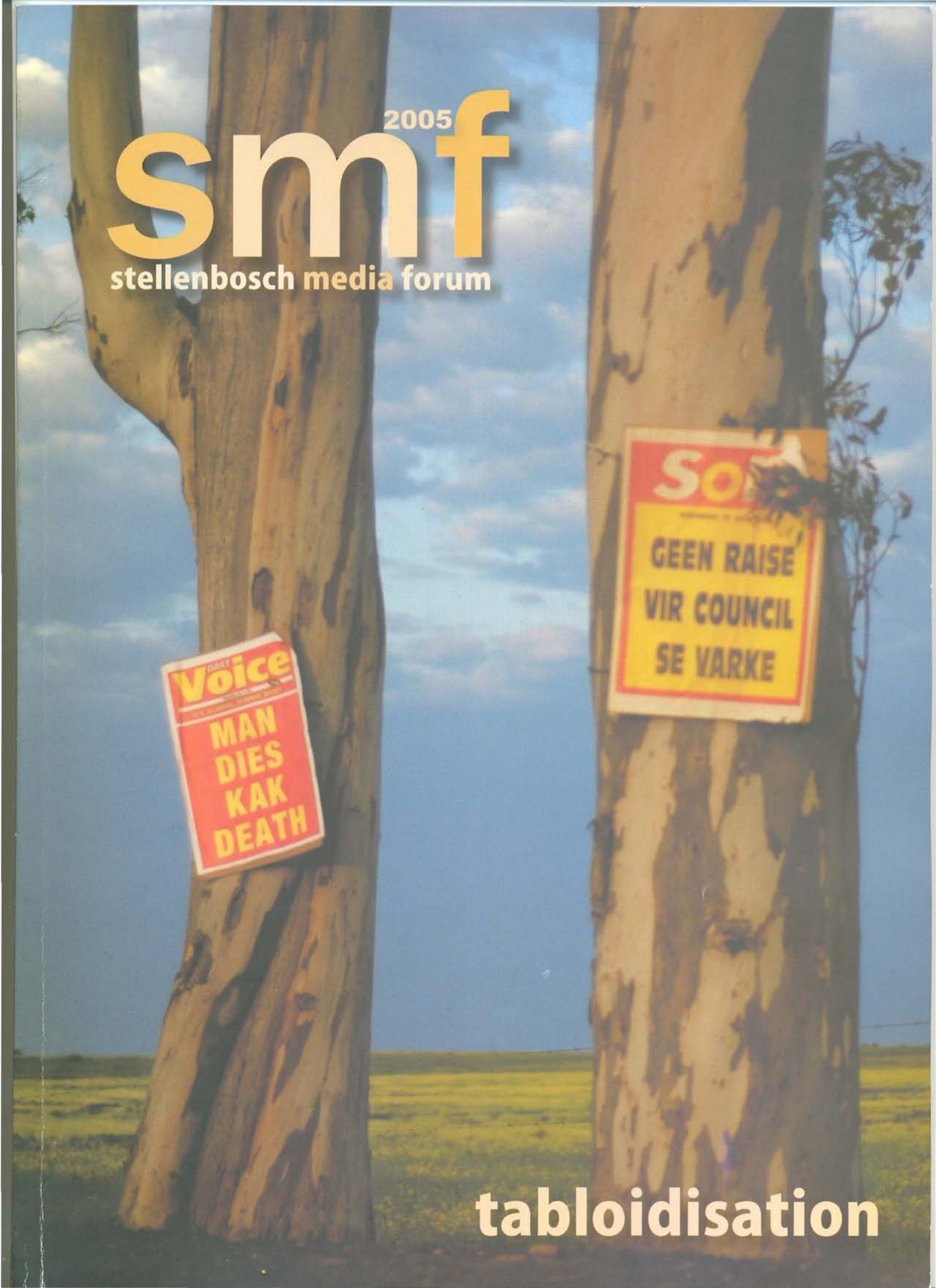
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Media24

TYDSKRIFTE
MAGAZINES

inhoud
contents

smf 2005

5 redakteursbrief

7 tabloids:
die geskiedenis van skinder en skok
fanie van rooyen

profiles: media people

10 rhoda - vuurwarm en stroomop — louise steyn

11 shocking revelations of a tabloid journalist — janine jellars

14 deon se boontjierank — alet van zyl

media trends

18 bigger, badder and naughtier — bryan silke

21 has bollywood lost the plot? — shanaaz ebrahim

24 mediakultuur 2020: feite of vermaak? — fanie van rooyen

27 the revolving door of journalism — msimelelo njwabane

advances in the media

30 blowing the lid off the blogosphere — andrea ketteringham

32 amateur journalism: taking the news into their own hand
giselle linström

35 hoe om te blog
anneli groenewald

the great tabloid debate

36 broadsheet style: sa media in decline — carolyn bind

37 tabloid style: the tabloids are coming! — carolyn bind

38 smaller is better? the tabloidisation of layout — henno kotzé

41 die athlone to oxford dictionary — henno kotzé

46 skoktaktiek: enigste reklame vir poniepers? — lucille botha

47 prikkelplesier of sirkulasietier? — ema buffel

50 my kerk is net my werk — janice johannes

53 'n lang pad huis toe — eppy strydom

57 bloom and doom of the rising *sun* — namhla thsisela

60 poniekoerante: gewild - én goed vir jou? — michelle viljoen

63 are we what we read? — natalie bosman

66 tabloid or bust? — leanne raymond

69 ubuntu: sit die regte vleis in jou skinder — anneli groenewald

72 do you buy the 'success' story? — marie-louise du bois

gay media

75 pienk media gekas — eduan maggo

79 akkers & aikônas

80 produksiespan production team

THE JUPITER DRAWING ROOM (CAPE TOWN) 150721

Dit gee ons groot plesier om die taal te help verklein.

Verkleinwoordjies. So teenstrydig met die beeld van hardekop dwarstrekkerigheid, maar tog so tekenend van 'n volk se gulhartigheid. Daar's net een taal wat verkleinwoordjies soveel gewig verleen. Met projekte soos die Sanlam-prys vir Afrikaanse teater, die Sanlam-prys vir Jeuglektuur, die RSG/Sanlam Radioskrywers-kompetisie, gee ons 'n hupstootjie aan Afrikaans. Want elke keer dat so 'n verkleinwoordjie op eg Afrikaanse manier gebruik word, word die taal net groter. Ons dink vooruit. En jy?

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GELISENSIEERDE VERSKAFFER VAN FINANSIËLE DIENSTE

redaktelurs brief

redakteursbrief

"JOURNALISTS see change nowhere as evident as in journalism itself," skryf Mitchell Stephens in *A History of News (1988)*.

Dit het ons ook vanjaar in die Suid-Afrikaanse media-landskap gesien. Die "wulpse sussie" het 'n nuwe fase van haar lewe bereik en is nou die *flavour of the week*. Sy's juicy, sexy, toeganklik en tog so *provocative*.

Baie wil haar koop, want sy's *hot property*, my bru.

Ja, die onderwerp is tabloids – vanjaar die vuurwarm besprekingspunt, nie net in mediakringe nie – oral. Veral onder sekere sedebewakers. Ook in Stellenbosch se joernalistiekklas was daar besondere belangstelling in hierdie nuwe medium.

Gassprekers en dosente is dikwels – nog voor daar geleentheid vir vrae gegee is – hieroor gekonfronteer.

Koos Bekker, besturende direkteur van Naspers, wou weet of ons dan nie vrae oor werksmoontlikhede het nie. Die antwoord: "ons wil eintlik meer van die tabloids weet!"

Langenhoven sou trots wees op hierdie klas. Hy het nie verniet gesê 'n mens moet weet waar jy vandaan kom om te weet waarheen jy oppad is nie.

Dit is presies wat ons met dié publikasie wil doen.

Ons kyk na waar tabloids vandaan kom. En uiteraard waarheen hulle oppad is. Hoe word die huidige medialandskap beïnvloed? En seker die belangrikste: watter kwessies ontstaan in die proses?

We spoke to the people, got their opinions — and ironically, let the facts *not* stand in the way of a good story.

It is no rumour that tabloids have made an enormous impact on the market and are even outselling established traditional daily broadsheets by the thousands. And they have readers by the millions.

It is also no rumour that the journalistic approach and principles, or lack thereof, that some of these tabloids follow, have an impact on journalism and its development.

Our *SMF* team found strong arguments against this latest addition to our newsstands, but also strong arguments in support of the valuable role that these papers play in some communities.

Ek dink die antwoord lê nie daarin om die groeiende tabloid-bedryf te stuit nie, maar eerder om plek te maak vir 'n meer diverse medialandskap.

Dr. Jakes Gerwel, voorsitter van die Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, skryf in sy voorwoord tot redakteur Adrian Hadland se *Changing the Fourth Estate – Essays on South African Journalism*, gepubliseer deur HSRC Press: "Kwaliteitjoernalistiek verwys egter nie net meer na die gewone kenmerke van knap skryfwerk en evokatiewe klankgrepe nie." Dit "vereis 'n media wat divers is, die verhale vertel van mense wat op 'n miljoen verskillende maniere bydra tot die opbou van 'n nuwe land".

So, wie weet, met 'n bietjie leiding kan die "wulpse sussie" dalk gou volwasse raak en haar plek volstaan in 'n opwindende medialandskap wat in alle opsigte inlig, opvoed en vermaak.

Louise
Louise Steyn
Redakteur

SIX JOURNALISM AWARDS IN FOUR YEARS

Since the inception of the Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards in 2002, OFM News has proven its mettle time and again. In 2002 OFM scooped both categories for Radio – namely News and Features. In 2003 OFM took gold in the regional finals in the Radio Features Category. And in 2004 OFM again pipped regional competition to the post in the Radio News Category.

The 2005 regional award ceremony saw OFM doing it again. The station came first in the Radio News Category for the coverage of the death of Noby Ngombane, a high-profile government official in the Free State province. Ngombane was murdered in Bloemfontein in March of this year, and his death made headlines countrywide.

So stay tuned for next year's award ceremony. Central South Africa's number one news team will be back for...

.../more

OFM 94-97 FM

Number one in central South Africa

PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN

tabloids: die geskiedenis van skinder & skok

die ganse land is op die oomblik in rep en roer oor die "nuwe" verskyning van die poniemedia en die "*dumbing down*" van mediaverbruikers. maar hoewel skinder- en skoknuus dalk nog nooit voorheen so prominent in die media verskyn het nie, is dit eeue reeds 'n deel van die mens se behoeftes. fanie van rooyen doen verslag.

IN Suid-Afrika mag *tabloids* dalk 'n nuwe verskynsel wees, maar die menslike instink om skinder- en skoknuus te vertel en te versprei, het 'n lang geskiedenis.

Reeds in die Romeinse tydperk het dit al geblyk dat mense nie net wil weet wat die keiser in die senaat gesê het nie, maar ook die detail van die keiser se gruwelike owerspel met die eerste offisier van die weermag se vrou, byvoorbeeld.

Volgens een bron het die "eerste" Westerse joernalis, 'n Romein genaamd Chrestus, by die filosoof Cicero raas gekry omdat hy nuus oor die politici té "sensasioneel" aan die publiek oorgedra het.

Die eerste Amerikaanse tabloid, die *New York Sun*, is reeds in 1833 gestig met die klem op "stories wat handel oor seks en geweld". Die *New York Herald*, wat die eerste koerant was met spesifieke sport- en finansiële bylaes, is eers twee jaar daarna in 1835 op die been gebring.

Met ander woorde: die *New York Sun* het tot stand gekom voordat Karl Marx en Friedrich Engels die Kommunistiese Manifes gepubliseer het in 1847, voordat die eerste inkpen uitgevind is in 1884, en omtrent sestig jaar voordat die eerste spotprente deur Alfred Harmsworth in 1890 gepubliseer is.

Sommige bronne, soos die *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies* (Watson, Hill: 2003), sê dat *tabloids* grootliks te danke is aan die kompetisie wat daar in die VSA ontstaan het tussen twee groot mediabase genaamd Joseph Pulitzer en William Randolph Hearst.

Dié twee moes stry om dieselfde lesersmark en hulle het dus toenemend meer "kompakte" nuus vervaardig. Korter berigte wat maklik lees, groter vetgedrukte opskrifte en 'n sensasionele benadering tot nuus het die nuwe tendens geraak.

Die mens se honger na sensasie – en dus stories oor seks, geweld en skandaal – het dus van die begin van die moderne joernalistiek al kop uitgesteek. Vandag is *tabloids* egter nie net bekend vir hul kontroversiële inhoud nie, maar ook oor hul visuele impak – veral op bladsy drie.

In 1969 het Rupert Murdoch die Britse *The Sun* heruitgereik nadat hy dit gekoop het. Een van die veranderinge wat hy gemaak het, was om 'n model op bladsy drie van elke uitgawe te laat pryk.

Die eerste "bladsy 3-meisie" was die "*Penthouse Pet*" van November 1969 – ene Ulla Lindstrom. Ulla en die modelle wat op haar gevolg het, was egter altyd darem gedeeltelik geklee.

Op *The Sun* se eerste verjaardag het die destydse redakteur, Larry Lamb, egter besluit om die bladsy 3-meisie in haar "verjaardagpakkie" te publiseer – terwyl Murdoch nie in die land was nie.

Só het ene Stephanie Rahn toe op 17 November 1970 die eerste bladsy 3-meisie geword wat kaal-bolyf en pronkborstig aan die lesers van *The Sun* verskyn het. Teen 1971 het verkope met 40% gestyg, tot na 2.1 miljoen kopieë.

Al heers daar tans hewige debat oor die morele implikasies van *tabloid*-publikasies, is dit onwaarskynlik dat tabloids ooit heeltemal sal verdwyn. Mense is gans te lief vir skinderstories en nuus wat skok – die geskiedenis bewys dit. *Tabloids* is maar net die gedrukte vorm, swart-op-wit en in volkleur, van die skinder- en skokstories wat ons almal gewoonlik agter geslote deure bespreek en in ons agterkoppe oor wonder.

Die "sport" van seks, "skinner", skandale, "*skin*" en sensasie is net te lekker om te laat verbygaan. *Tabloids* vervul duidelik daardie rol in ons moderne lewe... en dan moet ons dalk daarmee verlief neem as dit bydra tot 'n "*dumbing down*" van die samelewing. Cicero het immers al daarteen gewaarsku.

foto: die burger

rhoda – vuurwarm en stroomop

menseregte-aktivis. "moeilikheidmaker". dapper. rhoda kadalie leef al jare lank dié rol. en toe die samelewing poniekoerante begin kritiseer, was sy reg om te verdedig – stroomop. deur louise steyn

Daar is geen twyfel dat die poniepers vanjaar 'n lewendige media-omgewing veroorsaak het nie. Maar terwyl sommige die inhoud afskryf as gemors-joernalistiek, sê Rhoda Kadalie, 'n menseregte- en geslagsgelykheidaktivis en *Business Day*-rubriekskrywer, dat daar tussen die skandes en sensasie tog werklike nuus oor werklike kwessies verskaf word.

"Ons kan die poniepers soveel kritiseer as wat ons wil, maar dit vervul 'n belangrike rol deur 'n stem aan die stemloses te gee," het sy onlangs by 'n Media24 gala-geleentheid gesê.

Kadalie veg al lank vir die "stemloses". In 2003 is sy deur die organisasie South African Women for Women bekroon vir haar stryd om geslagsgelykheid en menseregte.

Maar, al het sy in Den Haag 'n meestersgraad in die studie oor vroue en ontwikkeling behaal, en al was sy die eerste geslagsgelykheidsamptenaar aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK), het die ANC-koukus haar naam van die kortlys vir die kommissie vir geslagsgelykheid weggelaat, het Willemien Brümmer verlede jaar in 'n onderhoud met Kadalie in *Die Burger* geskryf.

"Dieselfde beweging wat aan my my stem en my tong gegee het voor 1994, háát nou daardie einste tong," het sy aan Brümmer gesê.

Kadalie was tot 1997 'n lid van die Suid-Afrikaanse Menseregtekommissie (SAMRK) en tot 1998 die hoof van die Distrik Ses-grondeise-eenheid. Haar bedanking, skryf Brümmer, was weens 'n eindelose frustrasie met die bestuur van beide die kommissies.

'n Interessante teenstrydigheid in hierdie openbare kritikus se lewe is dat sy vandag werk as hoof van die Impumelelo-toekenningsprogram wat geslaagde regeringsprojekte beloon in die bevordering van dienslewering en armoedeverligting.

Terselfdertyd is sy slaggereed om die poniepers te verdedig, want sy sê húlle is nie bang om politici te ontmasker nie.

En, soos Kadalie aan *Die Burger* gesê het, moet 'n patriot altyd reg wees om haar land teen die regering te verdedig.

Volgens haar gebeur dit nie in die hoofstroom-media nie. Húlle, sê sy, het hul eie agenda. "Hul politieke vooroordeel is duidelik en boonop is hulle laks om die regerende party te kritiseer. Inteendeel, hulle ondersteun die party openlik."

Waarom beskou sy die hoofstroom-media as bevooroordeeld? >>

foto: die burger

<< "Daar is 'n neiging in die media om vryheidsleiers te verromantiseer," sê sy. "Die media moet verstaan dat die ANC as 'n vryheidsbeweging die morele gesagsposisie beklee het, maar nou as die regerende party hom nie meer daarop kan beroep nie. Hy moet so deur die media behandel word." Dus, sê Kadalie, moet hulle nou suiwer volgens hul prestasie en dienslewering verantwoordbaar gehou word.

"Aan die een kant weerspieël die media die president as 'n intellektueel, 'n invloedryke leier in Afrika, terwyl hy inderwaarheid dit alles is, maar ook uit voeling met sy kieserskorps is."

Volgens haar doen die poniepers presies die teenoorgestelde deur die stem van die volk, die ontevrede kiesers en die minderhede wat voel hulle word stilgemaak, te verteenwoordig.

Die hoofstroom-media se kritiek op die poniepers se groeiende rol in die samelewing skryf sy toe aan die volgende:

"Die poniepers ontmasker die hoofstroom-media vir wat hulle is – uit voeling met hul lesers."

Dan, sê sy, is hulle ook bevooroordeeld ten opsigte van klas en neem aan dat die armes nie lees nie.

"Die poniepers het hierdie vooroordeel ondermyn en bewys dat die armes wél lees, belangstel en die vermaak waardeer – al beskou sommiges die aanbieding daarvan as smaakloos."

Kadalie beweer die poniepers het 'n wenresep beet om in hierdie mark se behoeftes te voorsien. Hulle, sê sy, skryf nie net oor internasionale sterre nie, maar ook die plaaslike sterre – die wat op radio en televisie verskyn. "Poniepers skryf *oor* die armes *vir* die armes, oor misdaad, nuus, gesondheid, opvoeding en kwessies wat hulle in die algemeen affekteer."

"Poniekoerante het die onderwerp van gesprek in haarsalonne, om etenstafels, en in kerke geword. Mense word geïnspireer om te praat oor openbare kwessies – al word daar dikwels veronderstel dat dit net binne die domein van die geletterdes en middelklas gebeur."

Sy sê die ou argument dat die poniekoerante die massas depolitiseer, is nie meer geldig nie – selfs al word dit wat hulle opdis, geminag.

"Mense identifiseer met die kwessies en praat daaroor. Die nuus word deel van die openbare debat; bewustheid oor MIV/vigs, gesondheid en opvoeding word openbare kwessies en mense lug hul menings hieroor." Mense word voortdurend ingelig oor ontwikkelings en hoe om hulle stem te gebruik. En dit, sê sy, is die belangrike rol wat die poniepers speel.

'n Stem is nie meer net 'n kruisie op papier nie. "Dit gaan nou daaroor om jou stem te gebruik om politici in te lig oor wat jy van hulle prestasies of tekort aan dienslewering dink. Deur die poniepers kan die kiesers nou die politici verantwoordbaar hou en hul siening oor die owerheid op 'n manier in die openbaar kry."

Maar wat van etiek? Is daar nie 'n lyn wat die poniekoerante soms oorskry nie?

"Hulle neem risiko's en waag voortdurend om die grense te verskuif. Ek vermoed daar sal 'n tyd kom wanneer hulle te ver sal gaan en dan verantwoordbaar gehou gaan word. Dit is egter 'n geveg wat hulle *moet* en bereid is om te veg."

"Die hoofstroom-media is vervelig juis omdat hulle nie risiko's neem nie; juis omdat hulle bloot aangaan soos hulle al vir jare lank aangaan."

Sy glo dat dit die rede is waarom die hoofstroom-media hier en oorsee al meer in die rigting van die tabloid-inhoud begin beweeg. Volgens haar is daar ruimte vir ernstige joernalistiek vir die uitgesoekte gehore, maar dan moet hulle hul beperkings aanvaar en besef dat die poniekoerante hul eie ding doen.

Hoe lyk die rol van die media dus ná 10 jaar van demokrasie?

"'n Demokrasie word beoordeel na gelang van hoe gesond sy parlement is, hoe onafhanklik sy regstelsel is, die respek vir die oppergesag van die reg, hoe sterk sy opposisie is, hoe luid die burgerlike samelewing van hom laat hoor, en hoe lewendig sy media is."

> "met 'n tweederde meerderheid in die parlement en die anc se doelwit om al die magshefbome te beheer, moet die vierde stand waaksamer as ooit wees"

"Die media is die Vierde Stand en nie die vyfde kolonne nie." Kadalie sê daar word egter ál meer soos laasgenoemde opgetree omdat die Suid-Afrikaanse media vryheid méér ondermyn as enige politieke party of politikus.

"Self-sensuur, politieke korrektheid, rassevooroordeel en eiebelang word toegepas."

"Met 'n tweederde meerderheid in die parlement en die ANC se doelwit om al die magshefbome te beheer, moet die Vierde Stand waaksamer as ooit wees."

Daar is geen twyfel by Kadalie dat dít 'n rol is wat deur die poniepers in die toekoms vervul kan word nie en dat hulle, soos die afgelope jaar gesien is, 'n lewendige media-omgewing kan veroorsaak.

Dit het dalk tyd geword om verby die snert te kyk en te besef dat die poniepers tog iets werd is, meen Kadalie.

Want, soos sy met goeie rede sê: "Hulle gaan nog dekades lank met ons wees." ●

KAAP
NAWEEK
Son
VRYDAG 23 SEPTEMBER 2005
die son sien alles

shocking revelations of a tabloid journalist!

ever heard the one about the family waiting for their daughter to rise from the dead? or the woman raped by ghosts? well, these are not bad jokes. they are news stories written by the *son*'s senior reporter, melvin whitebooi. here melvin tells **janine jellars** about surviving in the sometimes bizarre world of tabloid journalism.

"we don't do **politics**, we do **politicians**"

grafika: eduan maggo
oorspronklike grafika: *son*

Melvin has been at the *Son* since it rose, so to speak, in March 2003. Prior to this he worked at *Die Burger* and *Rapport*. So how does a man who followed the seemingly normal path from "reporter, sub-editor and then editor of the *Metro-Burger*" become involved in tabloid journalism?

His answer seems simple: "More money, actually," he laughs. In a profession not known for churning out millionaires, Melvin says he earns "significantly more" at a tabloid than in the mainstream media.

Money was not the only factor, though. Referring to the tabloid phenomenon, he adds, "I thought this would never happen in South Africa, so I thought I'd just do it for fun."

It might have started as fun, but things soon became serious. At its dawn, the *Son* had "only three staff members and we had to do everything", says Melvin. The newspaper was given a lifespan of four years and only R4 million was invested into it – "we didn't expect it to be successful".

More than two years later, the *Son's* circulation figures, at just under 200 000, are bright enough to blind its competitors.

With this success came consequences.

"At first we were having trouble finding young journalists to work for us, but when the circulation went sky-high everyone wanted to work for us," Melvin says.

"When the *Son* started, Ingo said he wanted to start a culture of making our reporters famous," Melvin says. National editor-in-chief Ingo Capraro succeeded in a way, and Melvin has to live with this.

The man whom colleagues describe as someone "who doesn't really have much to say" finds it "difficult and embarrassing" that public attention has become part of his job description. These days he cannot even do his grocery shopping without being stopped by people eager to share their stories with him.

Melvin even has a stalker, although she is far from being an admirer.

"There's this woman, she phones me from the *platteland*, she tells me she's going to burn down my house because I wrote a story about her brother," he says.

With a wife, Rosaline, and two daughters, the 22-year-old Siobhan and the 17-year-old Aarika, you would expect him to be disturbed, but Melvin is not easily concerned with these antics.

Public response to the *Son* has definitely been overwhelming. From preachers on trains advising people "*moenie goed in die donker doen nie, die Son sien alles*" (don't do things in the dark, the *Son* sees everything), to those threatening their enemies with an exposé in the tabloid – everyone has something to say about this newspaper.

For Melvin, the controversy can sometimes become uncomfortable. "People sing hymns and pray for you over the phone because you work for such a paper. What do you do?" he asks helplessly. "You can't put the phone down!"

for melvin, the controversy can sometimes become uncomfortable. "people sing hymns and pray for you over the phone because you work for such a paper. what do you do?", he asks helplessly. "you can't put the phone down!"

Then there are the "academics" that criticise the tabloids for "peddling smut, degrading minority groups, fuelling obsolete superstitions", as Kevin Bloom puts it in *The Media*.

The "stuff of cheap fiction" that is "a country away from credible journalism" is what Prof Guy Berger wrote about tabloids in a *mail&guardian* article.

Prof Johannes Froneman, subject chairperson of the School of Communication Studies at the Potchefstroom campus of the University of the North West, lambasts tabloids for their lack of ethical and professional values and he feels that "this can be to the detriment of the profession as a whole".

In an online column published earlier this year, Prof Lizette Rabe of the University of Stellenbosch's Department of Journalism called tabloidism "the antithesis of good journ-alism" because of the irresponsibility with which it reports on people's lives.

But Melvin says tabloids are a new kind of journalism.

"Critics attack it and say that it is degrading journalism. Why not teach students tabloid reporting?"

Melvin suggests that tabloidism be taught because "all the tabloid reporters cross over from the mainstream" and like him, they find that it is "quite a different environment".

It is in this environment that "Western or old school media values count for squat," as Bloom wrote in the same *The Media* article.

And Melvin agrees.

For him, the *Son* and mainstream newspapers are like dawn and dusk – they differ in terms of everything from readership to writing style.

There is even a difference in the way they approach national politics. As Melvin puts it, "at the *Son*, we don't do politics, we do politicians" and they usually "put a sensational spin on political stories".

"We don't work like other reporters. We don't go to meetings because you waste a lot of time

ANC wik en weeg oor Truman

einde wil maak aan Truman se loopbaan?"

'n Ander ANC-lid het gesê 'Truman het waarskynlik té ver gegaan toe hy R3000 uit die burgemeesters-

at meetings. We rather wait until after the meeting, then go speak to the people and get the story behind the story," he says.

According to Melvin, most newspapers build their stories around speech transcripts that are sent to them beforehand while the *Son's* journalists "find something in the speech we can sensationalise" and then follow up on that instead.

Ethically, Melvin also believes that mainstream values need not apply. The *Son* initially used *Die Burger's* ethical code, but he felt that it "will never work for a tabloid". At the *Son*, they take stories "to the edge and *Die Burger's* ethical code doesn't allow for that. *Die Burger's* code won't let us go that far".

Does that mean that they are blatantly unethical? Melvin does not think so. The *Son* has drawn up its own ethical code and most of the principles are "the same as other newspapers".

The journalists are still expected to live up to the principles of truth and accuracy, but Melvin says that the principles of privacy are more relaxed in the *Son's* code because they "write about people's private lives".

They are even "allowed to use swearwords if it makes sense in the story", which is not the case at *Die Burger*.

This is because, as Melvin says, "the sub-editors decide on the writing style" in the mainstream press, while "you are encouraged to have your own style of writing" in the tabloid world.

Melvin feels that because of this, "mainstream writers never get a chance to develop. At a tabloid, there's so much more you can do. You're on your own, you must generate stories, you must be on the ball."

For Melvin, the main difference between the mainstream and tabloid is that the readers expect the journalist to "fight for their rights". Most tabloid readers have "never read before, and now feel that this is their newspaper".

He feels that "creating a new world of readers, not only for ourselves, but for mainstream newspapers", is the tabloid's contribution to the media world.

Tabloids also reward their readers' loyalty by being their voice when no one else is. "You meet people and some of them are in need and if you don't publish the story, no one else will", he says.

Melvin firmly believes that the *Son* is "there for the small guy. We must fight his battle against the giants because he doesn't have the means. If we can help him, why not?"

It is this ability to be "sympathetic towards your reader" that, according to Melvin, makes a good tabloid journalist.

For the *Son's* senior editor, Andrew Koopman, it is more than sympathy that makes Melvin one of the best.

"He's a very experienced guy and he's got a feel for tabloid stories. He's got contacts like you wouldn't believe and he's a good writer," says Koopman.

Sometimes experience and contacts are not enough preparation for Melvin. For a man who has written screenplays for stage and television, the stories he hears are sometimes beyond his imagination.

"at the *son*, they take stories "to the edge and *die burger's* ethical code doesn't allow for that. *die burger's* code won't let us go that far"

'Terror-seun' (7) aangekla van messtekery

With over 47 years experience, we'll be there when you need us most

MELVIN WHITEBOOI

Con-Leigh Abrahams, die sewejarige "terroris" van Bersterivier, het nog nie hulp van die staat of iemand anders ontvang nie omdat niemand wil glo dat hy werklik só erg is soos sy ma, Julie, beweer nie.

Con-Leigh is die seun wat op grootmoeise spoeg en hulle en ander kinders aanrand.

His long list of whacky stories includes "a woman in Athlone who says there are seven demons in her house and they're raping and touching her".

Then there's the Kraaifontein woman whose "family believed she wasn't dead" and did not want to have her buried. They eventually relented – if only to avoid any further embarrassment or stories in the *Son*.

He admits that at times like these he finds it "very difficult" to control his laughter, "especially because the people are so serious when they tell you these stories".

Even the page 3 girls have caused light moments. Besides complaints from feminists, people also complained that a "page 3 girl was ugly", Melvin laughs.

If that was not bad enough, "the girls from the factories complained that her panty was made in China – she wasn't even wearing locally made underwear!"

For Melvin, this emphasises the point that tabloids are "about having fun, people laugh after they read a story".

So what does Melvin do for fun? He's a self-confessed music-lover who enjoys clubbing. He admits that he goes to see the live acts, but sometimes uses this opportunity to spy on people and gather gossip.

He also writes books for the *Son's* "*Son*-boeke" initiative. One, *Siener van die Dood*, proved so popular that a sequel is in the pipeline and he was approached by film maker Jan Scholtz "to make a movie about it".

