawamura, 2005). Though this definition does not refer specifically to clothing, the fashion industry defines fashion as all that is concerned with the creation, marketing, selling and consumption of clothing (Jackson, 2007). *Fashioning Meaning,* as the title of this dissertation, draws from both the etymological and industry definition, defining fashion as the visible clothing styles within a society; created and consumed during a specific period. Fashion refers to the visual manifestation of social markers and symbolic meaning that forms part of the historical and cultural narrative of a particular collective identity (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012).

The development of a clothing line does not begin with cutting fabrics and sewing clothes. Rather, traditionally, the conception of a line begins with a visual narrative of inspirations – a mood board – which the fashion designer seeks to articulate through design (Jackson, 2007). Research begins in a similar manner. Before the researcher embarks on their research journey, they first create their own 'mood board' in the form of a proposal, that is later translated into the first chapter (du Plooy, 2009). As such, this first chapter entitled *Vision Boarding Research* presents the rationale for this research, as well as this study's primary research objectives and structure.

The Graphic T-shirt as a Meaningful Text

Fashioning Meaning identifies *Butan Wear (Butan)* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents)* graphic t-shirts as cultural products that serve as representations of their respective consumers' shared identity. The primary aim of this research is to understand the manner in which the designers of these two South African fashion brands draw form theirs and their consumers' shared social reality in producing graphic t-shirts that serve as meaningful cultural artefacts. The t-shirts are analysed with the aim of answering the research question of how the *Butan* and *Magents* graphic t-shirts serve as part of the narratives about the South African collective identities who identify with the respective brands. The subsequent discussions elaborate upon the above-mentioned research question and aims.

Background of Study

The study of the t-shirt as communication is not a new endeavour within the field of social sciences. The preferred method of approach is most commonly the study of the t-shirt as a communicative tool for the consumer, who uses the meanings to express identity, belonging, emotion and political views (see Musangi, 2009; Hasanah, 2010; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012; Manan and Smith, 2014; Chiluwa and Ajiboye, 2015). This approach is in line with the favoured trajectory of the study of fashion as the articulation of meaning created by consumers through wearing existing clothing (see Bogatsu, 2002; Becker, 2008; Inglessis, 2008; Brandes, 2009; Reddy, 2009; Angeros, 2014). The works of Roland Barthes influence this popular stream of research in that clothing is a form of communication – a language – with the act of wearing and displaying clothes as the act of communicating (Tejara, 1988; Barthes, 1990; 2013 [1957]).

Fashion is first and foremost a capital good – the material manifestation of status and wealth (Marx, 1971; Strinati, 2004). The monetary value of consumer goods such as fashion translates to its social value (Strinati, 2004), and is reflected in the manner in which individuals consume the clothing in an effort to keep up with the social elite who adorn themselves in the latest styles (Simmel, 1904; Veblen, 1912; Rogers, 1962; Kawamura, 2005). As a product of consumption, fashion is the reflection of the collective consensus and aggregated taste of a society (Blumer, 1969; Hemphill and Suk, 2009). Simply stated, wearers create narratives through their fashion choices (see Sanborn, 1927; Sproles, 1981b; Roach-Higgins and Eicher, 1992; Banister and Hogg, 2007; Hines and Bruce, 2007; Hemphill and Suk, 2009).

The graphic t-shirt, with its bold aesthetics, is one such manner of expressing shared identity (see Musangi, 2009; Hasanah, 2010; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012; Manan and Smith, 2014; Chiluwa and Ajiboye, 2015). This shared identity forms an extension of the meaning embedded within the t-shirt produced by the designer. The design process draws heavily from history, current affairs, social trends, and lived culture (Sapir, 1931; Brenninkmeyer, 1963; Blumer, 1969; Jackson, 2007). Clothing thus conveys symbolic meaning. As such, clothing is a result of symbolic productivity – that which is created not only to satisfy human needs, but also to produce meanings used in the creation of individual and collective identity (Willis, 1990).

Rationale

Designers not only create clothing, but interpret the elements that come to encapsulate the culture and lived reality experienced by a collective of individuals during a particular era: the zeitgeist (Kawamura, 2005; Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). The zeitgeist is understood as cultural elements which come to encapsulate the essence of a specific time or era (see Hegel, 2001; Bruce and Yearley, 2006; Magee, 2010). The term is said to be first theorised by German philosopher Georg Hegel (in his posthumously published *Philosophy of History* originally written in 1805), who expressed that "it is the spirit (*der Geist)* that leads to the truth (Hegel, 2001: 28)". The zeitgeist – as it is known today – refers to the unique sense of felling and culture that individuals draw from when conveying the quintessence of an era (Magee, 2010). Fashion, as a reflection of the zeitgeist, informs both cultural and anthropological studies that view fashion as a form of social commentary about shared history, collective understandings and lived social reality of cultural narratives of the wearers (Hansen, 2004; de Greef, 2009; Barthes, 2013 [1957]).

Fashioning Meaning assumes that designers' intended meanings of their clothing are diffused through consumption practices. Diffusion, as defined by Everett Rogers (1962), is characterised by the creation, communication, reception, and adoption of a new idea to various members of society during a certain time period. As such, this research assumes that designers communicate their – and society's – ideas through their clothing designs, if one is to define communication in Dennis McQuail's (2005: 15) terms, as "the process of information transmission". Consumers who resonate with the designers' meaning – as it reflects part of an identity shared with others who also identify with the same object of fashion – consume the designers' preferred meaning of the garment (Hall, 2006 [1980]). If one is to contemplate the words of Jean Baudrillard (1968: 10) who states "if we consume the product as product, we consume its meaning", the consumption of fashion may be considered the consumption of the meaning created by the designer. The consumption of this clothing, or the act of wearing clothes, thus arguably reflects collective consensus with the designers' ideas. The study of fashion is therefore the study of the material manifestation of a concept expressed through clothing, that through its diffusion becomes the reflection of collective consensus regarding that concept (Schrank, 1973).

The production and consumption of fashion occurs within the context of culture and as such, the study of fashion should endeavour to engage with the socio-cultural process involved in both consumption and production (Braham, 1997; du Gay, 1997). However, the common approach to the study of fashion as communication, largely from the consumer perspective, illustrates a gap in the current knowledge regarding fashion. *Fashioning Meaning,* as a dissertation, addresses this gap through engaging with fashion as communication with the designer as the producer of meaningful messages. This research assumes that "contextualising cultural forms and audiences in historically specific situations helps illuminate how cultural artefacts reflect or reproduce concrete social relations and conditions" (Kellner and Durham, 2006: xxi). It is in light of this statement, that the rationale for this research is constructed. This research shall not engage with 'the meaning of the t-shirt' for the consumer, as the main purpose of enquiry is informed by a cultural production perspective which seeks to determine how meaning is constructed from the perspective of the cultural producer (Braham, 1997).

The t-shirt as a cultural product enables the comprehension of the fashion designer a producer of a cultural form. South African graphic t-shirt designers articulate narratives that youth have come to use as part of their identity negotiation within a post-apartheid South Africa (Vincent, 2007; Musangi, 2009), aligning the study of fashion design with the study of cultural production. This idea of cultural production informs the manner in which four t-shirt designs of two purposefully selected South African fashion brands – *Butan* and *Magents* – shall be analysed.

In engaging with fashion from the aspect of production, this research aims to understand the manner in which the clothing forms created by fashion designers are informed by the social reality of their target consumer. The study of cultural production requires that this research be informed by the Circuit of Culture Model (du Gay et al., 1997), which assumes that cultural artefacts are analysed through five interlinked circuits (*representation*; *identity*; *production*; *consumption*; and *cultural regulation*). The Circuit of Culture model assumes that meaning is created through both the *production* and *consumption* phase of the model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer and Jackson, 2008) which corresponds with the assumption of the Encoding/Decoding model that suggests that meaning is created through the moment of encoding and decoding (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Greer, 2010). Both the Circuit of Culture and the Encoding/Decoding models are utilised as theoretical frameworks (elaborated in the latter part of this chapter). Employing semiotics as a further theoretical framework enables the comprehension of the

represented meanings of the t-shirt as a cultural text. Semiotic theory provides the framework for understanding how "meaning occurs in language, pictures, performances and others forms of expression" (Tomaselli, 1999: 29). In this sense, the *Butan* and *Magents* graphic t-shirts are analysed and understood as part of the material culture that encapsulates the lived reality and history of a specific collective identity (Manan and Smith, 2014). This understanding informs the assumption that an analysis of the fashion design process of a graphic t-shirt, as a representational text, conveys socio-cultural information about a specific collective identity. It is in light of this understanding that informs this study's primary research question of: What do the meanings of the *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* graphic t-shirts communicate about aspects of certain South African collective identities?

Research Aims and Objectives

This dissertation seeks to understand fashion as a site of production of meaning and knowledge about a shared reality. This forms part of primary research question articulated in the previous sub-section. Table 1.1 further details this dissertation's aims and objectives.

Dissertation Aims and Objectives	
Chapter	**Objectives**
Chapter 2 Literature Review Threading Literature	Survey literature in order to understand how fashion designers use the fashion design process a form of communication
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework Fabrics of Theory	Discuss theory that allows for the analysis of graphic t-shirt as a cultural artefact about the zeitgeist
Chapter 4 Methodology Stylish Methods	Determine a research methodology which: • Enables an objective analysis of graphic t-shirts; and • Assists the understanding of how designers convey meaning through design use
Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 Data Analysis and Findings Voguish Analysis	Analyse the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) brands in light of the Circuit of Culture moment of *production* and *consumption,* (reading) in order to understand: • Production: the socio-cultural factors that characterise the design process; and • Consumption: the codes required to decode the meanings of each t-shirt Discuss the interpreted findings from the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) t-shirt analysis in light of the Circuit of Culture moment of *representation* and *identity* in order to understand: • Representation: how each designer uses the design process to convey meanings through the aesthetics of their t-shirt; and • Identity: what the interpreted meaning of the t-shirt reflects about the shared aspects of the *Butan* and *Magents* consumer's lived reality

Table 1.1: Objectives of Research by Chapter

The Graphic T-shirt as Socio-Cultural Communication

Theoretical Location

Fashioning Meaning is a study rooted within the field of social sciences, more specifically the field of Cultural Studies, which suggests that the analysis of cultural production enables a portal into understanding the materials from which cultural narratives are formed (Johnson, 1998). In the past, culture was exclusively defined as relating to the fine arts and high culture (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Lister and Wells, 2001), however the development of Cultural Studies as a field has redefined the understanding of culture and the study thereof (Pitout, 2007; Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013). The Cultural Studies approach views culture as the learned and shared meanings and conventions of a collective identity such as language and etiquette (Grossberg *et al.*, 1992; Williams, 1993 [1958]). Culture refers to texts – cultural artefacts – and symbolic expressions encoded with meaning for people with a shared collective identity (Williams, 1993 [1958]; Storey, 1996; Lister and Wells, 2001). Culture also refers to the consumption of cultural artefacts – from shopping for clothes to the experience of watching entertaining content – and the production of culture, namely the representation of reality through written, visual, oral and performative texts to name but a few (Lister and Wells, 2001).

Locating the study within a Cultural Studies framework enables the examination of the relationship between culture, communication and the meaning-making process. As such this research adopts theoretical frameworks from the field of Cultural Studies (Turner, 2003; Kellner and Durham, 2006), specifically the Circuit of Culture Model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997), and the Encoding/Decoding model of communication (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The Circuit of Culture model enables the analysis of any cultural text as a mode of cultural production (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer and Jackson, 2008). Employing the Circuit of Culture model facilitates the discussion of fashion as a cultural artefact that can be analysed as a meaningful text about society (Curtin and Gaither, 2005; Leve, 2012).

Fashioning Meaning employs qualitative research techniques in its quest to understand how the *Butan* and *Magents* designers' engagement with their consumers' lived reality enables them to produce t-shirts that serve as an articulation of their consumers' zeitgeist. It considers the designer as a creator and contributor of knowledge about the cultures of collective identities that exist in South Africa. This approach is framed by the constructionist paradigm that assumes

that knowledge is not preconceived (Guba and Lincon, 1999; Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006), but rather it is constructed through social and cultural engagement with one's environment (Bodner, 1986; Johnson, 1998; Flick, 2004). This research is not only concerned with what meaning entails, but also the meaning-making process, within fashion design, which roots this research within an inductive approach, which focuses on "the logic of exploring the meaning making process" (du Plooy, 2009). As such, this research extends upon the assumption that designer interprets their environment and that of their consumers in producing clothing choices that come to be used in the construction of identity (Blumer, 1969; Musangi, 2009; Farber, 2013).

Geographical Location

The narratives weaved within designers' creations are assumed as reflections of the collective identity of their target market, if collective identity is defined as a sense of belonging shared with others (Ashmore *et al.* 2004). With eleven official languages, South Africa is a melting pot of cultural and collective identities. Research that might seek to explore all the collective identities that exist in South Africa is vast. This research shall not seek to explore all the collective identities within South Africa; rather this research seeks to investigate the collective identity of the target markets of two South African designers. Each designer represents a facet of South Africa's multicultural identity. *Butan* creates t-shirts informed by the South African hip-hop subculture to which a large majority of their consumers identify with. *Magents* designs draw from their consumers' cultural history (such the Zulu culture) and political ideologies (such as Black Conscious).

The chosen t-shirt designers are not limited to those located in KwaZulu-Natal. *Magents* hail from Cape Town and *Butan* is located in Johannesburg, with both their clothing distributed nationally and abroad (see Figure 1.3 for geographic location of brands).
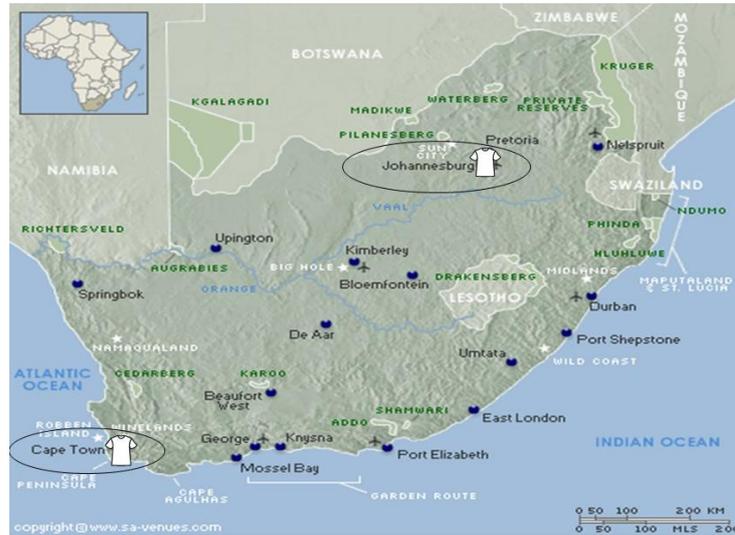
Figure 1.3: South Africa Relief Map

Source: SA-Venues.com

The geographic location of the designer dictates the data collection transpires via online communication such as email (for the collection of imagery) and Skype (for the collection of primary interview data).

The Study of the Graphic T-shirt

This final section of Chapter 1 presents the structure of this dissertation, providing brief overviews of the contents of subsequent chapters.

Structure of Dissertation

The second chapter, *Threading Literature,* presents the literature review of this dissertation. Chapter 2 creates the framework for understanding that fashion does not communicate aspects about identity, but rather aspects about lived reality which individuals use to express their identity (Sanborn, 1927; Blumer, 1969; Kawamura, 2006; Kim *et al.*, 2011). This view is further contextualised through drawing from past studies undertaken on the graphic t-shirt as a form of communication (see Cornwell, 1990; Vincent, 2007; Hasanah, 2010; Farber, 2013; Manan and Smith, 2014; Chiluwa and Ajiboye, 2015). This chapter shall further explore the manner in which fashion, as a 'diffusion of a meaning' that resides within reality, forms part of the

discourses about society. *Threading Literature* thus reveals how designers create garments during a specific period; with the aesthetics of those garments serving as a visual representation of aspects of the zeitgeist of that period (Gick and Gick, 2007). The third chapter of this dissertation reveals that an analysis of this sort requires an understanding of culture as the study of the relationships that characterise the lived reality of individuals in a society (Hall, 1980).

The third chapter, *Fabrics of Theory*, presents the theoretical framework that guides the discussion findings and analysis. This study utilises theoretical frameworks informed by Cultural Studies (Turner, 2003; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). As such, the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) and Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) provide the primary theoretical framework for this chapter. Semiotic theory, informed by a constructionist paradigm (see Hall, 1997) as a further theoretical framework, is discussed in light of the Circuit of Culture model. The triadic model of signification and Taxonomy of Signs proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce (1932) is utilised as the primary semiotic theoretical constructs, further utilised as analytical tools as part of the qualitative content analysis of the four t-shirts.

In understanding fashion as an articulation of reality through an analysis of four graphic t-shirts created by two South African designers, this research shall explore the meaning-making process within fashion. The fourth chapter, *Stylish Methods,* provides the methodological outline used in the analysis of the graphic t-shirts. The chapter discusses the methodology, sampling procedures, validity, replicability and the limitations of this research. Four of the five nodes of the Circuit of Culture – *production, consumption, representation* and *identity* – are utilised as an analytical framework. *Production* refers the analysis of the context in which a text is commercially produced (Scherer and Jackson, 2008: 509). As such the moment of *production* refers to the analysis of *Butan* and *Magents* design process in its entirety. The analysis utilises secondary – documentary – data (see Mogalakwe, 2006), in the form of past narrative interviews conducted with the designer, analysed with the aim of understanding each designer's encoding process. The findings from the moment of *production* enable the researcher's decoding of each of the four t-shirts under analysis as part of the moment of *consumption*. Though the consumers' consumption of each graphic t-shirts is not analysed within this dissertation, the graphic t-shirts under analysis are the best selling t-shirts from the year 2015. Furthermore, this research adopts Anabelle Leve's (2012: 4) definition of *consumption* as the moment of 'reading' a text. This informs the decision to utilise the moment of *consumption* as

the researcher's decoding of the aesthetics of each designer's t-shirts with the aim of determining the designers' preferred meaning of their t-shirts (Hall, 2006 [1980]). This method of analysis is informed by the assentation that "the analysis of latent meaning of narratives is best pursued through a qualitative content analysis that enables researchers to "penetrate the deeper layers of a message" (Wigston, 2009: 04).

The qualitative content analysis utilises semiotics as an interpretative tool (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2009; Fourie, 2009), to uncover the designers intended meaning of each t-shirt. The discussion of the academic decoding of each t-shirt forms part of the *representation* node – which is concerned with how meaning is represented in a text (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). Understanding the manner in which the designers draw from their reality, in constructing their intended messages, is discoverable through personal interaction. Interviews are a comprehensive manner for understanding personal experiences, and therefore form part of the data analysis process (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). As such the *representation* node further utilises primary data, in the form of Skype interviews personally conducted with the designer after the analysis of each t-shirt, in discussing the represented meanings of each t-shirt. The primary interview data serve as a validity measure to verify that the researcher's decoded meanings reflects each designers' encoded meaning. The *identity* node draws from the findings of the *production, consumption* and *representation* nodes in answering this dissertation's research question.

Table 1.2 presents the methodology and the manner in which the Circuit of Culture is utilised as an analytical tool for answering this research's sub-questions. This summary is adapted from the structure developed by Kobus Maree and Carol Van Der Westhuizen (2009: 26) for the presentation of how data is collected and analysed for the purpose of answering research questions.

Methodological Process				
	Rationale	**Question**	**Data Source**	**Data Analysis**
Production	Analyse designers' encoding process	What is the identity of the designer and the brand?	Past interviews (Documentary data)	Narrative interview analytical model (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004)
Consumption	Decode meaning of t-shirts	What cultural narratives does the designer draw from?	Aesthetics of t-shirts: • *Butan* • *Magents*	Qualitative content analysis: Analytical schema of static visual images (du Plooy, 2004)
Representation	Interpret represented meanings of each t-shirt	What do the graphics of the t-shirt convey?	Findings from *production* and *consumption* node	Qualitative content analysis: Semiotic analytical schema of typology and layout (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2004; Fourie, 2009)
Identity	Interpret shared aspects of lived reality presented on each t-shirt	What do the t-shirts convey bout the lived reality of the *Butan* and *Magents* consumer?	Findings from *production*, *consumption* and *representation* nodes	Framework for Collective Identity (Ashmore *et al.,* 2004)

Table 1.2: Methodological Process of Study
Adapted from: Maree and Van Der Westhuizen (2009: 26) and du Gay *et al,* (1997)

The fifth and sixth chapters – collectively referred to as the *Voguish Analysis* chapters – present the finding and discussions from the data analysis. The chapters present the findings from the secondary interview data (documentary data) according to the moment of *production*, and the qualitative content analysis as the moment of *consumption.* The *representation* node presents the discussion and interpretation of the qualitative content analysis of each t-shirt, and further draws from the primary interview data to substitute the decoded meanings of each t-shirt. The moment of *identity*, answers the question of what the meanings of the analysed graphic t-shirts communicate about collective identity.

The seventh and final chapter – *Fashionable Finale* – revisits the research objectives and elaborates the study's findings. The final chapter shall commence with a discussion of how the primary research objectives of each chapter were addressed, which is followed up by a brief discussion entailing the manner in which the research question was answered. The chapter and this dissertation shall conclude with a suggestion of further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review
Threading Literature

Introduction

This study's title, *Fashioning Meaning,* reveals that it is concerned with the manner in which garments are 'fashioned' or 'created', which when read or analysed as cultural texts convey particular meanings. This literature review chapter, entitled *Threading Literature,* seeks to understand the manner in which clothing reflects the lived social reality of specific collective identities**.** The chapter engages with various literature – fashion design, fashion studies, clothing studies and communication (Barnard, 1996; Hartley, 2002; Aage and Belussi, 2008; Bugg, 2009) – with the aim of answering the question of how designers create clothing that is reflective of a particular collective identity's zeitgeist. *Fashioning Meaning* assumes that fashion designers create clothing for more than commercial purposes, but creative purposes as well, using design to convey knowledge to their target consumer about their lived reality. The study sees clothing as cultural artefacts to inform the cultural research of specific collective identities that exist in a society such as South Africa.

The chapter is organised according to four themes, namely *Perspectives of Fashion*, *Fashion as a Reflection of Collective Identity*, *Fashion as Articulations of Zeitgeists* and *Fashion as Communication*. The first section, *Perspectives of Fashion,* draws primarily from fashion theory (Crane, 1999; Loschek, 2009) in order to elaborate on the research problem introduced in the first chapter, *Vision Boarding Research. Fashion as a Reflection of Collective Identity* draws from South African and global studies undertaken on the graphic t-shirt (Musangi, 2009; Luvaas, 2012; Farber, 2013). The latter part of this chapter utilises academic journal articles and research papers as case studies, which inform the assumptions, sampling decisions, and forms of analysis of this research. *Fashion as Articulations of Zeitgeist* introduces the argument of the fashion design process as a process of encoding meaning (Bugg, 2009; Kazmierczak, 2013). The literature in this section focuses on how designers draw from their consumers' zeitgeist in creating new clothing styles. *Fashion as Communication,* the final section of this chapter, engages with studies conducted on the design process (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007) and communication theory (Fiske, 1990; Craig, 1999), in formulating an argument

for the study of fashion as a communication process. This section also discusses some of the findings from the case studies in light of the framework of collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). This discussion confirms the assumption that fashion lends itself to the study of communication from designer to consumer (Crane and Bovone, 2006). Studies undertaken on the design process as communication (Gick and Gick, 2007; Ames, 2008) inform the manner in which this research defines fashion as communication.

Perspectives of Fashion

Early theorists such as Thorstein Veblen (1904) and Georg Simmel (1912) focus their attention on the manner in which trend adoption communicates the need for the wealthy to differentiate themselves from the masses, and the lower classes' desire to emulate the lifestyle of the wealthy through imitating their clothing styles (Crane, 1999; Aage and Belussi, 2008). These theorists' concepts of fashion was informed by the top-down fashion system of the 1850s French fashion system, of designers who presented new clothing styles exclusively to wealthy customers (Aage and Belussi, 2008: 477). During this era, fashion was as an object of luxury – owning a new style of clothing denoted superior social status (Rosa, 2013: 81). The initial democratisation of the fashion system during the early twentieth century – where fashion was afforded to middle and lower classes – transformed fashion from coveted luxury goods to easily accessible consumer goods (Aage and Belussi, 2008). Theorists during this era were concerned with the role of fashion media and the fashion industry in perpetuating trends (Blumer, 1969; Barthes, 2013 [1963]). In current times, fashion has evolved from a symbol of status to a symbol of collective identity, with many consumers using fashion to "express their multifaceted individual identities within specific 'tribes' and individual sub-groups" (Aage and Belussi, 2008: 479). In recent years, fashion literature focused its attention on consumers' engagement with latest clothing styles, being motivated by the desire to communicate personal ideology and collective belonging (Barnard, 1996; Kawamura, 2005; Gick and Gick, 2007; Ames, 2008; Bugg, 2009). *Perspectives of Fashion,* as the first discussion presented in this chapter, details this historical evolution of fashion theory. The study of evolution of the t-shirt (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994) and various studies pertaining to fashion and identity (Abaza, 2007; Clemente, 2008) are utilised to substantiate the arguments presented about the fashion theory.

Fashion as a Function of Trend Adoption

George Simmel (1904: 544) is one of the first theorists to examine fashion at length, in discussing fashion as "a product a product of class distinction". Similarly, Thorstein Veblen (1912) as a form of status negotiation in stating that fashion was a pastime for the wealthy whose vast financial wealth enabled them to adorn themselves in the latest styles. These early theories reflect a grassroots understanding of the relationship between fashion and collective identity, where dominant social groups determined the trajectory of popular clothing styles (Aage and Belussi, 2008). Fashion, in this sense, is viewed as a process of differentiation, with those of superior socio-economic status as innovators of new trends. For Simmel (1904), the study of fashion could be analysed by observing the adoption of clothing styles by the wealthy, motivated by their desire to differentiate themselves from other socio-economic classes. This theoretical assumption views clothing as having the capacity of communicating social divisions within a society based on socio-economic status, and as such, illustrates a one-sided nature of early fashion theory, which viewed fashion as a commodity created for the wealthy (Barthes, 2013 [1957]).

Edward Sapir (1931) reveals a different narrative in stating that the wealthy were indifferent to fashion trends, adopting styles purely because they have the financial means to adopt styles before the rest of society. Diana Crane (1999: 14) confirms this assumption in asserting that

> Upwardly mobile status groups are motivated to adopt new styles to
> differentiate themselves from groups subordinate to themselves. Highest
> status groups however, whose eminence is secure base on wealth and
> inheritance, tend to be relatively indifferent to the latest fashions

Tine Aage and Fiorenza Belussi (2008) note that this top-down approach to fashion trend diffusion is a reflection of the organisation of the early fashion industry, where designers created new clothing styles for exclusively for higher socio-economic classes. This exclusivity in the fashion industry is evident in the introduction of the graphic t-shirt as a mass-produced undergarment. Lower classes in society purchased the t-shirt undergarment in retail stores, while the upper classes continued to employ seamstresses for manufacturing the undergarments (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994).

While early theorists (see Simmel, 1904; Veblen, 1912; Sapir, 1931) view the fashion as a reflection of status, later theorists (see Blumer, 1969; Sproles, 1976; Crane, 1999) acknowledge youth subcultures, media, and even lower classes innovators of fashion. The diffusion of the t-shirt as an outer garment serves to confirm this idea, as it was first adopted by the lower working class of society in the 1950s (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). British designer Vivienne Westwood might have been the first designer to include the graphic t-shirt in her clothing selection, however the style originated from the self-designed t-shirts of the punk sub-culture in 1970s England (Barnard, 1996; Luvaas, 2012). This subverts the notion that the wealthy are propagators of new trends, and that lower classes engage with fashion in an attempt to emulate the wealthy. The diffusion of the t-shirt as an outer-garment, and the evolution of the graphic t-shirt from sub-cultural commodity to fashion statement, reflects the bottom-up theory of trend diffusion which led to the democratisation of fashion (Crane, 1999; Aage and Belussi, 2008). The media depiction of the t-shirt as an outer garment did not mirror the lifestyle of the higher socio-economic classes, as it was associated with laziness (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). The symbolic value of the t-shirt was therefore negative, thus denying its status as a fashion trend.

The symbolic value of the t-shirt highlights the nature of fashion as a material good used to convey belonging by the consumer (Chiluwa and Ajiboye, 2015). Furthermore, it informs the assumption that designers create clothing with their consumer in mind, using design to convey meaning. By the 1960s, production technology had changed the manufacturing of t-shirts. Designers created t-shirts with different stylistic features for different markets, using fabric of a higher quality to influence the purchasing decisions of the upper class (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Rivoli, 2005). Though the connotations associated with the t-shirt were somewhat negative, its fine fabrics when read in conjunctions with its connotation of laziness influenced the adoption of the t-shirt as form of leisure wear for the middle class (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). By the 1970s, the democratisation of fashion introduced mass-marketed clothing styles, such as the Levi's blue jeans and the t-shirt as an outer garment, both symbolic of working class lived reality (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Aage and Belussi, 2008). The findings from this particular study of the t-shirt (see Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994) inform the research assumption that designers use design to convey symbolic messages to their consumers. Furthermore, the adoption process of the t-shirt, introduces the notion of fashion trends as a function of collective consensus. Edward Sproles' (1976) *Fashion Theory: A*

Conceptual Framework concurs in acknowledging the role of the design aesthetics and as a reflection of collective taste on a specific collective identity.

Fashion as a Reflection Collective Consensus

Roland Barthes' (1990; 2013 [1963]) analysis of the fashion system highlights the manner in which fashion magazines portray clothing styles to their target readership, thus creating new trends. Herbert Blumer (1969) confirms Barthes' concept of the fashion system by discrediting the role consumers as innovators of trends, rather the communication of new clothing styles by magazine editors, retail buyers and advertising is seen as the process of trend innovation. Within the fashion system, the role of the magazine is duel, first to portray a designers work and secondly to persuade consumers to purchase it (Barthes, 1990; 2013 [1963]). The analysis of the issues of two fashion magazines *(Elle* and *Jardin des Modes*), published between the period of 1958 and 1959 were analysed with the aim of understanding how magazines communicated fashion to their readership (Barthes, 2013 [1963]). The findings from the study reveal that magazines use photographic and linguistic representations of garments, to inform and persuade readers about new clothing styles (Barthes, 1990). The study suggests magazines do in fact play a role in the creation of new trends. This assumption is confirmed by Evelyn and Wolfgang Gick's (2007) study on the relationship between magazines and fashion designers. The findings from that particular study reveal that,

> Each fashion magazine has its particular clientele, and it both understands and reiterates the social values of its readers. It has the authority to tell those readers who share its view how the *zeitgeist* translates into ideological positions and can be expressed by wearing fashion. […] It is as if fashion magazines are empowered by their readers either to distill a new fashion when they see two designer agree, or reject their expression of the *zeitgeist* all together.
>
> (Gick and Gick, 2007: 8-9)

Though fashion trends may be determined by the media, fashion designers create clothing that reflect the opinions and lifestyle of their target audience (Mora, 2006). The synergy between the designer's target market and the magazine's target audiences enables magazines to portray clothing that is reflective of their target readership's lifestyles (Gick and Gick, 2007).

Furthermore, magazines' understanding of designers' original concept of designs enables them to describe garments linguistically to their reader, presenting new clothing styles as both a reflection of current trends and a reflection of their readership's lived reality (Barthes, 1990). However, consumers do not always take their cues from media portrayals of garments, as evident in the studies presented below.

The findings of the study of trend creation for Egyptian women revealed that new styles gained popularity based on their capacity to reflect the lifestyle of those collective identities that identify as "Islamic chic", "Western chic" and "ethnic chic" (Abaza, 2007). The study suggests that these particular clothing styles serve as cultural artefacts, due to their ability to reflect the lifestyle of certain Egyptian women (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). The self-attributed constructs of the "Western chic", "Islamic chic" and "ethnic chic" lifestyle, reflect the shared individual level that characterise certain Egyptian women as collective identities (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The study of the changing fashion trends at Princeton University from 1900-1930 revealed further the role of clothing style as cultural artefacts, reflective of collective identity (Clemente, 2008). The findings of this particular study reveal that, while the elitist cultures influenced new styles, students were drawn to clothing styles that was reflective of their leisure lifestyle (Clemente, 2008). The study suggests the popularity of a certain clothing style is due to their ability to reflect the "leisure lifestyle" group narrative of the certain Princeton University students (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Discussing the findings of this study in light of the organising framework for collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004), confirms the assumption that designers create clothes that serve as cultural artefacts for expressing collective belonging by consumers. Chapter 3 elaborates the discussion of clothing as cultural artefacts.

Though this research does not engage with the study of fashion trends, knowledge about trend production and diffusion informs the assumption that clothes serve as cultural artefacts, reflecting the lived reality of specific collective identities. This knowledge further informs this study's aim of understanding how designers use graphic t-shirts to convey knowledge about specific collective identities that exist in South Africa. This study's forthcoming analysis of local t-shirt designs (in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) aligns with the study of fashion proposed by Roland Barthes (2013 [1957]). Barthes (2013[1957) believed that the social scientist's point of enquiry should not be the manner in which garments transition from a form of protection to an item used as adornment, rather social scientists should endeavour to understand how meanings inscribed in clothing come to be. Ingrid Loschek (2009) concurs in arguing that the role of the

fashion theorist is in part to determine the latent meaning inscribed in clothing by their designers.

This research assumes that fashion designers use aesthetics of design to convey meaning to their intended consumer, the study of which reveals the role of the designer as a cultural producer of clothing as a cultural artefact. As such, this research adopts theoretical frameworks informed by the field of Cultural Studies (elaborated in Chapter 3) in its study of fashion as socio-cultural communication. Cultural Studies assists in the comprehension of fashion – more specifically the graphic t-shirt – as a cultural product created to convey the opinion, values and lifestyle of its consumer (Kellner and Durham, 2006). The theoretical concept of fashion design as a form of cultural production suggests that the process of design leads to the creation of garments – as cultural artefacts – used as for the expression of symbolic value (Crane and Bovone, 2006) which highlights the importance of the analysis of the production of fashion products as cultural goods.

Fashion as a Cultural Artefact

Contemporary literature regarding fashion as a cultural artefact highlights the manner in which consumers use garments as a form of expression (see Roach-Higgins and Eicher, 1992; Jones, 1994; Crane, 2000; Twigg, 2009). The psychological and consumer marketing perspectives assert that consumers are drawn to aesthetics that are reflective of their identity (O'Cass, 2001; Banister and Hogg, 2007). The sociological perspective elects to analyse how changes in clothing style communicates change in dominant ideals held by societies or collective identity (Brenninkmeyer, 1963; Skov and Melchior, 2008). These views do little in the way of acknowledging the role of the designer as creator of clothing, that when analysed as a cultural artefact communicates the zeitgeist of an era and collective identity. As such, these perspectives are greatly informed by early fashion theories (Aspers and Godart, 2013).

The role of designer as creator is currently acknowledged by fashion journalists, however their work is not of a scientific nature (Loschek, 2009; Barthes, 2013 [1959]). Fashion media interpret the aesthetics of designers' garments in line with their target readerships' lifestyles and present various clothing styles that are appealing to their target readership (Crane, 1999; Gick and Gick, 2007). This assumption is further confirmed by Yuniya Kawamura (2005), who states that fashion theory fails to acknowledge the role of the designer as creator of meaningful

messages about society. Most often, fashion media understands the creative manner in which designers use clothing to communicate both the designer's expressive message and the commodity value of their clothes (see Gick and Gick, 2007; Loschek, 2009; Barthes, 2013 [1959]).

The study of the early trend adoption of the t-shirt, illustrates the role media can play in the adoption process. Media portrayals of rebellious or lazy working class film characters played a large part in creating the negative connotations that drove those of higher socio-economic classes to reject the t-shirt (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). In representing new design styles to their target readership, fashion media influence trends that reflect the zeitgeist of certain collective identities (Blumer, 1969). Media thus influenced the working class to adopt the t-shirt first, while simultaneously influencing the upper classes to reject it (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). This confirms the need for a study of this nature. *Fashioning Meaning* seeks to understand the manner in which designers use aesthetics as a vehicle to communicate to their consumer, the findings of which reveal knowledge about the lived reality of the designer's target consumer, which may point to issues of collective identity.

Malcom Barnard (1996: 73) is one of the few authors, who analyses fashion from both the designer and consumer point of view, asserting that the communicative properties of fashion exist both internally and externally to the garment. This research seeks to extend upon the study of fashion, in identifying the designer as a creator of clothing that is reflective of their target market's identity and zeitgeist. In doing so, this research adopts Barnard's (1996) assumption that the meaning of clothing can be analysed from the designer's point of view as well as the consumer's point of view.

The aim of this study is to understand how designers use design to communicate meaning to their target market. This research assumes that an analysis of clothing, more specifically the graphic t-shirt, may inform the study of the culture of a particular collective identity which conceptualises fashion as a cultural product that contributes to the creation and communication of the symbolic values that characterise material culture (Crane and Bovone, 2006). It is fitting therefore to locate this research in the field of Cultural Studies as the focus of *Fashioning Meaning* is the production of graphic t-shirt that serve as a visual representation of the lived reality of a collective identity. As the name presumes, Cultural Studies is a field that engages with the cultural processes which characterise societal life (Turner, 2003). The discussion of

Cultural Studies, which informs this study's theoretical framework, transpires in Chapter 3, *Fabrics of Theory*. Turning the attention back to the study of fashion as visual communication about specific collective identity, the next section explores fashion as a reflection of collective identity.

Fashion as a Reflection of Collective Identity

South Africa is characterised by multiple cultures, each with their unique customs, beliefs and values. In spite of this difference, there are aspects of South African culture that can be elicited to create moments of collective identity – for example around national sporting activities and social issues like HIV prevention etc. – which designers convey through graphic t-shirt designs (see Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012; Farber, 2013).

Micro-Markets as Collective Identities

Previous studies of the adoption of clothing styles as a reflection of national phenomena, fail to account for the development of the product, the individuals involved in the adoption process, and the location in which the adoption occurs (Schrank, 1973: 540). Analysing clothing that is worn by a certain collective identity, contributes towards the understanding of the values that characterises the social identity of the members (Crane and Bovone, 2006). This serves as the rationale for analysing the creation of graphic t-shirt as a form of cultural production, adopting the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) as part of the theoretical framework and methodology discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. This framework allows for the analysis of the t-shirt through understanding: i) the motive for the creation; ii) the identity for which it was created; and iii) the manner in which the garment reflects the needs and identity of that collective identity. As such, this research treats fashion as a cultural artefact (du Gay et al 1997); it does not analyse current fashion trends typically offered by large fashion retailers, but instead the focus is on two local, independent fashion brands.

