

BEAUTY AND THE BEACH

Claudia Bernadette Plunkett

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Arts
at the Centre for Visual Art, Faculty of Human Management and
Sciences, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.



Pietermaritzburg

2003

0.00
03

ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to interpret holiday imagery in the media, as a site of South African cultural production, on the basis of newspaper images of local white and black people published in the Natal Mercury from 1966 to 1996. A strong historical approach (the history of the Western holiday) has been taken in order to analyze existing social structures relating to the holiday in South Africa, specifically gender, race and class. These social structures have been examined in depth, with the result of numerous interpretations being made about behaviour and the depiction of behaviour in the context of Durban beaches and leisure.

Keywords:

Natal Mercury, Durban, South Africa, images, imagery, media, beach, holiday, leisure, figurative, bodies, photography, pin-up, pose, gender, race, class, behaviour, social studies.

704.942 PLU



PO29212

S.H. Acc B2d 809231

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with gratitude the help given to me by many people in the undertaking and concluding of this research project. I am particularly obliged to the following:

Professor K.L. Durrheim, professor of Psychology at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), for supervising this research. His critical evaluation, ideas and inspiring nature provided me with endless assistance and constant motivation for this project.

Juliet Leeb-du Toit, senior lecturer at the Centre for Visual Art at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), for also supervising this research. Her critical evaluation and ideas are much appreciated as well as her ceaseless support and encouragement which supplied me with much motivation throughout this project.

My Father, always a source of serenity and knowledge, provided me with incredible support and much helpful feedback, thanks a lot Dad.

My mother, who has also been an ardent supporter during this project, and given much encouragement.

Alexa Farina, for her keen support and generous assistance with the research and presentation of this project.

Sara Nigro, for her endless encouragement and willing assistance with the presentation of this dissertation.

Andrew, who assisted me with the imagery in this project.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research work described in this dissertation was conducted in the Centre for Visual Art, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, from November 2001 to December 2003 under the supervision of Kevin Durrheim.

These studies are a result of my own investigations, except where acknowledgement of other work is specifically indicated in the text and have not been submitted in any other form to another university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudia Plunkett', with a stylized, cursive script.

Claudia Plunkett

March 2003

PREFATORY NOTE

I wish to make a note about the poor quality of some of the images portrayed in this dissertation. The presence of moray dots on some of these images is a result of the scanning process, which unfortunately only appears during printing. Numerous efforts have been made to restore the original quality of the images, but unfortunately very little improvement was made. However, the effect of the moray dots should not detract from the significance of the text.

"We don't get the Audrey Hepburns these days, the fragility isn't there, certainly isn't there on the exterior, women have muscles now."

Anna and Jane Campion "Holy Smoke"

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Holiday as a Western Phenomenon of Leisure	
i) Vacationscapes.....	4
ii) The Regulation of Place.....	6
iii) Maxims of the Holiday: The Beach as a Phenomenon of Leisure.....	12
iv) Politeness and Decorum on the Beach: Regulation of Behaviour and Bodies in Place.....	13
 Chapter Two: Methodology:	
Section 1: A White Patriarchal South Africa.....	24
Section 2: Photography: Ideology Behind Production and Consumption...	29
Section 3: Interpretation of the Imagery.....	32
 Chapter Three: The Holiday in South Africa.....	35
i) Section A: Lifesavers and Strong Men.....	37
ii) Section B: Analysis.....	40
iii) Section C: Developments in a Changing South Africa.....	54
 Chapter Four: Representation of Women on the Beach.....	59
i) Section A: The Male Gaze and the Pin-up Paradigm.....	60
ii) Section B: Regulation of the Body in the Pin-up.....	66
iii) Section C: Analysis of the Pin-up	71
 Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	114
 Literature Cited.....	116

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 1 (6 March, 1987,pg 1)	pg 26
Figure 2 (27 September, 1985, pg 3)	pg 26
Figure 3 (10 November, 1989, pg 2)	pg 26
Figure 4 (interior of CVA)	pg 34
Figure 5 (interior of CVA)	pg 34
Figure 6 (27 September, 1975, pg 5)	pg 42
Figure 7 (22 November, 1978, pg 10)	pg 42
Figure 8 (16 February, 1971, pg 3)	pg 43
Figure 9 (16 July, 1983, pg 1)	pg 43
Figure 10 (9 August, 1979, pg 17)	pg 46
Figure 11 (4 August, 1983, pg 2)	pg 46
Figure 12 (2 February, 1976, pg 13)	pg 47
Figure 13 (11 January, 1972, pg 5)	pg 47
Figure 14 (11 Dec, 1978, pg 7)	pg 48
Figure 15 (5 Dec, 1979, pg 3)	pg 49
Figure 16 (29 Dec, 1979, pg 2)	pg 49
Figure 17 (7 Dec, 1970, pg 19)	pg 52
Figure 18 (19 Jun, 1967, pg 4)	pg 52
Figure 19 (13 Jul, 1993, pg 12)	pg 53
Figure 20 (16 May, 1988, pg 14)	pg 56
Figure 21 (13 Feb, 1989, pg 16)	pg 56
Figure 22 (19 Oct, 1992, pg 3)	pg 57
Figure 23 (14 Dec, 1989, pg 6)	pg 57
Figure 24 (8 Mar, 1968, pg 3)	pg 60
Figure 25 (27 Dec, 1969, pg 1)	pg 60
Figure 26 (11 Jan, 1973, pg 28)	pg 63
Figure 27 (28 Dec, 1974, pg 5)	pg 63
Figure 29 (15 Jan, 1977, pg 3)	pg 69
Figure 30(21 Jul, 1986, p 18)	pg 69
Figure 31 (7 Apr, 1972, pg 15)	pg 69
Figure 32 (22 Dec, 1973, pg 16)	pg 70
Figure 33 (20 Feb, 1978, pg 3)	pg 74
Figure 34 (24 Jul, 1979, pg 3)	pg 74
Figure 35 (6 Mar, 1978, pg 7)	pg 74
Figure 36 (19 Jun, 1972, pg 3)	pg 75
Figure 37 (6 Feb, 1979, pg 3)	pg 75
Figure 38 (3 Jul, 1978, pg 18)	pg 75
Figure 39 (5 Aug, 1985, pg 18)	pg 77
Figure 40 (29 Aug, 1984, pg 20)	pg 77
Figure 41 (8 Jul, 1985, pg 8)	pg 78
Figure 42 (28 Jun, 1975, pg 22)	pg 78
Figure 43 (6 Dec, 1977, pg 7)	pg 79
Figure 44 (22 Jun, 1977, pg 1)	pg 81

Figure 45 (25 Dec, 1975, pg 3)	pg 81
Figure 46 (7 Jul, 1980, pg 3)	pg 82
Figure 47 (9 Jun, 1986, pg 4)	pg 82
Figure 48 (19 Jul, 1982, pg 18)	pg 83
Figure 49 (17 Apr, 1981, pg 18)	pg 84
Figure 50 (16 Jan, 1984, pg 22)	pg 84
Figure 51 (28 Oct, 1982, pg 18)	pg 85
Figure 52 (22 Apr, 1982, pg 3)	pg 85
Figure 53 (1 Nov, 1989, pg 1)	pg 88
Figure 54 (10 Oct, 1967, pg 1)	pg 88
Figure 55 (8 Oct, 1979, pg 18)	pg 89
Figure 56 (6 Dec, 1976, pg 30)	pg 91
Figure 57 (3 Aug, 1981, pg 28)	pg 92
Figure 58 (3 Jan, 1995, pg 3)	pg 94
Figure 59 (25 Dec, 1992, pg 5)	pg 95
Figure 60 (18 Apr, 1994, pg 3)	pg 96
Figure 61 (26 Dec, 1994, pg 1)	pg 97
Figure 62 (11 Apr, 1994, pg 3)	pg 97
Figure 63 (9 Oct, 1993, pg 18)	pg 97
Figure 64 (20 Jan, 1973, pg 1)	pg 98
Figure 65 (7 Jan, 1971, pg 15)	pg 100
Figure 66 (6 Apr, 1973, pg 1)	pg 100
Figure 67 (12 Jul, 1986, pg 3)	pg 101
Figure 68 (18 Apr, 1993, pg 5)	pg 101
Figure 69 (3 Nov, 1986, pg 1)	pg 103
Figure 70 (4 Jan, 1990, pg 1)	pg 104
Figure 71 (19 Nov, 1977, pg 1)	pg 105
Figure 72 (4 Jul, 1967, pg 18)	pg 105
Figure 73 (4 Feb, 1975, pg 11)	pg 106
Figure 74 (14 Apr, 1993, pg 30)	pg 107
Figure 75 (27 Mar, 1995, pg 1)	pg 108
Figure 76 (5 Jan, 1990, pg 3)	pg 109
Figure 77 (16 May, 1995, pg 3)	pg 109
Figure 78 (3 Sept, 1974 pg 27)	pg 111
Figure 79 (19 Jul, 1976, pg 3)	pg 111
Figure 80 (15 Oct, 1975, pg 1)	pg 112
Figure 81 (5 Nov, 1974, pg 1)	pg 112

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Statistics of Photographic Categories in the <i>Natal Mercury</i>	pg 32
Table 2: Frequency of photographs depicting crowded beaches from 1966-1996	pg 35
Table 3: Statistics of the depiction of South African men on Durban Beachfront	pg 40
Table 4: Statistics of the depiction of South African women on Durban Beachfront	pg 61

LIST OF GRAPHS

Bar Chart (Figure 28) Bar chart showing the frequency of female age groups as depicted in the <i>Natal Mercury</i>	pg 67
---	-------

BEAUTY AND THE BEACH

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to interpret and define how the holiday has become a cultural production of both white and black South African culture by way of photographs represented in the *Natal Mercury*. I have selected Durban's beaches to be the site of discourse, and have utilized images of the beach from The *Natal Mercury* (from 1966 – 2001) as my source for interpretation. A main aim of this dissertation is to interpret how Durban beachfront has been represented and thus produced (in the specified timeframe) in the *Natal Mercury*, in terms of a changing South African culture. Durban beachfront in particular is a good site for cultural discourse, as this is a long-established tourist destination and site for beachgoers. Being one of the holiday 'Meccas' of South Africa, it has been subject to much social discourse regarding race, gender and class.

This dissertation will interpret how the representations of bodies on the beach are regulated and patterned according to cultural beliefs and trends. These photographs will be analysed in order to show how the beach holiday operates as a regulated institution that enacts and reproduces broader forms of race and gender exclusion, as well as marginalisation in South Africa. Nowhere can cultural values and meanings be more easily "read" than in the regulations and rules that a culture imposes on its landscape (such as the beach) and people. These forms of regulation can reveal many aspects of a culture such as what is acceptable and what is not, and where the boundaries lie for certain types of behaviour. This dissertation also has a historical focus, describing the history of the holiday from a South African perspective.

The analysis of the images of the beach holiday can be defined in four modes of interpretation:

- 1) How the beach holiday is produced in terms of place, in other words, how a site (in this case the beach) is regulated through particular codes and meanings identified with a physical landscape (in a South African context.)

2) How the subjectivity of the beach is regulated, by this I mean by how one is 'meant' to feel, or how one is 'trained' emotionally to respond to a particular environment according to one's culture.

3) How behaviour is regulated on the beach; the "typical" activities that occur on the beach, social norms of interaction and boundaries of behaviour which reflect cultural (South African) codes of conduct (decorum).

4) How bodies in place (in this case Durban beachfront) are constructed, in other words, the presentation of the body and what the functions of these representations of the body are, in place. In no other location can one witness such open public display of the body than at the beach. This is why it forms such an interesting site of discourse in terms of place and body with regard to one's culture.

To look at the issues of how bodies in place are constructed, and the ways in which the holiday is being produced in terms of regulation, I refer to Ervin Goffman's works as a key source for interpreting these images. This is a suitable outlook due to the similar approach which is taken towards the interpretation of "objects in frame" (the *manner* in which people are displayed); and the interplay between the fashioned image (how the subject can be manipulated) and so-called natural behavior. As Goffman suggests: "Gesture, expression, posture reveal not only how we feel about ourselves, but add up, as well, to an entire arrangement – a scene – that embodies cultural values" (1976:3). I will discuss how this production of imagery contains highly manipulated representations of these recognizable scenes related to the holiday, which, in turn reflect and perpetuate the social institutions that have developed in a South African context. This play between fantasy and imagery has become a fundamental part of our daily social practices, such as which images we associate with fantasy, for instance: beach – semi-nude woman, bright colours, fun activities and other 'typical' images. In the context of the holiday, Lofgren refers to this phenomenon as 'vacationscapes' (1999: 98).

CHAPTER ONE: THE HOLIDAY AS A WESTERN PHENOMENON OF LEISURE

i) VACATIONSCAPES

The landscape, namely the beach, is densely populated with images, fantasies and daydreams. The beach can be described as a combination of personal memories and collective images that has been produced and shaped by two centuries of tourist history (Lofgren, 1999: 3). Vacationscapes are constructed by two fundamentals: history and collective imagery (Lofgren, 1999:93). It is important to look at just how much history has shaped and modified people's ideas of vacationscapes. For instance, what kinds of foresights and preconditions are at play? How much landscape experiences are mediated by both each individual's past history and by the technologies of representation in the media. Goffman claims that a function of media imagery is to "affirm social arrangements and announce ultimate doctrine" (1976: 3). This is significant in determining the regulation of social structures of the beach holiday that have been created in South African culture over a long period of time.

Lofgren claims that when new tourist destinations (sights and attractions, and new forms of tourist activities) become fashionable, they undergo processes of exploration with regards to the promotion of certain kinds of media imagery (the manner in which these locations and activities are portrayed, be it forceful, seductive, or portrayed in a positive or negative way). This process determines what kind of imagery will be selected and what meanings will be associated with that landscape. As a destination becomes more popular, people become familiar with its meanings and image due to the promotion of certain types of imagery associated with that landscape. As time goes on, this results in the institutionalization of certain imagery and thus "collective meanings" are generated where we associate collective concepts with collective images. Vacationscapes are thus a product of these collective images, and the history that shapes them.

According to Lofgren, vacationscapes are produced and changed over time, and can be integrated into everyday life (1999:93), such as in the way that we daydream, organize our activities of leisure and so forth. Vacationscapes evolve from the interplay between physical and mental landscapes through which we move simultaneously (Lofgren, 1999:93). Through the collection of various imagery and information one learns to negotiate the terms of how one is supposed to *feel* or *view* a particular landscape. The vacationscape can be said to carry with it a range of pre-visualizations, everything from landscape paintings to scenarios advertised in the media, to which we compare our actual landscape experiences, as well as our past landscape experiences (Lofgren, 1999: 94). Vacationscapes can thus be described as a culmination of interactions between certain landscape characteristics, cultural ideologies and tourist technologies of movement and representation.

To begin with, this dissertation shall look at the history of the holiday, in order to show which particular vacationscapes have become institutionalized through history and the use of collective imagery. Although experiences are highly personal in “taking in” impressions, we may still be influenced by many established and shared cultural knowledges and frames (Lofgren, 1999:95). This will hopefully make clear which social institutions (such as gender stereotyping or racial exclusion) are depicted in the photographs of the *Natal Mercury*, and how they are represented in order to function as a vacationscape in a South African context.

ii) THE REGULATION OF PLACE:

Vacationing and holidaymaking appeared as a recreational activity in the second half of the eighteenth century in Europe. At that point in time, travellers were strictly male and sought out new places where they could "...experience the landscape, not just look at it" (Inglis, 2000:2). Originally, the mode of representing these holiday places was by means of 'capturing' the landscape through means of selecting and 'framing' certain views and painting them. This was called the 'picturesque' (Lofgren, 1999: 19).

During this period of tourism development, art played a key role in training these pioneers about where to look and how to look in or at the landscape, (Lofgren: 1999:19). A good example of how these artists "produced" images is their use of the Claude-glass, which helped to "capture" the image. For the artists of that time, this was a device that aided the technique of framing the landscape in the pursuit of painting a picture with specific landscape features that made a 'truly' picturesque view. This is an early example of regulating place (the landscape), by selecting that part of the scenery that was considered appropriate and putting it down on canvas. Already this process gives rise to issues of the type of patriarchal need for control, and the kind of subjugation of nature to the desires of the viewer or vacationer. This was a highly popular media and became a genre called *voyages pittoresques* (Inglis, 2000:30). As a result, many etchings began to function as souvenirs.

What is important to note here, is how people began to find the means of framing the "right" time and place. This can be seen as the transformation of experience into an event by "marking" it, thus demanding that one activate the senses (Lofgren, 1999: 98) and be particularly conscious of that landscape and how one *ought* to understand it. Methods of landscape viewing and looking at paintings combined to establish a certain deep correspondence in people's sensibilities (Inglis, 2000:28). One could call this an education of the feelings and perceptions. Inglis writes that in considering these landscape paintings, there occurs between the form of the landscape and the framing power of the "sociable way of seeing" - certain normative responses about

what to feel in the presence of nature, as suggested by the painter (2000: 30), in other words, a regulation of the subjectivity of the individual. There is a “*correspondence* between attributes of the landscape...and between the inarticulate but expectant feelings we bring to it” (Inglis, 2000:31). In a sense, this is not only the beginning of the regulation of place/landscape, but also the regulation of subjectivity in a landscape - how one was *supposed* to feel when looking at the landscape.

According to Lofgren: “Using the technique of framing, you could impose some kind of order on the unknown and untamed landscapes that confronted you. The wild was still seen as chaotic” (1999: 21). An important issue which should be kept in mind here is the fundamental ideology behind the works of landscape painters during the Romantic Movement. This was a popular art movement during the eighteenth century which often looked toward the “terrible beauty” of natural phenomena; the sublime and the terrible characteristics of nature untainted by the “safety” and “goodness” of civilization (de la Croix, Tansey, Kirkpatrick, 1991: 855). This belief that natural phenomena were untamed and dangerous allows for the development of interesting ideas in the discourse of nature versus civilization. The concept the ‘wild’ beach as an integrated structure of holiday culture is an important one, which will be discussed at a further stage in the development of this dissertation. However, it is important to note that nature, as a dangerous and mysterious entity was a firmly supported belief during this era, and one that has had a significant impact on how people view nature.

The institutionalization of sights is an important concept in Lofgren's vacationsapes. If one is to appropriate the landscape in terms of representation (and thus regulate it), one can do so by means of a Claude-glass, a camera, a camcorder, television programmes, travel brochures and other methods. Lofgren states that he sees no difference in a person comparing the waterfall he is looking at to a television commercial in his mind in 1966, to one standing at a waterfall and thinking of his collection of engravings of picturesque views in 1866 (1999:94). This type of comparative, pre-visualizing phenomenon is directly linked to the formation of

vacationscapes – the personal experiences along with standardised, cultural conventions that we bring into that landscape.

Tourist sights can be described as having been mediated and historically institutionalised through didactic processes that convey specific cultural messages. The relationship between the characteristics of a landscape as well as the mindsets and tourist technologies of movement and representation is what produces a vacationscape (Lofgren, 1999:98). The way in which one responds to a specific landscape today is often the consequence of this long process of institutionalization. Lofgren claims that the landscape becomes condensed into a cultural framework, an icon. Thus we come to recognise certain signs and signals that conjure up particular vacationscapes into one's mind (1999:98).

The Northern European interest in Southern travel and consumption of landscape painting created a bona fide export industry (Lofgren, 1999:20). The institutionalization of sights was greatly helped in the early 1800's by the ways in which the wilderness entered the average middle-class home through means of books, magazines and individual prints of landscape reproductions. During the early nineteen hundreds, taking a vacation became a common occurrence for the wealthy aristocrats of Northern Europe. It in fact signified a normal, healthy, mainstream lifestyle. Tourism was on the rise and gained increasing popularity and accessibility. A romantic longing for new and greater emotional states brought about a new quest – the exploration of national identity (Lofgren, 1999: 35).