On the day of the interview, Melvin was completing a romance novel due in September. He wants to return to writing screenplays in the future.

In the meantime, though, Melvin has two big (and real) *Son* stories to complete. One is about a group of disgruntled policemen who were moved to an airplane hanger in the middle of nowhere and the other about sex-crazed pastors.

But between completing the novel and investigating the policemen's claims, the pastors will have to wait. At least until next week.

MELVIN WHITEBOOI

deon se boontjierank

soos jan se boontjierank in die kinderverhaal groei die poniekoerant *daily sun* sonder end. deon du plessis is die man wat die saadjie geplant het in die vrugbare mark van die werkersklas van suid-afrika. alet van zyl het die wortels van die *daily sun* in die kelder van mediapark gaan soek.

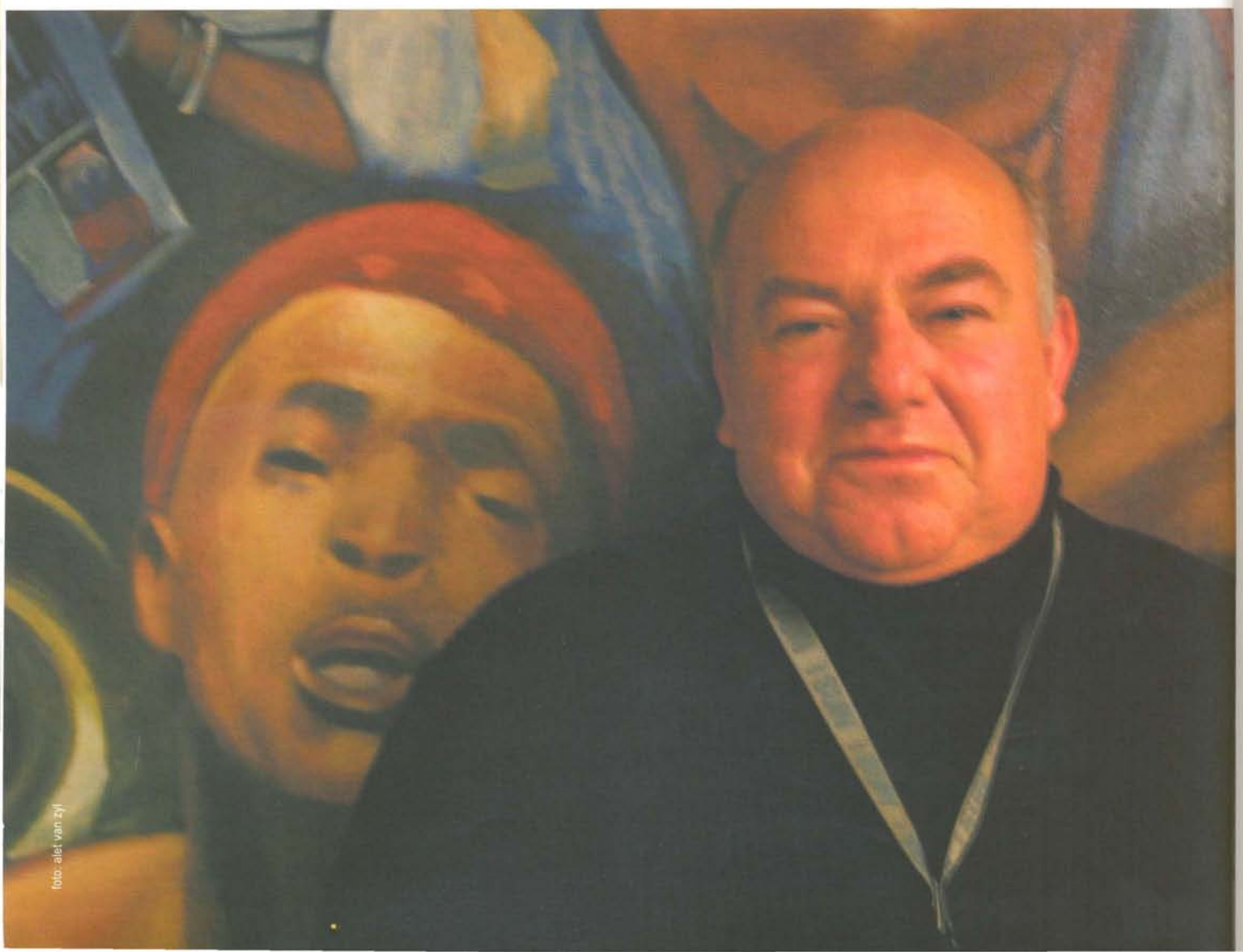

foto: alet van zyl

OPSKRIFTE soos *"Pregnant woman terrified by sight of man's big red penis!"* en *"Help! I'm in my bed on the roof!"* begroet daagliks miljoene pendelaars op die voorblad van die *Daily Sun*.

En hulle hou daarvan.

Kritici van die poniekoerante, soos prof. Guy Berger, hoof van die departement joernalistiek en mediastudies aan die Rhodes Universiteit, en Thabo Leshilo, redakteur van die *Sowetan*, waarna ook soms verwys word as 'n poniekoerant, vind egter hierdie én ander poniekoerante se onkonvensionele stories aanstootlik en 'n vernedering vir die joernalistieke beroep.

Leshilo het onlangs by die algemene jaar-vergadering van die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Redakteursforum (Sanef) sy kommer uitgespreek oor die "rassistiese paradigma" wat poniekoerante gebruik. Volgens hom word swart mense deur dié koerante uitgebeeld as "primitief, wellustig en eenvoudig."

Berger het weer onder meer sy misnoeë uitgespreek oor die *Daily Sun* se "bladsy 3-meisie".

Iets wat nie in die *Daily Sun* verskyn nie.

Volgens Deon du Plessis, die "vader" van poniekoerante in Suid-Afrika, hou die *Daily Sun* se leser nie daarvan nie. "Hy voel *embarrassed* deur *tits*", verduidelik Du Plessis, met verwysing na sy leser.

Du Plessis is die uitgewer en mede-eienaar van dié koerant. Hy en Media24 besit elkeen 50%. Hy sê egter die kritici mis juis die punt van sy koerant. Dit gaan oor die leser.

"As jy 'n das dra, mag jy nie hierdie koerant lees nie. As jy in die suburbs bly, mag jy dit nie lees nie. Dis nie vir jou nie."

Volgens hom begin die kritici "by die koerant en eindig by die arme ou wat dit moet lees, terwyl ons begin by die ou wat dit moet lees".

"Dié koerant gaan nie oor ons nie, dit gaan oor daai ou," en hy wys na die dummy wat op 'n stoel buite sy kantoor sit en koerant lees.

Die *Daily Sun* het onlangs twee sulke dummies laat maak wat hul lesers kan verteenwoordig, sodat hulle ook 'n sê kan hê in die nuuskantoor. Tswelopele sit buite Du Plessis se kantoor. Die ander een, Manqoba, ontvang besoekers by die ingang na die *Daily Sun*. Hy het 'n 20kg-sak rys in die een hand en 'n *Daily Sun* in die ander.

"Ons vra hulle advies," sê Du Plessis ernstig. Hy maak nie 'n grap nie. Dié man neem sy leser so ernstig op, dit lyk amper asof die "simboliese leser" werklik met hom praat.

Tswelopele en Manqoba, wat onderskeidelik "sukses"en "oorwinning" beteken, stel albei die tipiese leser van dié koerant voor. Hulle dra blou oorpakke en is deel van die werkersklas van Suid-Afrika. "As jy in die townships bly, is ons koerant soos 'n spieël."

Dit is ook nie net die mans wat die koerant lees nie. Du Plessis erken egter dat hy eers later besef het hoeveel vroulike lesers die koerant lees. Hulle maak net minder as 40% van die leserstal uit. "Ons sit nou meer vroulike perspektief in die pot as wat ons in die verlede gedoen het", sê Du Plessis.

Die *Daily Sun* word nie verniet "die koerant van die mense" genoem nie. Du Plessis soek selfs die "eienskappe van ons lesers in die verslaggewers" voor hy hulle aanstel. "Hulle moet die mense wéés wat hulle bedien."

Daarom maak die *Daily Sun* van herskrywers gebruik. Dit is 'n stelsel wat Du Plessis ontdek het terwyl hy by die *Philadelphia Enquirer* in Amerika gewerk het. Die verslaggewer gaan uit in die veld om die inligting te versamel en die storie saam te stel. Daarna word die berig deur 'n herskrywer geskryf in 'n "taal" wat die leser sal verstaan.

Dis vir Du Plessis belangrik dat die leser die koerant verstaan, daarom is een van die goue reëls wat hy aan die herskrywers gegee het: "Niks meer as twee klinkers nie."

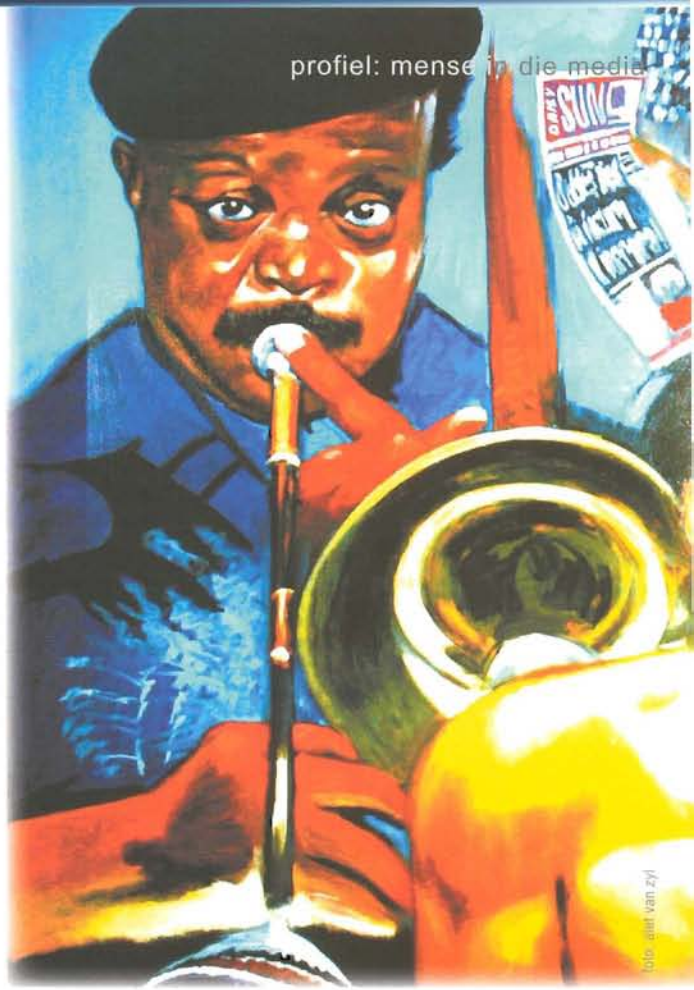

foto: aart van zyl

"as jy 'n das dra, mag jy hierdie koerant nie lees nie. as jy in die suburbs bly, mag jy dit nie lees nie. dis nie vir jou nie"

Ten spyte van al die kritiek op sy koerant is dit duidelik dat Du Plessis en sy span stry vir die opkomende swart werkersklas in die townships. Hy herhaal voortdurend: "*bottom line* is, die skole het hierdie ou gefaal".

Behalwe vir die daaglikse nuusstories, daardie wat die kritici se bloeddruk so laat styg, is daar daagliks 'n bladsy vol eenvoudige wetenskaplike verduidelikings wat wissel van hoe glas gemaak word tot hoe om 'n veilige vuur aanmekaar te slaan. Volgens Du Plessis sal al die verduidelikings op hierdie bladsy algemene kennis wees vir enige een met behoorlike skooloopleiding.

Dit moet 'n leersame ervaring wees elke keer as die leser die koerant oopmaak. "Ons wys hom dinge wat hy nie geleer het op skool nie, sonder om te preek."

Daar is ook daagliks 'n kort opsomming van die belangrikste internasionale nuus wat gerangskik word om 'n wêreldkaart, sodat die leser kan sien waar die land is waaroor daar geskryf word. Dis 'n idee wat ook in 'n paar meer ernstige koerante en tydskrifte gebruik word. >>

<< Du Plessis beweer "almal wil nou soos ons wees".

Maar wie sou nie wou nie? "Ons groei in een jaar met die totale sirkulasie van ander koerante."

foto's: alet van zyl

▲ deon en tswelopele buite die *daily sun* se kantoor

◀ en saam met manqoba, wat besoekers by die ingang na die *daily sun ontvang*

Volgens Du Plessis veroorsaak dit nou dat die ander koerante gesplete persoonlikhede ontwikkel. "Jy moet 'n pistool wees, nie 'n haelgeweer nie. Jy moet *zone*. Kies jou mark en skop nes."

Hy verwys na een van hul opposisiekoerante wat min of meer dieselfde mark as die *Daily Sun* bedien, wat onlangs 'n motor wat R800 000 kos oor drie bladsye gedek het, maar "sy lesers kan nie daarmee identifiseer nie".

Die *Daily Sun* se webtuiste verwys na sy lesers as die "ekonomiese kern van ons land". "Vir die eerste keer het dié ou aan die einde van die maand geld oor. Wat doen hy daarmee? Hy koop sy heel eerste kar. Hy is die eerste een in sy familie om 'n nuwe kar te koop."

Dit is egter belangrik om te weet presies hoeveel geld "hierdie ou" aan die einde van die maand oor het om te spandeer. Du Plessis ken sy mark goed genoeg om te weet. Dis hoekom hy daarop aangedring het dat geen berigte oor motors duurder as R120 000 gepubliseer mag word nie. Dis nou behalwe vir die paar uitsonderlike gevalle wat in die *Dream on!*-hoekie pryk. Want die *Daily Sun*-leser mag mos droom, soos almal.

Du Plessis het met behulp van 'n ou vriendin, die marknavorser Jos Kuper, sy mark fyn uitgekies en behoorlik nagevors voordat hy sy visier gestel het. Hy is egter baie geheimsinnig oor die resultate van dié navorsing. Sy skoot was in die kol en vandag is hy aan die hoof van die enigste koerant in die land wat sy advertensiepryse in pas met die groei van sy sirkulasiesyfer aanpas. Ander koerante pas dit aan in pas met die styging van inflasie.

Nóg kritiek teen *Daily Sun* is dat hulle nie genoeg skryf oor politiek nie. Du Plessis ontken dit, want vir sy lesers is "alles politiek".

Hulle praat in elk geval nie in hul teetyd oor Zuma nie. Hulle praat oor riool wat in die strate vloei, die polisie wat nie opdaag nie, waterpype wat gaan bars of gebars het. En sokker.

"Ons het 'n *hall of shame* gehad waarheen mense kon inbel met klagtes oor die plaaslike owerhede. Dít is politiek. Nou skielik wil almal die townships help, maar dit was *Sun* se idee," sê Du Plessis.

Vir die *Sun*-leser is sokker óók politiek. Du Plessis vertel hoe die *Daily Sun* vir Danny Jordaan, hoof van die Suid-Afrikaanse bodkomitee vir die Wêreldbeker-toernooi in 2010, stemme gewerf het onder die SAFA-streeks-hoofde om seker te maak hy kry dié pos.

Hoe die geld wat dié toernooi gaan inbring, aangewend gaan word, is ook politiek. Die lesers moet inskryf en sê wat hulle wil hê moet met dié geld gedoen word. "Die park oorkant ons leser se huis in Thokoza is meer politiek as enige iets anders."

Daily Sun beplan ook nie om 'n groter rol te speel in die volgende verkiesing nie. Nét as die ANC iets doen wat hul lesers direk negatief beïnvloed, sal hulle ingryp.

Themba Khumalo, redakteur van die *Daily Sun*, voeg later by: "As enige iets ons leser ontstel, sal ons teruggaan en dit evalueer."

"Wat dink jy van 'n *Daily Sun*-party?" sê Du Plessis tong-in-die-kies.

Dié koerant kry meer as 10 000 briewe elke maand. Die briewekolom is die lesers se vuvuzela. Du Plessis kry weer daardie vasberade stemtoon.

"Die arme bliksem het nog nooit 'n stem gehad nie. Hy was net 'n gesig in die massa. Ons is die trompet."

Wat van die stories oor "tokkelossies" en "groot rooi penisse" wat vir die kritici na wolhaarstories lyk?

Wat Du Plessis betref, is dit deel van sy mark. "Ek gaan nie die een wees wat vir hulle sê dit bestaan nie. Ons gaan dit plaas, want hulle gaan daaroor praat."

Tswelopele en Manqoba is ook deur 'n sangoma ontvang by Mediapark. Hy het voorspoed oor hulle uitgespreek.

Wat dit ook al is wat die leser verwag, is Du Plessis bereid om te gee. "Dit werk vir ons."

Enige nuwe idees wat die lesers binnekort kan verwag?

"Wat van 'n algemene jaarverslag in strokiesprentformaat?"

Du Plessis wil hê die groot maatskappye moet op hierdie wyse aan die man in die fabriek die rol wat hy in die groter prentjie speel, verduidelik. Hy is altyd opsoek na maniere om sy leser se lewe te verryk.

Die Januarie tot Junie ABC-syfer vir 2005 is reeds 437 041. Al rede waarom dit nie hoër is nie, is volgens Du Plessis omdat Media24 se rolpers nie meer kopieë kan druk nie. 'n Nuwe drukpers word tans aangekoop. Volgens Du Plessis is 'n sirkulasiesyfer van 800 000 dan nie meer ver nie.

"Die einde is nie in sig nie." ●

VERKOOP VOOR JY KAN SE SIT-SIT SO. Landbou Geel Bladsye

foto's: alet van zyl

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bigger, badder, naughtier is best

tabloid journalism is governed by the public's perceived need for excess. to exaggerate a simple story or profile seems to be common practice in print media, yet hollywood and its television industry counterpart are regularly castigated for far milder transgressions of journalistic excess. perhaps it is time re-evaluate the actual claims against hollywood's excesses, writes bryan silke.

uma thurman (left) battles lucy liu in an epic fight scene from quentin tarantino's controversial *kill bill*.

OUR society scorns mediocrity. Whether it is average sporting performances, films about the mundane or music without swearing, journalists will always look for something extraordinary for pure novelty value. Across three of the most popular contemporary mediums of entertainment – film, music and television – commercial success amongst the mainstream audience can be measured using excess as the yardstick.

Whether it is violence, language, gag vulgarity or dress, it is difficult to succeed in these mediums by focusing entirely on the simplicity of acting without concentrating on the above ingredients.

Yes, there are screenwriters and directors such as Woody Allen and David Mamet who produce films based almost entirely on dialogue, and some, such as David Lynch and Paul Thomas Andersen, who devour the audiences' imagination with an ambiguous story.

The overwhelming domestic perception of Hollywood and television however, is that the story and characters are merely secondary characters behind the humour, violence and special effects. Perhaps the opposite is true in several recent American drama and comedy shows, where excess in violence and explicit dialogue directly manifests the needs of the protagonist rather than a reverse cycle of scripted dialogue based around the excess.

▲ hbo's *sex and the city* (left) and *the soprano's* (centre) have received both critical and commercial acclaim, but both are heavily chastised for their excessive sexual and violent narratives. oliver stone's *natural born killers* (right) received significant criticism for it's perceived satirisation of criminal culture.

According to Dr Herman Wasserman, a media analyst and lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch's Department of Journalism, contemporary shows such as *24* receive mainstream acclaim because fragmented narratives, chronological experiments and multiple perspectives are all characteristic of postmodern culture and narrative strategies.

Take HBO's *The Sopranos* for instance. Known to non-viewers as a show about "gangsters with violence and lots of swearing", the success of *The Sopranos* stems from the topsy-turvy family dynamics within the Soprano household. Joining mob boss Tony and his wife Carmela, are their two children – gorgeous university bound intellectual Meadow, and naughty adolescent son Anthony Junior (AJ). What remains interesting after several seasons of the show, is how Tony's spousal relations and fatherly role affect his position as boss of his other "family". Such script writing, believes Wasserman, is more effective in its originality because viewers "might have become jaded after exposure to older series" where the single plot story lines lacked the intricacy to challenge the viewer.

Another element of realism which the show advances is to use downtown New Jersey, where Tony's bar/business is stationed (a substantial part of the show is set in the bar's back rooms) as an additional character. Like Michael Mann's use of the late night Los Angeles metropolis in *Collateral* to emphasize Tom Cruise's hit man's cold demeanour, *The Sopranos* starkly contrasts the suburban opulence of Tony's residence against a darker view of New Jersey's night life.

Despite the commercial and critical success of HBO's *Sex and the City*, the show was bombarded with criticism about the overly explicit sexual scenes. In an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* on 5 September 2003, Catherine Orenstein criticised the show calling the caricatures "vapid, materialistic and hysterical".

According to creator Darren Star, the show captured part of an audience solely based on the excessive sexual nature of the dialogue.

The show, however articulated real and controversial issues such as gender stereotyping and cheating on partners through the lens of four successful career women. This points to Wasserman's argument that script originality is what wooed television audiences. The comparison to the formulaic approach for writing daytime soap operas is a shoddy one. One reason for this is that show creator Star had the impudence to choose New York City as the location to explore the lives (though we seldom saw the women engaged in their professional work) of the four chief characters.

The Big Apple's rich diversity in wealth, culture and levels of decadence of its inhabitants was used as a critical storytelling component, something possibly neglected in *Friends*. Star could have relied on a higher scale of excess if he wanted to, but kept the apartments modest and respectable, unlike the improbable settings of *Friends*, where Rachel could afford to share a lavishly furnished and decorated apartment on a waitron's salary.

But the biting reality of several new age American shows is the focus on relationships where real challenges and frustrations are confronted without fear of being too shocking in nature. Luckily, talk of different sexual positions and techniques will always be less deplorable than pornographic films. In the same way, filmed brutality of war in cinema will always be more comfortable viewing than watching the suffering of bombing victims on Sky television.

The concept of excess in the media would be incomplete without a reference to continual anti-Tarantino sentiment that meanders through the mainstream press whenever one of his films is released. The hysterical cacophony of letters to the editors of newspapers pleading film companies not to screen "his unadulterated violence" is actually tiresome. >>

photo: stef-kinekor

<< Though this is not the correct forum to examine their sad arguments and Tarantino's usual defence, it allows the perfect opportunity to understand the concept of excess, particularly within the context of on-screen violence.

Reservoir Dogs and *Pulp Fiction*, two of Tarantino's first and arguably finest films were chastised in the media upon their release for excessive, gratuitous violence. During the films a man's ear is cut off, another's face is accidentally blown to smithereens in the back of a car and a mob boss is viciously raped in the basement of a shop. What all of these have in common, and this is something Tarantino stresses regularly, is that none of the actual incidents happen directly on screen. Rather, the audience hears the incident taking place without complementing visuals.

The argument now becomes whether watching a bullet hit someone in the face is on a different level of violence to just a gunshot or does all violence fall under the same umbrella that some believe needs to be outlawed?

Excess in entertainment is certainly not limited to violence and sex. Language, attitude and image all fuse together for the commercial success of today's rock musicians and hip hop stars. They are constantly under the spotlight from promoters and marketers, which indirectly causes a loss of identity.

The new, perhaps forged identity, needs to be monitored for the benefit of commercial gain, and this monitoring of the celebrity's lifestyle will be gauged on a scale of excess whether it is the consumption of alcohol or the size of their jewellery.

Over centuries, the human thirst for material success has never changed. It is rather what constituted the material that has changed. It is the culture of competition (which has characterised the 21st century entertainment industry) that causes innovation. And that is how the concept of excess should be analysed.

pulp fiction and *reservoir dogs*, tarantino's first and arguably finest films, were chastised in the media upon their release for excessive gratuitous violence

despite the commercial and critical success of hbo's *sex and the city*, the show was bombared with criticism about the overly explicit sexual scenes

filmed brutality of war in cinema will always be more comfortable viewing than watching the suffering of bombing victims on *sky* television

photos: stockingnet

has

BOLLYWOOD lost the plot?

to achieve commercial success, producers have spiced up indian movies with flashy dance sequences of skimpily clad women, high degrees of sexual innuendo and violence to win over Indian cinemagoers. **shanaaz ebrahim** investigates whether or not bollywood **sold its soul** in a bid for global acceptance or if it's just going through an experimental phase?

THREE and a half hours long, colourful song and dance sequences and family melodrama are typical elements of what has become known as a masala movie.

These movies represented the traditional image of Indian society. But this did not earn the industry any respect and credibility on the international movie circuit.

More recently, there has been a gradual shift in film style that now threatens the very existence of values and culture of Indian people.

According to Lotus FM DJ Varshan Sookhun, who hosts the Bollywood Top 20 show, Bollywood is currently undergoing a revolutionary phase with its main aim to find out what its audience truly want.

Sookhun said that although the elements of sex and violence may seem foreign to an Indian audience, it should be noted that it has allowed Indian cinema to bridge the cultural gap with Western audiences. He was particularly proud of the influence Indian cinema has had on Hollywood as surprise box office hits *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Bride and Prejudice* proved to be commercial successes.

Sookhun was quick to point out that it was not only an ideological and cultural change that was noted amongst India's youthful population.

He said that even though Bollywood produced more than eight hundred films annually, the industry did not have the same infrastructure and finances at its disposal as Hollywood. He said that this was also an important factor, which forced Indian cinema on its current path.

Producers found that India's younger generation was greatly influenced by the West.

Indian youths were moving away from their traditional upbringing and moving towards a more globalised culture that encouraged them to look towards the West for cultural and financial security.

Indians adopted Western thoughts and ideas and this ideological shift was soon seen in Bollywood cinema. Bollywood underwent an image change.

This 'new and improved' Bollywood was represented through films such as *Oops* and *Boom*.

Oops dealt with the story of two male strippers, a concept previously unheard of in Indian cinema.

Boom, on the other hand, had two female leads parading around in nothing more than two-piece bikinis and who were the frequent targets of crude sexual remarks.

This would seem the norm in any Hollywood movie, but for Bollywood these storylines proved to be too risqué, resulting in riots inside the cinemas in a bid to ban the screening of *Boom*.

On their website, the Film Federation of India (FFI) complained about the methods used by producers to fill cinemas, as the current trend in Indian cinema is to use high degrees of vulgarity, sexual innuendo and violence.

The FFI believe that "films being produced [currently] are too westernised and that they were degrading and [were] diminishing India's true cultural identity."

Sookhun is convinced that the debate on Bollywood cinema "will die down pretty soon" as critics look beyond the current trends and see that Indian cinema can produce quality, A-grade films which can compete against top titles of Hollywood.

One of these movies he refers to is *Lagaan* which is, to date, the only Indian movie nominated for an Oscar.

Sookhun does admit that before Bollywood can get there, the formula needs to be revisited as Indian cinema has become too dependent on its Western counterpart.

In the last two years, three commercial films were released which borrowed storylines from Hollywood movies, with the formulaic *masala* twist to them.

Koi Mil Gaya was a befuddled remake of *ET* and *Bhoot* (Ghost) was the Indian version of the cult horror flick *The Exorcist*.

Raaz (The Secret) featuring former Miss World and now Bollywood starlet Bipasha Basu and actor Dino Morea, was an interpretation of the movie *What Lies Beneath*, which starred Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer.

Sookhun ended by saying that as soon as Bollywood stops borrowing from Hollywood, and as soon as producers decide whether they are producing movies for audiences or for making a substantial profit, Indian cinema will still be better off. He said that since Bollywood has now nearly hit "rock bottom, the only way now for the industry is up".

Kom studeer en leef jou droom!

Jodi Godden
Honneursstudent
in Sielkunde

"Ek het gekies om by die Univerisiteit van Stellenbosch te studeer omdat dit vir my die uitdaging én geleentheid bied om nie net my droom te verwesenlik nie, maar om mense van uiteenlopende kulturele agtergronde te ontmoet.

"Vandag is ek 'n selfversekerde en doelgerigte mens wat weet waarheen ek oppad is. Die Universiteit van Stellenbosch se Fakulteit Lettere en Wysbegeerte het my bemagtig met die nodige vaardighede om my droom elke dag uit te leef. Ek weet dat dit ook vir jou kan werk!"

Die volgende graadprogramme van die US Fakulteit Lettere & Wysbegeerte rus jou toe vir 'n loopbaan in vandag se kompeterende arbeidsmark:

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- BMus
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- BA in Ontwikkeling en Omgewing
- BA in Politieke, Filosofiese en Ekonomiese Studie (PPE)
- BA in Regsgeleerdheid
- BA in Sosiale Dinamika
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mediakul
feit of

daar word gesê dat die nuus al hoe meer sensasioneel uitgebeeld en bemark word, maar geweldadige films laat mens wonder of dit nie presies is wat kykers toenemend wil hê nie. dié tonele kom uit *sin city*

ul tuur 2020: of vermaak?

poniekoerante en vermaaklikheidsjoernalistiek steek oral kop uit. veral die jeug word elke dag gebombardeer met mediavermaak en kits-inligting - en dit is hul generasie wat die toekoms van die media sal bepaal. fanie van rooyen het probeer kyk hoe die media moontlik kan verander in die volgende paar jaar.

TABLOIDISERING verwys na die groeiende tendens in die media dat nuus- en aktualiteitsprogramme al hoe meer as produkte bemark word met die oog om die leser, kyker of luisteraar te vermaak eerder as om bloot net in te lig.

Poniekoerante, soos *Son*, se verspreidingsyfers styg elke dag. Op die TV verskyn daar al hoe meer programme wat gelyktydig informatief én vermaaklik probeer wees, soos *The Daily Show* in die VSA.

Realiteitsprogramme verander "werklike" gebeure en die lewens van "werklike" mense in kitsvermaak soos op *Survivor*, *The Bachelor* en *The Amazing Race*.

Daar is waarskynlik meer as een rede vir hierdie onlangse vermenging van tradisionele feitelike joernalistiek en goedkoop vermaak. Die jeug word egter groot in hierdie nuwe media-omgewing, en wat hulle van hou en verwag van die media in die toekoms, sal bepaal tot hoe 'n mate hierdie verskynsel die media sal verander.

Een van die moontlike redes, volgens Lésa van den Berg, fotograaf by Iline Films in Pretoria, hoekom vermaak so belangrik geraak het in die media van vandag, en in die bemarking van programme, koerante en so meer, is dat mense moeg geraak het vir al die geweld en tragedie in die nuus. Van den Berg sê: "Dit voel nie asof die nuus my alledaagse lewe as 'n Suid-Afrikaner reflekteer nie. Daar word net gefokus op geweld en dit is tog maar een aspek van die samelewing. Die nuus is net vol misdaad en hartseer."

Dit is dus heel moontlik dat Suid-Afrikaners eerder 'n vorm van vermaak in die media sal verkies om te kan ontsnap van die harde "realiteite" van misdaad wat in die media voorgestel word.