The selection of independent labels is informed by the assumption that smaller fashion brands have direct relationships with their consumers, enabling them easier access to their consumers' attitudes and values (Crane and Bovone, 2006). Kawamura's (2006) study of Japanese teenagers as influencers of new clothing styles confirm this, as the findings reveal, that Japanese designers' engagements with youth sub-cultures influence the creation of new designs. This is

especially evident with the graphic t-shirts of various subcultures who utilise the inscriptions as an expression of their collective belonging and ideology (Hebdige, 1979; Brown, 2007; Luvaas, 2012). This is particularly evident in the Richard Hebdige's (1979) study of the graphic t-shirts created by members of the punk sub-culture in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1970s, usually with written statements of non-conformity which became the symbol of anarchy for society and rebellion against the dominant ideology of the time. The t-shirts created by punk youth later became the inspiration for the early work behind fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, who articulated the ideology of the subculture through a series of graphic t-shirts created for the sub-culture, to articulate their collective belonging (Barnard, 1996).

Brent Luvaas' (2012) study of the do-it-yourself (DIY) fashion culture, revealed that the now globally recognised surf clothing brand, Stüssy, emerged from the 1970s Southern California surf culture. Surfboard maker Shawn Stüssy drew inspiration from the punk, reggae and hip-hop music which was popular amongst the Laguna Beach surfers of the time (Deleon, 2012). The Stüssy graphic t-shirts are considered as the dawn of American streetwear designers who drew inspiration from various subcultures in the creation of the graphic t-shirt (Staple, 2013). Similarly, the 1990s Milkcrate Athletics t-shirt's (Figure 2 .1) depiction of a record cover in a crate was inspired by designer Aron LaCrate's interactions with the American rave culture of that time (Staple, 2013).

Figure 2.1: Milkcrate Athletics T-Shirt
Source: Freshness, *The Freshness Mag,* 22 June 2012

In South Africa, Jacky Lucking's (2015) study on the clothing style of the Afrikaans subculture, revealed that members favoured graphic t-shirts of the brands *Iron Fist* and *Unburden clothing*.

The findings reveal that this youth subculture stands against many of their parents' pro-apartheid views (Lucking, 2015). The gothic and 1970s/1980s rock and roll inspired t-shirts of both brands are used by members of the subculture to articulate their resistance of pro-apartheid Afrikaans ideology (Lucking, 2015). The findings from these particular studies inform the assumption that designers not only design clothing with specific micro-markets in mind, but rather some designers create new clothing styles with specific sub-cultures in mind. Fashion designers do not create clothing for an entire society, opting to tailor their product offering to a micro-market. Fashion designers therefore focus their attention on determining the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of a specific collective identity or target market, through micro-marketing practices (Jackson, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Loschek, 2009). A micro-market segment can be defined as a form of collective identity, if collective identity is understood as a categorical classification of individuals according to common characteristics (Melucci, 1995; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Through micro-marketing research, designers define potential consumers based on demographic, life style, social activities, psychographics, opinions and preferred media consumption, style preference, and fashion involvement among other factors (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The decision to create a certain type of clothing – t-shirt, dress, trousers etc. – is undertaken within the parameters of creating a garment that satisfies the intended consumers' needs (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007).

The media too seek out audiences' needs based on micro or macro segmentation, identifying factors that affect audiences' needs in order to create content that satisfies them (McQuail, 2005). Producers of mass media content tailor their content to a specific audience (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Mass media's "audience are aggregates of many potential and actual consumers, […] boundaries assigned to audiences are based mainly on socio-economic criteria" (McQuail, 2005: 403). Both media producers and fashion designers determine the characteristics that contribute to developing seemingly unrelated individuals into a collective identity. The collective identity of the audience of the mass media – like the consumers of fashion – is articulated through the product offering of the creators of the media of fashion product. Understanding that new clothing styles are tailored to a certain collective identity confirms the assumption that the study of fashion informs the study of a collective identity. Chapter 3 elaborates on the relevance of the similarities between micro-market research and media-audience research in discussing the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) as a theoretical framework underpinning this study.

While larger companies utilise market research, stratifying procedures and consumer imaging to construct identities of their ideal consumers, smaller companies use personal engagement to define the collective identity they create clothing for (Crane and Bovone, 2006; Schulz, 2008). Research conducted on high-end ladies wearing South African brand *Stoned Cherrie* utilised the designer's media interviews as their data, revealing that the brand utilises socio-economics, culture and shared history as a means to determine their micro-market (Vincent, 2007; Farber, 2013). These aspects of shared history between consumer and designer are what characterise them as a single collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). Research conducted on the smaller youth South African brand *Loxion Kulca*[2], revealed a different strategy as the brand utilised shared culture and history as the process for classifying their target market (Bogatsu, 2002). Designers Wanda Nzimande and Sechaba Mogale created the brand to convey the shared narrative history that reflect their and their consumers' lives (Bogatsu, 2002). Though both have lived in the township, Sechaba was educated in suburban English schools while Nzimande was educated in local township schools (Bogatsu, 2002). This diversity in upbringing allows the designers to create clothing that is reflective of both the suburban and urban black youth.

Historically, clothing reflective of township life – such as the 1940s zoot suit[3] worn by 'otsotsi' (gangsters) – was due in part to the appropriation of American style (Morris, 2010). The zoot suit was no mere fashion statement, but a cultural artefact reflective of African American and Chicano[4] ethnicity and masculinity (Cosgrove, 1984; Fregoso, 1993; Alford, 2004). In America, "the zoot-suit was a refusal: a subcultural gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience" (Cosgrove, 1984: 78). In South Africa, the zoot suit was a reflection of tsotsi identity, "emphatically associated with masculine violence, personal autonomy, and unfettered mobility — everything apartheid withheld from black subjects" (Morris, 2010: 88-89).

Fashion brands such *as Loxion Kulca*, and *Stoned Cherrie* create clothing that enable South African to express their collective identity informed by a shared history of belonging with

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[2] The name word loxion – derivative of the English word location – is a slang term referring to township, while Kulca is the stylistic depiction of culture (Bogatsu, 2002).
[3] The zoot-suit was the black suit with huge padded shoulders and tightly tapered trousers (Cosgrove, 1984.) The term zoot – which emerged from 1930s Harlem urban jazz culture – is a verb referring to the act of dressing or performing in an extravagant manner (Cosgrove, 1984; Alford, 2004). The zoot-suit was the black suit with huge padded shoulders and tightly tapered trousers (Cosgrove, 1984).
[4] Chicano refers to the self-ascribed collective identity of male individuals of Mexican American decent (Fregoso, 1993)

clothes that are reflective of their lived reality (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). Nzimande and Mogale's clothing draws on the history of black people living in townships, evident in their 2002 *Loxion Kulca* overall suit, inspired by overalls of black migrant mine workers during the apartheid era (Bogatsu, 2002). The findings from the study reveal that the overalls signify the socio-political journey from a time where "black South Africans […] were denied even their nationality, as the term 'migrant' labour suggest[s]" to the current state of racial equality in a post-apartheid South Africa (Bogatsu, 2002: 7). *Loxion Kulca* and *Stoned Cherrie* draw from historical narratives shared with their consumers in creating clothing with aesthetics reflective of a contemporary township lived reality (Bogatsu, 2002; Farber, 2013). This aesthetic is no longer an appropriation of African American fashion, rather it informed by historical socio-political narratives of a black South African collective identity.

An analysis (see Musangi, 2009) of the South African graphic t-shirt brand *Ama-Kip-Kip* graphics (Figure 2.2), is a further example of contemporary township aesthetic informed by a shared cultural identity between designer and consumer.

Figure 2.2: Neon Ama-Kip-Kip T-shirt
Source: Ama-Kip-Kip Global, *Twitter*, 28 October, 2009

Though the t-shirt reached global popularity, its initial popularity was due to the use of a cultural artefact of Johannesburg youth to communicate a collective urban black identity (Musangi, 2009).

Understanding a designer's intended consumer contextualises the designer's work as being representative of a particular collective identity. The shared cultural history between *Loxion Kulca* designer and consumer enables the consumer to comprehend the designer's reticulation of a the historical narrative that is characteristic of township youth of the y-generation (Bogatsu, 2002). The designer and consumers' shared culture serves as tool – a code – for understanding the meaning of the aesthetics of the designer. A code refers to various signifying units, that when organised in a certain manner create and convey meaning (Fiske, 1990; Hartley, 2002; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006; Chandler, 2007; Posner, 2009). The use of shared codes allows senders and receivers a shared meaning of a communicated message (Posner, 2009). This confirms the assumption that a designer and consumer's shared culture assists the interpretation of a designer's meaning. The discussion of the use of codes as a tool decoding meaning for continues in Chapter 3 in light of the Encoding/Decoding Model (Hall, 2006 [1980]), communication (Craig, 1999; Steinberg, 2007) and semiotic theory (Peirce, 1932; Chandler, 2007) as analytical frameworks used in conjunction with the Circuit of Culture Model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997).

Using Codes in Collective Identity

In cases where designers and consumers do not share cultural similarities, the use of past design serves as a code for the understanding of the designer's intended meaning. Understanding the manner in which a designer uses aesthetics to communicate themes in past collections also serves as tool for interpreting the designers message (de Greef, 2009). Understanding a designer's personal design aesthetic enables minimal ambiguities in the interpretation of communicated meaning through clothing (Gick and Gick, 2007) which serves as a code for the interpretation of a designer's current collection (de Greef, 2009). The analysis of *Stoned Cherrie's* use of the political hero Steve Biko on a graphic t-shirt yielded five possible readings. Identifying the designer's micro-market served as one way to narrow meaning, while analysing the designer's past work revealed that the designers favoured the use of political aesthetics as symbols for contesting political gender roles in contemporary South Africa, which further contextualised the reading (Vincent, 2007).

Design elements of the garment, when interpreted through a shared understanding of their signifying potential, operate in a similar manner as codes as they resonate with consumers for their construction and articulation of their identities (Sproles, 1981b; O'Cass, 2001; Banister and Hogg, 2007). Similarly, within media, the creation of a text involves the use of signs

organised in a specific manner, reflecting familiar codes for the encoder and assumingly the decoder (Chandler, 2007). Encoding refers to the construction of message using various signifying units that when read convey meaning (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Decoders interpret texts using the codes that they believe are appropriate (Chandler, 2007).

Findings from Gick and Gick's (2007) research on the manner in which magazines interpret designer clothes as an expression of a zeitgeist confirms this. Fashion weeks serve as a communication channel for various designers to express their interpretation of the zeitgeist to fashion editors, journalist and retail buyers (Gick and Gick, 2007; Jackson, 2007). Those in attendance are assumed to be familiar with the manner in which designers communicate through design, somewhat illuminating the possibility of miscommunication (Blumer, 1969; Gick and Gick, 2007). The analysis of designers' past clothing styles, as well as the design concept, enables insight into the manner in which the designer communicates themes that resonate with their target consumer (de Greef, 2009). Research conducted on the South African designer Clive Rundle's use of asymmetry, aged materials and cut-outs communicate history, loss and trauma that is characteristic of his target market's identity as a South African, was undertaken through first understanding the designer's preferred use of design aesthetics (de Greef, 2009).

In understanding that codes facilitate the creation and interpretation of the meanings conveyed by signs (Posner, 2009), it becomes clear that understanding how designers communicate through design is equally as important as understanding how clothing conveys symbolic meaning about their wearers. The analysis of the clothing as socio-cultural communication should therefore include an analysis of their design codes. Recognising that various design aesthetics operate in the same manner as linguistic codes, reveals the designer's intended meaning in creating a particular garment. An analysis of codes reveals various elements which underpin the construction of meaning within culture (Chandler, 2007; Posner, 2009) which serves as a rationale for adopting a basic semiotic analysis as part of this study's treatment for the selected t-shirt. Semiotics is concerned with how meaning is constructed and conveyed through signs and codes (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 2007). Adopting a semiotic framework in order to understand the manner in which designers source, construct and convey meaning about their target markets' zeitgeist through their t-shirts, serves as part of the discussion in Chapter 3.

As a text, the t-shirt conveys meanings of fashion, economics, military, popular culture and even politics (Manan and Smith, 2014). Uncovering these meanings however requires

knowledge of the underlying historical development of the t-shirt and the various signifying units used by fashion designer. This goal can be achieved through the analysis of the design process that characterises the creation of a new garment, as well as an understanding of how designers use aesthetics to convey meaning. Understanding garments as a form of text that articulate messages about the lived reality of collective identity not only serves as an argument that the study of fashion is not one of frivolity (see Barnard, 1996; Barthes, 2013 [1957]), but one of cultural production.

The discussion now turns to the manner in which the study of fashion, as reflection of a zeitgeist, conveys knowledge about the lived reality of a particular collective identity.

Fashion as an Articulation of a Zeitgeist

The adoption of new styles in society is a "process of social influence and diffusion" (Sproles, 1976: 2). Diffusion refers to the "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers, 1962: 5). In order for any fashion business to survive, designers should be able to produce innovative products that communicate their consumers' need for novelty and change (Sproles, 1981a; Mora, 2006; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). Innovation is understood as "an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption (Rogers (1962: 11). The definition of diffusion as communication informs the assumption that fashion is a process of communication from designer to consumer, with their adoption of new styles being a result of an understanding of a designer's innovative message conveyed through the creation of a new style of clothing. Early theorists elect to discuss the communicative properties of the process of the diffusion of garments, as driven by the monetary and social value of a garment, novelty associated with new styles, and aesthetic appeal of clothing for consumers (see Sapir, 1931; Blumer, 1969; Schrank, 1973; Sproles, 1976; Crane, 1999; 2000; Twigg, 2009). This view neglects the role of the designer as the innovator of new clothing forms.

Though the t-shirts of today are considered a staple clothing item (Wong, 2013), at the time of their original conception, the t-shirt was a considered a new idea: an innovation. The history of the t-shirt reveals that it was created as a standard issue uniform, created solely to meet the protective needs of the United States Naval Officers who served during the First World War (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Manan and Smith, 2014). The physical lifestyle of the naval

offers required a light undergarment that could be worn as a form of insulation and protection from the heat (Manan and Smith, 2014). The historic analysis of the t-shirt, using their design as the unit of analysis, revealed that clothing communicates innovation, collective belonging, changes in the zeitgeist and symbolic value (see Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Manan and Smith, 2014). This definition extends the study of fashion from the study of trend consumption, to the study of the production of cultural artefacts, which retrospectively communicates the zeitgeist of the American soldier, characterised by the Second World War.

The study of adopting new clothing styles serves as a lens for the examination of social and cultural change within a society (Clemente, 2008). Analysing the t-shirt as a function of fashion trend adoption is characteristic of early fashion theory and fails to uncover the innovative ideas communicated through the process of design, as well as the purpose for the creation of a garment. Adopting a historical trajectory to the study of the t-shirt would also serve inadequate as it simply identifies specific eras in which the clothing was popular (Barthes, 2013 [1957]). The analysis of the t-shirt as a reflection of innovative communication of a zeitgeist requires the analysis of fashion as a meaning-making process – an avenue that this study seeks to explore.

The research of Peter K. Manning and Betsy Cullum-Smith (1994) utilised a semiotic framework to analyse how the fabric choices, structure and aesthetics of historical development of the t-shirt was in reaction to specific collective identities' needs. Muhammad Shahudin Abdul Manan (2014) utilised Barthian semiotics, in order to analyse underlying connotative meanings of Americanisation and counter-Americanisation in two graphic t-shirts. A Peircean Framework was favoured by Asri Hasanah (2010), whose thesis analysed the manner in which a particular t-shirt design informed the reader about Jagja culture. Semiotics theory illuminates the multiple meanings that exists within the communication process, through the examination of the underlying codes of a phenomenon (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). As such, this research utilises semiotic analytical schemes (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009) for the qualitative content analysis of the *Butan Wear* (*Butan*) and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* (*Magents*) t-shirts, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 and 6 delineates the findings to uncover how the chosen designers of this research utilise aesthetics, colour and fabric to convey zeitgeist about their target market's lived reality. Literature pertaining to the fashion design process further informs the discussion of the findings presented in fifth and sixth chapters. As such, the following discussion presents the review of literature pertaining to the design process.

The Design Process

Design is understood as the "rational process that facilitates the construction of meanings conveyed through the creation of artefacts" (Kazmierczak, 2013: 45). Design encompasses activities from idea generation, gathering information about consumers, cultural and economic trends, to the design concept, conceptualisation of a how design concept is articulated into a garment and finally the production of a garment (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The contextual analysis of the communication of meaning between designer and consumer requires an understanding of how a designer's design concept is determined (Bugg, 2009).

A design concept serves as definition of the manner in which garment design can simultaneously satisfy their consumers' needs through utility while communicating the designer's artistic ideas about society and culture through aesthetics (Au *et al.*, 2001; Smal and Lavelle, 2011). Fashion is, first, a product consumed to satisfy needs. Designers do not create clothing for the sole purpose of creating trends, but as a reaction to the target market needs. In creating new clothing, fashion designers provide consumers with clothing choices that communicate their zeitgeist and lifestyle (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Ames, 2008). This is achieved through an exploration, understanding and interpretation of cultural, political, economic and environmental changes that reflect notions of the *zeitgeist* of a particular collective identity through forecasting techniques [5] (Ames, 2008).

Forecasting techniques enable designers to explore the zeitgeist of their consumers in order to develop styles consumers will perceive as fashionable in the near future (Ames, 2008). This knowledge enables designers to interpret cultural, economic, political, technological and even legal trends, which characterise current and future consumer needs in order to communicate them through the creation of new garments (Le Pechoux *et al.,* 2007; Ames, 2008). Forecasting involves scenario building through understanding the current – global, local, cultural, political,

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[5] Since the 1950s the focus of fashion forecasting techniques has shifted from stratifying the needs of certain socio-economic classes to the identification of needs of the specific micro-market consumer nodes (Gick and Gick, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.,* 2007; Ames, 2008). Forecasting does not only look at what consumers might want, but how those wants might occur (Le Pechoux *et al.,* 2007). Forecasting procedures includes understanding political upheavals and factors that characterise predicted and ongoing wars (Ames, 2008). Fashion forecasting techniques allow designers survey information within the supra-environment, macro-environment and microenvironment respectively (Le Pechoux *et al.,* 2007). It reveals information not only regarding the current zeitgeist, but possible scenarios of what factors might influence change and how those changes affect consumer needs (Ames, 2008).

33

economic, religious, technologic – trends that characterise societal life and influence consumer needs (Jackson, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Ames, 2008). Fashion forecasting approaches reveal information regarding changes in the *zeitgeist*, which through the creative process is synthesised into a design concept and communicated through the garment (Ames, 2008). In constructing a design concept, designers endeavour to articulate their consumers' attitudes and thoughts regarding the zeitgeist using design aesthetics (Ames, 2008). Understanding of a designer's design concept reveals information about the target market that the designer creates clothing for, as well as the motives for design (Ames, 2008; Bugg, 2009). In the absence of information regarding a fashion designer's forecasting process; the analysis of clothing is still possible (see Mason, 2011; Mackinney-Valentin, 2012; Özlü and Nasiriaghdam, 2014).

Returning to the historical analysis of the t-shirt as reflection of a zeitgeist, reveals that the fabric choice and structural form of the t-shirt was a reaction to the political zeitgeist of the naval officers it was designed for (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). The cotton fabric used in the creation of the t-shirt served the purpose of the absorption of perspiration during the long days on duty; furthermore, cotton fibres enabled a fair amount of circulation in high heat climates (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). An analysis of fabric choices, serves a further lens for understanding the political and economic zeitgeist of the fashion industry (Rivoli, 2005). This study is concerned with the consumers' zeitgeist, therefore, the structure and form of the t-shirts analysed are assumed to reflect the needs and wants of a specific South African collective identity.

The design concept serves as a tool for determining how fashion designers utilise aesthetics in the construction of a garment, with the aim of communicating specific ideas to their desired consumers (Bugg, 2009). The physical creation of a garment through the design process is the construction and delivery of the design concept through imagery, symbols, cuts and style (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). The articulation of the design concept into a garment mirrors this encoding process, which involves the simplification of a particular phenomenon using of set of specific codes (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Chandler, 2007). The study of the design concept is therefore analysed in conjunction with a designer's target consumer, as it is determined with the intended consumer in mind. This reveals the process of communication from designer to consumer or clothing viewer (Bugg, 2009).

Fashion literature rarely discusses the manner in which clothing communicates the zeitgeist. Understanding the discourse of the aesthetics as a response to research on a target market's zeitgeist requires an analysis of the aesthetics as they appear in reality. Maria Mackinney-Valentin's (2012) study of the lumber jack shirt (Figure 2.3), as a reflection of the cultural and political zeitgeist, utilises media depictions of the red and black shirt throughout history, read alongside prevalent social and political views and events during the shirt's popularity.

Figure 2.3: Vintage 80's Lumberjack Shirt - Red and Black Flannel
Source: Sofistikate, *Etsy Incorporated*, 10 December 2008

The findings reveal that the popularity of the shirt throughout history was in reaction to an articulation of simple living as a result of an economic recession, as the shirt was symbolic of the logger culture and cowboys (Mackinney-Valentin, 2012). This mirrors the analysis procedure of Pınar Göklüberk and Özlüand Arezoo Nasiriaghdam's (2014), whose study on the changes of the swimming costume styles reflect changes in societal values, attitudes and beliefs regarding the body. The study utilised a visual analysis of the changes in costume styles alongside changes in clothing styles, advancements in the textile industry and prevailing thoughts regarding body image (Özlü and Nasiriaghdam, 2014).

These studies (Mackinney-Valentin, 2012; Özlü and Nasiriaghdam, 2014; Vangkilde, 2015) inform the aims of this research, as their findings confirm the assumption that the analysis of clothing conveys knowledge regarding the zeitgeist of a specific collective identity. Gick and Gick (2007) confirm the assumption that designers communicate the zeitgeist of the target market through aesthetics. The research utilises a media representation of clothing read in

conjunction with the prevailing zeitgeist of their target market as depicted in newspapers, examining the manner in which fashion media curates garments from various designers in order to communicate the prevailing zeitgeist. This reveals the manner in which clothing communicates the zeitgeist of a collective identity (Gick and Gick, 2007). Meghan Mason's (2011) research on how the Second World War impacted women's clothing styles, revealed that fashion designers took their cues from the prevailing attitudes surrounding the war, creating clothes views and opinions about the war. In Britain, the restriction on the fashion industry and rations of fabric lead to the creation of the utility dress[6] (Figure 2.4) that reflected modesty and style (Mason, 2011).

Figure 2.4: A model wearing a black woollen Utility Atrima dress in 1943 (D 14826)
Source: Ministry of Information Photo Division, *Imperial War Musems*, 1943

The political zeitgeist is still a great influencer on contemporary fashion design, as clothing styles exhibited during the autumn 2001 runway season communicated the cultural zeitgeist characterised by a war on terrorism though clothing with militant stylistic features (Gick and Gick, 2007). The analysis of graphics t-shirts worn by protesters suggest that designers create

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[6] Utility dressing was introduced as a government scheme to reduce factory cost of clothing production as a result of the Second World War restrictions (Clouting, 2016). The utility dress was a mandated by the British government to ensure that fashion designers would create a garment that could serve as a dress and overcoat while still conveying an elegant silhouette (Mason, 2001).

graphic t-shirts to articulate the shared political opinions of individuals whose collective action is toward a common goal (Melucci, 1995; Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012). The political upheaval surrounding the Black Lives Matter (#BlackLivesMatter)[7] movements in the United States of America, served as motivation for creation of graphic t-shirts (Figure 2. 5) by various American fashion designers and retailers (Fierce, 2015).

Figure 2.5: BlackLivesMatter Tee
Source: #BlackLivesMatter, *Tee Springs*, 2015

The t-shirts serve as "a way for Black people, white folk, and non-Black people of color to show their support for the cause, letting the world know they believe black lives do matter" (Fierce, 2015: 1). The t-shirts were not created as fashion statements; rather they are cultural artefacts reflecting the ideology – shared individual beliefs about the experiences, and position about young black people in society – of the #BlackLivesMatter movement in America (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Fierce, 2015). The #FeesMustFall movement t-shirts, discussed in Chapter 1, reflect a collective identity characterised by a common goal and collective action about changing the education system in South Africa (Melucci, 1995). The analysis of the graphics of these political t-shirts, in relation to their meaning in reality, reveals that the study

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[7] The Black Lives Matter movement was creates by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, in response to the racial discrimination and criminalisation Black people (Garza, 2014; Fierce, 2015). The movement began after the posthumous trial of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin (African American) for his own murder, while George Zimmerman (Caucasian) who had killed Martin was acquitted (Garza, 2014). What began as a social campaign and out-cry against anti-black racism, grew into an ideological political movement through the moniker #BlackLivesMatter on the social media platform Twitter (Garza, 2014; Fierce, 2015).

of the discourse of design aesthetics has the capacity to communicate the political beliefs of a collective identity (Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012).

The study of any article of clothing cannot be done in isolation, as the findings from the above studies show. An analysis of the graphic t-shirt therefore needs to undertake a reading of the graphics as they appear in reality. The above studies illustrate that an analysis of a garment's meanings requires knowledge of the meanings of the aesthetics of the design as they appear in reality. The analysis of the utility dress within the historical context of its production reveals the zeitgeist that inspired the design concept of the garment (Mason, 2011). The study of the lumberjack shirt in conjunction with the historical evolution of the aesthetic of the shirt as they appear in reality, informs the symbolic meaning of shirt (Mackinney-Valentin, 2012). Finally the studies of the *Ama-Kip-Kip*, *Stoned Cherrie* and *Loxion Kulca*, suggest that an analysis of clothing should be using the narrative of the designer's cultural identity which also reveals the communicated message between designer and consumer's mutual collective identity (Bogatsu, 2002; Musangi, 2009; Farber, 2013). Understanding what the discourse of the aesthetic as they appear in reality, in conjunction with the designer's identity, design concept and target consumer, enables the study of fashion as a reflection of a zeitgeist. The findings from the above-mentioned studies, inform the use of the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) as a theoretical framework and methodological tool.

Turning back to the discussion of this chapter's discussion of graphics t-shirt as a reflection of zeitgeist, an analysis of the graphic t-shirt gives rise to a number of meanings. Establishing the possible meanings requires: i) an understanding of the designer's biographical detailing, brand image and ideology; ii) the designer's intended consumer; iii) an understanding of the way in which the designer uses aesthetics to convey messages; iv) the design concept; and v) the discourse of the design concept (including image etc.) in reality (Vincent, 2007). Leora Farber's (2013) analysis of the *Stoned Cherrie*'s 2009 collection as a signifier of African cosmopolitan – "Afropolitan" – identity illustrates this. Analysis consists of, first, understanding the design ethos of the brand, the designer's ideal consumer and the designer's ideological reasons for creating their garments (Farber, 2013). Furthermore, the study explores the current political conditions that characterise South Africa during the period of the garment's production (Farber, 2013). These directives inform the analysis of this study's four t-shirts, in Chapter 4, *Stylish Methods.*

In creating new garments, designers balance their designer creativity – personal design styles, brand identity and ideologies, utility value, originality and practicality – for the consumer (Au *et al.*, 2001). The analysis of a graphic t-shirt of struggle icon Steve Biko revealed that the discourse of the graphics has the potential to convey multiple meanings, as the struggle hero's ideology and popular use in fashion gave rise to multiple meaning (Vincent, 2007).

The discourse of the aesthetics, as they appear in reality, together with knowledge of the designer's design style, and target consumer, narrows the reading of the graphics of a t-shirt, while if the aesthetics were read in isolation, they would give rise to multiple meanings (Vincent, 2007). Designers and clothing retailers are aware that their brand identity needs to resonate with their consumer, therefore their product offering articulates fragments of their corporate identity that their intended consumer recognises (Hines *et al.*, 2007). The identity of a fashion brand therefore forms part of the message communicated from the designer to their intended consumer (Gick and Gick, 2007; Bugg, 2009).

Understanding both the brand identity and the collective identity for which the designer creates garments, serves to contextualise the message (Au *et al.*, 2001; Gick and Gick, 2007; Bugg, 2009; Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014). The analysis of a brand's ideology and product offering is also characteristic of a Circuit of Culture analysis which assumes that a company's culture and ideology is communicated through their product offering (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) which facilitates the understanding of a designers' intended meaning and how their clothes can be used to shape culture and lived reality.

The cases discussed in this section, and the previous section *Fashion as a Reflection of a Collective Identity,* reveal that the study of fashion as a socio-cultural communication involves an analysis of the design process in its entirety. Analysing clothing in conjunction with the design process, informs this research's understanding of fashion as a communication process from designer to consumer. To further contextualise this understanding, the subsequent section discusses the design process as a form of communication.

Fashion as Communication

Consumers are indirectly involved in the process of the creation of new garments and trends, or rather the creation of trends is a collective endeavour between the fashion industry media and consumers (Blumer, 1969; Gick and Gick, 2007). Analysing clothing as a function of trend

consumption fails to reveal the purpose of fashion design. The classification of fashion as a function of trend consumption has contributed to the study of clothing being typecast as a study of frivolity (Barnard, 1996). It is this stereotype about fashion design that this research aims to challenge through an exploration of how the creative endeavours of fashion designers inform knowledge about a specific cultural identity.

Designers use garments as a form of communication, with their aim being the purchase and adoption of their clothing (see Hines and Bruce, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The consumers' decisions to adopt a trend occurs within the parameters of the styles made available to them by designers, fashion media, retail buyers and retail forecasters (Blumer, 1969). Media often play a role in determining new styles, as they are a source for consumers about information regarding their lifestyle and zeitgeist (Gick and Gick, 2007; Bugg, 2009). As part of the communication dynamic, through the act of consumption, the consumers create a symbolic meaning for the fashionable goods (Crane and Bovone, 2006).

Fashion serves as a "commodity code", that forms part of the "social codes" of a culture (Chandler, 2007: 149). As a commodity, it speaks of differentiation through adoption of what is new (Chandler, 2007). The value of the garment as a commodity refers not only to its monetary value, but rather to a material good consumed for its ability to convey symbolic value (Crane and Bovone, 2006). Fashion thus serves as a cultural form used to construct and communicate the lived reality of society at any given moment (Crane and Bovone, 2006). This illustrates fashion as a communication process, a Circuit of Culture, between designers and their consumer, the study of which reflects the how meaning is encoded to facilitate the use of clothing to construct and convey identity and collective belonging (Du Gay *et al*, 1997).

Whether or not consumers are aware of the meaning of their clothing styles, the choice to wear particular garments reflects fragments of their personality (Gick and Gick, 2007). The meaning of a garment therefore changes from designer to media and media to consumer. These meanings however, are rarely analysed within the study of fashion. Fashion is also a social code that reflects the negotiations of belonging and differentiation within a culture (Chandler, 2007). Fashion is thus more than a commodity, but a cultural artefact. Understanding the manner in which designers use fashion as a communication tool requires the contextualisation of the design process as a communication process.

Graphic t-shirts have the potential of communicating shared culture, evident in the analysis of South African fashion brand *Ama-Kip Kip* and *Stoned Cherrie* (Vincent, 2007; Musangi, 2009). The analysis of the symbolic meaning designers embed in clothing reveals that clothes serve as a visual narrative of their intended consumer (Bogatsu, 2002; de Greef, 2009). In understanding that design is a form of intended, constructed and reconstructed communication (Kazmierczak, 2013), this research argues that the design process is a meaning-centred communication process; this process differs from the transmission model of communication model conceptualised by Claude Edward Shannon and Weaver (1949). The linear transmission model conceptualises the manner in which information originates from an information source, is converted into a signal and relayed to the information sources' intendent destination (Shannon and Weaver, 1949). The meaning-centred view of communication underpins the discussion of fashion as a dynamic form of communication.

The meanings-centred approach to the study of communication analyses the process of the construction and conveying meaning (Fiske, 1990; Steinberg, 2007). This view recognises the encoding/decoding model of communication proposed by Stuart Hall (2006 [1980]), discussed further in Chapter 3. Designers create clothing not only with the purpose of creating trends but with the purpose of communicating their thought, beliefs and desires about society to their target market (Barnard, 1996). It is the latter communicative message that this research seeks to identify. Designers present their ideas in the form of clothes, using design aesthetics to convey messages through the medium of clothing to their intended consumer (Au *et al.*, 2001). Understanding this message is based on the assumption that the design process is a form of encoding that utilises aesthetics as a form a code, if encoding is defined a systematic process of the formulation of a message using various codes in order to convey meaning (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

Understanding the design process as a form of encoding rationalises the use of the Encoding/Decoding model as a theoretical construct that assists the discussion of the *production* node of the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Hall, 2006 [1980]). Describing the design process provides the textual knowledge for the encoding of a garment – this is elaborated in Chapter 3. The social knowledge required to encode clothing is revealed through the perspective that fashion is both a commodity and a cultural artefact.

Conclusion

Fashion is primarily the process of creation: the design process forms part of the fashion process. The meanings of design reveal insight regarding the culture of specific collective identities. The discussion of the evolution of the t-shirt revealed that fashion is a form of text that serves as a visual representation of society's needs, ideologies and lived reality. The production and consumption of the t-shirt can, in part, be seen as a reflection of cultural systems that characterise a collective identity within a society. This second chapter, *Threading of Literature* discussed relevant literature pertaining to fashion design communication theory and fashion theory, illustrated with empirical evidence from selected case studies. The chapter serves as a contextualisation of the study of fashion as communication process. This literature review revealed that as an academic field, fashion researchers rarely seeks to understand the designers' intended meaning of the garment, focusing on the symbolic meaning consumers create.

This blind spot in the comprehension of fashion as communication has resulted in the study of fashion being rather one-sided with a focus on the diffusion of trends and articulation of identity (Kawamura, 2005). This study seeks to address this gap using a cultural studies approach, which views clothing as a cultural artefact, and the fashion design process as the creation and dissemination of meaning from designer to consumer. The study of clothing as a cultural artefact conveys knowledge about the social, cultural, political and economic zeitgeist of their target market through innovative new products. The third chapter, *Fabrics of Theory,* extends the discussion on the study of fashion as cultural artefact through the explanation of the Circuit of Culture model as a theoretical framework. This is discussed in conjunction with the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 1980) as well as semiotic theory (Peirce, 1932; de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 1994) as a means of understanding the aesthetics of design as meaningful signs.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework
Fabrics of Theory

Introduction

Fashioning Meaning is research located in the field of Cultural Studies and is concerned with fashion as a form of cultural production. A cultural production to fashion approach views garments as a text comprised of symbols that contribute to the identity construction and expression of its wearers (Crane and Bovone, 2006). This is none more evident than with the graphic t-shirt, as designers utilise the fabric of a blank t-shirt as a medium and with the graphics being used to express various messages (Manan and Smith, 2014). The research adopts a meaning-centred approach to the study of communication, which focuses on the signifying properties of a communication message (Fiske, 1990). This informs the decision to adopt a Cultural Studies approach. The relevance of Cultural Studies to this study is evident in Chapter 2, *Threading Literature,* as the chapter defined the fashion design process as a form of encoding, clothing as a form of text and fashion as the study of cultural production.

Threading Literature discussed literature pertaining to the study of clothing as visual narratives reflective of a social, cultural and political reality of specific collective identities. The arguments of the chapter contextualised the study of fashion as a study of cultural artefacts. These arguments also brought to light the limitations of the study of fashion as a function of trend adoption as this view fails to recognise fashion designers as creators of cultural artefacts used by consumes to articulate identity and collective belonging. Discussing the role of the designer in the fashion process further contextualised the process of fashion design as a meaning-centred communication form, from designer to consumer. Chapter 2 discussed fashion as a cultural artefact produced by designers to convey meaning about the social reality of their consumer, while consumers utilise fashion to articulate their identity and belonging. This third chapter entitled *Fabrics of Theory* continues the discussion on fashion as a communication process, presenting the theoretical framework for this research.

Fabrics of Theory discusses theories that allow for the analysis of graphic t-shirts as a cultural artefact about aspects of a zeitgeist. The use of a single theory would serve inadequate for the discussion of the graphic t-shirt as a cultural artefact that conveys meaning about a social reality

of a specific collective identity. An analysis of this kind requires methodological procedures that reveal not only the meanings the garment conveys, but also the analysis of the production of meaning. The chapter begins with a discussion of Cultural Studies and the manner in which the field informs the study. Cultural Studies utilises various frameworks and methodologies for the analyses of culture from the point of view of production and consumption of text within their historical context (Kellner and Durham, 2006). The fact that this research draws from Cultural Studies, rationalises the choice for the use of the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]), semiotic theory and the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). The chapter concludes by highlighting the manner in which the above-mentioned theories inform the study of the graphic t-shirt as a cultural product.

Cultural Studies

Utilising John Storey's (1996: 1) criteria for the description of an academic field, this section discusses Cultural Studies by outlining i) culture as an object of study, ii) the historical development of the discipline, and iii) the underlying assumptions that inform its methodologies. The discussion outlines the manner in which Cultural Studies informs this research.

Culture as an Object of Study

Culture can be broadly defined as the beliefs, values, norms and practices that characterise a society, as well as material artefacts and historical heirlooms passed down from past generations (Pitout, 2007); culture is the learned and shared conventions of collective identity (Williams, 1993 [1958]). Culture is dynamic, continually changing according to economic and political change, and mirrors the changes of societal beliefs and collective values (Pitout, 2007). The dynamic nature of culture is visible in the production and consumption of processes, practices, institutions, technologies and events that construct and convey meaning and add value to the daily lives of individuals (During, 2005). Culture is the social production and reproduction of wisdom, meaning and awareness, and refers to the processes of meaning, which unifies economic processes of production and social relations such as politics (Hartley, 2002: 68). The study of culture thus informs knowledge about a collective identity in society (Storey, 1996; du Gay *et al.*, 1997).

Chapter 1, *Vision Boarding Research,* argued that the study of changing fashion is in fact the study of cultural change. The discussion characterises clothing as "both a product and a stimulus of changing consumer wants through time" (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007: 200). Chapter 2 discussed fashion as both an economic process and the articulation of meaning, as fashion designers create clothing with the motive of selling clothing, while simultaneously articulating meaning about their consumer's – political, cultural, economic – zeitgeist (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The diffusion of fashion within a society not only influences cultural trends in the realm of fashion but influences society's social structure (Kawamura, 2005); this is evident in the diffusion of the t-shirt which, as a marker of social status during its early years, was seen as clothing of the lower socio-economic classes (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). Characterising fashion as a cultural process locates this study in the field of Cultural Studies. Adopting a Cultural Studies trajectory recognises fashion as more than just adornment but a reflection of the social structure of specific collective identity.