The desire for a nationalization of nature emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, where a kind of domestication of the wilderness began taking place (as opposed to the utilization of the sublime and terrible of the wilderness during the Romantic movement). This desire materialized into a new way of capturing (and domesticating/regulating) the land, through wilderness photography; America in particular was renowned for its wilderness photography, having borrowed ideas from French and British painting styles (Lofgren, 1999: 39). This new medium could encapsulate the landscape in a

powerfully persuasive manner, and of course this gave rise to a new pictorial development - the postcard.

The first souvenir postcard made was in 1889. The postcard was a cheap, attractive pictorial medium. It is a good example of what one could call a cultural production of imagery, a selected image that represents a specific 'place' of holiday in that particular culture. This is one of the many ways in which the holiday is produced, through selecting recognizable scenes that contain certain recognizable signs that carry holiday connotations/meanings. If one is to jump ahead to today's symbols that we may associate with the setting of the beach, we can recognise many icons such as, beach umbrellas, ice creams, bright colours, a strong emphasis on the idea of "fun in the sun"

Postcards were, and still are, mass-produced; which was necessary in order to satiate the population's demand for imagery. It was a means for people to visualize the world, and thus an important medium on which to organize and present ideas about holiday preferences, tastes and attractions. The postcard went on to reach its peak of illustriousness over the turn of the century, 1800's-1900, (Lofgren, 1999:77). The postcard can also be seen to embody a highly regulated representation of the holiday as place. Lofgren describes these scenes as "...distinct subgenres and favourite motifs" (1999:77). Postcards were invariably of popular tourist destinations and they depicted entrenched recognizable symbols of tourist signs and props, for instance the Eiffel Tower, or the Leaning Tower of Pisa. If one looks at these examples, we can easily recognize the relation between image and place. In fact, these particular sights have come to be a metonym of that place, what Paris or Italy *is* or *means*. This is a good example of how a mediated view of landscape can come to form part of people's collective images, and in effect, how one regulates ones' own vacationsapes. These metonyms form part of the collective centre from which we create our holiday experience.

The genre of the picture postcard had a substantial influence on the development of amateur photography among tourists. Photography developed into an extremely popular and user-friendly medium (Lofgren,

1999:77). Locals were getting paid to be part of the scenery and landscapes were becoming increasingly institutionalized through the abundance of landscape photographs in the media. Photographer Ansel Adams articulated the American wilderness creating this powerful American tradition that sought to nationalize its sublime landscapes.

Fiction seems to invade our lives constantly in the Twentieth Century with the result that we live in a world where the margins between reality and fantasy are dissolved. The media, which promises the realization of our fantasies, has as a result, developed an interface between the physical and mental landscapes through which we move simultaneously (Lofgren, 1999: 93). From an historical perspective, one can see how vacationsapes are determined by ways of "seeing" (capturing the landscape through means of the Claude-glass or camera) and how the production of mediated images has impact on our attitudes and thoughts concerning specific landscapes. There are strong normative elements in our perception of experience, as Lofgren states, they are: "...framed and localized and memorized..." (1999:96). In this next section, I wish to address the fundamental structures of the beach holiday in South African culture (the further regulation of place, subjectivity and behaviour), so that it may become apparent what exactly is being selectively represented in these images, and how they reflect specific social institutions in South Africa.

iii) MAXIMS OF THE HOLIDAY: The Beach as a Phenomenon of Leisure

Since the advent of the holiday in the eighteenth century, people have established general ideas about what it means to be on holiday. Having originated out of the ancient 'Holy Days' one can glimpse many qualities that have pervaded the structure of modern day holidays. In Inglis's words: "...heavy collective labour was replaced in brief respite by collective recreation – the dance, the race, the Christmas feast" (2000:6). Inglis also refers to some of these 'holy day' associations: "Excess, ecstasy, abandon, recklessness were given their usual lead in the pleasures of food wine and sex and talking dirty, extravagant display and indecorous attire" (2000:6). These rites and customs can be said to be at the very roots of holiday making (Inglis, 2000:6). This aspect of holidays begins to give an idea of how subjectivity is generated at certain times and at certain places – how one is allowed to act, how one should feel on certain occasions (for instance the ecstasy or recklessness mentioned above).

The impact of the beach on visitors was powerful; the seaside was a setting of a union between man and very dramatic forces of nature. In Inglis' words "...only at the seaside can he or she walk the thrilling line between domestic propriety and that licentious spontaneity for which the sea is the inexhaustible and commonplace metaphor" (2000:38). John Fiske in his study of regulation on the beach speaks of the "...anomalous category between land and sea..."(1989: 45). Fiske claims that the beach is an area that pushes the cultural as far as it can go toward nature, where people/culture, meets with the sea/natural (1989:56). Contact with the sea provokes very real issues such as the threat of potential death, which is about as far away as one can get from the ideology of culture (previously mentioned with regards to the Romantic Movement). What is important to note at this stage (late eighteenth century) is that the beach can be said to be an anomalous area, and therefore gives rise to anomalous behaviours. These behaviours can be said to be connected with the behaviours mentioned in the above paragraph, seeing as though the beach is a holiday site and is frequented over holiday / "holy day"

periods, and that the behaviours are different in comparison with norms of urban life.

Vacationing turned up about the same time as the consumer in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Tourism, which could have been described as a new mode of consumption, was founded on ideas of leaving the home and workplace in search of new experiences, pleasure and leisure. An elite tourist group consisting of aristocrats emerged, (or anyone wealthy enough to travel), and their search was for education through new experiences. In terms of vacationsapes, one could say that these aristocratic tourists were the first to set the rules in what people "ought" to experience (regulation of subjectivity) and what to look for (regulation of place). Through these good and bad experiences, which have become intensified by history, newcomers in the tourist world were (and still are) educated (Lofgren, 1999:100).

More people began the process of learning how to be a tourist and experiencing exotic places and being close to nature. The male desire for leaving the home and 'going abroad' in search of adventure, made travel a mental as well as a physical space for elaborating masculinity (Lofgren, 1999: 100). However, as women became involved in travel, so men tried to find new settings for male adventure in the face of this threatening feminization. Considered to be generally a male pastime (leaving the home in search of adventure), women who traveled were seen to be out of place and at great risk in "terrible nature". If one looks at the male framework of travel ("elite tourism"), one can note how a normative framework of travel was derived, defining what was desirable, noteworthy, and what was exciting (Lofgren, 1999:100) as according to their patriarchal views – the standard by which the beach holiday (and holidays in general) is defined.

The seaside spas that evolved during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emphasize the medicinal benefits of the sun and the sea. The aristocracy frequented these spas. They integrated deeply regimented social interactions due to their obsession with hierarchies and rituals (Lofgren, 1999:113). Initially, the spas were lacking in appeal to the touring pioneer, due to the fact

that its sole function was for medicinal purposes and not for exploration and aesthetic interests.

The seashore became somewhat redefined in the mid-1800's. Previously found to be too chaotic – the dramatic forces of nature and danger, the advent of seaside spa's were seen as harmonious, restful, attractive in their "...clarity and simplicity" (Lofgren, 1999: 115). This latest view of the seascape as being aesthetically pleasing was combined with the medical discourse of the healthiness of the maritime environment (Lofgren, 1999:116), and thus appealed to many in general.

New forms of awareness during this time (mid 1800's) developed as seaside spas became more frequented. Most days were spent resting, taking brisk walks, cold immersion was practiced and bathing was seen as a direct extension of water cures (Lofgren, 1999: 177). Sea bathing is often described as a Victorian innovation, which, in that era, was regulated by all kinds of precautions, rules of privacy and modesty. This meant that swimming had to be disciplined, and above all, a very strict monitoring of female behaviour was required (Lofgren, 1999:117). There was much paternal control in the regulation of decorum and the body where women were concerned. Women were reminded to "control and cover" their bodies on the beach and were regarded as frail beings at risk in the water (Lofgren, 1999:118). If one is to think of the naked body (or nearly naked body where the beach is concerned nowadays), exposing oneself can be seen as being closer to nature – the animal kingdom, bare skin what man shares with animals (theirs being largely fur). However, this conceptual boundary is dangerous and taboo seeing as man considers himself to be civilized and cultured, therefore, culture must regulate the body. These kinds of views were important in shaping future conceptions of the beach, especially the regulation of the body and behaviour.

As more seaside tourists explored the beach and sea, a new freedom of movement and the body developed, not as a prescribed cure, but as purely physical and mental pleasure (Lofgren, 1999:118). This can be attributed to the effects of coming into contact with the untamed forces of nature, and the

feeling of freedom from everyday life in such an environment. The attractions of the seaside were that of health, and now it was also a refuge where one could enjoy simple and natural pleasures and "...escape into nature" (Lofgren, 1999:115). The air and water were ideally perceived as pure and clean and fresh (away from fumes and pollution of the city) and people found the beach to be a new kind of emotional space. The emptiness and simplicity of the landscape made room for 'finding yourself' – this was a new space of freedom, freedom from the 'fettters' of civilization, stress and urban life (Lofgren, 1999: 116). In this sense, the beaches became an experimental zone where one could question the rituals and norms of everyday urban life and even make transgressions (this aspect is looked at in detail in a subsequent section "Decorum on the Beach"). The general outlook of the beach gradually changed from primarily a health focus (which is still maintained to some degree today) to that of fun.

At this stage of development (mid to late 1800's) of the seaside we begin to see marked discrepancies occurring between the elite upper-class tourists and the more marginalized class groups who had begun to travel around early-mid 1800's. The growing popularity of travel resulted in tourist destinations (for instance, in 1838, the Niagara Falls were rated as one of the best honeymoon destinations), which the tourist elite began to refer to as "vulgar tourism", especially with the advent of guided tours and books on "How to be a Tourist" (Lofgren, 1999:7).

A noteworthy individual of this era is Thomas Cooke, who is regarded as being the premier innovator of the age of mass tourism (Inglis, 2000:47). Cooke started organizing excursion trains to take large numbers of people and families to the seaside from about 1841. His was a non-profit organization which meant low prices and cheap accommodation, and thus appealed to many people of lower income groups. His tours brought prosperity to the beaches, but also brought masses of people from lower-class groups (Inglis, 2000:48). This generated animosity between the so-called "vulgar tourists" and the "bourgeoisie".

The tourist elite found the presence of the lower classes in their “utopic” domains offensive and threatening due to their “...lack of culture” (Lofgren, 1999:235). There are clear examples of “othering” if one looks at Blackpool (which was a main tourist attraction for wealthy and poor tourists). For instance, the town seemed to split in two as the 19th Century progressed, with spa’s up on the cliffs, fine terraces and pavilions, and on the other side of town were stalls, fortune tellers, peepshows and the like which were considered to be very “vulgar”. There were no facilities such as pavilions for the poorer side until much later in 1876 (Inglis, 2000:51).

Here we see the beginnings of “the other” occurring in terms of class, and we shall see at a later stage how this “othering” is implemented on Durban beachfront as a form of regulation. If we are to skip ahead in time, we can note further discrepancies between the so-called “elite” and “vulgar”; Subsequent to the Second World War, the advances in travel technology (planes, cars and so forth) meant that tourist destinations were more accessible than ever (Inglis, 2001: 103). However, with the dawn of mass travel came the decline in the quality of ethics. Huge outcries were made concerning the lack of inhibitions that holidaymakers displayed (drinking too much, promiscuity and other supposedly ‘bad’ behaviours) especially relating to sex (Lofgren, 1999: 174). The promise and availability of sex became a feature of travelling abroad. This particular notion of sexual fantasy will be a major area of discussion later on with regards to the production of imagery containing bodies on the beach. The allusion to sex and the holiday as such is a discernable feature throughout the history of the holiday.

A significant development in beachgoing was the institutionalization of “summer life” and “winter life”, the polarity between country and city. This is very much a solid foundation on which the framework of the beach and holiday rests – the institution of the ‘beach holiday’ in relation to the summer season defines as well as regulates the time and place in which it functions. During the 1920’s, the social base was broadened considerably and new middle-class tourists began to engage in the summer holiday in a different manner. Clothing that previously functioned for purposes of ‘modesty’ and

'decorum' gave way to practical, sporty styles (Lofgren, 1999:235). During the 20th Century, the ideology of healthiness of summer life by the sea led to the construction of a number of "summer activities".

The beach became a site for new activities (such as boating, fishing or building sandcastles), as well as new awarenesses; One could easily oscillate between different modes of vacationing: sunbathing, daydreaming, swimming, suntanning and other hedonistic pursuits (Lofgren, 1999:236). The beach thus became a malleable space in which to accommodate new social practices and regulations if needs be. This is a noteworthy characteristic as we have already seen the changing structure of the beach throughout history, and shall see further changes with reference to the changing political and social climate in South Africa.

Through the production of particular media imagery, and the production of vacationsapes, the place of the holiday has become to be regarded as a "utopia". A place to eradicate evils and bad experiences and fulfill indulgent longings for a good time, as opposed to working in the office, running the home. In other words, the holiday can be regarded as a kind of therapeutic experience. One can view this perspective as a conditioned *subjectivity* that occurs when one is in a beach context, how one *ought* to feel when one is at the beach.

In his study of the beach, Edgerton refers to the feeling of the "sense of escape from the problems of everyday life", and the "sensuous aura" created by "so many beautiful near-naked bodies" (1979:26). This is an obvious embellishment but holds true in terms of impressions, or the 'vacationsapes' that are produced in our society. One caption from the *Natal Mercury* referred to a *feeling* that one experiences at the beach, describing it as: "...the unfettered sense of relief", a narrative which links directly back to the Victorian era of seaside spa's and the freedoms of urban life and social rigours they encountered. The economic system sells the pleasure of infinite anticipation (good times, relaxation, the intimation of sexual encounters of some kind),

smoothly replacing disappointment and boredom (within the home or workplace) with the promise of satisfaction.

iv) POLITENESS AND DECORUM ON THE BEACH: REGULATION OF BEHAVIOUR AND THE BODY IN PLACE

There are certain truisms that have been generated through history and have come to express the meaning of the holiday experience (Inglis, 2000:9). With regards to behaviour, one is allowed to alter one's behaviour in particular ways that would be otherwise unacceptable in our everyday lives (as discussed briefly in the previous section). Inglis makes clear that a very significant aspect of the holiday is one's license to relinquish the strict code of conduct adhered to in city life; for instance, one is allowed to eat unhealthily, drink too much, and wear few (or less) clothes (Inglis, 2000: 12). One's reputation and respectability are permitted to alter or become invisible.

In his book: *'The Presentation of Everyday Self'* Goffman describes how people's actions and behaviour are scripted in specific places. Social establishments are what Goffman describes as being "...any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place" (1956:7). Goffman describes the ways in which people behave in certain situations, the way in which we assume a 'front' or put on a 'performance' (1956: 32). Goffman claims that an individual's performance frequently functions in a general and fixed manner to define the situation for those who observe the performance (1956: 32). These established patterns of action or "performances" shall be referred to in this dissertation as "scripted" behaviours, as one can view the setting, the beach, as being regulated or scripted by that particular culture.

With regards to *setting*, Goffman claims that the setting in which one performs, in this case Durban beachfront provides scenery and "stage-props" for the cultural action performed upon it (1956:32). The beach as a setting is infused with all sorts of meanings and metaphors on various levels and can be viewed as a social institution / production highly codified by elements of time (leisure), place (beach), activity (swimming, sunbathing) and signs (umbrellas, bright clothing and other visible conventions) through which it can be recognized. These identifiable symbols of the beach have only come about

because of the institutionalization of certain cultural specifications of: “what it means to be at the beach”.

Those who would utilize the setting as a part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place, and must also cease their performance when they leave the place (Goffman, 1956:33). This notion of regulating place and behaviour is important as it exercises social control, one would *not* be allowed to suntan on a pavement or walk around half-naked in an urban environment. The beach can be described as a subjective space, where our identities undergo being partly defined by these contexts of space (Durrheim & Dixon, 2001: 434). One could say that *place defines behaviour and behaviour defines place*.

Goffman describes how an individual typically infuses his or her activities with signs that dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts about the setting (1956:40), behaviour as defined by place. One could use sun tanning or playing with a beachball as example of this if we are to look at the kinds of activities that have become institutionalized at the beach. There are expressive requirements for specific situations, the individual must “fit” in with specified terms of aptness, propriety and decorum (Goffman, 1956:63), in other words behaviour and activities are *regulated*. Goffman also makes use of the terms “front” and “back” regions, the front being what a person wishes people to see (performance) and the back region being that which would disrupt or destroy/discredit the impression the performance is attempting to foster (1953:141).

Goffman maintains that a sufficient amount of self-control needs to be exerted so as to preserve an (apparent) operational harmony within the system that we exist in (1956: 72), in other words “seemly behaviour” or social decorum. By emphasizing certain facts that adhere to the rules of appropriate social decorum (referred to as the front region) and concealing others which would disturb the harmony created by appropriate behaviours (back region), one presents an idealized impression; the performer sustains expressive consistency. This is a necessary social function for regulating behaviour in

place, as if one were allowed to expose back regions, the impression that a culture attempts to project would be destroyed. In this regard, back regions are anarchic.

Diverse social groupings are capable of communicating in different ways, such attributes as age, sex, class, race and the like, and that supposedly, in every case, these exposed attributes are disclosed by means of a distinctive multifarious cultural configuration, which, Goffman says, are theoretically in their social context, *the proper ways of conducting oneself* (1956:81), or decorous behaviour. Thus, we can say, that to *be* a specific type of person, then, one must not only possess the mandatory attributes (for instance, white, middle-class female), but also to maintain the standards of behaviour and appearance required and reflected by that specific social grouping (which could be possibly very modest and conservative) in that particular setting or place. Therefore, such qualities as status and class and so forth, may not merely just be entities that can be possessed and then exhibited, one could say that they are part of a pattern of scripted behaviours which Goffman claims, is "... coherent, embellished, and well articulated" (1956: 81). One could associate politeness with class for instance, such as the "refinement" of manners, actions within a context of decorum. Meanings of the beach are struggled out between groups occupying different social positions and therefore the beach is not always an area that is stable and harmonious (where an atmosphere of decorum is maintained). For instance, the meaning of the beach for a family is often contested by subcultures such as surfers drinking or taking drugs (back regions which generally opposes family values) and other conflicts with conventions of politeness or front region that other people attempt to maintain.

A good example of upholding the front region of the beach (preserving its air of decorum) is Edgerton's study of behaviour on the beach. Edgerton describes how in most cases of indecorous behaviour, beachgoers will seldom intervene and rarely confront those who may offend them. Most of the time he noted, if the beachgoer in question became too uncomfortable and could no longer ignore the behavior (such as blatant sexual displays or

drunken brawling), he or she simply got up and moved away (1979:186). These cases reflect the necessity for maintaining an apparent sense of operational harmony. To confront the “anarchists” would acknowledge the presence of the back region which could disturb or destroy the front region which is of imperative value. In these cases, regulating behaviour is depicted here through avoidance.

The tension between the front region and back region, nature and culture can also be clearly demonstrated where exposure of the body is concerned. The beach is a setting where one is permitted to display the body in such a manner that would in most other public situations be taboo and unacceptable. Behaviour and the body on the beach can be seen as safe and culturally controlled (scripted), such as, despite the fact that one is allowed to expose one’s body the genitals must *a/ways* be covered. However, on the other hand tanning can be seen to be further from culture (the shedding of one’s clothes) and closer to nature (baring one’s skin), (Fiske, 1989:57) - a fairly incongruous situation of nature (the beach) meeting with culture (people).