Die mediawêreld het die afgelope paar jaar aansienlik meer kompeterend geraak het. Volgens Amanda Visser van *Sake-Beeld* in Pretoria is dit 'n hoogs relevante en interessante onderwerp.

"Veral die jeug is meer gesteld op vermaak, leefstyl en sogenaamde *celeb*-stories. Die mense onder 35 se leefstyle en belangstellings verskil dramaties van dié van hul ouers. Ek dink daar gaan toenemend ruimte geskep word vir vermaak en leefstyl-geörienteerde stories, maar harde- en dieptenuus gaan steeds koerante se kos bly."

Programme, koerante, tydskrifte, en artikels het dus "kommoditeite" geraak wat aan die jeug bemark moet word. As 'n produk bemark kan word met die klem daarop dat dit die verbruiker sal vermaak, is die kanse dat dit sal verkoop baie groter as byvoorbeeld bloot net nuus of feitelike inligting. Veral in 'n kapitalistiese, demokratiese land soos Suid-Afrika is kompetisie in die media uiters groot. Media-konglomerate wat groot aantalle publikasies besit, soos Media24 en Caxton, kan dit bekostig om reuse-bemarkingsveldtogte te bestuur. 'n Koerant met net die nuutste nuusgebeure in hul artikels het dus minder om te bemark as 'n poniekoerant wat die kernnuus sowel as skindernuus, vermaak, menslike intriges en glansnuus bevat.

> "veral die jeug is meer gesteld op vermaak, leefstyl en sogenaamde *celeb*-stories"

Jong mense word groot in 'n mediakultuur waar vermaak baie hoog op die prioriteitslys tel. Hulle het toegang tot meer as dubbeld die hoeveelheid media waartoe die vorige generasie gehad het. Die internet is waarskynlik vandag die grootste bron van inligting in die Westerse wêreld. Die gevolg is dat jong mense met internet-toegang oombliklik inligting kan verkry oor enige onderwerp onder die son.

Selfs rolprente en TV-, sowel as radioprogramme, kan oor die internet afgelaai word. Die gevolg is dus dat die jeug 'n baie groter verskeidenheid media het om van te kies as ooit tevore.

DSTV is 'n goeie voorbeeld. Daar is ongeveer 50 kanale om van te kies, en amper alles is op die internet beskikbaar. Hoërskoolkinders hoef selde te wag vir 'n TV-program of rolprent om op TV of teater uit te kom – hulle laai dit eenvoudig van die internet af en versprei dit tussen hulle vriende.

Corné Wilke, 'n 16-jarige van Somerset-Wes meen hy sien meer rolprente op sy rekenaar as in die flieks, "want ek kan dit maklik by my vriende kry en dis verniet". Gevolglik raak dié ouderdomsgroep groot in 'n kultuur waar hulle enige soort vermaak of nuus enige tyd tot hulle beskikking kan hê.

Kommunikasie het in die laaste twee dekades so vinnig ontwikkel dat die beskikbaarheid van inligting groot vooruitgange kon beleef. >>

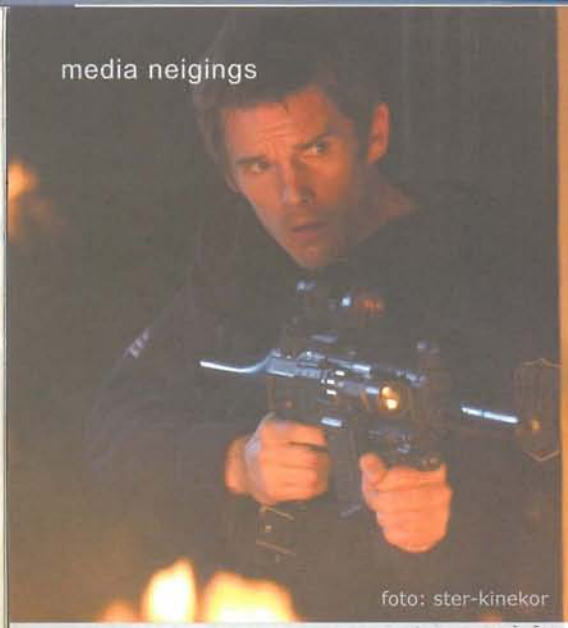


foto: ster-kinekor

lyk die nuus al meer soos vermaak, of lyk vermaak al meer soos die nuus?

foto: *beeld*

daar is 'n neiging om die nuus 'mooier' te laat vertoon.

<< E-pos en selfone het tot gevolg dat enige persoon basies enige tyd met enige ander persoon (wat dieselfde toegang het) in die wêreld in verbinding kan tree, en selfs inligting elektronies kan uitruil binne enkele minute. *Bloggers* skep ook hulle eie webtuistes en onderhou dit soos enige koerant hul webtuiste onderhou. En hulle is vry om hulle eie mening by te sit.

Hierdie nuwe kultuur van oombliklikke kommunikasie en amper oneindige inligtingsbronne is waarmee die jeug grootword. 'n Mens kan dus sê dat dit nie meer baat om die media as inligtingsbron te bemark nie. Die meeste mense in die teikenmark van die wêreldmedia het tog toegang tot die internet en het dus toegang tot die wêreld se inligting.

Dit is dalk die moontlike verklaring hoekom die media al hoe meer die klem lê op vermaak eerder as inligting, sê Visser. Vermaak kan ook baie meer doeltreffend en oorspronklik bemark word. Die bewyse hiervoor is oral in die hedendaagse media te vinde.

Wat hou die toekoms in? Sal inligting al hoe meer op die agtergrond beland soos wat vemaaklikheid die voortou neem? Of sal die media in twee gekloof word, met inligtingsmedia aan die een kant en vermaaklikheidsmedia aan die ander? Hoe sal hierdie moontlike veranderinge die struktuur van die media verander en hoe sal kommunikasie-tegnologie nog verder ontwikkel om aan te pas by die groeiende aanvraag na kitsvermaak?

Dis wat kenners, en die toekomstige gebruikers van die media, vandag se jongmense, sê hoe die media oor 'n dekade of wat gaan lyk:

Markus Hagedorn (22), 'n multimedia-ontwerpstudent van die Tshwane Universiteit van Tegnologie, meen dat TV-nuus al hoe meer neig na sensasie en vermaak. "Daar is 'n neiging om die nuus "mooier" te laat vertoon. Verslaggewers en nuuslesers is meer gefokus op hoe die nuus gekommunikeer word as op die feite. Gerugte of skinderstories word gereeld as feite aangebied sonder dat dit deeglik ondersoek word. Die mening van verslaggewers en TV-kanale kom ook al hoe meer deur in die berigte self, en dit kan nie aanvaar word nie. Nuusverslaggewing behoort nie 'n kreatiewe oefening te wees om sensasie te veroorsaak nie."

Hy meen dus dat dit wel lyk asof die media van die toekoms vermaak-gesentreerd sal wees, maar dat dit beslis nie 'n positiewe ontwikkeling is nie.

Van den Berg meen ook dat nuus toenemend gaan oor sensasie, skok-waarde en vermaak.

"Vir my het die nuus te wreed geraak om na te kyk. Daar word net oor slegte nuus berig omdat dit makliker is om te bemark en dus meer winsgewend is. Die nuus het ook so vaag en polities korrek geraak dat dit nie meer die waarheid van die situasie reflekteer nie. Poniekoerante is selfs nog erger."

Annja van Niekerk (21), 'n student in Sosio-Informatika op Stellenbosch, glo dat vermaak 'n reuse-mark geword het, en dat dit in die toekoms net gaan groei. "Kyk maar net om jou. Alles gaan oor mooier, vinniger, lekkerder, en langer. Almal wil supersterre wees met superster-lewens en dit kom deur op alle vlakke, insluitend die media en nuus."

Martin Lemmer (22), 'n ouditeursklerk van Pretoria, dink dat inligting oral beskikbaar is en dus nie bemark kan word nie.

"Daarom word daar eerder klem gelê op watter kanaal die beste nuuslesers het met die mees in-diepte en skokkende waarhede wat hulle onthul. Basies is dit net goed gekamoefleerde vermaak."

Volgens die mediaverbruikers is vermaak besig om die mediawêreld oor te neem, en dat inligting, waarheid en feite dikwels in die slag bly.

Die feit dat hulle dit telkens as negatief beskryf is egter 'n teken dat tradisionele feitelike joernalistiek nog steeds na waarde geskat word.

Tessa Moore van Cinemark, die maatskappy wat statistieke hou van teaterbywoning vir advertensiedoeleindes, maak 'n interessante opmerking in hierdie verband.

"Bywoning het gedaal in die laaste jaar. In Julie 2004 het Numetro 1 065 759 kaartjies verkoop, en in Julie 2005 slegs 943 296. Dis 17 % minder. Ster-Kinekor het ook in Julie 2004 meer verkoop as in Julie 2005, met onderskeidelik 1 823 754 en 1 764 822."

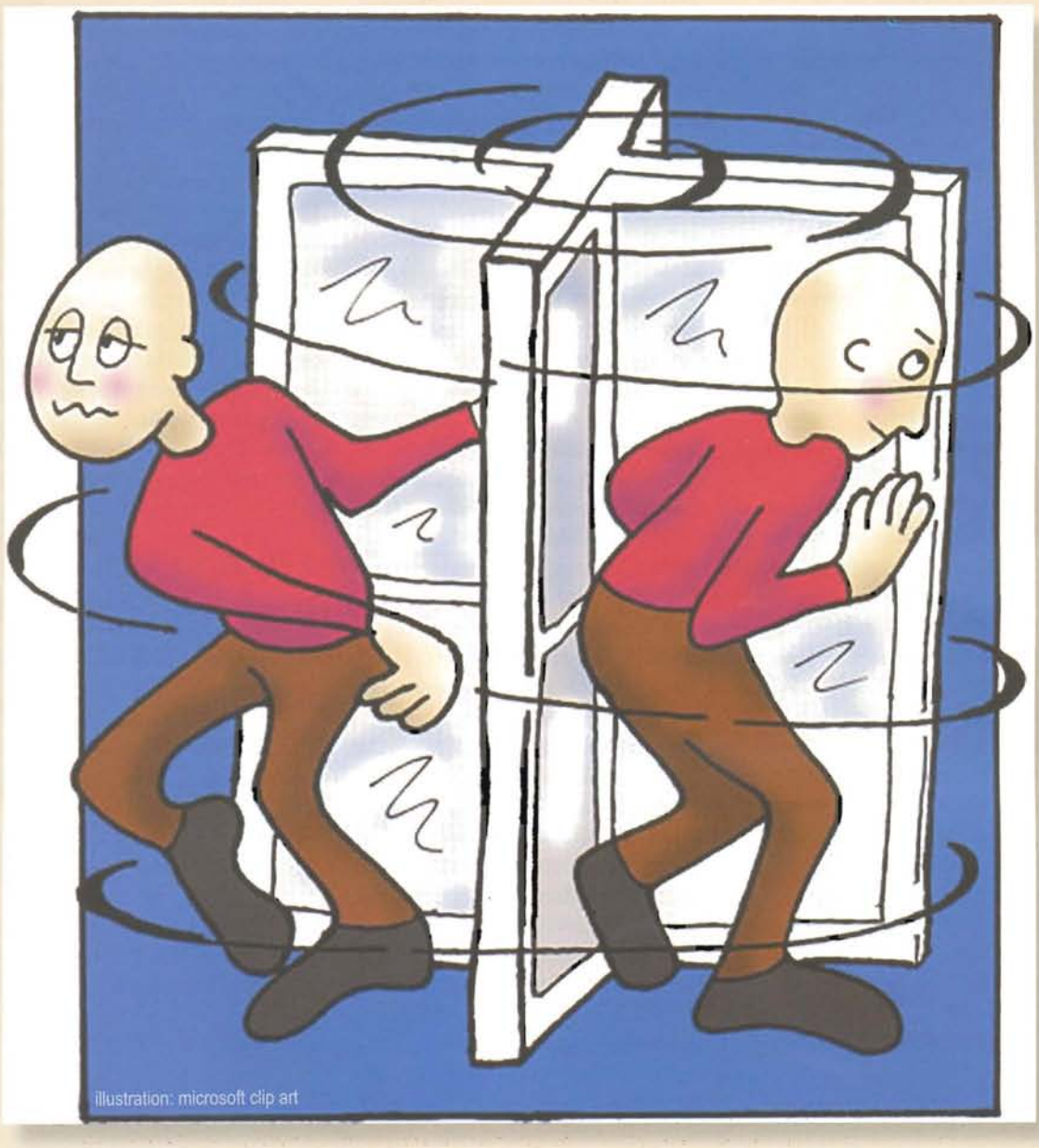
Volgens haar is dit 'n aanduiding dat mense minder vermaak "nodig het" as die vorige jaar of dat hulle makliker en vinniger vermaak elders kry. "Dit is wat die onderwerp so moeilik maak en ons sal maar net moet sien."

Wat 'n mens laat wonder of tradisionele joernalistiek nie dalk 'n groot gedaanteverwisseling sal ondergaan in komende jare nie. Aan die ander kant, dit lyk tog of die jeug ontevrede is met die huidige oppervlakkige gejaag na "spookasem-vermaak" ten koste van goeie, feitelike nuusverslaggewing.

Maar op die ou einde sal dit die verbruikers wees – vandag se jongmense – wat sal bepaal presies hoe die media-aanbod oor vyftien jaar sal lyk. Vermaakmal sensasie of tradisionele joernalistiek?

the revolving door of journalism

can journalists move from journalism to public relations and back to journalism again? **msimelelo njwabane** tries to debunk the myth of the revolving door of journalism.



THERE is nothing wrong with journalists working for government, corporate entities and the media interchangeably, Joe Thloloe, Chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum, said in a telephonic interview with *stellenbosch media forum (smf)*.

The logic behind this is that the revolving door is, has been and always will be a feature of journalism, because journalism skills enable people to switch between numerous fields with relative ease.

According to Thloloe, "there is nothing wrong with this phenomenon, as long as people declare their interests; in terms of our democracy everyone has a right to work where they wish to work at any given time".

It is generally accepted that journalists should not engage in activities that could compromise their integrity and credibility or affect the reputation of the organisation to which they are affiliated. Some of the most prominent international ethical codes for journalists deal with this issue of the "revolving door" in journalism.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors outlines that "freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital".

According to the American Society of Professional Journalists, all journalists should be free of obligating to any interest other than the people's right to know.

Much of the debate about the revolving door of journalism has focused on the notion of conflict of interest. This fails to address the broader implications of journalists vacillating between journalism, corporate communications, public relations and working for government, and how it affects their ability to remain objective and credible.

There are also no strict rules regarding journalists who appear in advertising commercials or commercial videos despite the fact that this might compromise their integrity. The same applies to journalists who are involved with political parties, government communications and to an extent, the corporate sector.

The journalist involved in these activities could easily become friendly with fellow politicians, which might lead to journalists being seen as partisan. Their credibility will be compromised because they will always be associated with a specific party, and hence all their political commentary will be viewed as suspect.

Senior journalism lecturer at the Walter Sisulu University of Technology (former Border Technikon), Gerry Leibel, said that he does not recommend the "revolving door" to his students.

"But how can I influence their decisions when they are offered highly lucrative salaries that double the money they get as journalists with a Beemer thrown in for good measure?" Leibel asked.

"After 1994," said Leibel, "the old guard of career journalists who got into journalism for the love of it and not the money, slowly disappeared, due to retirement and even emigration. They were replaced by junior journalists who saw journalism as a nine to five job that pays a terrible salary."

"At the same time a vacuum developed in corporate and government communications departments, gaps that are not being filled by graduates of public relations courses, but instead are being filled by young and ambitious journalists who are attracted by the salaries offered by these corporate companies and government departments," Leibel added.

A much-debated example of the revolving door syndrome is Snuki Zikalala, Managing Director of SABC News and Current Affairs, who went from being a broadcast journalist with the labour beat to a government communication post as the spokesperson for the Ministry of Labour and back to journalism in the space of a few years.

The debate, of course, centres on whether he is able to be objective, having "crossed over" to the other side. Assertions have been made that SABC news has become less critical because of Zikalala's alleged alignment with the ruling party. Zikalala does not hide the fact that he is a card-carrying member of the African National Congress (ANC).

Dr Herman Wasserman, senior lecturer in Media Ethics at the University of Stellenbosch, said "the question usually arises whether a spokesperson for corporate or government communications will be considered credible again when working as journalist.

"Perceptions around this in the media, also, sometimes say something about media bias, for instance there are people working as journalists that have previously been spokespeople for political parties, but one does not often hear the same questions being asked about them."

"we live in the real world, with all manner of biases, relationships and conflicts of interest that can and do colour our reporting and commentary"

Similarly, journalists often go back and forth (or even juggle positions simultaneously) between corporate communications and journalism, without as much of a fuss being made of that, since corporate influence is usually regarded less harmful than political influence.

"In some ways Snuki Zikalala has been targeted unfairly, on the basis of his personal history rather than on the strength of evidence from his work," added Wasserman. "The important thing to recognise is that everyone has an opinion and a political view. There is no such thing as a 'value-free' journalist," said Wasserman.

"journalistic integrity does not imply political neutrality. it is willingness and ability to declare one's interests rather than hide them, to try and think past your own biases and opinions to also see the other side, and to put the public's interest above personal benefit"

In fact, some of them admit to having erred, saying that they are increasingly frustrated with having to put a positive spin on really bad news and not writing about the bad news as journalists.

Some former journalists who have "revolved", who did not want to speak on record, freely admit that they are now in a position where their lifestyles will not allow them to move back to journalism, taking a huge salary cut and working longer hours under tight deadlines in stressful newsrooms.

One such person, who was willing to speak on record, is former *Saturday Star* journalist Tendani Tsedu. Tsedu, nephew of *City Press* editor Mathatha Tsedu, turned to the world of public relations as Rand Water's Media Relations Manager.

"My advice to journalists who are about to enter the world of corporate communications is that there is a reason the grass is greener on the other side – they feed it a lot of manure," he said

The editor of the newspaper *Las Vegas Review Journal* in the United States of America (USA), Thomas Mitchell, writes that journalists are not cloistered monks.

"We live in the real world, with all manner of biases, relationships and conflicts of interest that can and do colour our reporting and commentary," he said.

"For news consumers, the object lesson should be that objectivity is a lofty ideal, but one should be ever mindful of the source of information. It isn't just conflicts that matter, but also mindsets."

Deborah Potter, Executive Director of NewsLab, a non-profit journalism training and research centre in Washington, DC in the USA commented in *American Journalism Review* that the line between journalism and politics has been fuzzy for a long time.

"It can be argued that there is nothing inherently wrong with a journalist having some background in politics as it is obvious that there is nothing like a firewall between the two professions," she said.

The line between politics and journalism has long been blurred by political activists entering the media. The current head of communication of the ANC, Smuts Ngonyama, started out as a journalist for the *Daily Dispatch* in the Eastern Cape.

Mathatha Tsedu was also a political activist for the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) and a political prisoner during the apartheid era.

"I think journalistic integrity does not imply political neutrality," Wasserman said. "It is the willingness and ability to declare one's interests rather than hide them. It is to try and think past your own biases and opinions to also see the other side, and to put the public's interest above personal benefit."

This illustrates that having a revolving door between politics and journalism is not necessarily a bad thing. These journalists with extensive political experience, regardless of ideology, can be a great asset in the political news business.

Kevin Bloom, Editor of *The Media*, a magazine on the media industry in South Africa, said he does not think that the revolving door is "too much of a problem as long as there is as a healthy antagonistic relationship between the politicians and the journalists".

This, however, can only be true if journalists are capable of leaving personal biases aside in search of fair and balanced reporting.

"The important thing to recognise is that journalists should also not be without opinions – the important thing is to be fair and balanced, and be willing to declare one's vested interests where applicable," Wasserman said.

Sean Jacobs, *The Media's* New York-based correspondent, recently wrote an article in which he asked whether the South African media does have its own revolving door policy. He argued that switching jobs between journalism and the subjects of their reporting is an old practice in South Africa.

According to Jacobs, journalists like Redi Direko, Thokozani Mtshali, Ranjeni Munusamy, John Dludlu, Jon Qwelane, Rich Mkhondo, Snuki Zikalala, Sithembiso Ndlovu, Donwald Pressley and many others have jumped between journalism and the more lucrative posts in public relations for government ministers and corporations.

"They insist that this has little impact on their jobs. A number of them have been given a free pass to do government or corporate public relations and then return 'objectively' to journalism," said Jacobs.

"Take Donwald Pressley, a parliamentary reporter for *I-Net Bridge*, who served as media spokesperson for the short-lived Democratic Alliance administration in the Western Cape. It is surprising, given the insistence on a separate identity, that these issues aren't on the agenda of South African media," he added.

"It is a tragedy that journalism educators around the country pour their hearts and souls into educating good journalists, simply to have them snapped up by the corporate world or government, where they are forced to go against the very training they receive and become spin-doctors," said Leibel.

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wednesday, october 30, 2005

blowing the lid off the blogosphere

are blogs a "dumbing down" device in an age that celebrates the mind-numbingly mundane?

THE more traditional journalists lingering in the relics of the Fourth Estate brush off blogs as nothing more than online diaries which the self-indulgent can publish for the world to see.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that our new-found access to millions of opinions all over the world may indeed impact the way we interpret news.

Blogs, short for Web logs, are online opinion journals updated at regular intervals, with most being updated every day and many even more often than that.

They are hyperlinked to other websites and blogs and serve as a platform for anyone with access to a computer to publish their thoughts online for a worldwide audience.

Peter Merholts, who was blogging way back in the nineties, coined the term in 1999 when he changed the term Web log to 'we blog'. The 'we' he spoke of then referred to a somewhat elite community of computer geeks but now includes over 14 million people spread out all over the globe and so pervasive is this online phenomenon that the latest *Oxford English Dictionary* has included the term.

James Francis writes in *Blogging: a quick history* that the medium really "exploded as a voice" after 11 September 2001. The attack sparked worldwide discussion and debate and what better medium for opinion than the online Web log? After other major news events such as last year's tsunami and the London bombings in July, the first people to tell the stories were bloggers who had witnessed the events unfolding. The competitive edge they have on the mainstream media in this regard is immediacy.

Within minutes of the London attacks, bloggers had posted on-scene video footage taken with cellular phones on their Video blogs (vlogs). Readers the world over no longer had to wait for the next day's newspaper to tell the story. Everyone with online access could read about the first hand experiences of Londoners as events unfolded.

There is a lot of nonsense out there, however, and Google searches are becoming frustrating as more and more blogs pop up onto the scene.

Many blogs are the epitome of the "dumbing down" trend infiltrating media spheres, fuelling our fascination with the ordinary. Chuck Olsen, a documentary film maker and video blogger in Minnesota, who has been on the blog scene since the early nineties, says that in this age of information, "mundane is the new punk rock".

According to an eWEEK.com article, "The Cult of Blog", the only unifying theme behind the blogging phenomenon is "an unfettered desire to let it all hang out".

Deep in the sea of blog baloney there are some gems to be uncovered, however. Take for example the dear_raed blog written by "Salam Pax". Salam Pax, a pseudonym, is a young Iraqi who wrote about what was happening in Iraq during the initial stages of the American invasion.

about me

name:
Andrea Ketteringham
location:
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

i have spent a large portion of my time researching the blog phenomenon this year. my curiosity was sparked by arguments suggesting that blogs are blurring the line between journalism and personal diaries where anyone can publish the mundane details of their daily lives for all to see online.

LOGS SEARCH THIS BLOG SEARCH ALL BLOGS

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His blog posed a very different perspective on events from that of the American mainstream media and people bought into it because he made no claims to be presenting an objective overview.

He told the story as he saw it, not glossing over his biases claiming to be objective.

His blog caused such a stir that *The Guardian* persuaded him to write a regular column for them. He also worked as a journalist for *The Guardian*, writing both columns and feature articles.

In October 2004 he was sent to America by the paper to report on the American presidential race and the current thought there on the subject of Iraq.

In February 2005 a series of filmed reports by Salam Pax, produced by Guardian Films and transmitted by the BBC's *Newsnight* won the Royal Television Society Award for Innovation.

His blog was also transcribed in print and published as *Salam Pax: The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi* by Grove Press.

Jane Singer, associate professor at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, has written extensively on blogs, bloggers and blogging, and insists there is a clear distinction between Web logging and journalism.

She describes blogs as "unedited, unabashedly opinionated, sporadic and personal" and in many ways "the antithesis of traditional American journalism".

She says that many journalists see blogs as "an antidote to the corporatisation that is silencing independent media voices".

Bloggers have become suspicious of the media, which is increasingly owned by large conglomerates that are perceived to prioritise the so-called bottom line over journalistic integrity. They argue that blogs are offering more transparent points of view where biases and agendas are clear for all to see.

According to Matt Welch, an American journalist who has been following the blog trend, blogs are now playing the role the traditional "alternative media" used to play.

In his article "Blogworld", Matt Welch describes the increasing conformity of the so-called "alternative" print media. He says that modern alternative weeklies have strayed from what made them alternative in the first place.

"The papers once embraced amateur writers; now they are firmly established in the journalistic pecking order, with the salaries and professional standards to match. They once championed the slogan 'never trust anyone over thirty'; now their average reader is over forty and ageing fast. They have become so ubiquitous [that] the very notion that they represent a crucial 'alternative' to a monolithic journalism establishment now strains credulity."

Welch claims that these lost qualities are embodied in the blogosphere where for the first time in history any average Joe and Jane Soap can write, edit, design and publish their own product within minutes.

According to Welch, blogs have become so popular because they have something to say.

"In a media world that's otherwise leached of opinions and life, there's so much life in them...When do you last recall reading some writer and thinking 'damn, he sure looks like he's having fun'?"

Just as the products of the print media can be arranged on a spectrum ranging from the very serious to light hearted, so too can Web logs.

One would never lump *People* magazine alongside *The Economist*. Similarly, one cannot lump together all blogs. The Web log is simply a new medium of publication; the content is diverse, ranging from the mundane to cutting edge journalism.

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amateur journalism:

taking news into their own hands

has technology replaced discipline as the prerequisite for being a journalist? or does it need to be combined with the essential building blocks of skill, knowledge, talent and professionalism to make it all gel? giselle linström looks at the phenomenon that is blogging.

SO you've studied long and hard to get that sought-after journalism degree from Stellenbosch, Rhodes or Wits when news of the latest fad (or is it?) in amateur journalism reaches you. You're left wondering if all you need to be a journalist nowadays is access to the Internet. Or in the case of a photojournalist – a nifty, new mobile phone with built-in camera.

Digital technology – the Internet, e-mail, blogs, mp3 players, digital cameras, camera phones – has evolved to the extent where the public share with professional journalists the ability to reach a mass audience, to tell and show the world what they see and experience.

In the past, eyewitness photographs and videos of dramatic events turned up for viewing only on the evening news and in the next morning's newspaper. Today through e-mail and blogs that spread news quickly and efficiently, amateur journalists often find large audiences without the help or need of mainstream news outlets.

But, in an interview with Journalism Professor Anton Harber of the University of the Witwatersrand, he says that technology is no more than a tool which may deliver an initial fascination with its potential. However, this can quickly run dull and be overtaken by the next generation of technology unless it is brought to life by "talent", in the form of interesting and appropriate content. He says that technology without content is like a car without petrol. "It might be pretty and full of potential, but it ain't going anywhere."

Unless you have been living under a rock, you have probably heard of blogs – personal websites that offer frequently updated observations, commentary, news, photos and/or diary entries, organised chronologically.

With the help of blogs that are easier to set up than one, two, three; news events and issues are now being written about and dissected on the Internet by a new breed of "amateur journalists". Or, as some are calling them – "personal journalists".

With the terrorist attacks that occurred earlier this year in London, news spread quickly on the Internet as people tried to obtain information. With mobile phone networks suffering congestion, mainstream news sites overloaded, and most Londoners at work, blogs were the way people were getting the latest news.

The blog tracking service, Technorati, found more than 1 300 posts about the attacks little over an hour and a half after the blasts, according to the BBC online. This is an example of how bloggers have an advantage over the slower, traditional media.

Bloggers also had an advantage when it came to covering the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. According to the Poynter Institute's blogging expert, Steve Outing, the tsunami represented a turning point in amateur journalism. What 11 September was to setting off the growth and enhanced reputation of blogs, the tsunami was to the larger notion of amateur journalism. Blogs were able to show photos that newspapers and mainstream news sites would have received criticism for had they published them. Much like tabloids, blogs can get away with much more, possibly because they are considered less "serious" and thus can be less ethical.

civilian journalism will grow "like a boil on the bum of professional journalism"

Rhys Johnstone, Content Manager at Independent Online (IOL), says that this is where news sites have an advantage over blogs. They have more stringent standards regarding accuracy, fairness, ethics and legality.