The study of culture refers to the study of the relationship between elements that allow individuals to construct and convey meaning about their everyday lives (Hall, 1980). The aim of Cultural Studies is thus to understand the manner in which socially produced meanings and consciousness – culture – manifests itself through production and social relations (Hartley, 2002). Similarly, the aim of this research is to understand the socio-cultural meanings of graphic t-shirts produced through the design process. Utilising a semiotic theory (Peirce, 1932; Fourie, 2009), this research seeks to understand the manner in which design aesthetics convey meaning that reflects the lived reality of the specific South African collective identities. As an analysis tool, semiotics provides a research framework that concentrates "on analysing a structured set of relationships which enable a message to signify something; in other word, they concentrate on what it is that makes marks on paper or sounds in the air into a message" (Fiske, 1990:39). This research utilises a semiotic framework for the analysis of the visuals of the study's selected graphic t-shirt as a representation of collective identity. Chapter 4, entitled *Stylish Methods,* details this method which is informed by the semiotic analysis outlined by Pieter J. Fourie (2009) and Daniel Chandler (1994). This third chapter discusses the use of semiotics as a theoretical framework that forms part of Cultural Studies, and more specifically the Circuit of Culture (du Gay *et al.* 1997).

Culture also represents various political discourses – often competing for dominance – that characterise the lived reality of a society (Kellner and Durham, 2006); this is most evident in

graphic t-shirts created for protest, where designers convey the political opinions (Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012). The discussion of the t-shirts worn by students protesting as part of the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa (in Chapter 1) reflect some opinions regarding the education system in South Africa. The t-shirts worn by the students reflect the shared political views of the individuals who participated in the #FeesMustFall collective action protest (Melucci, 1995). Chapter 2 detailed the how the #BlackLivesMatter movement sparked an array of t-shirts for those who support the fight against unjust police brutally in America. These t-shirt reflect the shared political discourse that unites individuals who support #BlackLivesMatter as a movement (Melucci, 1995).

Certain cultural artefacts such as novels, film and television enable individuals to comprehend their social reality through different perspectives (Kellner and Durham, 2006); this view of culture depicts culture as political in that the study of culture reveals dominant and contested political positions characteristic of collective identities within a society (Storey, 1996). This view informs the assumption that social practices and cultural processes provide insight into the lived reality of collective identity (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Johnson, 1998; Turner, 2003).

History of Cultural Studies

The origin of Cultural Studies is rooted in struggle for cultural identity both as a field and as an object of analysis (Turner, 2003; Pitout, 2007). Cultural Studies, as a multidisciplinary field emerged from and is influenced by literary studies as well as sociology and even anthropology (Turner, 2003; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). The field can be traced back to two literary works by Richard Hoggart (1958) and Raymond Williams (1966 [1958])) who discussed lived culture experienced in everyday life (Hall, 1980; Johnson, 1998). British Cultural Studies emerged from the University of Birmingham through the works of Hoggart, Williams, Edward Palmer, Thompson and Stuart Hall, with a focus of literary criticism, connecting literature to the culture of the ordinary (During, 2005; Pitout, 2007).

Early studies of culture – not within the field of Cultural Studies – had an exclusive focus on the culture of the social elite of society (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Lister and Wells, 2001). The study of the elite mirrors the early theories of fashion, which analysed clothing as a function of social status (Simmel, 1904; Veblen, 1912; Sapir, 1931). The study of culture – like the study of fashion – was deemed superficial, and one that was a mere reflection of other processes that

characterise everyday life (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). This assumption – held largely by Marxist theorists – was due to the fact that the study of culture was often concerned with the analysis of signs, languages, visual artefacts and beliefs of specific collective identity (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006).

Cultural Studies grew from the need to examine low and popular culture officially and rigorously. As it is not confined to the study of high culture of the social elite, it is all inclusive of popular and low culture (Kellner, 1995). The first studies on popular culture emerged from The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham (Pitout, 2007). The field views popular culture as "a site where the construction of everyday life may be examined" (Turner, 2003: 5). The academic studies of popular culture included the analysis of popular music, sports and fashion as discourses that contribute to the social construction of meaning by organisations and individuals of a particular society (Pitout, 2007). This study adopts the stance of popular culture as worthy of academic study by electing to study graphic t-shirts. Chapter 2 discussed studies that utilised t-shirts as a source for the analysis of historical and cultural narratives that are unique to South Africa (Musangi, 2009; Farber, 2013) which confirms the assumption that graphic t-shirts are a site for the construction of daily life, and can therefore be analysed as such.

As a field, Cultural Studies is concerned with the study of the everyday way of life of a particular collective identity within a society (Storey, 1996; Kellner and Durham, 2006). Early studies sought to understand the experience of the working class, while later studies became inclusive of the societal struggles unique to women and gender inequality (Turner, 2003). During its early years, the field was often relegated to a second-order study within the social sciences (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). The multidisciplinary nature of the field also spurred debate regarding the definition and focus of the field (Grossberg *et al.*, 1992; Storey, 1996). Cultural Studies later adopted ethnographic approaches that sought to understand how individuals and collective identities define culture (During, 2005). By the 1990s, Cultural Studies had carved itself a space within universities across the globe as a discipline that was not only concerned with the consumption of cultural process, but the production of cultural artefacts within society which provide knowledge about the lived reality of collective identities within society (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Johnson, 1998; Turner, 2003). This research is concerned with the production of the graphic t-shirts as a source of knowledge about aspects of South African lived reality.

In Africa, Cultural Studies often seeks to understand African identities based on indigenous wisdoms – which are often excluded from academia – and not defined by Western perceptions, ideologies or biases (Nyamnjoh, 1999). The South African trajectory of Cultural Studies was introduced in the 1970s as the study of Culture and Media Studies (Tomaselli, 2012) that primarily focussed on representation and perception of texts. The political and social changes in South Africa in the 1980s spurred on an evolution in the field to consider the relationship between text and context. The adoption of Cultural Studies with a focus on both the production, and consumption of texts within a socio-cultural context was introduced through the University of KwaZulu-Natal (formally known as Natal University), in the Centre for Culture, Communication Media Studies in the 1980s (Tomaselli, 2012) – the centre from which the current Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) emerged. *Fashioning Meaning,* as a dissertation within CCMS, thus analyses the production meaning in graphic t-shirts as a socio-cultural text.

Assumptions and Methods

Cultural Studies refers to theoretical assumptions and methodological tool within the fields of humanities and social science (Pitout, 2007). Cultural Studies remains interdisciplinary, drawing from sociology, linguistics, anthropology, semiotics and literary studies (Grossberg *et al.*, 1992; du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Turner, 2003; Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013). Cultural Studies is concerned with understanding: i) cultural production and consumption; ii) meaning and beliefs within the context of social processes and institutions; and iii) the manner in which audiences of text construct their own meanings of text (Lister and Wells, 2001; Pitout, 2007). As such Cultural Studies is characterised by two basic assumptions: culture cannot be detached from history and social context and culture is of an ideological nature (Storey, 1996: 3-4). The multidisciplinary nature of the field, means that the research methodologies commonly utilised are inclusive and involve ethnographic, psychoanalytic, textual, semiotic and sociological methods (Lister and Wells, 2001). The above stated arguments; assumption and methodologies of Cultural Studies inform various aspects of this research.

The social and historical context of culture

Culture is expressed through texts and cultural artefacts (Williams, 1993 [1958]; McQuail, 2005); culture is viewed as meaningful experiences, texts and events, produced amidst the

backdrop of a society characterised by unequal power structures, and socio-economic hierarchies (During, 2005). Cultural artefacts refers to media – television, film and newspapers – social gatherings, leisurely pastimes and even shopping (Lister and Wells, 2001; Kellner and Durham, 2006). While cultural texts express social and political discourses of a society of collective identity, they refer to media (and clothing) which serve as sources of information, entertainment and, in some instances, vehicles for the expression of dominant ideologies (Kellner, 1995).

Textual analysis forms part of the research methodologies employed in Cultural Studies, with historical discourse and semiotic analysis as analytical tools (Turner, 2003; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). Analysis of any text requires social and textual knowledge that contextualises the meaning of the text through its production and consumption (Chandler, 2007). The primary focus of a semiotics analysis is text, concerning itself with the how senders use signs to convey meaning through message and the manner in which the reader – receiver – actively constructs meaning from the message (Fiske, 1990). In adopting semiotics as a theoretical framework, this study views designers as senders of messages and consumers as receivers. Designers utilise design – fabric, cuts, colour, aesthetics etc. – as signs to convey meaning through clothing.

Cultural text and artefacts are inscribed with representations of history and lived reality of a culture. In order to understand the constructed and conveyed meaning of a culture, cultural artefacts should be analysed within the context of social structure and history, (Grossberg *et al.*, 1992; Kellner, 1995; Storey, 1996). A contextual analysis of a cultural artefact refers to the identification and analysis of the organisation and determining forces – political, social, economic conditions – that inform the creation of meaning of a cultural process (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). Culture should therefore be analysed from the point of view of production and consumption (Kellner, 1995; du Gay, 1997). Analysing cultural artefacts within their social context encompasses mapping out the processes that characterise the production of culture and the manner in which cultural production influences individuality and collective identity (Kellner, 1995). As a framework rooted in Cultural Studies, the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) serves as a framework for understanding production and consumption within its social, economic, political and cultural context (Leve, 2012). Utilising the model ensures that study of a cultural artefacts does not only focus on the binary role of production and consumption, but the meaning associated with the process of construction, consumption and regulation of culture and identity (Turner, 2003; Curtin and Gaither, 2005;

Leve, 2012). This model confirms the importance of social and historical context that characterise both production and consumption in the process of determining meaning (Leve, 2012). The Circuit of Culture model serves as a framework for the analysis of the social process – *representation*, *identity*, *production*, *consumption*, *cultural regulation* – which characterise the production of meaning within a cultural artefact (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). Including the Circuit of Culture in this study's theoretical framework enables the explanation of how the two selected designers draw from the social and historical reality of their consumers in creating new clothing styles. The interrelated processes of the model also serves as a methodological tool in Chapter 4 for the analysis of the production and expression of meaning of graphic t-shirts created by two designers in South Africa.

Culture is Ideological

Cultural Studies assumes that individuals utilise language and ideology in the construction of their social identity (Turner, 2003). As a theoretical concept of Cultural Studies, ideology is of Marxist origins; ideology is informed by the notion that capitalist societies are characterised by gender, racial, socio-economic and historical inequalities (Storey, 1996; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). The Marxist concept of ideology assumes that ideology operates on an unconscious level, developing and structuring the individual's understanding of their reality (Turner, 2003). The organising of any social group in society is constructed through construction of an ideology that informs their dynamics, social relations, knowledge and consciousness as a collective identity (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). The concept of ideology is further informed by Louis Althusser's (1970) assumption that collective and individual acceptance of dominant ideals values and norms reinforces the production of a dominant ideology (Pitout, 2007); these views depict members of society as passive consumers of dominant ideology, embedded in cultural texts and practices. Cultural Studies does not assume that consumers are passive, rather through the act of consumption they actively create meaning of cultural products (Leve, 2012).

Stuart Hall's (2006 [1980]) Encoding/Decoding model serves as a critique of the concept of passive individuals, arguing that individuals decide whether or not to accept dominant ideologies (Pitout, 2007; Greer, 2010). The model argues that television communication is informed by the meaning structures of media organisations that typically adhere to dominant power structures of a society (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Media texts are encoded for ideological and institutional reasons, creating text with preferred meanings (McQuail, 2005; Hall, 2006 [1980]).

Drawing from Frank Parkin's (1972) *Meaning Systems,* Hall theorised three hypothetical interpretation of media text:; dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional (Greer, 2010: 45). The identification of the three interpretation positions assumes that there exists a preferred reading of a text, however, audiences adopt and develop alternative readings of texts (McQuail, 2005; Hall, 2006[1980]).

The Encoding/Decoding model argues that producer and consumer of cultural text are of equal importance, as production and consumption is framed by social structures on understanding produced within the context of historical, social and economic relations (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The development of the model challenged the prevailing methodologies of empirical audience research of the social sciences and humanistic content analysis, which fail to acknowledge the audiences' ability to impart meaning to messages (McQuail, 2005; Greer, 2010). The model suggests that audiences have the ability to reject the ideological meanings through counter interpretations informed by their personal experiences and opinions (McQuail, 2005). This view characterises meaning of texts as actively constructed by receivers based on socially constructed understandings (Greer, 2010).

Ideology is an important concept within the field of Cultural Studies, it is the practice of reproducing social relations of inequality through meaning and communication (Turner, 2003; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). Ideology is central to the study of text, and is useful for understanding that meaning of a communicated event are socially constructed and aligned to specific ideologies (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). Opinions and views regarding society are conveyed through texts such as mass media, which produces text that resonate with particular audiences or collective identities in order for media organisation to be profitable (Kellner, 1995). As such, Cultural Studies is characterised by analyses focused on ideological discourses embedded within certain texts that impact the construction of the lived reality of individuals (Turner, 2003).

The focus of such analyses, which take a cultural production framework, examines the cultural function of cultural texts that articulate ideology (Turner, 2003). The underlying assumptions of these studies view culture as a site for subordinate groups to contest the meanings imposed by dominant social groups (Storey, 1996; Pitout, 2007). Empirical research that focuses on ethnographic and textual studies of cultural practices and artefacts illustrate the manner in which subordinate groups in society utilise cultural discourses to contest the authority of

dominant ideology (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). This is evident in Richard Hebdige's (1979) study on style as a vehicle for the expression of ideology which suggests that fashion can be used as a vehicle for the expression of ideology. Hebdige's (1979) study does not engage with graphic t-shirt as source of ideological struggle, however this research argues that clothing, specifically graphic t-shirt as cultural artefacts, provides counter narratives that assist individuals to make sense of their reality. The South African satirical t-shirt manufacturer *Laugh it Off*'s appropriation of South African Breweries beer Black Label is an example of this. The t-shirt (Figure 3.1) serves as a reflection of the racial tension characteristic of South African history that still exists today (Jones, 2005).

Figure 3.1: Black Labour White Guilt T-Shirt
Source: Laugh it Off, *Pinterest,* 2013

Theoretical Frameworks

Having outlined the manner in which the field of Cultural Studies informs this research, the following section discusses the Circuit of Culture model, Encoding/Decoding model of communication and the theory of semiotics as the theoretical frameworks that inform this research.

Circuit of Culture Model

The Circuit of Culture model can be traced back to the work of Richard Johnson (1998), who identified a gap in the study of production and consumption of texts (Leve, 2012). Johnson's (1998) model arose from arguing that simply reading a text did not reveal information regarding the condition that characterised the production of text, nor could a simple reading reveal the reader's use of the text (see Figure 3.2 below).
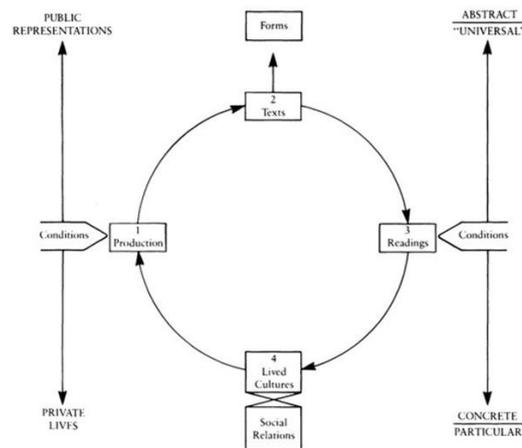
Figure 3.2: Original Cultural Circuit Model
Source: (Johnson, 1998: 84)

Johnson developed the circuits of capital model as an illustrative tool for analysing cultural processes through the process of *consumption* and *production* (Leve, 2012). The model focused on the relationship between the private choices of individuals that inform consumption, and public motives and processes of production (Leve, 2012). It further highlighted the importance of the interrelationship between each moment within the circuit, which informed the interrelated process of the later version of the model (Johnson, 1998; Leve, 2012). The model was further elaborated on through Stuart Hall's (2006 [1980]) conception of the Encoding/Decoding model of communication (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). For Hall, the circuit of culture exists between television media organisations and audiences, used for the analysis of the production, circulation and consumption of the television communication process (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Scherer and Jackson, 2008).

The Encoding/Decoding model as a circuit of meaning, analyses the communication process according to moments of *production*, *circulation*, *consumption* and *reproduction* (Greer, 2010).

The object of analysis is not the text itself by meaning and messages that take the form of sign vehicles organised according to specific codes (Hall, 2006 [1980]). This informed the development the Circuit of Culture model as a tool for analysing the meaning of cultural phenomena by the British Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies members of Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus (Leve, 2012). The contemporary Circuit of Culture model (See Figure 3.3 below) analyses five process – *representation, identity, production, consumption* and *cultural regulation* – concerned with the production and dissemination of meaning through a cultural artefact (du Gay *et al.*, 1997: 3; Leve, 2012).
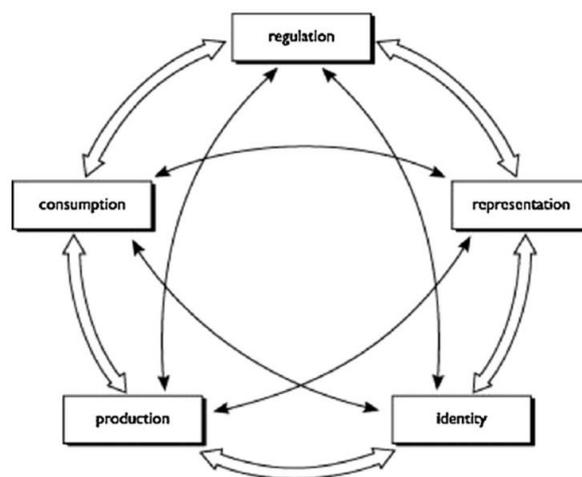
Figure: 3.3: Circuit of Culture Model
Source: (du Gay *et al.*, 1997: 3)

The five interrelated nodes (or moments) of the model serve as articulations of the meaning construction process (Leve, 2012). "Articulation was the term chosen because of its dual meaning: to express and to join together" (Curtin and Gaither, 2005: 98). Each moment of the model assists the in-depth analysis of the moment both independently and as part of a larger circuit (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). The analysis of a cultural artefact can begin at any node (Figure 3.3) provided the model is utilised in its entirety (Leve, 2012).

This study seeks to understand the manner in which designers produce graphic t-shirts that serve as representations of their target markets' lived reality. This study gives attention to the stages of *representation*, *production*, *consumption* and *identity* of the model. The departure point of the discussion using this model shall be from the production of a cultural artefact: the manner in which designers encode meaning in clothing through the production – design – process as

part of the *production* node of the Circuit of Culture model, utilising the Encoding/Decoding model. This discussion draws from the encoding process, while the *consumption* node utilises the decoding process. Semiotic theory therefore assists the discussion of the *consumption* and *representation* nodes.

Encoding/Decoding Model

Prior to Hall's model, the analysis of media text utilised the linear transmission model of communication conceptualised by Claude Edward Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949), whereby senders transmit a message to a receiver who is viewed as interpreting the message as the sender intended (Greer, 2010). This simplistic comprehension of communication is less concerned with the message, but rather the transmission model of communication maps the flow of information from one source to another (Craig, 1999). The model does not focus on the context of the message, failing to recognise the cultural factors that influence the meaning making process by only focusing on the technical processes of communication (Fiske, 1990; Hall, 2006 [1980]). Hall argued that the linear nature of the model could not account for the different interpretations of the same messages by audiences (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Greer, 2010). In order to understand the complexities of the communication process, each moment of the process requires analysis (Greer, 2010).

As a Cultural Studies methodological tool, the Encoding/Decoding model asserts that the relations between cultural texts – media – and ideology can be analysed through the codes and signifying units of a text (Turner, 2003). This study utilises the model in discussing moments of *production*, and *consumption* of the selected graphic t-shirts, in light of the Circuit of Culture model. At both the encoding and decoding ends of the circuit, the use of semiotics allows for the understanding of the meaning of message (Hall, 2006 [1980]). As such, semiotic theory informs the analytical schema utilised in the qualitative content analysis of the *Butan Wear* (*Butan*) and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* (*Magents*) t-shirts presented in Chapter 4 (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2009; Fourie, 2009). More specifically, the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1932), Roman Jakobson (1960) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) are utilised in discussing the process of encoding using design elements (aesthetics of the t-shirts under analysis) as a sign systems in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Encoding/Decoding model, though rooted in structuralist semiology, argues that meaning of the sign is not fixed (McQuail, 2005). This is characteristic of the constructionist approach argues that signs are organised into different languages which are used to convey meaning with others (Hall, 1997; Chandler, 2007). Semioticians that adopt a constructionist stance are concerned with the role of sign systems within the construction of social reality (Chandler, 2007). Hall's (2006 [1980]) constructionist stance is evident in his argument of polysemic texts. Hall argued that meaning in texts are polysemic, and as such they convey multiple meanings, and should therefore be interpreted according to the culture and context of the audience (McQuail, 2005; Greer, 2010).

The Encoding/Decoding model is rooted in semiology and economic theory, drawing from Ferdinand de Saussure's *circuit of speech* and Karl Marx's concepts of the labour process and commodity production (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Greer, 2010). De Saussure's circuit of speech serves as an early model of the Encoding/Decoding model, as well as the Circuit of Culture model. Simplistic as it may be, the transmission model assists the comprehension of the communication process as linked moments of *production, circulation, consumption* of a message (Hall, 2006 [1980]). De Saussure's circuit of speech (Figure 3.4) illustrated the involvement of sender and receiver in oral communication (de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 2007).
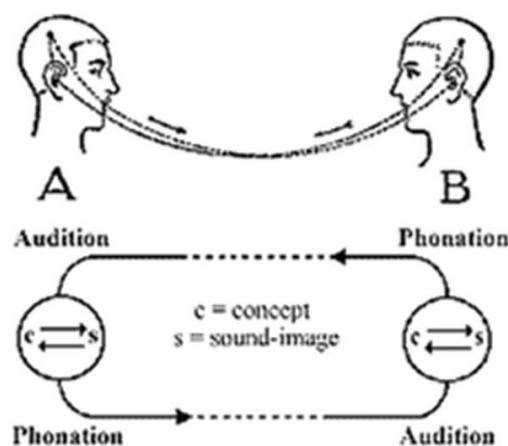
Figure 3.4: Circuit of Speech
Adapted from: (de Saussure, 1983: 11-12)

Hall borrowed the circuit of speech model (see Figure 3.4 above) and extended it to mass communication (see Figure 3.5 below), between television media and television audiences (Wren-Lewis, 1983).
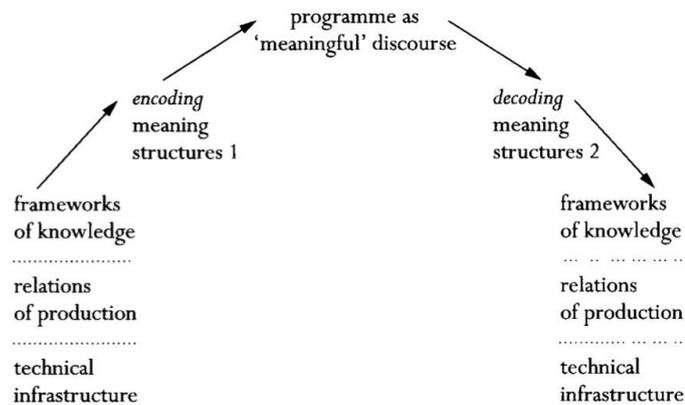
Figure 3.5: Encoding/Decoding Model of Communication
Source: (Hall, 2006 [1980]: 165)

The above model focuses on the on how media organisations (senders) produce meaning through the creation of messages, the channels used to distribute the message and how audience (receivers) interpret (decode) the messages thereby producing their own meaning (Kellner, 1995). The model is illustrative of how television programmes are portrayed as meaningful communications, encoded according to media organisations' structures of meaning (McQuail, 2005: 73). The Saussurean model (1983) demonstrates the process of encoding, elaborated on by Hall (2006 [1980]).

The Encoding/Decoding model argues that an event, as it is lived and experienced, cannot be transmitted in its 'real' form through media such as television (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Television utilises an audio-visual signification process to convey messages about lived reality (Wren-Lewis, 1983). Television programming is characterised by visual and oral codes (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The produced message utilises the rules of signification to represent the socio-cultural, political nature of the event in a specific manner, based on the manner in which the producer conveys it (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The process of production at this point is characterised by the formal rules of language in order for the product to convey meaning (Hall, 2006 [1980]). This mirrors de Saussure's *langue and parole* model of language and usage, discussed in the later

part of this section entitled *Semiotics.* It is not enough, however, to only understand the encoding process, but also the economic, political and social factors that characterise the production process need to be taken into account (Kellner, 1995; du Gay *et al.*, 1997).

Hall (2006 [1980]: 164) notes that an analysis of the television communication process should include: "the institutional structures of broadcasting, with their practices and networks of production, their organized relations and technical infrastructures". This mirrors Marx's means of production which asserts that each factor of production utilised in the creation of objects adds value to the meaning of the product (Mohun, 2001). Marx's discussion on commodity production in capitalist societies further illustrates how production, distribution and consumption operates as a continuous circuit through the creation and consumption of commodities (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

The production of television content is further characterised by the media organisation's use of factors of production (within their organisational context) in the creation of a product (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Encoding as a circuit of production therefore takes into account manufacturers' technological structures, organisational culture and ideologies as well as the technical process of the creation of an object (Hall, 2006 [1980]), which mirrors the description of the *production* node of the Circuit of Culture. This description asserts that the analyses of production of a cultural artefact focuses on the organisation and physical and cultural processes utilised in the manufacturing of a cultural artefact (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Curtin and Gaither, 2005). This study takes into account the design process and the brand identity of the designer in analysing the graphic t-shirt. By this account, the message – though important – comprises a single moment of a larger process, therefore it should be analysed as part of the larger social and organisational conditions that characterise the communication process (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

The Encoding/Decoding model argues that the decoding media messages are not only dependent on the content of the message by the decoders' social positioning, skills, experience and knowledge of various codes utilised by the producer (Greer, 2010). Decoding television programming occurs within the knowledge and meaning structures of different audiences in different social contexts (McQuail, 2005). Receivers do not necessarily decode meanings in the manner that it was encoded, which leads to variant meanings of the communicated message (McQuail, 2005). Receivers of a message interpret meaning from the message using a set of codes related to the sign system; the decoder's knowledge of what types of codes to use when

interpreting the texts eliminates the potential of misinterpretation of the decoders intended meaning (Chandler, 2007). The study of codes and texts forms part of the study of semiotics. This study does not engage with the process of decoding, through an analysis of how *Butan* and *Magents* consumers interpret the meaning of their t-shirts. Rather, this study analysis of the meaning of the t-shirt as part of the Circuit of Culture moment of *consumption* as a process of the 'reading' or decoding (see Leve, 2012) of each t-shirt. This study's reading of the graphic t-shirt is undertaken with the aim of determining the designers preferred meaning of each t-shirt as text, drawing from the organisational, cultural and in some instances ideological codes that are assumed to influence the designer's encoding (design) process (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Decoding the each t-shirt with the aim of understanding the each designer's intended meaning highlights the relevance of the Encoding/Decoding model as a theoretical construct.

Semiotic Theory

In its simplistic form, semiotics explores the manner in which reality is represented through signs, and how meaning is created, conveyed and interpreted (Fiske, 1990; Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Chandler, 2007). "Meaning is not transmitted to us – we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or convention of which we are normally unaware" (Chandler, 2007:11). This definition somewhat mimics the social construction approach which assumes that people actively create knowledge through lived and shared experiences of the world (Gergen, 1985). The constructionist approach assumes that meaning is constructed using language as a sign that references something that exists within social reality (Peirce, 1932; Hall, 1997). The chapter detailing theoretical concepts, *Fabrics of Theory,* adopts a constructionist understanding of meaning, viewing the meaning of garments as actively constructed through the language of design. This research argues that designers utilise design elements as signs that reflect aspects of their target market's lived reality.

Fashioning Meaning, as a study, adopts a constructionist rather than a structuralist approach to semiotics, arguing that meaning is not a finite structural concept, but rather occurs through active construction through social interaction. Moving beyond the traditional structuralist framework of semiotics to a constructionist approach enables semioticians to analyse signs within their specific social context (Chandler, 2007). The constructionist approach further assumes that certain social actors interpret their lived realty, culture and language in order to create and communicate meaning about their lived reality, while simultaneously adding

meaning to the world (Hall, 1997). This study argues that fashion designers create clothing that not only communicates to a target market, but also communicates knowledge about the lived reality of their target market.

Semiotics draws greatly from linguistic constructs due to Ferdinand de Saussure's influence within the field, and also because linguistics as a field is more established than semiotics (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 2007). For de Saussure (1983), language is the written and spoken word; therefore his system of signification is only concerned with linguistics. Stuart Hall (1997) defines language not only as the written or spoken word, but language refers to the shared sign system that enables individuals to translate mental concepts into words, images, sounds and even smell. This serves as the rationale for the adoption of de Saussure's linguistic concepts for the study of the signifying properties of design elements. The Saussurean study of language distinguishes between *langue* and *parole*: language and speech (Hall, 1997; Chandler, 2007; Barthes, 2013 [1957]).

The model of *langue* and *parole* states that *langue* is the concrete system that enables individuals to associate images and concepts, and *parole* is a product of language, the use of which is determined by the conventions created by the collective identities that use it (de Saussure, 1983). *Langue* is the socially constructed sign system from which individuals draw their *parole* (Barthes, 2013 [1957]). *Langue* is a system of signification characterised by rules of classification*; langue* exists independently from its user, and is adopted by individuals and used for the purposes of classification of mental concepts (de Saussure, 1983) - it is the codes and rules of any linguistic system (Hall, 1997). *Parole* is an individual act, it involves both though and action (de Saussure, 1983).

Codes are a tool used to signify ideology and power within certain discourses (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Roman Jakobson (1960: 356) seminal work on the functions of language describes the code as the "metalingual" function of language, which facilitates understanding of the meaning within a communicated message (Steinberg, 2007; du Plooy, 2009). In constructing a media message, senders determine a set of codes – determined by personal knowledge and ideological factors influencing the message – that form the framework for the comprehension of signs used in the message (Fiske, 1990; Hall, 2006 [1980]; Chandler, 2007; Tomaselli, 2015). Chapter 2 discussed the manner in which understanding a designer's preferred use of design aesthetics,

fabrics, cuts and silhouettes serve as a code for understanding how designers signify concepts of social reality (Gick and Gick, 2007; Mason, 2011).

The contemporary approach to semiotics is less concerned with the structure, but focuses rather on the relationship between *langue* and its use as a portal into culture (Hall, 1997; Chandler, 2007). The contemporary adoption of the Saussurean model has been extended beyond linguistics, with the signifier relating to the physical form of any sign (Chandler, 2007). Extending this to media, a particular medium – a television program or particular film for instance – is *parole*, and the conventions for the creation of such media is *langue* (Chandler, 2007). Barthes extends the Saussurean concept of *langue* and *parole* to *dress* and *dressing* respectively (see Barthes, 2013 [1957]; 2013 [1959]; 2013 [1963]). *Langue* refers to garments which exist as part of the fashion system, the analysis of which requires understanding of their sociological meaning (Barthes, 2013 [1957]). *Parole* refers to *dressing:* an individual's use of garments to convey something about themselves, and it is observable purely through usage (Barthes, 2013 [1957]). Barthes argues that for the researcher, the relationship between *dress* and *dressing* becomes the focus of analysis (Barthes, 2013 [1957]). Similarly, the relationship between fashion design and complete garments is the focus on this research; this makes the model of *langue* and *parole* applicable in the analysis of a designer's creation of a graphic t-shirt.

Fabrics of Theory further extends the notion of *langue* to fashion design. Applying the model of *langue* and *parole* as theoretical concepts of design requires an understanding of *langue* and the system usage and structure of the design process, and *parole,* and the codes and messages conveyed on the garment. Chapter 2, *Threads of Communique,* discussed the design process as a system characterised by conventions and procedures. The creation of a design concept of any garment is determined within the parameters of design principles (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). Design principles that inform the construction of a concept of design is conceptualised as *langue*. The construction of any garment utilises a creative process of articulating a design concept through the fabric, form, structure and aesthetics of a garments (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014). Fashion designers articulate their design concept through the creation of clothing that expresses their ideas through the design of the garment (Au *et al.*, 2001). The specific *manner* in which designers articulate their design concept into garments relates to *parole*. As such, the creative use of fashion design as a guiding set of principles to create meaningful garments relates to *parole*.

Applying the *langue* and *parole* model to the analysis of the graphic t-shirt, assists in understanding how designers use the system of design to convey meaning. In turn, this informs the study's analysis of the interpretation of the meanings of the graphic t-shirt using Charles Peirce's (1932) concept of the 'interpretant' as part of the encoding and decoding process. "The interpretant […] is key to understanding how interpreters make sense of, and respond to, signs, in relation to the discursive contexts from which they are generated" (Tomaselli, 2015: 2). Understanding a designer's *langue* and *parole* therefore enables one to make sense of the interpretant. This is elaborated in the subsequent section as part of the *representation* node of the Circuit of Culture.

Peirce is regarded as the forefather of the American stream of semiotics (Fiske, 1990). He was largely concerned with the definition of the sign, developing taxonomies of various types of signs, while other semioticians explored the codes in which signs are organised (Chandler, 2007). For Peirce, semiotics was of a philosophical nature, with his concern being of the understanding of worldly experiences (Fiske, 1990). Peircean semiotics is described as "a theory of knowing rather than a theory of languaging" (Moriarty, 2002: 13). This characterises the semioticians model as an abductive approach, if abductive reasoning is defined as approach that seeks to find "meaning centred rules" (Reichertz, 2004: 163). This research utilises an abductive approach to the analysis elaborated in Chapter 4. Peirce's (1932) triadic model of signification and taxonomy of signs is utilised in Chapter 4 as part of the semiotic analytical tool used as part of the content analysis of the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirt (discussed in the *Voguish Analysis* chapters). This current chapter thus discusses the Peircean triadic model of *signification* in the subsequent section as part of the *representation* node of the Circuit of Culture.

Circuit of Culture and the Graphic t-shirt

The Circuit of Culture as a theoretical framework assists the holistic comprehension of cultural meanings embedded in cultural artefacts (Leve, 2012). The model was created for the analysis of the Sony Walkman in the 1990s (du Gay *et al.*, 1997), but has since been utilised for the analysis of various cultural artefacts and processes by different academic scholars. Annabelle Leve (2012) utilises the model to analyse the process involved in the construction and management of education as a commodity. Leve (2012: 4) simplifies each of the moments as:

i) *representation* as text; ii) *identity* as lived social reality; iii) *production* as construction; iv) *consumption* as reading; and v) *cultural regulation* as condition. These definitions of each node are utilised in defining the parameters of the study of the graphic t-shirt. *Representation* as text refers to the object of analysis of this study, namely the aesthetics of the graphic t-shirt. Representation is the description or symbolic depiction of something other than itself, and it is thus useful to think of representations as signs (Hall, 1997; Leve, 2012). This informs the use of semiotics theory as the analytical scheme used as part of the qualitative content analysis of the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts. This research contends that a semiotic methodology enables the social scientist to problematize the process of representation (Chandler, 2007). As such, the discussion of the garment as representation transpires within the context of Peirce's definition of the sign. *Production* as construction serves as the rationale for the use of the encoding process to discuss the construction of the graphic t-shirt. *Consumption,* as reading, serves as a rationale for the researcher to decode the manner in which the designers use aesthetics to communicate a collective identity. This study does not engage with the fifth node of *cultural regulation.* This research reads (consumption) the aesthetics of *Butan* and *Magents'* graphic t-shirts in order to determine how each brand uses the design process (production) to convey meanings that are reflective (a representation) of their target market's lived reality (identity) (Curtin and Gaither, 2005; Scherer and Jackson, 2008; Leve, 2012).

The decision to exclude a node is informed by Jay Scherer and Steven Jackson's (2008) study which argues that the Circuit of Culture model serves as both a theoretical and methodological framework useful for researching the social processes and power relations that characterise the production, diffusion and consumption of cultural artefacts. Their study utilises the Circuit of Culture model – yet excludes the *cultural regulation* node – to examine the *production*, *representation* and *consumption* of Adidas sponsored All Blacks (New Zealand National Rugby team) adverts (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). The analysis of the other nodes further inform how indigenous New Zealand identity is constructed and conveyed through the adverts (Scherer and Jackson, 2008).

Despite the previous comment by Leve (2012) and Du Gay (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) that the analysis can begin at any node, Stuart Hall (2006 [1980]) describes the production process as the starting point of the construction of a message through the Circuit of Culture. The discussion of the graphic t-shirt as *circuit of culture* therefore commences with the moment of *production,* then *consumption* and *representation and identity* respectively.

Production Node

Paul du Gay *et al.* (1997) states that the study of production represents: i) the manner in which the product is conceptualised; ii) the identity and organisational culture of the manufacturers; and iii) the process of encoding meaning during the production phase. The moment of *production* is characterised by two processes that correspond with the list above: the physical process of production in terms of the company that produces the artefact, and the production of the message (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). The production and dissemination of a product is characterised by collaborative processes (Leve, 2012). Identifying the key stakeholders and the organisation's aims and objectives provide the context for understanding how certain meanings are encoded in the product (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). This particular research includes the analysis of the identity of the designers and the factors of production utilised in the construction of the graphic t-shirt. The methodology utilised for analysing the identity and organisational culture is informed by the cases discussed in Chapter 2 that take into account the identity of the designer's, biographical details, the brand and the brand ideology (Bogatsu, 2002; de Greef, 2009; Farber, 2013).

The designer's identity is further analysed according to the sector of the industry in which each designer works (Farber, 2013). Designers working in different sectors – haute couture, *prêt-à-porter* (ready to wear) or fast fashion (retail fashion)[8] – of the fashion industry create clothes for differing reasons. The analysis of a designer's clothing within their context of the industry position would yield different results. Haute couture designers place creativity before profit, with many large designers creating not-for-sale showpieces as part of their marketing strategy (Jackson, 2006). Showpieces are used to test whether their artistic message can be later transcribed into a design concept for a more sellable garment either by the designer of fast fashion retailers (Ames, 2008). Ready to wear designers seek profit from their clothing, designing garments that consumers can wear on a daily basis (Jackson, 2006). Fast fashion

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[8] Traditionally, *haute couture* designers were once incubators of fashion and creativity, and innovators of new styles (Ames, 2008). "Prêt-à-porter which means ready to wear (RTW) emerged as a counter to couture in the 1960s (Jackson, 2006: 35)". Haute couturiers, once regarded as designers for the wealthy, create garments not intended for mass production (Ames, 2007; Gick and Gick. 2007). Fast Fashion retailers utilise forecasting methods that involve determining the latest trends and fads as they arise (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). Their quick response to changing consumer wants and fast production methods earn them the name of fast fashion retailers (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010).

retailers create garments that reflect current zeitgeist, or rather clothes that reflect a predicted future zeitgeist (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). Fashion retailers such as Zara and H&M identify themselves as fast fashion retailers (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). In South Africa, the retailer *Mr Price* identifies itself also as a manufacturer of fast fashion (Blair, 2014). Drawing from the above definition of fashion, the graphic t-shirt forms part of ready to wear sector, as they are garments consumers can wear daily.

