MIRROR-MIRROR ON THE WALL: A MULTI-SEMIOTIC AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF

***MR PRICE* AND *H&M FACEBOOK* ADVERTISEMENTS**

by

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DECLARATION

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_____

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this investigation was to examine how images of feminine beauty were constructed in the *Facebook* advertising of retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*. The study examined whether western and European ideals of feminine beauty are perpetuated by these retailers as the standard of beauty in South Africa over a three-year period from 2016 to 2019. The study also explored how visual and linguistic resources are used in the retailers' advertisements to generate meaning and contribute to reinforcing certain dominant discourses by propagating certain ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions about female beauty in South Africa. Furthermore, the study investigated if change is taking place in the way feminine beauty is constructed in South Africa in the selected *Facebook* advertisements.

Underpinned by the theoretical framework of cultural studies, specifically critical race studies, critical whiteness studies, and decoloniality, as well as feminism, and the methodological approaches of semiotics and discursive analysis, the selected images were subjected to a quantitative as well as a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical discourse, and multimodal analysis. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses incorporated the literature review in order to establish and interpret its relevance to the larger body of work on the topic of female beauty. A comparative analysis was also employed in order to contrast and compare the *Facebook* advertising of a local retailer (*Mr Price*) with that of an international retailer (*H&M).*

From the comparative analysis, three prominent themes emerged. These are: Privileging white beauty, the glow of white women; The otherisation of Black women, and the illusion of inclusion; and finally, The politics of beauty. Findings revealed that the beauty of the white models were privileged, and therefore, they were positioned to glow. This showcased that there is a visual language of whiteness that is dominant. On the other hand, the Black models who appeared in the advertisements were stereotypically portrayed in a sexual, exotic manner, which placed them in the category of the "other". Additionally, while there was a fair representation of Black models, their placement in the advertisements created only an illusion of inclusion. Also revealed was how the historical and political legacies of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid continue to reinforce the dominant narrative that western and European beauty features are preferred, and

therefore that is the ideal that is perpetuated by the media. On this basis, the study recommends that in-depth investigation into the portrayal of Black, South African women in advertising discourse be conducted. There needs to be a collaborative and ongoing research drive that includes the diverse cultural groups represented in South Africa. The project must ultimately demonstrate the overall ability of communication science as a discipline to make a tangible difference to social, political and cultural existence in South Africa.

KEYWORDS

H&M; Mr Price; Cultural studies theory; Semiotics theory; Critical discourse analysis; Critical race theory; Decoloniality; Coloniality; Politics; Feminism; Gender; Beauty whitewashing; Blackness; Exotic; Otherisation; Whiteness; White privilege; Advertising; Mass Media; Internet; Online media; Social media; Facebook; Multi-semiotic analysis; Multimodal discourse analysis; Textual analysis; Intertextuality

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Cultural Studies (CS)

Black Consciousness (BC)

Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

DEDICATION

TO ALL THE BROWN SKIN GIRLS AROUND THE WORLD.

"it is a blessing

to be the color of the earth

do you know how often

flowers confuse me for home" – rupi kaur

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First and foremost, thank you to God, the Creator of the Universe, for always providing me with inner peace and wisdom to understand, and navigate the world I live in. The last four years have been emotionally draining, and challenging, and I would not have been able to overcome this had it not been for prayer, meditation, and the spiritual energy guiding me.

To my mother, Mariamma Naidu, I am eternally grateful for all that you have done for me. Growing up, I may not have had much, but we had a full life, and I will always appreciate the sacrifices that you have made for me.

My thanks are owed to my dear husband Carl William Hoffmeester for hours of talking, listening and laughing. Thank you for proving that men who understand the importance of what I believe in exist. Thank you for standing alongside me and fighting for causes that are dear to my heart. Thank you for your daily encouragement, but more importantly, thank you for challenging me to explore, learn and grow. Thank you for the father you are to our daughter; she is blessed to have you, and I am incredibly fortunate that we can ponder this world and the next together. I will choose you in every lifetime.

To my busy bee, my incredibly amazing daughter, Madison-Sophia. Blessed are those whose first child is a daughter. I was pregnant for you when I started this journey and as little as you may be, you have motivated me in ways that I cannot describe. I am so proud to be your mother and so grateful to have been chosen to shape and mould your soul. You are without a doubt my biggest and greatest achievement.

To the Old Souls – my dearest friends, my sisters, my tribe – you ladies are a group of women who I am immensely blessed to have crossed paths with. What an amazing rollercoaster the last 18 years have been. We have stood strong together, and learnt from each other, and have constantly encouraged and supported each other to be, and do better. We have seen each other transform from young, naïve, and shy girls, into strong and confident women, daughters, wives and mothers. Our friendship is the kind of friendship I wish for my daughter and the millions of

girls and women around the world. Thank you for being a part of my crazy journey and for adding so much magic to it.

Thank you to my supervisor, Professor Hannalie Marx Knoetze, for all your guidance and for encouraging me to explore this topic and for understanding the crazy schedule of a working mum, wife, daughter and daughter-in-law. My master's has been the hardest academic endeavour I have ever undertaken, so thank you for also pushing me during the times I felt like giving up. Your support and OCD mannerisms (which match mine) has been invaluable.

To everyone who I have met along the way, family, friends and strangers, who have motivated me to keep going on this journey. Every word of encouragement has carried me to this final point, and even though I cannot mention all of you by name, I am thankful for you.

And finally, thank you to my late father, RD Naidu, a great man of the South African liberation, and people's struggle, whose immense contributions have been largely side-lined and forgotten. This year marks 31 years since your passing, and even though time does heal sadness, there are moments when the pain of losing you is unbearable. I thank you for your legacy, which has taught me so much about the kind of woman and human being that I want to be. I know that you walk beside me every day, and I am honoured to be your daughter, and I proudly carry your name. I will forever keep your memory alive.
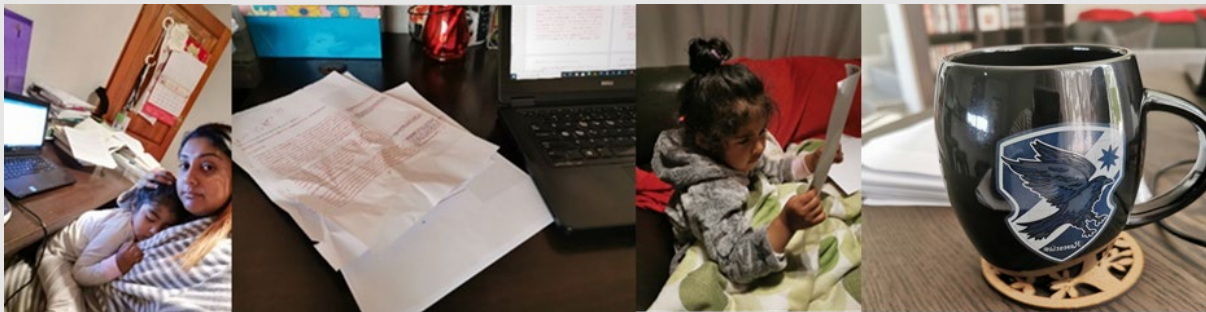
As I am first and foremost an artist, a creative soul who loves to tell stories, I wanted to include a few images that summarise the story of my master's journey. There were many 2am morning work sessions when all my baby wanted was for me to hold her. There were many cold nights when I worked, prompting my baby to do her own "masters reading". Additionally, there were many squashed pages that bore the brunt of my frustrations, and many cups of coffee that rescued me during all these unusual working hours.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and study rationale

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is an old saying that purports the notion that there is no single definition of beauty, and that beauty is defined by the subjective perceptions of a person or society. But when browsing through various media platforms, one must question if this is really the case? When viewing movies and television shows, as well as browsing through magazines and newsletters – both print and online – it would appear as if many media campaigns promote western and European ideals of feminine beauty, and even if there are women from different ethnic and racial groups represented in these media texts, they often embody western forms of feminine beauty. This is, arguably, also the case in South Africa, a country which continues to feel the effects of colonisation and apartheid across various institutions, including the media, despite its democratic ideal and diverse population groups (Thompson & Berat, 2000: 290-346). Additionally, with the ever-increasing use of technology in every sector, online media, from newsletters to magazines and social media, has become a crucial role-player in how aesthetic messages of feminine beauty are constructed, received and interpreted by society. This study focuses on these aesthetic messages, in particular, that of the *Facebook* advertising of female clothing of two fashion retailers in South Africa, *H&M* and *Mr Price*. By analysing these *Facebook* advertisements, the study aims to investigate whether these retailers promote western and European ideals of beauty as the ideal standard of beauty in South Africa.

The idea of the study originated in 2015 when apparel, homeware and sportswear retailer *H&M* launched its brand in South Africa. The launch was met with great excitement but also much controversy. Upon reflecting on its advertisements and billboards, a young South African woman questioned via *Twitter* why there were a limited number of Black models used in the posters, especially considering the launch was a South African one. Tlalane Letlhaku tweeted (Huffington Post, 2015):

> I was at your CT [sic] store. Most, if not all your posters in store have no black models. Please work on that to appeal to everyone.