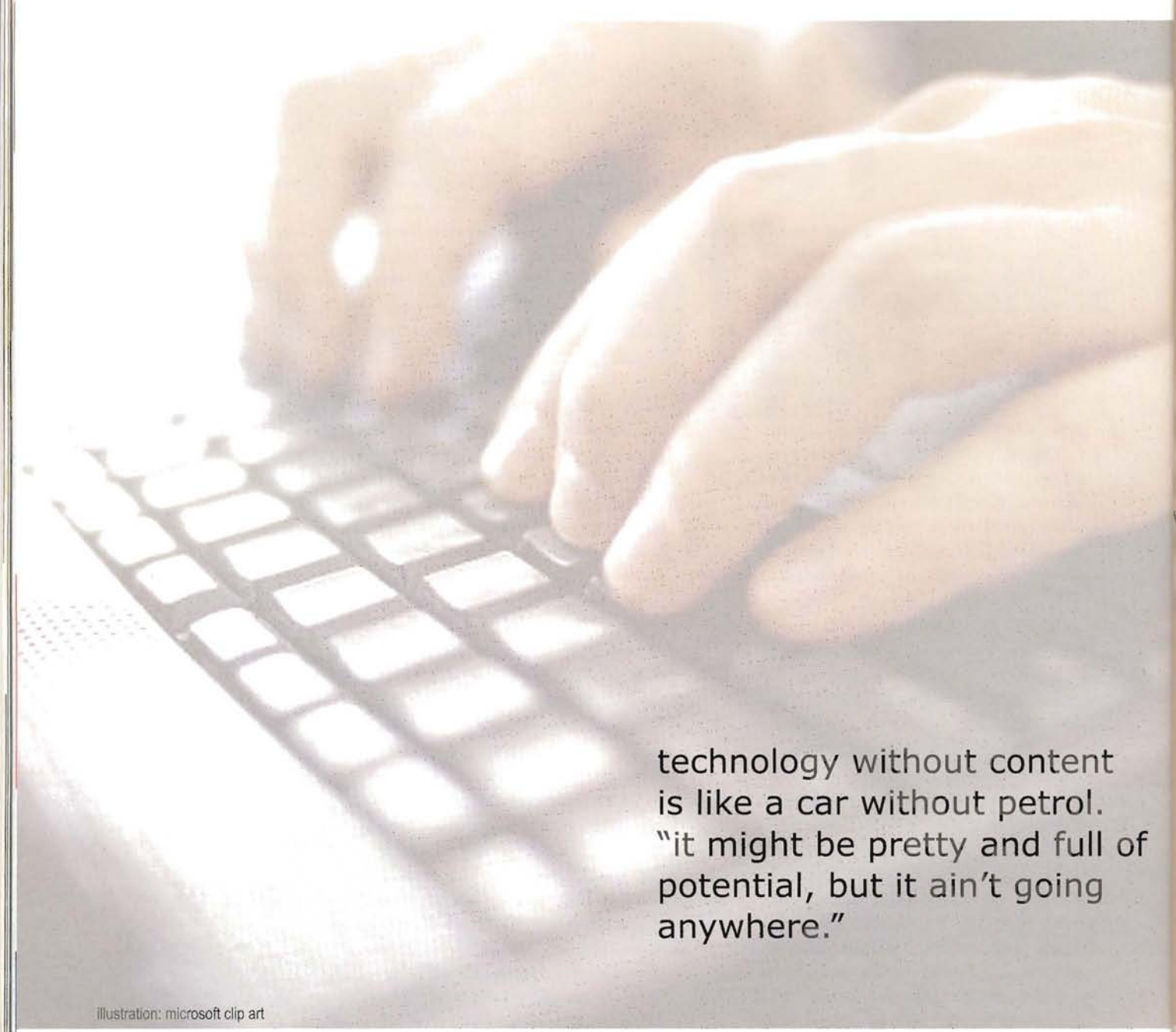
So, do professional journalists in South Africa have to be concerned about the "threat" posed by amateur journalists? According to Harber, there is not much of an amateur journalism community in South Africa. But, he adds, as connectivity spreads and bandwidth widens, "civilian journalism" will grow "like a boil on the bum of professional journalism".

Harber adds that hidden among the hordes of bloggers are a few potential journalists. Those who stick with it, gain credibility, build a relationship with their audience, develop the techniques and craft of journalism and use the technology not just to hear their own voice or talk to themselves, but to challenge and provoke audiences and illuminate and expose information. In other words, they become true journalists, regardless of the channels they use to convey the information.

Despite this, bloggers still face many challenges if they want to be regarded as journalists, including a lack of recognition of their status. Harber thinks that they should be afforded the same rights as "real journalists". He says that if freedom of expression belongs only to recognised or licensed journalists, then the only thing that matters is who will use and abuse the power to issue the licence.

"You must remember that in the 1980s elements of the 'mainstream' media tried to argue that the 'alternative' media was not 'real journalism' and not entitled to the same protection they demanded for themselves.

Some of the most interesting journalism in this country – >>



technology without content is like a car without petrol. "it might be pretty and full of potential, but it ain't going anywhere."

illustration: microsoft clip art

<< the independent black newspapers of the early 20th century, the left wing papers of the1950s, the resistance press of the 1980s – has come from those who were labelled 'alternative' and therefore not 'real', or 'professional'."

Another positive aspect of blogging is the interactivity factor. News is a "conversation", thus the story doesn't end when it's published, but rather just gets started as the public begins to do their part, according to Outing. With "normal" media such as newspapers, people will discuss the story, and perhaps write a letter praising or admonishing the journalist.

With blogs the interaction is taken a step further. Readers of the blogs can add to the story, discuss it amongst each other and even correct it.

But, blogs also have their shortcomings. One of them is the lack of an editor, according to Outing. He writes that an editor can help to catch spelling, grammar, factual errors, and the really dangerous issues – such as possible libel cases against the blogger. However, bloggers tend to say that their readers are their editors. Mistakes are pointed out quickly and bloggers readily acknowledge and correct their errors in plain sight.

The real question is whether the new "alternative" media can really replace the old. Can you "survive" on an appetite of blog-only news?

Non-scientific experiments have shown that gathering news solely by checking blogs will lead to a definite lack in the depth of knowledge of current events. This is because blogs seem to be better at offering commentary and starting conversations than serving a current-events-indicator role.

Johnstone says that while a lot of people are reading blogs and thus not reading news websites when they are on the blog site, the two feed each other. He says that the blogs often provide links to news websites – and often comment on articles that were posted on news websites. "I see them in a positive light," he adds.

So it seems, for the time being at least, your best bet is still a newspaper with your breakfast coffee, radio in your car and television news in the evening. And if you want more commentary, interactivity and unrivalled immediacy – turn to the blogs. ●

blogging is my lewe! dot com

ek wil iets sê en ek gaan dit sê (Nuustak®)

kry jou eie blog @

www.blogger.com

www.blogmania.co.za

www.freewayblogger.com

www.myblogsite.com

Wat is 'n blog?

In kort: 'n Persoonlike ruimte op die internet waar individue die geleentheid kry om te sê net wat hulle wil, net hoe hulle wil en in soveel woorde as wat hulle wil. Enigeen kan dit doen. Jy kort net twee dinge:

1) Toegang tot die internet
2) 'n Behoefte om iets te sê

Skep binne minute jou eie ruimte op die web. Op dié digitale spasie kan jy jou vriende in ander wêrelddele op die hoogte hou van jou daaglikse handel en wandel, jou aktivistiese politieke standpunte lug, familieresepte deel, of sommer net jou foto's stoor. Onthou net: almal, letterlik álmal, kan dit lees.

07:09:05 - 11:34 comment >>>

Vingers op die knoppies...

Om te begin:

Jy het geen kwalifikasies nodig nie. Solank jy 'n rekenaar kan aan- en afsit en weet hoe om op die web te kom, behoort jy dit te kan doen. Kies enige van die webruimtes wat op hierdie blad verskaf word en kliek daarop. Dit behoort jou te neem na 'n tuisblad waarop jy jou eie blog kan skep.

Gewoonlik is daar 'n vraelysie wat jy eers moet voltooi. E-pos-adres, land van herkoms en so aan. Dit behoort jou drie minute te neem.

Dan volg daar maklike en duidelike instruksies oor hoe om jou blog op te stel. By sommige blogging-bladsye kan jy dit binne 2 minute, en met die kliek van drie knoppies, voltooi.

Kies net 'n agtergrond en 'n uitleg vir jou blog, sit jou eerste bietjie inligting daarop en stuur daarna 'n e-pos aan alle vriende, familie en vyande waarin jy hulle nooi ("vriendelik verplig") om jou blog te besoek.

07:09:05 - 12:17 comment >>>

jy hoor "blog" en jy dink: "bloke? blob? blot? mental block?" nee, jy weet nie wat dit is nie, maar jy knik en jy sê: "o, jaaaaaaa! blóg! blóóóóg!"

anneli groenewald

gee inhoud aan dié nuwe gonswoord.

Wat kan ek op my blog laai?

Sodra jou blog geskep is, kan jy daarop laai nét wat jy wil! Dit is wat blogging so opwindend, maar terselfdertyd gevaarlik, maak. Geen kontrole word daaroor uitgeoefen nie, so die man en vrou op straat kan nou onverpoos hul digitale stem laat hoor.

Die maklikste manier om uit te vind hoe om data te laai, is om weer na die tuisblad te gaan waar jy oorspronklik jou blog geskep het (dit is belangrik dat jy na dieselfde tuiste gaan, want daar word die beste programme en metodes vir jóú spesifieke blog verduidelik). Jy is nou klaar op hul databasis, so jy kan net jou gebruikersnaam en wagwoord intik.

Iewers behoort daar 'n opsie soos "*How to*" of "*Help*" te wees. Kliek daarop. Gewoonlik verskaf dit 'n baie eenvoudige stap-vir-stap verduideliking oor alles wat jy moontlik op jou blog wil doen. Dit wys hoe om foto's te laai, ander webruimtes aan jou blog te skakel en vele meer.

Onthou net: Pasop vir kopiereg-skending. Laai verkieslik net jou eie oorspronklike data op.

Onthou ook dat enigeen daardie data van jou kan aflaai (steel) en so kopiereg op jou foto's kan skend.

07:09:05 - 14:06 comment >>>

broadsheet style:

journalists slate decline of south african media

in the wake of the almost exponential rise of tabloids in the mainstream south african media, "serious" journalists have begun to speak out against the growing trend of commercialised news in both print and broadcast media. carolyn bind interviewed a number of journalists to hear their opinion on the matter.

JOE Thloloe, Chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum, has lamented the deteriorating quality of South African journalism. According to him "most publications have resorted to trashy journalism whereas some straddle between serious journalism and tabloid journalism".

Thloloe was speaking soon after resigning from his position as editor-in-chief at free-to-air broadcaster e-tv.

"e-tv was gradually descending into a tabloid format. The real story remains untold in the process. We seemed to have shifted from our core responsibility of bringing understanding to the viewers. In some of our programmes we embarrassed our guests. This is very entertaining to the audiences, but once again the real story is not told."

According to Thloloe, speaking at a World Press Freedom Day panel discussion in Stellenbosch, the current trend toward commercialisation of the media is the main threat to true press freedom today. He complained that this trend had caused news bulletins to become more entertainment based and more aggressive as opposed to educational.

At the same panel discussion, Snuki Zikalala, Managing Director of SABC News agreed, saying that the country's news needed to shift its focus to one that is more educational rather than entertaining.

> "we seem to have shifted from our core responsibility of bringing understanding to the viewers"

Sam Bartlett, the assistant news editor of the *Cape Times*, reiterated that there was a trend toward more sensational reporting. She condemned it, saying that certain lines should simply not be crossed.

The *Cape Times* prides itself as being a "paper of record". It has a policy known as the "Marmalade Principle". The basic premise of this principle is that if the journalist's mother were reading the paper whilst eating marmalade toast, would the article cause her to drop her toast. If so, the article is too sensational or shocking.

Leopold Scholtz, the deputy editor of *Die Burger*, said that this trend is "most definitely a problem". He says that journalists at the paper are struggling to maintain the paper's reputation as a serious broadsheet because managers are more interested in profit than reputation.

This also leads to juniorisation in the newsroom, which leads to a decline in the quality of the paper. Front page photographs which readers have denounced as "shocking", "sensationalistic" and "unethical" have admittedly pushed up the sales for that particular day.

Countering this opposition to commercialisation of the news, Joseph Aranes, assistant editor at the *Cape Argus*, says that there is a place for all styles in a society that is still finding itself. He believes that people are beginning to express themselves differently than in the past and that there is a place for commercialisation.

Andries Cornelissen, financial editor of the *Son* says that "commercialisation is not a swearword". In his opinion journalists should embrace commercialisation as he says that it results in better salaries. He does admit, however, that it places ethics as a lower priority.

tabloid style:

journos lash out in terror at the tabloids

south african journalists have attacked the tabloid industry in a move that quite obviously belies the terror that broadsheet journalists have for the tabloids.

JOE Thloloe, Sanef Chairperson, speaking soon after his alleged resignation from his position as editor-in-chief at free-to-air broadcaster e-tv, complained that most publications have resorted to "trashy journalism".

According to sources* within the e-tv news room, Thloloe's resignation was not the moral stand that he portays it to be.

One source commented that Thloloe was merely attacking tabloids in response to being scorned in an article in a Johannesburg-based tabloid.

"Thloloe did not resign. He knows what had happened," said the credible source* who refused to be named.

Thloloe maintains that he left the station in protest to the "deteriorating" style of broadcasting.

"e-tv was gradually descending into a tabloid format. The real story remains untold in the process. We seemed to have shifted from our core responsibility of bringing understanding to the viewers. In some of our programmes we embarassed our guests. This is very entertaining to the audiences, but once again the real story is not told," said Thloloe.

However, in reality it was Thloloe himself who helped create the fresh and upbeat style of the station, the same style which he now calls trashy.

> "journalists should embrace commercialisation as it means better salaries"

"When Thloloe left, he used the opportunity to turn on e-tv the author of a defamatory, yet true, tabloid article by cunningly using the opportunity to condemn them both," said another source*.

"He has gained his revenge."

Financial whizz, Andries Cornelissen, who works at the reputable Western Cape newspaper, the *Son*, vehemently disagreed with Thloloe's claims that the media were "resorting" to commercialised reporting with the result of trashy publications.

"Commercialisation is not a swearword. Journalists should embrace commercialisation as it means better salaries."

Several journalists speaking on condition of anonymity* admitted that broadsheet journalists are envious of tabloid journalists who earn better salaries and enjoy better lifestyles largely as a result of more relaxed bosses who can afford to treat their employees well.

While the broadsheets insist on enduring with conservative reporting, the nation is yawning. In today's fast-paced, ever-changing information age, it's bound to be the survival of the fittest and right now it seems that the tabloids are the way of the future.

**Note: This article has been written in an exaggerated manner in order to highlight some stereotypical tabloid traits. All unnamed sources are fictional.* ●

photo: henno kotzé

smaller is better?: the tabloidisation of layout

with front pages laden with massive headlines and overblown photos, eye-catchingly bright logos and short but surreptitiously intriguing stories in a format that can be easily held in one's hand, tabloidisation is a global phenomenon. henno kotzé pins down the increasing trend towards tabloidisation within the newspaper industry and answers the question: is this the future of newspaper layout?

THE tabloidisation of the media in terms of content is still a blister on the writing hand of most "serious" and academic journalists in South Africa and worldwide. In this ongoing debate, points for and against tabloidisation have been argued across the board like paper projectiles thrown across the newsroom by angry editors.

Those against it state the erosion of ethical journalism as their strongest case, whilst those in favour cite the dominance that tabloid circulation numbers hold over serious, or broadsheet newspapers.

Whatever the case may be, this trend (whether it is just a trend or the future foundation of newspapers is unclear) is well-known and well explored.

The tabloidisation of layout, however, is a development that is not given the same recognition, but is potentially just as important.

This type of tabloidisation entails the shift towards a smaller, easier to hold format (A4 size up to roughly half the size of a broadsheet). Mario Garcia, co-founder of the Poynter Institute and Garcia Media, holds a poignant view of layout tabloidisation in an article on the Poynter website.

"Everything makes a comeback," he says. "There is an eternal renaissance of essential things. In journalism, design, literature and art. Things tend to simplify themselves. As life in the big cities become more chaotic, technology becomes more accessible with wireless, fast communication available to larger masses of the population."

In terms of newspapers and other print media, he says this "translates into smaller formats, more reader-friendly for users who seek simpler storytelling, quicker messages and who seem to prefer, as in everything else, the smaller packages". >>

<< Six years ago Garcia predicted that a large number of American newspapers will shift towards tabloid form by 2020. Last year, he changed his prediction to 2010.

Perhaps most notably has been the shift of the world's most famous business newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, to tabloid form. This shift can also be seen globally, including South Africa.

South African Media Facts 2005 states that "the last few years has seen a surge in popular journalism with the launch and massive success" of the tabloid the *Daily Sun*. The circulation figures amongst the 18 main dailies through the second half of last year show the dominance that the *Daily Sun* has had over its competitors. Its circulation of nearly 500 000 is more than double that of its nearest daily rival, the *Star*.

It seems as though tabloidisation is paying off in South Africa – but is it because of the editing, content or layout?

Prof Klaus Schoenbach, Chair of the Amsterdam School of Communications Research, approaches this question differently in an article entitled "Does tabloidization really make newspapers successful?".

Schoenbach asks whether "dynamic, vivid and colourful layouts with many visual elements (such as pictures, graphs and logos) help sell copies?" He also questions whether "newspapers with shorter articles and bigger headlines attract more readers".

Conversely, he asks if it is a case of "a greater share of entertaining stories at the expense of 'serious' politics" or whether more sensational topics loaded with "emotional language" increase circulation.

One can apply the same questions to South African newspapers.

The American organisation Poynter, who sees itself as a "school for journalists, future journalists and teachers of journalists", believes it comes down to the WED philosophy. Ron Reason, Creative Director of Garcia Media, says this principle is the integration and "harmonious marriage of Writing, Editing and Design (WED) to produce a journalistic project that is more powerful than any one element in isolation".

This, agrees Garcia, is the fundamental principal that makes tabloid layout more powerful, quoting various examples such as London's *The Independent* and *The Times*. Both made successful conversions to this format, yet call themselves "compacts" to distinguish themselves from "tabloids".

The underlying argument of Garcia's article entitled "The March of the Tabloids" is that the myth of tabloids being of lower journalistic quality is unfounded.

He says it is the "irrational fear of some editors and publishers of the word 'tabloid' itself that keeps many from contemplating the idea of testing their newspaper in a smaller format".

Garcia says that "using stereotypes, and even worse, formats, to determine what constitutes serious versus sensational journalism is not going to lead to better products".

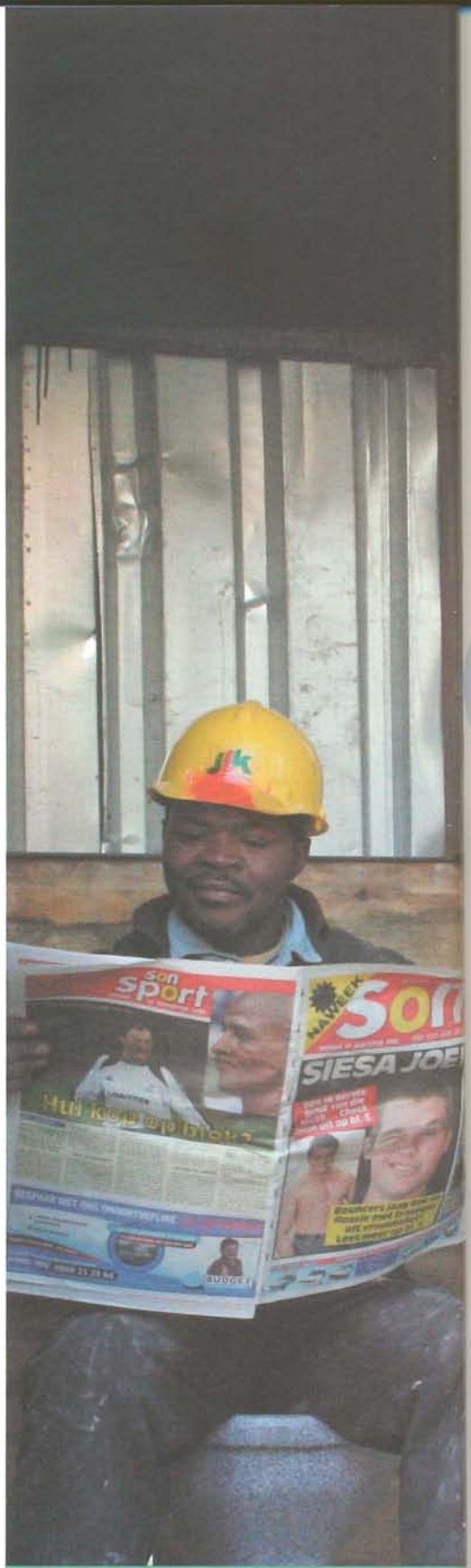
Despite the polemic about the tabloidisation of newspaper content continuing, tabloid layout should be seen in a different light. It is a phenomenon on its own, one that requires different deductions and solutions.

Circulation figures speak for themselves when it comes to tabloidisation and cannot be ignored in the competitive and potentially lucrative print industry. One can clearly see that there is a significant distinction between the tabloidisation of layout and the tabloidisation (or sensationalism) of news, or content.

From the various successful conversions of "serious" papers to tabloid format as well as new tabloids making significant impacts, it does not seem a question of if, but rather when, broadsheets will be looking at this conversion towards a more user-friendly format.

One clear distinction of this kind in South Africa is *Die Wêreld*, a "serious" tabloid that did not last long. This, however, was more a case of internal financial difficulties and amateurish content than of layout.

Nevertheless, this conversion may become more viable only when the "tabloid myth" is debunked and the public become aware of a distinct difference between tabloid content and tabloid layout. ●



"using stereotypes, and even worse, formats, to determine what constitutes serious versus sensational journalism is not going to lead to better products"

die oxford 2 athlone advanced tabloid taalboek

henno kotzé

"DIE *system* is *corrupt*," sê 'n man die ander dag vir sy vriend.

En nie hoe nie! Moerse *corrupt*!

Toe *check* ek: As jy net geweet het hoe *corrupt* jou *language* is, *my bra*, dan sou ek maar dié stukkie *mind* vir myself gehou het.

Toe *scheme* ek, dis mos maar eintlik hoe die *masses* praat, of hoe?

Wie is ek nou om vir die man en sy tjommie te *preach*? Ek *mean*, vat ons *favourite* Kaapse koerant, Die *"sunshine in my life"*, aka die *Son*, *for instance*.

Wat sou die *masses* nou *worry* oor een of ander awaregse misbruik van die taal so lank hulle dit verstaan? Nei wat, dis eintlik duidelik. Koerante is mos nie gemaak om Wagter se hok te *line* vir warmte in die winter nie.

Hulle is daar om gelees te word, of hoe? Die enigste *system* wat *corrupt* is, is die ene wat *dictate* dat ons nie mag skryf soos ons praat nie.

Kyk net hoe't die ou Nederlandse ballies *gereact* toe *Cape Dutch* sy kop uitgesteek het in Van Riebeek se *times*. Hulle was so gekant teen dit soos die Katolieke teen *condoms* en dié goed.

Hulle moes maar net *accept* dat die taal verander soos wat *society* verander en *develop*. Súlke koerante het eintlik die *guts* om dit sê hoe dit is.

Die *Son* steek gevaarlik uit met sy stories en dis hoekom ek hom *like*; hy praat met my. Ons is op 'n *level*. Hulle *mince* nie hulle woorde soos wat 'n Sexy Boy se hare *mince* nie.

En toe besluit ek om vir daai *high* and *mighty's* 'n woordeboek te *mix* van hoe die *masses* praat. Ek roep hom die "Oxford to Athlone Advanced Tabloid Taalboek".

Van boobs, Okapi's en Gatsby Dite's, tot tjoekie tjommies en tikkoppe, my lanie.

Die taal is mos 'n mengelmoes van uitdrukkinge, 'n *fruit cocktail* van *expressions*.

Dis die kern van wie jy is en hoe jy met ander mense *communicate*. *True*, partykeer is dit rof, rou en onbeskof, maar dit *reflect* mos ons *society, so why not?*

Boobs/Tits – Borste
Bliksem – Om iemand fisies seer te maak/'n slegte persoon (sien ook "donner")
Boere/Cops – Die polisie
Beaulah – Mooi man
China – Vriend
Cherry – Jou meisie
Donner – Om iemand fisies seer te maak/'n slegte persoon (sien ook "bliksem")
Duidelik – Iets wat goed of reg is
Eish – Uitdrukking van verbasing
Fadala – Klaar/Verby
Gatsby/Gatsby Dite – Geholde brood met vulsel
Gatvol – Moeg, nie meer lus vir iets nie.
Jislaaik – Uitdrukking van verbasing
Laaitie – Jong seun
Laaik – Om van iets te hou
Maak sterk – Om vir iets te vra
Makwerekwere – Immigrant (wettig of onwettig)
Moegoe – Slegte persoon, krimineel
Moffie – Homoseksuele man
My Bra – Vriend
Lanie – Meer bevoorregde persoon/wit persoon
Nommer (26, 27, 28) – 'n Bendelid (wat gewoonlik in die tronk is of was)
Skhokho – "Die Man", "*main* konyn", "baas van die plaas"
Skokiaan – Tuisgebroude bier
Smart – Om van iets te hou
Tjoekie – Tronk
Tjom/Tjommie – Vriend
Tokoloshe – Mitologiese Afrika ondiertjie

Van finansies tot profiele. Van politieke verslaggewing tot skinderstories. Van kosrubrieke tot ondersoekend joernalistiek. Van sportberiggewing tot gesondheidskwessies. Media24 het dit. Dit maak nie saak in watter tip joernalistieke loopbaan jy belangstel nie. As Afrika se voorste uitgewer, drukker en verspreider van koerante tydskrifte en verwante digitale produkte, het ons 'n loopbaan vir jou. Jy kan jou potensiaal by meer as 55 koerante 56 tydskrifte en sewe toonaangewende webtuistes uitleef. Bykans 120 miljoen koerante en 130 miljoen tydskrift

word jaarliks gedruk, terwyl die webtuistes sowat een miljoen unieke besoekers per maand het. Boonop vorm Educor en Via Afrika ook deel van die groep. Educor is die grootste verskaffer van private onderwys in Afrika, terwyl Via Afrika die beheermaatskappy van verskeie sake-ondernemings in die boek uitgewery, verspreiding, kleinhandel, vermaak en privaat opvoedkundebedryf is. As 'n student van die joernalistiek sal jy by dié grootste uitgewersbedryf in Afrika altyd êrens 'n holte vir jou voet vind.

Media24

HOU JOU IN VOELING. MET WOORDE.

Media24 Korporatiewe Kommunikasie

skok

enigste reklame

AL gehoor van *Titti-opkoptus* – die gevreesde "vrou-agtige uitgroeisel, hoofsaaklik op die hoof van mans"? Dan is jy waarskynlik nie 'n *Son*-leser nie. Of jy was nie vanjaar by die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees op Oudtshoorn nie.

Want volgens die poniekoerant *Son* se reklameveldtog vanjaar by hierdie einste fees is dié virus die gevolg van Bladsy 3-sindroom. Dis eenvoudig as 'n man te lank of te veel na die bostuklose "dames" op die *Son* se derde bladsy staar, groei 'n kaalborsvrou by sy kop uit.

Tannies (en ooms) het in hul koeldrank gestik en kinders het verbouereerd gegiggel elke keer wanneer 'n verslonste middeljarige man met 'n lewensgrootte kaalborspop op sy nek hulle 'n skimpskrif in die hand stop. Dié strooibiljet, wat soos die pamflette in medisyne-verpakkings lyk, vertel lesers van *titti-opkoptus* en bevat 'n eksplisiete foto van 'n kaalborsvrou.

Maar dit was nie die einde van die veldtog nie.

Die *Son* het 'n Spartaanse woonwa op die hoek van die twee besigste strate op Oudtshoorn staangemaak. Die woonwa is omskep in 'n ambulans met 'n loergaatjie waardeur feesgangers na 'n regte bostuklose model, wat op 'n man se kop sit, kon koekeloer.

En nog is dit het einde niet.

Motoriste onderweg na die fees is begroet met reuse waarskuwingsborde wat soos amptelike padborde gelyk het. Die boodskap: "Waarskuwing: Page 3-sindroom kwarantyn gebied" (sic). Ontstoke boere het geëis dat die borde onmiddellik verwyder moet word, want hulle het die moontlike impak daarvan op die volstruisbedryf so kort ná voëlgriep in die Oos-Kaap uitgebreek het, gevrees.

Die fees het skaars begin of die *Son* het ingestem om die woord "kwarantyn" van die borde te verwyder.

Dit lyk asof die poniepers hom die reg toegeëien het om minagtend op elke moontlike gebied te wees. Ook reklame. Die *Son* was uit daarop om te skok, nie net in die koerant nie, maar ook met hul openbare beeld.

Mnr. Steve Immelman, *Son*-projekbestuurder, verduidelik die veldtog as volg: "Die veldtog het gepoog om humor en pret aan die handelsmerk te koppel. Die *Son* is 'n pret-publikasie en dáárom die veldtog. Ons wou nuus maak en ons het."

Volgens hom is die bladsy 3-meisie "een van die *Son* se vele sterk punte wat ons blitsvinnig die grootste verkoper in die Wes-Kaap gemaak het."

"Ons navorsing het gewys dat die bladsy 3-meisie geweldige nuus vir die publikasie maak, almal praat daaroor wanneer daar oor die *Son* gepraat word."

Hy meen die KKNK-veldtog was in goeie smaak. "Ons het honderde mense aan die loer gekry, alles in 'n goeie gees sonder om mense aanstoot te gee."

Mnr. Charl Nel, direkteur van die advertensie-agentskap 9November Unie, wat vir die *Son* se veldtog verantwoordelik was, sê: "Die boodskap wat oorgedra moes word is dat die

ktaktiek

ne vir poniepers

die *son* se reklameveldtog op die klein karoo nasionale kunstefees laat dit lyk asof die poniepers hulle die reg toegeëien het om op elke denkbare vlak te skok - nie net binne die bladsye van hul koerante nie. en die hoofstroommedia raak kriewelrig hieroor.

lucille botha het probeer vasstel wat die motivering hiervoor is.

Son veel meer as net die bladsy 3-meisie is. Mense wat nie die *Son* lees nie, is geneig om neer te kyk op *Son*-lesers en bladsy 3 is een van die probleme wat nie-*Son*-lesers met die koerant het."

Die tong-in-die-kies karakter en ander invalshoek van poniepersnuus en die boodskap dat die *Son* nie bang is om nuusstories wat gewone koerante halfhartig dek, na te jaag nie, moes volgens mnr. Nel ook oorgedra word.

Hy meen dit is uit jaloesie dat hoofstroomkoerante 'n bohaai gemaak het oor die veldtog.

"Die *Son* is 'n ongelooflik gefokusde produk met 'n bestuurspan wat hul mark goed verstaan. Dit veroorsaak jaloesie van ander produkte wat iets vir almal probeer wees en in die proses 'n grys produk in die mark raak."

Ná die *Titti-opkoptus*-advertensie in *Die Burger* se hoofkoerant verskyn het, het redaksielede van dié koerant 'n petisie opgestel waarin hulle eis dat die *Son* se advertensies nie langer in hul koerant verskyn nie.

Mnr. Arrie Rossouw, redakteur van *Die Burger*, sê die koerant se advertensiebeleid eis dat advertensies met 'n seksuele ondertoon of verwysing nie in die hoofkoerant geplaas word nie.

"Met die keuring van die advertensie was die waarnemende redakteur, mnr. Leopold Scholtz, onder die indruk dat die advertensie in 'n bylae gaan verskyn en hy het toestemming daarvoor gegee. Maar so 'n advertensie sal normaalweg nooit in ons hoofkoerant verskyn nie."

Volgens Rossouw het 'n aantal gebeure aanleiding gegee dat die redaksie oor meer as net die advertensie gegrief was met die *Son* – onder andere valse stories dat *Die Burger* hul personeel dwing om by dié poniekoerant uit te help op 'n stadium wat die *Son* aan't oorskakel was na 'n dagblad.

Sedertdien is die verskille uitgestryk en Rossouw gee nie om dat die *Son* in *Die Burger* adverteer nie, mits dit ooreenstem met die koerant se advertensie-beleid.

"Waar moet hulle anders adverteer? *Die Burger* se lesers is nie heeltemal die *Son* se teikenmark nie, maar dit is die naaste wat hulle daaraan gaan kry."