Activities such as tanning have become synonymous with the beach (an activity that portrays confirmatory facts about the setting). For instance, a suntan can be interpreted as a *sign* to be read by others in the city (Fiske, 1989:46). This activity signifies that the sunbather or wearer, has been into nature and has brought back both the physical health of the animal, and mental health that contact with nature induces (as discussed previously), into unnatural urban lifestyle (Fiske, 1989:46). The tan can be viewed as a sign of leisure, which denotes healthiness (the sun seen to be good for the skin), relaxedness (the hours spent getting the tan) as well as wealth (the money it requires to take a holiday and time off from work). In this sense, the tan can be brought back into culture to signify wealth and alludes to class. The activity of sunbathing can also be seen as regulating the body – obtaining a good all over tan by not burning or having an even, all-over tan.

Further tensions between nature and culture can be witnessed in activities such as swimming and surfing (other activities synonymous with the beach).

Both of these activities or behaviours need to be regulated, although this is very difficult, as both are close to nature. By accepting the risk of nature and entering the sea, one has to leave the safety zone of the beach and therefore one's culture. The body in this case breaks free of cultural control, disrupting the world of *sense* (Fiske, 1989: 62), by accepting the possibility of death which might be caused by swimming or surfing in the sea. This notion is as far away from the safety of culture that one can get. However, regulatory measures are taken to attempt to maintain control, this can be viewed by the presence of lifeguards on the beach, trained observers and rescuers for those who encounter problems in the sea (although absolute safety of the public is beyond their control). One could say that *every holiday lives on the liminal*. In other words, despite regulations and attempts at social control and awarenesses, the beach provides a space which has seemingly limitless boundaries in which people can explore issues surrounding the body and social relations.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

SECTION 1:

A WHITE PATRIARCHAL SOUTH AFRICA

In researching the history of the holiday, Lofgren often refers to the considerable extent to which the “male framework” defines the desirable, the noteworthy and the exciting (1999:100). The holiday as a social institution in South Africa is rooted in a context where for the most part a white patriarchal system was firmly implemented (and later on more strongly with Apartheid). During the Apartheid era, a system whereby South Africa’s races were legally segregated, beaches became areas which were separated for exclusive usage according to race (Durrheim & Dixon, 2001:435). Beach segregation had been formally practiced in South Africa throughout the century however, the government began legislating far more severe policies of division than it had earlier.

With regard to the analysis of the photographs taken from the *Natal Mercury* from 1966 to 1996, the following political events have reference: In 1960, the government brought about the Reservation of Separate Amenities Amendment Act. This gave local authorities the power to implement beach segregation. The Separate Amenities Amendment Bill of 1966 ensured that any person in charge of ‘public premises’ could implement racially exclusive rights on their premises (this included the sea shore). The Sea Shore Amendment Act in 1972 was then created in order to empower the Minister of Agriculture to bestow control of the beaches to local and provincial authorities. Consequently, Beach Apartheid was deeply entrenched by the 1970’s (Durrheim & Dixon, 2001:436).

With regards to the above forms of extreme “othering” that has occurred in South Africa for so many years between white and black people, one could describe “othering” as being a structure of ideas, in which difference cannot readily be accommodated; A system that reduces all difference to a distinction and all identity to sameness (Grosz, 1988:11). “Othering” can also occur in

the exclusion of that which is undesirable – the emphasis on what is good so that those things which are not included must therefore be bad. Consequently we are able to observe the general patriarchal “sameness” that has persisted throughout the years in photographic trends concerning racism and gender, and the sluggishness of change concerning these issues.

Regulation of Durban’s beaches can be observed most clearly through use of prohibition signs. Common prohibition signs such as “No Dogs Allowed” indicate how culture imposes its laws onto nature. Fiske claims that in this way, differences are established – the boundaries between nature and the beach, and between the beach and culture in a way that is specific to the beach (the beach signifying a space where the culture and nature meet), (1989:49). However, one of the most important issues of prohibition raised on South African beaches was the prohibition of race groups (afforded by Apartheid policies mentioned above). In a significant photograph in 1987 (6 March, p6), a non-white individual, Mr. Morris Fynn, holds a racist prohibitory sign that he has cut down in protest (refer to figure 1). This photograph, as well as figures 2 and 3 indicate the extent to which the beach was regulated according to racial policies. The prohibition sign is not only a negative definition other norm (that which is deviant, in this case, racial “others”), but is also a positive agency of social control – controlling/regulating the meanings of the beach and definition of the norms (Fiske, 1989: 51).

With regard to gender issues, one notices distinct trends in the way women are portrayed. In the history of the production of the holiday, the advent of the woman tourist symbolized change and threat to the changing principles of masculine gendering of emotions. When women entered the world of tourism there were powerful reactions: Did women belong in the wilderness, was one of the most frequently asked questions. And equally important, did they detract from the masculinity of travel? (Lofgren, 1999:100).



Mr Mornia Fynn, Natal leader of the People's Congress Party, says he will cut down this beach apartheid sign in Durban.

Just waiting to get his saw back

Mornia Fynn
A Durban leader of the People's Congress Party, Mr Fynn, who was arrested last week for cutting down a beach apartheid sign, says he will get his saw back.

The Durban sign, which was erected last year, was cut down by Mr Fynn, who was arrested last week for cutting down a beach apartheid sign, says he will get his saw back.

Mr Fynn, who was arrested last week for cutting down a beach apartheid sign, says he will get his saw back.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Initially (during the 1800's) male tourist was generally patronizing to women and regarded their presence as devaluing the experience of adventure (Where is the magnetism and danger if a woman can also do it?). Lofgren states that: "The wilderness (and in this case the beach) became new territory in which to try out new gender roles" (1999: 63). From this general outlook of the patriarchal male in South African society, an important issue to be examined here is that of the production of gender and race, and the stereotypes that occur therein.

The *Natal Mercury* newspaper in Durban portrays (and has portrayed) an array of collective images that have come to represent 'the beach'/vacationscapes in South Africa which have been shaped by two centuries of tourist history. In examining the regulation of non-white groups on

Durban's beachfront, the role of the media, in this case the *Natal Mercury*, can be viewed as significant. This is due to the fact that the media often reflects (and regulates) society's collective fantasies, fears and can possibly perpetuate as well as dispel specific cultural institutions. As Goffman writes: "The divisions and hierarchies of social structure are depicted microecologically, that is, through the use of small-scale spatial metaphors..." (1976: 1), in other words, the photograph.

Goffman also raises an important point by saying that: "It is not at all unlikely that a family on vacation might take its cues for what 'having a good time' is from external sources, and might, in fact, contrive to look and act like the idealized family-on-vacation..." (1976:vii). In defining the role and importance of these images, one needs to acknowledge the significance of the photographic medium. The mechanically or electronically reproduced image is the semantic and technical unit of the modern mass media and at the heart of post-war popular culture (Evans & Hall, 1999:2). One needs to recognize that photography can be seen to be key in implementing the institutions of production, distribution and consumption. This next section will hopefully give insight into photographs and their power to produce, in numerous ways, the concepts of fantasy and the social institutions that have come to represent the beach in our culture.

SECTION 2

PHOTOGRAPHY – THE IDEOLOGY BEHIND PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

My main interest here is to clarify the manner in which this medium (photography) affects the production of the image with regards to the photographs of the *Natal Mercury*. A central theme in this dissertation is the role of photography in the development and perpetuation of social norms with specific reference to the South African holiday. This matter is noteworthy if one considers how photography has been integrated into the foundation of the most intimate of these social relations (specifically the family, leisure, personal remembrance and vanity – the creation of vacationsapes); it is inscribed in institutions (the photo press, high street photographers, schools and other practices); and is significantly incorporated into the material conditions of consumption (relating to class, income, sex, advertising, retailing and other means), (Evans & Hall, 1999: 290). The photo press, which has significant reference in this dissertation, plays an enormous part in the discussion of the proliferation of certain social conventions due to its accessibility by the general public.

Burgin (cited Evans & Hall, 1999) states that in photography, certain physical materials are technically handled so that meanings are produced; this means controlling (or manipulating) lighting, objects, people and so forth. The old adage that the camera cannot lie can be applied to instances such as the photo-finish, it promises reality, truth and scientific precision, however, in most other cases it is necessary to know the circumstances of production and processing of the image, as it is known to us that the interference of an human agency could be of great consequence (Beloff, 1985:2). Beloff explains that we recognize photographs to be true and that they represent a kind of independent reality (1985:15). From the beginning of photography, both practitioners and theorists have understood that photographs can lie.

In this instance of the *Natal Mercury* photographs, the challenge is to work out why and when they “lie”, and how they do it, while at the same time seeing

they also show a truth. This is why there is much difficulty in interpreting photographs (Beloff, 1985: 19). Problems arise with the notion that we have that we "see" reality, and therefore we believe what our eyes show us. Beloff argues that we do not see, but perceive, however, by the very nature of personalized perception (through our own experiences and thoughts), we accept our partialities as normal, natural, and even sometimes universally valid (1985:17).

In effect, the photographic image will thus show the perception of a social agency (the photographer), its partiality possibly being that of a personal one (family-snaps, holiday-snaps), economic (advertising a product), aesthetic or ideological. Beloff explains that the social agency's expectations, desires and assumptions may have led to factors such as: selection, lighting, censorship, beautification or uglification (1985:17). On a different level, Burgin claims that we "read" photos, bringing to a photograph a whole set of personal associations (stemming from our own experiences, forming our own vacationsapes), (cited Evans & Hall, 1999). It is these 'meanings' that are conjured up that make our perception, "...we never merely see our visual image" (Burgin, cited Evans & Hall, 1996:17). Detecting the influences of a social agency are important in interpreting the *Natal Mercury* photographs that one must be aware of intentions and perceptions that may have influenced the image.

An obviously ideological slant in photographs (usually caused by the photographer) is often condemned as being 'manipulative' and calculating; in other words, the photographer manipulates or provokes what comes across in the image (this phenomenon will be observed in the Analysis section). As a result, his or her audience's beliefs about the world are manipulated or derived through these images (Burgin, cited Evans & Hall, 1996:74). An important issue here, is that although one cannot say exactly how much a person is influenced by a photograph, manipulation is central to photography, and photography cannot be separated from it. As Burgin states: "*Photography did not exist without manipulation*". (cited Evans & Hall, 1996:74).

Photographs not only infiltrate our consciousness with the simple content that is there, but also draw in other themes such as sexual arousal, wealth, motherhood and other female stereotypes as a means for capitalistic gains (Beloff, 1985:18). This may be evident in the *Natal Mercury* in that it would naturally attempt to appeal to public desires and interests in order to attract and sustain readership. Maintaining the public interest would mean structuring public desire in terms of existing social norms in order to legitimate its subject matter.

The images produced by the photo press of the *Natal Mercury* would obviously be in keeping with the types of behaviours and subjectivity that occurs on Durban beachfront, so that these would be accepted as being 'truthful' by the general population, yet they also **contain information** which has been manipulated, enhanced and vilified through means of the aims and perception of the photographer (such as attractive, sexually arousing women or idyllic family settings, which will be observed in the Analysis). It is these elements, which are key in interpreting these photographs in recognizing the manner in which different subject matter has been manipulated or regulated. Photography of the beach both reflects and produces the beach, and, the South African holiday tradition.

SECTION 3

INTERPRETATION OF IMAGES

The photographs were obtained and photocopied from the imaging archives of the Natal Society Museum in Durban. The photographs chosen were all those including scenes from the Durban beachfront published in the Natal Mercury between 1966 and 1996. There were some 2007 photographs fitting this description. Of these, 561 pictures were excluded as they pictured non-social events such as scenes of accidents, incidents, rescues, environmental themes and animals. The remaining 1446 photographs were then analysed and sorted into categories based on the gender and race represented within the photograph, as well as whether the subjects were pictured being active or passive. Further subdivisions resulted in the photographs being divided into fourteen different categories. Each photograph was recorded in these categories with its date and page number along with a brief description. These categories were labeled as the following: 1) Female Pin-ups in Sitting/Lying/Kneeling Positions, 2) Female Pin-ups in Standing or Walking Positions, 3) Females Photographed in the Water, 4) Females Depicted in Active Contexts, 4) Females in Beauty Pageants, 5) Pin-up females considered to be "Seductive", 6) Use of Props in Portrayal of Pin-ups, 7) Black female representation 8) Children and Family (including women with children), 9) Men Depicted in Active Contexts, 10) Men Depicted in Eroticised Contexts, 11) Black Male Representation, 12) Men and Women Depicted Together, 13) Crowded Beach Scenes.

Photographic Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Number of Photographs	327	154	69	115	61	31	36	127	345	19	51	60	82

Table 1: Statistics of photographic categories of the *Natal Mercury*.

These categories were then arranged in chronological order and the photographs displayed for about four months, during which various themes emerged. Statistics were derived from these categories, denoting trends and the frequency of particular images that occurred. These findings were then tested and developed with three independent observers at an arranged viewing at the University of Natal Arts Faculty (refer to figures 4 and 5). The revealed themes formed the basis of the dissertation.

A new process then began of re-conceptualising the images by means of relating them to relevant literature. This process consisted in part as historical methodological research, relating the images to concepts of the holiday, beaches and “othering” that have occurred internationally and in South Africa. Parts of this research were conducted from a Post-structuralist Feminist perspective, deducing information by means of researching the history and the regulation of the subjective in terms of body and place. The Post-structuralist Feminist process is described in detail in the analysis of the photographs concerning male and masculine issues (Section C of Chapter Three).

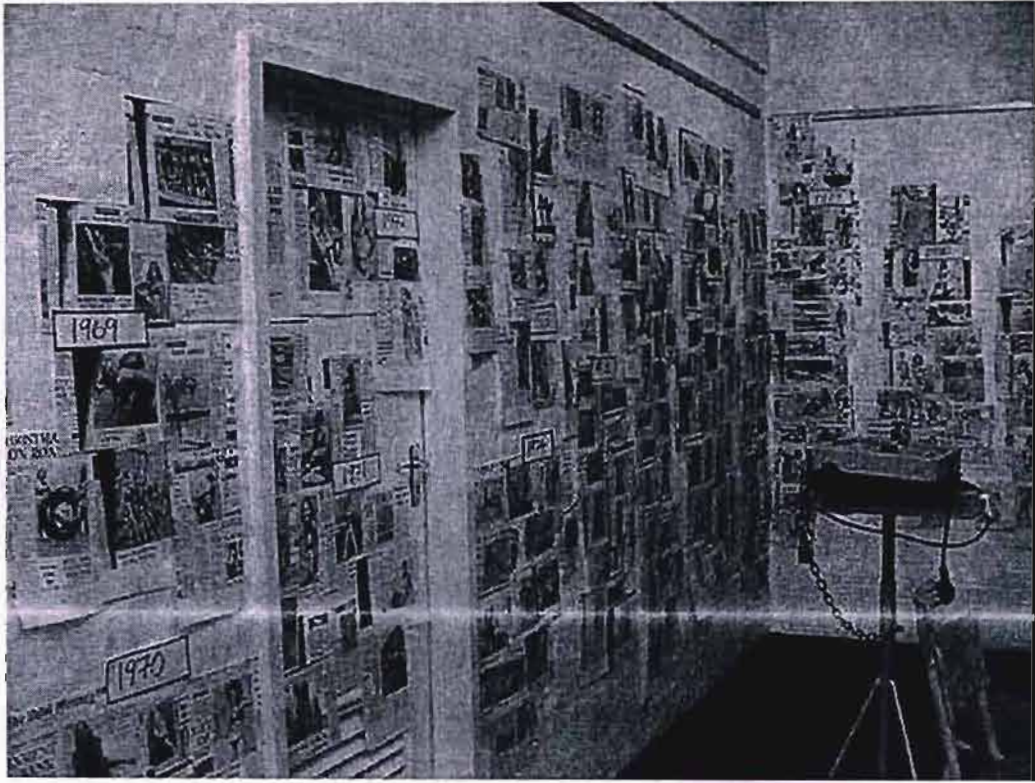


Figure 4

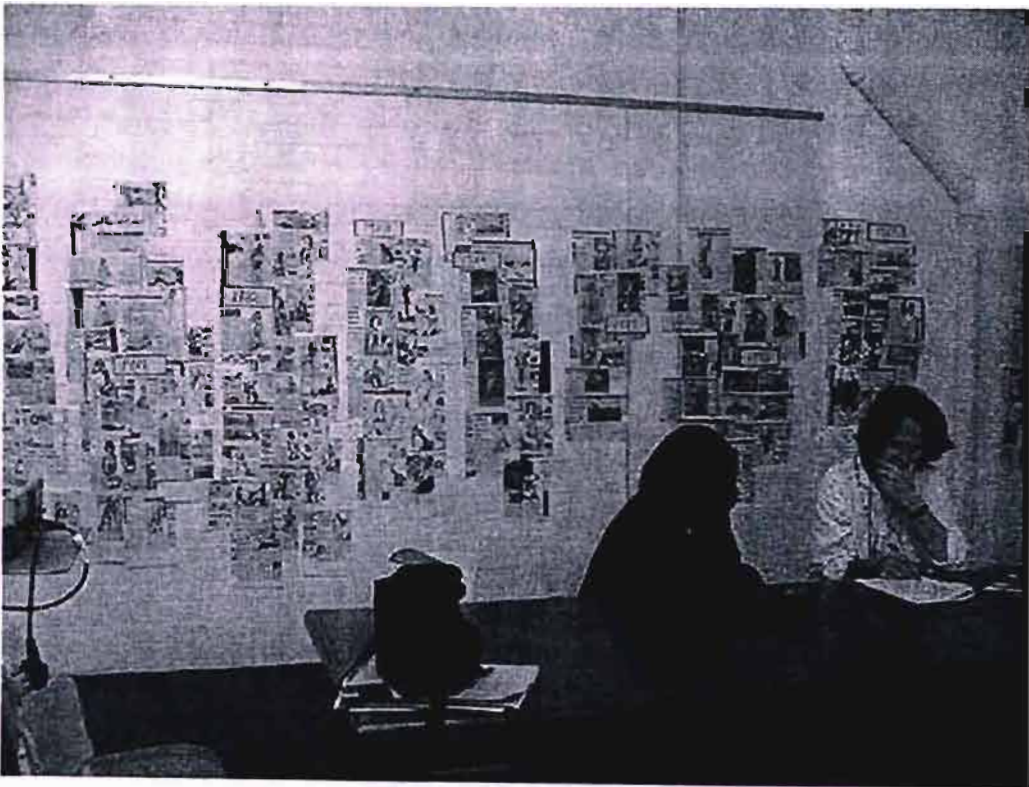


Figure 5

CHAPTER THREE:

THE HOLIDAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The notion of the holiday as being regulated in terms of time, is made highly apparent by the photographs of jam-packed beach scenes at the specific times of year that are regarded as being “popular” for holidaymaking. In the case of Durban beachfront, the most common timeframe in which the *Natal Mercury* depicts packed beaches is between the 17th of December and the 3rd of January, this being the prime time of the Christmas holiday season and New Year celebration. This is made clear by Table 2 below which shows those times of the year that Durban's beaches are most frequently attended.

M = Month

NP = Number of photographs

M	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
NP	16	5	2	13	6	4	2		2	4	28

Table 2: Frequency of photographs depicting crowded beaches from 1996-1996

Despite this being the most popular period for families and people to frequent the beach, photographs of people on the beach, be they male or female oriented, are continually shown all year round. One would expect this, however, seeing as though Durban “is by the sea” (a well-known South African expression) and therefore the *Natal Mercury* would naturally represent people on the beach). Activities and the types of people represented in the *Natal Mercury* give compelling ideas to what the holiday on the Durban beachfront means.

Different roles according to gender, race and class in a South African context can be “read out” of these photographs, revealing appropriate behaviour and attire for the beach. Regulations and norms can be revealed through the

proliferation of certain “idyllic” representations or the exclusion or ridicule of other behaviours which are considered to be undesirable.