The South African *H&M* social media team responded with the following tweets (Huffington Post, 2015):

> H&M's marketing has a major impact and it is essential for us to convey a
>
> positive image.
>
> We want out marketing to show our fashion in an inspiring way, to convey a positive feeling.
>
> We work with a wide range of models and personalities throughout all our marketing both online, outdoor and in store.
>
> Our marketing policy, campaign productions and work is something we constantly discuss internally and with creative professionals.

This response was met with much criticism as other South Africans tweeted (Huffington Post, 2015):

> Wait. H&M are saying that they have white models *in South Africa* because they want to convey a positive image?
>
> What exactly are you trying to say @hmsouthafrica?
>
> I had to read that twice, this is how these big companies paint images of ethnic minorities into our heads.

The South African *H&M* social media team then proceeded to clarify their initial response with the following comment (Huffington Post, 2015):

> H&M regrets the response to a social media message that was recently aired on Twitter and wishes to clarify the intention of the message. In no way does H&M state that positivity is linked to an ethnic group. H&M is proudly a global brand that embraces all people who are inspired by fashion, regardless of ethnic background, gender or culture. We wish to apologise if our message has caused offence in any way this is not the intention. Throughout the years we have worked with many models from various ethnic backgrounds in our campaigns.

H&M even listed models from different ethnic, population and race groups that they have featured in previous campaigns citing Naomi Campbell and Salma Hayek, amongst others, as examples. In my own experience as a Black woman from the minority South African Indian/Asian population group, I related to the emotions that this campaign created among young

black/African and coloured South African women. When looking at many media campaigns, television shows, movies, and advertisements, I always feel that I am never truly represented in any of these – with maybe the exception of a now cancelled American show called *The Mindy Project (2012)*, which is rare. I personally do not see myself – personality traits and physical features – represented in mass media, even in popular Indian cinema known as *Bollywood*. What is often seen across different media campaigns – advertisements, television, magazines, movies, and theatre show – is the same form of western and European beauty. Even if there are women from different ethnic and race groups in these media texts, they often embody the western ideals of beauty such as long straight hair, light skin, light eyes, small waists and body frames, and/or tall with long legs (Zhang, 2013:05). Women such as Indian actress and former Miss World, Aishwarya Rai; Latina actresses, Eva Longoria and Salma Hayek, and almost all the Miss World winners from South America; former Miss World from China, Yu Wenxia; and former Miss World from Nigeria, Agbani Darego, are some examples of the women of colour that the western media idolise for their beauty because it is representative of *their* ideal of beauty – lighter skin with more anglicised features (Hunter, 2005:71).

It is evident that the issues surrounding the controversy of the *H&M* media campaign are not new, in the sense that white, light skinned models are considered to be preferred over darker skinned models in media campaigns, and the world is conditioned to accept this (Olga and Kwan, 2003: 2, 8-9). However, the controversy came at a time in South Africa where the concept of decolonisation of racist practices, and institutions, were being brought to the fore daily by the news media. Even though it is not a new academic debate, it started receiving renewed attention when the news media began reporting on the decolonisation agenda during the #RhodesMustFall movement in 2015. The #RhodesMustFall movement started when South African university students began their call for the decolonisation of their universities and education system (eNCA, 2016). This was coupled with other incidents such as a 2016 campaign, #StopRacismAtPretoriaGirlsHigh, where young Black girls stood up against the school's dress code policy as it applied western rules of how they should comb their hair (*Mail & Guardian*, 2016). Other incidents included the racist remarks from a white South African woman, Penny

Sparrow (now deceased) and others, when they referred to people of colour as "monkeys" during the 2015/2016 festive season (City Press, 2016). According to Wulf Hund and Charles Mills (2016), in their article *Comparing black people to monkeys has a long, dark simian history*, this view of Black people as animals, is considered racist. A more recent case is that of South African citizen, Adam Catzavelos, who in 2018, created a selfie video while holidaying in Greece, making racist comments about Black people being absent from his surroundings (News 24, 2018). *H&M* also had a more current and similar backlash to its advertising when it featured a black child wearing a sweatshirt with the words "coolest monkey in the jungle" written on the front (West, 2018). While the *H&M* "monkey sweatshirt" incident is not directly related to women, it is relevant when researching the company's advertising approach, especially considering that the company is a western company originating in Sweden, therefore, it's ideals on beauty, fashion, and lifestyle might be premised on western norms and values.

Another recent incident is centred on the backlash that South African pharmacy and beauty retailer *Clicks* received for using "racist" advertisements designed and published by *TRESemmé*. The advertisements depicted a white (Cf. pages 6-7) blonde model's hair as "normal" as well as "fine and flat", and a Black model's hair as "frizzy and dull". This prompted widespread protests in South Africa with Black people labelling *Clicks* and *TRESemmé* as racist. This led to many of the big retailers pulling *TRESemmé* products off their shelves. According to Pumza Fihlani (BBC News, 2020), the advertisement was insensitive especially considering the history of South Africa and its association with African hair. The Economic Freedom Fighters (BBC News, 2020) state that due to this history, "black [sic] identity exists as inferior to the identity of white people". They explain that within this context, advertisements such as the *TRESemmé* ones, continue to communicate a message, that Black women's beauty ideals "represent damage, decay and abnormality", and they should therefore aspire to white standards of beauty (BBC News, 2020). According to Gloria Paidamoyo Chikaonda (2020), imagery such as the *TRESemmé* advertisements are "damaging because it perpetuates the notion that black [sic] features are inherently flawed". She comments that advertising of this nature is "irresponsible", and that these ideas of "acceptable standards of beauty and appearance" have long-lasting negative ramifications for Black people in South

Africa (Chikaonda, 2020). In this regard, all the examples mentioned here, are an appropriate launch pad for this study, as it helps highlight possible entrenched colonial and racist beliefs associated with representation in the South African context.

In light of the aforementioned, this study delves into the investigation of whether the *Facebook* advertisements of female clothing for retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M* prefer and perpetuate western and European beauty ideals as the standard of beauty in South Africa. *Mr Price* was selected for this study as this investigation seeks to draw a comparison between a local retailer that is similar to that of *H&M*, an international, European retailer. Given that both retailers sell apparel, homeware and sportswear, the Facebook advertisements of *Mr Price* are a suitable and appropriate choice in order to compare and contrast with the *H&M Facebook* advertisements. In this regard, the study is one that has socio-cultural significance as it questions whether these *Facebook* advertisements identify with the local culturally informed ideals of beauty or global western ones or perhaps a combination of both. Additionally, the investigation's significance is hinged on the fact that in South Africa, Black females are in the majority, but might be made to feel marginalised by the white minority's western beauty ideals and standards captured in these advertisements. This will be expanded on in the research problem which is presented next.

1.2 Context and background of the research problem

Given the diversity of the South African population in terms of the various race groups, ethnicities and cultures that exist within its borders, this study seeks to investigate whether western and European feminine beauty standards dominate over "other" beauty ideals by conducting a case study of *Mr Price* and *H&M*'s *Facebook* advertising. While the concept of "other" is explored in great detail in this study's literature review, it is important to briefly outline it here. As explained by Jean-Francois Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43-47), the concept of "other" is used to divide humanity into two groups. The identity of one group is valued, and they are defined as the norm, whereas the other group is considered to have faults, and they are therefore, "devalued and susceptible to discrimination" (Staszak in Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43-47). Through a discursive process, "otherness" or "otherisation" is created by a dominant "in-group" by stigmatising a real

or imagined difference of another group or the "out-group" (Staszak in Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43). This impacts on identity formation and can lead to discrimination against the "out-group".

When considering who the "other" is in South Africa, the country's historical context of imperialism, colonisation and apartheid, as well as the make-up of its population, must be taken into consideration. South Africa's population, according to Statistics South Africa (2016), comprises largely of four main race groups, i.e. black, coloured, Indian/Asian and white. The creation of these population groups is associated with the country's history of colonisation and apartheid. While these terms were created by the apartheid government, they are still used in post-apartheid South Africa to group and identify people.

Based on data from Statistics South Africa (2016), currently, the total South African population is around 55.6 million people with the following breakdown: black/African, 44.891603 million; coloured, 4.869526 million; Indian/Asian, 1.375 834 million; and white, 4.516691 million. When considering these statistics, it is evident that when the totals of the black/African, coloured, and Indian/Asian groups are added together, they account for the majority of the South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2016). These three groups, black/African, coloured and Indian/Asian, are commonly referred to as "non-white" or "people of colour". While these groups are, generally, referred to as "people of colour", for purposes of this study, I will use the capitalised Black to refer to all three of these groups. I am basing this on the fact that the term Black was also used to describe all "non-whites" or "people of colour" during apartheid, when the National Party-led government sought to divide the population, and re-classify people under the Population Registration Act of 1950.

In addition to the above, during this time of apartheid, there was an anti-apartheid activist named Bantu Stephen Biko who gave birth to the concept of Black Consciousness (BC). This movement, in summary, encouraged Black people to own, shape and celebrate the Black mind. According to Ndumiso Dladla (2017: 107), Biko's Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) understood apartheid's stratification of the "non-whites" as a strategy to divide the black/African, coloured,

and Indian/Asian groups. Therefore, in defining BC, Biko believed that being Black reflects one's mental attitude, and not the pigmentation of one's skin (Dladla, 2017: 107).