The Encoding/Decoding model suggests that communication is constructed by a sender in a manner that encourages the receiver to interpret it in a certain way (McQuail, 2005). Identifying the sector in which the designers operate, directs the manner in which designers convey messages through their clothing; this, therefore, comprises the first process of the message construction for the designer, as it reveals the context of design. Endeavouring first to understand the context in which each t-shirt was designed (encoded) enables a decoding that is reflective of the designer's preferred meaning of their design (Hall, 2006 [1980]). Furthermore, identifying the sector of production reveals information regarding the micro-market of the designer.

Through the process of production, producers create artefacts encoded with meanings, targeted at certain consumers (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). This characterises the *circuit of meaning* between producer text and consumer. Utilising de Saussure's *circuit of speech* to conceptualise the *circuit of meaning* between design garment and consumer, informs the second moment within the *production* node. For any form of communication to take place, a message must first be created, through the use of signs (Fiske, 1990). de Saussure's *circuit of speech* is concerned with oral communication and it begins with the *circuit of speech* of a sender (between the brain and speech), namely the sender's (encoder's) mental association of concepts (signified) as representations of linguistic sound-images (signifiers) used for communication (de Saussure, 1983). A signifier – a word – is the linguistic representation of a particular object or concept, while that which is signified refers to the mental association the signifier conjures for its user (Fiske, 1990). The Saussurean model continues with the verbal communication (medium) of the mental concept (content), with the message disseminated through sound waves (channel) from sender to receiver (de Saussure, 1983). Verbal communication in this instance is defined as a the medium of communication, the physical form used to convey the message (Fiske, 1990). The content of the message refers to the verbal information disseminated through the medium (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). The channel refers to the physical or technological

means used for the transmission of the message (Fiske, 1990). The circuit of speech continues with a circuit of meaning by the receiver of the message. The *production* node is concerned with the circuit of meaning from the producer's point of view, therefore only the first half of the circuit of speech is discussed with the latter part of this section within the *consumption* node.

This particular research contends that the circuit begins between reality and the design concept. The various cases utilised in Chapter 2 inform the assumption that designers of graphic t-shirts convey the lived reality of their target market through design (Farber, 2013; Fierce, 2015). The circuit of meaning begins with the designer gathering and synthesising ideas regarding their target market zeitgeist and transcribing them into a design concept (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). Design elements such as fabric choices and use of aesthetics signify aspects of their target consumers' lived reality (signifier). In the case of this particular study, the design process in its entirety is taken into consideration in the study of the graphic t-shirt as part of the process of encoding. The theoretical concept of the design process is distilled into five activities: i) the identification of the designer's market segment; ii) the designers proffered use of design; iii) source of ideas that inform the design concept; iv) the design concept; and v) the translation, "fabrication", of the concept into a garment (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Ames, 2008; Smal and Lavelle, 2011). This particular study contends that the fabrication phase of the design process, where designers articulate their design concept into garments, refers to the final process of the *circuit of meaning* (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). The garment itself, as a form of clothing, serves as the medium, while the aesthetics and construction of the garment, the content and the fashion system serve as the channel. The reading of the meaning of the text transpires within the *consumption* node (Leve, 2012).

Consumption Node

Fashion designers are producers of commodities that become useful for consumers in the negotiation of their position in society (Sproles, 1976). Magazines and retail buyers label certain clothing as fashion trends while a valuable brand image of a designer increasing the social value of the clothes (see Blumer, 1969; Gick and Gick, 2007; Hines *et al.*, 2007). The message of the new garment received by consumers from media is thus the connotative function – messages created with the intention of influence (Jakobson, 1960). Consumers adopt clothing for the articulation of their personal identity, while media display styles that serve as a reflection of the current zeitgeist of fashion (Gick and Gick, 2007). The diffusion of fashion as commodity,

reflective of collective taste, reflects the political nature of fashion where magazines impose their dominant opinions on clothing, determine the clothing styles available within society. This study argues that analysing clothing according to economics, or the sale of items, instead of trends popularised by the media, reveals the narratives about particular collective identities.

This circuit is characteristic of the decoding process of the *circuit of meaning*. Understanding how meaning is articulated through the *consumption* node requires firstly an understanding of the produced meanings of the product and how consumers interpret this meaning through the act of consumption (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). If the meaning of the product cannot be interpreted by consumers, the product is not successful and the *circuit of meaning* does not take place (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

Consumption does not signify the end of the production/consumption process, rather consumption influences production and vice versa (Leve, 2012). The moment of *consumption* serves as a methodology for understanding how cultural artefacts are utilised in the context of experiences, social relations and sites of resistance (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). Understanding how the cultural artefact can be utilised by consumers to maintain and resist moments of lived reality requires the analysis of the representation of the cultural artefact. This study does not analyse the manner in which *Butan* and *Magents* consumers utilise the graphic t-shirt as a material product. This idea of consumption informs the parameters of data collection in this study, as only the most widely consumed t-shirt styles from the year ending 2015 shall be analysed. This research utilises the graphic t-shirt as a portal for understanding the lived reality of the selected designers' target market.

The production process is characterised by the encoding of meaning, while the *consumption* process is characterised by decoding, making these a continuation of one another (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). The *consumption* node therefore utilises the decoding model, which serves as the complete circuit of meaning. Decoding serves as the circuit of speech that transpires from the receivers' point of view. The interpretation the message by receiver represents the circuit from ear to brain (de Saussure, 1983). Upon hearing the communicated message, the receiver (decoder) does the inverse of the sender in associating a linguistic sound-image to mental concepts of representation (de Saussure, 1983). For Saussure, there exists no relationship that connects the signifier to its signifies, rather its association is determined by linguistic rules (codes) (Chandler, 2007); this view makes relevant the use of de Saussure's *langue* and *parole*.

Within contemporary semiotics, the distinction between *langue* and *parole,* "is one between *system* and *usage, structure* and *event* or *code* and *message*" (Chandler, 2007:8-9). Analysing the manner in which designers utilise aesthetics in past designs serve as a code for analysing the manner in which designers convey meaning (Bogatsu, 2002; de Greef, 2009).

Consumption refers to the purchase of a product based on its monetary and social value (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). This research does not analyse the consumption practices of the selected designers' target consumers. Consumption in this study is viewed as an act of consuming – meaning inscribed in an object through the process of production and advertising (Baudrillard, 1968), as stated in Chapter 1. The moment of *consumption* is utilised for understanding how designers convey meaning through design.

Representation Node

The moment of *representation* is understood through engagement with the text form of a cultural artefact (Leve, 2012). A garment is an open text that coveys personal opinions of the zeitgeist of both consumer and designer (Evelyn and Wolfgang, 2007). "A text or practice or event is not the issuing source of meaning but a site where articulation of meaning – variable meaning(s) – can take place" (Storey, 1996: 4). As such, the dissemination or circulation of a product refers to the circulation of the meanings embedded within the product (Hall, 2006 [1980]). *Representation* as a Circuit of Culture node refers to the way in which meaning of objects are constituted (Leve, 2012).

The meanings of representations are not innate in the product but are socially constructed through signifying systems (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). Furthermore, for any representation to make sense, it needs to be based on something that exists in reality (Leve, 2012). This draws parallels with the Peircean (Peirce, 1932) triadic model of signification. The Peircean model consists of a i) *representamen*; ii) *object;* and iii) *interpretant*, which form the triadic elements of a sign (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 2007). This study adopts the Peircean definitions of the *representamen* as a *signifier*, the *object* as *a referent* and the *interpretant* as the *signified* (Peirce, 1932). Chapter 4, *Stylish Methods*, discusses the use of the triadic model of signification as a semiotic analytical scheme used in the content analysis of the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts. The abovementioned terminology is mobilised as pre-coded categories for the qualitative content analytical schema (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2009; Fourie, 2009) utilised for analysis

findings of the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts. As a theoretical construct, the triadic model is further utilised in *Voguish Analysis chapters* (Chapters 5 and 6), in discussing the study's findings in light of the Circuit of Culture model's moment of *representation* (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer and Jackson, 2008). The discussion below elaborates on the definition of the elements of the triadic model as a theoretical concept.

A *representamen* is "the form in which the sign appears" (Chandler, 2007: 30). The *representamen*, serves as a signifier of a tangible object that exist in reality (Peirce, 1932). As such, the *object* is the "representative character" – the referent property – of a sign (Fourie, 2009: 51). The *interpretant* (signified) is not the act of decoding, rather it is the interpretive quality of the sign (Fourie, 2009). The *interpretant* is the signified mental concept based on the creator's or reader's knowledge of the referent and understanding of the relationship between the signifier and the referent (Fiske, 1990; Chandler, 1994). The encoded information serves as a *sign*, the reading of aesthetics serve as the *interpretant* and the signifier to that which is represented in this study, collective identity

Within the context of this research, design elements operate as *representamen* of elements that characterise the lived reality of a specific collective identity (the object). The *interpretant* refers to the knowledge of how a designer uses design principles as a sign as an expressive tool. Peirce's model serves as a structure for understanding the construction and interpretation of meaning according to the manner in which signs are organised (Tomaselli, 2015). The Peircean taxonomy of signs of indexical, iconic and symbolic modes is further utilised as a theoretical framework and analytical tool (Chandler, 2007). Iconic modes refers the reality of a sign, indexical modes refer to signs that serve as direct representations of that which they signify, while the symbolic mode is a constructed or learned representation of that which is signified (Peirce, 1932). These definitions inform the denotative, connotative and mythical meaning of the text. These meanings are utilised in understanding how a designer utilises design to convey the original design concept. Endeavouring to understand a designer's original design concept reveals the iconic mode of design as a sign. This is evident in the discussion of the 1940s utility dress (discussed in Chapter 2) where the structure and form of the garment signifies the utilitarian purpose of the garment (Mason, 2011). The design structure and form of a dress that resembles an overcoat a reveals the iconic – first order meaning – of the utility dress (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). The connotative meanings of a message are evident when analysing how representations of reality are conveyed, through indexical signification (Hartley, 2002). The

connotative meaning of the form and structure of the utility dress is indexical of the utilitarian militant jackets worn by solders during the Second World War (Mason, 2011). The symbolic meaning of a sign reveals the myth or ideological meaning of a text (Hartley, 2002). In the context of the utility dress, the garment is reflective of the zeitgeist of the 1940s, characterised by restrictions on the fashion industry because of the war (Mason, 2011). As such, the utility dress is a symbolic signifier of the Second World War. These theoretical concepts are utilised as part of the discussion of the *Butan* (in Chapter 5) and *Magents* (in Chapter 6) t-shirts presented as part of the moment of *representation* in the *Voguish Analysis* chapters.

The above example reflects how the information that informs both the *production* and *consumption* nodes informs the *representation* node of the circuit. This leads to the final process within the model, that of the articulation of *identity*, which asks the question of how certain identities come to associate themselves with the product (du Gay *et al.*, 1997).

Identity Node

Identity is conceptualised on an individual, collective, organisational and national level (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). *Identity* and *representation* often overlap, as the *identity* node requires an analysis of how meaning associated with a product is used by individuals to express their identity (Turner, 2003; Champ and Brooks, 2010). du Gay *et al.* (1997) note that through engaging with the representation of a product, it becomes clear with whom the product can be associated. Curtin and Gaither (2005) note that the articulation of *identity* refers to meanings ascribed to objects through the process of *production* and *consumption*. The underlying question in the analysis of the articulation of *identity* therefore determines the various identities are associated with the product (Turner, 2003). This study adopts the assumption that cultural artefacts are intrinsically linked to the construction and maintenance of social reality and history (Pitout, 2007); this serves as the rationale for utilising the findings from the *production, consumption* and *representation* nodes to discuss the *identity* node of the graphic t-shirt as a circuit of culture. This assertion assumes that producers of media texts draw knowledge from their audiences in constructing message making audiences both the "source and the receiver" of media messages (Hall, 2006 [1980]: 165). Media texts express the lived reality of their audiences, through the creation of television, film and music (Kellner, 1995). The prevailing clothing styles of a society reflects the cultural and historical narratives of the collective identities they were created for (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012).

Media organisations draw from audience views and beliefs in creating media texts illustrating the manner in which the moments of *production* and *identity* operate as a circuit (Kellner, 1995). Media audience research allows medium specific research that identifies those audiences who prefer a specific medium, based on their social uses (McQuail, 2005). Similarly, micro-market segmentation allows designers to collect data regarding the environmental factors that characterise and influence consumer needs (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007).

Designers collect data – through the forecasting process[9] – regarding the consumers' zeitgeist, lifestyle, trends, and needs which enable designers to tailor their marketing practices toward their intended consumer (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The manner in which changes within the zeitgeist are predicted to impact societal life characterises the manner in which designers create clothes that cater to consumer needs (Ames, 2008). The Cultural Studies definition of culture informs the manner in which this study views fashion as a cultural process that mirrors the social reality and beliefs of collective identities.

The main goal of any designer is to satisfy the needs of their consumer through innovative design (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007), therefore designers create with an ideal consumer in mind. The discussion of the *identity* node in Chapter 5 for *Butan* and Chapter 6 (for *Magents Lifestyle Apparel)* of this study utilises the framework of collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004) in conjunction with the findings and interpretation from the subsequent nodes in order to classify the collectives identities associated with *Butan* and *Magents* graphic t-shirts.

Conclusion

The theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter characterise the study of the graphic t-shirt as the study of a cultural artefact. Adopting a Cultural Studies approach informs the decision to study not only the t-shirt, but also the social, historical and economic conditions that

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[9] Forecasting techniques analyse the supra, macro and microenvironment of consumers (Le Pechoux, *et al., 2007*; Ames, 2008). The knowledge regarding the supra-environment reveals how consumer worldviews are shaped by local and global politics, economy, culture and natural environment, informing designers' conceptualisations of new clothing styles that express these ideals (Le Pechoux *et al., 2001;* Ames, 2008). Macro-environmental information has the capacity to reveal the dominant social groups, and powerful commercial enterprises that influence perception that informs the initial adoption of new styles (Le Pechoux, *et al.,* 2007; Ames, 2008). Knowledge of the microenvironment enables designers a further understanding of high, popular and low cultures within a society and which of those relates to their target consumer (Ames, 2008).

characterise the creation of the t-shirt; this further informs the decision to utilise the Circuit of Culture model as both a theoretical and analytical tool. The discussion of the evolution of the Circuit of Culture model as the main theoretical framework of this research revealed that the Encoding/Decoding model informed the conception of the model (Scherer and Jackson, 2008; Greer, 2010). This substantiates the decision to utilise the Encoding/Decoding model in conjunction with the Circuit of Culture model. Reviewing the development of the Encoding/Decoding model highlighted the manner in which Ferdinand de Saussure's contributions to the field of semiotics and linguistics informed the model. Furthermore, though the model does not unequivocally acknowledge the Peircean model of triadic signification as an analytical tool used for the interpretation of meaning, adopting the triadic model assists in the comprehension of the meaning making process within the model (Tomaselli, 2015). These arguments serve as a rationalisation for this research's utilisation of multiple theories.

The chapter concludes with an amalgamation of the Circuit of Culture model, semiotics and the Encoding/Decoding model discussed within the context of the graphic t-shirt. This discussion elaborated the interrelated nodes of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity,* outlining the study of the graphic t-shirt as a circuit of culture. This serves as a theoretical rationalisation of research design of this study. Chapter 4 entitled *Stylish Methods* elaborates on these theoretical concepts of production, consumption and representation through the discussion of the methodology and research paradigms that inform this study. The *Voguish Analysis* chapters, presents the findings of this analysis of the graphic t-shirt according to each designers articulation of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity*. The chapter places particular attention on the manner in which each moment of the Circuit of Culture informs the knowledge about the lived reality of the micro-market of designers that were utilised in this study.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology
Stylish Methods

Introduction

The previous chapter, *Fabrics of Theory,* discussed the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) serves as the primary theoretical framework used to discuss the graphic t-shirts under analysis, according to moments of *production*, *consumption*, *representation* and *identity*. This fourth chapter, *Stylish Methods,* outlines the manner in which the Circuit of Culture model also served as an analytical tool. *Fabrics of Theory* further discussed the use of Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) as a framework for the discussion of the manner in which designers encode meaning into each t-shirt and the various interpretations – readings – that can be decoded from the aesthetics. The chapter also detailed the use of semiotic theory from a constructionist paradigm as the framework used in the discussion of how the design elements of each t-shirt operate as signs that convey meaning. This chapter elaborates on the use of semiotics as a research instrument, utilised in creating coded categories for the qualitative content analysis of each t-shirt.

Stylish Methods details the methodological approach employed in collecting and analysing this study's data. The chapter begins with an outline of the research approach employed for understanding the meanings of graphic t-shirts as a representation of aspects of the lived reality of certain collective identities that exist in South Africa. The chapter continues with a delineation of the sampling techniques utilised in recruiting the *Butan Wear (Butan)* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents)* designers as the research participants, and a detailed account of the data collecting procedure. The discussion pertaining to data collection highlights the challenges encountered during the data collection process, and the manner in which a qualitative content analysis was utilised for converting the aesthetics of the t-shirt samples into analysable units.

This chapter introduces the data analysis process, while Chapters 5 and 6, (collectively termed the *Voguish Analysis* chapters) present the findings and interpretations discussed with the aim of answering this study's research question. This fourth chapter further discusses of the data analysis process of the pilot study of the *Mr Price* t-shirt, which informed data collection and

data analysis procedures of this study. Furthermore, the pilot study details the use of semiotics as an analytical scheme for interpreting the meaning as part of the content analysis of the t-shirt data. Finally, this chapter concludes with an outline of the ethical parameters, and reliability measures of this research. Unlike the previous chapters of this dissertation, *Stylish Methods* details some of its contents in the past tense, as it serves as a record of the methods employed in the analysis of the graphic t-shirt as socio-cultural communication about South African collective identity.

Research Approach

The primary aim of this research is to understand the meanings conveyed in four graphic t-shirts – created by South African fashion brands *Butan* and *Magents* – as representations of the discourses that exist in post-apartheid South Africa. This aim is informed by the social constructionist paradigm aim to understand meanings and discourses that exist in society (Guba and Lincon, 1999). Constructionist paradigms employ methodological strategies that are concerned with understanding meanings, making them qualitative in nature (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The primary objective of uncovering the meanings presented through graphic t-shirts called for a descriptive objective. A descriptive objective such as this can be a goal of both qualitative and quantitative research, however, this research utilises non-numerical information (the aesthetics of graphic t-shirts), making it qualitative in nature (du Plooy, 2009; Struwig and Stead, 2013). The discussion presented below, outlines the paradigm, research approach, and study design adopted for the analysis of the graphic t-shirt as representation of the lived reality of the *Butan* and *Magents* target markets.

Constructionist Paradigm

A research paradigm refers to a basic belief system based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that serve as guiding frameworks for the analysis of any phenomenon (Guba and Lincon, 1999; du Plooy, 2009). This research draws from a constructionist paradigm. Constructivism and constructionism are often used interchangeably, however, they do not lead to the same modes of enquiry (Gergen, 1985; Hruby, 2001). Constructivism refers to a series of theories regarding the manner in which individuals construct knowledge (Hruby, 2001). Social constructivism "enquires after the social

conventionalizations, perception and knowledge in everyday life" (Flick, 2004: 87). Social constructionism, or constructionism, refers to the construction of meaning through social interaction and interpretation (Kim, 2001). This research is concerned with the manner in which designers use graphic t-shirts to convey knowledge about their target market's reality through interacting with their consumers' zeitgeist.

Ontologically, constructions assume that reality is not given, but socially constructed through language and sign systems (Chandler, 2007). The fashion forecasting process identifies signifiers of emerging and current trends within society and utilises it as knowledge about their target market's zeitgeist (Jackson, 2007). The findings from the literature review (See Chapter 2) revealed that designers convey their personal interpretation of their target market's zeitgeist through their seasonal clothing designs (Au *et al.*, 2001; Gick and Gick, 2007). Studies pertaining to South Africa revealed that; representations of a designer's target market's reality are used by consumers as part of their construction and articulation of collection belonging (Vincent, 2007; de Greef, 2009; Musangi, 2009; Farber, 2013). The meanings conveyed in clothing (as a form of material culture) serve as a part of a discourse about society used by collective identities to construct their identity (Hall, 1996); this informs the assumption that understanding the meaning of clothing informs knowledge about the lived reality of specific collective identities that exist in South Africa. This assumption serves as the rationale for adopting a constructionist paradigm which is concerned with understanding how social meanings is encoded in language (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). A constructionist paradigm is utilised to understand how *Butan* and *Magents* draw from the lived reality of their target market in encoding meanings in their graphic t-shirt designs.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is framed by inductive reasoning, where the researcher formulates assumptions and attempts to confirm them through a description of their findings (du Plooy, 2009). The literature surveyed in Chapter 2 informed the assumption that the analysis of the aesthetics of the graphic t-shirt reveals knowledge regarding aspects of the zeitgeist of a designer's target market (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Musangi, 2009). In adopting a qualitative approach, this research seeks to prove such assumptions by analysing the t-shirts designed by *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* using a semiotic analytical scheme as part of the qualitative content analysis. Semiotics refers to a "method of textual analysis, but

involves both the theory and analysis of signs, codes and signifying practices" (Chandler, 2007: 259); it is the study of how meaning occurs in all forms of communication and expression (Tomaselli, 1999). As part of the qualitative content analysis, semiotic theory assists the interpretation of the meaning of each designer's t-shirt.

The third chapter of this dissertation outlined the manner in which the Circuit of Culture serves as a framework for describing the graphic t-shirt according to moments of *representation, production, consumption and identity* (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer and Jackson, 2008; Champ and Brooks, 2010; Leve, 2012). In understanding each moment as text, construction, reading and lived reality, respectively (Leve, 2012), the Circuit of Culture model served as a framework for describing the construction of the t-shirt as text that can be read as a narrative of its intended consumer's lived reality.

Adopting a qualitative approach enables a researcher to analyse the manner in which meaning patterns contribute to the understanding of social reality (Flick *et al.*, 2004). The t-shirts under analysis serve as a visual narrative of South African life constructed by the designer. These narratives reflect multiple discourses about the various collectible identities in existence in present day South Africa. Understanding collective identity allows for the understanding that similarities and differences enable those in society to define and place themselves within a society, cementing their cultural belonging (Gilroy, 1996). *Fashioning Meaning,* does not attempt to describe South Africa's collective identity as a whole, but rather aspects of a collective identity represented by two South African Fashion brands, *Butan* and *Magents*.

Descriptive Study Design

Positivist paradigm designs are exploratory in nature while the constructivist favour designs that allow for rich descriptions (Durrheim, 2006). The previous discussion outlined the aim of this research is to use the graphic t-shirt in order to describe the lived reality of the collective identities represented by two South African fashion designers. A research design refers to the plan that details the: i) research questions; ii) unit of analysis; iii) sampling parameters; iv) analysis methods; and v) interpretation of findings data (Yin, 2003; du Plooy, 2009).

The research question seeks to describe the meaning of the graphic t-shirts, and as such the designers of t-shirts served as the sample. The primary research question of this study asks: what do the meanings of the graphic t-shirts convey about the lived reality of South Africa's

collective identities? The nature of the question requires a descriptive design, as it gives rise to research questions that seek to ask "who/what is to be described" (du Plooy, 2009: 95).

Methodologically a constructionist paradigm seeks to uncover the manner in which social reality is constructed, preferring texts and interviews for their methods of analysis (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The primary objective of this research is to decode the meanings of the graphics t-shirts as representations of social reality. The unit of analysis is therefore the text – the contents – of the t-shirts while a qualitative content analysis is used as both a data collection and analysis method (du Plooy, 2009). As an analytical tool, a qualitative content analysis – which utilises semiotics as an interpretive tool – is used to uncover the apparent and latent meanings of the contents of the t-shirt (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). As a data collection method, the content analysis converts the contents of the t-shirt – as a text – into analysable data (du Plooy, 2009); this forms part of the first step of semiotics analysis process (see Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009) that informs the analytical scheme utilised as part of the qualitative content analysis. The latter part of this chapter – which details the data collection process as lengths – elaborates on how the qualitative content analysis makes use of semiotics.

The second chapter, *Threading Literature,* detailed the manner in which the garment is a medium with the design elements operating as a creative linguist form that conveys meaning (Clemente, 2008; Mackinney-Valentin, 2012). Fashion is a form of communication between designer and consumer (Sproles, 1981b; Bugg, 2009) and as such, the source of the data for this research therefore refers to the fashion designer, while the aesthetics of each t-shirt serve as the data. Sampling refers to the sources from which data is collected (Newing, 2011), therefore the sampling procedures refers to the recruitment of fashion designers as research participants. The subsequent sections of this chapter details the sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis methods utilised in this research.

Sampling Procedures

There exist three sampling strategies: i) probability sampling, ii) quasi-probability and iii) non-probability (du Plooy, 2009). Random or non-probability sampling allows for a proper representation of the target population under analysis and is commonly used in quantitative research (Newing, 2011). Purposive sampling does not a allow for a quantifiable sample of a target population, rather it is most useful for the analysis of small groups of individuals (du

Plooy, 2009). This research utilised two purposive sampling strategies in the selection designers as participants. A non-random purposive strategy was utilised in the selection of fashion brands as a sample unit, while a convenience sampling strategy was utilised in recruiting fashion designers.

Purposive Sampling Strategy

The objectives of this research informed the decision to use a purposive sampling strategy for recruiting individuals deemed suitable for the study (Newing, 2011). Chapter 1 outlined the primary objective of this study as understanding how designers convey meaning through the aesthetics of their t-shirt designs. A known group sample of South African fashion designers who create graphic t-shirts as part of their product offering were purposefully selected as they were considered as a reflection of their target market considered for this research (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003; du Plooy, 2009). A target population was not predetermined as part of the sampling strategy, however, understanding that designers interpret the lived reality of their consumers in constructing a design concept for new garments (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Ames, 2008), informed that the chosen designer served as a representation of a target population.

A purposive sampling strategy allows for the selection of specific participants that possess specific qualities regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Polkinghorne, 2005). This research sought participants who were independent ready to wear designers who offered a wide range of graphic t-shirts, rather than larger fast fashion retailers. The decision to use independent designers rather than fast fashion retailers was due to the fact that retailers often employ large design team and forecasters, while smaller independent labels take on the dual role of designer and forecaster (Jackson, 2007). Furthermore, fast fashion retailors create clothes that reflect prevailing fashion trends, rather than interpreting the reality of the complete zeitgeist of their target consumer (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010; Cachon and Swinney, 2011). The literature surveyed in Chapter 2 further informed this decision, as past studies had successfully interpreted the t-shirts of ready to wear fashion brands, yielding results that informed this research (Vincent, 2007; Musangi, 2009; Farber, 2013).

Qualitative researchers do not state an ideal size of a sample, as the sample size is based on the objectives of the research (Struwig and Stead, 2013). Initially, a sample size of six t-shirts was predetermined, with the decision to recruit six designers in order to understand the different

ways in which designers interpret the zeitgeist. The characteristics of the sample unit (South African Fashion designers) were determined by the elements (graphic t-shirts) that focused this study as communication research (Struwig and Stead, 2013).

An online search for 'South African fashion designers' and 'South African streetwear designers', was utilised for creating a list of the possible designers that could be included in the sample. The search results served to create a list of the possible designers that could serve as a sample. Each fashion brand was further searched for online in order to determine whether it had a website. The brands with no website were eliminated, as the designers' homepage would later serve as a "way of finding desired material" (Struwig and Stead, 2013: 86). The homepages were surveyed in order to determine whether the fashion brands created graphic t-shirts as part of their product offering. National distribution of clothing, both online and physically, served as a further parameter, as this served useful in considering the identity of their target market. Finally the brand's online presence on social media served as further criteria. Each brand's online presence was of particular importance as it represents the brand's relationship with the market they represent through their designs. Furthermore initial contact was made through the brand's online channels (such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), as many designers do not list their contact details online. Each designer was selected as a representation of a certain aspect of culture; the designer's cultural backgrounds were also taken into consideration, as each designer is representative of a certain culture that comprises South Africa's collective identity. This selection was undertaken in order to portray possible varying cultural interpretations, however, not all cultures could be represented.

Recruitment Strategy – Convenience Sampling

The initial sample size for this research had been six designer, with one t-shirt from each designer. Establishing initial contact using Facebook served as major difficulty as many designers did not respond to the message sent to them. From the purposive sample frame, a convenience method was utilised, which selects cases based on their ease of obtainability (Struwig and Stead, 2013). A convenience sampling strategy enabled the selection of designers based on those who responded.

Ten designers were contacted and asked to participate in this study, however, of those ten, four replied to the initial Facebook message. Of the four designers who replied, one designer

declined the offer to take part in the study, as they were busy with a rebranding strategy and had not released new merchandise. The sample size was therefore amended to three designers, with two t-shirts from each designer. Finally a formal request to be a part of the study was sent to the designers via e-mail. The three designers who agreed to take part were sent a formal email, explaining the nature of this research (appendix 1).

The designers were later asked to send images of their t-shirt during the month of June 2016, however, one designer elected to not send a sample. The designer later explained that due to the small size of their business they had not created new t-shirts in 2015. The sample size was amended a final time, to two designers, with two t-shirt samples each. The aim of this research is to understand the how the design process can be analysed as a process of communication. As such, the numerical change in sample size would not affect the findings. The final two brands, *Butan* and *Magent*s, are located in Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively. A profile of each designer is not detailed in this chapter, as it served as part of the analysis process; however, the contents of the four t-shirt samples are detailed in the subsequent section

Pilot Study

A qualitative content analysis was utilised as a data analysis tool. G.M du Plooy (2009) notes that in order to ensure the practicality of a coding scheme, a pilot study needs to be conducted. The pilot study was conducted prior to the data collection procedures, to ensure the reliability of a qualitative content analysis as a methodological tool and semiotic theory as an analytical framework. The findings from the pilot study informed the decision to include interviews with each of the designers as further data to validate the findings from the analysis process. As such, the pilot study is discussed before the section detailing the data collection methods.

A t-shirt that formed part of the *Mr Price* Summer 2014 'lookbook' served as an informal analysis[10] used as a pilot study to establish whether research of this nature would be feasible. The pilot study of the *Mr Price* t-shirt was informed by the basic semiotic analysis derived by Daniel Chandler (1994) and Pieter Fourie (2009), which begins with the identification of the institution from which the text emanates from.

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[10] The study is classified as informal, as the findings from the analysis of the Mr Price t-shirt are not discussed as part of this dissertations finding in Chapter 5. The study was did however inform the methodological processes used in the analysis of the Butan and Magents t-shirts.

The identity of the institution was identified as the South African retailer *Mr Price*. Utilising the 2014 Mr Price Annual Report (Blair, 2014) as documentary data, a profile of the company was created. This would later serve as a code for interpreting the meaning of the retailer's name. The classification of the name "Mr Price" as a sign was further informed by the Peircean triadic model of signification: of i) *representamen* (signifier); ii) *interpretant* (signified); and iii) *object* (referent) (Peirce, 1932; Chandler, 1994). The analysis first defined the signifier, referent and signified meanings of retail brand name "Mr Price". As Chapter 3 discussed, the *representamen* refers the appearance the sign takes (Chandler, 2007) and it is best comprehended in a similar manner to Ferdinand de Saussure's (1983) *signifier*. The *signifier* is a referent of an *object* that exists in reality (Fourie, 2009). The *interpretant* refers to the interpreter's or reader's interactions with the interpretant and object whereby meaning is abstracted, enabling the sign to signify an image or mental concept of something other than itself (Posner, 2009). This research adopts the term *referent* in classifying the interpretant (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009). The association between the referent and the signifier reveals the arbitrary, indexical and symbolic signifying properties of the sign.

The name "Mr Price" served as the signifier with its meaning the signified. Using the English language as a code for interpreting the signifier, the signified referent of 'Mr' and 'Price' was determined. Information derived from the mission statement of *Mr Price*, served as a code for interpreting the signified, using 'Mr' a derived from the word master (Ayto, 2005), and 'Price', which refers to monetary value as the referent. The mission statement revealed that the retailer describes itself as a "provider of fashionable merchandise" (Blair, 2014: 15) to "young and youthful customers in the 6-10 LSM range" (Lyne, 2014: 35). The signifier "Mr Price" was therefore established signifying the retailer as the master of fashionable clothing at reasonable prices.

The retailer's reports were further analysed in order to understand the company's design ethos; the report stated that the company employs an in-house trend team who scours the globe in search of trends that could be reinterpreted for the development of clothing ranges (Blair, 2014). The recreation of trends is not uncommon in the fashion industry as it forms part of the fashion forecasting process (Jackson, 2007; de Wet, 2008). It is common for large retailers to employ forecasters to travel the world in order to source trends for their clothing lines (Jackson, 2007); this informed the assumption that *Mr Price* clothing designs reflect global and local youth trends.

The analysis of the name and surveying of the report and mission statement created a profile of the brand and their design preference. *Mr Price* was assumed to use design in order to articulate prevailing clothing trends – at an affordable price – to their target market. This was further confirmed by a reading of the *Mr Price* mission statement which stated that the company constantly engages with their customers in order to create clothes that caters to their needs (Lyne, 2014). This findings from the analysis of the retailer's name was utilised to contextualise the interpretation of the t-shirt under analysis (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: 'Bossy' Tank Top
Source: Mr Price Group, *Mr P Summer 2014 Lookbook*, 2014

The analysis of text depends upon a context in order to interpret meaning (Eco, 1981). The contextual understanding of *Mr Price* clothing was derived from the identity of the company and the understanding that the retailer creates clothing that is reflective of current trends. This knowledge was utilised as code for interpreting the relationship between the signifier (the word "bossy") and the referent (the English definition of the word). The findings from the identification of the brand informed the first level semiotic analysis of a *Mr Price* tank top (Figure 4.1). The semiotic methodology utilised for the interpretation of the retailer's name was adapted into an analytical scheme of typology and layout for the content analysis of the *Mr Price* tank top (Table. 4.1)

Mr Price 'Bossy' Tank Top Pilot Study		
Semiotic Analytical Scheme of Typology and Layout		
First Level Semiotic Analysis		
Signifier	**Code**	**Referent**
"Bossy" (Linguistic Message)	English Language	Domineering personality
'Bossy' (Bar and Logo Design)	Reflection of existing trend	Obey tank top

Table 4.1: First Level Semiotic Analysis of 'Bossy' Tank Top

Interpreting the signifier "bossy" required only knowledge of the English language to derive the referent of "a domineering personality" (Ayto, 2005). Knowledge that the tank top could be a reflection of an existing trend, informed the code for interpreting the signified. The word "bossy" formed part of a bigger image, the border in which it was contained. As such, an internet search for "bar logo t-shirt" was employed in order to determine the signified meaning of the t-shirt. The search yielded results that depicted similar style tank tops, with the word "obey" (Figure 4.2)

Figure: 4.2 'Obey' Tank Top
Source: Obey Giant Clothing, *asos.com,* 2014

Further research revealed that the t-shirt was created by American graffiti artist Shepard Fairey as part of his *Obey Giant Clothing* collection (Luvaas, 2012; Staple, 2013). For a consumer who has no pre-existing knowledge of the *Obey Giant*, the 'Bossy' tank top could signify nothing other than itself, namely an object of fashion. In this capacity, the t-shirt would be an iconic sign, a sign which refers to itself (Peirce, 1932). However, the knowledge that *Mr Price* creates clothing that is reflective of prevailing trends (Blair, 2014; Lyne, 2014) serves as a code that enables a second order signification of the tank top, linking the 'Bossy' tank top to the 'Obey' tank top (Chandler, 2007; Posner, 2009). The 'Bossy' tank top is thus an indexical signifier of the 'Obey' tank top, as the bar and logo depictions of the linguistic words on 'Bossy' tank top resembles that on the 'Obey' tank top. Furthermore the words "bossy" and "obey" are binaries, conveying a causal link between the signifier "bossy" and the referent "obey" link between on the two tank tops (Peirce, 1932). The knowledge that different versions of Fairey's 'Obey' t-shirts are considered as one of the many iconic streetwear t-shirts (Staple, 2013; Neulabs, 2014), confirms the assumption that *Mr Price's* 'Bossy' tank top is a signifier of prevailing trends.

Knowledge of the signified meaning of the 'Obey' tank top reflected a constructed or learned symbolic meaning of the 'Bossy' t-shirt (Peirce, 1932). As a second order sign, the 'Obey' tank top was analysed to determine what it might signify (Table 4.2).

Mr Price 'Bossy' Tank Top Pilot Study			
Analytical Scheme of Typology and Layout			
Second Level Semiotic Analysis			
Signifier	**Referent**	**Taxonomy**	**Signified**
"Bossy" (Linguistic Message)	Personality type	Iconic	Domineering personality
'Bossy' (Bar and Logo design)	Existing fashion trend	Indexical	'Obey' tank top
'Bossy' tank top	'Obey' tank top	Symbolic	*They Live* Film

Table 4.2: Second Level Semiotic Analysis of 'Bossy' Tank Top

A brief analysis of the 'Obey' t-shirt revealed that the word "obey" (Figure 4.3) had appeared in the 1988 film *They Live* (Carpenter, 1988) about the consumer culture and the subliminal messaging of advertising (Devega, 2015).

Figure 4.3: Obey Billboard, Film Still from the *They Live* (1988)
Source: Garry Kibbe, *Alive Productions,* 1988

The analysis of the *Mr Price* tank top did not reveal much about the zeitgeist of their consumer, apart from their assumed preference of global fashion trends. This finding however did served as knowledge regarding the current reality of the South African fashion industry. The t-shirt revealed that the South African fashion industry forms part of the trickle-down theory of trends (Aage and Belussi, 2008; de Wet, 2008). During the apartheid regime, South Africa seemed to

be at the bottom end of this theory, adopting trends from the Global North as European culture was deemed far superior to that of South Africa; many retailers today still favour recreating trends from the global North for their South African consumers (de Wet, 2008). Georg Simmel's (1904) theoretical understanding of fashion trickling from the social elite down to the masses mimics that of the South African fashion landscape during the apartheid era. The *Mr Price* tank top serves as confirmation that the South African fashion industry is still largely at the bottom end of the trickle-down theory, trying to carve out an identity for itself (de Wet, 2008).