Section A:

Lifesavers And Strong Men

While South Africa bears the scars of racism as an official policy, it has been aware of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' for a long time, and has begun the process of reconfiguring their meanings in a more egalitarian society (Kimmel, 2000:337). South Africa having been a distinctly white patriarchal country up until the 1994 elections, "...one of the last bastions of chauvinism" (Athol Fugard, Sunday Times, 1994, Nov 27), is now experiencing major transformations in masculine diversity and gender relations (Morrell, 2001:1). Addressing masculinity is key in understanding gender on Durban beachfront as represented by the *Natal Mercury*, in how masculinity can and does change, and in what ways it has done so in a South African context with regards to the photographic content of this dissertation.

Bob Connell, an Australian sociologist, developed a theory of masculinity that seeks to incorporate psychological insights and social forces, the combination of personal agency with social structure. This theory also aims to incorporate the diverse intellectual influences of materialism, feminism and critical theory. In the development of this theory, Connell describes how there was a masculinity that was hegemonic – one that dominated other masculinities and which succeeded in creating prescriptions of masculinity which were binding (sometimes only partially), and which created cultural images of what it is to be a 'real man' (1987:79). Also present are three other categories of non-hegemonic masculinity: subordinate, complicit and marginalized – masculinities that developed outside the hegemonic preferences (Morrell, 2001: 7).

Minorities are aware of the differences between the ruling class/elite and themselves on the definition what of 'being men' is (Morrell, 2001:7). David Buchbinder describes how discursive frames generally deemed powerfully influential in the construction of subjectivity (and therefore the regulation of subjectivity) are those of race, class, age and gender (1998: 13). Those classes/people deprived of social authority are deemed social "others", and are correspondingly unauthorized and disempowered (Buchbinder, 1998: 13).

Morrell also claims that masculinities should not be thought of as fixed social structures (2001:7), minorities are subject to change and shifts in power are possible. In fact, this dissertation aims to reveal in this section how masculinities are in fact fluid and malleable in the context of the changing economic and political climate of South Africa. Masculinities are socially and historically created in a process that is constantly under construction of what it means to be a 'real man'.

The media, texts and representations seek to reproduce the dominant masculinity as both a reflection of that social reality, and as a model on which men in that particular culture may pattern themselves (Buchbinder, 1998:ix). In keeping with this concept, Morrell also describes that while masculinity is not inherited or automatically acquired, it is also true that boys and men are not entirely free to choose those images that please them (2001:8). He writes: "The mass media and the people and organizations who use them (specific masculinities), institutions...who inhabit them, leisure and work activities and the people who are involved in them – all these media, places, people are involved in the complex process of constructing gendered discourses. The discourses that become dominant tend to illegalise or censure certain gender constructions...and tend to affirm other gender constructions..." (2001:89), in other words, the regulation of masculinity and gender.

Socially constructed models of being-in-society can be said to maintain their particular discourse by 1) inviting us to desire or imitate those models which society and ideology approve of and 2) warn us against others (Buchbinder, 1998:3). Buchbinder claims that the function of such representational models serve to enable men to 'recognize' themselves and each other within their relevant culture and social class, and thus approve of male behaviour in terms of ideological correctness (1998:29). Thus, in this recognition, there is encoded a system of prescriptions, or regulation of subjectivity by means of scripted 'male' behaviours. In this analysis of masculinity as represented by the *Natal Mercury*, this dissertation hopes to reveal those discursive frames

that are influential in its regulation, and how they have developed or changed over time.

For white South African men involved in the regime of Apartheid, the uneven distribution of power gave them privileges but also made them defensive about challenges (by women, blacks and/or other men) to those privileges (Morrell, 2001:18). For black men, their hardships of continual poverty and the emasculation of political powerlessness gave their masculinity a dangerous edge (Morrell, 2001:18) and were (and still are) extremely problematic with regard to their traditions and culture. With regards to the beaches of South Africa, these were only made accessible to black people in the early 1990's. Until then, blacks and non-whites had little opportunity to participate in aquatic sports and other activities and were not allowed on "white" beaches. Before the 1990's, white patriarchal discourses involved in a range of "otherings" in order to regulate the beach in terms of place (who and what is allowed), subjectivity (what it means to 'be a man' at the beach, and thus what is *not* a man), behaviour (gender roles), and the body.

SECTION B: ANALYSIS

Yr = Year

Wfig = Number of photographs representing white males

Bfig = Number of photographs representing black males

A.M. = Number of photographs representing active males

E/Pm = Number of photographs representing eroticised or passive males

MLC = Number of photographs representing males looking at the camera

YR	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
WFig	3	13	8	8	8	5	13	8	9	8	14
Bfig	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1
AM	3	11	8	8	7	5	11	8	8	7	8
E/P m	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MLC	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	1

YR	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Wfig	4	11	10	10	9	3	17	10	13	10	14
Bfig	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
AM	4	11	10	9	9	3	17	10	4	10	14
E/P m	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MLC	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	1	1

YR	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Wfig	27	15	14	16	20	34	17	27	15
Bfig	3	0	0	2	3	5	4	6	8
AM	22	14	14	12	17	28	14	25	14
E/Pm	5	0	0	3	2	5	2	2	0
MLC	2	1	1	3	3	6	3	5	2

Table 3: Statistics of the depiction of South African men on Durban beachfront 1966-1991.

Total number of males: 444

What is evident through examination of the photographic material from the Natal Mercury in the above table is that men on the beach generally occupy a position that involves being active, be it group orientated or independent. Statistics show that 87% of male photographs, including black and other genres (such as incidents and political issues) depict the subject "in action". One of the most prolific source of male activity on the beach could be said to be that of the lifesavers. Their presence is certainly noticeable in these photographs, and they are often displayed in moments of intense action (figures 6, 7, 8 and 9) concerning competitions, races and lifesaving tasks.

This feature of masculine portrayal or production can possibly allude to a number of issues. Firstly, this could refer to the evident absence in masculine exhibition, of vanity or sexual objectification – according to Mosse, in his construction of masculinity, female sensuousness has no place in the male realm: he must show restraint of passions (1996:75). Secondly, this could also indicate with reference to patriarchal ideals, the male devotion to the body and mind – dedication to his task and strength of will, Mosse also describes how the ideal representation of the male body projects strength, virility and self-control; outward appearances and inward virtue are supposed to form one harmonious whole, a precise construct where every part is in its place (1996:5). The penetrating and conquering nature of the male body could be said to symbolize society's need for order and progress, as well as middle class virtues such as self-control and moderation.



Figure 6

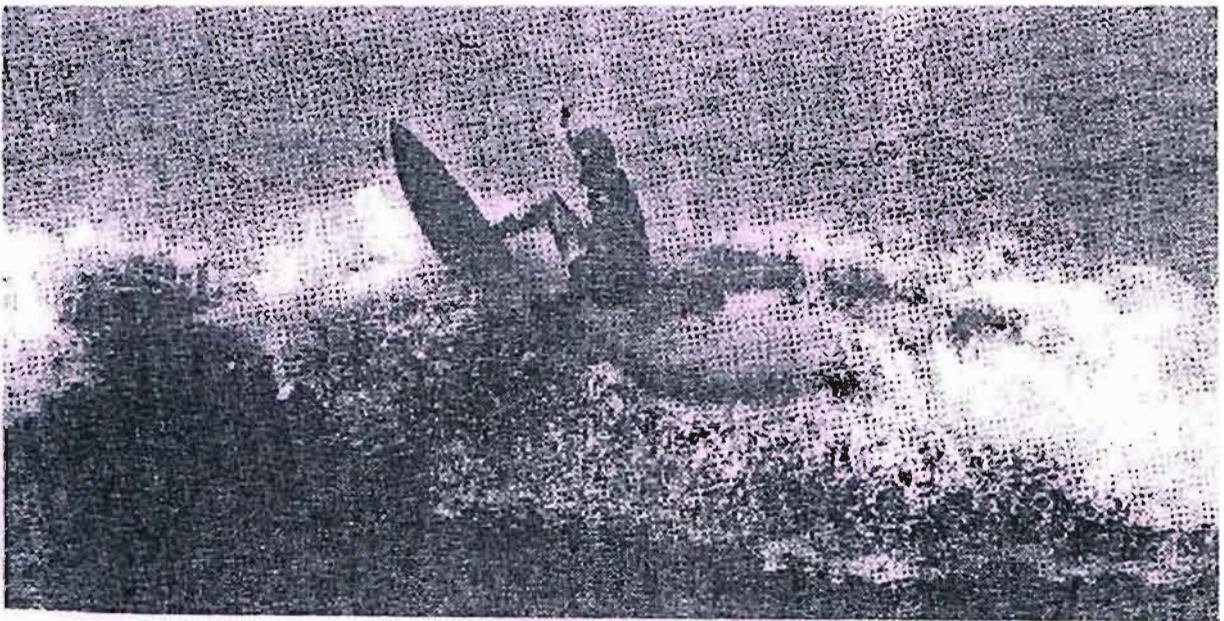


Figure 7

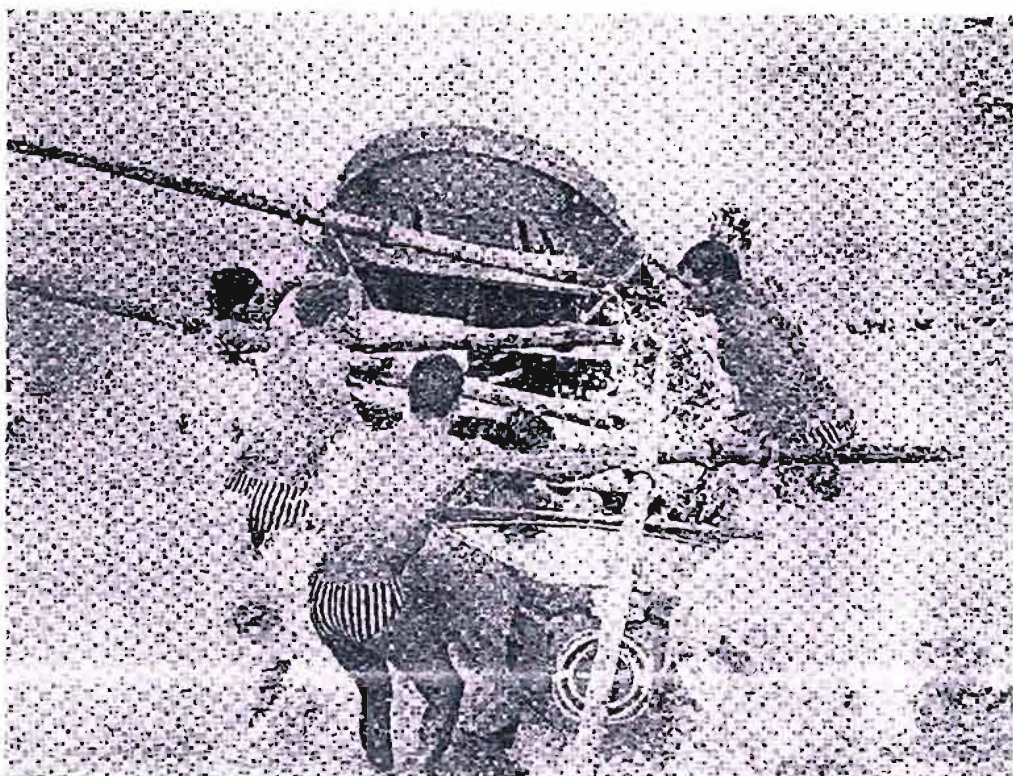


Figure 8



Figure 9

The structures in place regarding the male display of the body are clearly a result of the 'socialization' process that a male would go through (Goffman: 1956:44). Or, as it has been frequently written: the cultural construction of gender in a particular society involves definitions of what it means to be male or female, masculine or feminine (Brettell & Sargent, 1993: 108) as discussed previously with regards to Morrell and Buchbinder.

The photographs of Durban beachfront reflect particular definitions that can be used as a model against which the onlooker is expected to measure him or herself. Hall, describes this process as an active procedure of constructing identity, and requires defining what one is, against what one is not (1996:290). The process of regulation through 'othering', excluding those elements which are undesirable (for instance eroticisation of the body or passivity), is evident. However, more noticeable by its absence is black masculinity which, as discussed previously, is hardly depicted at all. Human agents supposedly give form and purpose to the landscape (Jackson & Thrift, 1995; Slater, 1997), and in this case, the beach holiday appears to be a distinctly 'white' phenomenon.

The regulation of representation of the beach (place) through exclusion of black people can clearly be linked to the Separate Amenities Amendment Act and the Seashore Amendment Act, however the fact that non-whites are almost eliminated from the production of beach culture entirely (6.2% of the photographs overall portray black people on beaches), reveals the explicit "selective" process that beach representation undergoes. Table 3 on page 40 shows the extent to which black male representation was kept to a minimum in comparison to white male representation during the Apartheid regime until 1991. This may be seen as a type of "othering" - producing displays that are viewed as "acceptable" and "appealing" and expelling or excluding images which are the antithesis to these ideals, in this case, the *swart gevaar*. The Apartheid era was a critical period for black people in South Africa, in that it created ethnic labels and promoted ethnic identities (Morrell, 2001: 17). However, due to the structures in place and thus the absence of black

representation in the *Natal Mercury* photographs, very little can be noted about the masculinity of black and non-white males until the 1990's.

These spatial divisions in South African landscape (during the Apartheid era) thus result in profoundly undemocratic and exclusionary places. Jackson (1989:5) describes how these dissensions and divisions tend to assist the augmentation of the growing confidences of "consumption classes" (white patriarchal society during Apartheid) and the increased alienation of the impoverished and despairing "underclass" (the black South African population), each with its own distinctive geography, such as the separate beaches. Durban beachfront was divided into specific allotments for different racial groups.

The only times black men are portrayed in the *Natal Mercury* during this period, is it appears under "correct" circumstances" such as black men in menial labour positions or assisting a white "boss", these can be observed in instances such as Figure 10 11 and 12, and these are few in comparison to white male representation if one looks at Table 1. A good example of the racial situation can be summed up in one of the few photographs of a black male, the title reading "Summer Sufferer" (figure 13) and the caption as follows:" Haaw! Maningi shisa!" (It's too hot!) was this umfaan's comment at North Beach yesterday where he took a few minutes rest from his chores. He had to settle for an old umbrella while others cooled off in the sea" (January 11, 1972, p5). This is a typical example of beach Apartheid, the white "others" swimming in the sea while a black labourer works on the beach, the only reason he is allowed to be there in the first place.



Figure 10

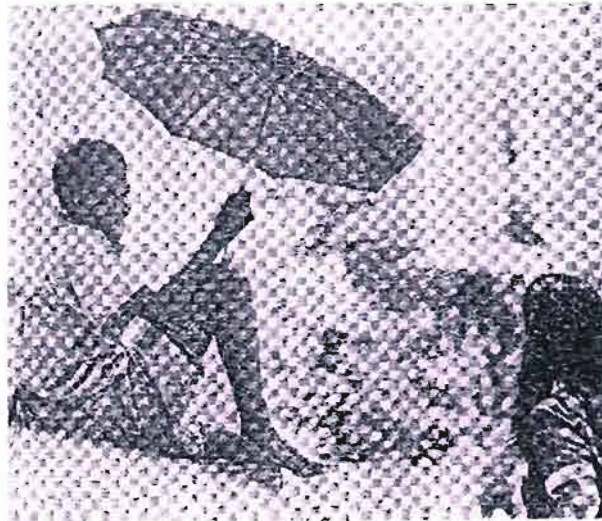


Figure 11



Figure 12

—Summer sufferer—



"HAWAII: Manana shial
 (My too hot)," was this
 umbrella's comment. At
 North Beach yesterday
 where he took a few
 minutes' rest from his
 chores. He had to settle
 for an old umbrella while
 others cooled off in the sea.

Figure 13

The only other non-white depiction is that of Indian men fishing for their families and trade, also viewed as “safe” subject matter. Statistics show that 90% of the *Natal Mercury* photographs show Indians in a fishing-related role. These men are often portrayed in a somewhat romantic manner, a common portrayal being the “peasant” on the beach going about his daily routine (figure 14) or exhibiting the remunerations of their sport (good “catches”), refer to figure 15. Otherwise, Indians have been given little or no other roles to play on the beach until the end of the Apartheid era. The fact that they are only depicted as fisherman legitimates this as their only acceptable role. The only other times that non-whites are portrayed are under unique circumstances, for instance, an Indian lifesaver is depicted in favourable heroic light after rescuing seven people (29, Dec 1973, p2) figure 16, or a black lifeguard in 1974 that sighted sharks and thus prevented disaster from occurring on an “African” beach (4 March, p5).



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

Surfing is a consistent depiction of 'men in action' on the beach, and has become highly competitive and commercialised (there is much coverage of surfing competitions in the *Natal Mercury*) and developed in a manner that Morrell describes as being "...its own macho orientation" (2001: 24). In a different context of the beach, (the absent context), black and non-white South Africans were given few opportunities to participate in aquatic sports due to segregation policies of Apartheid, and thus there is very little black representation up until the 1990's (only 6% of the photographs representing males were black). However, post-Apartheid, there is a marked rise in black representation (which can be observed in Table 1) in a masculine sport-type context such as in lifesaving and regatta's.

In terms of subjectivity and behaviour, boys and men (predominantly white) on the beach are mostly displayed in distinctive circumstances (scripted performances) of competitiveness and physical challenge for instance beach races, lifesaving challenges and other socially determined 'manly' acts of the physical. Competitive team sports have been a significant element in masculinity for much of the twentieth century, despite racial segregation (Morrell, 2001: 23). The male, both young and old in the *Natal Mercury*, are depicted continuously in circumstances that demonstrates the fashioning of the male body through physical exercise – what it is to 'be a man' (regulation of the subjective – the male must be active on the beach in order to prove his "correct" masculinity, therefore he cannot be seen to show female 'passivity').

Easthope writes how the frozen image of male activity and strength permits a look at the male body as an object of visual pleasure (1986: 99). However, patriarchal limitations are very clear-cut, Ang suggests that the male body appears only to be an object of desire when it is in motion (1983: 421). These photographs of (white) South African men on Durban beaches often give the impression of the male subject/s as having "just happened" to be looked at in their masculine 'performance' such as in the instance shown in figure 17.

With regards to the column showing the males who look at the camera and comparing it to the rest of the male categories in Table 1, one can see the

resistance of the male subjects to appear conscious of the camera or to be acknowledging the camera's presence, thereby acknowledging their objectification. What is also interesting to note are those subjects which look directly at the camera, (apart from those photographs which show the subject to be conceding to his objectification) are somewhat acceptable in that they are representing the success and rewards of their activeness. This can be seen in photographs such as in figures 18 which shows men holding up trophy fish (the victory of a masculine action – fishing); or surfers who have won a competition such as figure 19, which shows a surfer posing and smiling for the camera. The focus however, is more on the triumph of masculine activity than the subject himself.

The male body resists straightforward eroticisation (Ang, 1983:421), masculinity as defined in this case shows a marked difference to how the female is depicted (which will be discussed in the next section). There are only a few incidental photographs of a 'passive' nature (four exactly), otherwise until 1988 photographs representing male subjects can be defined by their complete lack of passivity. What becomes evident however, is how patriarchy is *effected out* at a local level. The apparent 'scriptings' of behaviour as represented by the continual mass production of images of men in action, oblivious to the camera.