In line with this, in this study, the term Black will then refer to the "other" or "Black" ideals of beauty as the opposite of white/European/western beauty, and is related to the black/African, coloured, and Indian/Asian population groups of South Africa. However, I will also use small letters "black", "coloured" and "indian" or "people of colour" when there is a need to specifically differentiate between these groups in a South African context. Additionally, given that a portion of this study's literature review encapsulates African American scholarship, it is within that context, the capitalised Black will refer to the ancestors and descendants of the transatlantic slave trade, and the term "people/women of colour" will be used to describe those around the world who do not fall under the grouping of white people.

With the statistics proving the Black population to be the majority in South Africa, it can be assumed that the *Facebook* advertisements being researched would organise their communication to appeal largely to these audiences. However, at first glance, when browsing through various visual images used in the *Facebook* advertising, this does not seem to be the case. Instead, it appears that what is being represented (across various South African social media platforms, including but not limited to, *Facebook*) are western and Eurocentric messages of feminine beauty. As Lei Zhang (2013: 4) explains, this can be attributed to globalisation and increased technology and access to western media. However, it is also important to understand that the mass media within South Africa operates in a unique space. According to Pieter J. Fourie (2002: 18-27), the history of the media in South Africa showcases how western ideology came to dominate the country's media industry. He explains that during the apartheid era in South Africa (1948 to 1994), all political, economic, industrial, agricultural, military, and social power resided in the hands of the white minority, with the media being no exception. According to an online article by *Press Reference* on South Africa (2019), during the country's apartheid years, the media operated under government censorship, making it impossible to publish any information without authorisation. South Africans received news reports through the public service broadcaster, the

South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and government selected magazine and newspaper groups (Thompson and Berat, 2000: 198). According to Fourie (2002: 20), the media was owned and managed by mostly white males, who promoted the western mode of media production and western news values. Fourie (2002: 20) expands on this point by stating:

> In terms of content the mainstream media catered mainly for the white population and their needs. The content predominantly represented the white population's western history, culture, economic and political interests.

Following the dawn of democracy in 1994, Fourie (2002: 27) explains that the media underwent many changes as the new South African Constitution made provision for a free media, and for the free flow of information. This meant that the South African media could now be owned, and managed, by Black people, and content suitable for its diverse population could be produced. However, there are views that this is currently not happening, and that much of the content created for South Africans still carry a predominantly western and Eurocentric voice. In this regard, one point to consider is that the media operates as an industry which puts its own economic interests ahead of its role "as a cultural product and a symbolic form of expression" which "produces a well-informed public opinion that will contribute to democracy" (Fourie, 2002: 36). According to Fourie (2002: 36), market-driven strategies such as liberalisation, privatisation, internationalisation and commercialisation, have contributed to "increasing superficiality, emptiness and meaninglessness of much of the present-day media content". However, in considering this, the question remains – how does this contribute to the western and Eurocentric culture that appears to proliferate South Africa's current media landscape?

A contributing factor is that the South African white population still retain buying power, even though they are in the minority. According to a *Living Conditions of Households in South Africa* survey by Statistics South Africa (2017), nearly two decades after the legal end to apartheid, the income of white South Africans was about four and half times larger than that of the "black" population group. The income of white households was also three times larger than the average national income. White South Africans, who make up about 10% of the population have the highest average income in the country at approximately R444 446 a year (Statistics South Africa,

2017: 15). This is almost five times more than "black" South Africans at R92 983 per year. "Black" South Africans account for about 81% of the population. The "indian" headed households, which make-up about two percent of the population, had an average annual income of R271 621; while the households headed by the "coloured" population – seven percent of the population – earned on average R172 765 per annum. Additionally, the survey highlighted that white-headed households receive two-thirds of their income from work and 22,8% from additional sources such as "imputed rent and capital" (Statistics South Africa, 2017: 15). With regards to the average annual household consumption expenditure, the survey indicates that the South African white population group has the highest average annual household consumption expenditure at R350 937 across all the population groups. The "black" households spend R67 828 annually; "coloured" homes spend R124 445 annually; with "indian" homes spending R195 336 annually (Statistics South Africa, 2017: 13).

In light of the aforementioned, it is evident that buying power in South Africa resides in the white minority population. This could be the reason why western beauty ideals are prioritised in advertising campaigns for retailers such as *Mr Price* and *H&M.* However, a counter argument can be made that there is also now a Black upper middle-class sector of the population, who in recent years has achieved buying power. According to the *Top Million* research report into South Africa's upper middle-class households, released in 2019 by the UCT Marketing Institute, there has been a significant shift in South Africa's middle class. Detailed in the report is that there are "many new entrants into the upper middle-class – who have leapfrogged from normal middle class direct into this demographic from the poorest segment" (Marsland in Biz Community, 2019). According to Louise Marsland (Biz Community, 2019), this group of the population have "massive buying power and exert pressure on brands". They are defined as "key influencers" as they can negatively or positively influence a brand's performance. One of the changes mentioned in the report is that the demographics and consumption patterns of those with the buying power has shifted. According to Marsland (Biz Community, 2019), at the launch of the report it was revealed "that South Africa remains a dual economy with one of the highest inequality rates in the world".

However, the "upper middle-class group has grown, even as South Africa has drifted sideways" (Marsland in Biz Community, 2019). The report indicated that the "tax base has increased on the richer side of the South African economy, and the *Top Million* group has enjoyed the benefits of rising affluence" (Marsland in Biz Community, 2019). Statistics from the report (Marsland in Biz Community, 2019) reflect that, "out of South Africa's total population of about 57 million people, 5% of households in SA fall into this *Top Million* segment". The report defines a *Top Million* household as one that earns at least R40 000 per month (after deductions) with the average combined household earnings totaling R70 000 every month. This segment of people "have a combined spending power of R700 billion, representing 36% of all consumer spend in South Africa" (Marsland in Biz Community, 2019). The racial profiles of this group are as follows, 54% white; 32% "black"; 8% "coloured/mixed race"; and 5% "indian/Asian". Based on these statistics, if the totals of the three race groups that account for the South African Black population are added, the total amounts to 45%, which provides some form of substantiation to the counter argument that there is now a Black upper middle-class sector of the population who now has buying power. However, in spite of these progressive changes in the buying power, the *Top Million* research report, as with the findings of the *Living Conditions of Households in South Africa* survey, also reflect that the white minority possess the main buying power in South Africa. Given that the white population group appear to have the most expendable income, it seems possible that the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* are constructed and packaged to appeal to this group.

Another crucial point for this study is the construction of advertisements in the social media space, with particular reference to *Facebook.* According to Rodney G. Duffett and Myles Wakeham (2016: 21), social media advertising is a powerful marketing tool for brands operating in South Africa. This is due to the increased number of the country's consumers who are joining social networks such as *Facebook*. This means that a company's message has the potential to reach millions of people. Duffett and Wakeham (2016: 21) found that social media marketing communications has a significant influence on the attitude of consumers. They explain that *Facebook* is one of the most commonly used social medium in the world (including South Africa).

This is of relevance to my study considering the main research aim. Similarly, Melanie Wiese, Carla Martínez-Climent, and Dolores Botella-Carrubi (2020:76) discuss "that *Facebook* is the world's foremost social network service (SNS) and a tool that has become an integrated part of consumers' lives". They explain that messaging can occur in various ways on *Facebook*. For example, a company can have paid for advertising (photos, videos or text in the form of sponsored posts, pay-per-click ads and carousel ads), which appears in the user's news feed. Another way of advertising is by creating a free *Facebook* business profile and regularly communicate free / organic messages (photos, videos or text) in the form of posts through that profile that can be liked, commented on, or shared (Wiese, et al.,2006: 76). The scholars also explain that it is important to understand that *Facebook* advertising differs from traditional website advertising because most of the time *Facebook* users cannot distinguish between advertising and general user content. According to Wiese, et al. (2006: 76), "most Facebook advertisements are designed to resemble a typical post, making it difficult for Facebook users to differentiate between advertising and other types of user-generated content".

Based on the contextualisation of the research problem as outlined in this section, the next subsection presents the research questions posed by this investigation.

1.3 Research questions

The aim of the study is to examine how images of feminine beauty are constructed in the *Facebook* advertising of retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Both retailers sell apparel, homeware and sportswear, with the first being a South African company operating from the city of Durban since 1985 (Mr Price Group Limited, 2016) and the latter a Swedish based retailer which entered the South African market in 2015 (H&M Group, 2016). The research project analysed selected *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion by retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*. The images were selected from the retailers' social media profiles, namely their South African *Facebook* accounts, *@MRPFASHION* and *@southafricahm*, from 1 October 2016 to 31 October 2019. Underpinned by the theoretical framework of cultural studies, and specifically critical race studies, critical whiteness studies, and decoloniality, as well as feminism, and the methodological approaches of

semiotics and discursive analysis, the selected images will be subjected to a quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical discourse, and multimodal analysis. The study will investigate whether western and European ideals of feminine beauty are promoted by these retailers as the standard of beauty in South Africa. The reason for selecting these two stores is due to their popularity in South Africa, the fact that both sell similar apparel, homeware and sportswear, and are similarly priced.