Alhoewel hy nie saamstem daarmee nie, het Rossouw nie regtig 'n probleem met die *Son* se bemarkingsveldtog nie.

"By feeste is daar baie bemarkingsgeraas. As jy dus 'n boodskap wil oordra, moet dit skerp wees. Skoktaktiek is die beste vorm van reklame. Die *Son* het 'n klein begroting gehad om mee te werk en moes gaan nadink oor wat hulle reeds tot hul beskikking het en dit >>

foto: lucille botha • grafika: marie-louise du bois

"by feeste is daar baie bemarkingsgeraas. as jy 'n boodskap wil oordra, moet dit skerp wees. skoktaktiek is die beste vorm van reklame"

foto: lucille botha • grafika: marie-louise du bois

<< hul voordeel gebruik."

In 'n mate is hy dankbaar vir die *Son*, sê Rossouw, want "dit het *Die Burger* geheb om 'n meer gefokusde produk te raak".

Volgens hom kan die koerant nou beter na hul lesers – tipies diegene met 'n hoër LSM – se behoeftes omsien, want die *Son* kyk na die ander gros. Hy is ook seker dat die *Son* 'n deur oopgemaak het vir mense wat voorheen nooit koerant gelees het nie.

Akademici is nie so goedgesind teenoor die *Son* se reklameveldtog nie.

Prof. Lizette Rabe, hoof van die departement joernalistiek aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, sê prontuit dat publieke pornografie nie deel is van 'n beskaafde land nie.

Volgens prof. Guy Berger, hoof van die Rhodes Universiteit se departement joernalistiek en media-studies, lyk dit asof die *Son*, met verwysing na hul optrede by die KKNK, eerder in die pornografiese as die nuusbedryf is

Wat gaan die ponies in toom hou? Baie voel 'n eie etiese kode is die oplossing, maar sal dit werklik die potensiële skade wat die poniepers aan die samelewing kan rig, keer?

"As die *Son* as 'n outentieke koerant gesien wil word, moet dit die gedragskode van alle ander koerante volg. Hierdie kode is vrywillig, en hulle kan hul eie ding doen, maar as hulle nie daarop inkoop nie, bevestig dit dat hulle hulself nie as ware joernaliste sien nie," sê Berger.

Hy meen daar behoort geen uitsonderings vir die poniepers te wees nie. "Daar is geen rede waarom die poniepers minder eties moet wees as enige ander regte koerante nie."

Rossouw glo ook die poniepers moenie oor 'n ander kam geskeer word as die hoofstroom-media nie. "Hulle het ander norme as ons, maar hulle moet ook die gevolge van hul optrede dra."

prikkelplesier of sirkulasietier?

gebruik koerante vroue om sensasie te wek en só sirkulasie te bou? waaroor het die bohaai oor die "kaal-advertensie" gegaan? en wat van die berugte bladsy 3-meisie? ema buffel het gaan ondersoek instel.

foto: akkerliefies

WALGLIK, skokkend, aanstootlik, onbetaamlik. Dít is hoe woedende lesers van die Gautengse koerant *The Star* 'n advertensie van 'n naak vrou beskryf het.

Dit was Desember 2000 en *The Star* se telefone het gegons met lesers wat die koerant gekritiseer het omdat dit die advertensie gepubliseer het. Die Suid-Afrikaanse Owerheid vir Advertensie-Standaarde van Suid-Afrika (ASA) het ook baie oproepe van mense ontvang wat gekla het oor die advertensie en *The Star* se gebruik daarvan.

Die omstrede advertensie was vir die modehuis Yves Saint Laurent se nuwe Opium-parfuum en was 'n foto van Sophie Dahl, toe 23-jarige model en kleinkind van die skrywer Roald Dahl, wat kaal op haar rug lê met niks anders as goue hoë hakskoene, 'n halsnoer en 'n armband nie. Die advertensie is in Brittanje deur die Britse ASA verbied omdat dit volgens hulle vernederend teenoor vroue is.

Op *The Star* se webwerf verskyn etlike menings van lesers. Verskeie *bloggers* het ook deelgeneem aan die debat.

Op die webwerf sê die koördineeder van die Christian Youth-groep aan die Oos-Rand, Stephen Sampson, dat hy baie teleurgesteld was in *The Star* omdat hulle die beeld gepubliseer het wat voorstel dat "pornografie aanvaarbaar is as 'n metode om produkte aan die publiek bekend te stel".

Volgens Sampson is die publiek geprovokeer. Hy meen die rede hoekom mense nie oor die advertensie gekla het nie, is omdat dit nog net in tydskrifte was, en nie op buitelug-reklameborde soos in Brittanje nie.

"Ek het 'n ernstige probleem met die advertensie en ek gaan 'n formele klag by die ASA lê."

Maak dit saak waar die foto verskyn het? 'n Naakfoto bly 'n naakfoto, of dit in 'n tydskrif of 'n koerant of op 'n reklamebord is.

Nog 'n *Star*-leser, Judith Meyers van Roseacre, Johannesburg, het in die meningspeiling gesê: "Ek is vies en geskok dat só 'n advertensie bestaan. Dit blyk dat vryheid in hierdie land beteken dat mense geforseer word om pornografie in verskillende vorms te sien. Ek geniet elke dag julle koerant, maar dit het my regtig gewalg."

Drukmedia én die nuwe media waarin die vroulike liggaam gebruik – of misbruik – word, is dus aktueel. 'n Webwerf wat "entrepreneurs" van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch geskep het met sogenaamde "akkerliefies" (sien foto's) was ook kontroversieel.

Volgens 'n berig op die nuuswebwerf IOL het 'n appèl-komitee van die Persombudsman van Suid-Afrika verlede jaar in Kaapstad besin of die poniekoerant *Son* naak- of halfnaakfoto's kan publiseer. Die appèl is deur Jessica Samson aangeteken wat meen die gebruik van naakfoto's om koerante te verkoop, is beledigend en 'n oortreding van grondwetlike regte. Dit misken ook menswaardigheid en geslagsgelykheid, het sy gesê.

Die klag is deur die Persombudsman, Ed Linington, afgewys. Samson het gesê *Son* het die professionele perskode, wat alle koerante onderskryf, oortree. Etiese kodes is egter nie wetlik afdwingbaar nie, maar deel van die media se selfregulering. Volgens 'n berig op die webwerf van Marketing Web word koerante van die Film- en Publikasiewet van 1996, wat verskeie riglyne neerlê, vrygestel van riglyne oor die uitbeelding van seks en geweld.

Waaroor gaan die debat oor die *Son* se foto's? As jy ingaan op die *Son* se webblad, kry jy die volgende:

"Lus vir meer as net elke Vrydag se bladsy 3-*girl* in ons koerant? Lus vir meer as 'n enkele foto? Nou kan jy bederf word met 'n fotofees van ons verleidelike, sexy bladsy 3-meisies."

Eintlik gaan dit dus oor meer as slegs naakfoto's in die publikasie self. Op die internet kry jy nou 'n "fees" van bladsy 3-meisies. Charl Davids, 'n sielkundige van die Trauma Sentrum in die Kaap, 'n nie-regeringsorganisasie, het gesê dat die idee van 'n vrou as seksobjek deur die media in stand gehou word.

> mense van enige ouderdom, wat R5 op hul selfoon het, kan dus wettig halfnaakfoto's van die internet aflaai

Davids sê "Vroue in half-naak foto's in *Son* word gesien as 'n grap. In plaas daarvan om die kwessie aan te spreek, laat vroue toe dat die siklus voortgaan deur hul stilswye. Vroue sal aanhou om hul liggame ten toon

te stel, want daar is 'n mark daarvoor."

Die ontwikkeling van die tegnologie bring mee dat sulke pornografie nie net 'n publikasie of op 'n rekenaarskerm gesien kan word nie, maar letterlik saam met jou kan stap. Kyk bietjie wat sê die *Son* se webwerf verder.

"As jou lus vir ons *girls* groot is, sms (dit kos R5) dan die kodewoord 'Son' na die nommer 36900 om 'n geheime kode te kry waardeur jy 24 uur-toegang kry na ons witwarm foto-galerye hier op die web. En as jy nie net wil kyk nie, kan jy selfs aan hulle raak ook! Op die rekenaarskerm natuurlik."

Mense van enige ouderdom, wat R5 op hul selfoon het, kan dus wettig halfnaakfoto's van die internet aflaai.

Die rekenarisering van ons wêreld sedert die vroeë 1990's het letterlik meegebring dat beelde en boodskappe voortdurend ons daaglikse lewe beïnvloed. Gedagtes en ervaringe van die werklikheid word só gevorm.

Volgens 'n berig op IOL is dit 'n feit dat fotoredakteurs meer oor naakfoto's bots as oor foto's wat tonele wys van geweld of dood. Associated Press, een van die wêreld se grootste nuusagentskappe, weier om volle naaktheid te publiseer, behalwe in uiterste omstandighede. Volgens die biografieë van die "meisies" in die *Son* se bladsy 3-onderskrifte, is baie van hulle professionele ontkleedansers by ontkleeklubs. Met die toename in naakfoto's van vroue in die media rondom ons, van drukmedia tot selfone, sou 'n mens dink dat meer mense hulle daaroor sou uitspreek.

Verlede jaar het slegs een persoon *Son* by die Geslagskommissie aangekla. Volgens IOL het sy spesifiek gekla oor die bladsy 3-meisies wat sy as vernederend teenoor vroue gesien het.

Die akademici Karen Ross en Carolyn M Byerly skryf in hul boek *Women and Media* dat die meeste hedendaagse studies, ten spyte van die bemagtiging van vroue, nie net in die mediabedryf nie, steeds met geslagsongelykheid worstel. Ross en Byerly meen ook dit lyk spesifiek of die media vasgeval het in die groef van tradisionalisme en stereotipering.

Juis die besluitnemers in die media moet dus meer bewus wees van die invloed van die media op die samelewing. Hoe vroue daarin uitgebeeld word, is krities. Die media moet 'n rol speel om denke oor stereotipering, veral van vroue as seksobjekte, te verander.

Anders gaan vroue se liggame steeds uitgebuit word, of dit vir parfuum-advertensies of poniekoerante is.

foto's: akkerliefies

my kerk is net my werk

janice burnice johannes

gesels met die redakteur van *son-noord*, dirk lotriet, én met mense op straat,oor die stereotipering van kerke - oftewel geestesgenootskappe - in poniekoerante.

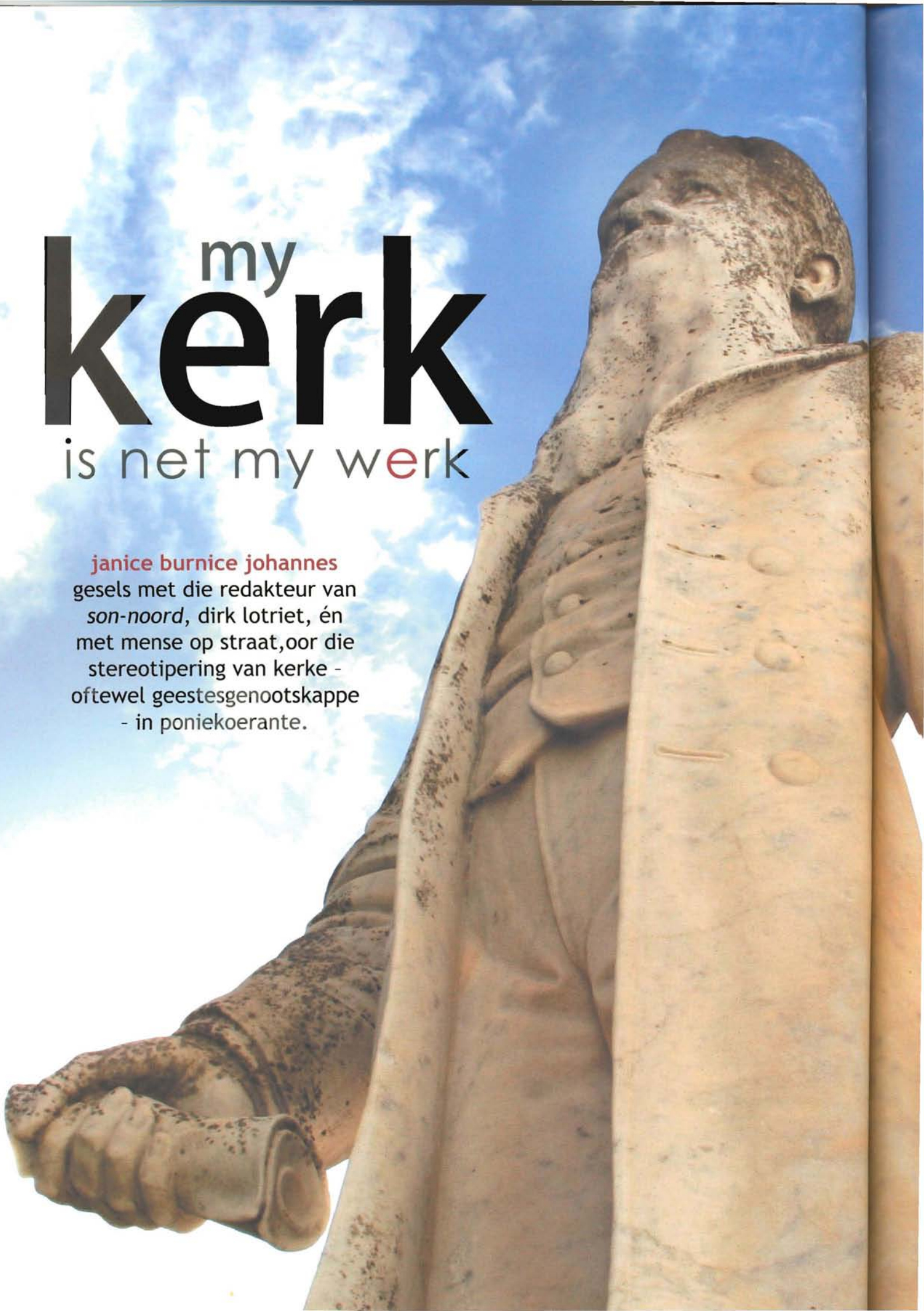


foto: anneli groenewald

GAY 'verneuk-dominee' mag vir drie weke nie preek. Kerk weier om man te betaal vir bouwerk. Die lekker Ds. Becker hak af met buurvrou. 'Moenie met *Son* praat' pleit benoude pastoor.

Dié soort hoofopskrifte op plakkate langs hoofweë laat 'n mens wonder: het poniekoerante hul mes in vir kerke en hul predikante?

"*Son* sien alles" – blykbaar tot binne in 'n kerk, tempel, tent en moskee oftewel enige geloofsgenootskap se gebou waar mense bymekaar kom om hul geloof te beoefen.

Woorde van die voormalige popgroep die Fugees se treffer "*Ready Or Not, Here I Come, You Can't Hide, Gonna Find You...*" kom in mens se gedagtes op. Maak wat jy wil, dit lyk nie asof jy *Son* sal kan ontduik nie.

Die onderhoud is in Dirk Lotriet se kantoor in Mediapark, Johannesburg. So maklik, dit was nie eens nodig om 'n afspraak te maak nie. Dis midwinter in Gauteng, maar die son skyn so helder soos 'n somersdag buite.

Lotriet kyk 'n mens vierkantig in die oë en vir 'n oomblik lyk dit asof hy nie weet of hy bly of bekommerd moet wees nie. Ek gryp dus die geleentheid: is dit *Son* se missie om geestelike leiers en geloofsdenominasies by te kom?

Hy sit agteroor in sy stoel, terwyl sy een hand liggies oor sy rekenaar se toetsbord streel.

"Dis nie asof ons 'n spesifieke kerk of geloofsgenootskap van meet af aan teiken nie. Maar met sulke stories probeer ons hierdie mense in hul magsposisies op hul tone hou. Dis in 'n mate net om te keer dat hulle nie uit lyn uit trap nie," sê Lotriet.

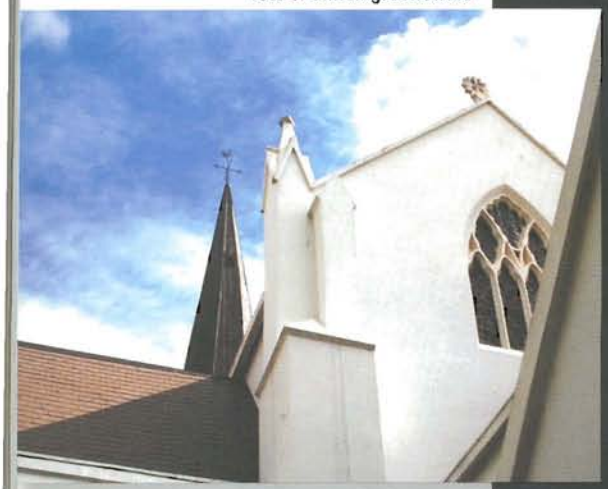
Dink hy nie omdat so baie sulke stories in poniekoerante geplaas word, dat menige denominasie se naam deur die modder gesleep word nie? En is dit 'n tendens om op kerke as nuuspunt te fokus? En waarom?

Maar eers wil hy darem net sê: "Laat ek een aspek uit die weg ruim voor ons verder gaan. *Son-Noord* verskil van die Kaapse *Son*. Ons kom nog steeds slegs een keer per week uit, in teenstelling met die een in die Kaap. Ons *Son* het in totaal seker drie tot vier kerkstories gepubliseer."

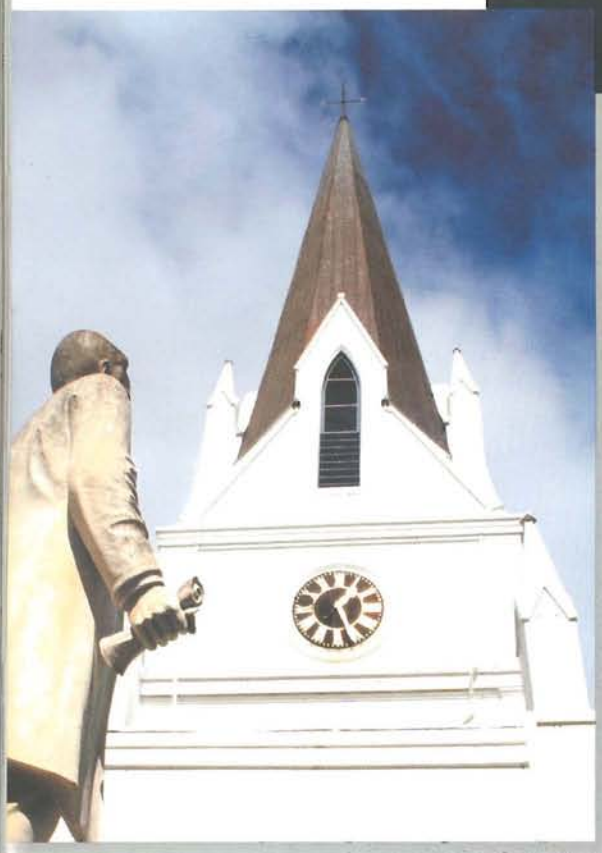
En dan: "Wanneer dit wel gebeur dat Dominee sy vrou met die buurvrou verneuk, is dit beslis in die publiek se belang."

Lotriet gaan voort: "Geestelike leiers is mense in gesagsposisies en het in baie opsigte veel meer mag as die parlementariërs. En dis juis op grond daarvan dat volgelinge, hele gemeenskappe, verwag dat geestelike leiers opreg sal lewe." >>

foto's: anneli groenewald



"kyk, geestelike leiers is mense in gesagsposisies en het baie meer mag as parlementariërs. en juis op grond daarvan verwag sowel volgelinge as gemeenskappe dat hulle opreg moet lewe. maar hulle is nie altyd so eties as wat hulle moet wees nie"



<< "Maar dit gebeur al hoe meer dat baie van hulle nie altyd so eties lewe as wat hulle moet nie."

Maar is dit dan eties van poniekoerante om die naam van 'n kerk, of 'n denominasie se reputasie, skade aan te doen?

"Ongelukkig is dit 'n kwessie van assosiasie. Enige persoon wat homself in die publiek se oog plaas, of dit nou in 'n kerk is, en sy magsposisie misbruik, se misstappe moet op die lappe gebring word. Dis nie 'n geval dat *Son-Noord* daarop uit is om 'n geestesgenootskap te teiken nie."

Hulle werk dus binne 'n etiese kode?

"Ja natuurlik het ons 'n etiese kode."

Toe begin hy sy lessenaar se laaie deurgaan, maar die gesoek het niks opgelewer nie. En toe sit hy die soektog op sy rekenaar voort, ook sonder sukses. Na dié vrugtelose gesoek gee hy moed op.

"Ek het ongelukkig nie nou een in my besit nie, maar jy kan gerus ons nasionale redakteur, Ingo Capraro, vra," sê hy.

Gaaf, kan jy sommer sy telefoonnommer gee?

"Ongelukkig is dit etiket in die bedryf dat joernaliste en senior werkers se nommers nie uitgegee moet word nie," sê Lotriet.

Dus dankie vir die onderhoud en voort met inligting soek vir my storie: Die volgende stap is na *Son* se webwerf toe. Na 'n paar vinnige klikke kan mens darem die nasionale redakteur se e-pos-adres kry. Maar die redakteur het nie my navraag beantwoord nie.

En toe is dit na die mense op straat om húl menings te kry oor dié brandende kwessie. As die koerant se mense nie wil kommentaar lewer nie, wat sê Jan en San in die straat?

"Ek glo dat die *Son* wat ons hier elke Vrydag in Johannesburg kry, nie so smetterig is soos die een wat Kapenaars daagliks kry nie!" sê 'n vrou in Aucklandpark.

"Baie van die stories in poniekoerante is snert. En ek glo dat dit verkeerd is om die naam van 'n kerk te plaas. Nie net veroorsaak dit konflik tussen geestesgenootskappe nie, maar dit veroorsaak dat mense nie meer kerk toe wil gaan nie!" sê 'n lidmaat van die NG Kerk op Stellenbosch, wat glad nie die koerant lees nie. Volgens hom is die *Son* niks minder as "'n *cheap, low class* koerant wat 'n ouderdomsbeperking kort" nie.

"Son het een keer 'n storie gepubliseer van 'n imam wat glo seks in 'n moskee gehad het, wat ek met met 'n klomp sout ingeneem het. Geloof word in die algemeen altyd negatief in die media uitgebeeld. En poniekoerante se artikels daaroor is net olie op die vuur!" sê 'n moslem-vrou van Kaapstad.

"Ek's jammer, maar ek lees nie daai stront nie. Dis net lae lakke wat *Son* lees!" sê 'n vrou van die Calvynse kerk in Northpine, Brackenfell.

"Ek lees die snert in *Son* wanneer ek die dag 'n lekker lag nodig het, want dis mos net goedkoop vermaak. Maar ek sal dit nie self koop nie. Hulle joernaliste moet weer training kry, want van wanneer af het die Nuwe Apostoliese kerk dan nou pastore?"

So sê 'n lidmaat van die Nuwe Apostoliese Kerk in Kraaifontein.

Terug na Lotriet. Wat het hy oor die negatiewe kommentaar oor die *Son* te sê?

"Sloppy joernalistiek gebeur in gevalle waar joernaliste nie hul huiswerk behoorlik doen nie. Dis jammer wanneer so iets gebeur, maar ongelukkig gebeur dit soms met die beste van ons."

So, dis maar "tough luck" as jy die een is wat deur die *Son* "raakgesien" is, en dit 'n joernalis is wat nie sy of haar huiswerk gedoen het nie.

Inderdaad. Die *Son* sien alles.

Soms ten regte, en soms ten onregte.

dis 'n lang pad huis toe

foto: loanna hoffmann

die "tabloidisation" van die media beteken onder meer dat inligting in klein, kragtige sarsies afgevuur moet word om lesers se vlietende aandag te behou. maar hoe gemaak met 'n storie wat nie in dié maatlyne inpas nie? neem die storie van "die burgemeester se plan". die doelwit was optimisities; naïef volgens sommiges: teen junie 2005 sal geen kinders op die strate van die kaapse middestad leef nie. Só het me. nomaindia mfeketo, burgemeester van die moederstad en beskermvrou van die smile-a-child-veldtog, die vorige jaar aangekondig. toe junie aanbreek, het sy volgens kaapse dagblaaie gesê die probleem is meer kompleks as wat aanvanklik vermoed is. **eppy strydom** wou weet wat die situasie só ingewikkeld maak.

foto's: loanna hoffmann

onder 'n brug aan meulstraat se kant het dié kinders hul blyplek met weggooi-meubels ingerig

DIE atmosfeer is uitbundig in Langstraat, Kaapstad. Dit wemel van jongmense, mooi mense, keurig uitgesoekte *outfits*. Tussen kuierplekke en kafees meng hip-hop, jazz en *chill-out trance* met vrolike stemme en die geklingel van glase. 'n Bottel bier spat van 'n balkon in duisend stukkies op die sypaadjie. Dit is Saterdagaand en 'n parfuum van vermaak hang in die lug.

Sy hou 'n blom gebuig uit bloudraad in haar hand terwyl sy al om die man met die lang, blonde hare fladder wat reeds met sy hande na sy beursie vroetel. Hulle gaan staan wanneer hy die donasie oorhandig – 'n handvol munte wat sy seënend aanvaar. Wanneer hy aanloop, huppel sy terug in die rigting vanwaar hulle gekom het – die bloudraad-blom 'n towerstaf van geluk.

As jy haar volg, sien jy dat sy deur 'n groep ouer kinders aangeneem is.

Wanneer die strate leegloop en die dag breek, kruip hulle deur die tralies van 'n krot waaruit 'n bittersuur stank opslaan.

Die bewusssyn, goddank, reeds uitgedoof.

dié kinders, hier op die parade in kaapstad, is skaars groot genoeg om oor die toonbank te sien, maar op tien, elf jaar is hulle reeds hul eie baas

Daisy* is een van sowat 180 hawelose kinders wat in die strate van Kaapstad bedel.

"Straatkinders" noem die media – en dus ook die gemeenskap (of is dit andersom?) – hulle.

"Asof hulle 'n ander soort spesie is," sê me. Sandra Morreira, direkteur van die nie-regeringsorganisasie (NRO) The Homestead aan die bokant van Strandstraat.

Twee stereotipes word meestal in die media geskets: weerlose slagoffers van armoede en brutaliteit, of klein, bedwelmde misdadigers.

Engele en Duiwels.

Maar die rand van die munt – so ooglopend sigbaar dat 'n mens dit miskyk – is dat hulle in die eerste plek net kind is.

Mnr. Gavin Joachims, koördineerder van sosiale ontwikkeling van die onderneming Opheffing van die Sentrale Sakekern (CCID) in Kaapstad, werk saam met welsynsbeamptes van NRO's om die kinders se vertroue te wen. In die middestad se strate, op die Parade en in Die Gat, helder die gesigte op wanneer hulle hom sien. Glimlagte. Hande wat bladskud. "Hoezit Gavin, bru?"

Die reuk van gom duisel uit die plastiek-sakke wat 'n paar in die hand klem.

"Jy kan nie die kinders se omstandighede veralgemeen nie," sê Joachims toe ons 'n rukkie later aanstap. Iets soos "armoede" speel in die meeste gevalle 'n rol, maar nie altyd nie. Talle kinders word uit die huis geskop omdat hulle gay is. Maar baie keer is dit aangeleerde gedrag. Mense gee makliker vir 'n dogtertjie geld. En gay seks is lonend.

"Terloops, Daisy is 'n seun."

Berigte in die hoofstroom-media wek telkens simpatie vir dié kinders se omstandighede. Die poniepers weer, skep dikwels 'n uitsiglose prentjie van die gemeenskap waaruit die meeste van hulle kom. Elk van dié raamwerke is problematies.

Simpatie veroorsaak dat mense aanhou om vir kinders geld of kos te gee. Dít hou hulle op straat, sê Culum McGregor, eienaar van die jazz-klub Kennedy's in Langstraat.

Die poniepers versterk die negatiewe stereotipes onder kinders oor die omgewing waarbinne hulle grootword, aldus Morreira.

"ek het nie omgegee of ek lewe of doodgaan nie. die *crime*, die *drugs*, die slegte vriende . . ."

"Kyk, hul situasie is benard. Maar ek dink nie mense besef hoe baie dié kinders lees nie – en hoe wyd dié invloed strek nie. Die kinders dink daar is geen hoop vir hulle nie – dat dit maar is hoe die wêreld werk."

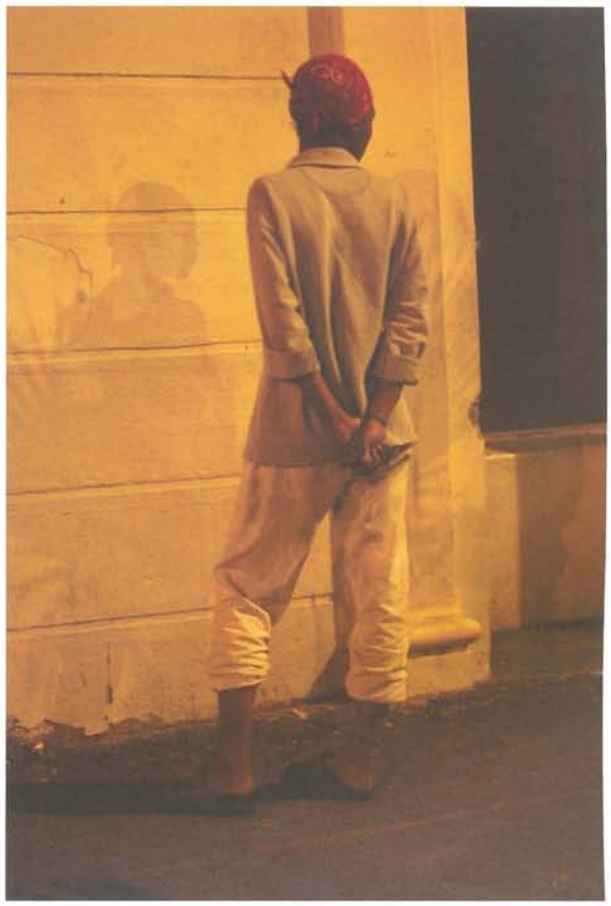
Hoewel daar die afgelope tyd meer positiewe berigte in die Kaapse poniekoerante verskyn het oor byvoorbeeld "tikkers" wat hul verslawing oorkom het, is die algemene trant dat tikkers hul toekoms klaar vernietig het.

Só skryf 'n "berader" onlangs: "Tik is een van die gevaarlikste drugs ter wêreld. Die klomp onnosele goed wat dit gebruik, besef dit, maar hulle gee nie om nie. Ten minste nie totdat hulle daar met nikssiende oë en 'n opgeneukte liggaam op hul sterfbed lê nie. Dan verwag hulle dat mense na hulle moet omsien."