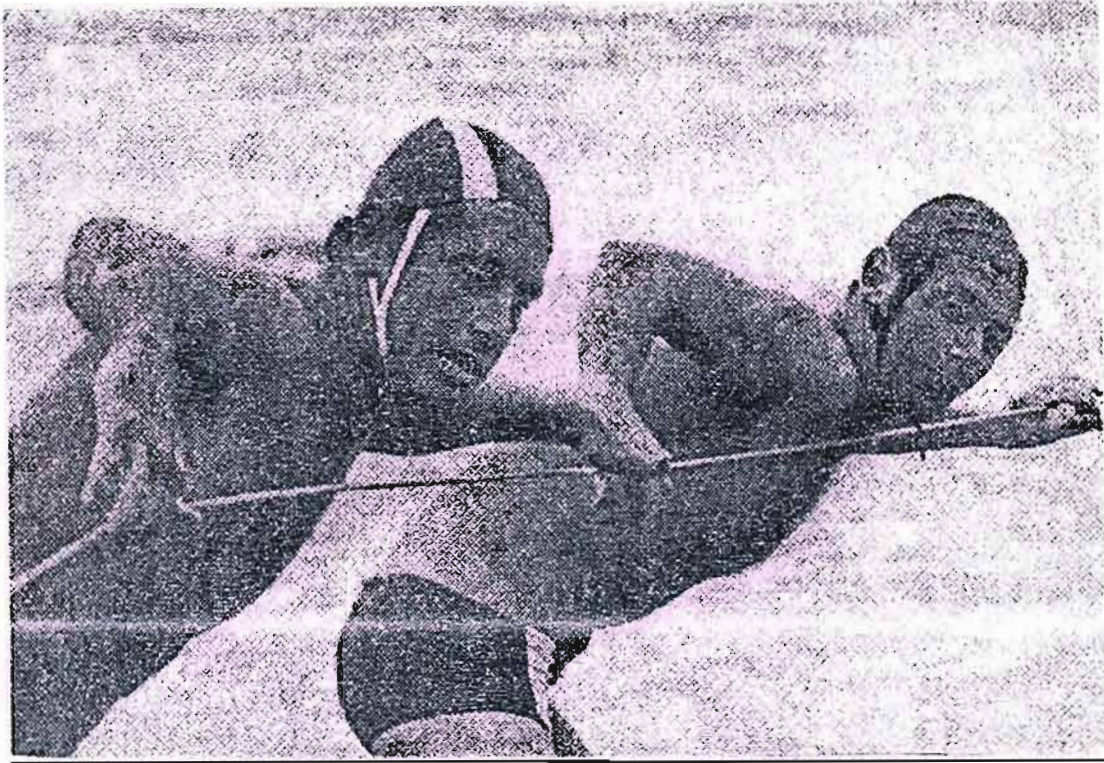


Figure 17

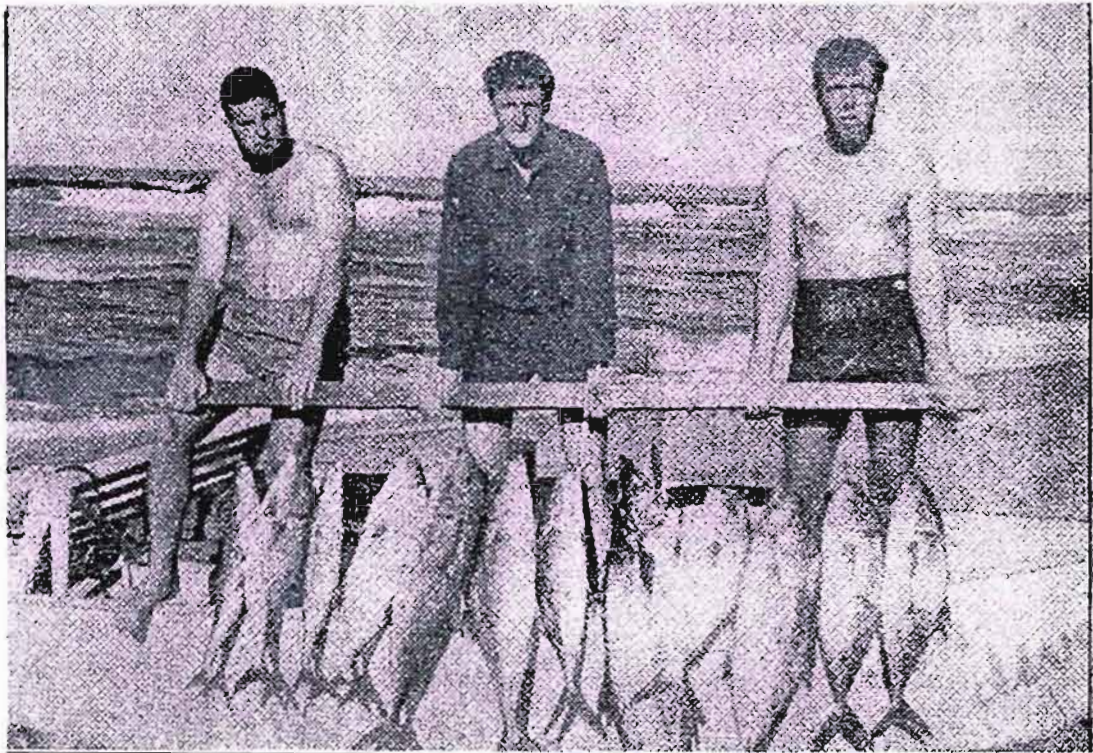


Figure 18



Figure 19

SECTION C:

DEVELOPMENTS IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

During the 1980's, distinctive and marked changes occur within male and female representation. One could attribute these changes to a number of factors including the Feminist Movement (a movement with a number of approaches with a common goal of empowering women) and Western influences. The Post-Structuralist feminist framework utilized in this analysis is in keeping with the types of discourse discussed in this dissertation; both are centrally concerned with the issue of subjectivity, addressing the issues of marginalised, diasporic and colonized cultures.

Weedon claims that the post-structuralist concept of discourse is centrally important for feminism as it refers to a number of ways of constituting meaning that is specific to particular groups and cultures and historic periods (1987:7). Weedon claims that one must not deny the subjective experience, since the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relationships work (1987:8). In Foucault's theory of gender, he contends that gender identity is not fixed, but fragmented and shifting (1976:14). What is evident (and will be made more evident in the following sections regarding female representation and race and so forth) is that it is possible to destabilize conventionalized notions of gender and identity.

According to Kimmel, we come to know what it means to be male or female in a culture, by setting our definitions in opposition to a set of "others" – racial minorities, sexual minorities. For men, the classic "other" is women (2000:11). Butler describes how there occurs a radical dependency of the masculine subject on the female "other" (1990: 1). However, in keeping with Kimmel's notion of 'fluidity', in moulding gender identity as according to one's culture, one notices that in the *Natal Mercury*, distinct modifications in male representation affiliates him with the female "other" and displays him in previously "othered" contexts. With Feminist and Western influences, changes in the representation and "performances" of gender identities began

to occur in South Africa. The female body has become steadily 'leaner' and more toned (Crowley, Himmelweit, 1992: 99) and partakes in more "masculine" activities, and the 'masculine' body has begun to accommodate more eroticised representations.

With regards to changes in the representation of the 'masculine' male (previously portrayed in active, competitive circumstances as discussed earlier), Jobling describes in his study in the USA, how in the 1980's, men's bodies also became objects of desire (1999: 10). This becomes evident when one sees this advent of the male pin-up on May 16, 1988, which up until this point has been entirely absent. This is the first time a man can be seen to be purposefully 'objectified', however, what is interesting to note that in this photograph and others such as in figure 20 and 21, the male subject does not return the gaze of the onlooker as would the female subject under normal circumstances. This can be attributed to a number of different reasons, for instance, the typical male representation of being 'oblivious' to the camera. It could also perhaps represent his discomfort of being objectified – a position that the male subject (in South Africa) has not been familiar with until this point.

From 1992 onwards (in particular 1992 and 1993), bodybuilding pictures become fairly prolific as well as male beauty pageants (refer to statistics shown in Table 1). Through these changes over time, women can be allowed to experience voyeuristic pleasure of men as objects, especially in terms of bodybuilding where the body is purposefully displayed as an object of aesthetic beauty (figures 22 and 23). Previously in South African culture (as depicted by the *Natal Mercury*), the patriarchal definition of looking was established as primarily being a male activity, and being looked at was a female passivity (Mulvey, 1999: 31) These recent changes in representation (the male body to be looked at and eroticised) can be described as a normative measure of success (van Zoonen, 1994: 88) and are evidently acceptable institutions in South African society due to their productive capacity in the *Natal Mercury* photographs. One can also assume that it is also acceptable in terms of celebrating the aesthetics of the male body, with

specific reference to muscle definition – a core aspect that is often used in defining masculinity (strength, power and other distinctly male attributes).



Figure 20

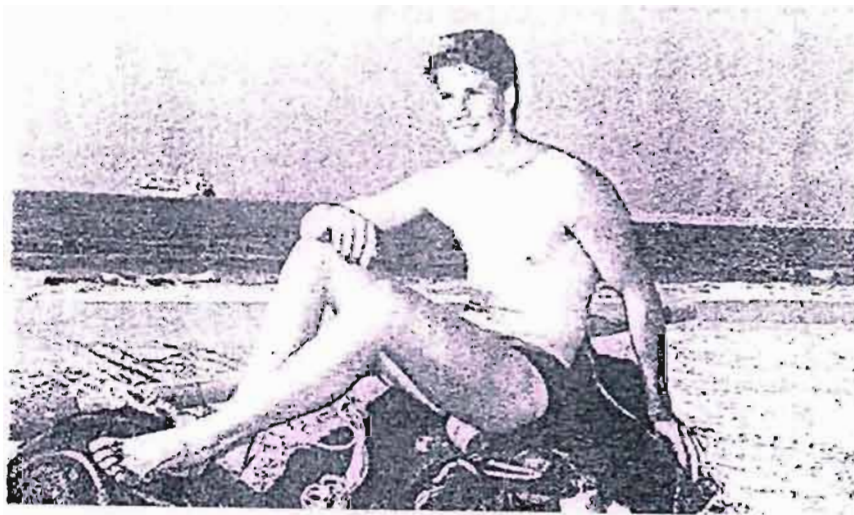


Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

Despite these changes, what is important to note is that the male body resists direct eroticisation (as discussed previously with reference to Ang). In cases such as bodybuilding (which appears to become another beach-related activity), the male body is eroticised and produced within the “ acceptable” patriarchal boundaries, of the male body as a success (as discussed previously with reference to Mosse): of the body being fashioned by means of physical activity and self-discipline; the inward virtues of masculinity are represented outwardly - by the obvious strength and self-control displayed in bodybuilding. The black male however, features very little in this eroticisation process, despite the 1994 elections that increased the numbers of black portrayal (from 6,2% of the photographs overall to 17%) in bodybuilding (and other sports) and eroticised contexts

CHAPTER FOUR

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ON THE BEACH

This chapter aims to interpret the photographs of South African women on the beach as depicted by the *Natal Mercury*. South African women were afforded few roles on the beach until the early-mid 80's when gender and racial dynamics progressed in the country. Until this time, women were relegated to the roles (or "performances") of either the pin-up model (a passive object to be eroticised for men), or the role of the mother (looking after children).

An excellent illustration of the roles allotted to men and women can be seen in figures 24 and 25 which show two very similar scenes; one with a woman posing in a concrete pipe and a similar scene with a boy posing inside the rubber tube with two girls standing passively on either side. The boy is upside-down in an extremely awkward and active position while the two girls maintain "dignified" passive poses. The woman in figure 24 however has created a pose which is "femininely appropriate" and attractive. Her role is clearly not the same as the boy's and no photographs depict any females in a male active role (such as the boy's) until about 1986. Very few photographs before this time depict active females on the beach, and there are only three pictures (refer to Table 4 on page 61) depicting black females until the early nineties. What we can assume from this information that the typical patriarchal systems described in the chapter above were present.

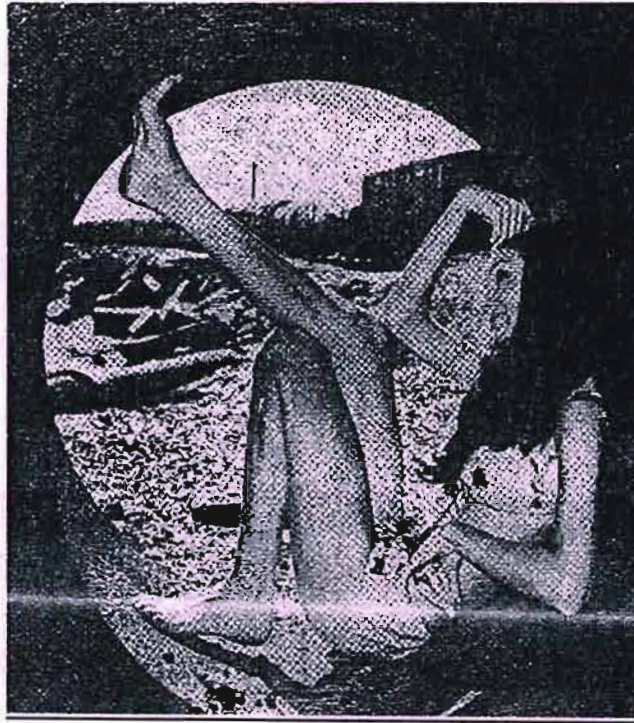


Figure 24

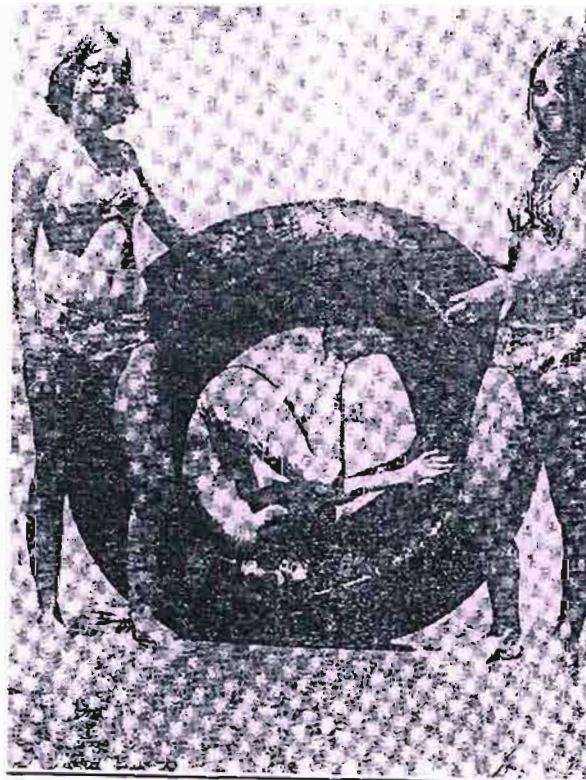


Figure 25

SECTION A:

THE MALE GAZE AND THE PIN-UP PARADIGM

Yr= year

Wfig = number of photographs depicting white females

Bfig = number of photographs depicting black females

Afig = number of photographs depicting active females

BP = number of photographs depicting beauty pageant contestants

WC = number of photographs depicting women with children

YR	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Wfig	6	9	9	18	8	14	9	7	14	25
Bfig							1		1	
Afig	1			5	1	3	1		1	
BP										
WC				1	3			2		1

YR	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Wfig	43	63	36	38	29	32	44	31	22	21
Bfig		1								
Afig	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	8
BP										
WC	4	1	2	1	1	1		2		1

YR	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Wfig	30	23	15	22	36	33	25	22	16	24	18
Bfig						2	1	7	6	8	10
Afig	6	11	1	4	9	5	6	1	8	10	4
BP		1	8	3	5	5	12	7	13	2	
WC	1			1	1		1				

Table 4: Statistics of the depiction of South African women on Durban beachfront.

Total number of photographs: 812

Conventions and prejudices, it has often been said, are socially constructed (Marwick, 1988:33). In regulating and perpetuating masculine ideals on the beach, regulation of the masculine “other”, the feminine, is key in maintaining order and constructions of masculinity in the cultural context of the beach. The female, in a patriarchal South African context, would have to be regulated in terms of body, place, subjectivity and behaviour very strictly to maintain the masculine ideals discussed in the above chapter. Morrell claims that the history of masculinity has not just been created exclusively by men, but that women despite having opposed certain aspects of their masculinity have also supported others (2001:16). South African femininities have not been a widely explored subject, however, Morrell states that while women functioned in oppressive gender contexts, they also were part of the regime that maintained the class and race divisions. (2001:16).

One of the first forms of regulation on the body and subjectivity to be looked at is that of the male gaze on the female body. A key feature of the patriarchal culture instilled in South Africa is the exhibition of women’s bodies as objects of desire and fantasy, often referred to as the male gaze (van Zoonen, 1994:87). It seems evident that this particular practice from South African patriarchal discourse was (and still is to some extent) the only discourse women in our country were/are accustomed to. Two photographs from the *Natal Mercury* depict this phenomenon very humourously in figures 26 and 27, but at the same time capturing wonderfully the essence of the objectified female “other”.

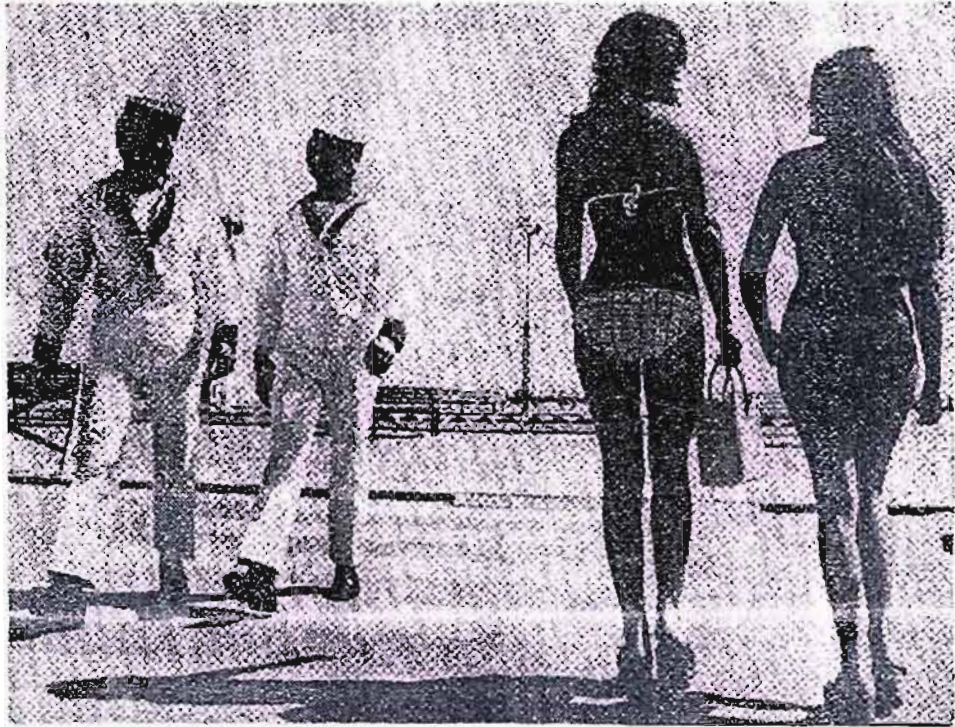


Figure 26



Figure 27

The male gaze focuses on the female body, which, as a result becomes a multiplicity of desires (Iragaray, 1977:84). According to many feminists, the

media-created women are seen as either sex-objects used to sell products to men, or as women trying to be beautiful for men (Hole & Levine, 1971:249). Ellis argues that the process of de-censorship is not due to any liberalization or lull of social mores, but rather to the growing perception that sex can be used to enhance the selling power for a whole variety of products, thus strengthening the capitalist system (1988:27). Connell also describes the pin-up as "emphasized femininity", which is organized around a compliance with gender inequality and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men (1987:183). The pin-up in the case of the *Natal Mercury*, are women, or girls, with little clothing on (or bikinis), in positions that are considered to render them "sexy" or "attractive".