In the initial stage of data collection, there was a total of 995 *Facebook* advertisement posts collected from both retailers over the three year-period mentioned above. In order to construct a viable sample size for analysis purposes, one advertisement per month, per retailer, was selected, which totalled 74 advertisements. These advertisements were selected based on the presence of preselected criteria relevant to the study. Informed by the literature review, the preselected criteria include race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hairstyle, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary.

However, during the downsizing stage, while sieving through the advertisements, there were also 36 advertisements (18 from *Mr Price* and 18 from *H&M*) that were added to the 74, because of the political, social and cultural comments made by viewers of the advertisements. The comments matched the preselected criteria and characteristics, and based on this, these advertisements were relevant to the study. This meant that there were a total number of 110 advertisements, 55 from each retailer, selected for the quantitative analysis (Addenda A and B).

Following this, in order to establish the sample size for the qualitative analysis, 10 out of the 110 advertisements were selected. Aligned to the preselected criteria and characteristics, there were five advertisements from each retailer selected for the qualitative analysis. These 10 advertisements were subjected to a multi-semiotic critical discourse, and multimodal analysis. Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis are presented in this dissertation. Based on the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, a comparative analysis was conducted. Including a comparative component made it possible to examine if there are similarities and / or

differences regarding the perpetuation of western beauty ideals in the *Facebook* advertisements of the two retailers. According to scholars such as Sonia Livingstone (2003) as well as Frank Esser and Thomas Hanitzsch (2012), comparative research has become one of the most powerful tools used in intellectual inquiry in communication science.

Based on what has been presented in this chapter thus far, the specific aims of this study are:

1   To investigate how feminine beauty is constructed in South Africa in the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* as it relates to western and European ideals of feminine beauty.

2   To investigate how linguistic and visual resources used in the *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements generate meaning and contribute to reinforcing certain dominant discourses by propagating certain ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions about female beauty in South Africa.

3   To investigate if change is taking place in the way feminine beauty is constructed in South Africa in the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M.*

Based on these aims, the study will seek to answer the following:

1   Do the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of *Mr Price* and *H&M* promote western and European beauty standards over localised beauty ideals as the ideal in South Africa?

2   How does the semiotic make-up of the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of *Mr Price* and *H&M* shape the ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions about female beauty in South Africa?

3   Has there been a change in the construction and packaging of feminine beauty in the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M?*

1.4 Structure of the dissertation: chapter outline

Chapter one serves as a brief introduction for the research investigation by providing background information locating this study. This information is largely focused on the marketing campaigns

of *H&M* as it brought the idea of this study to life. In identifying the research problem, this chapter also contains a brief discussion of the history and population makeup of South Africa, highlighting racial occurrences as well the rise of decolonial movements as it is pertinent to the study. Also discussed briefly is the media history of South Africa, consumer buying power among the country's population, and the construction of advertisements in the social media space and *Facebook*. This chapter also identifies the aim of the research, as well as the research questions concerning this investigation. It concludes by providing the chapter outline for the dissertation.

The literature that is relevant to this dissertation is reviewed in chapters two and three. In chapter two, a historical account of South Africa with regards to colonisation, apartheid and post-apartheid is presented. A range of international and local scholarship is covered to flesh out the complexities of feminine beauty in South Africa, and around the world, in relation to the historical account discussed.

Chapter three contains the second literature review which starts with a focus on the mass media, presenting its history in general, and then focuses specifically on the history and current context of the mass media in South Africa. It discusses the internet as a mass media channel with a specific look at social media and Facebook. Also presented in this Chapter is international and South African scholarship on advertising as a tool for mass communication of messages. The literature on advertising also covers a range of research that addresses representations of feminine beauty in mass media around the world. In this way, the literature also considers the social, cultural, and political impact of mass mediated images used in advertising.

The theoretical framework of this research study is discussed in chapter four. It explores cultural studies theory as the overarching theoretical framework in order to explore representations of, and for, marginalised social groups and the need for cultural change. Highlighted as part of the cultural studies theory are eight key interconnecting concepts that are vital for any cultural studies investigation. These are culture and signifying practices, representation, materialism and non-reductionism, articulation, power, ideology and popular culture, cultural texts and readers,

as well as subjectivity and identity. Following this are discussions on critical race theory (CRT), critical whiteness studies (CWS), and decoloniality, as well as feminism.

Building on the theoretical framework, chapter five presents the methodological framework of this study. It contains a discussion on the relevance of semiotics and the discursive approach and how these frameworks will be applied to the study. It also highlights the feasibility of a multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) which includes Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar. A detailed discussion on the multimodal semiotic principles that form part of the social semiotic framework, and which will be applied in this study is provided.

The research methodology is presented in chapter six. This chapter unpacks the importance of the quantitative and qualitative research design, as well as the importance of employing a comparative analysis approach to validate and authenticate the findings of the analyses. The chapter also expands on the data collection techniques; the research population; the tools that will be employed to analyse and interpret the data; issues of reliability and validity, and ethical considerations.

Chapters seven and eight present the quantitative and qualitative data analyses respectively. It contains discussions of how the analyses were applied to the *Mr Price and H&M Facebook* advertisements that were collected over a three-year period from 2016 to 2019. It discusses the findings of these analyses in relation to the the pre-selected criteria of race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary.

In chapter nine, the conclusion of the study is presented. The discussion presents the findings of the comparative analysis. The chapter highlights the general conclusions from the preceding analysis and researching findings chapters. It also provides a comprehensive summation of the study with regards to the research aims. It concludes with a presentation of the strengths and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for future research.

1.5 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the research of this dissertation. The study investigates whether the *Facebook* advertisements of female clothing for retailers, *Mr Price* and *H&M*, perpetuate western and European beauty ideals as the standard of beauty in South Africa. In this introductory chapter, the background and rationale for the study is presented considering that the study has socio-cultural significance as it questions whether these *Facebook* advertisements identify with the local culturally informed ideals of beauty or global western ones or perhaps a combination of both. This chapter also presents the research problem, which directs the focus of the research, and guides the data collection and analysis. The study is situated in the larger theoretical framework of cultural studies and a mixed-methods paradigm was identified as being suitable for the needs of this dissertation. Therefore, the chapter briefly highlights the quantitative, qualitative and comparative design that will be employed in this study. In addition, the chapter documents the research aim, and research questions that guides the study. It demonstrates what the knowledge obtained from the study will be used for. The chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the dissertation. Having given context to the study, the following chapter presents the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW PART ONE: MARKERS AND MAKERS OF FEMININE BEAUTY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers part one of the study's literature review and focuses on existing scholarship on the topic. According to Guy Paré and Spyros Kitsiou (2017), a literature review plays a critical role in scholarship as it allows for rigorous knowledge synthesis. The literature review is an essential component for any research study because it helps the researcher to "identify what has been written on a subject or topic; determine the extent to which a specific research area reveals any interpretable trends or patterns; generate new frameworks and theories; and identify topics or questions requiring more investigation" (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). The aim of this literature review is to situate the study within existing knowledge.

The focus of part one of the literature review is on the historical and political implications of how western and European ideals of beauty came to be the standard of beauty that all other cultures are measured against. This scholarship explores how feminine beauty representations have always drawn on racial, political, and gendered ideas. The chapter details how whiteness established itself as superior and ideal beauty, and considers how Black female beauty is viewed, interpreted and portrayed around the world. Additionally, because this study is situated in South Africa, it is vital to discuss and interpret the country's history of colonisation, apartheid, and post-apartheid, as well as how these structures relate to cultural, social, economic and political constructions that impact Black feminine beauty ideals in the country.

In light of the aforementioned, this chapter provides the point of departure for a review of the literature that will be presented over two chapters. It explores a historical perspective of feminine beauty representation by covering a range of international and local scholarship. In some instances, there might appear to be an overlap between the two chapters, but this is due to the subject matter and the complexities that exist on this topic. Chapter two begins by exploring how whiteness came to be the ideal marker of beauty.

2.2 Whiteness as *the* standard of beauty

According to scholars such as bell hooks (1992), Imani Perry (2006), and Susan Bryant (2013), for centuries, in societies around the world, Black women have internalised European standards of beauty, and have sought to recreate these ideals in themselves. These scholars argue that western and Eurocentric beauty markers have become prevalent in many Black communities largely due to influences that are rooted in historical and political occurrences such as colonialism, imperialism, and slavery. As this study seeks to understand why whiteness, and consequently European and westernised ideals, are considered the standard of beauty in mass media, it is important to examine the history of how the white race group came to establish themselves as the race that is considered superior to all the other race groups around the world.