Joachims tref 'n onderskeid tussen "wegstoot-" en "aantrekfaktore". Die verlies aan een of albei ouers, 'n huislike situasie van seksuele of fisieke mishandeling en 'n omgewing van drank-en dwelmmisbruik is van die faktore wat kinders van die huis wegstoot. Dan is daar natuurlik ook ouers wat sélf op straat bly.

"Ons kry kinders wat deur hul ouers as prostitute uitgehuur word om geld in te bring," sê hy. "Of 'n pa of ma wat hul kinders laat bedel om hul tik-verslawing te finansier."

Onder die "aantrekfaktore" is 'n gebrek aan ontspanningsgeriewe in woonbuurte. Kinders kom in die stad na vermaak soek. Wanneer hulle sien hoe maklik dit is om geld in die hande te kry, is die vryheid en onafhanklikheid onweerstaanbaar. Hoekom teruggaan?



▲ op soek na geld vir seks in darlingstraat

Soos mnr. Lorenzo Davids, direkteur van die City Mission Assessment Centre in Soutrivier, dit stel: "*Big business* dink hulle is so barmhartig! En die media basuin dit uit: gratis bootritte vir straatkinders; gratis McDonalds. Die kinders in die townships lees dit en dink: 'Kom ons gaan stad toe, want die kinders daar het 'n lewe.' "

Vernietigend. Só is die invloed van die straat, sê Patrick*, 'n kind van Mitchell's Plain, wat die afgelope jaar deur City Mission se programme gewerk het en deur voogouers aangeneem is.

"Ek het nie omgegee of ek lewe of doodgaan nie," vertel hy. "Die crime, die drugs, die slegte vriende . . . Daar's een ding wat die mense van City Mission my geleer het: *Never give up to find the purpose of your life. Connect* met jou *goal*."

Die eerste stap na herstel is die besluit om "huis toe te gaan". NRO's huisves die kinders in "Plekke van Veiligheid" terwyl welsynwerkers hul families probeer opspoor en die omstandighede tuis uitpluis. Ná 'n moeisame proses van rehabilitasie, opvoeding en die ontwikkeling van menswaardigheid (dikwels dié van hele families), word hulle òf met hul ouers herenig, òf deur voogouers aangeneem.

Dit gebeur min dat suksesse soos dié die nuus haal. Volgens Davids het City Mission die afgelope jaar 120 families herenig – 'n gemiddeld van een kind elke drie dae. In Julie was dié families in Soutrivier om hul hereniging te vier. Daar was nie 'n verslaggewer in sig nie.

Ironies genoeg is een van die grootste probleme die onderlinge gevegte tussen die meer as 100 NRO's wat elk in verskillende oplossings en strategieë glo.

Terwyl sommige sopkombuise bedryf, glo ander dat dít juis die kinders op straat hou. Wat is beter? Om kinders van die strate af te haal en vaardighede te leer, of hul grondwetlike reg op vryheid van keuse te respekteer?

Sestien NRO's is deel van "die burgemeester se plan" wat beteken dat 'n deel van hul geld van die regering kom. Maar almal ding mee om die beperkte donasies van ondernemings en individue. Beskuldigings word oor en weer geslinger, maar min mense is bereid om name te noem. Filosofieë, eerder as praktiese oplossings, is die norm.

Davids het wel konkrete voorstelle. Volgens hom moet NRO's wat "net 'n voordeurdiens" (die tipiese sopkombuis of "*shelter*") lewer, uit die burgemeester se plan gesny word. Die "agterplaasdiens" is die belangrikste – om kinders en families se omstandighede tuis te verbeter en hul potensiaal te ontwikkel.

"Ja, maar kyk hoe grênd is City Mission se sentrums," sê 'n anonieme welsynwerker.

"Dit weerspieël nie die kinders se omstandighede nie en dan moet hulle weer van voor af in hul stukkende gemeenskappe aanpas."

So gaan die verdagmakery voort, terwyl die *bottom line* en beperkte spasie en tyd – "*the "pressures of the marketplace*," soos die musikant Roger Waters dit gestel het – veroorsaak dat joernaliste nie al die kante van 'n saak kan ondersoek nie. En dat sekere stories nooit verskyn nie.

Maar straatstories kan 'n belangrike bydrae tot die Suid-Afrikaanse gesprek lewer deur byvoorbeeld die owerheid aanspreeklik te hou wanneer opheffingsprogramme in arm gemeenskappe kwyn.

Daar sal altyd hoop wees.

* *Skuilname is gebruik om die kinders se identiteit te beskerm.*

science communication

the latest fad?

With growing international (and national) attention drawn to the role that scientists play in communicating about their work to the lay public, one might very well think that science communication is the latest buzz word in the world of communication.

In the last two decades science has delivered dramatic results relevant to health, survival and lifestyle. In many cases the pace of scientific change has accelerated beyond what the public can keep up with, let alone comprehend and accept - just think about advances in genetic modification or cloning technology.

Within the international scientific community there is an increasing awareness of the duty and responsibility of publicly funded scientists to make their work more accessible to the general public. For many scientists public communication does not come naturally, and even when they are willing to get involved, they need some help. Journalists, on the other hand, are often intimidated by science and don't know where to find credible science stories and media friendly scientists. Insufficient knowledge about the scientific peer review process also leads to doubts concerning the reliability of a science story.

Within a democratic society where science must be answerable to the public, there is a real need to find new and innovative ways of more effective mass communication about the benefits of science, but also about areas of concern to the general public.

The mass media undeniably is the major role player in stimulating public debate and shaping public opinion on scientific questions and issues. If scientists don't engage the media effectively, people with opposing views (anti-science) will! Silence and avoidance on the part of scientists will fuel ignorance and mistrust of science.

Scientists have to accept that they must operate within the parameters and news values of the media. Worldwide science reporting is moving away from 'celebratory' reports about 'space and dinosaurs' towards debate and issues around the impact of science on society. It's no longer "Professor, please tell us about this fantastic project?" but rather: "Explain why you are doing this research, who's funding it, what is your agenda?"

While we want to challenge (and help) the mass media to do science better, it is equally important to challenge (and help) scientists to do media better!

Just like good science, good communication requires commitment, planning, skills and appropriate levels of resources.

Science communication is not about promoting an institution, glorifying science without asking questions or one-way flow of information. Rather, it is about dialogue, engagement, respect for audience and context, science and how it matters to society and scientists as the key actors.

Through its mandate, the South African Agency for Science & Technology Advancement (SAASTA) assists in bringing science closer to society - science communication is one of SAASTA's strategies towards achieving this goal.

Some science communication activities include:

- Science & Mass Media:
  Science and media networking events, media resources and networks, science journalism training, and media partnerships for competitions.
- Communication of research to public audiences:
  Developing researchers' media and communication skills, science and society dialogue, debate and discussion forums, and focused communication efforts linked to research priority areas.
- Communication products and networks:
  Printed publications, communication tools and resources, online materials, conferences, exhibitions and science theatre.

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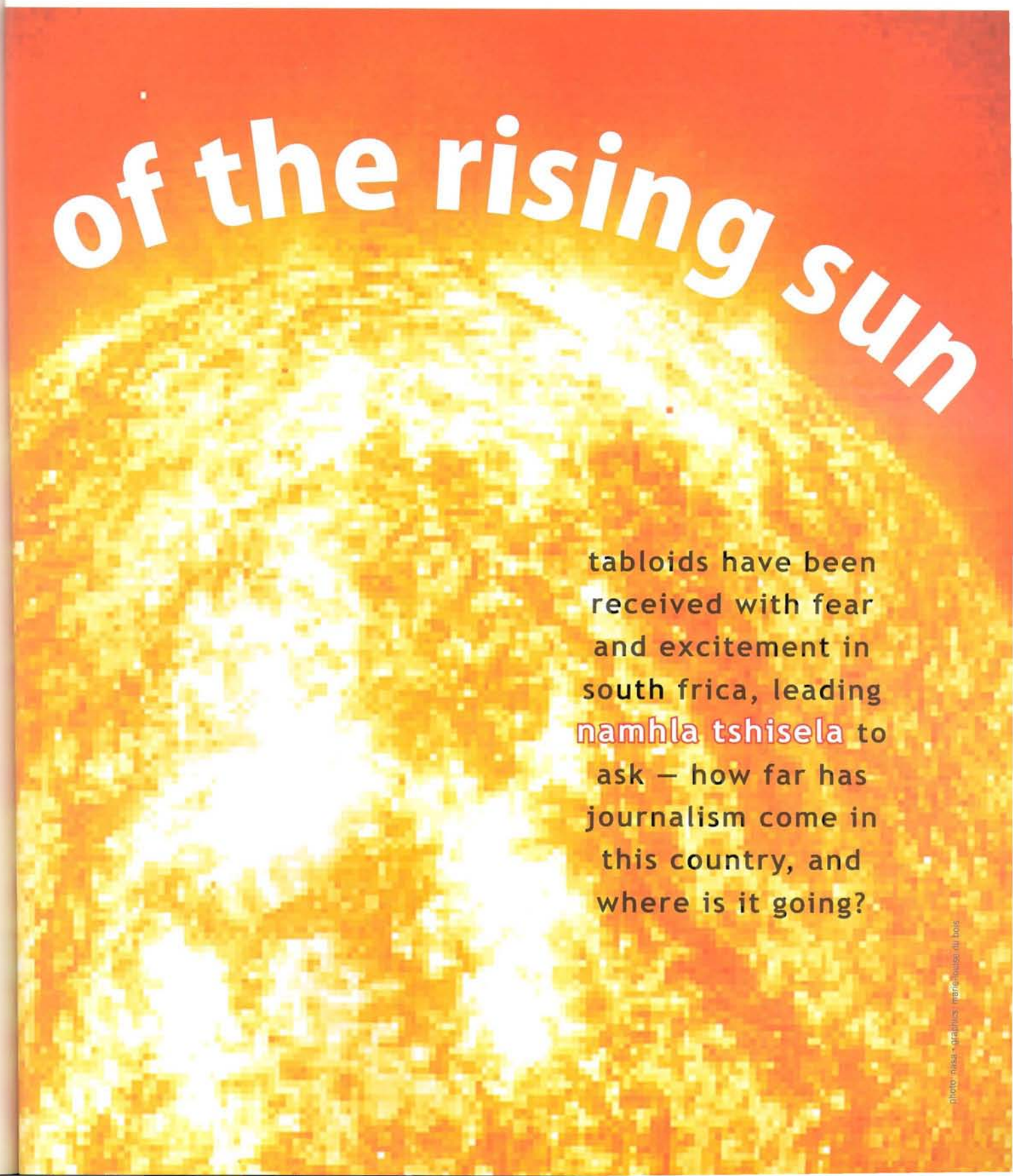
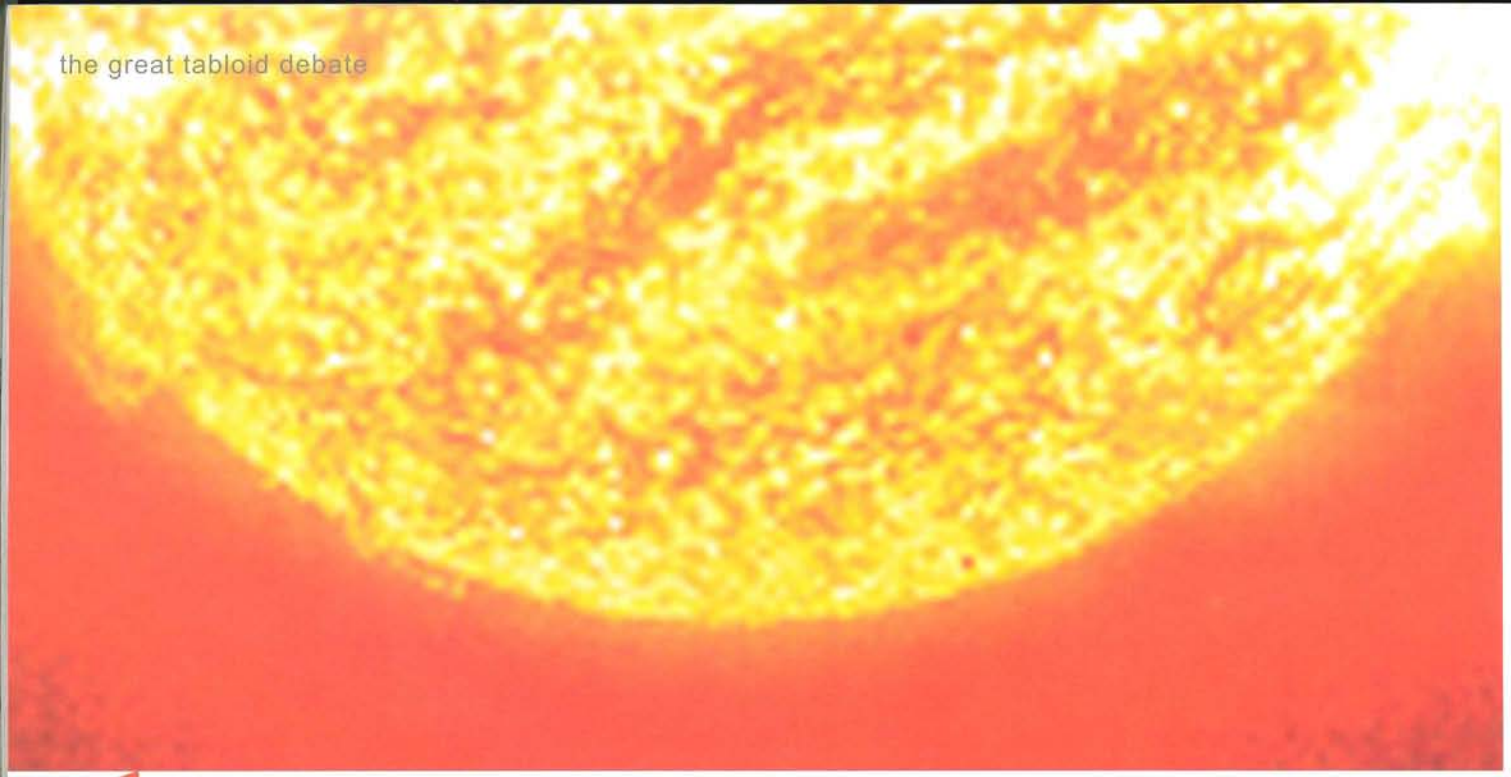
bloom and doom

of the rising sun

tabloids have been received with fear and excitement in south frica, leading namhla tshisela to ask – how far has journalism come in this country, and where is it going?





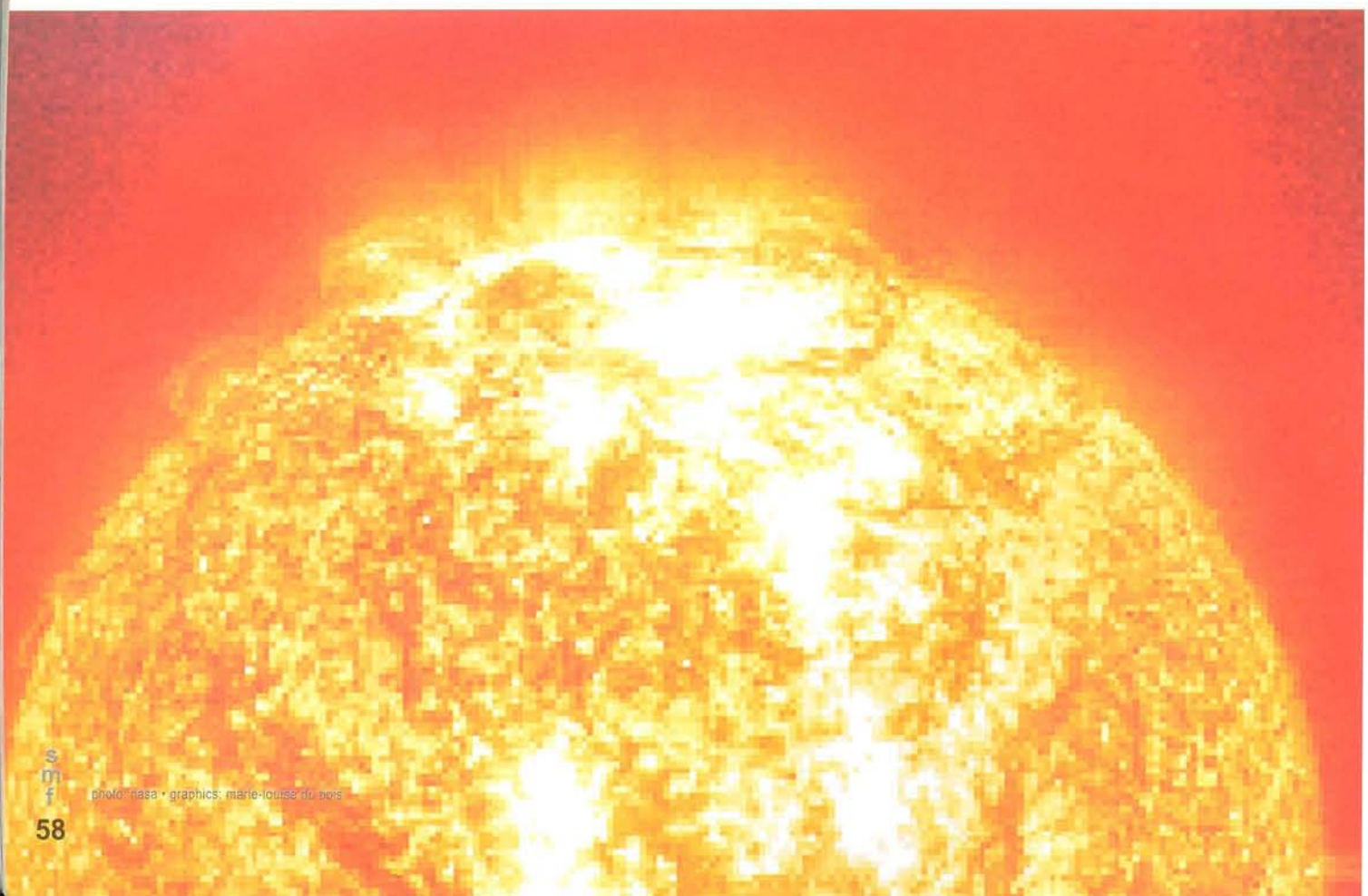
THE state of journalism has changed into something that the fathers of journalism in South Africa, Thomas Pringle and Charles Fairbairn, would barely recognise were they still alive. Thabo Leshilo, editor of the *Sowetan*, once said, "The 1970s and 1980s have gone, this year is one of tabloid journalism." Leshilo was referring to a phenomenon of the "noughties" in South Africa, something that has revolutionised the media scene.

The current state of the print media has left some media watchers perplexed, some hailing the advent of tabloids as something that could change South Africa's media landscape for the better, and some predicting its impending doom.

The debate started with the *Daily Sun*, a tabloid newspaper that has grown into a staple in the South African media diet. In its long history of the newspaper industry, the media has seen nothing like it. Before the *Daily Sun* and other tabloids, there was not a newspaper that catered for the South African working class, both black and white. "Serious" newspapers have generally been deemed inaccessible to the working class, a factor that was probably worsened by low literacy levels in South Africa.

The now defunct *ThisDay*, according to Phillip de Wet, a former journalist at the newspaper, "was very clear on its 'national' target market: educated people who prefer thoughtful political and economic coverage over the popular crime-scandal-celebrity mix. Such readers, it believed, would fall into a high living standard measurement group with significant disposable income, or would aspire to fall into that group."

Prof Anton Harber, head of the Department of Journalism at the University of the



the impact that the tabloids will have on the future south african landscape cannot be ignored. whether the *daily sun* will **outwit, outlast & outshine** all its competitors, however, remains to be seen

Witwatersrand, says "more people are reading papers, making us one of the few countries in the world where newspaper sales are going up, and that has to be a good thing that will affect the quality of our democracy.

"These papers – with their influence on millions of voters – will become politically more important."

However, Harber argues that this is not a feat that we can yet celebrate. "What an irony: apartheid and its repression brought us some courageous, outspoken, probing journalism that won international admiration and few readers; democracy and normality have brought us popular sleaze. The price of freedom is that the bottom feeders also enjoy it."

Leshilo's statement heralds a trend that is growing massively in South Africa, and brings about the question of standards and the basics of journalism.

Journalism is based on a mix of accuracy, impartiality and the quest for truth at all times. This is now debatable as this new form of journalism has come on the scene. Some believe that the standards have changed, and some may go as far as implying that the standards have dropped with the advent of tabloid journalism.

Prof Guy Berger, head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, remarked that "newspapers have to become interesting and popular" in order to gain popularity and attention in this country.

As a result, tabloids have been berated and accused of ignoring social issues and diverting people's attention from them. Justice Malala, former editor of *ThisDay*, accused the tabloids of only "tackl[ing] Zola or Mandoza", referring to the prominence of entertainment stories in the tabloids.

However, newspapers like the *Daily Sun*, *Son* and the *Daily Voice* have moved in what Harber refers to as "popular sleaze", untapping a market filled with mystic and wonder. Newcomer to the Western Cape tabloid scene, the *Daily Voice* prides itself of dishing out "sex, scandal, skinner and sport", a heavy mix that can be found in small doses in mainstream newspapers, if at all.

Themba Khumalo, the editor of the *Daily Sun*, once commented in a radio interview that stories are often published without verification and in most cases with only one source. Accuracy is not something that the tabloids usually go for, he seemed to suggest, as most stories are published because of their absurdity or entertainment value.

Khumalo claimed that tabloids are allowed a certain level of "mystery", a factor that has come to be associated with certain media such as television and film. Berger referred to this notion as "crass archetypal narratives" usually reserved for "cheap fiction". It seems that tabloids have their own ethical standards that are far removed from mainstream newspapers.

Prof Lizette Rabe, the head of the Department of Journalism at the University of Stellenbosch, says, "It seems that there are two sets of standards. One the mainstream media should adhere to, one for the tabloids. Tabloids carry on with their destruction of what is socially and morally acceptable in our constitutional democracy".

Tabloids *can* get away with murder it seems. A recent edition of the *Daily Sun* carried a bloody photograph of a murdered shop owner in East London. The headline read: "Slaughter of the aliens!" The introductory paragraph read, "Cruel gunmen on a rampage through foreign-owned spaza shops murdered two makwerekwere businessmen!". Their brash use of sensation and their xenophobic use of words like "aliens" and "makwerekwere" leave little room for sensitivity and ethics, as shown by the example above.

But are all tabloids bad? This, like everything else dished out on the tabloids, is debatable. With more people reading, it is a great achievement for our democracy.

With a strong focus on human interest stories, tabloids are perhaps offering what has been lacking in mainstream media: issues and plights that grassroots people can relate to.

Advice columns on personal and finance issues are common, making the papers more accessible and relevant to their readers.

Prof Arrie de Beer, part-time lecturer at the Department of Journalism at the University of Stellenbosch, once praised the *Daily Sun* for having "one of the best Africa pages" in South African newspapers.

As Harber puts it, "the tabloids are filled with ordinary people leading ordinary battling with on a daily basis with violence, bureaucracy, witchcraft and usually a toxic combination of them all".

If this "intoxicating mix" does exist in society, then it cannot be ignored any longer.

Judging by the number of stories that each edition of the *Daily Sun* pulls out, it seems that the stories are there, and maybe for a long time have been waiting to get out.

The 500 000 people that buy the paper everyday do not seem to mind as the numbers are steadily rising. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the *Daily Sun*'s sales went up by 72 000 from December 2004, with sales averaging 437 401 at the end of June 2005.

This decade has been marked by a surge of new newspaper titles. Some, however, like the Afrikaans weekly, *Die Wêreld* and the highly praised *ThisDay*, have failed.

They were different from the *Daily Sun*, and according to De Wet, stood "in direct contrast to the growing success of [its downmarket mirror of] the *Daily Sun*."

tabloids: gewild– én goed vir jou?

almal wil die nuutste skindernuus lees. of dalk is dit die informele taal wat deur koerante soos die *son* gebruik word wat dit meer toeganklik maak. gebruik poniekoerante hul gewildheid om tussen die skinder en skandaal mense darem ook toe te rus met waardevolle inligting? michelle viljoen soek die nuus agter die skinder.

foto: alet van zyl

WAT is die doel van die poniepers? Om te vermaak, te "skinner", of in te lig?

Dit hang af wie jy vra. En as 'n mens eers begin bespiegel oor die joernalistieke integriteit van tabloids soos die *Son* en die *Daily Voice*, dan word die debat éérs vurig.

Só het prof. Lizette Rabe, hoof van die departement joernalistiek van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, gevind toe sy sekere poniekoerante "die antitesis van goeie joernalistiek" in haar rubriek op news24 se webtuiste genoem het. Mnr. Ingo Capraro, nasionale redakteur van die *Son*, het onder meer gereageer met 'n artikel in *Die Burger* en 'n kommentaarstuk in die *mail&guardian* (*m&g*).

Volgens Capraro is poniekoerante soos die *Son* in pas met die "liberaliserende veranderinge wat plaasgevind het in Suid-Afrika". Die "onskuldige" halfnaak foto van 'n vrou op bladsy 3, kontroversiële opskrifte en geselstaal is wat hul lesers soek.

"Ons fokus op die kwessies en belange van ons lesers. En natuurlik vermaak ons hulle," skryf Capraro in *Son's shining success* in die *m&g* van 3 Junie vanjaar.

Om mense te vermaak is een van die min eienskappe wat die *Son* en *Heat*, 'n tydskrif wat fokus op skindernuus oor vermaaklikheidssterre, in gemeen het.

"Nie alles wat jy eet, hoef volledig gebalanseerd en vol vitamiene te wees nie. Soms is mens lus vir goeie sjokolade – *Heat* is die tydskrifekwivalent," sê Melinda Shaw, redakteur van *Heat*. Ten spyte van dié tydskrif se groot vermaaklikheidsafdeling ("die grootste van enige publikasie in Suid-Afrika") klassifiseer Shaw nie dié tydskrif as deel van die poniepers nie.

"nie alles wat jy eet hoef volledig gebalanseerd en vol vitamienes te wees nie. soms is mens lus vir goeie sjokolade..."

Daar is dus 'n verskil tussen vermaaklikheidstydskrifte soos *Heat* en *People magazine* wat fokus op skindernuus van beroemdes, en die poniekoerante. Bestaan daar ook verskille tussen die poniekoerante self?

Volgens mnr. Deon du Plessis, redakteur van die *Daily Sun*, is daar duidelike verskille tussen die poniekoerante soos die *Daily Sun* en die *Son*, "nes daar verskillende tipes van enige ding is".

"Ons en die *Son* mik op verskillende soorte mense. Hulle dek byvoorbeeld baie rugby en ons nie. Dis nie 'n vraag van beter of nie, net verskillend. En dis hoe dit behoort te wees. Verskillende markte vra na verskillende produkte," sê Du Plessis.

En wie is hierdie mark? "Die ou in die blou *overall*. Die opgeleide werkersklas wat in die stedelike LSM groep tussen 5 en 6 val," sê Du Plessis.

En vir die *Son*, met sy skrapsgeklede bladsy 3-vrou wat ontbreek by die *Daily Sun*, is die mark die "laer LSM-groepe", volgens mnr. Andrew Koopman, redakteur van die *Kaapse Son*.

En die verkoopsyfers wys dié koerante het hul mark reg gelees. Die *Son* se ABC-syfer vir Maart 2005 het die 250 000-kerf verbygesteek. En die *Daily Sun* se syfers is selfs hoër – 437 041.

Maar wat maak die koerante so gewild onder hul teikenmarkte? "Juis omdat mense weet hulle kan na ons toe kom as hulle te na gekom word en omdat ons dinge kaalvuis sê. Ons beoefen vreeslose joernalistiek en ons praat die taal van die mense," sê Koopman.

Tog dink Rabe eerder sulke poniekoerante se gewildheid het meer te doen met die bladsy 3-vrou as met hul sogenaamde ondersoekende joernalistiek waarmee die hulpeloses bemagtig kan word. "Die ponies is ook gewild omdat dit die mens se natuurlike voyeurisme uitbuit. Omdat dit dalk mense laat voel dat ander se lewens in 'n groter gemors as hul eie is," sê Rabe.

Prof. Johannes Froneman, vakvoorsitter vir die Skool van Kommunkasiestudies aan die Universiteit van Potchefstroom, meen poniekoerante is gewild, want dit "mik so laag".

Froneman se stelling dra dalk 'n mate van waarheid. Toe Koopman uitgevra is oor die rede waarom die *Son* 'n informele geselstrant volg in berigte, het hy geantwoord dit is "omdat ons mik op mense wat in die laer LSM-groepe val en hulle nie wil afskrik deur hoogdrawende taal nie".

Vir Du Plessis gaan dit nie daaroor om op so laag as moontlik 'n groep te mik nie. Hy sien poniekoerante se rol in die gemeenskap as iets wat "mense aan die lees kry. Dit gee vir hulle 'n beuel om op te blaas, 'n vuur waarom hulle kan bymekaarkom en dit beklemtoon dat hulle ook belangrik is."

Swak taalgebruik, skraps geklede vroue en twyfelagtige joernalistiek tersyde, is poniekoerante steeds gewild. En dit bereik 'n mark waarby meer gevestigde koerante soos *Die Burger* of *Cape Times* nie aanklank kan vind nie. "Ons navorsing het gewys dat mense wat voorheen nie koerant gelees het nie, nou die *Son* lees," sê Koopman.

Het poniekoerante dan die potensiaal om as 'n soort opvoedingsmedium te dien, omdat dit so baie mense bereik?

"Beslis kan dit – behoort dit – ontwikkelingsjoernalistiek te wees. Dis wat nodig is in 'n jong demokrasie – die media het eintlik so 'n verpligting teenoor die bevolking," sê Rabe.

Sy dink egter nie poniekoerante slaag heeltemal in so 'n doel nie – onder meer as gevolg van bladsy 3. "Om vroue te objektifiseer op die manier waarop dit gedoen word, is 'n skending van basiese menseregte – en vir die media en die samelewing om dit toe te laat, is eenvoudig 'n aanklag teen ons eie waardestelsels," sê Rabe.

Froneman dink ook poniekoerante kan "beslis" gebruik word as 'n opvoedingsmedium, "maar nie die *Son* nie". Froneman is egter meer positief oor die *Daily Sun* se bydrae tot ontwikkelingsjoernalistiek. Hy verwys na sy ongepubliseerde referaat, *Tabloid journalism in the aftermath of the apartheid conflict*, waarin hy skryf "...die *Daily Sun* is nie 'n tipiese poniekoerant nie. Dit publiseer nie uithaal-en-opsit foto's van meisies of 'n stroom skindernuus oor bekendes nie – soos dit gewoonlik die geval is. Dit dra ook heelwat nuus en rubrieke wat as ontwikkelend beskryf kan word". Froneman sê verder, "dit verskaf baie soliede en bruikbare inligting".