In discussing the need (of the male) for erotic imagery, one can look at the "scotophilic instinct" as a means of an explanation. According to Freud, when looking has become libidinised, the aim of the person who looks is not perception but sexual gratification. This is called the scotophilic instinct (a component of the sexual instinct), the primary aim being to look at the sexual object (Freud, 1905: 369). In adults it serves the purpose of inducing sexual pleasure – sight is the sense by which humans are mainly guided and therefore must be regarded as the principle agent in the production of forepleasure (Freud, 1905: 370). One can thus easily establish the reason for the presence of pinup-type females in the pages of the *Natal Mercury* as being a popular alluring feature for male consumption.

The images appear to be a permanent fixture of sexual desire; its success can be derived from the fact that (according to Freud) there is something in the nature of sexuality, which is resistant to satisfaction. However, one must not forget that fantasy does not depend purely on the objects themselves but in their setting out; and the pleasure in the **fantasy lies in the setting out**, not in having the objects (Freud, 1905: 191). This can be linked directly back to Goffman's notion of setting and performance, and how one reflects the other. For instance, the context of beach as the setting gives rise to the "legitimate" body and performance of a scantily clad "attractive" female, and thus is fertile ground for the exploitation of the scotophilic instinct and fantasy.

Day suggests that perhaps the compulsion for looking at the female "other" without clothes is in order to experience a sense of self, or perhaps it is just a question of wanting to know, and therefore control what is different (Bloom & Day, 1988:89). Nevertheless, whatever the reasons, the depiction of the naked female is not a new one. Before the pin-up, there was the nude in art. Day suggests that the difference between the two is in the fact that the latter's pose was such that she barely seemed conscious of her sexuality, while the former most certainly is (Bloom & Day, 1988:89).

Another important function of the male gaze and objectification of the female body in a masculine economy, is that it provides opportunity for male homosocial bonding, and hence the affirmation of the individual's acceptability by other males (Buchbinder, 1998:120). Buchbinder also maintains that even if the consumption of the eroticised female by a male is a solitary activity, his engagement with the material constitutes him as a member of an imaginary male community with similar tastes and pleasures; women can function as a site on which men may meet and confront with one another, and thereby bond with one another (1998:121). Significantly, this genre can elucidate structures of the masculine in South African culture. It is not only an erotic fantasy but a cultural genre that confirms its own masculinity vis-à-vis that of other men (and in doing so elucidating that which is feminine and *not* masculine).

SECTION B:

REGULATION OF BEAUTY IN THE PIN-UP

At this point in time people have become accustomed to vast array of explicit images and representations of sexuality that would have been thought unthinkable in the 1950's and 60's (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1999: 4). During that period, discourses of 'beauty' such as proposed dietary regimes and the use of cosmetics, made hardly any connection with notions of 'health' at all; the objective of diets was simply to get thinner (Arthurs, Grimshaw, 1999:4). In fact, girls were required to behave in 'ladylike' ways, which as a result, strongly discouraged them from any physical activity (Belotti, 1976:2). One could say that in examining the messages presented to women through various forms of popular culture, and in this case the *Natal Mercury*, it becomes clear that regulated images of the body are foregrounded in such a manner, that a girl's identity is intricately linked to her physical appearance (Mazzarella & Pecora, 1999:3). In fact in an extensive study, Stephanie Harter concluded that physical appearance is the most important domain in contributing to children's and young adolescents' sense of self-worth. This seems particularly true for girls (1987: 227). What is important to note here, is the integral pervasiveness of image and identity with one another, and how these photographs can be linked to the perpetuation or condemnation of particular norms.

The photographs from the year of 1989 reveals a marked rise in the number of beauty pageant contestants depicted in the *Natal Mercury*. Beauty pageants appear to become a regular fixture. Beauty and body obsessions, according to Brumberg, appear to be starting at a younger and younger age with each succeeding generation (1997: 3). The products and images of popular culture, Brumberg claims, have already begun to socialize them into an obsessing with physical beauty and their bodies (1997:3). Although this is difficult to say to what extent this has occurred in South Africa, what is apparent are those sexualized depictions of very young beauty contestants. These young girls are often displayed next to older contestants, in similar poses and with similar facial expressions that denote sexual awareness -

conscious display of the body as a sexual object. This phenomenon of beauty being associated with youth can also be seen in the bar graph below (figure 28), which shows the age mean as recorded by the photographer in the photographs of females. Not all of the ages were recorded unfortunately, although the amount of data established is substantial enough to warrant comment. One could suppose that this phenomenon could be attributed to South African cultural beliefs, that younger is viewed as more alluring or acceptable for pin-up photography (as seen in the *Natal Mercury*).

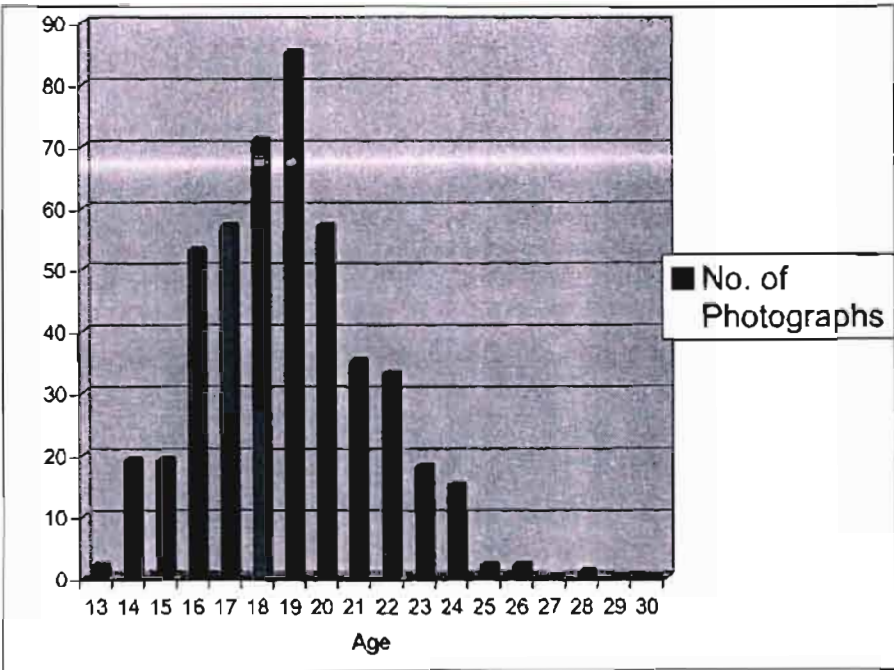


Figure 28

Bar chart showing frequency of female age groups in the *Natal Mercury*

Beauty, or concepts of beauty are of the essence in the production of the pin-up, reflecting conventions and ideals of the society in which they are created. A type of "othering" which can occur within the beauty context of beach decorum is, according to Edgerton, the general annoyance and infuriation of people provoked by overweight people exposing their bodies. A number of interviews were conducted in which beachgoers expressed strong negative responses and complaints about overweight people exhibiting their bodies (1979: 31). According to Fredrikson and Roberts, culture condemns obese people, and in particular obese women, as having "let themselves go", as

being "lazy", "inactive" and most importantly, unattractive - hence of little value (1997:179).

A good example of selective representation of beauty in the *Natal Mercury* is the observable tendency to only represent slim girls for instance in figures 29, 30 and 31. In most of these photographs there appear to be hardly any overweight people, in fact, the only overweight people shown in photographs in the *Natal Mercury* are those of people involved in accidents or at events (as these can't be helped) or as an object of ridicule as in the depiction of an overweight couple sitting on the beach in figure 32 (this notion will be discussed further in the chapter).

This could be seen to reflect a South African response to what is an acceptable figure beauty-wise, and what is not. Kimmel proposes that our identities (in terms of gender, race, class and thus subjectivity, behaviour and body) are fluid assemblages of the meanings and behaviours that we construct from the values, images and prescriptions we find in our changing environments (2000:87). One must also keep in mind, is what is considered unacceptable, and more often than not these images will be selectively disqualified. In other words, what is *not* being displayed is equally important as what is being displayed.



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

SECTION C:

ANALYSIS OF THE PIN-UP

Sexuality, and in this case, female sexuality, may be viewed as "natural" in origin. In the forms by which it is expressed however, they are sometimes specifically cultural, in other words, the body is culturally regulated (Fiske, 1989:53). With regards to the beach, a space where one is permitted to show the body, exposure of the body is dangerous as it threatens conventional reality and covering the body is essential in maintaining urban decorum. Fiske claims that nakedness can be seen as the 'body in nature' and clothes represent the "culturised" body (1989: 56). States of dress and undress are ways of signifying man's difference or similarity to the rest of the animal kingdom. The female, perceived already as an unknown quantity and as a danger to masculinity, must be strictly monitored and regulated lest she become too "natural" and therefore too "animal"/ untamable.

One of the key features of the holiday, which was discussed earlier, was the production of 'vacationscapes' by the tourist industry. These liminal landscapes where the imagination and veracity combine in order to create fanciful thoughts in the onlooker, are highly utilized by the tourist industry and the media for capitalistic gain. The pin-up stereotype has become very much a part of the vacationscape of the beach as we know it through countless redundant images produced by the media. The numerous renditions of this genre clearly indicate scripted behaviours allotted to female or feminine discourses on the beach. The images, which have changed very little in essence, reflect a regulation on the female body that is produced by South African culture on the beach. These regulations indicate the subjective – what the female "ought" to feel in this pin-up position, and how her behaviour affects societal, and in this case, South African, norms on the beach.

The most popular position for the female according to statistics from the *Natal Mercury* is a recumbent or passive position, in particular the positions of lying on one's side, kneeling or sitting. These "passive" photographs form 58% of the overall representation of females. The second most popular position is

the standing female which makes up 30% of overall female representation (of which about 6% shows the female walking or in semi-motion from the standing position). The third most popular image of females is the female in action, involved in some sport or activity which makes up about 19% of the overall representation of females in the *Natal Mercury*. The fourth most popular trend of female representation is that of females *in* the water. Where the pin-up is concerned, one notes certainly that the most favourable pose for the female to be in is extremely passive – sitting, lying down or reclining in various positions (which can be observed in figures 29 – 31). The abundance of this type of imagery leads one to ask is why these positions are considered attractive. One certainly feels that some kind of regulation is occurring for so many duplicate images. Further analysis of the phenomenon of the pin-up will reveal why.

The construction of subjectivity on the beach for the female in these photographs can be read in the poses of the women, depicted as being powerless and submissive – objects of male desire for sexual power and domination (Coward, 1984:182). The enjoyment of objectification or "submissiveness" of the subject can be observed in the perpetual eager smile (only 4 photographs depicting women overall contained non-smiling women) or her willingness to show her body such as in figures 29, 30 and 31 (no attempt is made to cover up any parts of their bodies). The girl in the picture reflects the notion that females "ought" to enjoy the male gaze upon their bodies, and that revealing their bare skin and parts of their bodies to men is "good". The portrayal of these willing female participants can be seen to legitimize and perpetuate the masculine phenomenon of the male gaze in South Africa. In turn, this can also serve to perpetuate the acceptance of passivity and eroticisation of females on beaches amongst females themselves. In this sense, a type of "othering" is occurring whereby most men (as seen in Table 3) are displayed in an active context, whereas here the most popular depiction of the female is to be in a considerably "passive" position.

It has been suggested that the main objective of the pin-up is to cause sexual arousal of some kind in the onlooker. This notion becomes apparent when analyzing the positions of the body in most of these photographs, which are aimed to emphasize the regions of sexual organs of the female body. These sexual intentions are fairly substantiated when observing the proliferation of specific poses coordinated to enhance cleavage such as in figures 33, 34 and 35. In terms of the female, one can view this as regulation of body and subjectivity – the manner in which she "ought" to display her body for maximum sex appeal, and the way she "ought" to feel about that display: pleased, coy or exuberant (this aspect of subjectivity will be discussed later on with regards to the "seductive" pin-up). This trend is apparent from 1966 throughout the years until 1996, which gives good indication as to how long this type of regulation has been in place.



Figure 33



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38

Another indication of sexual intention is that the centre of the photograph is always seemingly in line with either the breasts (figure 38) or the genitals (figures 36 and 37). Hence one is likely to perceive these sexual organs as being the main focus (or as having major status) in these photographs. Most of these photographs tend towards a construction of the vacationscape – a sexual fantasy associated with the landscape. These images have taken on a kind of iconic status through the sheer number of photographs that have been produced over time

The pin-up female is generally depicted alone, never with a male counterpart (as this would contradict the purpose of the female fulfilling the onlookers desire to possess her, and her alone). The only other context in which she is in the company of another person is if she with children (which will be discussed later). This can be viewed as the regulation of the female in place in the pin-up genre. In the process of "producing" an image the cameraman can create a scene, which allows an unobstructed view of the subject (Goffman, 1976:23). These are liberties that the person viewing the scene in reality would not be able to take. The form of the female is usually juxtaposed

against a recognizable scene from the beach, driftwood (figure 39 and 40), rocks (figure 41), sea (figure 42), or even *in* the sea (figure 43).



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43

One can draw interesting conclusions from this aspect. On the one hand, we could say that it is part of the patriarchal desire in man to domesticate the landscape, control it, or produce the landscape as being 'safe' (such as in the context of the Claude-glass framing and plotting the landscape). On the other hand, one might also make the association of the parallels between the female and nature – the "untamable" or "unknown" quantity (highly characteristic of the Romantic Movement discussed earlier). From this aspect, the regulation of female behaviour becomes problematic – there are contradictory desires: she must either be accessible and submissive, or wild and untamable. Feminists contend that one of the archetypal characteristics of the female that tends to stimulate patriarchal perception is her 'mystery' – "to be a female within the terms of a masculine culture, is to be a source of mystery and un-knowability for men (de Beauvoir, 1983:1). In this sense we recognize the female as the veritable "other" in patriarchal discourse. This is just a part of a whole series of "otherings" that may occur on the beach. However, it is these "otherings" that will help us read these images in terms of regulating the female in terms of subjectivity, body and behaviour on the beach.

In keeping with Goffman, another aspect of “producing” or regulating the image can be seen in the advent and institutionalisation of certain poses or gestures. For example, in 1976, one sees the introduction of a new pose which portrays the woman twisting her upper torso in such a manner that one breast can be seen in profile, while the other appears to “face” the camera (refer to figures 44 and 45). One could assume that this position gives a more accurate and detailed view of the breasts, not only what they look like from the front, but from the side as well. These images become more abundant and a fixed feature of these photographs throughout the years, thus instilling and perpetuating “norms” or “regulations” for female behaviour on the beach.

The proliferation of specific poses also indicates the influence of a human agency (the photographer) such as the pose of women touching their heads, or hair with her fingers or hand (refer to figures 46, 47 and 48). This particular gesture is also prolific one, and also illustrates how an image can be ‘fashioned’ by the photographer, the pose being somewhat unnatural and uncomfortable-looking and likely to have been prompted by another agent. There are also a large numbers of these poses where the action is very specific such as touching the head (which makes up about 14% of photographs depicting women) and this also indicates the influence/promptings of the photographer in order for there to be so many.

Women are offered a variety of contradictory poses: “...the virgin, the whore, the nurturer, the destroyer, the old cow...” (Bloom & Day, 1988:84). This allows the patriarchal male (in this case, the South African male), to construct women, as they will them to be, often in these fragments, as they would probably become either too dull, or too dangerous otherwise. The women depicted in the beach pin-ups of the Natal Mercury have undergone the patriarchal process of “othering”, expressing a variety of these fragmented identities.



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48

A regulated identity that perpetuates throughout the years from 1966 to 1996 is that of the “virgin”. This is to say that her expression, or demeanor, exudes the same sense that one gets from the nude in Day’s comment earlier, about the subject hardly being aware of her own sexuality (subjectivity is regulated here to execute this performance of naïveté. The subject is often quite young, as conveyed in the bar graph on page 66 (figure 28), and conveys a sort of naïveté in her pose, which could often be described as awkward or submissive (refer to figures 49, 50, 51 and 52). These poses are a clear indication of a human agent (the photographer) fashioning (regulating) the image, as the poses in these naïve cases appear to be uncomfortable for the subject. One is also able to observe “embarrassed” or self-conscious smiling due to the type of pose that has been required of them or just the mere fact that they are being photographed.



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52

A general observation regarding submissive poses is that the female is nearly always presented on the ground in a lying or sitting position (Goffman, 1976: iv). This pose is nearly always relegated to the women, (there are only three photographs overall of men sitting or lying on the ground) and thus can be seen as a production of regulated behaviour, or decorum for the female in a beach setting. This recumbent position is one from which one is least likely to be able to defend oneself (Goffman, 1976: 41), and thus renders one in a generally more submissive manner.

Further analysis of regulated productions of female decorum, subjectivity and the body can be seen in many instances in the lowering of the level of the head, in relation to that of the viewer apparent in about 64% of the total photographs representing female subjects). This can also be read as a kind of acceptance of subordination, ingratiation and appeasement (Goffman, 1976: 46). Goffman also refers to smiles, and how it can be argued that they can mean (and in particular in this case of the naïve pin-up) that nothing belligerent or confrontational is intended or invited, that the meaning of the other's act has been understood and deemed satisfactory, that indeed, the other is accepted and appreciated (1976: 48). There are other "types" of smile, which will be discussed with reference to their respective female roles; nevertheless, the type of smile in this instance seems more like the conciliator of an inferior, rather than a superior. What is essential here though, is to note the regulation of female subjectivity, the smile signifying satisfaction (how she "ought" to feel) of how her body and behaviour in place have been regulated,

The next archetypal feature in the pin-up is that of the seductress (refer to figures 53, 54 and 55), the woman who is conscious of her power to arouse the spectator, with what Annette Kuhn calls the 'come on' look (1985:38). Goffman also indicates in this instance, how the female subject appears to be making eye contact with the onlooker (as these photographs show), as if encouraging the viewer to feel as if he is an actual participant in the scene (1976:16). The female in the pin-up can be said to be, by and large, functioning as an available object. In this instance of the seductress, Kuhn indicates that this does not mean that the voyeur's possession of the female

form, whom he possesses through his 'gaze', is lost; but it does indicate, in how ever small a manner, that he is being challenged (1985:38). What the onlooker is in fact being confronted with by means of the 'come on' look, is that he does not have total control of the body, and probably not as he would like. From this perspective, this type of female role in the pin-up may be said to be in conflict with patriarchal norms and ideals, for despite her awareness of being able to arouse the voyeur, she is also making clear that she is the owner of her body, and that her display of it is a display of ownership (Bloom & Day, 1988, 90). This is particularly apparent in figure 55 where the woman is unbuttoning her top of her own free will with a rather serious expression, her eyes fixed without humour (as with most of the other photographs showing women smiling) on the camera. One can suppose that this display of ownership, which causes the male to want to own the female's body (because of his patriarchal inclination), is something he is unable to do, yet has the misapprehension of doing, for the reason that he can make the model respond to his fantasies.

The female in the pin-up can also be said to be "available" due to the fact that she is unaccompanied, and as a man does not possess her in her environment, she is there for the taking. However, the fact that she is unaccompanied can also mean that she therefore, ultimately, has no need of the voyeur, although he is in need of her. Day claims that the voyeur becomes superfluous, and the irony for patriarchy is that the very female it constructs (in many cases) as being safe and knowable, consequently manifests itself as a threat, and leaves little room for any maleness at all (1988:90).



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55

The cultural construction of gender in South African society involves male definitions of what it means to be female (Brettell & Sargent, 1993: 108); however, a number of issues are raised when one looks at this working example. For instance, even though females may be produced for male consumption, their availability is reliant on selective conditions which, when inspected closely, ultimately question the very notion of their accessibility. Even if this is accepted, it can be objected that the models have internalized male desire and, even if they seem as if they are in charge of themselves, are nonetheless presenting themselves as how men would like to see them (Bloom & Day, 1988:90). Yet again, one can argue that these internalizations of the male gaze may not work in the onlooker's best interest, as the result could be that the images construct him as being a redundant entity.