In her book, *The History of White People* (2010), Nell Irvin Painter writes that western academia is responsible for promoting the idea of Eurocentric beauty as the universal beauty ideal. Her book provides some vital context for this study as it explores the history of the notion that whiteness equates to superiority. In tracing the shifts in whiteness, and describing attitudes towards, and definitions of, race, Painter (2010) begins her exploration with ancient Greece and continues through to the beginning of scientific racism in early modern Europe, to 21st century America, and modern times. She illustrates that "race is an idea and not a fact" and that it is not just a matter of biology (Painter, 2010: ix-xii). She explains that the "meanings of the white race reach into concepts of labor [sic], gender, class, and images of personal beauty" (Painter, 2010: ix-xii). Before this history is expanded on in the paragraphs that follow, the definition of whiteness must also be explored. According to Melissa Steyn (2007: 4), whiteness can be defined as:

> The social positioning which was opened up for those of European descent in relation to "others" through the enormous differences in power, wealth and influence established over three or four hundred years, and then further rationalised in the past 150 years through "race" theories and discourses. This privileged position continues to reproduce itself socially and ideologically, through normalising itself as the invisible centre of power, while keeping attention focused on the "others" which it marginalises, and constructs as being the source of the problems that need to be solved in a multicultural context.

More simply, whiteness, and the privilege that accompanies it, are seen as powerful social constructs that position the whites as superior to others, providing them with automatic benefits. Steyn (2012: 11) writes that:

> Whiteness, which has been characterized [sic] as a structurally privileged positionality (un)informed by ignorance/blindnesses – taking for granted unearned entitlements that come at the expense of racialized [sic] others, and generally lacking insight into the normalized [sic] racial order that shapes life opportunities and conditions imperceptibly around the comfort, convenience and advancement of whites.

Furthermore, she writes that whiteness can be viewed "as a collective racial epistemology with a history of violence against people of color [sic]" (Steyn, 2012: 11).

In exploring the beginnings of whiteness as superior to other race groups, Painter (2010: 43-58) writes about the origins of racial classification. Even though it is believed that colonialism, a political and economic system that different European nations used to dominate and exploit vast areas of the world, began in about 1500, Painter (2010: 43-58) states that it is French physician, Francois Bernier, who is credited for identifying four races in 1684. Based on geographical locations, Bernier's first group were Europeans (with the exclusion of those from Moscow), and he also included some population members from native America, North Africa and Asia in this group. In Painter's (2010: 43) opinion, it is "odd" that some members of these other societies belong to Bernier's first, and mostly European group. Painter (2010: 43-44) states that according to Bernier, the second race group are people from sub-Saharan Africa. The third race group is the largest, and includes, the Georgians (a group of Caucasian natives from Georgia and the South Caucasus); Muscovites (natives of Moscow); Usbeks (people of Turkic ethnicity from the central Asian republic of Uzbekistan and surrounding areas); and the Turcomans (people originating from Central Asia, primarily the Turkmen nation state of Turkmenistan). Also included in the third group are sections of southeast Asia; China; and the vast lands between China and Russia, including the Tartars, who are the natives of west-central Russia and other former Soviet Republics. Another section that forms part of Bernier's third group is the Fertile Crescent (this includes part of the Middle East that covers what is now known as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine,

Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, as well as the south eastern region of Turkey, and the western borders of Iran, and sometimes Cyprus); and the Levant (Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia). Bernier's fourth group included the Lapps, also known as the Sámi people. According to Marzena Skubatz Photography (n.d.), the Sámi people are a "Finno-Ugric people inhabiting Sápmi, which today encompasses large northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula within the Murmansk Oblast of Russia".

According to Painter (2010: 43-44), Bernier's "weird configuration" of race groups seems to focus on physical appearance and is based on how he described the physical features of the natives of a country. For example, Bernier (Painter, 2010: 43-44) referred to the Asians as "truly white, but they have broad shoulders, a flat face, a small squab nose, little pig's-eyes long and deep set, and three hairs of a beard". He also described the Lapps as "little stunted creatures with thick legs, large shoulders, short neck, and a face elongated immensely; very ugly and partaking much of the bear" (Painter, 2010: 43-44). This is in contrast to how Bernier and other scholars at the time described Georgians, Circassians, and Caucasians, which were interchangeable terms used to refer to white people. According to Painter (2010: 45), white women were depicted as having with them "the aura of physical attractiveness, submission, and sexual availability - in a word, femininity". White women possessed an enchanting perfection of features, and very delicate complexions, with "their noses being aquiline, their eyebrows arched and regular, their mouths small, their teeth remarkably white, and their ears not so large" (Painter, 2010: 48). They also had a "smooth, even, lily-white complexion and admirably beautiful features" (Painter, 2010: 45). Having been described as tall, graceful, slender, and poised, with no bulges on their bodies, white women were considered the most beautiful women in the world, with some being "downright Angelic" (Painter, 2010: 45-46).

The above descriptions that Painter (2010: 43-58) provides of whiteness and other race groups is important for this study because it demonstrates that even though centuries have passed since the beginnings of these racial classifications, the ideals of white beauty as perfection have endured, and have become firmly embedded in the science of race. The term Caucasian, coined

by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in 1795, also supports the notion that whiteness is a symbol of beauty. Blumenbach created the term after he saw people of European descent at Mount Caucasus. According to Blumenbach (Dewan, 2013), Mount Caucasus produced the "most beautiful race of men". Painter (2010: 59-62) also mentions German art historian and archaeologist, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who said that "white skin makes bodily appearance more beautiful". Painter (2010: 59-62) argues that Winckelmann openly criticised non-European features, while simultaneously giving value to white skin, based on the gleaming white marble of Greek statues. Moreover, Painter (2010: 72-90) refers to other earlier intellectuals such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke, and the eighteenth-century Edinburgh philosophers who associated beauty with smallness, weakness, and women. Using "images of Greek Gods to represent the ideal white person, their theories and images, which were an extension of the association of whiteness with beauty, started to reverberate through the work of authors writing in English" (Painter, 2010: 70-71). Further to this, there was research that was being done on skulls, with measurements of skulls being used to rank race groups hierarchically. According to Lisa Forman Cody (2015) this was captured in the Charles White Human Chart which documents the hierarchy of races, calling for some race groups to be labelled as different species. The chart illustrates that the "Negro, whose mouth juts far out in front of the rest of his face, sits next to the ape", and due to these animal-like characteristics, the "Negro" places last on the race hierarchy. However, the "big brained" and "clever" European and "his statuesque, Greek and marble" features, placed Europeans in prime position on the chart.

Another element to consider when exploring the process through which European and western beauty ideals came to be superior in comparison to beauty ideals found in other parts of the world, is that of Anglo-Saxonism. According to Martin Wall (2020), the term Anglo-Saxon, is used historically to describe immigrants from northern Germany and southern Scandinavia. This group, from the early fifth century to the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, populated and reigned over regions that are today part of England and Wales (Wall, 2020). Anglo-Saxons are known as the descendants of three different Germanic tribes – the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (Wall, 2020). According to scholars, the Anglo-Saxons are known to have established the Kingdom

of England, and they are also known for having influenced the modern English language. While the history of the Anglo-Saxons is important, it is the physical traits of this group of people, in particular the women, that is of relevance to this study. According to Painter (2010: 91-103), over time, Anglo-Saxonism has developed into a racial belief system that has been promulgated by British and American intellectuals, politicians and academics, to promote the superiority of Anglo-Saxon knowledge, politics, and physical characteristics, among others. In doing this, it contributes to the message and belief that whiteness is superior (Painter, 2010: 91-103). When scholars speak of the Anglo-Saxon physical characteristics that Black models in mass media portray, they are referring to characteristics such as long straight hair, light skin, light eyes, small waists and body frames, and tall with long legs. Therefore, Anglo-Saxonism thinking is embedded in mass media and forms part of the ideology that is disseminated on whiteness as an ideal form of beauty. According to Painter (2010: 91-103), one of the reasons for this is the fact that English and American writers have long been inspired by German theories of racial meaning which equates the ideal beauty type to European aesthetic features. Additionally, because European intellectuals saw the USA as an important "white outpost", this is how, and why, the same kind of thinking on whiteness as superior, exists in the USA, even though the country is not geographically part of Europe (Painter, 2010: 132-150). Moreover, Painter (2010: 132-150) asserts that because the USA is a society largely built on the colonisation of native Americans, and African slavery, one's racial grouping has always played a prominent role in determining ranking in society. This, coupled with the European belief that "race purity produces beauty", is one of the main reasons for why European beauty ideals are generally accepted as ideal and superior in the USA, and therefore, also referred to as western beauty ideals (Painter, 2010: 132-150).

The literature presented thus far has focused largely on how racial classifications and the aesthetic features associated with these classifications came to be. In continuing the exploration of how whiteness became the standard of beauty, the next part of the review considers how the historical and political occurrences of colonialism and imperialism impacted, but also spread, beauty ideals. Hannah McCann, in an interview with Anna Kelsey-Sugg (2018), explains that the

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ideas of what is considered beautiful are "inextricably linked to history", and in order for society to understand what is classified as beauty and why, society "needs to look deep into the past, and consider the ideas that have been presented to them". As highlighted earlier, "colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). According to Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy (2017), there are many examples in early world history that demonstrate how one grouping of people can steadily expand by including nearby lands and placing its people in regions that it has conquered. Popular examples of such societies include the Greeks, Romans, Moors, and the Ottomans, among others. However, they state that it was in the sixteenth century when "colonialism changed decisively because of technological developments in navigation that began to connect more remote parts of the world" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). This meant that it was possible for colonising states to reach countries in remote areas of the world and to maintain relations between themselves and the colonies. Kohn and Reddy (2017) write that this is how "the modern European colonial project emerged, when it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political sovereignty in spite of geographical dispersion". Their definition of colonialism describes it as a "process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Colonialism allowed the colonising country to exploit the resources of the conquered country for their benefit. Kohn and Reddy (2017) also highlight that the "project of European political domination" lasted until the twentieth century when most of the national liberation movements of the colonised countries were formed, assuming legal governance of their countries.