The preliminary research on *Mr Price* revealed that retailers such as *Mr Price* remain at the bottom end of this theory, as their customers desire global trends. However, not all South African's can be assumed to yearn for global trends, such as the customers of those designers who create clothing with uniquely South African elements. The future of the South African fashion industry lies within the hands of designers who create clothes that reflect South African aesthetics (de Wet, 2008; Farber, 2013). Furthermore these designers have the potential to shape not only the identity of the South African fashion industry but communicate about the various cultures that characterise present day South Africa. Fashion and the internal communication thereof can be used a form of social commentary about shared history and collective understanding of a lived social reality (de Greef, 2009; Farber, 2013).

Data Collection

This research utilised primary data, collected specifically for this study (Struwig and Stead, 2013), and secondary – documentary – data. An unobtrusive strategy was utilised in collecting the documentary data and the physical artefacts (the t-shirts) of material culture (Struwig and Stead, 2013). First, secondary data in the form of past interview documentary data about the designers' and their brands was collected online. This secondary data was used to inform inferences regarding the identity and design ethos of each brand. Once the documentary data was collected and analysed a content analysis was employed as a data collection method in order to convert the aesthetics of the t-shirt into data using an analytical scheme of static visual image (du Plooy, 2009)."The purpose of data gathering in qualitative research is to provide evidence for the experience it is investigating" (Polkinghorne, 2005: 138). The secondary data – in the form of past narrative interviews – served as documentary evidence used to

contextualise each designer's production process. The collection extraction of the graphic t-shirts into data served as evidence of the zeitgeist portrayed by each designer, contextualising the moment of *consumption* from the researcher's perspective. The primary data in the form of semi-structured interviews conducted with each designer transpired after the analysis of the t-shirt data. Unlike the secondary data, which was analysed in order to understand the each designers' encoding process, the primary data served as a triangulation method. As such the primary interview data was utilised to verify the researcher's decoded meaning as the designers' intended encoded meaning of each t-shirt.

This present *Data Collection* discussion details the collection of the secondary documentary and the conversation of the graphic t-shirt aesthetics into analysable data. The latter part of the chapter entitled, *Credibility, Dependability and Conformability of the Study,* presents the primary interview data as part of the triangulation methods used to ensure the credibility measures of this research. The decision to use the primary interviews as a validity measure served as the rationale for not discussing the interview process as part of the *Data Collection* segment of this chapter.

Qualitative Content Analysis as a Data Collection Technique

The fabric selection and stitching of the t-shirt was not included in the analysis of the t-shirt. Each designer was asked to send images of their two best selling t-shirts from the year ending 2015. The decision to analyse only the best selling t-shirts was informed by the diffusion model of fashion garments. Once a garment has been designed and produced, its diffusion throughout society is characterised by the stages of the garment's lifecycle: introduction, growth, maturity and decline (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). Fashion innovators are the first to adopt the style within the introduction phase, followed by opinion leaders and early conformists (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). The popularity of a new style is due, in part, to opinion leaders and early conformist who hold influence over early majority adopters (Rogers, 1962).

The chosen t-shirts were those t-shirts that had reached popularity based on the sales of the garment. The aesthetics of the t-shirt served as the unit of analysis, had to be extracted as data; this called for the use of a pre-coded analytical scheme of static visual images utilised in order to covert content into data (du Plooy, 2009). An analytical scheme of static visual images is utilised for describing the contents, while a semiotic analytical scheme of typology and layout

describes the signs and codes of the text, as well as their meanings (du Plooy, 2009). The *Data Analysis* segment of this chapter (see *Contextualising Consumption* sub-section) details the layout and utilisation of the above-mentioned schema as a data collection and analysis tool.

Online Documentary Data

Documentary data refers to written texts that are not necessarily created for research purposes, but can be used in the description of the social reality under investigation (Mogalakwe, 2006). Selection of documentary data should be based on: i) the authenticity of that which detailed; ii) the typicality of the document; iii) the credibility of the creator of the document; and iv) the various meanings or interpretation that can be made of the text (Flick *et al.*, 2004). Initially the documentary data was limited to the websites of each fashion label in order to extract information regarding the identity of each designer. Surveying each website revealed that the designers rarely disclosed any information about their personal identities. The data sources were extended to include online magazines, newspaper websites and blogs that had conducted interviews with the designers. In order to ensure credibility of the blogs, the documentary data was collected from well-established bloggers who had conducted interviews with the designers and bloggers who display their published interviews with the designers. The documentary data took a single day to collect (3 October 2016), the sources utilised in the collection of the data are summarised below (Table 4.3 and Table 4.4).

Documentary Data Sources		
Butan Wear		
Author (Publication Date)	**Page Title**	**Publication (Type)**
Julian Kubel (2013)	About Us	*Butan Wear* (Butan Website)
Mandy de Waal (16 November 2015)	Butan and the Gutsy Art of Brand-Building	*Mark Lives* (Online Magazine)
Mpumi Sinxoto (1 April 2014)	Sensational Street Style	*Destiny Connect: Man* (Online Magazine)
Rudzani Netshiheni (26 August 2014)	Why the 'B' in Butan Stands for Business	*Hype Magazine* (Magazine Website)
KOOLOUTC (16 December 2015)	One on One with Butan Founder, Julian Kubel	*Kool Out Concepts* (Magazine)
Nick Kaoma (25 September 2007)	Butan Wear - More Than Just a Clothing Label	*The Encore Mag* (Online Magazine)
Siphiliselwe Makhanya (30 June 2016)	Bantu fashion: Butan is the New Black	*The Time Live* (Newspaper)

Table 4.3: Butan Wear Documentary Data Sources

Documentary Data Sources		
Magents Lifestyle Apparel		
Author (Publication Date)	**Page Title**	**Publication (Type)**
Didier De Villiers (2013)	History	*Magents* (Magents Website)
Lee Lebotsa (28 July 2015)	Magents	*More than Just Food* (Magazine)
Nontando Mposo (2016)	Fashion Fit for an African Warrior	*Business Media Live* (Newspaper)
Lesley Mofokeng (07 July 2015)	Magents Make Local is Lekker Trendy Again	*The Soweten* (Newspaper)
Tara Johannisen (04 July 2015)	The Misunderstood Kids on the Fashion Block - Magents Lifestyle Apparel	*Trend Soiree* (Blog)
Yazeed Kamaldien (27 March 2016)	Wear local fashion, say South African designers	Weekly *Argus* (Newspaper)

Table 4.4: Magents Lifestyle Apparel Documentary Data Sources

Challenges Encountered

A few challenges were encountered during the data collecting process, the first of which being finding a sample. Establishing initial contact in order to request their participation proved to be difficult because many designers do not list their contact details online. The decision to contact each designer via Facebook, though not ideal due to the informal nature of the platform, served as the only means of establishing contact. However, once contact was made with each designer, the process of communication became easier.

Full ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu Natal was only obtained during the month of July 2015 (appendix 2), therefore due to the lengthy ethical application process, the analysis process only transpired in 2016. This setback also influenced the selection of the t-shirt, as the initial aim was to obtain t-shirts that could reflect a current zeitgeist. Furthermore, the decision of one designer to pull out of the study served as a challenge as the sample size was further reduced. However, in conversing with the designer, they mentioned that their t-shirt designs had remained the same since 2013, and felt that they would not serve as a reflection of the current zeitgeist. Though the collection of documentary data was not a great challenge, there was a limited amount of interview data available online. Many websites contained replications of the same interviews or opinion pieces regarding the brand – this was especially difficult with *Magents* whose designer and graphic designer rarely do interviews, as such the documentary data collected for *Magents* is less than that of *Butan*.

During the transcription of the interview with *Butan* owner/designer Julian Kubel, it was discovered that parts of the recording had been paused, and 20 minutes of the interview had not been recorded. The first section of the interview processes consisted of questions regarding to the evolution of *Butan* as a fashion brand. A secondary interview was not conducted; rather data was collected in the form of personal communication with *Butan* marketing manager Sandile Samuels on November 04 2016. The personal communication with Samuels took place in Johannesburg during 'Butan Wear 15 Years in the Game' exhibit.

Data Analysis

The findings from the pilot study revealed one of the possible meanings the *Mr Price* tank top could convey, which informed the decision to conduct interviews with the designers of the *Butan* and *Magents* designers to ensure the validly of the interpretation of their t-shirt samples. The organisation of this section follows the order of methodological process undertaken during the data collection and analysis process. As such, this section presents the analysis process of the secondary interview data (documentary data) and t-shirt samples presented in light of the interrelated moments of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity* of the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). The semi-structured interviews (primary data) conducted with each designer are discussed in the latter part of this chapter, which is concerned with the validity and reliability measures of this research process.

The documentary data of past interviews are presented as the moment of *production*. The data analysis process utilised the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) and the analysis of narrative interviews (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004) as analytical tools. The analysis process that forms part of the moment of *consumption*, which this research defined as 'reading' (see Leve, 2012), is informed by the semiotic analysis process (see Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009) and utilise the qualitative content analysis as a data collection method. The moment of *consumption,* researcher 'reading' (decoding) the t-shirts' text presents the layout of analytical schema of a static visual image with the pre-coded categories informed by the three messages of a visual image (Barthes, 1977). The schema were utilised for the decoding the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirt aesthetics into analysable units of text. The moment of *representation* presents the layout of the semiotic analytical schema of layout and typology with pre-coded categories informed by semiotic theory (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009). The findings from the pilot study, specifically the second order analysis, informed the decision to modify the semiotic analytical schema of typology and layout used in the qualitative content analysis of each t-shirt (du Plooy, 2009). The moments of *identity* does not form part of the analysis process, rather it serves as theoretical frameworks that assist the discussion of the findings from the subsequent nodes in light of this study's research question.

Contextualising Production – Documentary Data Analysis

Identifying the institution responsible for the creation of the text, and identifying the various individuals involved in the creation of the text, reveals the social and ideological factors that influence the encoding process (Fourie, 2009). This also serves as the first step of the semiotic analysis process outlined by Chandler (1994) and Fourie's (2009) semiotic analysis process. The analysis was further informed by *The Production of the Walkman* chapter of Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus' (1997) *Doing Cultural Studies,* Gabriel Rosenthal and Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004) *Analysis of Narrative-Biographical Interviews* framework and Stuart Halls *Encoding/Decoding* (2006 [1980])*.* The Circuit of Culture *production* node is characterised as the construction processes (Leve, 2012). This study's analytical process of the moment of *production* does not use the t-shirt as the unit of analysis, but rather the documentary data/biographical interviews about each brand. The documentary data was analysed with the aim of detailing the design process as a moment of encoding meaning characterised by translating the lived reality of a target consumer into graphics on a t-shirt (Kazmierczak, 2013). The documentary data collected about each designer is analysed separately with the aim to make sense of the company and the appearance of the product offering, through a biographical detailing of the company and its founder (du Gay *et al.*, 1997).

The analysis of narrative-biographical interviews involves of: i) the examination biographical data; ii) thematic field analysis; iii) reconstruction of case history; iv) detailed analysis textual location; v) reconstruction of the interview data as narrate of life as a lived experience; and vi) formation of types (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). The narrative analysis serves as a methodology for analysing texts from the point of view of the speakers (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). This method is utilised as the documentary data comprises of past interviews conducted with the designers of each brand. The narrative analysis is therefore utilised for the biographical reconstruction of the lived reality in narrative form, using past interviews with each designer as a source of data (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004).

The narrative analysis in its entirety is not used as an interpretive tool, but rather as an analytical scheme. Three of the six narrative analysis processes (examination of biographic data; thematic field analysis; reconstruction on interview data as narrative) are used to organise the biographical interviews into a narrative account of the identity of the fashion brands and

designers. The Circuit of Culture framework (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) informs of the thematic categories of:

- Identity and skills possessed by the designer(s)/owner of the brand;

- Identity and ethos of the fashion brand;

- Factors of production utilised by the brand; and

- The brand as a signifier of South Africa

The findings from the biographical interviews thematic fields are presented in light the first three process (technical infrastructure, relations of production; frameworks of knowledge) of the Encoding/Decoding model as sub-heading related to the process of encoding (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

The *factors of production* theme inform the discussion of the technical infrastructure utilised by each designer. Prior to the construction of a message, the production process of the Encoding/Decoding model begins with an analysis of the technical infrastructure and labour utilised in the creation of a message (Hall, 2006 [1980]: 164). This research does not analyse the technical infrastructure and labour process involved in the creation the t-shirt in-depth, rather this discussion focuses on where the designers manufacture the clothing, and the retailers that stock the clothing.

The themes of *brand identity and ethos* and *skills of the designer* inform the relations of production, which relates to the knowledge and skillset of the producers, the ideology of the organisation and the assumption about the audience, which influence the manner in which each designer frames their message (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The findings from the biographical interviews are presented as a cited narrative discussing the technical skills possessed by each designer, the design ethos of each brand and their profile of their intended consumer.

Frameworks of Knowledge uses the findings from the *brand identity and ethos* and the *signification of South Africa* themes. Framework of knowledge, refers to the ideas and topics used in order to create a message for a particular audience (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The documentary data findings organised according this theme convey the different manners which each designer interprets their consumers' zeitgeist for ideas and how those ideas are articulated into a design concept. These findings are displayed as narratives of each brand, using the biographical interviews to create a biographical account of the lived reality of each design

(Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). The narrative interviews, as secondary documentary data presented below, serve as an interpretive tool for contextualising the meaning of the t-shirts according to the qualitative content analysis presented in the subsequent section. Table 4.5 details the analytical process of the utilised as part of the moment of *production* analytical process.

Documentary Data Analysis Process		
Steps	**Data**	**Application**
Analysis of Biographical Narrative Interview Data	Significant dates regarding designer and brand are noted	Extraction of quotes relating to sequence of events that characterised the origin and growth of the brand
Identification of Thematic Fields	Information pertaining to the predetermined thematic fields are identified	Quotes from the interviews are organised according the Circuit of Culture *production* node thematic fields of: • Identity skills of designer; • Brand identity and ethos; • Factors of production; and • Signification of South Africa (du Gay et al., 1997)
Reconstruction of life events	Biographical data is presented in narrative form, organised in chronological order of events that characterise each designer's encoding process	Data is presented in narrative form (citation and quotes) organised according to the Encoding/Decoding model *encoding meaning structures* (as sub-categories) of: • Technical Infrastructure • Relations of production • Frameworks of knowledge (Hall, 2006 [1980])

Table 4.5: Summary of the Documentary Data Analysis Process
Adapted from: du Gay *et al.* (1997), Hall (2006 [1980]), and Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal (2004)

The findings and interpretation of the *production* node of each designer are detailed in Chapter 5, *Butan: Voguish Analysis* and Chapter 6, *Magents: Voguish Analysis.*

Contextualising Consumption – Reading of the T-shirts

The discussion of the Circuit of Culture model as a theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 stated that this research does not analyse the consumption of each t-shirt in the form of a typical reception analysis by different wearers/consumers. However, in utilising Annabelle Leve's (2012) definition of the moment of *consumption* as 'reading', *consumption* in this chapter (and in Chapters 5 and 6) presents the analytical schema of a static visual images as the researcher's decoding (reading) of each t-shirt as a text. The analysis of the *consumption* of each t-shirt takes the form of a qualitative content analysis as data collection using the semiotic analytical schema of a static visual image. This serves as the second step analysis of describing the medium and the characteristics of the text under analysis, as part of the semiotic analysis (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009).

This research uses the same medium (the graphic t-shirt) therefore the identification of the text refers conversion of the graphics of the t-shirt into analysable units. The graphics of the t-shirts are recorded into analytical scheme of static visual images using the Barthian (1977) concepts of *pure image* (the visual and linguistic message as single image) *linguistic message* (the written text on an image) and *visual message* (the pictorial form of an image) as pre-coded categories. This process also serves as the data collection method of the visuals of the t-shirt presented in the subsequent chapter. Table 4.6 presents the analytical scheme utilised as a data collection method according to the above-mentioned coded categories.

Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images	
Definition of Pre-coded Categories Terminology	
Message	**Description**
Pure Image	• Description of all the signifiers (visual and linguistic) evident on the text (Barthes, 1977) • Order of appearance in not important, rather composition/ layout of the t-shirt (Barthes, 1977) • Reference is made to the different image and fonts sizes used, • Note the colour of the t-shirt, • Note the colour schemes used on for the visual and linguistic messages
Linguistic Message	• Description of signifiers of a linguistic nature (Barthes, 1977) • List in order of appearance (top to bottom/left to right) • Note the colour, font size and the position on t-shirt
Visual Message	• Description of the pictorial signs that are a representation of reality or fictional reality (Barthes, 1977) • List of all the imagery used in the t-shirt • Note the colours and positioning

Table 4.6: Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images – Definition of Terms
Adapted from: Barthes (1977)

Chapters 5 and 6 present the detailed schema of each t-shirt under analysis as part of each designer's *consumption* node.

Contextualising Representation – Analysis of T-shirts

Representation is concerned with the manner in which sign are used to convey meaning (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). The discussion presented as part of the *representation* node utilises the findings from the previously sourced biographical interviews, and the semiotic analytical schema of typology and layout (qualitative content analysis) in discussing the manner in which each designer utilises the design process in the creation of their graphic t-shirts. The qualitative content analysis framework is informed by G.M. du Plooy's (2009) *Qualitative Content Analysis* methodology which employs semiotic theory as an interpretive tool for analysing manifest and latent meanings of a text. Pieter Fourie's (2009) *Basic Semiotic Analysis* and Daniel Chandler's (1994) *D.I.Y Semiotic Analysis*, inform pre-coded categories of the analytical schema of layout and typology utilised for analysis of the signs, codes and meanings presented

in the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts (du Plooy, 2009). The definition of the terms used in the analytical schema are further defined according to the works of Charles Pierce (1932), Ferdinand de Saussure (1983), Roland Barthes (1977) and Roman Jakobson (1960).

The findings from the *Mr Price* t-shirt revealed that the identity of the designer could serve as a code for interpreting the signified meaning of each sign. As such, the findings from the documentary data were utilised as part of the analysis of each t-shirt. Similarly to the analytical schema utilised in the pilot study (see Table 4.1 and Table 4.2) the Peircean triadic model was utilised for the pre-coded categories of the scheme. The pure image of each t-shirt served as sign comprising of three parts: i) the form in which it takes; ii) the idea or object referred to; and iii) meaning made from the form and the idea (Chandler, 1994). The Peircean triangle model utilised for the analysis and the discussion adopts the terms *representamen*, *object* and *interpretant* in the classification of these three components of the sign (Peirce, 1932). This research adopts the definition and terminology utilised by Fourie (2009) and Chandler (1994) in describing the *representamen*, the *object* and the *interpretant* as the signifier, referent and signified respectively.

The *representamen* has similar characteristics to Saussure's *signifier* as it refers to the form of sign (Chandler, 1994). The form of each linguistic and visual message of each t-shirt serve as the unit of analysis, as such they are presented as the signifier. The *object* refers to the concept or entity to which the signifier refers, and as such it is classified as the *referent* (Fourie, 2009). The sign is further classified according to their relationship between the *signifier* and *referent* in order to understand the various meanings the *sign* conveys (Chandler, 1994). The relationship of the signifier and referent reveals the arbitrary iconic, indexical or symbolic mode of signification (Fourie, 2009). The Peircean taxonomy of signs and the Barthian three levels of signification are further utilised, in discussing the interpreted meanings of each t-shirt (Peirce, 1932; Barthes, 1997). The discussion answers the question of what the meaning that each graphic of each t-shirt conveys. The classification of this terminology is listed below:

- Iconic Signification: Denotative literal meanings of sign

- Indexical Signification: Connotative figurative meaning of a sign

- Symbolic Signification: Ideological mythical meaning of a sign

(Peirce, 1932; Barthes, 1977; Hartley, 2002)

The knowledge required to interpret the signified referent each t-shirt message reflects the cultural cues the designer draws from in constructing their design concepts. The process of analysing the signifier in order to determine referent, serves as the first part of the source of the design concept. This process is informed by the design process of collecting and synthesising ideas from the lived reality of the design and consumer (Au *et al.*, 2001; Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014). It further serves as the first part of the circuit meaning of the communication, determining a mental concept of that which the communicator wishes to communicate (de Saussure, 1983).

The knowledge required to determine the mode of signification relates specific sourced ideas that into a design concept. In the context of fashion design, the mode of signification reflects the design concept of each t-shirt, as they are the messages that regarding the manner in which the designer balances their creative expression with their consumer needs through the process of garment design (Au *et al.*, 2001). The mode of signification further informs the signified (*interpretant* in Peircean terms) meaning of each designer's t-shirt (Peirce, 1932; Chandler, 1994).This reflects the third step of the semiotic analysis process (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009).

The *interpretant*, though not similar in characteristics to the Saussurean concept of the signified, is classified as the signified (Chandler, 1994). The Saussurean *signifier* is purely a mental association while the *interpretant* relates to what is signified and to the knowledge the interpreter uses in order to understand what is signified – it operates as a second order sign which can yield further interpretation (de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 1994). Determining the signified meaning of each signifier, thus utilises *codes* used by the designer during the encoding (production) process (Fourie, 2009). The codes required to understand what is the signified meaning of each t-shirt is informed by the encoding meaning structures (technical infrastructure; knowledge frameworks; relations of production) utilised by each designer (Barthes, 1977; Hall, 2006 [1980]). As such, the findings from the biographical interviews were used as a code of the designer, which assists the interpretation of the signified meanings.

The signified meaning was further analysed in order to understand the function of the sign (linguistic or visual message of the t-shirt). Chapter 2 discussed the design process as a form of communication (Bugg, 2009; Kazmierczak, 2013) and informed the assumption that signified

meanings of the linguist and visual messages on each t-shirt serve a specific function. The communication process is characterised by the use of signs according to six functions outlined by Roman Jakobson (1960). According to this process of analysis, the sign functions of each t-shirt are classified according to their:

- Referential Function: the content (subject matter) of communication;

- Expressive Function: the communicator's views, attitudes and opinion regarding the content (main subject) of the message;

- Conative Function: signs used to persuade or influence the readers opinions;

- Poetic Function: the form of the signs used to express convey the content of the message;

- Phatic function: signs used to establish contact with the reader; and

- Metalingual Function: signs that operate as codes that clarify the meaning of the content of the message

(Fourie, 2009: 54-56).

The six functions of the sign were utilised in order to understand how each designer uses design to convey meaning. The six function in conjunction with the Peircean triadic model of signification and taxonomy of signs serve as pre-coded categories for the analytical scheme of typology and layout (Table 4.7).

Semiotic Analytical Scheme of Typology and Layout				
Terminology for Pre-Coded Categories				
Signifier	Mode of Signification: Referent	Code	Signified	Function of Sign
The physical characteristics of the visual or linguistic message (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009)	Iconic, symbolic, indexical relationship between signifier and referent (Object, concept or idea referred to) of aesthetics (Peirce, 1932; Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009).	The knowledge derived from documentary data used as codes used to clarify meanings of signs (Peirce, 1932; Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009)	Meaning represented by the signifier order sign as a reflection of the design process (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009)	Referential, expressive, poetic, metalingual, conative, phatic function of sign on the t-shirt (Jakobson, 1960)

Table 4.7: Analytical Scheme of Typology and Layout – Definition of Terms
Adapted from: Peirce (1932), Jakobson (1960) Chandler (1994) and Fourie (2009)

In some instances, the linguistic or visual message serves as sign systems as they comprise of a collective of signs (Fourie, 2009). This informed the decision to utilise individual analytical schema for each message depicted on the t-shirt according such instances. Understanding the Circuit of Culture moments of *representation* and *identity* draws from the findings determined as part of the *production* and *consumption* node (Scherer and Jackson, 2008; Leve, 2015). As such Chapter 5, *Butan: Voguish Analysis*, and Chapter 6, *Magents: Voguish Analysis* discusses the findings from the analytical scheme using the semiotic theory that informed the coded categories of the schema as a theoretical framework. The findings from the *representation* node – which take into account the findings from the subsequent nodes – are further utilised to answer this study's research question as part *identity* node.

Contextualising Identity – Answering the Research Question

The findings from the *production* node enable inferences about each designer's encoding process (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). The moments of *consumption* serves as the researcher's decoding/reading of each t-shirt – using the codes used by each designer during their encoding

process – in order to establish each designer's preferred meaning of their t-shirt (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Leve, 2012). The *representation* node utilises the findings from the *production* and *consumption* nodes in discussing how each t-shirt serves as a visual representation of reality (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). Finally, the articulation of *identity* amalgamates the findings from the above-mentioned nodes in discussing how the t-shirt (as a text) serves as visual representation of an aspect of the lived reality of the brand's target market (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 utilises the findings from all these nodes to describe the lived reality of the target market of each brand as part of the *identity* node. Richard Ashmore, Kay Deaux and Tracey McLaughlin-Volpe's framework of collective identity (2004) assists this discussion of the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) t-shirts' articulation of *identity* by answering the research questions:

- What do the *Butan* graphic t-shirts convey about the lived reality of their consumer?

- What do the *Magents* graphic t-shirts convey about the lived reality of their consumer?

Credibility, Dependability and Conformability of the Study

The constructionist paradigm outlines trustworthiness and authenticity as the criteria for determining the credibility, dependability and conformability of a study (Creswell, 2000). The trustworthiness of a qualitative study refers to the credibility or validity and reliability of the research findings (Golafshani, 2003; Rolfe, 2004). The issue of trustworthiness is addressed through triangulation methods, utilised in this descriptive research in order to emphasise the accuracy and reliability of the observation (Golafshani, 2003; Durrheim, 2006). Observations in this instance refers to data collection methods such as ethnographic observation of individuals or content analyses (du Plooy, 2009). This research employed a qualitative content analysis as a form of observation, therefore triangulation in the form of the use of two data collection and analysis methods (semiotic analysis of t-shirt, Skype interviews with designer) was used in order to validate findings (du Plooy, 2009).

Credibility - Triangulation

Traditionally, triangulation was a method adopted through the positivist approach, however in past years, the method has formed part of the constructionist paradigm as a method of revealing the multiple realities that might exist of one phenomenon (Seale, 1999). Using semiotics to

uncover meanings in the creation of t-shirts only revealed one of many meanings that could be interpreted in many different ways. Interpretations, even those that use structured frameworks, can be influenced by the researcher's own cultural references (Eco, 1979). The meaning of the garment, using the designer as the source of meaning, was therefore imperative, as it was used to further understand and substantiate the meaning derived from the semiotic reading of the aesthetics of the garments. The knowledge that qualitative researchers analyse and interpret data in association with their participants, in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation from the perspective of the research participant (Struwig and Stead, 2013: 11), further informed the decision to also engage with the designer.

Understanding how the various designers interpret and express their target market's lived reality through their design process was accomplished through engaging semi-structured interviews with each designer. Interviews are an effective way to understand the personal experiences of others (Fontana and Frey, 1994). The aim of these interviews – which were recorded and transcribed – was to understand the designers' encoding process. The findings from the analysis of the t-shirt informed the interview guide (appendix 3-4) for each designer. Though each guide was different, the questions were organised according to standardised themes of: i) identity of the designer; ii) personal understanding of fashion design; iii) brand ethos; iv) characteristics of target market; v) conceptualisation of design concepts; and vi) findings from t-shirt analysis.

Each interview was conducted via Skype and lasted an hour in order to gain a well-rounded understanding of the designers' design process. The audio of each interview was recorded, transcribed and analysed, in order to establish the differences and similarities between this study's decoded meanings and the designers encoded meaning of each t-shirt. Drawing from the premise that transmitted reality becomes effective through collective and individual interpretation (Flick *et al.*, 2004), the findings from the semiotic analysis of the t-shirt designs serve as the decoded meanings of the t-shirts while the analysis of the interviews served as the encoded message. The responses from the interview were compared to the reading of the t-shirts, and those readings that differed from the interpreted reading were noted as the preferred reading (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The decision to include any disparity between the interpreted reading of the t-shirt and the designers intended meanings is further motivated by the epistemological assumption of the constructionist paradigm that states that the researcher assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, therefore findings are constructed through interaction with research participants in the analysis process (Guba and Lincon, 1999).

Dependability - Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to determine the dependability of the research instrument. The premise was to employ various lines of investigation in order to determine whether the same conclusions would be formed, and to also understand any errors that might occur thereby creating a richer understanding of the reality of the analysis (Berg, 2001). Though many studies have analysed the graphic t-shirt as narratives, the objective to utilise the t-shirt as knowledge about lived reality is not commonly explored. As such, ensuring that the research instrument could yield results that could achieve this objective was imperative. Re-administering a research instrument is a common method utilised in ensuring reliability. The analysis of the *Mr Price* t-shirt served to test the research instrument.

Ethical Considerations

There exists no predetermined rules that govern the ethical acceptance of communication research, however each participant's involvement in the research should be consensual (du Plooy, 2009). During the recruitment phase of this research, a letter detailing the outline of the study was emailed to each designer (appendix 1). Before each interview was conducted an informed consent letter and a guide of the interviews was emailed to each designer (appendix 3-4). The consent letter informed each designer that participation was voluntary and requested permission to record each interview. Neither of the designers elected to remain anonymous, therefore their full names and biographical details were included as part of the analysis.

Ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was obtained during the month of August 2015 (appendix 2), and the data collection process commenced in June 2016, when designers emailed their t-shirt designs for analysis. A gatekeeper letter was deemed unnecessary as the interview data served as a validity measure rather than a unit of analysis as the designers of each brand are also the founders.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the data collection and analysis process. *Stylish Methods* highlighted the manner in which the constructionist paradigm informed the various methods employed in collecting and analysing the documentary data and the contents of each t-shirt. The chapter

began by detailing the manner in which the aims and objectives of this research informed the rationale to adopt a qualitative approach, a constructionist paradigm and descriptive study. The chapter concluded by detailing the validity measures and ethical consideration applied in this research. The validity measures described the collection of addition data through online skype interviews with each designer used in order to ensure the credibility and dependability of the content analysis.

In order to facilitate a flow of reading, the findings from each designer are presented as individual chapters. Chapter 5, *Butan: Voguish Analysis,* presents the findings from the *Butan Wear* analysis process, while Chapter 6, *Magents: Voguish Analysis,* discusses the findings from the *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* findings. The *Voguish Discussions* chapters present the interpretations and discussion of the findings contextualised to the four interrelated Circuit of Culture the moments of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity* (du Gay *et al.,* 1997). The findings from the documentary data and the tabulated analysis schema of a static visual image of each t-shirt serve as moments of *production* and *consumption* respectively. The Circuit of Culture Model serves as an analytical framework for the analysis of the documentary data and t-shirt data as part of the *production* and *consumption* node (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Leve, 2012).. The *representation* and *identity* node utilise the Circuit of Culture as a theoretical framework in discussing the findings from the *production* and *consumption* nodes (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer and Jackson, 2008).

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings
Butan: Voguish Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter, *Stylish Methods* discussed the research design, paradigm and sampling methods that underpin the study of graphic t-shirts as a form of socio-cultural communication about collective identity. The chapter reviewed the methods employed for the data collection of the narrative biographical interviews (documentary data), the contents of the four graphic t-shirts, and the Skype interviews (as a validity and reliability measure) with *Butan Wear (Butan)* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents)* designers. It further outlined the data analysis processes – that form part of the interrelated nodes of the circuit of culture of the graphic t-shirt – utilised for purpose of answering the primary research question stated in Chapter 1.

This fifth chapter, *Butan: Voguish Analysis,* and the sixth chapter, *Magents: Voguish Analysis,* utilise the findings from the documentary data (narrative interviews) and the interpreted meanings from the qualitative content analysis of the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts in discussing this study's findings according to semiotic theory (Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009). The interpretation and discussion of the findings further draw from the literature surveyed in *Threading Literature* (Chapter 2) and the theoretical frameworks presented in *Fabrics of Theory* (Chapter 3). The Circuit of Culture nodes of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity* are utilised as thematic categories and sub-heading that contextualise the above-mentioned findings. As noted in previous chapters, this study does not analysis the manner in which the t-shirt affects issues pertaining to regulation, the final node of *regulation* is not included within the scope of this analysis. The four nodes of the circuit of culture model also serve as headings and sub-heading for this and the subsequent chapter.

Introducing the Voguish Analysis Chapters

Contextualising Production: Documentary data Analysis

The *Articulation of Production* segments of these *Voguish Analysis* chapters, present the *production* node, which refers to the creation of the text depicted on the graphic t-shirt (Scherer

and Jackson, 2008). The segments entitled, *Butan Wear: Articulating Production* (Chapter 5) and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel: Articulating Production* (Chapter 6) presents the documentary data findings in narrative form, organised in thematic categories informed by the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]). The documentary data of past interviews conducted with the designers of each brand were analysed using the Circuit of Culture moment of *production* (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) and the process of analysing biographical narrative interviews (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004) as analytical tools, in order to make inferences about the manner in which each designer articulates production.

Contextualising Consumption: Reading of the T-shirts

Chapter 4 detailed the manner in which qualitative content analysis serves as a data collection instrument utilised for converting the contents of each t-shirt into individual units of analysis. The chapter presented the templates used for the *Butan* and *Magents* analytical schema of visual static images used for converting the t-shirt graphics into data (see Chapter 4 *Contextualising Consumption)* as the second step of qualitative content analysis using the semiotic analysis (Chandler, 1994; du Plooy, 2009; Fourie, 2009) as an analytical guide. In this study the moment of *consumption* serves as the 'readings' of the t-shirts as the graphics are read as a text (Leve, 2012), as such the *consumption* node refers to the qualitative content analysis of each t-shirt undertaken in order to decode the aesthetics into analysable data. The *Reading the Aesthetics* segments of the *Voguish Analysis* chapters, thus serve as the academic 'reading' (decoding) of each t-shirt by presenting the tabulated findings from the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) analytical schema of static visual images.

Contextualising Representation: Qualitative Content Analysis

The moment of *representation* refers to the text (Leve, 2012). As such, the discussions presented as part of the *Articulating Representation* are concerned with findings from the qualitative content analysis of the t-shirt as a form of text. The content analysis utilised Pieter Fourie's (2009) *Basic Semiotic Analysis* and Daniel Chandler's (1994) *DIY Semiotic Analysis* as analytical schema for interpreting the design elements of each four purposefully selected t-shirts.

The interpreted findings from the *Butan* and *Magents* analytical schema of typology and layout are presented in narrative form, utilising the semiotic terminology that informed the pre-coded categories (see Chapter 4 *Contextualising Representation* sub-section) as a theoretical framework. These findings are discussed in light of the concept of *langue* and *parole*. The codes utilised by the designer (findings discussed as part of each *Butan* and *Magents* moments of *production)* detail the discursive production process of encoding meaning structure utilised in the creation of a media text (Hall, 2006 [1980]). In the context of design, this refers to the design process of gathering and synthesising ideas from the zeitgeist, transcribing ideas into a design concept, the articulation of the design concept into a t-shirt and finally the fabrication phase[11] (Au *et al.*, 2001; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Smal and Lavelle, 2011). This research does not analyse the pattern structure and fabric choices of each designer and as such the fabrication phase is not discussed at length.

Threading Literature and *Fabrics of Theory* (Chapter 2 and 3 of this dissertation) described the manner in which fashion design can be analysed as a text. The literature surveyed in Chapter 2 which stated that each designer has a unique way of expressing the same zeitgeist and an understanding of that interpretation requires an understanding of the designer's preferred use of design (Gick and Gick, 2007; Ames, 2008). *Chapter 3* discussed the manner in which designers use the process and principles of design to communicate the various themes and meaning through their clothing (Gick and Gick, 2007; Bugg, 2009). This informs the discussion of the findings from the qualitative content analysis of each t-shirt as a reflection of each designer's *langue* and *parole*.

The encoding process of each designer as codes utilised in the interpretation of the signified referent of the aesthetics on each t-shirt serve as *langue* (de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 2007). The interpreted signification and function of each sign informs the manner in which each designer uses the rules design process (*langue)* to create garments (*parole)*. The description of the function of each sign contextualises the manner in which each sign (visual/linguistic message) communicates meaning as part of the whole communication process (Fourie, 2009). The six sign functions of communication – phatic, referential, poetic, conative, expressive and metalingual – highlight the different ways in which each designer uses design to convey meaning. Each sign's function serves as the *parole* (use of aesthetics of design to communicate

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[11] The *fabrication phase* refers the articulation of the design concept into fabric and colour choices, a workable pattern, and finally a garment (Smal and Lavelle, 2011)

meaning) and the findings from the discursive design process serve as *langue* (the standardised design process as rules of communication) (de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 2007).

Contextualising Identity: The Lived Reality of a Collective Identity

The *Articulating Identity* segments draw from the Circuit of Culture model definition of *identity* as meaning associated with the lived reality of the individual who uses the object under analysis (Champ and Brooks, 2010; Leve, 2012). The *identity* node draws from the cultural cues used by the producer during the production process of a cultural production in order to make inferences about the lived reality of the consumer (Curtin and Gaither, 2005). The discussions presented as part of the each fashion brand's articulation of *identity* draw from the framework of collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004) and the findings from the *production, consumption* and *representation* nodes in answering the research question about the t-shirt as a form of socio-cultural communication. The remainder of this chapter details the findings from the *Butan Wear* data analysis.

Butan Wear: Articulation of Production

This discussion presents the findings of the past interviews conducted with *Butan Wear* designer Julian Kubel. The past narrative interviews were collected as part of the documentary data (secondary data sources) and presented as cited narrative according to the analysis of narrative interview framework (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). The narratives are organised according to the themes of: i) technical infrastructure*;* ii) relations of production; and iii) frameworks of knowledge informed by the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

Technical Infrastructure

Butan clothing is South African designed, their products produced locally, due to the difficulty in sourcing locally produced fabrics of a high quality (Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). The brand began in Cape Town, but reached a market stagnation which required Kubel to relocate to Johannesburg in search of a bigger clientele through retailers (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a). The

first retailing opportunity came with a potential partnering with *Cross Trainer*[12] stores, however, the brand identity did not fit the retailer's sporting lifestyle identity which saw the deal quickly come to an end (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). Finding an alternative retailer to stock his apparel proved difficult financially however a partnering with *Shesha*[13] stores enabled a distribution of *Butan* ranges in Melrose Arch, Rosebank and Canal Walk (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

Butan has been a commercially available to consumers as a staple part of the South African fashion industry since 2006, and a widely known streetwear brand, synonymous with hip-hop culture (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013; Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b; Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a). This decision to create everything locally almost led to the end of the brand in 2008, when Kubel invested his profits in new fabrics only for there to be a downturn of the economy which meant that clothing was not selling at a great rate and profits dwindled (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

Butan not only has a national distribution, but has evolved to having stores in Botswana and Namibia, as well an online presence with their products being available on the online store Spree (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a). By 2015 the *Butan* had been invited to showcase their range to European and American buyers at the New York streetwear tradeshow, Agenda[14] (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

Relations of Production

In recent years there has been a growth in South African streetwear of the many brands in existence today; one of the pioneers of the streetwear culture is Julian Kubel's *Butan* Wear (Kubel, Hype Magazine, Kubel, 2014b). Kubel's designs "are a reflection of what is happening in our world and our reaction towards it" (Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). The brand identifies itself as a part of street culture, and not a fashion brand that depicts street culture (Kubel, Butan

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[12] Cross trainer in a retail store founded in 1995 by the Frame family in Randburg, South Africa (Xtrainer, 2014). The retail outlet has grown to amass 40 stores nationwide, stocking sportswear brands such as Nike, Adidas and Puma (Xtrainer, 2014).