"dit het al die potensiaal om waarlik die 'media van die massas' te wees"

Rabe is egter vol hoop vir die potensiaal van poniekoerante as opvoedingsmediums. "Die rol van 'n ware poniekoerant behoort te wees om die stem van die stemloses te wees, die *'underdog'* te help, die owerhede verantwoordelik te hou vir dit wat saak maak vir gewone mense: huisvesting, dienste, skole, ens. Dit het al die potensiaal om waarlik die 'media van die massas' te wees," sê Rabe.

Sy glo nogtans poniekoerante sal meer suksesvol wees en groter adverteerders lok as hulle hulself "beter posisioneer met 'n redaksionele beleid wat getrouer aan die joernalistiek is".

"My vraag is, is dit nodig om platvloers te wees om op te hef?" sê Froneman, "Ek glo nie aan hoogheilige, prim-joernalistiek vir almal nie, want ons almal is nie so nie en wil dit nie so hê nie. Maar nogmaals: wie sê jy kan nie populistiese joernalistiek bedryf sonder om almal na die laagste vlak af te sleep nie?"

Du Plessis glo egter mens moet verstaan dat tabloids nie noodwendig gewild gaan wees onder ieder en elk nie.

"Wat te erg is in die stedelike gebiede nie, is nie te erg vir die *townships* nie," sê Du Plessis.

Volgens hom het selfs die persombudsman al sy siening van poniekoerante verander.

"Al wat ek sal sê, is dat die Persraadsombudsman sedert die begin van die *Daily Sun* sy horisonne effens verbreed het. Volgens my aanvaar hy mense is anders.

"Die woud beweeg... en so moet die dinosourusse." ●

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are we what we read?

"tokoloshes eat woman's unborn baby!" "love me - or I'll kill you". "slaughter of the aliens". these were a few of the *daily sun*'s headlines in the first week of july. in the same week, the *pretoria news* dealt with issues such as mbeki's successor, inefficient policemen working in pretoria, and a R150 000 drug bust in mamelodi and eersterus. even if tabloids are encouraging more people to read, increasing attention on what tabloids have people reading might be drowning this positive spin-off. **natalie bosman** investigates whether sensational tabloid articles are empowering their readers, or dumbing them down.

MANY South Africans support the rise of tabloid newspapers by arguing that they are improving society by encouraging more and more people to read. Although tabloid newspapers are still fairly new to South African audiences, the *Daily Sun* tabloid has made newspaper history in South Africa.

Today, the newspaper has an estimated daily readership of about 2.3 million, with sales reaching approximately 437 000 units per day.

These figures are proof that more South Africans are buying newspapers than ever before. But are tabloids really improving society? Or is their sensationalist content counteracting this?

If, as the old saying goes, "it is what is inside that counts", then are tabloids really serving their readers?

When comparing a week's worth of news from the *Daily Sun* and the *Pretoria News*, from 1 July to 8 July, it is clear that the *Daily Sun* often favours weird and wonderful stories over the deep, pressing issues of the day.

Granted, the *Pretoria News* is a serious, broadsheet newspaper with a circulation of 28 187, and the *Daily Sun* is a tabloid, but is the *Daily Sun* being fair to its readers in assuming that they will not find more serious issues interesting and worth reading?

According to *Daily Sun* editor Themba Khumalo, the newspaper is giving its readers what they want because it represents "the voice of the people". The newspaper caters for the blue overall-wearing working class, he says, and so it "needs interesting stories; it needs to captivate its readers with colour and wonderful, amazing headlines".

But do interesting stories with colour necessarily exclude stories of social, political and economic relevance?

Khumalo says that his newspaper does deal with big political issues, it just approaches them from the perspective of its readers. He gives the example that when Zuma was fired, the *Daily Sun* interviewed people on the streets to get their comments and opinions, rather than using an official governmental source, or analyst, for example.

"We are not interested in deep driven politics," he says. "We would rather give the people a chance to speak."

Even though Khumalo says that the *Daily Sun* does deal with political stories, in an entire week the tabloid had only one major political story on 4 July about Mbeki receiving a standing ovation when he closed the ANC national general council the previous day.

The majority of articles that appeared in the *Daily Sun* in the first week of July were filled with sensational scandal and gossip, or stories like the one about the tokoloshes that seem to be more rooted in myth than in truth.

Anton Harber, Professor of Journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand, says that although tabloid newspapers often do not deal with big social and political issues at the moment, this is likely to change in the future.

In a *Business Day* column entitled "Rich diet at bottom of trough", Harber predicted that tabloid newspapers, "with their influence on millions of voters, will become politically more important".

For the moment, however, purely sensational news in tabloids remains a serious concern, so much so that it has even been said that tabloids only serve to dumb down their readers.

In a *Business Day* article that appeared on International Media Freedom Day this year, the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) went so far as to say that "the proliferation of tabloid newspapers over the past two years in South Africa was the biggest problem facing the media industry".

The head of FXI's access to information programme, Console Tleane, said the problem with tabloids was that they "shifted attention away from important issues such as transformation and instead placed it on sensational and scandalous news pieces".

Although FXI sees tabloids as a potential threat in the media industry, Harber sees both positive and negative aspects that tabloids bring with them.

"Of course, we would all prefer people to start reading with Nadine Gordimer," he says, "but since this is not and never will be the case, the *Daily Sun* is better than not reading at all." Harber also cautions that all tabloids should not be grouped together and referred to as being one and the same thing. According to Harber, "one has to differentiate between the tabloids, because some of them are giving considerable space to educational information that is of high value".

Instead of dismissing all tabloids as sensational trivia, Harber argues that people should try to understand tabloids and their impact, rather than turning their noses up at them.

"We need to take account of this super-phenomenon which – like it or not – is fundamentally reshaping our profession, our media and our audience," he says.

In defence of the *Daily Sun*'s often sensational slant, Khumalo says that sensationalism is the device the newspaper uses to captivate its readers. He is adamant, however, that although the stories are sensational, they are not fabricated.

graphics: eppy strydom
original graphics: *daily sun, pretoria news*

"of course, we would all prefer people to start reading with nadine gordimer, but since this is not and never will be the case, the *daily sun* is better than not reading at all"

"Our news may be sensational," he says, "but we never twist the facts". Khumalo's argument is that the *Daily Sun*, like many other tabloids, caters for a different market than broadsheets like the *Pretoria News*.

"Different groups of people enjoy different kinds of news," he explains. The *Daily Sun* and the *Pretoria News* do indeed cater for different segments of the market. While the *Daily Sun* caters for an audience with a Living Standard Measure (LSM) of between 4 and 7, Dianne Low of the *Pretoria News* says that their newspaper caters for an audience with an LSM of between 7 and 10.

Even though the two newspapers have different target markets, and essentially a different approach as to how they present the news, why does the content in the two newspapers have to differ so drastically?

Are there not quite a few topics and issues that both the 4 to 7 and 7 to 10 LSM audiences find important, informative and necessary for everyday decision-making?

It seems to be just a matter of packaging the same information slightly differently to suit the different LSM groups.

According to Khumalo, it is unfair to compare the *Pretoria News* to the *Daily Sun*. "The *Pretoria News* is not a tabloid newspaper, and it does not serve our market," he says, adding that the *Daily Sun* is strictly a "reader-driven newspaper".

The *Pretoria News'* mission statement says that the newspaper aims "to be South Africa's premier provider of information and knowledge, enabling its citizens to govern themselves more effectively and enhance their lives".

Although adamant to point out the great differences between the two newspapers, Khumalo says that "the *Daily Sun*'s stories have in many ways empowered people".

When asked whether or not the *Daily Sun*'s audience would not want to be empowered with the same kind of information as contained in the *Pretoria News*, even if it is presented to them in a different writing style or jargon. "Audiences change," Khumalo says, "and the way people consume media has changed, so nobody can dictate to us how news 'must be'. "

Khumalo's response is simply that if the *Daily Sun* was not listening to its audiences' needs and wants, it would not be exhibiting such successful circulation figures.

Judging by some of the issues raised in the letters' page of the *Daily Sun*, its readers are interested in the social and political problems South Africa currently faces.

Viwe Sidali, for example, wrote to the *Daily Sun* to highlight some of the problems with South Africa's secondary education system, Jamakude Khumalo voiced his opinion about the ANC and the Department of Public Works not creating enough jobs, and Mpho Ngwesi wrote a letter about crime being South Africa's biggest problem.

These issues raised by the *Daily Sun*'s own readers are issues that the tabloid did not address. If the *Daily Sun* is indeed "the voice of the people", then the editor would presumably listen more closely to what its readers feel is worthy of discussion.

In the tabloid's defence, Khumalo says that *Daily Sun* reporters often follow issues raised in the letters page and follow them up with stories.

"It could appear tomorrow, the following week or in four weeks' time," Khumalo says.

Nevertheless, "in order for it to appear, it must appeal to people, otherwise, tough luck".

tabloid

INDEPENDENT Newspaper's *Daily Voice* is the latest in a string of tabloids to launch in South Africa over the last few years. According to the news editor, Gasant Abader, it is selling up to 200 000 copies every single day in the Western Cape. To put this into perspective the *Cape Argus*, the next most successful English daily in the province, sells just under 75 000. According to Francois Groepe, Financial Director of Media24, one of that company's daily tabloids, the *Daily Sun*, sells up to 500 000 copies every day, in seven of the nine provinces.

But what does this mean? Are tabloids, with their "Sex, Scandal, Skinner, Sport" (the slogan of the *Daily Voice*) contents and sensational headlines the way the print world is moving? Will more serious broadsheets have to adopt tabloid terms in order to sell papers?

In an interview conducted in April this year with *The Sunday Independent's* Judy van der Walt, Karl Brophy, editor of the *Daily Voice*, predicted that in the next 10 years there would be no serious broadsheet newspapers left. Anywhere in the world.

It seems many others concur. Our Stellenbosch honours journalism class is often faced with lecturers shaking their heads about the current state of journalism, as the class debates the relevance of splashing a snippet of Patricia Lewis, in (only) the flesh – as she appeared in Belgian soft porn movie, on *Die Burger's* front page. There goes the journalism neighbourhood, we all grumble in unison.

It seems that some papers have decided to aim a little lower in an attempt to cater to this fast-growing tabloid market. Lately the *Cape Argus* most often leads with violent crime stories, under sensationalised headlines, accompanied by large photos of the victim's weeping family.

Die Burger has introduced a "Page 3". It does not show bare female breasts, but it is filled with celebrity gossip. Readers can find out exactly what Amor and Joost van der Westhuizen are up to, and whether or not those really were Patricia Lewis' breasts on page one. They have also implemented a competition once a month often endorsed by local *Egoli* stars whose pictures take up almost a third of their above-the-fold space on the front page. Crime is a regular lead story.

"cape times readers are dying of old age every year"

This is the way the world is moving, we have heard journalism lecturers say, there is no point fighting it.

Chris Whitfield, editor of the *Cape Times*, believes that his newspaper is one of the few dailies in the Western Cape to maintain its serious persona. He feels that papers that have aimed lower will lose out in the end.

When Whitfield arrived at the *Cape Times* four years ago, he elected to keep the paper serious. In fact, to make it even more serious. He wanted it to be politically and environmentally focused. "We hardly ever lead with a crime story", said *Cape Times* news editor, Tony Weaver, who is happiest when the entire front page constitutes politics.

Is this approach working for *Cape Times* or is it just a matter of time before they too are forced to run the latest about Posh and Becks?

Dr George Claassen, respected science journalist and *Die Burger's* ombudsman, told the journalism class that the *Cape Times* approach was not working. He said: "*Cape Times* readers are dying of old age every year."

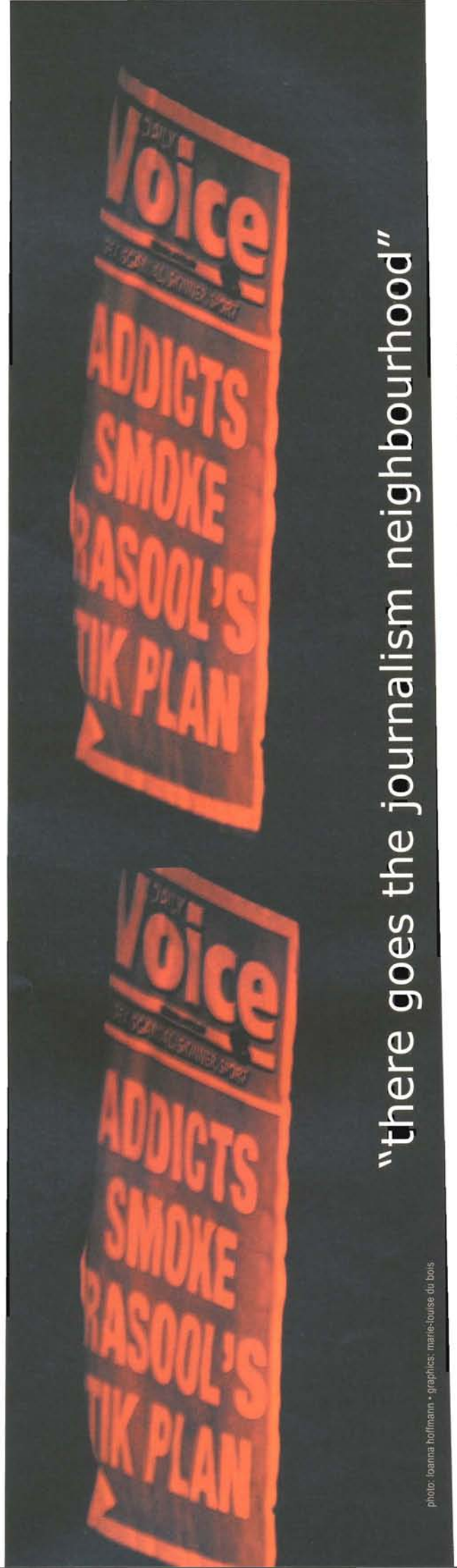
I put this to a surprised Whitfield. His reaction: "Since we have taken our paper upmarket our circulation has increased more than 10% in four years." The paper is selling at a ten-year high and, he said, their group of 25- to 35-year-old readers is steadily on the rise. This despite the launch of another English morning paper, the *Daily Voice*, which is selling at half the price of the *Cape Times*, and targeting the same area.

"There is most certainly a market that wants credible news. They want information that can help them and they want to see debate and what is happening in politics." >>

or bust?

headlines such as "jesus lives in my toilet" and "outrage over live lesbian sex show" are relatively new additions to south african newspaper stands. tabloids have made an enormous impact on the market, outselling traditional broadsheet papers daily by hundreds of thousands. but does this mean that it is tabloid or bust? is there still a market for the traditional broadsheet newspapers? leanne raymond investigates.

photo: loanna hoffmann • graphics: marie-louise du bois



<< Whitfield believes that there is space for both tabloids and serious broadsheets. He cited the United Kingdom as an example. "*The Sun* is by far their most successful newspaper, but the *Guardian* does very well too."

Whitfield is actually a fan of tabloids: "Tabloids are a campaigning voice for the community that make the politicians sit up and listen".

The *Daily Voice*, in its first three weeks on the stands, launched a "Kill the bush" campaign and got the mayor of Cape Town to commit to chopping down a section of bush on the Cape Flats where many women and children had been raped and even killed.

The *Cape Times* has on a few occasions followed up on big stories broken by *Daily Voice*. Melanie Gosling, environmental reporter at the *Cape Times*, said this was because the tabloids catered directly to a larger section of the population. The *Cape Times* focuses on a LSM of 8-10, while the *Daily Voice* caters to LSM of 3–6 which covers a much greater number of people.

A blue collared worker that stumbles onto a story would probably not feel comfortable phoning the *Cape Times* about it and would rather call the *Daily Voice*. Newspapers often rely on the public informing them of stories in their workplace or community. Basically the *Daily Voice* has more readers and therefore more public to call in with leads.

"Attracting new readers into the newspaper market is the most compelling argument for tabloids", said Whitfield. "I hope that some of these people will develop a taste for news and move onto a more serious paper, but most *Daily Voice* readers were never and won't ever be *Cape Times'* readers."

Whitfield is, however, totally opposed to invasive journalism. "Going through somebody's rubbish bin is over the top." South African tabloids follow their British counterparts in this regard. In fact, the *Daily Voice*'s editor, Karl Brophy, said that although they are hard hitting and do not beat around the bush, precisely that means that the stories have to be true.

"We don't equivocate. We go heavy on a story, so we have to be sure of our facts. We find someone to blame: 'this is the man, this is where he lives'. To do this we have a very senior newsroom," he told Van der Walt. The slogan of Ray Joseph, former *Daily Voice* news editor, was: "You can't make it up — you don't have to."

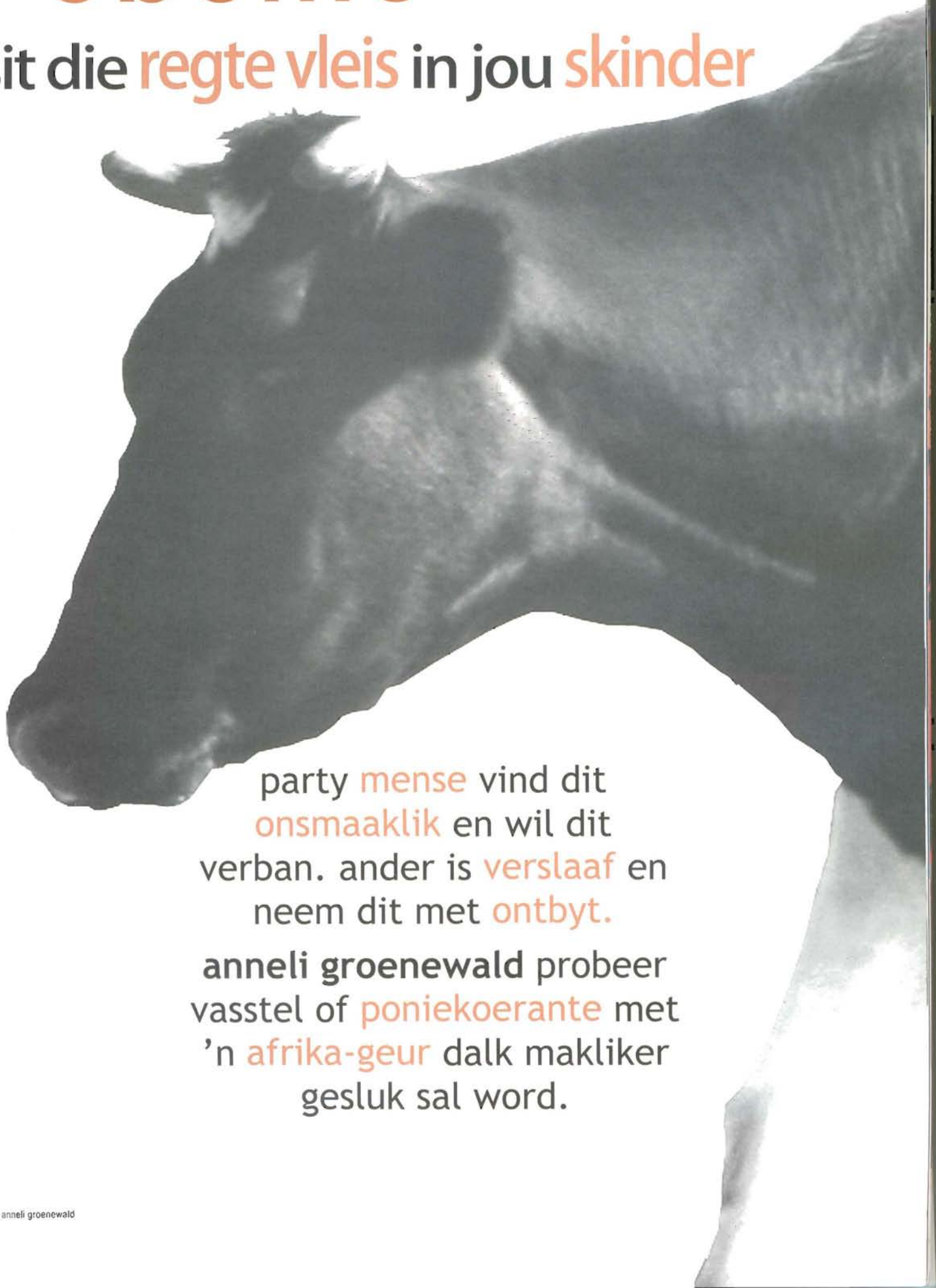
The question of ethics is another aspect that does not deter Whitfield's support of tabloids. Being unethical would be to manufacture a story, being sensational is not unethical, said Whitfield, whose sentiments were reiterated by Gosling. She said journalists working for serious papers like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times,* like Janet Cooke and Jayson Blaire, had blatantly lied — that was unethical. Sensationalising a story, as long as it is true, does not make it unethical.

Judging from their exceptional success, it does not look as though tabloids are going anywhere. The good news is that journalists hoping to do quality journalism should not fear. There is still a market out there for you.

Stopped at a traffic light in the city, if you listen very carefully, you may still hear the familiar call of the "*CAAAPPPE TTTIIMMEESS*", almost, but not quite, drowned out by "*DAAAIILLLLY VOOOICE*". ●

ubuntu

sit die regte vleis in jou skinder



party mense vind dit onsmaaklik en wil dit verban. ander is verslaaf en neem dit met ontbyt.

anneli groenewald probeer vasstel of poniekoerante met 'n afrika-geur dalk makliker gesluk sal word.

foto: anneli groenewald

geur jou skinder met 'n Afrika-spesery

foto's: anneli groenewald

ONS eet dit, praat dit, drink dit, speel dit, doen dit, koop dit en lees dit. Die drie s'e wat die voorblaaie, agterblaaie én bl.3's van koerante verkoop: sport, seks en skinder.

Ons voer 'n kitskosbestaan en wil alles in 'n haastige trant ontvang, verwerk en vergeet. Ook ons nuus moet in maklik verteerbare stukkies teks verkrygbaar wees sodat ons dit kan kou-en-sluk, kou-en-sluk, kou-en-sluk... of dalk uitspoeg, sou jy verkies om dit te doen.

Poniekoerante bied die drie s'e (en soms selfs veel meer) in 'n kleurryke en sakpas-formaat. Al waaroor die leser hoef te besluit, is "sluk" of "spoeg".

Die Suid-Afrikaanse nuusmedia het die laaste paar jaar die opbloei van die poniepers beleef. En dadelik 'n groot hap van die plaaslike lesersmark bekom.

In sy boek *Black, white and grey* skryf Franz Krüger dat *Daily Sun* slegs maande nadat dit in 2002 teen R1 op die mark verskyn het, reeds 200 000 kopieë per dag verkoop het. Dit was volgens Krüger baie nadelig vir *Sowetan*.

Maar is dit werklik die sensasie wat mense hul kleingeld laat uittel vir hul *Son*, wat sedert 2003 gepubliseer word, of *Daily Sun*? Of is 'n poniekoerant bloot meer toeganklik en makliker om te kou as die hoofstroom-nuus?

In 'n artikel deur prof. Anton Harber wat in 2003 in *Business Day* verskyn het, het die stigter van *Daily Sun*, Deon du Plessis, sy mening oor die poniepers se lesers gelug.

"Ons lesers is nie baie gesofistikeerd nie," het Du Plessis gesê. "Hulle is mense wat vir die eerste keer daaraan dink om hul huise te vergroot, of 'n nuwe motor te koop. En ons gee hulle die nodige inligting om in dié mark te beweeg."

Is dit waar dat poniekoerante hul lesers van nodige en relevante inligting verskaf? Of kan die aard van hul inhoud soms bevraagteken word?

Vroeër vanjaar in haar rubriek op news24.com het prof. Lizette Rabe, hoof van die department joernalistiek aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, geskryf dat sekere Suid-Afrikaanse poniekoerante onverantwoordelik "teenoor die samelewing en individue" optree. Volgens haar moet die menswaardigheid van diegene "wie se geld goed genoeg is" vir die poniekoerante ook erken word.

Media met 'n meer humanistiese en burgerlike joernalistiek het reeds in die 1980's ontstaan. In dié tyd het joernaliste in die Verenigde State van Amerika (VSA), Europa en Kanada besluit om iets anders op die tafel te sit. Hulle het ongemaklik gevoel met die idee dat die probleme wat op die nuusagenda is ná beriggewing steeds onopgelos was.

In reaksie is die konvensionele Westerse nuuswaardes soos konflik, bekendheid en die omvang van gebeure (wat gewoonlik aan stories 'n voorblad besorg het) gedeeltelik op die agtergrond geskuif.

Joernaliste het sosiale verantwoordelikheid as eerste prioriteit beskou. Volgens Arthur Charity, die skrywer van die boek *Doing public journalism*, was dié soort joernalistiek oor die verskeie kontinente heen gesetel in 'n sensitiwiteit vir die gemeenskap. Daar is probeer om antwoorde vir probleme te bied eerder as om paniek daar rondom te skep. Nuus is dus nie meer deur 'n negatiewe bril aangebied nie, maar juis as 'n positiewe poging tot die ontlonting van die probleem.

"ons lesers is nie baie gesofistikeerd nie. hulle is mense wat vir die eerste keer daaraan dink om hul huise te vergroot, of 'n nuwe motor te koop"

Poniekoerante skep die nodige ruimte om 'n soortgelyke sousie oor Suid-Afrikaanse nuus te gooi. Maar 'n sousie met 'n Afrika-geur. Ubuntu. Dié Afrika-filosofie is eie aan die kontinent, maar toon terselfdertyd sekere ooreenkomste met die gemeenskapsjoernalistiek wat in Europa en Noord-Amerika beoefen word. Dit is gesetel in die begrip van sosiale verantwoordelikheid.

Clifford Christians, 'n media-kundige, het in 2004 in 'n artikel in die akademiese joernaal *Ecquid Novi* geargumenteer dat verskillende wêreldstreke binne verskillende denkraamwerke staan. In die artikel, getiteld *Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics*, noem Christians dat daar 'n sterk ooreenkoms is tussen die gemeenskapsjoernalistiek wat in Europa en Noord-Amerika bestaan, en die Afrika-tradisie ubuntu. Volgens hom dien dié twee onderskeidelik as normatiewe denkraamwerke binne die bepaalde streke.

"die konsepte ubuntu, kubatana en harambee moenie meer net leë slagspreuke wees nie. dit moet uit die bladsye van tydskrifartikels kom en op die straat beland"

Richard Owen, 'n wetenskaplike in natuurlike hulpbronne in Harare, stel in die *Financial Mail* van 19 Augustus vanjaar voor dat die media 'n stem moet gee aan die gemeenskap.

"Die konsepte ubuntu, kubatana en harambee moenie meer net leë slagspreuke wees nie. Dit moet uit die bladsye van tydskrifartikels kom en op die straat beland," skryf Owen.

Kubatana en harambee verwys beide na eenheid, gemeenskaplikheid en samewerking.

Ubuntu verwys weer volgens Christians na 'n gesindheid waarin menswees teenoor ander alles vooraf gaan. Die belang van die gemeenskap is die belangrikste en eerste oorweging. Dít is gesetel in die idee dat individue sy menswees slegs deur ander, die gemeenskap, verkry.

Met só 'n benadering tot nuus, is 'n verandering in die bestaande nuus-spyskaart onvermydelik. Ontwikkelingsnuus móét dus voorkeur geniet.

Volgens nog twee navorsers, Gordon Adam en Lina Holguin, is die Kaapstadse gemeenskapsradiostasie, Bush Radio, reeds besig om ubuntu as 'n nuusbeginsel toe te pas.

"Bush Radio in Kaapstad, die eerste gemeenskapstasie in Suid-Afrika, was al die laaste 15 jaar baie betrokke by bemiddeling," skryf Adam en Holguin in hul artikel *The media's role in peace-building: asset or liability.* Volgens hulle het Bush Radio destyds besluit om nie verslag te lewer oor die vigilante-groep People againgst gangsterism and drugs (Pagad) nie. Dié groep het in die omgewing van Kaapstad verskeie vermeende kriminele aangerand en om die lewe gebring.

Bush Radio het aangevoer dat die moorde nie werklik meer nuus was nie, en dat die bendes satisfaksie daaruit geput het om te hoor hoe oor hul dade oor die radio verslag gelewer word.

Adam en Holguin voer aan dat dít 'n poging was om die paradigma van 'n Afrika-"oorlogskultuur" te verskuif na ubuntu wat as die Afrika-weergawe vir vredesjoernalistiek beskou kan word.

In haar rubriek stel Rabe voor dat poniekoerante hulself ook moet onderwerp aan 'n stel reëls of etiese kodes.

Is ubuntu-joernalistiek, 'n gemeenskapsgeöriënteerde joernalistiek wat bevordering van die gemeenskap ten doel het, die antwoord? En sou dit moontlik wees om só 'n poniekoerant tot stand te bring? ●

laat sak jou koei genoeg melk vir twee gesinne? deel met jou buurman.

ubuntu-wysheid

do you buy the succe$$$

tabloids hit the south african market in 2001. their circulation tell a tale of popular success. but criticism rises with their circulation. marie-louise du bois went to find out whether the tabloids story really is one of success and found that it takes more than circulation numbers

WHEN is the last time you read a good story? One of those so-called success stories that leave you happily baffled at the sensational smash-hit of a tale you just read.

The media tells many success stories. Celebrities' rise to stardom after years of obscurity. Inventions that change the way we think and live. Stories of compassion and of overcoming difficulties. Dashing stories of bravery and compassion.

What about the media's own success – success stories within the media? These are fewer told tales that may include all the above elements. The rise to stardom from obscurity, changing the way we think and live, as well as overcoming the difficulties of entering the market. Do these label a media tale a success?

Whether the story of the tabloids – the latest plot to thicken in the South Africa media – is a success story, is unclear. Certainly, there are all the elements of good storytelling: the launch of a new player, the rapidly rising, rocket-fashion circulation and the difficulties of daring the market. But since tabloids hit in 2001 the temperature of the debate about them rose as fast as their circulation. Some fancy them. Others hate them. But thousands buy them. And millions read them. Does this make them a success?

Some think so. One of them is Francois Groepe, the Financial Director of Media24, the company that started the first tabloids locally. "Certainly we consider them to be a huge success – it probably represents the most exciting development in journalism and in newspapers in South Africa for decades."

Given their circulation numbers, it seems that business-wise tabloids are a success. Groepe said that Media24 is "pleased with the progress of tabloids both from a circulation and financial perspective". The latest landmark in this circulation was when the *Son* hit 250 000 last March – up by 50 000 in just three months, according to him.