In explaining imperialism, Kohn and Reddy (2017) state that one of the challenges in defining imperialism is that it is hard to differentiate it from colonialism – "like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Simply put, while the two terms are used interchangeably, "imperialism can be defined as a broad term that refers to economic, military, and political domination that is achieved without significant permanent European settlement" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). According to these scholars, examples of this would be the "scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century and the

American domination of the Philippines and Puerto Rico" (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Amardeep Singh (2001) states that in order to differentiate between colonialism and imperialism, one should "think of colonialism as practice and imperialism as the idea driving the practice". Elaborating further, Singh (2001) explains:

> Colonialism is the implanting of settlements on a distant territory. It changed the economic landscape of the world forever. For one thing, it enabled Europe to get fabulously rich on the trade it produced. The foundations of what we now think of as free-market capitalism were invented during the colonial era, partly to handle trade.

According to Singh (2001), it is undecided in academic circles whether the ramifications of colonialism were only economic in nature, or whether cultural factors, for example, racial superiority, were also influenced and impacted. This is a critical point for my study as the investigation focuses on how feminine beauty is constructed in South Africa in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* as it relates to western and European ideals of feminine beauty. The study also analyses how the visual and linguistic resources used in these advertisements produce meaning and perpetuate certain dominant discourses by publicising content on particular ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions about female beauty in South Africa. Therefore, the study is concerned with the implications that colonialism and imperialism has had on cultural factors such as beauty ideals.

Against the background of what has been presented thus far on colonialism and imperialism, this literature review will now discuss how these "processes" could have influenced beauty ideals. In her paper, *Buying white beauty*, Perry (2006: 2) states that the west and Europe, during their acts of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery of Africans and Asians, assigned the beauty of white women as superior to the indigenous people of these regions. She explains that "white women's bodies provided a physical corollary to the ideals of balance and harmony found in the intellectual realms of white men and their governments". According to Perry (2006: 2), because of this, the "beauty of white women became the aesthetic standard which exerted a particularly powerful and negative impact upon black women, and the evaluation of their physical appearances". Similarly, according to Fiana O. Swain (2012: 1), due to a European colonial past, white cultural

values, including those of white beauty ideals, have long been imposed on women of various cultural and racial backgrounds, and is often consciously or unconsciously recognised as the legitimate standard. Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44) also explains that colonisation "allowed the west to export its values and have them acknowledged almost everywhere through more or less efficient processes of cultural integration". Therefore, "western categories of identity and otherness, transmitted through the universalist claims of religion and science, and forcibly imposed through colonisation, have thus become pertinent far beyond the boundaries of the west" (Staszak in Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44). Simply put, according to the scholars above, when countries in Africa, Asia and South America, among others, were colonised by European countries, their cultural values, including their beauty ideals, were influenced, and in some cases, replaced with European cultural values and beauty standards. According to Angela Aujla (1998: 1-3), anything that did not meet these standards were considered "other", "less desirable" or "unappealing". "Otherisation" is explored extensively later in this chapter.

In light of the aforesaid, Aujla (1998: 1-3) explains that even with the legal and formal end of colonialism and imperialism, European and western beauty characteristics are still used as the benchmark the world over when constructing the feminine beauty ideal. She explains that this is due to institutionalised racism, which is prevalent in many of the former colonised countries, or those influenced by the process of imperialism. Coined by Stokely Carmichael (later known as Kwame Ture) and Charles V. Hamilton, in their book *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America (*1967*)*, institutional racism is about the specific ways in which policies and practices of government, organisations or parts of systems such as schools, the police, courts, and medical facilities, are created or implemented unequally for different racial groups (Plain, 2018). According to Rachel Hardeman (Plain, 2018), "institutional racism is defined as the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color [sic]". Hardeman (Plain, 2018) elaborates further:

> Current-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and those around us. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions

that perpetuate it and keep it in place. The first step we need to take in dismantling institutional racism is being able to name it in research.

This study aims to do what Hardeman (Plain, 2018) states when she suggests that naming institutional racism in research is one of the ways of undoing it. It is important to note that even though the term was developed around the experiences of Black people in the USA, institutional or systemic racism is now used to describe the unequal conditions faced by Black people the world over. One of these conditions is the perpetuation in mass media of white beauty features as ideal, which according to Aujla (1998: 1-3), is affected by racist ideology, which is a product of institutionalised racism that was instigated by the processes of colonialism and imperialism. She explains that because of this, the beauty traits of white people are preferred, and negative traits are ascribed to certain physical characteristics of non-white people, othering them. The "western world associates the dark skin of African and Indian people with danger, savagery, primitiveness, intellectual inferiority, and the inability to progress beyond a childlike mentality" (Aujla, 1998: 1-3). In relation to how institutionalised racism positions whiteness as the benchmark of beauty, othering the aesthetic features of Black people, the next subsection will review literature pertaining to the "otherisation" of Black women.

2.3 The "otherisation" of Black women

In order to facilitate the analysis of *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*, and whether or not they promote western and European ideals of beauty as the standard of beauty in South Africa, this part of the literature review addresses the "otherisation" of Black women. It highlights and explains how the beauty ideals of Black women are viewed around the world.

Mwizenge Tembo (2010: 2) explains that the racial ideology established by Europeans created the idea that whites were dominant and at the top of the social hierarchy, and Blacks were subordinates, and at the bottom. Tembo (2010: 2) states that this racial gradient "may have destroyed African indigenous conceptions of the beautiful woman". An example of this can be found in the colonial narrative that describes the physical traits of the South African Khoisan woman Saartje (Sarah) Baartman in an undesirable manner. Elisa Foster (2009: 3) explains that

in 1810, Baartman was taken from her home in South Africa to London by the British (one of the nations who colonised different parts of South Africa). After she arrived in London, she was paraded in nineteenth century freak shows held in Britain and France and was given the stage name Hottentot Venus. According to Foster (2009: 3-4), the word "Hottentot" is a derogatory term for the native people of South Africa, while "Venus" represents female desirability. She was also the subject of many artists and medical professionals. According to Sadiah Qureshi (2004: 242), based on European ideals of beauty, Baartman's breasts, large buttocks and "hypertrophied" labia, were labelled by Europeans as "grotesque". Qureshi (2004: 242) writes that Baartman's features were described as follows; "jutting of the jaws, fatness of lips and short chin resembling the Negro" and her "large cheeks, narrow eyes, and flattened base of the nose echo Mongolian characteristics". Qureshi (2004: 242) states that in the nineteenth century, a person's physical appearance was commonly used to determine their character, as well as racial and class superiority. Baartman was subjected to this practice, with scientists confirming her "lowly status" based on European standards of beauty (Qureshi, 2004: 242).

Similarly, Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (2013: 215-216) explain that, because of Baartman's "steatopygia – her protruding buttocks", which is a feature of Khoisan anatomy and her enlarged labia (both of which were considered beautiful by the Khoisan people) – she embodied a form of difference. "She did not fit the ethnocentric norm that was applied to European women"; therefore, "she fell outside of the western categorisation of woman, and beauty" (Hall et. al, 2013: 254). In the view of Hall et al. (2013: 253-256), this is why Baartman was constructed as the "other" and represented a pathological form of "otherness". Moreover, Hall et al. (2013: 255) explain that Baartman's body was also read as a text, as her body provided evidence of her absolute "otherness", thereby creating an "irreversible difference between the races". According to Hall et al. (2013: 255), "Baartman was represented and observed through a series of polarized [sic], binary oppositions. For example, she was labelled as primitive, and not civilised; and "she was compared to wild beasts such as an ape rather than being referred to as human" (Hall et al. 2013: 255). In this regard, Baartman was reduced to just her body, thus the difference that she represented was signified, "above all" by her sexuality (Hall et al., 2013: 255).

In his paper, *Reclaiming Our Black Bodies: Reflections on a Portrait of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman and the Destruction of Black Bodies by the State*, Itumeleng D. Mothoagae (2016: 62-63) explains how Baartman's "legacy has impacted on the current representations and construction of African women". He states that her racial categorisation as "sub-human" when the British (and French) paraded her nude body during nineteenth century freak shows continues to impact how the Black female body is viewed today. Illustrating this impact, Mothoagae (2016: 62&72) writes the following:

> Her Black body was viewed as something that can be violated, exploited, destructed, penetrated, and subjugated to various inhumane conditions … Besides her Black skin colour as a marker, her physique and anatomy further characterise her as an inferior being.

Foster (2009: 4) explains that the imagery used to describe Baartman – "her exotic dark skin, large buttocks and abnormal genitalia – serves as the foundation for the western fantasy of African women". Moreover, Foster (2009: 4) writes that because Baartman did not possess the standard beauty ideals which were western in construct, "she evokes fascination and a curiosity for the exotic and unknown".