[13] Shesha Lifestyle stores are a line of retail store outlets across South Africa founded in October 2005 (Shesha, 2016). Shesha stores offer their customers a range of street style clothing and sneakers (Shesha, 2016). Their brand offering include international brands such as Nike and Converse, and local brands such as Struss Bob and Butan Wear (Shesha, 2016)

[14] Agenda is an annual fashion trade show that takes place in Long Beach, New York and Las Vegas (Agenda Show, 2016). The trade show was established in 2003 and serves as a platform for fashion designers and retailers to exhibit their work (Agenda Show, 2016)

Wear, 2013). The identity of the brand is an amalgamation of African heritage and popular contemporary design (Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). Kubel describes streetwear as form of counterculture, an anti-fashion that rebels against the high-end styles and fashion trends portrayed on seasonal runways (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b).

The word "Butan" (Figure 5.1) is an anagram of the Zulu word 'bantu', chosen to symbolise a reclaiming of a lost narrative of the people of Africa (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

Figure 5.1: Butan Wear Brand Name
Source: Julian Kubel, *Instagram,* 09 April 2013

The name bantu has a deep historical reference, from the derogatory apartheid usage to its universal meaning across a multitude of African languages (Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b).

> The brand name pays homage to our roots and heritage while the re-arrangement of the letters signifies a changed, entirely new mindset and outlook on life in contemporary South Africa. It is this fusion between cultural heritage and the present day experience that creates the unique look and feel about the brand
>
> (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013)

The brand draws from popular culture in portraying indigenous African culture in a contemporary manner (Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). The *Butan* "undefeated" logo (Figure 5.2) consists of a deconstructed Zulu shield, with a cross spear and *knobkerrie*[15] (Kubel, Hype Magazine,2014b; Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b).
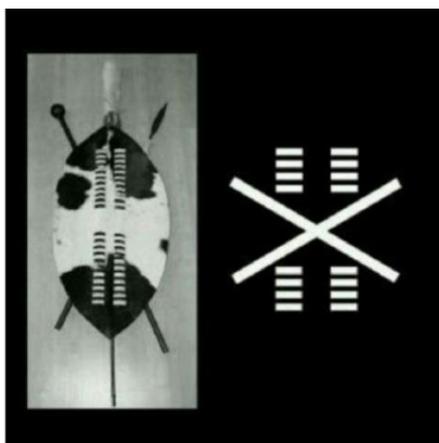
Figure 5.2: Butan Wear Undefeated Logo
Source: Julian Kubel, *Instagram,* 13 August 2013

Many of the brand's clothing often make reference to the year 1981, the year Kubel was born (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). Kubel's first introduction to hip-hop came in 1994 and this love for hip-hop later served as the inspiration behind the brand (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). Kubel started creating screen printed t-shirts in high school using an iron-on kit to create t-shirts for him and his friends (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b; Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). By the time Kubel was at university level, he started creating t-shirts for his campus radio and eventually was contracted by the university to create the official University of Cape Town t-shirts (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a). The designer and founder is not a formally trained fashion designer, rather a mechanical engineering graduate of the University of Cape Town (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013; Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a; Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

With no fashion or business training, the mechanical engineering graduate established *Butan Wear* in 2001 as a response to the lack of streetwear clothing that was reflective of a South African hip-hop culture (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). Acquiring

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[15] A knobkerrie is the colloquial term for a wooden Zulu sjambok.

funding from banks proved difficult, forcing Kubel to acquire a R2000 loan from his parents to start up *Butan* as a brand (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013; Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). *Butan*, a company that is reflective of South African street culture grew from minimal means and limited range of 20 t-shirts created for close friends in high school, to a brand that is worn by many local hip-hop artists today (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013; Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b; Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). Kubel remains creative director of his brand, designing all of his merchandise himself (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). The brand also collaborates with other street culture brands such as Demolition Squad Graffiti,[16] Studio Kronk[17] and Verb Skateboarding,[18] who have produced visuals for past t-shirt designs (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b).

Frameworks of Knowledge

The brand was envisioned to mirror the growth and evolution of the South African hip-hop culture, with clothes that could serve as a visual narrative of the zeitgeist of South African hip-hop and culture (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b; Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b). For Kubel, being both the founder and designer of his brand, the growth of the brand mirrors his individual growth as a person (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b).

> Butan Wear is a tangible expression of today's zeitgeist. It speaks to a
> younger generation that is ambitious, individual, influential, and relevant
> and continually reinventing itself. It is currently the label preferred by the
> who's who of SA's Hip Hop and electro-street culture scene, people such
> as Proverb, Kwesta, Slikour and Driemanskap
>
> (de Waal, 2015: 2).

In 2006, Kubel starting working alongside hip-hop events, providing *Butan* apparel for underground artists (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b); this allowed the brand to create strategic partnerships with up-and-coming hip-hop artists, who wore their clothing during the shows (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007). The involvement in the hip-hop events allowed the brand to be at the centre of hip-hop culture, enabling them to depict the culture from an insider's

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[16] Demolition Squad is a group of five South African graffiti artists (Tapz, Mars, Tyke, Fiya and Aybe) located in Johannesburg (Samuels, 2014)

[17] Kronk is the pseudonym of Johannesburg illustrator and graphic designer Kris Hewett (Friedman, 2010).

[18] Verb is one of the leading skateboard manufactures in South Africa (Samuels, 2015)

perspective (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). The decision to use emerging artists was a strategic one that aligned with the ideology of the brand, of that of mutual growth within the industry and the country (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007). Today, artists chosen as brand ambassadors are chosen because of their synergies with the brand's ideology and image (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b).

Being part of the hip-hop culture, rather than an observer for marketing reasons, allows the brand to create clothing that serves as a first-hand account of the zeitgeist of their target market (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b). *Butan* is still involved with hip-hop events that provide marketing opportunities and backing for events such as *Back to the City, Kool Out* and *Friday Uppercut* (Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b).

The brand's seasonal clothing does not follow a certain theme, however, each garment follows a common thread of a reinterpretation of global street trends and South African cultural zeitgeist (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007). The brand draws heavily from African culture as it identifies as a visual narrative of the lived reality of South Africa (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a; Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b). Before a design is finalised, the cultural meaning is researched through engaging with documentaries, films, and literature pertaining to the cultural origin of the design (Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b). Each design serves as a symbol of African pride, illustrating the depth and meanings that characterise South African life (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a).

In showcasing their designs on their social media pages, they found that many consumers were drawn to only the visual appeal of the garment, rather than its meaning (Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b). Exhibiting cultural narratives on their clothing range serves as an homage to African tradition, and the reason behind the brand's name (Kubel, Mark Lives, 2015a). The company does not seek to minimise African reference, therefore each design posted on their social media page consists of a description of the meanings of the source of each inspiration in their marketing strategy (Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b).

The winter 2014 range was inspired by elements of South African culture, especially Zulu culture and history (Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a). The t-shirts drew from imagery of Durban Rickshaws and the headdress worn by rickshaw pullers, as well as reed basket art (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b; Kubel, Indalo Media, 2014a).

> The brand represents the rich tapestry of the African continent, paying
> tribute to its influence on contemporary African youth. Every garment us
> the manifestation of the ideas and aspirations of our generation, our
> infinite potential and our heritage
>
> (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013).

The brand is also synonymous with hip-hop culture, with the winter 2014 range including global hip-hop references (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b). Streetwear culture has a history of appropriating famous logos as part of their narrative (Staple, 2013; Neulabs, 2014). *Butan* is no different, having rearticulated the logos of Miller, Walt Disney, Coca Cola (see Figure 5.3) and LA kings, as a witty social commentary about South African life (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b).
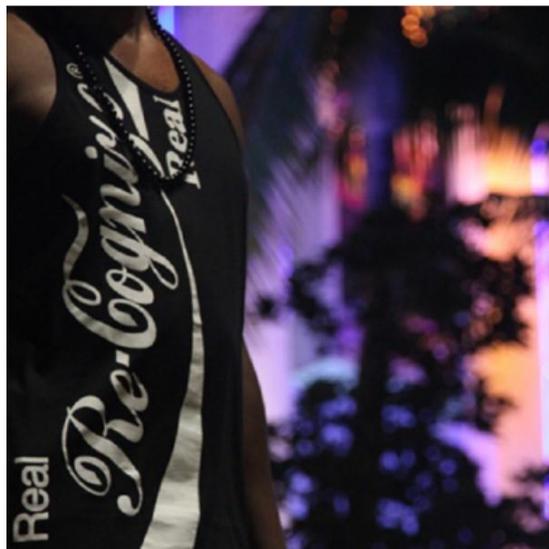
Figure 5.3: Real Recognise Real Tank Top
Source: Butan Wear, *Instagram,* 29 October 2013

Consumption and Representation of the Butan T-shirts

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the *Butan* 'Africa is the Future' and 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirts as part of the moments of *consumption* and *representation*. The section begins with the discussion of the *consumption* and *representation* node of the 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt, and concludes with the findings from 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt. The moment of *consumption* presents the findings from a content analysis as a data collection method (see du Plooy, 2009). The findings are presented using the analytical schema of static visual images, utilised for decoding (reading) the contents of the 'Africa is the Future' and the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirts as a form of text. The *Articulating Representation* discussions draws from the findings from the biographical interview data (moment of *production)* and the findings from the analytical scheme of static visual image (moment of *consumption*) in discussing the manner in which Kubel creates t-shirts that draw from his personal lived experiences, yet contextualised to reflect the lived reality of his consumer. The *Articulating Representation* discussion utilises semiotic theory in discussing the interpreted meanings of the *Butan* t-shirts.

Africa is the Future T-shirt: Reading the Aesthetics

*Butan'*s 'Africa is the future' t-shirt is a black t-shirt with two linguistic messages: "Butan Presents" and "Africa is the Future" and a single visual image. Figure 5.4 presents the photographic image of the t-shirt analysed as part of the *consumption* node and Table 5.1 presents the contents of the t-shirt decoded into analysable text according to the analytical scheme of static visual images.

Figure 5.4: Africa is the Future T-shirt
Source: Chris Preyser, *Butan Wear Spring Summer 2015 Catalogue*, 1 September 2015

Butan Wear	
Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images	
Africa is the Future T-shirt	
Text	**Description**
Pure Image	• Black t-shirt, with silver star-like dots, consisting of the text "Butan Presents Africa is the future" • Beneath the text is an arrow point to an image of the African continent. Below this is a grey gull wing door BMW 325i with the number plate Butan 81 • Left of the car is a young man riding a red hover board fashioned like boom box speakers is visible.
Linguistic Message	• White "Butan Presents" • Orange fade into yellow gradient "Africa is the future" • "The" stylised in red • "Butan Presents" and "Africa" is the future written in different fonts
Visual Message	• Arrow coloured in the same style as "Africa is the Future" text • Content of Africa also is the same colour • Grey BMW 325i with open doors, vertical wheels and flame like fumes from the exhaust – depicted as if the car is flying through space • Male figure dressed in knee high baseball socks, black shoes yellow vest, red sleeveless coat, dark sunglasses and red hat – riding a red hover board

Table 5.1: Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images 'Africa is the Future' T-shirt

Africa is the Future T-shirt: Articulating Representation

The first linguistic message "Butan Presents" serves as the linguistic non-coded iconic message as it conveys a purely denotational meaning that the t-shirt is one created by the *Butan* brand (Barthes, 1977). The second linguistic message 'Arica is the Future' serves as a coded iconic message as it lends itself to connotative meanings (Barthes, 1977). This second linguistic message is further read in conjunction with the visual message of an arrow pointing to the African continent; as such it forms part of the linguistic message. The visual message consists of an illustration of a flying car with gull wing doors, depicted as if it is flying in outer space and an illustration of a young male flying on a hover board alongside the car.

As a streetwear brand, *Butan* draws form existing imagery such as the past design reflected in the 'Real Recognise Real' t-shirt (see Figure 5.3) derived from the Coca-Cola logo (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b). As such analysis of the 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt (Figure 5.4) begins with the analysis visual message of the flying car and young male depicted in the centre of the t-shirt, as it serves to confirm the assumption that the visual message was in fact a reinterpretation of imagery that exists in pop culture. An online search for "flying car" reveals that that the signifiers of linguistic message and visual message are a referent of the *Back to the Future Part 2* artwork (Figure 5.5)

Figure 5.5: Back to the Future Two Promotional artwork

Source: Drew Struzan, *World Collectors.net,* 1988

The similarities of the depiction of the 1989 BMW 325i signifier (Figure 5.4) in Kubel's design the 1989 DeLorean referent (Figure 5.5) depicted in the film artwork reveal that the mode of signification used by the designer is indexical in nature (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2006). Kubel adds an addition image of a young male on a hover board, this is interpreted as an indexical signification of film's protagonist Marty McFly and his hover boars poster (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Michael J. Fox as Marty McFly and his Hover Board, Film Still
Source: Ralph Nelson, *Back to the Future Part Two Film Still,* 1988

The linguistic messages "Butan Presents" and "Africa is the Future" (Figure 5.4) convey similarities to the referents "Steven Spielberg Presents" and "Back to the Future Part II", thereby making them indexical to the film title on the *Back to the Future Part Two* poster (Figure 5.7).
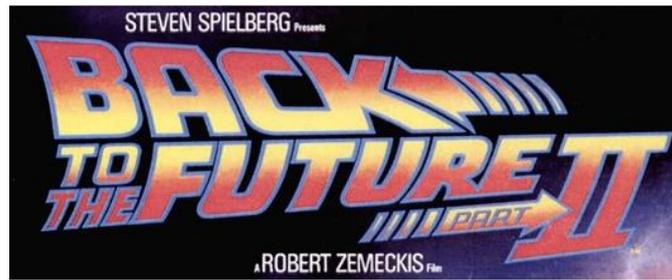
Figure 5.7: Tagline and Headline of Back to the Future Part II Film Poster
Adapted from: Drew Struzan Back to the Future Part II Film Poster (1989)

The analysis of the "Butan Presents" linguistic message, informed the manner in which the designer uses the processes of design to convey certain meanings. "Butan Presents" is depicted in a smaller size white font, positioned in the top left hand corner of the t-shirt. The font and positioning is a referent of the font on the "Steven Spielberg presents" phrase on the "Back to the Future Part II" on the films poster film poster (Figure 5.7)

The film referent does not refer to hip-hop culture, and the connection between the film and *Butan* – a brand that is reflective of global and local hip-hop culture – seems arbitrary. This informs the assumption that the design serves as a personal creative expression of the designer. This creative expression is especially evident in the visual image of a flying car with the number plate "Butan 81", which signifies the year Kubel was born (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013). The past interview data findings further inform this assumption, as Kubel views the brand as a reflection of himself and the hip-hop culture which forms part of Kubel's collective identity (Kubel, Hype Magazine, 2014b).

Back to the Future Part Two is a film released in 1989 when Kubel was 8 years old; it seems plausible that reference to the film is inspired by the designer's nostalgic recollection of his childhood. This knowledge further informs the assumption that Kubel – who has remained creative director and designer all of his merchandise himself since his brand's inception in 2001 (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b) – not only draws from his consumer's lived reality, but his own. This assumption was confirmed during the interview with the designer, who revealed that the t-shirt was pure creative expression (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). The 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt was featured as part of the *Butan Wear* Spring/Summer 2015 collection and released on 21st October, 2015. This date coincided with the date the lead character, Marty McFly, travels to the future (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). 2015 is also the year the

film franchise celebrated their 30-year anniversary of the release of the first *Back to the Future* film. This serves as an example of the forecasting procedure of the brand, through surveying popular cultural trends and articulating them through design (Ames, 2008).

The design concept may be inspired by the personal creativity; however, the text is contextualised by elements that are reflective of South African culture, and global and local hip-hop. The imagery of the BMW 325i serves to contextualise the image to the South African consumer. The car, which is popularly referred to as iGusheshe in South Africa, is a popular cultural icon. Gusheshe (Nyovest, 2014a) is also the title of the South African hip-hop artist Cassper Nyovest's 2014 song (appendix 5), as part of his *Tsholofelo* album (Nyovest, 2014b). This draws from the current zeitgeist of the *Butan* consumer, and further reflects the brand's knowledge framework of local hip-hop culture from which the designer draws sourcing inspiration for design concepts (Kubel, Encore Mag, 2007; Kubel, Kool Out Concepts, 2015b; Kubel, Times Media Group, 2016b). The lead character of the film is depicted as the referent of the imagery of the young male on a hover board is also contextualised to the South African consumer, as he is illustrated as having brown skin, as confirmed by the personal skype interview with Kubel.

> The t-shirt is in line with Butan's design ethos of sampling of pop culture
> and the remixing these designs with African elements. It was released on
> the actual date that Marty travelled to the future so I had to do it. Of course
> our print features an *African* Marty McFly, as the protagonist of the film,
> on his hover board, hanging from spinning Gusheshe that is styled to look
> like the legendary DeLorean.
>
> (Kubel, Skype, 2016a)

"Africa is the Future" as a referent of "Back to the Future" is also contextualised to the African consumer. An online search for the phrase 'Africa is the Future' reveals that the existence on an online magazine of the same name. *Africa is the Future* is an online magazine created by Nicolas Premier and Patrick Ayamam in 2004 (SafteyPins, 2010; Ayaman and Premier, 2016). The magazine was created "to challenge mainstream media's representation of Africa (Ayaman and Premier, 2016). The success of the magazine led Premier and Ayaman to create a line of t-shirts and jerseys of the same name (Ayaman and Premier, 2016). Premier reached out to Nigerian afro-soul singer Nneka, as he felt her lyrical content reflected the brand of *Africa is*

the Future (SafteyPins, 2010). The songstress began wearing *Africa is the Future* apparel during her stage performances and later on the cover of her Madness (Onye-Ala) mix tape (Nneka and J.Period, 15 December 2009) with American underground hip-hop artist JPeriod (SafteyPins, 2010) (Figure 5.8).
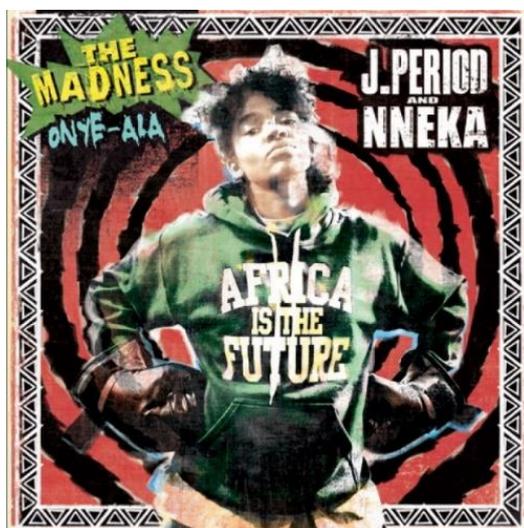
Figure 5.8: The Madness (Onye-Ala) Mixtape Cover Art
Source: J.Period.com, 15 December 2009

The track listing of the mixtape revealed a possible symbolic signification of the linguistic message "Africa is the Future", to the referent of the lyrics of the "African" (appendix 6). The song lyrics revealed that the artist sings about the colonial past in Africa and the need for African people to rise up against the past and work towards a prosperous future for the continent (Nneka, 2005). The visual message was assumed as referent to the 'Africa in the Future' movement, and a symbolic signifier of the meanings of narratives about Africa within the hip-hop community like that of the "Africa*"* lyrics. However, the interview with Kubel revealed that the t-shirt has no direct reference to the magazine or the mixtape, but rather the t-shirt was a reflection of the brand ethos of contextualising global references to the lived reality of the South African *Butan* consumer (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). The t-shirt is thus a statement, a personal narrative about the how the designer feels about Africa.

The linguistic aspect of the signifier "Africa is the Future" thus serves as an iconic sign, as the phrase is a signifier that resembles its signified – the meaning of the phrase in the English language (Barthes, 1977). The visual and linguistic messages serve as the referential and poetic function respectively. The statement "Africa is the Future" is the information communicated to

the consumer by *Butan*, as such it serves a referential function (Chandler, 1994). The visual message is the creative form of the message – the poetic function – as it signifies the phrase "Africa is the Future" through the illustrative means (Fourie, 2009). A poetic sign is often unique to a medium, and readers are often unaware of the poetic nature of its meaning (Fourie, 2009). The use of illustration as the creative form of the message is further contextualised as the manner in which *Butan* uses the *fabrication phase* of the design process to articulate the meaning of the design concept into a garment (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). The standardised process of the fabrication phase serves as the *langue* of the design while the use of illustration in a poetic manner to convey the linguistic message serves as the *parole.*

The positioning of the phrase and composition is an indexical signification of the phrase in the film poster. The linguistic aspect of the signifier "Butan Presents" is also iconic in nature, as it requires knowledge of the English language as a code to interpret the signification that the contents of the t-shirt are produced by the brand *Butan*. The signified meaning of this linguistic message suggests that it serves as an introduction to the main subject of the t-shirts. The linguistic message "Butan Presents" establishes contact with the *Butan* consumer, making them aware that the t-shirt is part of the *Butan* clothing line, and as such, the sign serves a phatic function (Chandler, 2007). This use of phatic signification is also visible in the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt presented in the subsequent section.

The 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt is an example of the manner in which the designers' concepts are an articulation of popular culture images. This design concept is inspired by existing imagery are reinterpreted in iconic, indexical and symbolic manners to reflect the current zeitgeist, hip-hop culture and the *Butan* brand ethos (Peirce, 1932). The visuals of the 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt reveal the indexical signification of the film poster for *Back to the Future Part Two*. This t-shirt further conveys the symbolic signification of film poster's layout, which is also evident in the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt. This layout is greatly favoured by *Butan*, whose upcoming designs also utilise the same layout (Kubel, Skype, 2016a).

Legends Live Forever T-shirt: Reading the Aesthetics

The 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt (Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10) is a white t-shirt with three linguistic messages and a single visual message on the front of the t-shirt. Table 5.2 presents the decoded text of the t-shirt as part of the moment of *consumption*.

Figure 5.9: Legends Live Forever T-shirt
Source: Chris Preyser, *Butan Wear Spring Summer 2015 Catalogue*, 1 September 2015

Figure 5.10: Legends Live Forever Back of T-shirt
Source: Chris Preyser, *Butan Wear Spring Summer 2015 Catalogue*, 1 September 2015

Butan Wear	
Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images	
Legends Live Forever T-shirt	
Text	**Description**
Pure Image	- White t-shirt with black and white line drawing of: i) portraits, ii) a train, iii) a radio, iv) spray-paint cans and v) two cars. "a Butan Production" is the first linguistic message at the top left hand of the t-shirt; "Legends Live Forever" is the second. - The linguistic message "Legends Live Forever" is positioned on the left, with a black coloured teardrop shape 'weeping' diagonally down. - The centre of the t-shirt consists of fist visual image of the portraits of people. - The left of the portrait is the second visual image of a train with spray-paint cans below it. These images are contain depicted amidst the background of an orange coloured shape. - The bottom right consist of the third visual image of two males watching a break-dancer and a held radio. - The fourth visual image is located at the far right of the portraits and consists of two cars. - The bottom of t-shirt is read as a single pure – third linguistic message and fifth visual image. From left to right: i) "RIP Legends Live Forever Because Legends never die"; ii) small black and white Butan logo; iii) deconstructed Zulu shield logo - The back of the t-shirt details the name of the figures depicted in the line drawing (fourth linguistic message).
Linguistic Message	"a Butan production" written in black "Legends Live Forever" is in a different font an written in blue "RIP Legends live forever because legends never die" written in black font at the bottom of the t-shirt (read in conjunction with the visual messages at the bottom of the t-shirt) - Names of each person depicted in the portrait on back of t-shirt
Visual Message	- A tear drop image in a yellow to orange gradient - Images of different people is the central image – predominantly male with one female at the bottom – all in black and white - A subway train on the right side of the t-shirt – black and white - Black and white spray paint cans - Two types of car – make not visible – black and white - Black and white "boom box" type hand held radio - Butan logo black and white and Deconstructed Butan Shield Logo at the bottom of the t-shirt (read in conjunction with linguistic message at the bottom of the t-shirt)

Table 5.2: Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images 'Legends Live Forever' T-shirt

Legends Live Forever T-shirt: Articulating Representation

The first linguistic image "a Butan Production" on the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt (Figure 5.9) utilises a font similar to the "Butan Presents" linguistic message seen on the 'Africa is the future' t-shirt (Figure 5.4) . The first level analysis reveals that using English as a code reveals the iconic signification that refers to "a t-shirt manufactured by *Butan Wear"(O'Sullivan et al., 2006).* The linguistic message "a Butan Production" thus serves a phatic function, used by the designer to establish contact with their intended consumer (Fourie, 2009). This stylistic use of "Butan Presents" or " a Butan Production" is a popular style of representation favoured by the designer (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). The sign allows the consumer to recognise that the t-shirt is part of the *Butan* range of clothing. As such it serves as a encoding meaning structures, the culmination of the encoding process drawing from knowledge frameworks, technical infrastructure and relations of production utilised during the design process (Hall, 2006 [1980]). As encoding meaning structure this linguistic message reflects the *fabrication phase* of the *Butan* design process, where the design concept is articulated into a consumable t-shirt product (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). Furthermore the phatic nature of the sign means that is not a primary message of the text (Steinberg, 2007). This linguistic message also serves a poetic function when analysed visual according to its form.

The form – font type and top right hand position on the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt – of "a Butan Production" (Figure 5.9) is an indexical signification of a movie poster message, which presents the production company or director responsible for the film. The form – font type and top right hand position "a Butan Production" resembles the referent "A Sig Shore Production" (Figure 5.11) on the *Super Fly* film poster message (Parks Jr., 1972), making the signification indexical (Chandler, 1994).
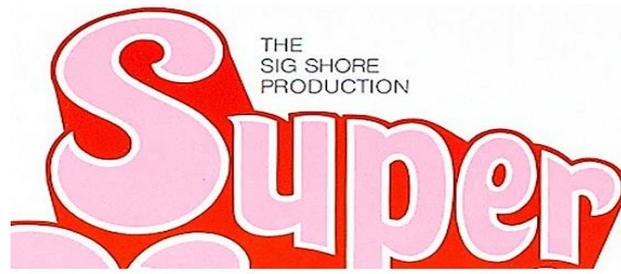
Figure 5.11: Tagline on Super Fly Film Poster
Adapted from: Super Fly Film Poster(Parks Jr., 1972)(Parks Jr., 1972) ,

This manner of presentation, which presents the production company or director responsible for the film, is a unique feature found on many film posters, as well as many *Butan* t-shirts (Stubblefield, 2007; Kubel, Skype, 2016a). This repeated use of this linguistic sign informs the assumption that *Butan* designs draw from film culture as part of their knowledge frameworks used in the construction of the design concepts of their-shirts (Au *et al.*, 2001; Hall, 2006 [1980]). Kubel confirmed that the film poster layout serve as part of many of his t-shirt, with this particular t-shirt inspired by more specifically by 'Blaxploitation-style[19]' film posters (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). *Butan Wear* marketing manager Sandile Samuels confirmed the reference to *Super Fly* (Samuels, 2016). The signified referent of the specific films *Super Fly* (ParksJr., 1972), and *Cleopatra Jones* (Starett, 1973a) were not evident during the initial analysis. It was clear however that Kubel designs were referents of film posters. The Skype interview with Kubel (24 October 2016a) revealed that 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt design concept was inspired by 1970s Blaxploitation film posters. Personal communication with Samuels (04 November 2016) confirmed the referent of to the film *Cleopatra Jones* directed by Jack Starett (1973a), and revealed that the design concept was inspired an additional Blaxploitation films. Further analysis revealed that the films referenced was *Super Fly* directed by Gordon parks Jr. (1972).

The movie poster is constructed using a linguistic (the film title) and iconic message (visual representation of the film title) read as a single conceptual unit (Tziamtzi *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, the 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt depicts the linguistic message of "Africa is the future" and a visual message of consisting of a flying car and a male riding a hover board. The

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[19] Blaxploitation film emerged as a subgenre of film characterised by racial stereotypes of African Americans (Weston, 2012). "90s hip-hop artist began to craft messages that mirrored those found in classic Blaxploitation film" (Weston, 2012)

'Legends Live Forever' t-shirts consist of the linguistic message "legends live forever" and the visual image of sketched portraits of hip-hop and graffiti artists, break-dancers, spray paint cans, a handheld radio, staircase, two cars and train. The stylistic black colouring emerging from the linguistic message "legends live forever" is indexical to the pink stylistic depiction of the "Super Fly" linguistic message on the poster in the stylistic use of its shadowing (Figure 5.12).
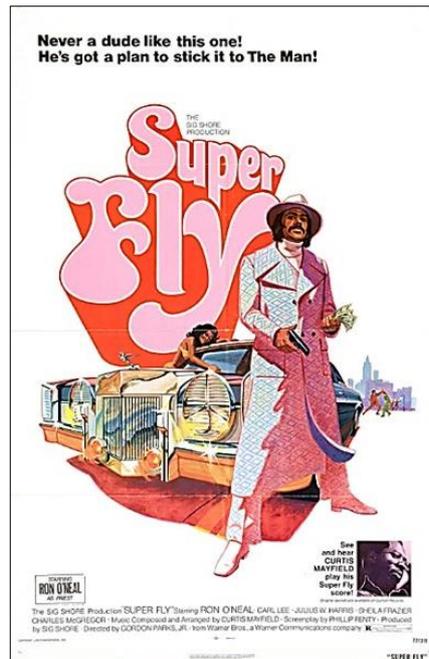
Figure 5.12: Super Fly Film Poster
Source: Gordon Parks Junior, *IMBD,* 1972

The visual message of the t-shirt is depicted in a similar line drawing style to that on the *Cleopatra Jones* film poster (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: Cleopatra Jones Film Poster
Source: Jack Starett, *IMBD,* 1973

The correlations between the visual image signifier and its referent film poster yield an indexical signification (Fourie, 2009). Furthermore this conveys the poetic function of the visual and linguistic messages of the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt, as is reflects the stylistic depiction of the messages (Chandler, 2007). The linguistic message of a film poster serves as a code for contextualising the imagery presented through the iconic message (Tziamtzi *et al.*, 2015). In the construction of the layout of the design concept, it is assumed that *Butan* designs operate in the same manner. The linguistic messages of "Africa is the future" and "legends live forever" serve as poetic functions to convey the linguistic message in illustrative form (Steinberg, 2007).

The second linguistic message "legends live forever" serves as the primary linguistic message. The signifier, when interpreted using only knowledge of the English language, signifies that icons never die. The linguistic message also serves to contextualise the meaning of visual message and as such the linguistic text serves a metalingual function. As a metalingual sign, the linguistic message is to explain the main subject matter – the visual message – of the text

(Fourie, 2009). This is also evident in the 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt, as the linguistic message served to contextualise the meaning of the visuals of a flying car as a narrative about Africa, which draws from popular culture references. The assumption is that in reading a *Butan* t-shirt, the linguistic message – in conjunction with the knowledge of the cultural cues *Butan* draws from – serves as an *interpretant* of the visual message, which conveys the symbolic meaning of the visuals.

Many film posters also have linguistic messages (taglines) which serve a secondary function of informing the reader further about the film and the contents of the poster (Tziamtzi *et al.*, 2015). The 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt does not have any further linguistic messages, however the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt does. Film posters include the film tag line, as well as a caption of the film, the name of the production company, the credits of principle actors and major contributors involved in the making of a film (Tziamtzi *et al.*, 2015). The 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt further illustrates the manner in which the design concept for the layout of the *Butan* t-shirts utilise auxiliary linguistic messages. The bottom right of the t-shirt's linguistic message, "RIP Legends live forever because legends never die", as a sign, conveys an indexical, metalinguistic, conative and expressive function (Jakobson, 1960; Fourie, 2009).

The iconic level of signification is visible in interpreting the 'RIP' as a sign using only the knowledge of the English language. The message signifies the phrase 'rest in peace', which serves as a metalinguistic function which informs the reading of the "legends live forever". A legend does not necessarily refer to a person who is deceased, and as such, the sign serves to inform the interpretation of the legends referred to in the visual and linguistic message above as people who have passed away. At an indexical level, the linguistic message is a referent of the film poster and signifies the design concept layout of the *Butan* t-shirt. The form and positioning of the phrase is indexical to that of a film poster tagline (Figure 5.14), the conative nature of the words suggest that it is a reference to the original design concept inspired by the Blaxploitation-style film poster.

Figure 5.14: Cleopatra Jones Film Poster Tag Line
Adapted from: Cleopatra Jones Film Poster (Starett, 1973b)

At this level of signification, the linguistic message serves as a conative level, persuading to reading to think of the people depicted and referred to in the visual image as legends. Furthermore, the stylistic depiction of the "RIP" linguistic message is indexical to the Parental Guidance (PG) age restriction layout on the *Cleopatra Jones* film poster (Figure 5.14), which also serves the conative function of persuading the movie audience about the content of the film. Finally, at a symbolic level of signification, the sign serves as an expressive function of conveying Kubel's (or the brand's) personal views about the people depicted in the image (Fourie, 2009). This was further confirmed through the interview with Kubel.

> It's obviously hard to say what is legendary. Some people say some of them aren't legendary so it's very subjective. I guess there are some that you can't deny like Biggie and Tupac, I think no one is going to stand up and say "ah but they're not really legends". […] There's a lot of local guys in there [as well] that we felt made an impact in the scene and they made it in our-- yeah view of a legendary status
>
> (Kubel, Skype, 2016a)

The bottom of the 'Legends Live Forever t-shirt (Figure 5.15) consists of a further pure message comprised of two visual message, the *Butan* monogram and the *Butan* logo, as a single linguistic message " RIP Legends live forever because legends never die".
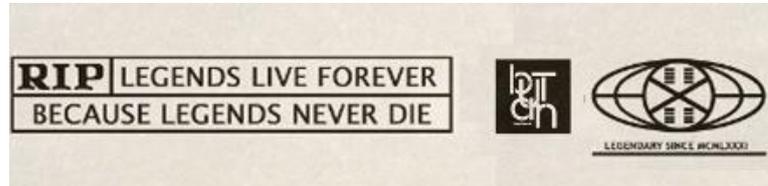
Figure 5.15: "RIP Legends Live Forever" Bottom of T-shirt
Adapted from: 'Legends Live Forever' T-shirt (Preyser, 1 September 2015b)

Interpreting this signifier (Figure 5.15) using the relations of production and framework of knowledge – that the design concept of the t-shirt as a whole is reflective of a film poster – as a code, the referent yields an indexical signification to the logo of a production company usually displayed as part of the tag line (Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16: Film Credits Tagline on Back to the Future Part Two Film Poster
Adapted from: Back to the Future Film Credits (*Back to the Future 2 Production Notes*, 2015)

At the level of symbolic signification, this visual message (Figure 5.15) serves a phatic function of establishing contact with the intended consumer through brand recognition (Steinberg, 2007). Using the referent of the relation of production of the brand name and ethos, the visual message is of an iconic nature as it refers to the meaning of *Butan* and the meaning of the brand logo. The iconic signification serves the metalingual functions of informing the reader about the contents of the t-shirt. The brand name, *Butan*, serves as a tribute to the *Butan* consumer's cultural roots and heritage (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013). The logo of the deconstructed shield and knobkerrie is a reflection of the manner in which *Butan* designs are a contemporary reconstruction of past narrative (Kubel, Butan Wear, 2013).

The final tagline (Figure 5.17) displayed on the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt is a linguistic message of a list of names[20] displayed on the back of the t-shirt (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.17: Bottom Back of Legends Live forever T-shirt
Adapted from: 'Legends Live Forever' T-shirt (Preyser, 1 September 2015b)

This linguistic message (Figure 5.17) is an indexical signifier of the credits of names on at the bottom of a *Cleopatra Jones* film poster (Figure 5.14). The credits on a film poster (Figure 5.14) serve the metalingual function of detailing the principle stakeholders involved in the film. Similarly, the linguistic message on the back of the t-shirt (Figure 5.17) serves the metalingual function of informing the reader of the names of the people depicted in the primary visual image on the front of the t-shirt. For the *Butan* consumer, whose lived reality is informed by hip-hop, the names serve as indexical signs, as they are able to associate the name with the face of a late rap artist. The text on the back of the t-shirt serves a metalinguistic function especially for those with no knowledge of the hip-hop culture.

The linguistic message may convey the meaning of the people depicted in the visual image, but not all of the other imagery such as the spray paint cans, the train, the radio and cars. Understanding their signification requires a knowledge of hip-hop culture, and the knowledge that Kubel, who was introduced to rap music in his youth, shares a similar sub-cultural identity with his consumer (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). The further images, are referents of the cultural commodities – of graffiti, DJing, rap, breakdancing and street fashion – that serve as a value system of the subculture (Hebdige, 1979; Ngcobo, 2014). The mode of signification is symbolic, as it requires the knowledge of the meanings of the images as cultural commodities.

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[20] Notorious B.I.G; Tupac Shakur; Left Eye; Big L; Freaky Tah; Ol'Dirty Bastard; Jolla; Sean Price; Big Pun; Mr. Fat; Heavy D; Devious; Robo the Technician; MCA; Scott La Rock; Eazy-E; Guru; Jam Master Jay; Soulja Slim; Nate Dogg; Poetic; Chaos Kid; Big Moe; Bugz; Stretch; Proof; Camu Tao: DJ Screw; Mac Dre; Subroc; Mizchif; Flabba

The visual image therefore signifies not only past hip-hop artists but the history of hip-hop subculture, which began in the 1970s as a counter movement of young people of colour living in the Bronx (Bradley and DuBois, 2010).