The cultural construction of gender in South African society involves male definitions of what it means to be female (Brettell & Sargent, 1993: 108);

however, a number of issues are raised when one looks at this working example. For instance, even though the females may be produced for male consumption, their availability is reliant on selective conditions which, when inspected closely, ultimately question the very notion of their accessibility. It can be objected that the models have internalized male desire and, even if they seem as if they are in charge of themselves, are nonetheless presenting themselves as how men would like to see them (Bloom & Day, 1988:90). One can also argue that these internalizations of the male gaze may not work in the onlooker's best interest, as the result could be that the images construct him as being a redundant entity.

As far as female decorum goes (according to the photographs of the beach), there are certain boundaries and rules that must not be broken in order to still maintain the *front* of "ladylike" behavior as well as limitations of public consumption. For instance, the breasts and genitals, no matter with how much explicit intensity they are being alluded to, are never fully revealed; and in particular, the nipples or pubic region (these are never exposed to the public eye). Although this is a well-used tactic of capitalism and marketing, "teasing the eye" so to speak, a clear-cut example of regulation of the body can be noted in the absence of entirely exposed bodies. If the photographs were to disclose bare breasts or genitals, they would breach the margins of acceptable female behavior and what is acceptable for public consumption. These photographs could be said to be on the outer limits of the regulation pin-up for public consumption in a newspaper (a good example can be seen in figures 55 and 56). One must not forget the public outcry when it was suggested that Durban become a topless bathing area in 1994, and the lengthy debates that ensued.



Figure 56

A noteworthy example regarding the regulation of improper female decorum is that of "Laura" (figure 57), who made the Monday Morning Glamour Spot though her somewhat "naughty" reputation through exposing her breasts at the Durban July Races. Her behavior caused a public uproar (she confronted the social norms of "appropriate" female behaviour) and she was arrested. In this regard, Laura has transgressed the codes of femininity. In public, any indecorum is a sign of lack of respectability, which, for woman, is commonly coupled with the sexual category associated with promiscuity or prostitution; Laura in other words, "cannot control her unruly female demands in satisfying her own bodily desires" (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1999:142).

In the instance where Laura exposed herself, Laura apparently attracted attention by making a spectacle of herself due to her "unbridled sexual appetites" (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1999: 142). Interestingly enough though, she is depicted on the beach in a similarly compromising state of undress, but here in a much more favorable light because she is in a zone where one can push the boundaries of liminal behaviour (as discussed previously), and because the voyeuristic pleasure in consumption of female bodies on the beach is acceptable and a regular feature. In fact, it was this article which described her on the beach as providing an "...unfettered sense of release,"



THIS leisure lass with no bows to her strings is Laura Crane, who is the Monday Glamour Spot girl I've chosen to give all you other unfortunately still working males the same unfettered sense of release I am experiencing by being on holiday.

Figure 57

The beach, it has been suggested, has become a site for cultural production, where the boundaries of fantasy and reality are dissolved. Everyone knows that the woman looking up at him or her, offering her body is not actually physically available to them, but she is there - in a sexually arousing icon of a vacationscape of the beach. However, in reality, the likelihood of a woman responding in this manner to a stranger is expected to be extremely low. An investigation made by Edgerton revealed that virtually none of the girls he spoke to wished to communicate with voyeurs on the beach, in fact most were bothered by obvious voyeurism. Some women were flattered by the attention, others felt vulnerable, and a few enjoyed being watched. Nevertheless, they did not want to be in contact the voyeurs at all (1979: 170).

SECTION D: 'OTHER' WOMEN

i) BLACK BEAUTY ON THE BEACH

With the increase in beauty pageants from 1989 onwards and the political developments that were taking place in South Africa during this time, one sees the first inclusion and subsequently proliferation of black African representation in the *Natal Mercury*. Due to the closing stages of Apartheid and the opening of beaches and activities to a black public, one notes a marked rise in the depiction of black females (refer to Table 4). However, what is also significant is the way in which these females have been represented. To begin with, one needs to look how the black female has been viewed in South Africa until this point.

With the racialised policies of the government before the 1994 elections, white South Africa viewed non-white people as “others” and carried out extreme forms of “othering” which has been discussed in previous chapters. The black female was constructed as the antithesis to the delicate fragile ideal of white femininity (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1997:10) and hence often looked with derision and contempt. Throughout history, ideals have been based on racial hierarchies with the white woman on top and the black African women at the bottom (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1997:9). Black women were considered “ugly” and degenerate, and in a racist South African context, the term ‘beautiful’ was forbidden to be associated with term ‘black’ (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1997:75). It is no wonder then that the discriminatory practices that took place under the state system constructed and maintained oppressive discursive regimes that shaped and influenced (and in effect regulated) the ideals of beauty and what was acceptable.

As in the case of the black male, there is little black female representation in the photographs until about 1993 (refer to Table 4). One of the few depictions of the black female are those photographs showing them as objects of ridicule (thus in a racist manner) such as in the 1993 photograph of the black couple sitting on the beach (figure 32), extremely overweight and in “inappropriate” attire for the beach. A few good examples can be seen in figures 58 and the

whole page spread in the *Natal Mercury* in figure 59 which can be seen as having been deliberately selected for their shock value (women in their underwear on the beach). Such photographs with the intent of ridiculing the “other” can be viewed as regulating the female on the beach, educating her on how *not* to be and what *not* to wear.

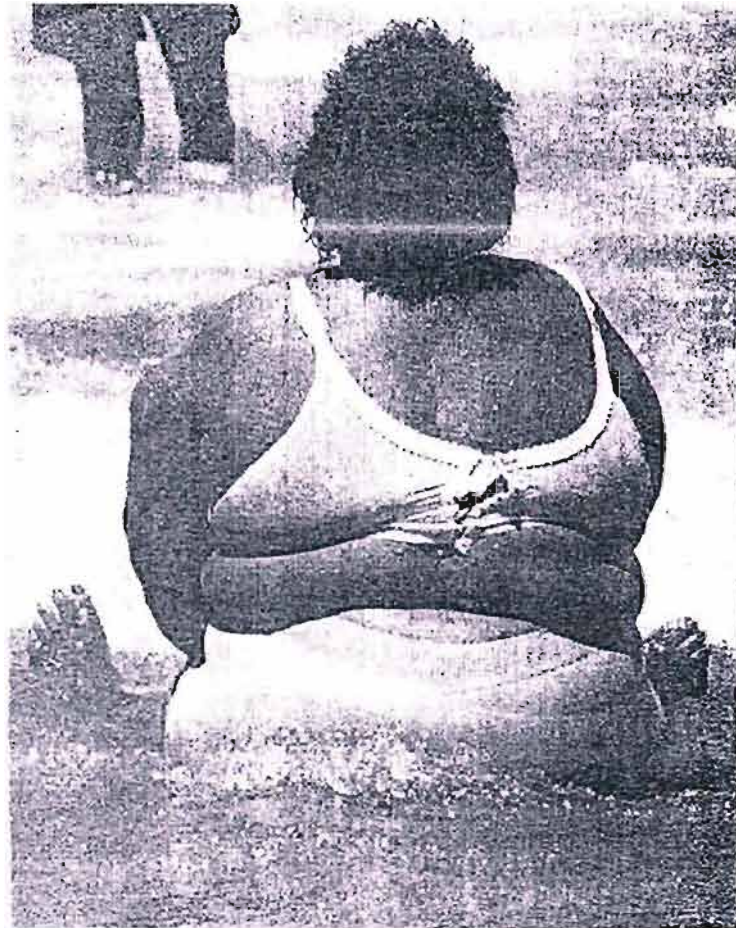


Figure 58

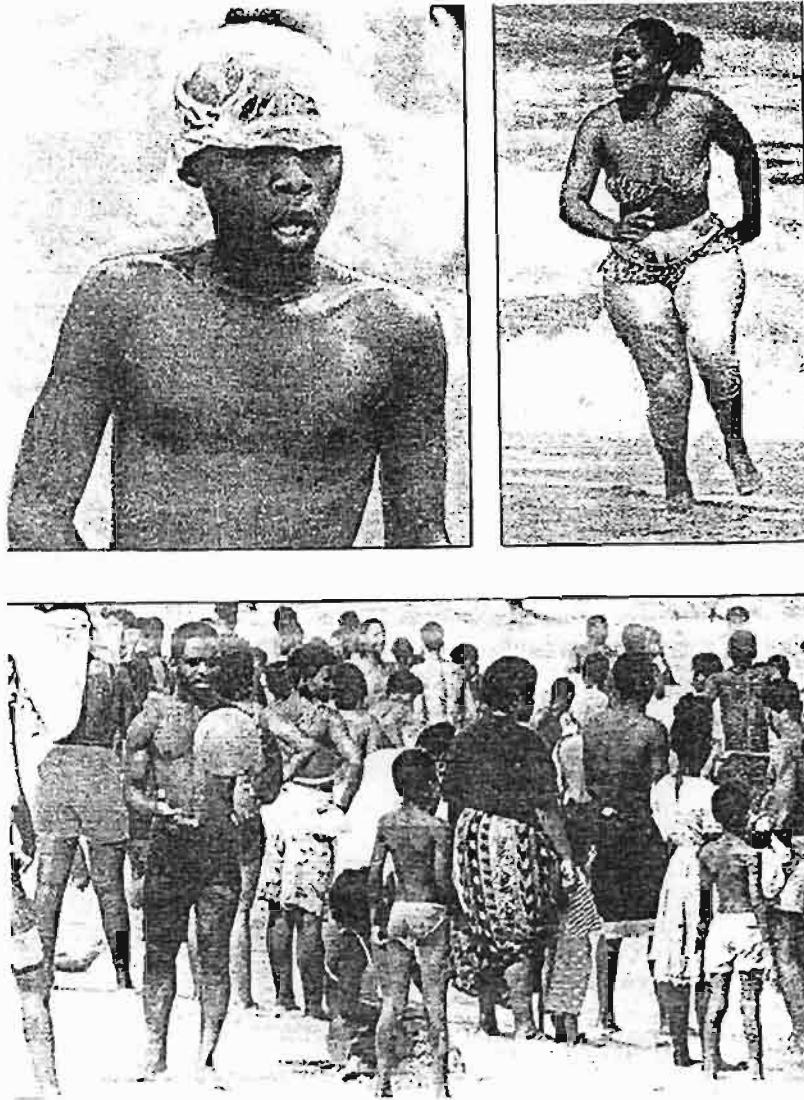


Figure 59

Despite the inclusion of black representation in beauty pageants as well as other eroticised images in the *Natal Mercury*, one cannot help but notice the practice of assuming white normative ideals of what it is to be considered "beautiful" and acceptable (the rules of beauty). There is a comfort in these pictures in that they are not too different from "white" norms of physical appearance (look at figures 60, 61, 62, 63). Firstly, all the girls depicted in beauty pageants and sexualised images have slim figures, moving away from the ideals of large or fat women in many black cultures (which would be seen as highly problematic with regards to how a woman *should* regulate her body according to white South African norms). Secondly, the subjects are appropriately attired (in "proper" swimming attire), unlike those women depicted as objects of ridicule in the previous paragraph. Thirdly, the facial

features of the subjects can be viewed as being "refined" in the sense that they are very similar to the facial features of a white woman. There is also an absence of features that could be said to be "too ethnic" for instance, the characteristic wide, flat nose of black people. Instead, a black girl would be featured with a small nose similar to that of a white woman's.

Given the long history of unequal cultural exchanges between black and white people, under systems of slavery, colonialism and during the current post-colonial Apartheid period, it is not surprising that white ideals of feminine beauty predominate (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1997:86). It is also not surprising then that black women can often be seen straightening their hair or lightening their skin. This has to be interpreted in the context of the construction of the white female with flowing hair as being very much a powerful icon (still) of female beauty (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1997:93).



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 63

ii) THE ADVENT OF THE ACTIVE FEMALE

Not all female 'performances' represented in the Natal Mercury from 1966-1996 are solely concentrated on portraying the female as a sexual object. In fact a growing trend developed in the 1980's concerning health and fitness, shifting the female into a new category generally reserved for men only (as discussed in Chapter Three). In previous pictures, the only "active" poses ever shown of women were that of dancers, either leaping or dancing (figure 64), and obviously these were considered to be part of "acceptable" female decorum (dancing can be said to be a safe female territory). However these photographs are very few in number (there only 9 in total) from between 1966-1982 which depict the active female.



Figure 64

Although a woman may have been portrayed in some kind of active/male context (for instance fishing, surfing or body boarding), she was/is still in keeping within the appropriate pattern of conduct for females. Female

subjects in an active context must be consistent with beauty standards, maintaining sexually appealing positions, gestures or other such attributes reserved for women on the beach (refer to figures 65,66,67, 68). So much so in fact, that the allusion to male action or male associated symbols such as in the case of figure 65 and 66 concerning the women holding fishing rods, becomes of secondary importance, or often of little purpose at all.



Figure 65

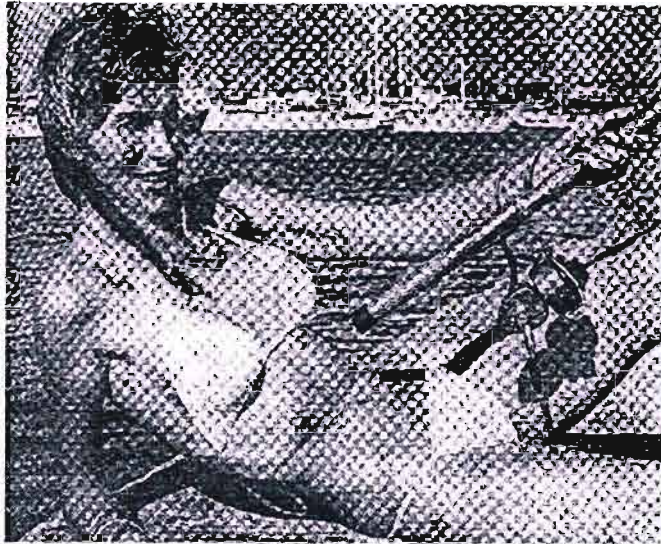


Figure 66

In many instances, the male associated object in the context of the female can be reduced to the status of functioning as merely a prop. The “masculine” objects in figures 67 and 68 (windsurfer and bodyboard) also undertake a redundant prop-like status as they aid these women in attaining sexually charged “female” poses, and *not* in any type of action at all. This corrosion of task importance habitually insinuates, in effect, the unlikelihood of a correlation between male and female ‘performances’ (and thus regulates it). There is also sometimes a suggestion of her behaviour as being humorously ironic in her attempts to be ‘masculine’ and thus she may become an object of temperate ridicule for attempting to share activities of the supposedly male domain.

What is also important to note, is that the woman involved in active pursuits who were selected, all appear to be of a visibly attractive nature, or sexually appealing (slim figures or “pretty” faces). A good example of regulating female behaviour is that of a photograph of a female windsurfing champion called “Kim” (figure 67) who, instead of being portrayed in action as the male would, is made to pose in an “appropriate” female manner of passively standing and smiling with her windsurfer aiding her as a prop. The emphasis here is more on attractiveness and female decorum than on the task at hand.



Figure 67

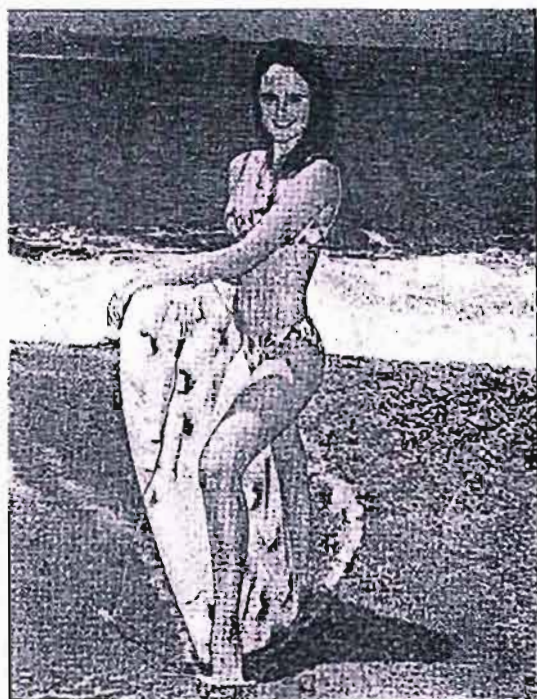


Figure 68

To refer back to figures 65 and 66, one first notices are the stereotypical pin-up type postures. These poses often have the effect of making the “action” redundant. For instance, in figure 66, the woman could not in fact possibly catch a fish if she were holding a rod in such a manner, nor would she have the “come on” look if she were fully engaged in this activity, the rod seems to appear more as a prop than anything else.

What is evident in this instance is that female occupation with regards to the production of beach culture is relegated to passive display (regulation of behaviour). Any photographs depicting the female out of context, such as in an active or “male context, are toned down to the point of the action being reduced to such minor importance, it becomes secondary. Or, the photographs portray the female in action as being a kind of benign, humorous entity due to the unlikely juxtaposition of a female with a ‘masculine’ object executing a male task. Representing women in male active contexts in this particular manner, (by the *Natal Mercury*), was the established convention up until about 1985.

In contrast to examples mentioned beforehand, there occurs a subtle shift from the 1960’s and 1970’s, where the body becomes further regulated in that the desire for a body that was no longer simply thin, but firm and toned. The lightly muscled body became ubiquitous (Arthurs, Grimshaw, 1999:4). This can be verified with the advent of female lifeguards (first picture of a woman lifeguard depicted in *Natal Mercury* 1 Feb, 1978), as well as the inclusion of girls in the lifeguard trainee “nipper” teams (first photograph depicting girl nippers on 22 March, 1978, pg 1). In fact, the present trends suggest a strong emphasis (thus intoning regulation) on exercise and physical culture (Marwick, 1988:300), such as aerobics by the beach, in which women are now often candidly depicted in “male” active contexts. During the last 18 years or so, the ‘fitness’ industry has soared with the result that discourses of health, fitness, and beauty can be said to have become virtually inseparable (Arthurs, Grimshaw, 1999:5). What seems to be apparent now, is that the body is regulated in terms of not being simply slim to enhance one’s sexual attractiveness, but is required to be slim, toned and “fit”- looking. This

movement is evident in the pictures of the *Natal Mercury* from 1985 onwards where the female is actively engaged in a sport, exposing those attributes that were previously reserved for men only. A good example of this body type can be seen in figures 69 and 70. These photographs show clear muscle definition, when compared to photographs from before 1985, for instance from figures 30 - 38, one can see a marked change the representation from just slim bodies to well-toned bodies.



Figure 69



Figure 70

Another important issue to look at here is the change that also occurs in depiction of the dichotomous relationship between the male and female in South African society. The traditional roles and 'performances' can be quite clearly "read" out of these images where these men and women are depicted together in figures 71 - 73. In most of these cases, one can identify the scripted female "passive" positions seen in figure and scripted male "active" positions such as in figure 71 which shows a man is running through waves holding a woman. The man is clearly in control of the situation, and the woman appears to be in complete submission to the male, similarly in figures 72 and 73.

These examples give evidence of firmly established models of behaviour for the South African male and female, and are representations of how others can recognize or measure themselves. However, these male and female relationships as depicted by the *Natal Mercury* reveal marked changes during and after the political and social developments that took place post-Apartheid and with developments in the feminist movement.