Baartman's beauty was, thus, (mis)interpreted and (mis)represented by Europeans and western culture, as it opposed what they considered beautiful. In this regard, this literature review explores the concept of the "otherisation" of Black women. According to Zuleyka Zevallos (2011), in cultural studies, when exploring the concept of the "other", it is important to first look at the ways in which social identities are shaped. She writes that there is a belief that people are born with certain identities, and that these are innate, but over time, scholars have found this to be erroneous, highlighting that the identity of people in a society can be constructed (Zevallos, 2011). Elaborating further, Zevallos (2011) speaks about "social identities, and the way individuals and groups "internalise established social categories within their societies, such as their cultural (or ethnic) identities, gender identities, class identities, and so on". According to Zevallos (2011), these social categories shape a person's ideas about who they think they are, how they we want to be seen by others, and the groups to which they belong.

Linking social identity to "otherness", Zevallos (2011) states that "identities have some element of exclusivity", and that the "ideas of similarity and difference are central to the way in which we achieve a sense of identity and social belonging". For example, people join a club that has a set of "socially-constructed" criteria to meet, and those who do not meet that set criteria, cannot belong to the club. According to Zygmunt Bauman (Zevallos, 2011), "otherness" is an essential component in formulating identity categories for purposes of a social order. Therefore, identities are set as dichotomies, explains Bauman (Zevallos, 2011):

> In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of the social order, the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the firsts, the opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus abnormality is the other of the norm.

Similarly, Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43-47) states that the concept of "other" is used to divide humanity into two factions, "one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued", and "another that is defined by its faults, devalued and susceptible to discrimination". Through a discursive process, "otherness" is created by a dominant "in-group" by stigmatising a real or imagined difference of another group or the "out-group", thereby impacting identity and causing discrimination (Staszak in Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43). According to Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44), the "in-group", while constructing one or more solid identities, considers the "out-group" to have a lack of identity which they base on stereotypes that are "largely stigmatising and obviously simplistic". Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43) states that "otherness and identity are two inseparable sides of the same coin".

Identity also represents an established social order, says Zevallos (2011). This means that there is a hierarchy where certain groups are positioned and recognised as being superior to "other" groups, and while it is assumed that people have a choice to create their own identities, the "negotiation of identity depends on the negotiation of power relationships" (Zevallos, 2011). According to Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43), there is an "asymmetry in power relationships which is central to the construction of 'otherness'". Moreover, Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43) mention that "only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its identity, and

to devalue the identity of the 'other' while imposing corresponding discriminatory measures". Furthermore, Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 43-44) believes that while power and its outcomes are discursive, there are other factors that control the discourse such as, "political, social, and economic factors, and the power of those who speak it". Similarly, Zevallos (2011) explains that the "idea of otherness is central to sociological analyses of how majority and minority identities are constructed and that the representation of different groups within any given society is controlled by groups that have greater political power".

Another crucial component that Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44) raises is the fact that, while all groups around the world "tend to value themselves and distinguish themselves from others whom they devalue", such as the caste system in India, western constructions of "otherness" are more dominant. According to Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44), there are two reasons for this; the first is that "identity and 'otherness' are based on binary logic", and the second reason is the act of colonisation which has already been explained in this review (Cf. pages 22-26). Elaborating on reason one, Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 44) explains:

> Western thought, whose logic has been attached to the principle of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle since the time of Aristotle, has produced a number of binaries that oppose a positively connoted term and a negatively connoted term and thus lends itself well to the construction of the self and the other. Many such dichotomies exist: male/female, Man/animal, believer/nonbeliever, healthy/ill, hetero sexual/homosexual, White/Black, adult/child, etc.

To answer the research questions posed in this study, the focus now shifts to exploring the notion of "otherness" in relation to Black women in mass media as it aims to answer these questions posed (Cf. pages 11-13). To note, while the mass media will be discussed in great detail in chapter three, it is briefly highlighted in this subsection with regards to its connection to "otherness". On this topic, the discussion by Hall et al. (2013: 215-287) on *The Spectacle of the Other,* proves insightful. In this essay, Hall et al. (2013: 215-287) explore the concept of representation by looking at the practices of stereotyping, and the practice of representing difference in popular culture. Focusing on a variety of images from popular culture and the mass media, Hall et al. (2013: 215-216) explain that the media, as a social institution, wields much power, and as such,

they continuously promote messages on representation, articulating to society "what is accepted as normal and what is considered as other". Hall et al. (2013: 215-287) analyse "how representation of difference can engage feelings, attitudes and emotions, and can also create fear and anxiety in the viewer". They assert that visual representations of "otherness", that can be found in mass media such as advertising, holds special cultural authority. Moreover, Hall et al. (2013: 215-287) state that the colonial history in western countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and the USA, influences how the representation of difference is portrayed. They explain that this representation of difference is benchmarked against the dominant group of white, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual Christians. It is the standards that this group sets for themselves that the "others", meaning Black people, are judged against (Hall et al., 2013: 215-287). Additionally, Hall et al. (2013: 215-216) state that commercial advertising images and magazine illustrations, are popular tools used to set such standards. These tools use racial, cultural and ethnic stereotypes from the era of the salve-trade or from the imperialism period of the late nineteenth century to construct messages (Hall et al., 2013: 215-216).

Foster (2009: 6) also writes of how Black women are often portrayed in popular culture, through the use of "controlling images", as "exotic, wild, and animal-like" – they are reduced to just their bodies, and are stereotypically represented by their sexuality. In explaining what is meant by controlling images, Patricia Hill Collins (Foster, 2009: 1) asserts that the mass media are responsible for producing visuals that oppress Black women. Such "stereotypical" and "controlling" images include, but are not limited to, portraying "Black women as mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mommas", with the latter being responsible for Black women being seen as a "Jezebel, whore, or sexually aggressive woman". Collins (Foster, 2009: 1) believes that these controlling images have reinforced a specific view of Blackness, and the characteristics and roles assigned to Black women in society, thereby constructing them as the "other", and more commonly, the "exotic other".

With reference to the "exotic other", Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46) writes "that exoticism constitutes the most directly geographical form of otherness, in that it opposes the abnormality of elsewhere with the normality of here". Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46) explains that "as a

construction of 'otherness', exoticism is characterised by the asymmetry of its power relationships; it is westerners who, during the phases of exploration and then colonisation, defined elsewhere and defined exoticism". Describing the word "exotic", Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46) states that it "has become a synonym for tropical and colonial". In deliberating on whether Europe can ever be "exotic", Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 46) states that Europe will never be viewed as "exotic" until the "minds and words are decolonized [sic]". Similarly, Kamala Kemapdoo (2004), whose research is based on the Caribbean, also defines the "exotic other" in relation to its connection to sexuality and race. Commenting about late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, Kempadoo (2004: 34-35) writes "that racially saturated sexual norms and practices were key to the ordering of society". Therefore, "the notion of exoticism captures the simultaneous romanticization [sic] and domination of the racial, ethnic, or cultural Other [sic] that has occurred through colonial and imperialist projects". Furthermore, Kempadoo (2004: 34-35) explains that as an approach to the non-Western world, exoticism is "associated with the legitimation of European conquest, control, and domination". Roy Porter in Kempadoo (2004: 35) elaborates on this:

> The invention of the "exotic" evidently satisfied needs amongst a European and, later, an Atlantic, civilization [sic] which, as it progressively explored and dominated the entire globe with its guns and sails, increasingly assumed the right to define human values and conduct in their highest expression. Other cultures, other creeds, were not merely different, not even merely lower, but positively - even objectively - strange. It was not merely the remoteness of geographical distance in a world where miles counted for much, but the ineluctable sense that all their mental processes and logical deductions were equally as alien. Labelling the anthropological Other as exotic legitimated treating the peoples of the "third world" as fit to be despised - destroyed even, or at least doomed, like the Tasmanian aborigines, to extinction - while concurrently also constituting them as projections of Western fantasies.

The most seminal author on this topic, Edward W. Said, explores the concept of the "exotic other" in his book *Orientalism* (1979). He writes that the term orientalism refers to how the west views the east as "exotic" and on the periphery. The west does this by producing patronising visual representations and scholarship of the east, the societies and people (Orients) who inhabit the places of Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. According to Said (1979: 204), orientalism is

fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient and is "inextricably" tied to the imperialist societies who produced it. Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 4-5) explains how the west and the imperialists characterised the Orient as "barbaric" and "savage". Elaborating in more detail, Staszak (Kitchin & Thrift, 2009: 4-5) writes:

> Orientalism is the discourse through which the West constructs the otherness of the Turks, Moroccans, Persians, Indians, Japanese, etc., all reduced to the same stigmatizing [sic] stereotypes, and thus gives itself an identity in opposition to them. The West thereby gains the right, if not the duty, to dominate the Orient, to save it from despotism, superstition, misery, vice, slavery, decadence, etc.

This discussion of the "exotic other" with reference to the east is similar to how the "exotic other" is viewed in other parts of the world, such as Africa and South America. It therefore illustrates a clear pattern of how western and European ideology on beauty, positions whiteness as the ideal to strive for, and anything that does not fit into the hegemonic western beauty box is considered as "other" kinds of beauty.

The preceding discussion has set the historical tone and provided a descriptive overview on the "otherisation" of Black women. In relation to this, the next sub-section focuses on Blackness and race in South Africa.