The subculture "emerged from the need of young African Americans to express their identity during a time where they felt rejected by society and dejected by the circumstances" (Rose, 1994: 407). Rap was the voice of this culture, the linguistic analogue of hyper-kinetic dance moves, vividly painted subway cars, and skilfully mixed break beats (Bradley and DuBois, 2010). The image of radio (from the 1970/1980s era) on the t-shirt serves as signifying the origins of hip-hop and the break-dancers of the time. The spray paint cans and subway cars are symbolic signifiers of the graffiti culture that is associated with origins of hip-hop subculture, while the cars serve as a symbolic signification of the current hip-hop music. The interview with Kubel confirmed these assumptions.

> The subway (train) has a graffiti piece on there by sort of like a legendary graffiti artist Dondi, he is one of the first to do subway art in New York. […] He died I think of lung cancer. […] [The box-box] has got that reference to 80's hip-hop. And obviously the other elements like the cars at the bottom; the whole flashiness of hip-hop is also part of the culture. As much as we might like it or not but you know it's part of it. It's [the t-shirt] about hip-hop culture. It's about honouring the culture and the style specifically, was done in the like Blaxploitation movie poster style.
>
> (Kubel, Skype, 2016a)

The t-shirt, as a text, pays homage to iconic figures within the local and global hip-hip subculture, and homage to the subculture as well. South African legends represented include Afrikaans rapper, Ashley Titus (Mr Phat) who passed away at the age of 36 in 2007 (de Vries and Maggo, 2007). The late Zimbabwean rapper Mizchif who passed away in 2014 while recording an album titled *Still a Legend* is also included in the imagery. Though the t-shirt was part of the *Butan* 2015 collection, it is in the second release of this t-shirt as Kubel added the portrait of the late South African Hip-hop artist Flabba, after his death in 2015 (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). Nkuleko 'Flabba' Habedi, who formed part of the hip-hop group Skwatta Camp, is considered one of the pioneers of the hip-hop music genre in South Africa (Sowetan Live, 2016). The artist's death made headlines after it was revealed that he was murdered by his

girlfriend in March 2015 (Sowetan Live, 2016). Kubel, has a personal connection with Skwatta Camp, as they were one of the first highly recognised hip-hop artists to wear *Butan* clothing, after *Butan* was acquainted with band member Shugasmaks (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). It can be assumed that the t-shirt is a further example of how Kubel balances his creative expression and the needs of the consumer.

The visual message of the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt consists of portraits of past hip-hop MCs (rappers). The iconic signification determined by the relationship between the portraits as signifiers and the referent of their name depicted on the back of the t-shirt revealed the literal denotative meaning of the t-shirt. This denotative meaning revealed that the t-shirt is about the MCs depicted on the visual message. The second order meaning, which is analysed the signifier as a referent, is an homage to past hip-hop MCs. The late Zimbabwean rapper is considered a pioneer of a hip-hop in South Africa (Sowetan Live, 2014). The MC's lyrics reflected the struggles of being a young South African and African identity. Within the hip-hop subculture, rappers are viewed as the voice of the identity, articulating narratives that are reflective of the views and opinions of those who identify themselves as part of this collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). This leads to the symbolic signification of myth or ideology associated with each of the legend's contributions to the hip-hop subculture as a whole. The visual image also portrayed cultural commodities of the hip-hop subculture, such as spray paint cans, an old radio, break-dancers and a train. Analysing these images in conjunction with the portraits revealed that the t-shirt communicates the ideology of the hip-hop subculture, shared by both designer and consumer.

Lived Reality of the Butan Consumer: Articulating Identity

The 'Africa is the future' t-shirt, depicts the African content in an expressive manner, as part of its linguistic message. The t-shirt is a reinterpretation of the 1980s film *Back to the Future* that is now considered a cult classic. The elements of the American film poster are replaced with indexical signifiers of elements that are unique to South African culture – this is mostly evident in the reinterpretation of the DeLorean car which is symbolic of America, with the BMW 325i (iGusheshe) a South Africa pop culture classic that was also the title of a South African hip-hop song. The statement of the t-shirt can be interpreted as an statement about African people rather than the continent which reflects the self-attributed African identity that unifies the *Butan*

micro-market influenced by global popular culture, yet rooted in their understanding of being young Africans (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

The *Butan* 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt reflects the narrative about a once marginalised youth who came together through the subculture of hip-hop. The meanings of the t-shirt reflect the shared narratives of the individuals who identify them as part of the subculture (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The t-shirt is a narrative of collective belonging through the pure image as a symbolic signifier of the history and evolution of hip-hop subculture in its entirety. A first level analysis revealed that visual images all serve as iconic signifiers (Hartley, 2002), however, the designer's use of linguistic message as metalinguistic signs (used to interpret the meaning of visuals of the t-shirt) reveals the indexical signified of the t-shirt. Each portrait is a symbolic signifier of the various rappers' personal contributions within hip-hop. The other elements (spray paint cans, subway train, break-dancer, radio and cars), when read in unison with the portraits; reveal the t-shirt's symbolic signification of the cultural elements of hip-hop as a subculture. This symbolic interpretation of the t-shirt is a reflection of shared history and ideology of those individuals who associate themselves with hip-hop (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the *Butan* analysis as part of the moments of *production*, *consumption representation and identity*. The subsequent chapter details the findings of from the *Magents* analysis. Chapter 6 concludes with a detailed conclusion regarding the analysis process in its entirety.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings
Magents: Voguish Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the findings and analysis of the *Butan Wear (Butan)* design process and t-shirts. This current chapter discusses the interpreted findings from the *Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents)* analysis according to the Circuit of Culture moments of *production, consumption, representation* and *identity*. The chapter begins with a presentation of the documentary data findings as part of the *production* node. Similarly to the previous chapter, the moments of *consumption and representation* present the findings from each of the *Magents* t-shirts under analysis.

The sub-sections entitled *Reading the Aesthetics* present the tabulated findings from analytical schema of a static visual image used as part of the qualitative content analysis of the 'Are You Still With Me' and 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirts. The scheme served to convert the aesthetics of each t-shirt into analysable units as part of the qualitative content analysis (du Plooy, 2009). The decoded graphics of each t-shirt presented as tabulated findings serve as the moment of *consumption*, with the interpretation of these findings presented in the subsequent sub-sections as the moment of *representation*. The *Articulating Identity* sub-sections draw from the previously mentioned Circuit of Culture moments in answering the research question of what the *Magents* t-shirts convey about their consumers' lived reality.

As the previous chapter introduced the overall discussion of the analysis process in its entirety, this sixth closes with a discussion of the overall conclusions drawn from the analysis of both *Butan* and *Magents*.

Magents Lifestyle Apparel: Articulating Production

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the past interviews conducted with *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* designers Didier de Villiers and Mothei Letlabika. The interviews presented in the discussion comprise of only the secondary data of past interviews collected online. The finding from the interview are organised in narrative form according to the analysis of narrative interview framework (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004). As such, the narrative interviews are presented as citation from the documentary data, organised according to the themes of: i) technical infrastructure; ii) relations of production; and iii) frameworks of knowledge informed by the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

Technical Infrastructure

Magents as a brand began with a line of cotton t-shirts with a washed-out finish in order to convey a sense of history, reflective of the historical narratives depicted on the t-shirts (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013). The brand was locally available in South Africa until 2003, while in 2005 the brand launched internationally in Europe, North America and Asia de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, de Villiers (2013). During this time, the brand was predominately produced in France, with a focus on the international market (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013). In 2009, after primarily being located abroad, de Villiers moved *Magents* production and distribution back to South Africa (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013; de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a).

Magents retail license was granted by the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union owned company Wear SA (Mofokeng, 2015). The brand has been creating designs for the past 20 years both locally and abroad in Paris New York, Vietnam, Japan and Canada (Mofokeng, 2015). *Magents* celebrates the rising of Africa through their clothing designs, with their store decorated in elements that are reflective of township life (de Villiers, The Soweten, 2015b). The brand is still available locally and internationally in Germany and the United Kingdom (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c). The brand identifies as a streetwear brand (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c).

Relations of Production

The name "Magents" is in reference to the local township slang meaning gentlemen (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). The brand logo began through a form of tagging in the three orange circles (Figure 6. 1) in the streets of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Soweto and Soshanguve (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013).
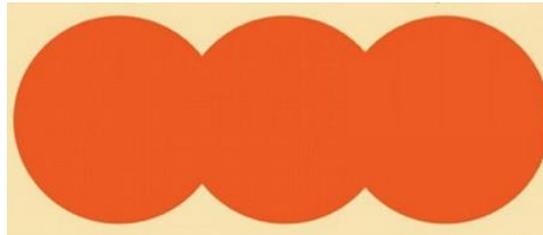
Figure 6.1: Magents Three Orange Circles Motif (Magents Woven Label)
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 22 January 2015

The tags were updated with three men (Figure 6.2) and the letter 'G' (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013).

Figure 6.2: Magents Three Men Motif (Magents Woven Label)
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 22 January 2015

The tagging (Figure 6.3) began as a precursor to the first range of *Magents* apparel distributed to South African retailers in 1999 (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013).

Figure 6.3: Magents Wall Painting, Soweto, Done in 1998
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 15 January 2015

> The logo [Figure 6.4] was inspired by the phenomena in the philosophical world called the "dialectic". The term dialectic has been used in the history of philosophy in a variety of ways. Here it is that of a totality structure ('metaphysics') consisting of two poles that mutually and simultaneously presuppose and exclude each other. It is commonly known as the "One and the Many" spheres or the "Universal and the Particular" that finds itself in all areas or spheres of life.
>
> (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013)

Figure 6.4: New Magents Logo
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 10 August 2016

Founder and creative director Didier de Villiers lost his parents at a young age, forcing him to become independent very quickly (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). As a result, this early independence fostered the dream of opening up a clothing store in his hometown of Rustenburg (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). De Villiers began creating-shirts in the early 1990s at a time where many thought the idea of starting an African clothing brand was a pipedream (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). The dream became a reality in the 1999 when *Magents* became available through local South African retailers (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013).

In 2013 de Villiers recruited graphic designer Mothei Letlabika, who at the time was working as an intern in Johannesburg (Letlabika, More Than Just Food, 2015a). Letlabika brings a sense of streetwear to the clothing, as it is a reflection of his personal style (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b). *Magents* operates from Cape Town, but both Letlabika and de Villiers are Johannesburg natives (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c). Letlabika's role is not limited to only graphic design, as his role in the company requires an understanding of the washes, stitching and arrangement components of each garment (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b). De Villiers remains as head of the clothing production, design concepts, patterns, cuts and fabrics for each garments (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c).

Frameworks of Knowledge

The goal of the brand is to reflect Africa through cotton (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013). The brand is aimed at an older clientele, as "Born frees don't know what being Magents is all about" (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a).

> The brand is about Africa expressing the soil through threads of cotton. We are inspired by South Africa but also ideologies like Forgive and elements along the lines of philosophy that this Country has experienced. Everything we produce is based on analytical thoughts of happening and underlying messages that affect our young generation.
>
> (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c)

Magents is inspired by African lived reality, from the climate, to music that is unique to South Africa (de Villiers, Magents Lifestyle Apparel, 2013). For Letlabika, fashion is not a reflection of trends but a means of self-expression through the medium of clothing (Letlabika, Trend

Soiree, 2015b). De Villiers views clothes as a message that do not reflect fashion trends, but are a presentation of South African narratives (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a).

> The look of Magents was partly inspired by Mr. Nelson Mandela's adventurous outlook on dress code. Mr. Mandela is famous for a certain style of shirt that signals his African-ness, but also points to his willingness to break with tradition, to set a trend, to move away from the past.
>
> (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a)

Engaging with their consumers in order for them to understand the brand ethos is a major challenge for the designers, as the clothes are not merely fashion statements but narratives about South Africa's lived reality (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b). The brand has used local celebrities such as Reason and J Something as endorsers of the brand; each celebrity was chosen as they reflect certain elements of the brand, and for their ability to draw in a target market that understands the brand (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b). The use of celebrity endorsements assists in getting the message of the brand to consumers as the brand believes that their clothing speaks for itself (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c).

The creation of design concept is inspired by the lived reality and spaces of the people of South Africa, and film also serves as a references in some pieces (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c). In creating each garment, Letlabika aims to create a conversation around each garment, in constructing a design concept; the concern is what the garment means as a sign for *Magents* as the creators and the possible meanings for their consumers (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b).

> We live in negativity and we try to see the positivity and detail in that negativity and that where we find inspiration for the concepts that we come up with. As people are so brainwashed to believe that everything is a rat race and negative that we want to show that there is positivity in the bad and use it to our advantage and the detail in it.
>
> (Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b)

De Villiers was never directly part of the South African struggle for liberation, rather an observer of the struggle through hearing political songs about Nelson Mandela, however, it is these struggle narratives that inspire themes depicted on many t-shirts (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). "Here at Magents we write what we want to. We do what we want to. Just like Steve Biko said in his column, where he said 'I write what I like' (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a)".

Magents expresses consistent themes throughout their lines, with Shaka Zulu being one of them. Each theme is researched in order to gain a fuller understanding of the cultural significance of it and is depicted through graphics and even seam trimmings (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c). Their 2015 collection, which debuted on SA Menswear Fashion week, was underpinned by an 'Afrika Rise' theme (de Villiers, The Soweten, 2015b). *Magents* apparel often spells Africa with a K, which is due to the brand ethos that 'c' represents colonisation and the African vernacular spelling of the word – as it appears on South Africa currency – is with a k (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). Past t-shirt designs depict 'TIA' (this is Afrika), Weekend Special, Shaka Zulu (Figure 6.5) and the Soweto Boxing Club as themes that are reflective of past and present South African narratives (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c; Letlabika, Trend Soiree, 2015b).

Figure 6.5: Magents Zulu T-shirt
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 20 November 2015

Consumption and Representation of the Magents T-shirts

This segment presents the findings and analysis of the 'Are You Still With Me' and 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirts according to the moments of *consumption* and *representation.* The sub-section *Reading the Aesthetics,* presents the analytical scheme of static visual images that used to decode the graphics of each t-shirt into analysable text as part of the moment of *consumption*. The interpretation of these findings presented in the subsequent section, *Are You Still With Me: Articulating Representation* and *Bikonscious Social Club: Articulating Representation,* using semiotics as a theoretical framework. The above-mentioned discussion informs the subsequent section pertaining to the articulation of *identity*, which delineates the manner in which the meaning of each t-shirt reflects the lived reality of the *Magents* consumer.

The discussion begins by presenting the interpreted findings of the content analysis of the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt and concludes with the discussion of the 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt.

Are You Still With Me T-shirt: Reading the Aesthetics

'Are You Still With Me' (Figure 6.6) is a white t-shirt with a linguistic message "are you still with me", with a visual message of the African continent and the face of Nelson Mandela, stylised in the shape of the question mark of the linguistic message. Table 6.1 presents the finding from the decoding of the t-shirt graphics.

Figure 6.6: Are You Still With Me T-Shirt
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 20 July 2016

Magents Lifestyle Apparel	
Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images	
Are you Still With Me T-shirt	
Text	**Description**
Pure Image	White t-shirt with question mark stylised in the shape of Africa. The question mark contains the words "are you still with", while "me" serves as the dot of the question mark. The centre of the question mark is the image of Mandela.
Linguistic Message	• Orange coloured "are you still with me" – words are organised in the shape of the question mark and range from big to small • "Are" is the biggest font size word and the first word on the question mark arrangement • "With" is the smallest font size and last word in the question mark arrangement • "Me" serves replaces/serves as the dot at the bottom of the question mark
Visual Message	• Brown faded question mark • A brown (faded) African continent is positioned over the question mark – parts of the shape serves as part of the question mark shape • Pop art style brown image of Mandela's face serves as the rest of the shape of the African continent

Table 6.1: Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Images 'Are You Still With Me' T-shirt

Are You Still With Me T-shirt: Articulating Representation

The word "me" of the linguistic message serves as the dot of the question mark (see Figure 6.6). The stylistic representation of the Africa and the portrait of Mandela in the shape of question mark, and the 'me' serve as a single pure image (Barthes, 1977). The pure image as a signifier yields a referent of the question, with its signified being the meaning of the question. This serves as an iconic mode of signification as "the signifier is not regarded as part of the referent but as part of depicting its transparency" (Chandler, 1994: 14). The phrase "are you still with me?" requires knowledge of the English language to understand that its referent is a question about continuing to stand alongside the person posing the question. The visual images are iconic depictions in the form of illustrations that signify Mandela and the African content. The pure image as an iconic sign serves the referential function of conveying the subject matter of the communication (Chandler, 1994).

The pure message, when analysed using *Magents* relations of production of the brand's goal of expressing African ideologies through clothing, generates a different meaning (de Villiers, Trend Soiree, 2015c). The pure image as a signifier yields the referent of an African ideology linked to Nelson Mandela, as discussed below. Determining the signified requires an individual analysis of the visual imagery of Mandela and Africa. Ideology refers to the dominant and prevailing knowledge, ideas and beliefs that distinguish a specific collective identity (Hartley, 2002). The relationship between signifier and referent reveals a symbolic signification of African collective identity. As a sign, this visual message serves a conative function of contextualising the question to a person who views themselves as part of the African collective identity (Chandler, 1994). The visual message of Mandela draws from the knowledge framework used by *Magents.* This assumption was confirmed through an interview with de Villiers, who revealed,

> We weren't so concerned about fighting the liberation but we heard through songs like that sang about Johanna [Gimmi Hope Johanna] by the reggae guy [Eddie Grant], who was singing about P.W Botha. The song was banned, but obviously we got a hold of it and we heard about the struggle and about Madiba and Biko. Especially through guys like Peter Gabriel from Simple minds, guys like Peter Gabriel and Jean Clerk from Simple Minds because they all sang about Biko very passionately. […] Anyway… so the idea of the brand, a brand called Magents sort of started to take its breeding space in that period of history.
>
> (de Villiers, Skype, 2016)

The brand draws inspiration for their design concept from the image and ideology of Mandela, that signifies "his willingness to break with tradition […] to move away from the past" (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a). The further knowledge that de Villiers, as the creative director of the brand, has a personal connection with Mandela, further contextualises the meaning of the t-shirt. The image is the reflection of the balance of creative expression and collective identity which he shares with his consumer (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). Though de Villiers was not part of any organised apartheid movement, the idea to start his clothing brand was greatly inspired by the political songs about Nelson Mandela and freedom (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a).

During Mandela's incarceration, the image of Mandela was banned in South Africa, however his name became a signifier of the liberation struggle in South Africa (Nicol, 2006; Tomaselli and Shepperson, 2009). The release of Mandela allowed the world to put a face to the man, which morphed Mandela 'the man' into an a symbolic representation of freedom of people of colour and unity of people in South Africa (Tomaselli and Shepperson, 2009). The images serve as a symbolic signification of freedom and unity. This symbolic signification serves the expressive function of contextualising the communicator of the question of the text (Chandler, 1994). As the use of the imagery of Mandela is of a symbolic nature, the communicator is not Mandela, but the notion of fighting for freedom and unity. The composition of the face within the African continent as a signifier (Figure 6.6) – when read as a single sign using the above findings as the referent – is an indexical signification of protest t-shirts (Figure 6.7) and imagery (Figure 6.8) of the 1980s and 1990s.

Figure 6.7: An ANC Supporter in 1990
Source: Getty Images, *BBC Online,* 1990
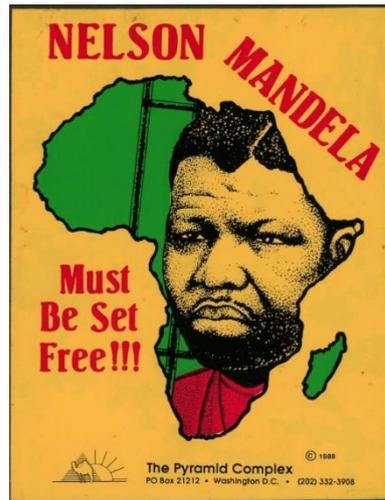
Figure 6.8: Nelson Mandela Must be Free Sticker
Source: The Pyramid Complex, *Sticker Kitty,* 1988

The sign also serves as a symbolic signifier of Nelson Mandela as a representation of the liberation struggle in South Africa. This symbolic signifier of freedom and unity of African people, serves the poetic function. The presentation of the amalgamation of the question mark, African continent and Mandela into a single image serves as an artistic articulation of a design concept about the liberation and unity of African people. Interestingly, a past t-shirt also conveys the linguistic message "I am still with you", however the concept is in reference to Steve Biko. *Magents'* t-shirts often use stylistic representation of imagery to portray an ideology as a design concept, as seen in the 'Eyes of Biko' t-shirt (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9: Eyes of Biko T-shirt
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 23 August 2016

In contrasting the 'Eyes of Biko' (Figure 6.9) "I am still with you" linguistic message with the 'Are you Still With Me' t-shirt's linguistic message (Figure 6.6) it becomes evident that the t-shirts are a symbolic representation of an ideology rather than a direct homage to an icon.

Magents uses an amalgamation of signifiers in both a metalinguistic and poetic function. The interpreted signified of each sign serves as code for the next signified. The manner in which each sign is organised expresses the subject matter of the t-shirt. This further confirms the assumption that the linguistic message is not in reference to Mandela, but African identity and ideology represented by the image of Mandela. This assumption was further confirmed through the Skype interview with de Villiers, who revealed,

> Madiba has been lifted up but Madiba himself said 'Biko is a greater man
> than I am'. He knew it because Biko was an amazing guy but we as a
> society don't celebrate him because we celebrating, looking at the TV and
> we think that [constructed images of people] is who we are but that's not
> who we are. That is not really what the freedom fighters before fought for.
> So we did the t-shirt [released on Mandela's birthday] and said, "Are you
> still with me" like check society, where are you? What are you this year?
>
> (de Villiers, Skype, 2016)

Bikonscious Social Club T-shirt: Reading the Aesthetics

The 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt is a yellow t-shirt comprising of the linguistic message "Bikonscious Social Club Inc." and the visual message of a bicycle with shoes hanging by the shoelaces on the handlebar of the bicycle (Figure 6.10). Table 6.2 presents the findings from the qualitative content of the 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt, as part of the decoding of the t-shirt text.

Figure 6.10: Bikonscious Social Club T-shirt
Source: Magents, *Magents Lifestyle Apparel Spring/Summer 16*, 4 July 2015

Magents Lifestyle Apparel	
Analytical Scheme of Visual Static Images	
Bikonscious Social Club T-shirt	
Text	**Description**
Pure Image	Yellow coloured t-shirt with the word "Bikonscious social club" written in black and red. The central image is a bicycle with shoes hanging on the rails.
Linguistic Message	"Bikonscious" at the top of the t-shirt, as the largest written text "Biko" written in red "Nscious" in black "Social" written in the same font as above lettering but smaller – black "Club" is written in a different font – bold black print "Inc." is the smallest font, written in the same font as club – not bold
Visual Message	- Black and white line drawing bicycle – central focus point - Shoes ('takkies') hanging by the laces on the bicycle rails – also line drawing (black and white)

Table 6.2: Analytical Scheme of Static Visual Image 'Bikonscious Social Club' T-shirt

Bikonscious Social Club T-shirt: Articulating Representation

The stylistic representation of the word "Bikonscious", as "Biko" in red and "nscious" in black (Figure 6.10) serves a similar design function as the stylistic representation of the question mark in the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt (Figure 6.6). The word is analysed as a pure image, comprising of a visual message (the stylistic depiction) and linguistic message (phonetic meaning). Determining the signification of the linguistic message requires an analysis of the meaning of the phonetics of the word. The phonetic meaning of the words requires reading the word aloud, which serves as the knowledge required to determine the referent to the phrase "be conscious".

The relationship between signifier and referent yields an indexical mode of signification as there exists a causal correlation between signifier (the word "Bikonscious") and referent (the

phonetic "be conscious") (Fourie, 2009). The code utilised for determining the signified is the English definition of the phrase "be conscious", which means a state of awakening or being alert. The function of the word (in the context of the pure image of "Bikonscious" and not the t-shirt in its entirety) is referential as it serves as the primary information conveyed by the designer. Interpreting the meanings of the stylistic representation the red "Biko" draws from the knowledge of the South African political history, in determining the referent as the surname of the late Steve Bantu Biko. The influence of Steve Biko also serves as a knowledge framework of *Magents* as de Villiers makes reference to Biko's writing about fear in South African politics *I write what I like* (Biko, 1981b) in expressing the *Magents'* brand ethos (de Villiers, More Than Just Food, 2015a).

No further code is required to determine the signified as the surname Biko. The mode of signification is therefore iconic, as the signifier "Biko" resembles the signified of the surname Biko (Chandler, 1994). The red "Biko" serves as the metalingual function as it serves as a code for the interpretation of the pure image "Bikonscious" (Jakobson, 1960). This also serves as a further relation of production, as it contextualises the manner in which the designer articulates the design concept into a garment.

Interpreting the referent and signified of the pure image "Bikonscious" as a signifier, utilises the above-mentioned knowledge in two ways. Firstly, the knowledge that the stylistic representation serves as a relation of production reveals the referent as the phrase "be conscious". Secondly, the signified meaning of the red and black stylistic representation serves as a code for determining the signified of Biko's concept of consciousness. Black conscious was a movement that served part of the many of resistance movements during the apartheid era in South Africa (Gerhart, 2008).

> Black consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time. Its essence is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It is based on a self-examination, which has ultimately led them to believe that by seeking to run away from themselves emulate the white man; they are insuring the intelligence of

whoever created them black. The philosophy of the black consciousness

therefore expresses group pride.

<div align="right">(Biko, 1981a: 137)</div>

The relationship between referent and signifier yields an indexical signification of Biko's above definition of black consciousness. The stylistic representation of the sign "Bikonscious" as part of the greater linguistic message "Bikonscious Social Club Inc." highlights the signification of ideology of black consciousness, thus serving a poetic function (Chandler, 1994). This use of an amalgamation of signifiers in one sign to reference an ideology associated with a person, rather than the person, is similar to the amalgamation of signifiers in the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt.

The entire linguistic message "Bikonscious Social Club Inc." is an indexical signifier of The Buena Vista Social Club. Knowledge of a musical group of the same name, or the documentary about the group of the same name reveals the mode of signification established through the similarity of the signifier and its referent. The referent, Buena Vista Social Club, is largely associated the Cuban musical group, musical album (González and Cooder, 1997), and documentary by Wim Wenders (1988). A transcript of an interview with Ry Cooder (a guitarist in the band) reveals the significance of the name, as a reference to the song Buena Vista Social Club by Orestes López (father to band member Israel López), and a real fraternal social club of the same name in the in Havana Cuba (Cooder, Pacifica Radio, 2000). "At the Buena Vista Social Club, musicians went there to hang out with each other, like they used to do at musicians unions in the US and they'd have dances and activities" (Cooder, Pacifica Radio, Cooder, 2000). The social club was for Afro-Cubans living in Mariano Havana during the 1940s and 1950s, one of the members being López's father.

> To name a recoding after a social club whose members were black Cubans
>
> was symbolic of the social apartheid many musicians had suffered before
>
> the 1959 Revolution and significant in itself

<div align="right">(Fairley, 2009: 10)</div>

The linguistic message when further analysed according to this knowledge reveals a contemporary meaning. The replacement of "Buena Vista" with "Bikonscious" signifies the notion of a revival of the black consciousness in contemporary society. The notion of social

club alludes to the Buena Vista Social Club, where membership was largely based upon ethnicity. The black consciousness was a non-violent movement that called for the psychological reawakening and mental emancipation of black people, which was viewed as a direct threat against the dominant apartheid ideology (Biko, 1981a).

The Buena Vista club membership was more than just a social club, but a celebration of Afro-Cubans' ethnic pride, and a fraternity (Oberacker, 2008; Fairley, 2009); in this sense, the phrase serves as a narrative of how to keep Steve Biko's teaching alive in contemporary South Africa, that it is not necessarily through political uprising but communal support. The interview conducted with de Villiers further revealed that the t-shirt signifies Cuban socialism,

> In Cuba the one ruled over and still rules the many, this system now call it is normally socialism, or communism or one of those phrases or terms that we use and of course people interpreted it differently. In socialism the one says no we as a government will rule you like this, you all get the same and they are benefiting from that, great benefits that democracy cannot achieve because of the greed of the man. […] So that is on the Bikonscious, on the social part [in reference to the "social" linguistic message on the t-shirt] is a little off [Fidel] Castro who also helped the ANC to fight the apartheid government and he was also pro-Madiba. He helped us a lot in South Africa but it's just a play on that.

> (de Villiers, Skype, 2016)

The visual message of the bicycle seems an arbitrary signification, as there exists no connection between the meaning of the bicycle and the meaning of the linguistic text (Fourie, 2009). It highlights the absent depiction of Biko's image that has become commonplace in many graphic t-shirts. At first the bicycle conjures up the notion the green movement. The designer's relations of production reveal that the brand conveys set themes through their clothing (de Villiers, 2013), which informs the assumption that the visual message is a further theme. These themes are visible, in the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt as part of the narrative about Mandela with t-shirt

'HiStory' (Figure 6.11 and the rearticulating of the question derived from the 'Eyes of Biko' t-shirt (Figure 6.9`).

Figure 6.11: HiStory T-shirt
Source: Magents Lifestyle Apparel, *Instagram,* 18 November 2014

A brief search of past designs reveals that the bicycle forms part of a greater narrative for the designers with the image of the bicycle being part of the 'African Bicycle Club' t-shirt (Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.12: African Bicycle Company t-shirt
Source: African Look Book, *AfricanLookbook.com*, 2016

'The African Bicycle Company' t-shirt was inspired by the African Renaissance speech of former present Thabo Mbeki (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). The bicycle of the 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt is different to that on the 'African Bicycle Company' t-shirt further informing the assumption of arbitrary signification. The bicycle is the central image on the t-shirt, serving as a phatic function – the first point of communication. From the researcher's assumed perspective of the designer, the centrality of the image and the assumed arbitrary signification brings to mind the theoretical assumption that consumers rarely comprehend the meaning of their clothing (Barnard, 1996; 2011). This informs the assumption that the use of the bicycle as a phatic signification draws in the 'bicycle loving consumers' to purchase the t-shirt, only for them to realise the true meaning of the t-shirt once they start wearing it. As the designers are located in Cape Town this the image is interpreted as reference to the city's known environmental policies and the pioneer for the inclusion of bicycle lanes in South Africa. The assumption could not be proven through analysis along, and the interview confirmed this assumption. "Guys that buy the t-shirt they think it says buy conscious [...] They think that and we don't want to interrupt them" (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). Graphic designer Mothei Letlabika, further confirmed the phatic nature of the image, "They think that and there is an actual bike there" (Letlabika, Skype, 2016). Letlabika, also revealed the poetic signification of the bicycle in stating,

> For us having a bike there it was a representation of [our target market] as a kid, you felt that you were part of your whatever group of friends you may have been amongst, so you were like that group. […]. So in some essence you feel like it was kind of like a social thing to have a bike. It's about that club as represented on there, but as well the fact that we didn't use his [Biko] face. I think it would be kind of a good conversation starter, because you don't want to make it obvious and have Biko's face there. So rather have something else that will be a representative or something that can us as people can relate with. That in essence starts to conjure up a conversation about why, who is Biko.
>
> (Letlabika, Skype, 2016)

Lived Reality of the Magents Consumer: Articulating Identity

The 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt uses the technological process of fading to convey a sense of history, serving a metalinguistic function to assist the reading with the visual message of the t-shirt. The imagery of the African continent and portrait of Nelson Mandala, when analysed using the fading as a code, conveys the meaning of the t-shirt as referring to a collective movement of fighting for the release of Mandela in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As such, the *Magents* consumer is characterised as one whose self-attributed African identity is largely informed by the South African political history and freedom fighters in contemporary South Africa (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The signification of the ideology through references to political narratives reflects not only the lived reality of the consumer but the assumed knowledge frameworks. The cultural cues used by the designers suggest that the *Magents* consumer has a keen interest in the political history of South Africa. The consumer's interest in political history informs *Magents'* ideas for their design concept. It thus signifies part of the shared narrative about their history and belonging in the consumer's identity. de Villiers (Skype, 2016) notes that his clothing relates to an older market. The use of past narratives suggests that the collective identity represented by *Magents* clothing is of their shared history. The t-shirts do not reflect the past, but rather they convey how knowledge of the past enables a deeper contemporary identity construction (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

The 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt reflects the ideological content that unites the micro-markets of each brands as collective identities. A collective identity of shared ideology is one that is united by "beliefs about experience and history of the group over time" (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004: 94). *Magents'* use of the colour red as a poetic and metalinguistic devise for highlighting the word "Biko" in "Bikonscious" contextualises the t-shirt to a cultural artefact related to an ideological teaching of Steve Biko, specifically black consciousness. The amalgamation of the symbolic meaning of "Bikonscious Social Club" as an indexical signifier of the *Buena Vista Social Club* refers to a collective action of the Afro-Cuban fraternity of the 1950s. The design communicates collective belonging to a micro-market that identifies with the ideology of black consciousness and understanding the significance of collective action in society (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

The findings from the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt revealed that the designer's use of Nelson Mandela and the African continent as a signifier is not in reference to the personal narrative of

Mandela. Rather, the signified is the symbolic meaning about the collective action of fighting for the freedom of Mandela and the liberation of the oppressed during apartheid-torn South Africa. The interview conducted with the designer revealed that his childhood was spent on the streets of Johannesburg township, where he saw first-hand the collective movements that fought for liberation (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). The t-shirt thus reflects a personal ideological belief of the designer, assumedly shared with his consumer (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt also draws from the liberation struggle using the linguistic message "Biko" as a signifier of the ideology of Steve Biko.

Conclusion

This conclusion details the concluding remarks regarding the *Voguish Analysis* chapters, which discussed the findings and interpretation from the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) analysis. The discussion of the *production* node, presented the narrative interview findings organised according to the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) thematic categories. The thematic categories were utilised as codes for interpreting the signified meaning of each t-shirt presented as part of the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) articulations of *representation*. The moment of *consumption*, as the semiotic reading of each t-shirt presented the tabulated findings from the content analysis according the analytical schema of visual static images. The moment of *consumption* served to decode the aesthetics of each t-shirt into analysable units/text and further analysed as part of the *representation* node.

The *Voguish Analysis* chapter addressed this study's research question through discussing how each designer presents aspects of their consumers' shared lived reality. The discussion presented as part of the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) moment of *representation* discussed the manner in which the designer utilises the design processes as a form of communication. Analysing each t-shirt using semiotic theory (Pierce, 1932; Jakobson 1960; de Saussure 1983) and interpreting the findings using the Circuit of Culture (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) and the Encoding/Decoding models (Hall, 2006 [1980]) revealed the socio-cultural conditions that influenced the creation of each t-shirt as cultural artefacts. The *representation* node interpretations (which take into account the moments of *consumption* and *production*) were utilised in discussing each brand's articulation of *identity* in light of the framework of collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The discussion presented as part of the articulation of *identity*

answered this study's research question through identifying how the meanings of the t-shirts can be used as knowledge about the *Butan* and *Magents* consumers' lived reality

The subsequent chapter presents the concluding remarks on this research process in its entirety. Chapter 7 begins by detailing the manner in which this study achieved its research objects and concludes with a brief suggestion of potential future research.

Chapter 7: Conclusion
Fashionable Finale

Introduction

This dissertation, *Fashioning Meaning,* explored the manner in which fashion designers use the process of design to convey meanings about the lived reality of their target market. This study's aim of understanding the meaning of the *Butan Wear (Butan)* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents)* graphic t-shirt argues the methodological benefits of analysing fashion from the perspective of the designer. The findings in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 revealed that the represented meanings presented on the t-shirts under analysis convey knowledge about the target market of each designer (du Gay *et al.*, 1997; Curtin and Gaither, 2005). This final chapter presents this dissertation's objectives and the concluding remarks on how the findings of this study present an argument for the study of clothing as a reflection of collective identity when analysed using the designer as the source of meaning.

Fashionable Finale details the overall conclusion of *Fashioning Meaning* as a study about the socio-cultural communicative properties of the graphic t-shirt. The chapter begins with a summary of the contents of the previous chapters. This discussion details how each chapter achieved specific objectives of this research (originally detailed in chapter 1). The chapter continues with a discussion of how the findings presented in the previous chapters serve as knowledge about the collective identities represented on the *Butan* and *Magents* graphic t-shirt. The aim of the analysis presented in Chapter 5 (*Butan*) and Chapter 6 (*Magents*) was to understand the contents of the graphic t-shirt through the Circuit of Culture *production* (encoding), *consumption* (decoding/reading), *representation* (text) and *identity* (lived reality) nodes (Leve, 2012). As such, this chapter summarises the findings presented in the previous chapters using the Circuit of Culture nodes as sub-heading. The chapter concludes with a delineation of the strengths and limitations of the study, and a brief discussion of this study's suggestions for further research.

Fashioned Objectives

Chapter 1 stated that the title, *Vision Boarding Research*, is derived from the fashion design first phase of the design process of conceptualising a mood for the new clothing collection through visual mood (or vison) board (Aage and Belussi, 2008). The mood board is created in order to solve to the problem of satisfying consumer needs while simultaneously creating a garment that expresses the designer's brand ethos (Ames, 2008). Chapter 1 of this dissertation presented the conceptualised direction of this study in its entirety; the chapter thus served as the vision board for this dissertation, in a similar manner that a designer's mood board serves as an outline for the new garment collection. The chapter further problematized this research topic of analysing fashion from the designer's perspective rather than the preferred method of the consumer perspective. Each chapter title within this dissertation refers to a different phase of the design process in order to contextualise this dissertation as a study about fashion and meanings.

Vision Boarding Research defined the study of fashion as the study of the production of meaning through the process of design. The chapter delineated the manner in which this research would engage with fashion, as the study of graphic t-shirts produced by two South African fashion brands, *Butan Wear* (located in Johannesburg) and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* (located in Cape Town). The chapter also defined the target market of each designer as an example of collective identity, while the zeitgeist of the target market was defined as the symbolic essence of the lived reality. The chapter concluded with a detailed account of the manner in which each chapter of the dissertation would achieve certain goals with the aim of answering the main research question of how fashion designers convey the lived reality of their consumer through the design process.

The second chapter, *Threading Literature,* is symbolic of the selection of threads a designer uses for their garments. The literature reviewed in this chapter served as the thread that contextualised the findings from the analysis process to the fashion design as a process of communication. As such, *Threading Literature,* reviewed literature with the aim of understanding the manner in which the fashion design process could be contextualised as a process of communication from designer to consumer. The chapter identified a gap in the current state of literature regarding the study of fashion as communication. Engaging with past studies undertaken on the manner in which designers utilise their consumers' zeitgeist in the

design process revealed that magazines and fashion buyers, who display new clothing styles to consumers, understand the manner in which certain designers express their consumer's zeitgeist through design (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Kawamura, 2006; Gick and Gick, 2007). Academic studies rarely engage with this perspective of fashion (Barnard, 1996; Kawamura, 2005). As such, there exists little knowledge regarding the methodological process of analysing clothes with the designer's intended meaning as the focus of the study (Kawamura, 2005; 2011; Barthes, 2013 [1957]). This one-sided approach to the study of fashion serves as a rationale for the need for a study of this nature, which views fashion as a form of cultural production. This understanding of fashion informed the need to utilise theoretical frameworks informed by the field of Cultural Studies, in order to understand the graphic t-shirt as a cultural artefact (Turner, 2003; Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013).