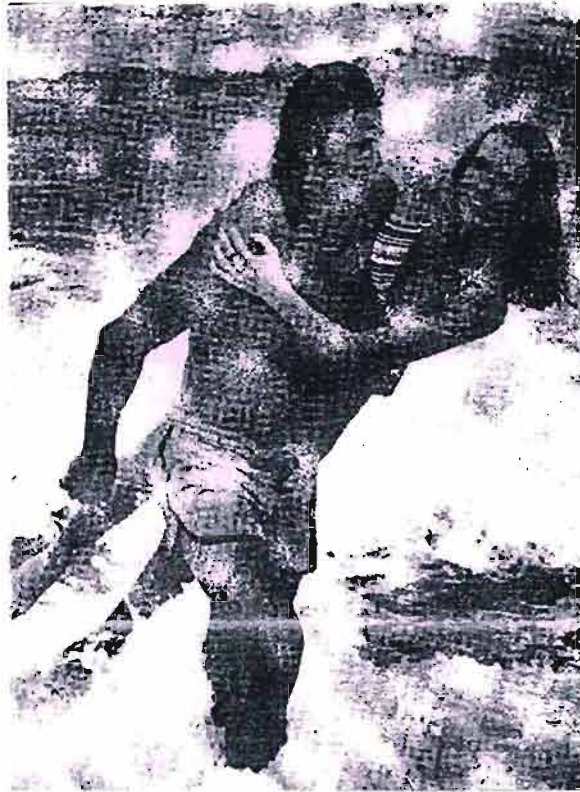


Figure 71

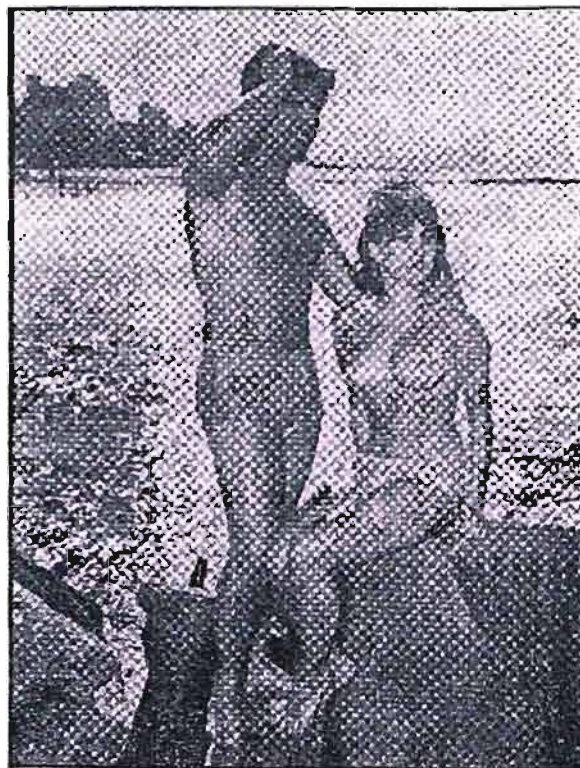


Figure 72

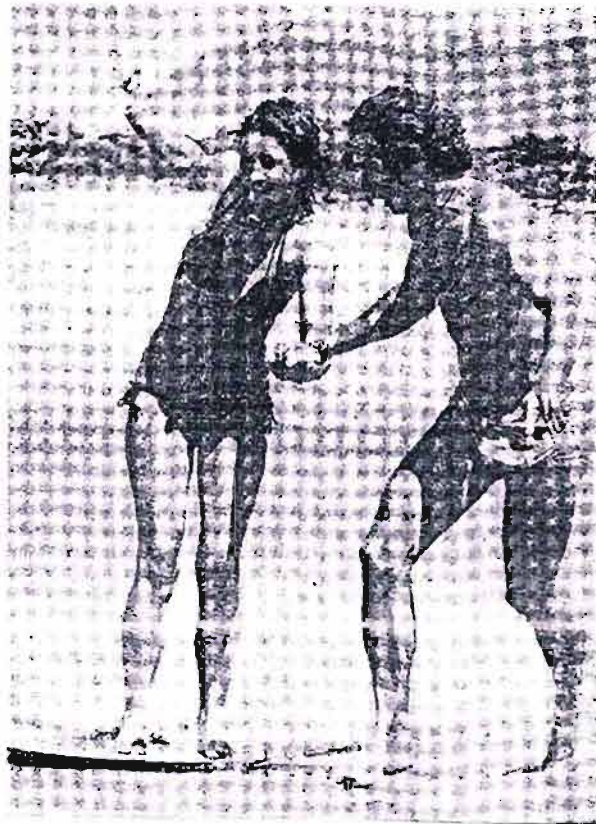


Figure 73

Both men and women, previously portrayed in a sexist hierarchical manner, are portrayed mostly as equals from 1991 onwards (when depicted together), both taking part in the same beach/holiday activities, such as volleyball tournaments (refer to figure 74). Women are depicted in a new light, displaying the same "masculine" indifference to the camera, or being "caught" in action. The difference in male and female representation (especially in terms of behaviour), are obvious when compared to the photographs in figures 71-73. This can be assumed as being the result of modern feminist movements. These types of pictures can be said to be symptomatic of the current dilemmas and uncertainties in gender relations occurring in South Africa with Feminist discourses. Certainly what this analysis reveals is the increasing intersections between male and female domains.

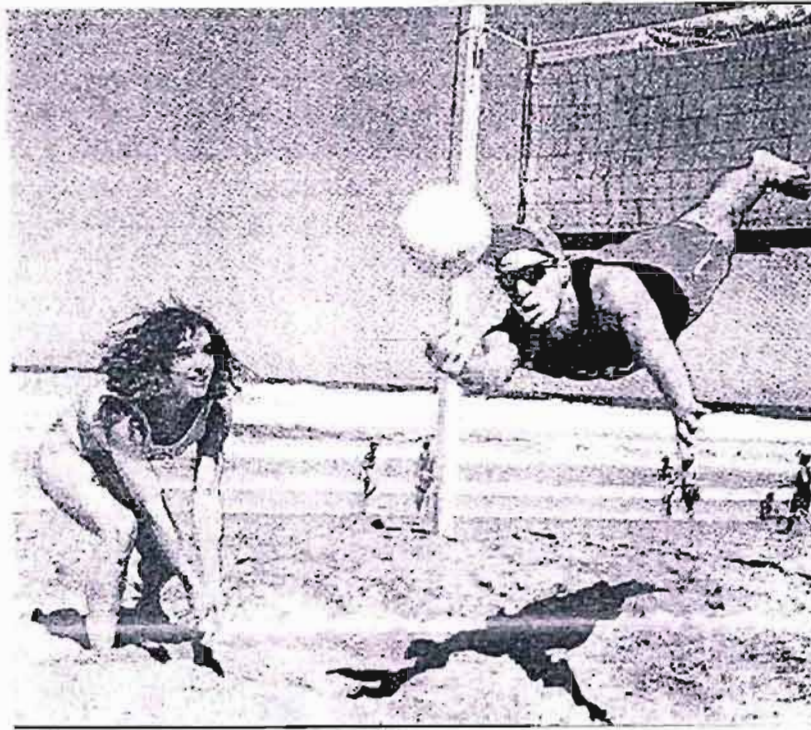


Figure 74

The discourses surrounding the body these days in terms of exercise and fitness, it is suggested, conveys signs of the youthful body being fetishized. This becomes evident when observing the results in the bar chart (figure 28) represented on page 67 which clearly indicates the *Natal Mercury's* preference for young female models. As Jean Grimshaw says: "it reinforces in women a panicky desire to hang on to the youthful body...the sexual 'market value' of a woman, for instance, is far more dependant than that of a man on retaining a youthful appearance" (1999: 96-97). Evidence of fitness and exercise becomes more and more pronounced, and the definition of body beauty tends towards a thin hard body (good examples are figures 67 and 69). Although women depicted in active contexts promoting fitness and health are mostly white, the slim 'aerobic body' can be read as connotating the requirement that whatever the class or race, women should be young, and attempt to retain their youthful appearance (Arthurs & Grimshaw, 1999: 93).

The ideal body shape in these photographs has a propensity to eliminate female softness or 'fleshiness', and instead endorse lean hard bodies, toned legs and thighs, muscled hips and toned arms (strict regulation of the female

body). It seems that the attributes of muscle definition carries an equal weight of significance in terms of the importance of breasts and cleavage, which, by comparison, appear to have been more important in previous pictures than the toned condition of the body. One could support this argument with not only the proliferation of the toned body in pin-up photographs such as in the figures just looked at previously, but also by looking at the increased use of the convention of women depicted in intense moments of action which were previously reserved for the male such as in figures 75, 76 and 77.



Figure 75

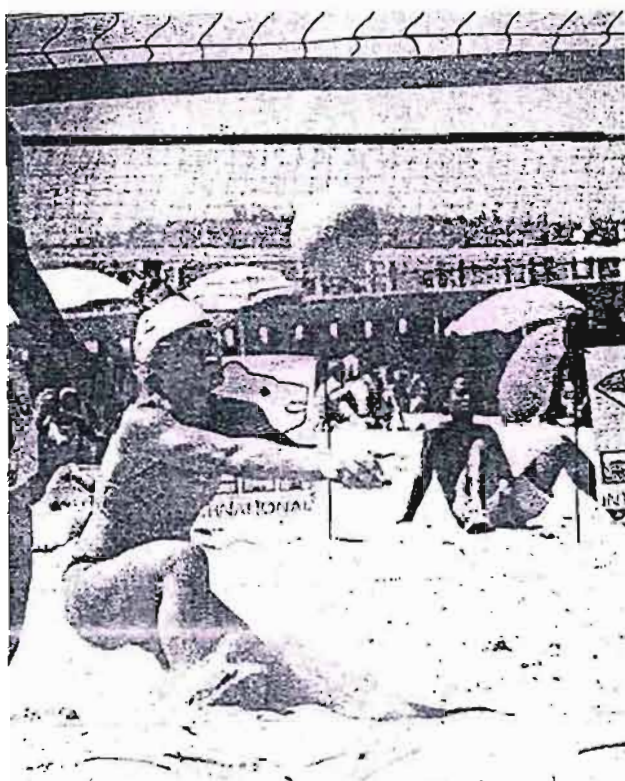


Figure 76



Figure 77

This modification in beauty trends is a good example of how photographs produce culture, signifying changes and possibly endorsing ideals. The approval of these ideals could be gauged in terms of the increase in production of certain images, in this case, the toned, “fit” body. Many feminist arguments can be made around these issues of beauty, or the way women look “as colonized by male imperatives” (Bartky, 1990:94), their ‘market value’ in other words.

A valid point of view, according to many writers and feminists, is that of the internalization of the male gaze. Betterton describes this phenomenon in the ways by which women constantly scrutinize themselves in all kinds of mirrored surfaces and in photographs: either as a woman identifying with the woman they are watching, or measuring herself against or learning how to be like her (1987:129). Foucault, in discussing concepts of power in *The History of Sexuality*, refers to the constant self-surveillance of women, and how this may be a process of normalization within the female body (1976:104), in other words, the female internalization of the male gaze is a very dominant heteronormativity. In a sense, this indicates how photographs such as these, serve to legitimate and normalize (and therefore produce) existing power relationships (Holland, Spence & Watney, 1986:182) as well as cultural ideals.

Apart from the being the object of desire, the female in patriarchal South African society is also allocated the position of the mother and nurturer (one of the regulated scripted roles of the female in the context of the beach). However, during careful examination of the photographs of mothers on Durban beachfront, one notices a distinct trend in depicting sexually appealing mothers. These women appear to be chosen for their sex appeal rather than as a representation of the maternal stereotype. Their figures are slim and “sexy” (well regulated) and their faces “attractive” as opposed to other “general” mothers illustrating maternal behaviour (refer to figures 78-81). Kimmel claims that key determinants of a woman’s status (despite being a sexual object) have been the division of labor around childcare (2000:53).

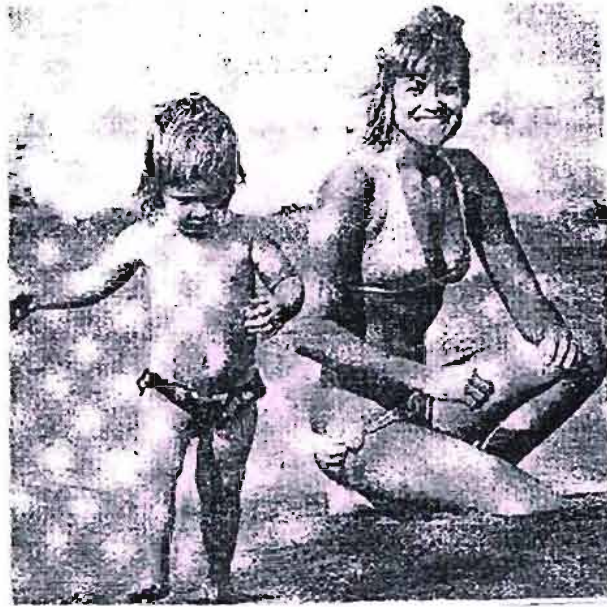


Figure 78



Figure 79



Figure 80



Figure 81

One could assume that this trend may well indicate the photographer's prerogative to display and sustain normal existing symbols of society, as well as satiating the public need for producing desirable images for consumption. These trends can also be seen as perpetuating the reminder for women to keep regulating their bodies by keeping them fit and young-looking. A legitimate issue is that of maintaining public interest. One could presume that mother and child images that display only a strictly maternal behavioural stereotype could soon become dull and redundant. What better way then, to capture the (male) audience's attention and still reinforce "acceptable" female stereotypes than to display "sexy" young mothers. This also however, reinforces the social institution that beauty is of chief importance, and that these particular mothers with their children have only been selected because they are considered attractive, or sexually appealing. Once again, the beach is being produced in terms of what appears to be less of the holiday and more sexual gratification.

These photographs could be said to be of a particularly un-family like nature; the female is shown without her partner (does this make her available? Or at least available to look at?) *and* her body is objectified rather than representing a familial scene. In this instance, and in most of the pin-up cases, the beach seems to be produced in terms of sexual indulgence as a key feature of the holiday – a vacationscape, rather than family fun (which is also a vacationscape but plays a lesser role in comparison to the one including sexual connotations).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the photographs of the beach from the *Natal Mercury* 1966-1996, through observation and research has yielded much information with regard to Durban beachfront as being a social institution regulated by South African culture. In the history of holidaymaking, place, subjectivity, behaviour and bodies have constantly been reconstructed to conform to different social and political ideologies. Durban beachfront has transformed from functioning as a site on which racist and sexist regimes took place (Apartheid and patriarchal regimes) to one that represents a more democratic view. However, the portrayal of Durban beachfront in the *Natal Mercury* still reveals the beach to be a site of racial and gender discourses (the persistence of pin-up images and new eroticised representations of changing masculinities).

Imagery of Durban beachfront offers idealized images of vacations—attractive, available women, happy active/relaxing people, and in doing so reveals the regulation of the beach in terms of place, subjectivity, behaviour and the body. These regulations discussed in this dissertation show how the beach holiday functions as a cultural institution.

As this chapter draws to a close, I feel that the most crucial result as a consequence of this chapter (and also central to the theme of this thesis) is the proposal that our associations are culturally conditioned (Lofgren, 1999: 95). Our experiences and afterthoughts are highly personal but are formed largely in part through what has already been established – through cultural knowledge and frames.

This dissertation shows how social institutions that constitute the meaning of the holiday in South Africa, are maintained through certain kinds of regulated imagery (such as regulation through “othering” or exclusion) or the proliferation of that imagery of that which is seen to be desirable. Through the analysis of these photographs, one can discover the ways in which

Durban beachfront becomes a malleable site on which the discourses of the history of the Western holiday are implemented in a South African context.

LITERATURE CITED

- Ang, I. (1983) 'Mannen op zicht. Marges van het vrouwelijk voyeurisme', *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* (Journal of Women's Studies).
- Arthurs, J. And Grimshaw, J. (1999) *Women's Bodies: Discipline and Transgression*, London: Cassell.
- Bartky, S. (1990) *Femininity and Domination*, London: Routledge.
- Beloff, H. (1985) *Camera Culture*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Beloff, H. (1997) *Making and Unmaking Identities: A Psychologist Looks at Artwork*, Hove, UK: Psychology Press.
- Belotti, E. (1976) *Little Girls*, London: Writers and Readers.
- Betterton, R. (1987) *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media*, London: Pandora.
- Bloom, C, and Day, G. (1988) *Perspectives on Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature*, Macmillan.
- Brettel, C.B. and Sargent, C.F. (1993) *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Brooks, A. (1998) *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*, London: Routledge.
- Brumberg, J. J. (1997) *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, U.S: Random House.
- Buchbinder, D. (1998) *Performance Anxieties: Re-producing Masculinities*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc.
- Connell, R.W. (1987) *Gender and Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Coward, R. (1984) *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*. London: Paladin Books.
- Crowley, H. And Himmelweit, S. (1992) *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- De Bouvier, S. (1983) *The Second Sex*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- De la Croix, H. and Tansey, R. and Kirkpatrick, D. (1991) *Helen Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

- Durrheim, K. And Dixon, J. (2001) *The Role of Place and Metaphor in Racial Exclusion: South Africa's Beaches as Sites of Shifting Racialisation*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol.24 No 3. May 2001, p433-450.
- Easthope, A. (1986) *What a Man's Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture*, London: Paladin Books.
- Edgerton, R.B. (1979) *Alone, Together: Social Order on an Urban Beach*, London: University of California Press.
- Ellis, R. (1988) *Disseminating Desire: The End of Obscenity*, New York: Grove Press.
- Evans, J. And Hall, S. (1999) *Visual Culture: The Reader*, London: Sage Publications.
- Fiske, J. (1989) *Reading the Popular*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Foucault, M. (1976) *The History of Sexuality*, London: Penguin.
- Fredrikson, B, Roberts T. (1997) *Objectification Theory: Towards Understanding Women's Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks* *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21.
- Freud, S. (1905) *On Sexuality: Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works*, vol 7, edited by James Strachey, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Fugard, A. (1994) 27 November, *Sunday Times*.
- Goffman, E. (1956) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New Jersey: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1976) *Gender Advertisements*, USA: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Grosz, E. (1988) *A Note on Essentialism and Difference*, " *Feminist Theory: Critique and Construct*, S. Gunew (ed) London: Routledge, London and New York, 1990, 332-344; reprinted from Deakin University Press, 1985.
- Harter, S. (1987) *The Determinants and Mediational Role of Global Self-Worth in Children: Contemporary Issues in Developmental Psychology*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Hole, J. and Levine, E. (1971) *Rebirth of Feminism*, New York: Quadrangle.
- Holland, P, Spence, J, Watney, S. (1986) *Photography and Politics Two*, London: Photographic Workshop/Comedia.
- Inglis, F. (2000) *The Delicious History of the Holiday*, London: Routledge.
- Iragaray, L. (1977) *Le Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Paris: Editions de Minuit.

- Jackson, P. (1989) *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*, London: Unwin Hyman.
- Jackson, P, Thrift, N. (1995) *Geographies of Consumption*, in *Acknowledging Consumption* Miller, D. (ed) London: Routledge.
- Jobling, P. (1999) *Fashion Spreads: Word and Image in Fashion Photography Since 1990*, Oxford: Berg.
- Kimmel, M.S. (2000) *The Gendered Society*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kuhn, A. (1985) *The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality*, London: Routledge.
- Lofgren, O. (1999) *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*, California: University of California Press.
- Marwick, J. (1988) *Beauty in History*, Gloucester: Thames and Hudson.
- Mazzarella, R. and Pecora, N.O. (1999) *Popular Culture and the Construction of Identity*, New York: Peter Lang Publications.
- Morrell, R. (2001) *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Mosse, G.L. (1996) *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, Oxford: University Press.
- Mulvey, L. (1999) *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, (Visual Culture) London: Sage Publications.
- Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Zoonen, L. van. (1994) *Feminist Media Studies*, London: Sage.