The *Daily Sun*, the first tabloid to start, currently circulates at 437 041. That is close to half a million who buy and read the paper every day. As Groepe puts it, "circulation has been buoyant, and trends are encouraging". The fact that they have increased readership alone, "outweighs many of the arguments against tabloids".

Really? Are circulation, readership and what Groepe labels financial progress enough to make tabloids a success story?

Not necessarily, according to some media role players. There are others who point out that some tabloids have been successful in certain respects but lacking in others. Joe Thloloe, Chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef), agreed that the tabloids have been a "circulation success". Overall, he said, they have increased South African readership. But he raised doubts about the journalistic integrity of some tabloids, such as those that do not use different sources. Such practices "have weakened the quality of journalism in South Africa", Thloloe stated.

Defenders of tabloids, such as Groepe, maintain that the circulation success points to a greater success story. According to him, "the phenomenal growth in tabloids is proof that the product/title speaks to readers needs". This, he concludes, means that tabloids "clearly serve the public interest". >>

tabloids'...

$$$tory?

photo: anneli groenwald • graphics: marie-louise du bois

<< Groepe's argument is that what the public is interested in is more or less the public interest. He judged high readership as evidence that tabloids produce what readers are interested in and thus successfully serve the public interest.

This may not have much to do with the accepted definition of the public interest. According to Dennis McQuail, author of the book *Media performance: mass communication and the public interest*, the public interest is both difficult to define and to recognise. Circulation numbers and readership are not enough.

Prof Guy Berger, head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, has also opposed matching the public interest with what the public is interested in. In a forum in *Die Burger* of 12 April this year entitled "Tabloids: where are the limits?", Berger stated that the public interest is an important standard. Criticising tabloids, he said "(tabloids) are quick to say that the public interest is the same as what the public is interested in. But what the public is interested in is not the standard. They are two different things".

Yet Groepe asserted that tabloids "most significantly" serve the public interest in that "we have brought and packaged the news, education and infotainment, in a way that appeals to the target market". They serve the public interest by "carrying stories of scandals the broad sheets often avoid carrying".

Thloloe pointed out that whether or not tabloids serve the public interest depends on how one defines it. The circulation success, he said, may be due to a number of factors other than whether they serve the public interest. One reason he noted was that tabloids are substantially cheaper than broad sheet papers. Although it may be of financial interest to the public, it does not fit the accepted definition of the public interest.

McQuail's book states that the media does have a "significant contribution to make to the general welfare of society and carries a corresponding 'social responsibility'". To serve the public interests, tabloids have to fulfil this as much as other papers. Their price, however high or low, is not such a contribution.

"(tabloids) are quick to say that the public interest is the same as what the public is interested in. but what the public is interested in is not the standard. they are two different things"

Instead, a defining characteristic of serving the public interest, according to McQuail, is "the *content* or product offered by the media, to overall service". He notes including different views of many sources as a trait. Given Thloloe's concerns about poor journalistic practices, specifically the use of a single source only, not all tabloids may be living up to serving the public interest.

Andrew Koopman, senior editor of the *Son*, said that his paper does. Readers, he stated, "are sick and tired of reading about violence and politics". His paper serves the public interest by offering "a different type of news, an entertaining read". But is this not once again what the public is interested in, rather than the public interest?

The *Son*, according to Koopman, does play an important role in the broader community it aims to serve. A recent human-interest story about a tik drug abuser prompted a reader to donate R10 000 for rehab. The *Son* also organised an "anti-tik march" earlier this year. Koopman emphasised that the paper sees its role not only as moneymaking, but also as serving the community. He named other projects, such as charity donations, with which the newspaper, according to him, serves the public interest.

From a journalistic point of view, it seems that if tabloids do not serve the public interest in their content, they are hardly successful. This is regardless of what the numbers say, whether they are readership numbers or the figures of charity donations. Thloloe pointed out that "Sanef welcomed the tabloids since they expand the scope in South Africa, but they are still expected to adhere to journalistic ethics and quality".

Once it is clear that they do so, it would make tabloids a true success story. But the different sources, for now, tell a different tale... ●

pienk media

gekas

die suid-afrikaanse media-omgewing word by die dag groter. nispublikasies is die reël en nie meer die uitsondering nie en webtuistes word geskep om aanlyn-behoeftes te vervul. maar steeds is die gay media onderverteenwoordig. en toe waai die saai winde van augustus-maand

...

eduan maggo het bietjie in die kas gaan... umh... rondkrap.

DIE samelewing word gewoonlik in populêre kultuur uitgebeeld. Maar wanneer die LGBTIQ gemeenskap (lesbieërs, gay, biseksuele-, transgender-, interseksuele- en "*questioning*" mense, sommer net gay in kort) in die spieël van populêre kultuur loer, sien hulle oor die algemeen... niks. Óf 'n verwronge karikatuur van die hoofstroom media se interpretasie van 'n gay leefstyl.

Gemeet hieraan, lyk dit of daar 'n behoefte is aan media wat spesifiek tot die LGBTIQ gemeenskap spreek. Nie dat gay mense wél van die breër samelewing onderskei wil word nie. Is daar egter plek vir media wat spesifiek die gay gemeenskap bedien? "Verseker," sê regter Edwin Cameron in die winter-uitgawe van die gay-tydskrif *Wrapped*. "As gays en lesbiërs het ons onderskeibare belange. Nie om onsself af te sonder, of om onsself af te sluit of te ghettoiseer nie." Hy sê hy is teen ghettoïsering, maar dat die gay media vir spesifieke belange kan sorg, soos vir spesifieke rolmodelle.

Die radioprogram *Tuesday night – non-stereotype radio* op Radio2000 was bemark as Suid-Afrika – en die hele kontinent – se eerste nasionale gay geselsradio-program. Die stigter en vervaardiger van dié program, Maciek Mazur, sê nes vrouetydskrifte vroue as teikenmark het, het gay media die gay gemeenskap. "Ons is gelyk en deel van die breër gemeenskap, maar ons het unieke behoeftes en belange."

"die program is 'n gemeenskapsprojek wat nodig is vir sowel die gay gemeenskap as die breër samelewing"

Ten spyte hiervan is opsies in die gay media beperk. Die gedrukte media het uit vier publikasies bestaan, naamlik *Exit* en *The Closet*, koerante, asook *Wrapped* en *Gay Pages* (oorspronklik 'n sakeblad). Buiten *Tuesday night* is *In the pink* elke Donderdagaand op die gemeenskapsradiostasie Bush radio uitgesaai. Die webwerwe Mambaonline, q-online en gmax.co.za is die nuwe media se bydrae.

Dis 'n handvol opsies in 'n bedryf waar slegs een mediamaatskappy, Media24, dertien spesialistydskrifte publiseer.

Lourens Joubert, redakteur van *Wrapped*, sê een van die hindernisse vir gay media is dat homofobie steeds wyd voorkom. "Dis nie soseer geïnstitusionaliseerde homofobie by groter maatskappye nie; hulle is te skerp om in regslokvalle gevang te word. Maar beslis onder medium en kleiner organisasies."

Mazur sien 'n gebrek aan bemarkingsondersteuning as nog 'n hindernis. Hy hoop egter hierdie situasie is besig om te verander.

"Enige publikasie het adverteerders nodig om rekeninge te betaal, 'n produk die lig te laat sien en om beter inhoud te verskaf," sê Mazur. Die nadeel is egter dat adverteerders nie bewus is van die opsie om in die gay mark te adverteer nie. "Daar is 'n lang ketting waardeur adverteerders moet gaan om by advertensiemaatskappye uit te kom voordat hulle uiteindelik die publikasie bereik." Hy noem ook dat advertensiemaatskappye nie altyd weet hoe om die gay media aan hul kliënte te verkoop nie.

"die sabc het ons toegemaak"

Navorsing wat die marknavorsingsmaatskappy Future Fact 2003 in SA gedoen het, toon mense in die hoër LSM-groepe aanvaar dat die gay gemeenskap 'n merkwaardige bydrae tot die samelewing maak. Verder toon nog 'n meningspeiling, die 1995 Outright opname, dat 73% van die respondente maatskappye wat in gay publikasies adverteer, sal ondersteun. 'n Verdere 74% het oor naskoolse kwalifikasies beskik, terwyl twee derdes meen die gay gemeenskap moet niegay-vriendelike organisasies boikot. Slegs 2% van die 799 respondente was tydens die opname werkloos.

Mazur sê gay publikasies word tradisioneel op die onderste rakke van tydskrifrakke in supermarkte geplaas – as dit hoegenaamd verskyn. Hy vermoed dat winkels versigtig is vir teenkanting van hul klante omdat die tydskrifte vir sekere mense kan aanstoot gee. "Nie omdat die materiaal onvanpas is nie, maar slegs omdat die totale samelewing nie gemaklik is met homoseksualiteit nie."

Dit maak die kortdurende sukses van die gay media nóg meer besonders.

Wrapped is onafhanklik vanuit Fourways uitgegee; advertensieverkope het die publikasie gedra. Met sy eerste uitgawe verlede jaar, het *Wrapped* 'n totale sirkulasie van 4 140 gehad. Dié syfer is vanjaar opgestoot na 5 275 vir die herfs publikasie. Altesame 7 500 tydskrifte is gedruk vir die winter publikasie (ietwat ironies, die laaste uitgawe). Ná slegs twee uitgawes het die tydskrif 'n databasis van 3 641 e-pos-adresse en selfoon-nommers gehad, wat gebruik is om die tydskrif te bemark en direk met die lesers te kommunikeer.

In 'n onderhoud in Junie vanjaar sê Joubert: "Ons skryf ons sukses daaraan toe dat ons die homoseksuele leefstyl positief uitbeeld. Ons wys dat gays suksesvol kan wees. Gay mense kán vervulde en gelukkige lewens lei." Hy noem ook dat die die gay gemeenskap oor 'n unieke rykheid en diversiteit beskik.

Mazur het ook vroeër vanjaar gesê hulle waardeer die diversiteit van die gemeenskap, alhoewel dit juis een van hul grootste uitdagings is. "Dit is eintlik ook 'n voordeel, want sou ons een deel van ons teikenmark mis, gaan ons by 'n ander deel aanklank vind," sê hy.

Volgens die Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS) het Radio 2000 'n 70% toename in luisteraarskap

tuesday night
NONSTEREO [TYPE] RADIO

getoon in die 10 maande dat die program uitgesaai word, as dit vergelyk word met syfers in die twee jaar wat die program voorafgaan.

"Ons formaat is inklusief. *Straight* mense, Jode, Asiërs, swart mense – niemand word uitgesluit nie. Ons praat met elkeen in 'n taal wat elkeen kan verstaan. Die program is ook nie bedreigend nie."

Doelgerigtheid en uithouvermoë het hulle ook ver gebring.

"So ook ons bereidwilligheid om onbekende paaie aan te durf. Die program is 'n gemeenskapsprojek wat nodig is vir die gay gemeenskap sowel as vir die breër samelewing."

Mazur het ook SABC radio in hul sukses geken, veral omdat *Tuesday night* die eerste program op SABC radio was waar 'n derdeparty-vervaardiger gebruik is. "SABC radio was baie ondersteunend, ook wat die kreatiewe inhoud betref."

Maar met die koue wintermaande betree die gay media 'n soortgelyke koue (hopelik hibernasie) tydperk.

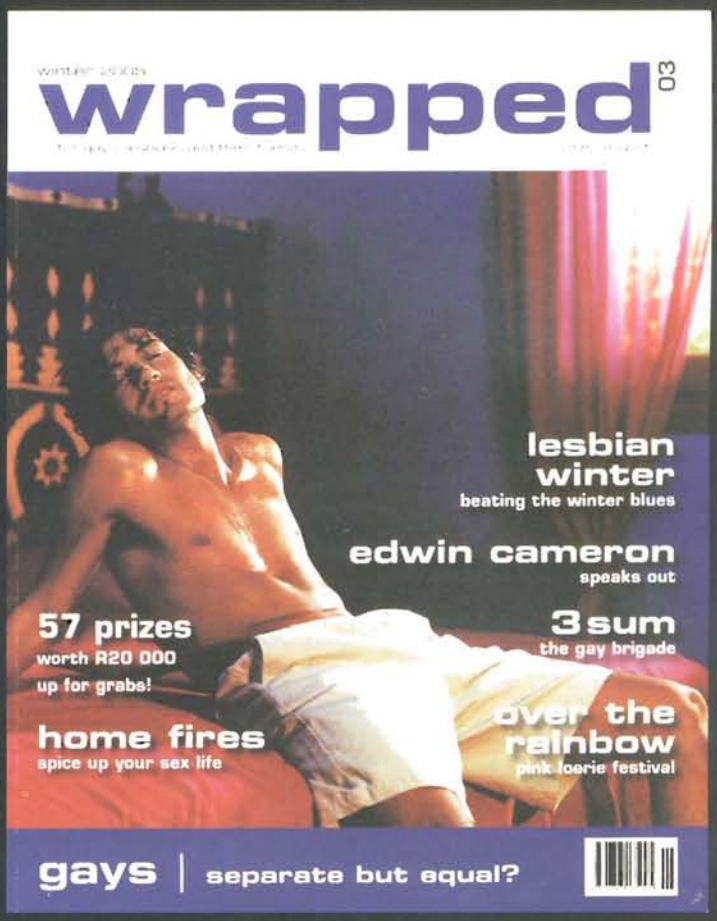
Op Saterdag 13 Augustus berig Mambaonline dat *Wrapped* finaal sy deure, oftewel dekblaaie, toemaak. Die 8 000 – glad nie sleg vir enige nispublikasie ná slegs drie uitgawes nie – kopieë wat 1 September sou verskyn, het nie die lig gesien nie. Volgens Joubert het 'n gebrek aan advertensies tot die tydskrif se ondergang gelei. Die skuld word voor die deur van die "ongeïnteresseerde hoofstroom adverteerders" geplaas.

Slegs drie dae na die *Wrapped* aankondiging saai *Tuesday night* op Dinsdag 16 Augustus sy laaste program uit. Kort voor die program uitgesaai word verduidelik Mazur wat verkeerd geloop het.

Toe die program in November 2004 op die been gekom het, het 'n drie maande kontrak bepaal *Tuesday night* sou vir lugtyd en 'n klankingenieur verantwoordelik wees. Die SABC en die program sou die advertensie-inkomste deel. Ná drie maande het die SABC met 'n nuwe ooreenkoms vorendag gekom, maar die inkomsteverdeling-bepaling was verwyder. Volgens Mazur, aldus Mambaonline, is dié kontrak nooit geteken nie. "Die SABC se lugtydverkope kon slegs een of twee kliënte kry. Ons is ook nie toegelaat om enige van die SABC se kliënte te nader nie." Die vervaardigers moes dus teen 'n verlies uitsaai, "alhoewel die program die tydgleuf se luisteraars amper verdubbel het".

In die finale kontrak waarmee die SABC vorendag gekom het, is die lugtydkoste verdubbel en moes die program later uitsaai, wat dit moeiliker sou maak om adverteerders te kry. Mazur kon nie hierby kers opsteek nie.

"Ons kan nie besigheid doen met iemand wat duidelik nie met ons besigheid wil doen nie."



Die gay media is nou na alle verwagtinge verminк.

Tog lyk dit of die hoofstroom media meer betrokke raak by die gay leefstyl. Joubert sê in die afgelope twaalf maande het gays meer dekking geniet as in die voorafgaande twee tot drie jaar.

"Selfs tydskrifte wat oorwegend op 'n swart mark gerig is, beeld gays oorwegend positief uit."

Advertensies in hoofstroom publikasies mag by tye 'n gay leefstyl parodieer en bestaande stereotipes versterk, sê Joubert.

"Dis nie altyd snaaks nie, maar terselfdertyd is dit belangrik om te lag as iets snaaks is."

Met 'n tekort aan gay publikasies rus 'n groter verantwoordelikheid op gay joernaliste. Die realiteit is egter dat baie verkies om hul private lewens só van hul werk te skei dat hulle vir die publiek "in die kas" bly, selfs terwyl hulle wel langtermyn verhoudings het. Mazur verwys na 'n bekende fliekresensent en vermoed dis omdat gay joernaliste bang is om "gemerk" te word.

'n Joernalis by 'n bekende gesinstydskrif wat wél sy seksualiteit uitleef, verlustig hom egter in die voordele: "Ek het die eerste sê op die komplementêre kaartjies na al die modeskoue!"

Ná 'n oplewing is die gay media in 'n netelige posisie. Dit kan óf die pad van die poniekoerantbedryf volg en 'n renaissance beleef, óf dit kan *ad infinitum* voortploeter. Die potensiaal vir 'n oplewing is duidelik.

Maar is die adverteerders gereed om dit te ondersteun? Is daar dalk 'n mediamaatskappy wat die gaping wil vat? Of is dit die mediaverbruikers wat eers uit die kas moet klim? >>

slegs drie dae na die *wrapped* aankondiging saai *tuesday night* op dinsdag 16 augustus sy laaste program uit

<<

Brian Berkman (English daily newspaper) I think the "gay market's" needs are well covered by regular media – and that what is missing is perhaps a sex focused guide. Gays are profiled in the media all the time and the décor industry, for example, often features the home of a gay couple. **Andrew October** (Two English daily newspapers) In a nutshell the state of gay media in SA is nothing short of sad! My assumption is that gay media has to sell muscles, tight asses and drag queens. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention blond and pretty white teenaged boys. It has to feature stories like the latest BMW for white readers and gay life in Soweto for white readers who never travel that far south in Gauteng unless they're flying business class. I don't do gay media – there is no such thing as gay media. I surf the net as most other tech savvy gays tend to do.

"i don't do gay media – there is no such thing as gay media"

Q&A

how are openly gay journalists treated in the workplace and how accepting are media companies of gay journalists? from a gay journalist's perspective: what is the biggest problem with 'gay media' and can you propose a solution to this problem?

Sieraaj Ahmed (Weekly family magazine) I can only speak for my own experience, of course. As far as my company is concerned, I have not experienced any discrimination because of my sexual orientation. I do not hide my sexual orientation and have mostly found my colleagues (from senior editors to junior colleagues) to be inclusive and non-discriminatory.

My problem with existing 'gay media' (specifically printed gay 'newspapers') is that they come across as superficial in the extreme. I perceive a lack of professionalism and an inability to present (or lack of interest in presenting) more than one stereotypical view of gay men (rich, white, driving convertibles around Green Point). Giving the publishers the benefit of the doubt though, I guess there must be difficulty in producing a newspaper that would attract advertisers while also attracting the target readers. The market of readers is small enough, and the market of readers who would actually pay for a gay newspaper is miniscule, so it would be tough for any publisher to sustain a paid product in this market. My suggestion for a free newspaper would be to try widening the advertising net beyond just the most up-market brands and products. Diversifying the content and advertisers will diversify (and hopefully increase) readership, and increased readership would help attract even more advertisers.

Waldo Muller (Afrikaans daily newspaper for about seven years) From my experience, which is limited to 1994 to 2001 and thus a bit outdated, not many were openly gay, especially in the Afrikaans newspaper environment of that time. I myself was certainly totally closeted, but in recent years I have become more emancipated and less afraid to be open. Back then one co-journalist of mine came out of the closet at work after which he was promoted into various managing positions. So I don't think being openly gay had a negative impact on his career path at all. Depending on your manager and their level of sophistication on issues like sexual orientation stereotypes and gender, and especially if they are unenlightened heterosexuals, a gay journalist could end up having to cover issues that are somehow deemed to be fitting for a gay journalist to focus on. But in your average newsroom I think everybody does a bit of everything and there is often not time for managers to delegate stories according to whether they fit into the personality/orientation of a particular journalist or not.

The biggest problem of the gay media is that it upholds and perpetuates stereotypes about gay sexuality and gay people. this is partially because of advertising needs – many adverts in the gay media feed of these stereotypes in order to sell their products. For instance, the objectified image of the young six-packed hunk, which is being repeated ad nauseum – eventually youthfulness and certain bodily attributes are being held up as prerequisites for mental/emotional fullfilment, which is utter nonsense, but has a lot to do with capitalist notions about what sells products.

Furthermore, the SA gay media is very white in its thinking and ideologies. In terms of demographics or numbers, there are probably more gay black people in South Africa than gay white people, yet the whole look and content of SA gay media is very white. And when blackness features in the SA gay media it is often merely as objectified bodies, not as a state of being or a social perspective that is being articulated.

is there a place for 'gay media'?

Waldo Muller Yes, but it needs to progress/transform into something that undermines stereotypes instead of upholds them, something that broadens the notion of the "gay culture" it claims to represent to include township gay life or rural gay life on an equal footing with the glitzy, nightclubby notion of gay culture.

Verbatim

akkers & aikônas

'n **AKKER** aan die SABC se Special Assignment-span wat die omstrede Beaufort-Wesse munisipale bestuurder ontmasker het. Nie net het hy onsedelike voorstelle aan minderjarige meisies gemaak nie, hy het ook dorpenaars gedreig. Sulke mense hoort nie in leiersposisies nie! **LB**

'n **AIKôNA** aan *Die Burger* vir die wyse waarop hulle Cornelia le Roux, JIP-redakteur, se plagiaatskandaal hanteer het. Sy het 'n fliekresensie net so uit 'n ander dagblad vertaal en gepubliseer. Haar straf? 'n Waarskuwing wat slegs vir 'n jaar geld. En dít terwyl joernaliste by ander publikasies afgedank word vir dieselfde oortreding! **LB**

An **AKKER** to the South African film industry, spearheaded primarily by producers Anant Singh and Darrell Roodt, for continuing the success generated by 2004's *Forgiveness*. Their critical and commercial acclaim for 2005's *Yesterday* culminated with an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film. This was the first South African film to be nominated in this prestigious category. Other excellent locally produced films for the year included *uCarmen iKhayelitsha* and *Red Dust*. **BS**

An **AKKER** to the late Hunter S. Thompson – the pioneer of gonzo journalism, that free-wheeling, cynical view of all things holy such as Nixon's re-election and the American Dream, shot himself earlier this year; a strange death befitting a strange man. In a final, quirky twist Thompson, the one who brought us *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, had his ashes launched into the sky from a 150 foot hand-shaped cannon. **HK**

An **AIKôNA** to the *Daily Sun* for publishing photos of the four men accused of gang-raping a 17-year-old Belgian exchange student while attending a friend's birthday party in Soweto. According to various media reports, the case against the four accused has been weakened because of the *Daily Sun*'s decision to publish the photos before police could place the men in a line-up to be identified. **AK**

An **AKKER** to *Vanity Fair* for breaking a story which solves one of journalism's most enduring mysteries: the identity of "Deep Throat". "Deep Throat" was the pseudonym for the source who leaked secrets about the Watergate cover-up that brought down U.S. president Richard Nixon. A retired FBI official, Mark Felt, now 91, admitted to being the source. Former *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward confirmed this. (An akker is also due to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post* who protected their source through decades of pressure.) **CB**

An **AIKôNA** to the public broadcaster SABC for not showing footage of the deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka being booed while delivering a speech in Utrecht in KwaZulu Natal on National Women's Day. The SABC claimed that their freelance cameraperson, Sanjay Singh, arrived too late to film the event, but e-tv broadcast footage proving that Singh was at the event, and did film the crowd booing Mlambo-Ngcuka. **NB**

An **AKKER** to the *Mail&Guardian* for breaking the Oilgate scandal, and for braving a police investigation into how the *M&G* acquired Imvume's financial statements. Despite the threat of Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act being used against them to force them to reveal their sources, the *M&G* has stayed true to one of the most important journalistic principles as far as freedom of expression is concerned. **NB**

An **AKKER** to Deon du Plessis for his pioneering work in the newspaper industry. This time he has identified a previously underserved niche known as the COOLS – "career-oriented, online, out of time and living to the full and doing it in style" – and braved the daily newspaper market with a new compact form newspaper, *Nova*. **JJ**

'n **AKKER** aan die verskyning van 'n tweede Afrikaanse Sondagkoerant – *Die Wêreld*. Mededinging is altyd welkom in die media mark! 'n **AIKôNA** gaan aan die verdwyning van *Die Wêreld* na 'n paar maande van onprofessionele verslaggewing. Ons mis die vermaak en die stories van die redakteur, Maryna Blomerus, se familielede. **JJ**

An **AKKER** to the tabloid, *Son*, for drawing up an ethical code. Since its inception, *Son* has used *Die Burger*'s ethical code, but some argued that this code was neither enforced nor appropriate for a tabloid newspaper. Here's hoping that the sometimes controversial tabloid plays by its own (new) rules! **JJ**

'n **AIKôNA** aan die Amerikaanse tydskrif *Newsweek*. Hulle het in Mei 'n artikel publiseer waarin beweer word dat Amerikaanse soldate by Guantanamo Bay 'n Koran in 'n toilet afgespoel het. Nadat die artikel internasionaal opspraak gewek en tot opstande gelei het waarin sewe mense dood is, moes *Newsweek* erken dat dié artikel op slegs een bron gebaseer was en dat dit moontlik foutief is. Ná 'n openbare verskoning, is die skade steeds nie herstel nie. **AG**

smf 2005 medewerkers *co-workers*

smf is saamgestel deur die klas van 2005 van die departement joernalistiek aan die universiteit van stellenbosch

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redakteur

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assistant-editor

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Namhla Tshisela
Leanne Raymond
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Wortel Strydom

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Eduan Maggo

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Lucille Botha
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Anneli Groenewald
Henno Kotzé
Bryan Silke

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Fanie van Rooyen
Alet van Zyl

front page

Photo: Loanna Hoffmann
Layout: Eppy Strydom
& Eduan Maggo

AS GOOD AS THE BEST

Sanlam Awards for the Community Press

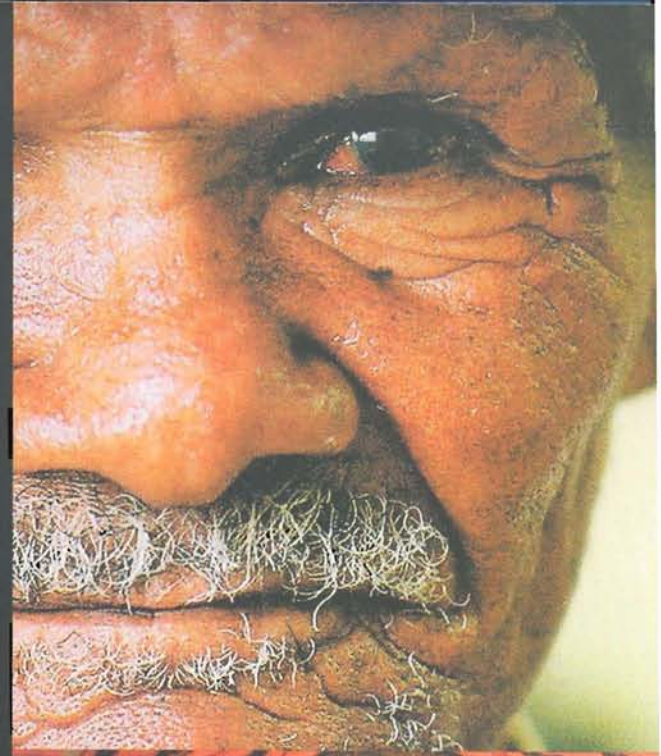
Hulle sit nie in joernalistiek se voorste gestoeltes nie; word nie altyd na die glansgeleenthede in die groot stede genooi of dikwels op buitelandse reise gestuur nie. In die parlement, langs die grootste sportvelde en tussen die supersterre soek jy hulle verniet.

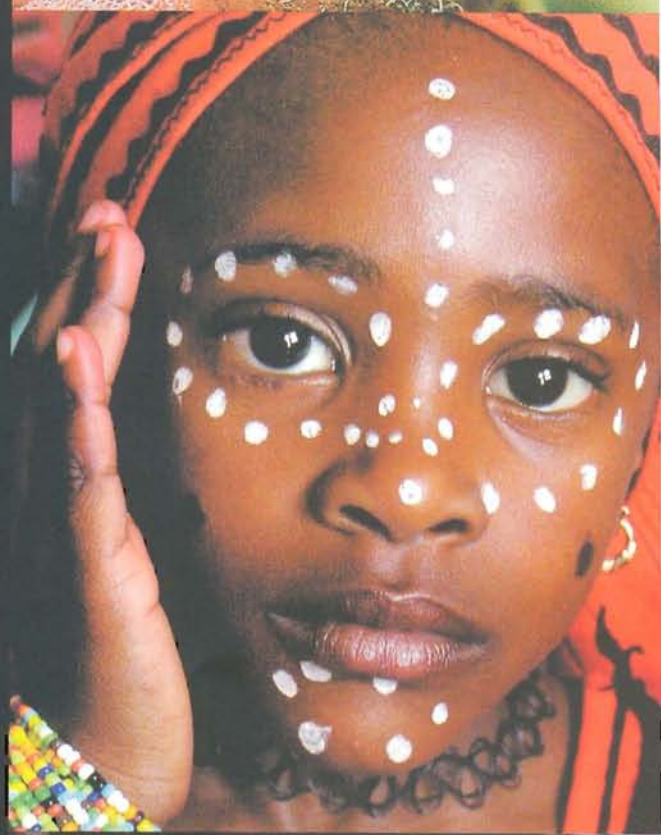
Maar die joernaliste van Suid-Afrika se talle kleiner koerante lewer op hul tuisveld – die platteland en die voorstede – prestasies wat hulle in die beste geselskap in dié beroep kan laat saampraat.

Danksy Sanlam se pryse vir lede van die gemeenskapspers kry dié joernaliste én hul kollegas in ander afdelings van hul koerante nou jaarliks erkenning en blootstelling wat hulle verdien. En danksy die mededingende Sanlam-kompetisie styg die gehalte van dié publikasies pal.

Die Sanlam-pryse vir die Gemeenskapspers is vanjaar vir die veertiende keer in Johannesburg aangebied en is deur 450 mense bygewoon. Altesame 1 635 individuele inskrywings van 482 joernaliste by 198 gemeenskapskoerante is ingeskryf.

Hier is 'n keur van bekroonde wenfoto's in die katrgorie: portrette wat vanjaar ontvang is.





regs bo: Schalk le Roux (*Hoorn*), 1e plek;
middel: MC Botha, 2e plek
onder: Jacci Babich (*Sandton Chronicle*), 4e plek

As jy ernstig is oor 'n loopbaan in die joernalistiek, is die US se nagraadse Departement Joernalisitek jou leerskool. Besoek ons webwerf by www.sun.ac.za/journalism/programmes.html vir inligting oor ons nagraadse joernalistiekkursusse.

If you are serious about a career in journalism, study at Stellenbosch University's graduate Department of Journalism. Visit our website at www.sun.ac.za/journalism/programmes.html for information on our postgraduate journalism courses.

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