Fabrics of Theory, the third chapter, symbolises the fabric choices selected by the designer, used to convert the design concept into garments. Similarly, the theoretical framework was utilised to convert the findings of the data into a scholarly discussion about the t-shirt as socio-cultural communication. The objective of the third chapter was to determine theoretical concepts that would assist the discussion of the findings of the graphic t-shirt as cultural artefacts reflective of the opinions and zeitgeist of a specific collective identity. This objective was achieved through discussing the relevance of the Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) of communication, constructionist semiotic theory (see Hall, 1997; Chandler, 2007), and the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) as theoretical frameworks for the study. *Fabrics of Theory* detailed the manner in which the Circuit of Culture model assists the explanation of how the production process of the graphic t-shirt culminates in a t-shirt product that reflects the lived reality of its target consumer. The Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) was introduced in order to explain the socio-cultural conditions that influence the physical production process, and the production of meaning within the design process. Semiotic theory (Peirce, 1932; de Saussure, 1983; Chandler, 2007) was discussed as a theoretical framework that assists in the explanation of meaning of the aesthetics of the graphic t-shirt as meaningful signs that serve as a representation of the lived realities portrayed by each fashion brand. These theoretical frameworks also served as methodological tools, elaborated on in *Stylish Methods,* the fourth chapter.

Stylish Methods, the fourth chapter, delineated the qualitative research methods utilised in the analysis of four graphic t-shirt created by *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel*. *Stylish*

Methods is representative of the design process where the designer formulates a method for solving their design problem through the creation of a garment (Ames, 2008). The is first phase of the fabrication phase of the design process that converts the design concept into a pattern (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). Similarly, Chapter 4 outlined the analysis process utilised for answering this study's research question. The chapter discussed a qualitative content analysis (du Plooy, 2009) using an analytical scheme of static visual images (Barthes, 1977; Chandler, 1994; Fourie, 2009) as a data collection and analysis method. Furthermore, the chapter introduced the manner in which the Circuit of Culture model would be mobilised as a methodological tool for analysing the biographical narrative documentary and the t-shirt data according to the moments of *production*, *consumption*, *representation* and *identity*. The chapter explained the manner in which the semi-structured interviews conducted with each designer would serve as a reliability validation measure for confirming the findings of the analysis presented in the *Voguish Analysis* chapters (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). This methodology chapter further discussed the sampling and data collection procedures of this research.

The *Voguish Analysis,* is also representative of the description a designer provides about their entire collection of garments, presenting the fabric selection, themes of the range and design concept (de Greef, 2009). Within the context of design, the threads and fabrics utilised to articulate the design concept into a garment are presented in written form so the viewer of the collection can understand how the designer expressed their design concept through their garments (Bugg, 2009). Similarly, in this study, the theoretical frameworks were utilised in conjunction with the reviewed literature in order to critically engage with the data to produce a discussion on the manner in which fashion designers use the design process to convey meaning about their consumers' lived reality. *Voguish Analysis* presented the findings and analysis of the narrative interview data, and the aesthetics of the t-shirt data according to the Circuit of Culture moments of *production* and *consumption*. The analysis and findings of the past narrative interviews (documentary data) utilised the analysis of the narrative-biographical interview method (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004) in presenting each designer's articulation of *production*. The documentary data is analysed with the aim of identifying the identity of the creator of the t-shirt. The findings from the documentary data were utilised as a code for interpreting the signified meanings of the t-shirt and were presented in conjunction with the findings from the moment of *consumption* in the discussion pertaining to the moment of *representation*. The moment of *consumption* as the researchers 'reading' (decoding) of each

t-shirt, presented the analytical schema of static visual images of the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) t-shirts. The contents of the schema served as the units of analysis interpreted as part the *representation* node.

The *representation* nodes discussed the interpretation of the findings of the t-shirts and narrative interview data, in light of the moments of *representation*, using semiotics (see Peirce, 1932; Jakobson, 1960; Barthes, 1977) as a theoretical framework for the discussion of the interpretation. This discussion further utilised the findings from the semi-structured interview to validate the findings, and the literature surveyed in *Threading Literature* to contextualise the interpretations to the design process. The chapters concluded with a discussion of the manner in which the findings from the moments of *production, consumption* and *representation* speaks to the shared lived reality of the *Butan* (Chapter 5) and *Magents* (Chapter 6) consumers as collective identities (Scherer and Jackson, 2008). The discussion, presented in the *identity* node, answered the research question of what the *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirt reflects about the specific South African collective identities.

The title of this final chapter, *Fashionable Finale,* is symbolic of a fashion show finale, which presents all of a designer's styles of clothing within a current collection. The clothes on show reflect a summary of the design concept articulated into the form of a garment (Gick and Gick, 2007). It also represents the designers' analysis of their garment in relation to their original design concept (Ames, 2008). Similarly, this chapter draws from the previous chapters of this dissertation in presenting a summary of findings of this research presented according to the research objectives of this study (originally stated in chapter 1).

Graphic T-Shirt Circuit of Culture

Moments of Production: The Butan and Magents Encoding Process

The documentary data of past narrative interviews were analysed in order to create a profile of each brand. The Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) and the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.*, 1997) informed the analysis and discussion of *Butan* (in Chapter 5) and *Magents* (in Chapter 6) brands, which both took the identity of the producer of the text into account.

The organisation of the narrative interview documentary data, according to thematic categories informed by Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980]) revealed the physical production process of each brand and the manner in which the each brand produces messages through the design process. Of the physical process of production, both designers do not utilise forecasting techniques, electing to engage with their consumer personally. The assumption made in Chapter 2 suggests that smaller fashion brands, as opposed to large retailers, have a direct relationship with their consumers, enabling them direct access to their consumers in order to represent their attitudes and beliefs (Crane and Bovone, 2006). This assumption was confirmed using the narrative interview documentary data to create a profile of each designer's encoding process.

Analysing the t-shirt as a cultural product required an understanding of the socio-cultural context in which they were created, and this involves an understanding of how the identity of the founder of each brand influences the production process (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). As such, the analysis of the biographical narrative interviews, as part of the *production* node, also served to create a profile of the identity of the founder of the brand. The findings revealed that both designers portray elements of their lived reality, shared with their target consumer.

Julian Kubel of *Butan Wear* identifies as part of the hip-hop subculture, evident in not only his t-shirts designs but his involvement in the South African hip-hop community (Kubel, Skype, 2016a). Kubel, who is of German descent, conveys the history informed by a subculture created by marginalised black and Hispanic youth in the Bronx (Rose, 1994; Ngcobo, 2014). The shared identity between designer and consumer enables the consumers to understand the designer's intended meaning of their clothing using shared cultural codes (Bogatsu, 2002; Musangi, 2009). This is evident in the shared self-ascribed hip-hop subcultural identity between Kubel and his *Butan* consumer (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

Didier de Villiers of *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* creates clothing that reflects South African history for consumers who have a mutual understanding of the relevance that the ideological teaching of past apartheid struggle heroes play in contemporary South Africa (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). De Villiers, of Afrikaans descent, draws from the narrative of black consciousness as a tool for challenging white oppression (Biko, 1981a; Gerhart, 2008). de Villiers' sense of identity is largely informed by the past narratives of the South African liberation struggle (de Villiers, Skype, 2016).

Moments of Consumption: Reading the Aesthetics of Each T-shirt

Determining the collective identity of a produced representation of *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts was determined, in part, through the *consumption* nodes of the t-shirt circuit of culture (Leve, 2012). The findings from the *representation* nodes of the t-shirt, using semiotic theory (Chandler, 1994; Fourie 2009) as a theoretical framework revealed how each brand used the process of design to convey meaning. The knowledge frameworks utilised by each design (determined from the documentary data) when utilised as codes for decoding the meaning, reveals the designers' encoding process (Hall, 2006 [1980]).

De Villiers (*Magents*) drawing from historical narratives in the creation of each t-shirt, constructs a cultural text used by the consumer to expressing their belonging, informed by shared opinion on the ideological teaching of the South African liberation struggle (Melucci, 1995; Storey, 1996; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012). The narrative interviews of the brand revealed that de Villiers creates clothing that reflects self-awareness of African identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004); this is evident in the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt, as the use of the African content reflects the knowledge framework of drawing from African history (de Villiers, Skype, 2016). This African identity is also evident in the amalgamation of the African continent, portrait of Mandela, and the word 'me' to portray a question mark, which reveals a symbolic signification of the ideological concept of liberation associated with Mandela. Though the brand does not create clothing for a subculture, the micro-market of *Magents* is organised as a collective identity based on their shared self-attributes of being an African and shared ideology informed by the political history of South Africa (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). This is evident in the findings of the 'Bikonscious Social Club' t-shirt that draws from the knowledge framework of black consciousness as an ideology. The different colours of red and black used to split up the word "Bikonscious" into "Biko" and "nscious", and the absent signifier of Steve Biko conveys the ideological concept of black consciousness associated with Biko

Kubel's vision for his brand is to reflect his and his consumers' personal narratives of hip-hop subculture zeitgeist through his clothing. This vision is evident in the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt. The t-shirt conveys Kubel's personal 'legends', informed by the knowledge frameworks of the history of hip-hop as a subculture. The t-shirts created by Kubel reflect the cultural commodities and shared opinions informed by the global and local hip-hop community. Kubel creates graphics t-shirts that convey meanings, used by consumers as cultural artefacts, to

express collective belonging to a specific subculture (Hebdige, 1979). The 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt reflects how Kubel's knowledge frameworks from global references such as *Back to the Future Part Two,* and contextualises it to Africa and hip-hop; this is evident in the use of the *African* Marty McFly (the protagonist of the American film) and the indexical signification of the DeLorean car into the BMW 325 (iGusheshe). The t-shirt is further contextualised to hip-hop music through the indexical signification of the hover board as a 1980s style radio, similar to that in the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt. The shared collective belonging between Kubel and his micro-market enables him to create a t-shirt that reflects the shared group narrative of individuals who identify themselves as Africans and as belonging to the South African hip-hop subculture (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The symbolic meaning of the visual imagery was interpreted as a signifier of the history and ideology of hip-hop. The interview with Kubel revealed that the design concept was informed by his personal creative expression about the prominent figures that, in Kubel's opinion, played a role in the creation and maintenance of the subculture, both locally and globally (Kubel, Skype, 2016a).

Moments of Representation: The Decoded Meanings of the T-shirts

The discussion of the articulation of *representation* drew from the findings from the moments of *production* and *consumption*. The findings discussed the represented meanings of each t-shirt with the aim of understanding how each designers utilises design to convey meaning. The findings reflect the circuit of speech of each designer and the *langue* (design process) and *parole* (use of design on a garment) of each brand. Chapter 3, *Fabrics of Theory* extended to the definition of *langue* and *parole* as language and usage respectively, to design process and garment design. Drawing from Stuart Hall's (1997) definition of language as that which is used to communicate ideas and meanings, this research recognises design as a 'language'. The standard design process utilised for creating a graphic t-shirt serves as *langue*. The function of the sign derived from the *Butan* and *Magents* analytical schema of sign function reveals how each designer utilises the process of design to convey meaning. As such, the interpreted sign function of each t-shirt serves as *parole.*

Engaging with the representation of a text reveals the characteristics of those who identify with the meaning of the text (du Gay *et al.*, 1997). The findings from the moment of *representation* revealed that the designer's t-shirts serve as cultural texts that represent meaningful experiences of the collective identities of those who identify with their meaning (During, 2005). The

semiotic analysis of each t-shirt, undertaken in order to understand the manner in which the designer interprets the lived reality of their target market through design, revealed the designers intended meaning of each t-shirt. The semi-structured interviews with each designer served to confirm the findings. The analysis of the narrative interview using the meaning structures of frameworks of knowledge, relations of production and technical infrastructure of encoding as thematic categories were utilised in analysing the meanings of each t-shirt.

The analysis of the 'Bikonscious Social Club' and 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirts revealed that *Magents* uses stylistic depictions of words as metalingual code for determining the expressive function of the t-shirts as a text (Jakobson, 1960; Fourie, 2009). This reveals the circuit of meaning of the designer, namely the manner in which *Magents* uses design to communicate meaning to their consumer (de Saussure, 1983), which informs the manner in which the designer articulates their design concept into a garment. This articulation of a design concept into a garment serves as a standard procedure of the *fabrication* phase of the design process (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). *Magents* contextualises the meaning of their signs, by using colour as symbolic signifiers. This is evident in the reading of the word as two signs, "Biko" and "be conscious", in the message "Bikonscious Social Club", which reveals the manner in which the designer uses design to articulate a design concept about ideological meanings into a garment (Smal and Lavelle, 2011). These findings reflects the designer *langue* and *parole,* as through the standardised fabrication phase of the design process, the designer elects to use colour to convey ideological phonetic symbolism to convey ideology. The 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt conveys the manner in which *Magents* utilises a fading technique to convey history, as part of their circuit of meaning, which again reflects the designer *langue (the fabrication phase)* and *parole,* in the use of the faded washes on their visual imagery to convey historical narratives.

Drawing directly from the lived reality of the subculture allows Kubel to create t-shirts that are cultural artefacts, used to express their collective belonging and ideology (Hebdige, 1979; Brown, 2007; Luvaas, 2012). The ideology of the hip-hip subculture was revealed in the designer's use of the cultural commodities of spray paint cans, rappers, and break-dancer as symbols of the cultural commodities. The stylistic depiction of the hover board of the young male as an indexical signifier of radio (boom box) speakers, similar to that depicted in the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt, reiterates the circuit of meaning of using cultural commodities to convey meaning. This nod to the history of hip-hop through cultural commodities is a

knowledge framework of hip-hop history shared by Kubel's consumers. These preferred knowledge frameworks reflect the designer's sourced ideas for his design concept (Au *et al.*, 2001), and refers to the *langue* as the standard design process used by the designer. The parole of the *Butan* garment is evident in the symbolic depiction that conveys personal meaning to Kubel and his consumer, who form part South African hip-hip subculture (Kubel, 2014a). As such, the *Butan* t-shirts are a reflection of the South African hip-hop subculture as a collective identity.

Moments of Identity: The Consumers' Lived Reality

The *identity* node served to answer the research question of what each designer portrays about the aspects the lived reality of their consumer. The findings from the subsequent nodes were discussed in light of the framework for collective identity. This discussion presents the conclusion, remarking on how designers create clothing that serves as knowledge about their micro-market's lived reality. The findings from the secondary data of narrative interviews and the primary data of semi-structured interviews reveal that the narratives portrayed by both designers are of personal significance to both designers; this subverts the notion that brands cater for a collective identity organised by a racial self-ascriptions. Though the narrative portrayed by the designers is reflective of a racial self-ascription, the designers' personal identification with the narratives reveal that the collective identity the designer seeks to represent, are identities characterised by shared self-attributes of an African identity rather, than a racial identity.

The design process begins with the identification and analysis of the shared socio-cultural characteristics, opinions and lifestyle of a designer's intended micro-market (Jackson, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Loschek, 2009). The shared characteristics of the micro-market enables the definition of each micro-market as a collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The findings from the *Butan* t-shirt reveal that the brand's micro-market regards the history of hip-hop as part of their collective history, which reflects part of their ideology as a subculture (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The findings from the *Magents* t-shirts reflect the shared ideology of the collective identity represented by the brand (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). These ideologies draw from black consciousness, socialism and the South African liberation.

A designer's understanding of the micro-market's needs and characteristics serve as a framework for creating new garment styles (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). In contextualising the design process to the Encoding/Decoding model, the knowledge used by the designer to encode meaning to the t-shirt reflects the frame of references required for consumers to decode the meaning (Hartley, 2002; Hall, 2006 [1980]; Tomaselli, 2015).

As cultural artefacts, each t-shirt was revealed to express social, political and ideological discourse of the micro-markets – as collective identities – of each brand (Kellner, 1995). This expression of shared ideology through clothing is visible in the *Butan* 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt. The analysis was undertaken in order to understand the encoding process of the designer, and the t-shirt was analysed to determine how the designer expresses such ideologies. The semiotic analysis of the 'Legends Live Forever' t-shirt identified that this is the second edition of the t-shirt; the death of hip-hop artist Flabba 2015, required the t-shirt to be updated in order to reflect the current reality of the South African hip-hop subculture. The release of the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirts, designed by *Magents,* coincided with the birthday of Nelson Mandela, reflecting the lived reality of the *Magents* consumer. The release day suggests that the lived reality of *Magents'* micro-market is characterised by a deep connection to South African political history. *Magents* t-shirts pay homage to past political icons, reflecting South African political history, which the *Magents* micro-market considers important. For *Butan,* the t-shirt is an homage of past icons who represent the ideological history of the hip-hop subculture. The designers' release dates of these t-shirts are reflect the zeitgeist of each brand's micro-market.

Though the *Butan* t-shirts reflect ideological meanings of hip-hop, the t-shirts are not about ideology, but rather the t-shirt are reflective of a collective identity with a mutual narrative informed by the ideology of the hip-hop subculture. The history and ideological beliefs of the *Magents* consumer and designer are what categorise them as a collective identity informed by the group narrative (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004). The *Magents* t-shirts, though a narrative above collective identity, reflect shared ideology. The t-shirts represent the lived reality of individuals whose collective identity is due to a shared ideological belief informed by past narratives (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

The findings from the t-shirts support the argument that the graphic t-shirt serves as socio-cultural communication. The 'Africa is the Future' t-shirt (*Butan*) and 'Are You Still With Me'

t-shirt (*Magents*) both have depictions of Africa and draw from 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s liberation movement narratives, in representing an African identity. The representation of African identity and communication of ideology reflects the contents that unify each designer's micro-market as a collective identity. These contents refer to: i) shared self-attributed characteristics; ii) shared ideology; and iii) shared narrative of a collective identity (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

The African identity portrayed in the 'Are You Still With Me' t-shirt draws from political history, while that of the 'Africa is the Future' draws from pop-cultural history. The t-shirts reflect the contents that classify their micro-markets as collective identities. The t-shirts in discussion reflect the self-attributed characterises of African identity, as an description of their personal identity that is shared with others who describe themselves using the same attributes (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004).

Fashioned Findings

This dissertation more specifically the *Voguish Analysis* chapters sought to investigate the manner in which *Butan* and *Magents* t-shirts serve as alternative form of socio-cultural communication about their respective consumers' lived reality. Table 7.1 below presents a tabulated summary of how each brand utilises design to articulate narrative that serve to represent and maintain their consumer's social reality. The questions answered within the table rearticulate the questions posed in Chapter 1 (Table 1.2). The table utilises key words (in italics) as contractions for the questions:

- What do the past narrative interviews reveal about the *brand identity*?

- What do the past narrative interviews reveal about the *brand ethos*?

- Which *cultural influences* does each designer draw from?

- Whose *shared reality* does each brand represent through the analysed t-shirts?

- How does each designer use *design aesthetics* to convey meanings about their consumers lived reality?

- How does the brand use signifiers to *articulate meaning*?

Butan and Magents Graphic T-shirts as Socio-Cultural Communication		
Keywords	**Butan Wear**	**Magents Lifestyle Apparel**
Brand Identity	Street wear	Ready to wear
Brand Ethos	Represent a zeitgeist that forms part of the designer and consumers' lived social reality. Use fashion design to provide a first-hand account of the social reality the designer shares with his consumers.	Use fashion design to convey contemporary depictions of historical and cultural narratives that influences the designers and consumers' understanding of their social identity.
Cultural Influence	Designer draws from personal lived experience as part of the South African hip-hop subculture. Designer draws from personal history and personal appreciation of popular culture and amalgamates it with consumers zeitgeist	Designers draw from personal understanding and reflections of South African political and cultural history. Designer amalgamates personal reflections about political and socio-cultural issues with political and socio-cultural zeitgeist of consumer.
Shared Reality	The t-shirts are articulate aspects of the shared reality of glocalised hip-hop sub-culture. The shared reality is that of a sub-culture that may have its roots in America but has grown to become a reflection of a contemporary South African heritage.	The t-shirts are reflective of a shared reality influenced by past/present dichotomy. Collective identity is negotiated through shared political and cultural history that informs contemporary understanding of belonging within South Africa.
Design Aesthetics	Rearticulating of widely recognised global popular culture aesthetics reinterpreted to reflect South African narratives reflective of designers and consumers' zeitgeist.	Representation of iconic figures, political colours and emotive phrases to convey ideological opinions the designers shares with their consumers.
Articulation of Meaning	Meaning is communicated through iconic and indexical signification.	Meaning is communicated on an indexical and symbolic level.

Table 7.1: Summary of the Research findings

Fashioned Strengths and Limitations

This dissertation defined fashion as the creation of clothing styles that reflect the cultural narratives of certain collective identities who use them in the expression of their identity and belonging (Barnard, 1996; Kawamura, 2005; Jackson, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2012). This definition informed the primary arguments of this dissertation, that the study of the creation of clothing reveals meaning about the collective identities who use graphic t-shirts to express their identities. This study argued that analysing the graphic t-shirt from the perspective of the designer, means viewing the design process as a process of encoding. The analysis of each t-shirt using the Circuit of Culture model (du Gay *et al.,* 1997) and Encoding/Decoding model (Hall, 2006 [1980] as analytical and theoretical frameworks, enabled the analysis of fashion, with the designer as the producer of the meaning. The findings from the t-shirt support the argument that t-shirts can serve as socio-cultural communication about collective identities that exist in South Africa. Furthermore, the study confirms the enquiry that fashion designers create clothing that reflects the lived reality of the consumer.

The review of literature contextualised fashion both the communication of the meaning of design, and the communication of the value of a garment. Certain consumers acquire certain clothing styles because of their knowledge of the designer's intended meaning (Rogers, 1962; Jackson, 2007); consumers who purchase clothing for this reason utilise the symbolic meanings of the design of garments in the construction and articulation of their individual and collective identity (Abaza, 2007; Clemente, 2008). The diffusion of fashion further revealed that certain consumers purchase clothing because of their knowledge of the worth of owning a certain style of clothing, considered as fashion trends (Crane, 1999; Jackson, 2007). Consumers of this sort utilise the symbolic meaning of owning a particular style based on its symbolic worth for status negotiation and articulating a desired belonging (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994; Crane, 1999). *Fashioning Meaning,* a study concerned with the former: the manner in which the graphic t-shirts of *Butan* and *Magents* communicate the lived reality of their consumer.

Introducing the concept of the design process as being inspired by the consumer's lived reality, informed the assumption that wearers' meanings of fashion, specifically the graphic t-shirt, are strongly influenced from the meanings first created by the designer (Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007; Musangi, 2009; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012; Manan and Smith, 2014). The study revealed how the t-shirts created by *Butan* and *Magents* can serve as a cultural artefact, expressing shared

ideology, self-ascriptions, and narratives. This view serves as an argument for the possibility of future research of fashion as communication from a cultural production perspective. Understanding the consumed meanings of fashion appears as an area for possible research as the methodology applied for understanding how designers encode meaning can be adapted to the inclusion of how consumers decode meaning. As this study is concerned with the communicated meanings about collective identity, the theoretical concepts of collective identity served a secondary role.

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This section comprises of the complete list of references utilised throughout this research. The sub-heading *Pilot Study Sources* contains the data utilised for the analysis of the *Mr Price* 'Bossy' tank top detailed in Chapter 4, including the two t-shirts analysed during the pilot study. *Primary Sources* contains to the Skype interviews and personal communication with *Butan Wear* and *Magents Lifestyle Apparel* designers and *T-shirt Data Sources* contains the references of the four analysed t-shirts. *Secondary data Sources* refers to the documentary data of past interviews utilised for creating a profile for each brand as part of the data analysis process in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. *Published Sources* contains the references of all published books, journals and electric book cited throughout this dissertation. The *Unpublished Sources, Theses, Dissertations and Presentation* sub-category catalogues all unpublished references, while *Visual Sources* catalogues the rest of the visual imagery within the dissertation. Finally *Filmography* contains the references to all films cited, and *Discography* contains references to music albums.

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Discography

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of Consent

Dear (Designer's name)

My name is Nonduduzo (Ndu) Ngcobo, I am collecting data to complete a study on merits of the graphic t-shirt as an alternative form of socio-cultural communication about South African collective identity. The study is conducted under the supervision of University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Culture and Media in society (CCMS). My supervisor is Dr. Lauren Dyll-Myklebust. I am writing to request your participation. The importance of this study is that it can aid the understanding of the various collective or cultural identities which characterise present day South Africa.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences. Confidential information will not be published without your permission. As a participant, you will be treated with respect and dignity. You will not be deceived or tricked you into revelling information unwillingly. In general, responses will be treated in a confidential manner. As a participant, you have the option to choose a pseudonym if you wish to remain anonymous. The data will be kept securely for five years for purposes of verification by the supervisor Dr Dyll-Myklebust at the University of KwaZulu Natal. Should you request it; an electronic copy of the final thesis will be sent to you on completion.

The South African fashion industry is booming, one can't throw a stone without it landing upon the feet of a t-shirt designer. Many of these t-shirts are reflective of trends for the sake of being trendy. Your brand, however, with its attention to the nuances of South Africa culture reflects aspects of a South African zeitgeist. It is for this reason that I would like to include your brand in my study. The use of your brand shall enable me to make inferences about South Africa's collective identity using two t-shirts from your brand (two best sellers from the year 2014). The designs of these t-shirts shall be analysed in order to make inferences about what they might reflect about South African culture.

I ask for permission to publish the images of your t-shirts which shall be used within the research, as well as the use of your brand name. Furthermore I would like the opportunity to interview you about your design process. These interview shall last for a period between 45 minutes to an hour. The recorded interviews conducted with you shall validate my findings from my readings of your t-shirts and be used to further understand your brand and its influence on culture. I ask for permission to publish information about your brand sourced from your website, social media pages and other media sources which might refer to your brand.

Your willingness to participate in this study will greatly be appreciated.

Research Information

You are invited to take part in this research study. This form tells you why this research study is being done, what will happen in the research study, possible risks and benefits to you, your choices, and other important information. If there is anything that you do not understand, please do not hesitate to ask questions. You can decide whether to take part in this study or not. You are free to say yes or no. Even if you join this study, you do not have to stay in it. You may stop at any time.

In this study I want to find out how the graphics of a t-shirts might inform research about a part of the collective identity of young South Africans. The only way to find this out is to analyse the various t-shirts within your brand and interview the person(s) who have designed the t-shirts.

1. You are free to quit the study at any time. If you are thinking about quitting, please inform the researcher
2. This research study is conducted for about eight months but an interview depends on the availability of your time
3. There is no payment for being in this study
4. You may use your name or remain anonymous in the study

Consent to Participate in Research

By signing my name below, I confirm the following:	Yes	No
I have read (or had read to me) this entire consent document		
All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction		
The study's purpose, procedures and possible benefits have been explained to me		
I agree to let the researcher use and share the information gathered for this study		
I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I have been told that I can stop at any time		
I agree to allow audio recording in this research study		
I agree to let my name to be used in the study		
I wish to remain anonymous in the study		

Name of Participant	**Signature of Participant**	**Date**

Name of Researcher	**Signature of Researcher**	**Date**
Name of Supervisor	**Signature of Supervisor**	**Date**

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance Letter

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

13 July 2015

Miss NSS Ngcobo 214567601
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Miss Ngcobo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0888/015M
Project title: Fashioning Meaning: The graphic t-shirt as an alternative form of socio-cultural communication about South Africa's collective identity

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 10 July 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Lauren Dyllo-Myklebust
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ▪ Edgewood ▪ Howard College ▪ Medical School ▪ Pietermaritzburg ▪ Westville

Appendix 3: Butan Wear Interview Schedule

Personal Information

Project Title: Fashioning Meaning: The Graphic t-shirt as an alternative form of socio-
cultural communication about South Africa's collective identity

Research Description: The research questions presented below shall be used to construct an
argument for how six specifically chosen t-shirts designed by two
South African designers communicate representations of some
collective identities that exist within South Africa.

Research Questions:

1. How do the aesthetics of the graphic t-shirt inform research about cultural
identity?
    a. What do the graphics express?
    b. What do these meaning convey about South African society?
2. How do designers convey social reality through t-shirts?
    a. What cultural cues does the designing process draw from?
    b. What are the intended messages of the t-shirt?
3. What do the meanings of the t-shirts reveal about the collective identities portrayed
by the designers?

Researcher: Nonduduzo Ngcobo

Research Participant: Julian Kubel

T-shirt Brand: Butan Wear

6. Why did you decide to work with Koolin in the City – Kool Out?

    a. Would you say that the people who frequent Kool Out are your exact target market?

Target Market

1. Do you have a name for your target market?

2. How would you describe the identity of your Target Market?

    a. What does he/she stand for?

    b. What are his/her values?

    c. How does he/she view the world?

3. In creating new clothing styles, how do you engage with your target market's zeitgeist?

4. What (in your opinion) draws your target market to your creations?

Design Concept

1. What was the concept for your 2015 summer Collection?

    a. What were the main themes of your mood/vision board?

    b. How did the current political/cultural/social zeitgeist of your ideal consumer influence the narratives of your t-shirts?

    c. Was the line a product of creative expression or was it purely driven by your consumer need (if it was a bit of both how did you strike that balance)?

T-shirt #1: Africa is the Future

1. When did you design this particular t-shirt?

2. *Africa is the Future* is not a new concept; but a movement that has birthed a magazine and graphic merchandise. Nneka also wore an *Africa is the future* hoodie on the cover her J. Period's mix tape (appendix 3).

   a. Did the magazine/merchandise make it into your mood board for the t-shirt?

   b. Did the mixtape make it into your mood board for the t-shirt?

3. *Back to the Future (movie)* reminds us that history cannot be rewritten and our present is our power.

   a. Can the creation of this t-shirt be interpreted as more than a homage to 30 years of the cult classic's release?

   b. Why did you decide to pay tribute to this particular film?

T-shirt #2: Legends Live Forever

1. When did you design this particular t-shirt?

2. Can you elaborate on the South African legends portrayed in your t-shirt?

   a. What makes them legendary?

   b. What (for you) was the most powerful thing about their message while they were still with us?

   c. How did they impact the South African hip-hop industry?

Appendix 4: Magents Interview Schedule

Personal Information

<u>Project Title:</u> Fashioning Meaning: The Graphic t-shirt as an alternative form of socio-
cultural communication about South Africa's collective identity

<u>Research Description:</u> The research questions presented below shall be used to construct an
argument for how six specifically chosen t-shirts designed by two
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3. What do the meanings of the t-shirts reveal about the collective identities portrayed
    by the designers?

<u>Researcher:</u>   Nonduduzo Ngcobo

<u>Research Participant:</u>   Didier DeVilliers

<u>T-shirt Brand:</u> Magents

Interview Questions

The Designer

1. Which part(s) of South Africa were you born and raised

2. Where are you based now?

3. How would you formally describe your cultural identity?

4. How would you (informally) describe your cultural identity?

5. Where did your interest in the multiple cultural and political narratives of South African come from?

Culture and Fashion Design

1. What attracted you to the fashion industry?

2. Why did you choose to create graphic t-shirts

3. What inspired you to create graphic t-shirt of a socio-cultural and political nature?

The Brand: Magents

1. What inspired you to create a brand that draws greatly from multi-cultural South African narratives?

2. DeVilliers being an Afrikaans surname, have you ever received any backlash regarding cultural appropriation?

3. What is your role in your company?

4. How did your collaboration with Mothei Letlabika come to be?

5. What is Letlabika's role in the company?

6. How would you describe Magents to someone who knows nothing about your work?

7. For me Magents conveys (albeit in the South African and Fashion context) thoughts and notions that are similar to the Negritude Movement. (How) Has the ideology of the movement influenced your ethos as a brand and the narrative construction your t-shirts?

8. J-Something and Reason are both flying the Magents flags

    a. How do their public identities' and Magent's identity fit together?

Target Market: Konscious Warriors

1. How did the phrase Konscious Warrior come to be?

2. How would you describe the identity of the Konscious warrior?

    a. What does he/she stand for?

    b. What are his/her values?

    c. How does he/she view the world?

3. In creating new clothing styles, how do you engage with your target market's zeitgeist?

4. What (in your opinion) draws your target market to your creations?

Design Concept: Best-selling 2015 T-shirts

1. What was the concept for your 2015 SA Menswear Show?

    a. What were the main themes of your mood/vision board?

    b. How did the current political/cultural/social zeitgeist of your ideal consumer influence the narratives of your t-shirts?

    c. Was the line a product of creative expression or was it purely driven by your consumer need (if it was a bit of both how did you strike that balance)?

T-shirt #1: Bikonscious

1. When did you design this particular t-shirt?

2. The SA visual artist Negritude Republic (Modise Sepeng) created Bikonscious artwork in 2013; did this artwork make it into you mood board for the concept for your t-shirt?

3. The words *Bikonscious Social Club Inc.* bring to mind the Buena Vista Social Club (not the film or the band but the actual social club)

   a. Can this reference to the Afro-Cuban club be interpreted as a suggestion of a way for Konscious warriors to carry on black consciousness movement?

   b. Does this reference refer to the fact that Konsciousness is not confined to politics or a movement but rather part of a communal way of life?

4. What influenced the whole conception of the *Bikonscious* lettering?

   a. The red and black lettering of the work *Biko-ncious* brought out numerous interpretations (from a signifying the black power movement to the blood shed of the struggle hero).

   b. Can this stylistic use of the colour red be interpreted as a nod to the biblical crucifixion?

   c. Is the interpretation a far stretch, rather the red is merely reference to Biko's brutal and unjust death?

5. Why did you choose to omit Biko's face in the design?

T-shirt #2: Are you Still With me

1. When did you design this particular t-shirt?

2. The design of Nelson Mandela and Africa brought to mind the *Free Mandela* t-shirts from the 1980s/1990 ANC rallies and the 1988 *Mandela Must be Free stickers* created by Pyramid Complex in Washington DC.

   a. Did such a t-shirt make it into your mood board for this particular design?

   b. Did the sticker make it into your mood board?

3. Please could you explain the concept for the *Depends on Who Wrote it* t-shirt?

Appendix 5: Gusheshe Lyrics

GUSHESHE

ARTIST: Cassper Nyovest

FEATURING: OkMalumKoolKat

ALBUM: Tsholofelo

[CHORUS]
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe
I'm riding around in my Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe Gusheshe

[Verse 1: Cassper Nyovest]
Let's dumb it down so they understand
Cassper Semenya, yeah, I'm the man
My money grows 'cause ra phanda man
You stuck on the same figure nje nge underpant
Damn I be down, damn I be down, ra khanda
Cassper Nyovest overstandin it now
You see the braods that I'm handling now
You would come short le di vandal tsa hao
Di ganana ko tlase
I am probably gonna kick it with the liquor
Ntwana ya ko kasi ko Phaphakadi
You can call me Papi but I ain't no father figure
Oh yeah, I stack it to the ceiling
Then blow it through the window
Then I make it back man, basically modimo o refile
How you feel about my tlatsa skill
Le mahipi ra ba tlatsa skeem
It's an oxymoron I became a big deal even though I got a crush on Minie
Ke phela soft but my rap is hard
You should check my repertoire
I'm about to make 16 like fanbase ya ma Repetoire
But you laughing at what I say
My Gush is bad, no colour complex

Your Gush is basic
It's me and KoolKat in that 325
We high like spaceships
We rocking pieces, rocking puzzles
They say high like spaceships
Cheated on my fears, broke up with my doubts
Married to my dreams
Carrying the couch
Middle finger to my exes
Ring finger to my next chick
Ngwanao ke mlahlo
Ke mgidlelo wa Rafanyo
Oh that boy bad like Dineo Ranaka's song

[CHORUS]

[Verse 2: OkMalumKoolKat]
Hithi Maria
Ogcwele iGracia
uMalumeKoolKat is a problem, inkinga
If you think you fresh to death, I'm as dead as Caeser
BoyznBucks, we always getting mixed up
Wherever that these chicks are, we always gonna feature
Sippin on that mixture, tipping on the ticker
I'm laying with your sister, she's pretty as a picture
I call her Mona Lisa, she's chillin in my T-shirt
Nka mo dira, my lips are where her lips are
And her tits are, pyramids of Giza
And I licks her and I sex her
I'm a fixer so I fixed her
Then I kissed her
Released her
Told her I'mo text her only when I need her
Now I'm leaning like the Tower of Pisa
Cats wanna catch up kodwa ngiyabashiya
FYI I got Air max in my sneakers
Plus I'm international ngidume nje nge pizza
Pac-man, Pac-man, bonke ngiyabagwinya
My only competition is that man in the mirror
Days of your lives, Stephano Dimera
I play Stephano Dimera

[CHORUS]

Cassper Nyovest *Gusheshe* Lyrics (Nyovest, 2014a)

Appendix 6: Africans Lyrics

NNEKA LYRICS

"Africans"

You keep pushing the blame on our colonial fathers
You say they came and they took all we had pocessed
They have to take the abuse that they have caused our present state with their intruding history
Use our goodness and nourishment in the Name of missionary
Lied to us, blinded slaved us, misplaced us, strengthen us, hardened us then they replaced us now we
got to learn from pain
Now it is up to us to gain some recognition
If we stop blaming we could get a better condition
(wake up world!)

Wake up world!!
Wake up and stop sleeping
Wake up africa!!
Wake up and stop blaming
Open ur eyes!!
Stand up and rise
Road block oh life penalty

Why do we want to remain where we started
And how long do we want to stop ourselves from thinking
We should learn from experience that what we are here for this existence
But now we decide to use the same hatred to oppress our own brothers
It is so comfortable to say racism is the cause
But this time it is the same colour chasing and biting us
Knowledge and selfishness that they gave to us, this is what we use to abuse us

Wake up world!!
Wake up and stop sleeping
Wake up africa!!
Wake up and stop blaming
Open ur eyes!!
Stand up and rise
Road block oh life penalty

Those who have ears let them hear
Brothers who are not brainwashed takt ruins and rest
Pick them up and stick them back together
This is the only way we can change this african weather

Lied to us, blinded slaved us, misplaced us, strengthen us, hardened us then they replaced us now we
got to learn from pain

Wake up world!!
Wake up and stop sleeping
Wake up africa!!
Wake up and stop blaming
Open ur eyes!!

Nneka *African* Lyrics (Nneka, 2005)