2.4 Blackness in South Africa

In this sub-section, literature on colonisation from a South African perspective; apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa; as well as decoloniality and Black Consciousness will be reviewed. It is important to explore such scholarship because it sheds light on how the western and European acts and ideology of colonialism and apartheid impacted and shaped South African culture, and by extension impacting Black beauty ideals. Before embarking on the review, it is noteworthy to highlight that the history of South African colonialism and apartheid is very expansive, which means that not all elements can be captured in this study. Therefore, what is referenced here is off relevance and significance to the research investigation.

For centuries, in numerous parts of the world, including South Africa, colonialism has dominated Black culture, even in countries where the majority of the population is Black. According to Christie and McKinney (2017: 2-3), "South Africa has a long and complex history of colonialism, having been colonised by both the Dutch and the British". Detailing how colonisation unfolded, Erna Oliver and Willem H. Oliver (2017) explain that in 1652, Jan Van Riebeeck and a group of Dutch Calvinist settlers, arrived at the Cape. According to literature captured in one of the country's biggest history projects, South African History Online (2017), Van Riebeeck was instructed by the Dutch East India Trading Company (VOC) to create a refreshment station in the Cape for ships that would stop over on their way to the East. South African History Online (2017) documents that from the time of their arrival, "the relationship between the Dutch and the native Khoisan people was antagonistic", and because of this, the limited trade taking place between the two, "turned into raiding and warfare".

Further to this, in 1657, the Europeans who had settled in the Cape were allocated "farms to in the arable regions – where wine and wheat became the major products" (South African History Online, 2017). According to South African History Online (2017), as the port expanded, the demand for labour increased. Due to this need for more labourers, the VOC brought in slaves from East Africa, Madagascar, and the East Indies. Shortly thereafter, there was an influx of settlers from the Netherlands, as well as from various other regions in Europe. "Increased European encroachment ultimately led to the colonisation and occupation of South Africa by the Dutch" (South African History Online, 2017). The Dutch governed the Cape Colony until 1795 before it fell to the British Crown. However, the Dutch ruled once again in 1803 (South African History Online, 2017). This would only las three years, as the British took occupation again in 1806, compelling many of the Dutch settlers (known as the boers and voortrekkers) to move inland (north, east and west) of South Africa, and establish settlements. This mass migration was known as the Great Trek.

The "discovery of diamonds in 1867, and gold in 1884, spurred wealth and immigration, and intensified the subjugation of the indigenous people as well as the conflicts between the Dutch and the British" (South African History Online, 2017). What followed was the Anglo-Boer war

(1899–1902), of which the British were victorious. This led to the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 "as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire" (South African History Online, 2017). This meant that in line with "the South Africa Act 1909, the four previously separate British colonies were incorporated – the Cape Colony, Colony of Natal, Transvaal Colony, and Orange River Colony" (South African History Online, 2017). In 1934, the country became a fully sovereign nation state within the British Empire. However, according to South African History Online, 2017, in 1961, the monarchy came to an end, and was replaced by a republic as the consequence of a 1960 referendum, which legitimised the country as the Republic of South Africa. Based on this brief account of how the colonisation of South Africa began, it is evident that from the time of white settlement in 1652, there have been struggles for control of land and resources between the white population group, consisting largely of Dutch and British descendants; and the indigenous people which consisted of mainly Khoi, San, Zulu, Pondo, Xhosa, and various other tribes of African descendants.

Between the period of 1806 to 1994, due to various historical occurrences in South Africa, further developments of the country's population took place. One of the major developments was the establishment of the four main population groups, which are still found in South Africa today (Cf. pages 5-7). Aside from the Khoi, San, and the various other tribes of African descent mentioned above, South Africa also became home to other non-white population groups. One of these population groups is known as "coloured" people. According to Fileve T. Palmer (2016: 1-14), the South African "coloured" community's ancestry has its roots in the Dutch, British, German and other European citizens that settled in South Africa; Malaysian slaves, Indian indentured servants, and other Asiatic citizens, as well as the Khoi, the San and the black population of the various other tribes of African descent. Additionally, Oliver and Oliver (2017: 5-6) highlight that the "coloured" community "in South Africa have many ambiguities and variances", and their skin tones also vary across shades of brown, with some even passing as whites. Moreover, Oliver and Oliver (2017: 5-6) explain that some of the "coloured" community have Afrikaans names and surnames, while others have English, Indian or other names and surnames. The mother tongue of most "coloureds" in South Africa is Afrikaans.

Another main population group that emerged in South Africa as a result of colonisation is that of the Indian/ Asian population group who, in contemporary South Africa, refer to themselves as the "South African Indian" population. According to South African History Online (2017), when slavery ended in 1834 and Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) became a British colony in 1843, the British colonialists in Natal looked to India to resolve a labour shortage. Having also colonised India, the British saw it fit to bring in indentured labourers from this country to work on the sugar cane fields of the then Natal. South African History Online (2017) writes that in 1860, the "SS *Truro* arrived in the Durban harbour with over 300 Indians on board". In the five decades that followed, "about a 150 000 indentured Indian servants and labourers arrived, as well as many free passenger Indians. This would result in what would become the largest Indian community outside of India" (South African History Online, 2017). By 1893, the Indian population was larger than that of the whites, who had settled in Natal, South Africa through the process of colonialism. During this time, lawyer and social activist, Mahatma Gandhi also arrived in Durban, Natal. Through the establishment of the Natal Indian Congress, he launched a civil rights struggle, which at the time, only fought for the rights of Indians and not all Black people. This struggle failed, meaning that until the democratic dispensation of 1994, Indians in South Africa also faced similar discriminatory laws experienced by other non-white citizens of the country (South African History Online, 2017).

Following this account of how colonisation began and led to the development of the main population groups of South Africa, this study will now briefly explore the history of apartheid in the country, which, was instituted based on the ideology of white superiority. According to Oliver and Oliver (2017: 5), "the Republic of South Africa, from 1961 onwards, was a continuation of the rule of the National Party (NP), which had already started its reign in 1948". The NP was a white, Afrikaner ruling party without any Black representation, and by this time, it was "independent of the supervision of Britain" (Oliver & Oliver, 2017: 5). According to Paul Maylam (2005: 138-156), "apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa, and instituted laws such as the Group Areas Act, 1950; Population Registration Act 1950; Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949; Immorality Amendment Act, 1950; and Separate Representation

of Voters Act, 1951"; among others. According to Kopano Ratele (2009), policies of apartheid were responsible for classifying the population into different racial categories of "black", white, "coloured" and "indian/asian" (Cf. pages 5-7), and in some cases, forcefully reclassified some people into different race groups. There was also a racial hierarchy amongst these race groups, with the races being ranked in the following descending order: white, "indian", "coloured" and "black". Leonard Thompson and Lynn Berat (2000: 200-204) write that due to these laws, the four different race groups were forced to live and develop separately. This led to gross unequal development among the groups, especially among "black" people. Additionally, Thompson and Berat (2000: 201) highlight that the apartheid government created tensions between the people of colour groups by favouring "coloureds" and "Indians" over "blacks", as well as ethnic divisions between the various "black" tribes. Thompson and Berat (2000: 187-264) state that "apartheid was a social system designed to disadvantage the majority of the Black population, simply because they did not share the skin colour of the minority white ruling population". Additionally, apartheid laws tried to stop all inter-racial marriages and relationships as well as social integration between racial groups.

According to Thompson and Berat (2000: 187-264), although many important events occurred during this period, such as the now famous women's protest against pass books march in 1956, apartheid remained the focal point around which most of the historical issues of this time revolved. This includes the militarisation of South African society as well as violent conflict, such as the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, and the deadly Soweto Student Uprising of 1976. Thompson and Berat (2000: 187-264) explain that resistance to apartheid came in the form of the South African freedom movements, religious groups, as well as other countries. A few of the key organisations instrumental in the South African anti-apartheid struggle were the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), the South African Communist Party, and the United Democratic Front (UDF) (South African History Online, 2019). Additionally, there were "indian" and "coloured" "organised resistance movements such as the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), the

Coloured People's Organisation, as well as white organised groups such as the Armed Resistance Movement (ARM), and Black Sash" (Thompson & Berat, 2000: 187-264).

Under pressure due to threats from external forces and the liberation movements, apartheid was legally over in 1994 when the country entered the democratic dispensation (Oliver & Oliver, 2017), paving the way for rebuilding of a new country. However, the ramifications of centuries of institutionalised colonialism, and decades of apartheid, would prove challenging to undo. According to Oliver and Oliver (2017: 4-5), the British and Dutch "colonisers brought with them a western culture and western intellectual baggage such as the Roman-Dutch Law, the Reformed religion, slavery, capitalism", and the display of wealth. This western culture and "intellectual baggage" created enormous political, social and economic challenges which present day South Africans, in particular, Black South Africans, are still grappling with. As Frantz Fanon (1952:63-68) explains, colonialism and apartheid were responsible for introducing "racist systems, subjugating Black people in deliberate and cruel ways". According to Fanon (1952: 68 & 1963: 36-50), colonialism, "with its system of compartments and the dividing line" constructed human existence into racial collectives, with apartheid being the quintessence of the colonial order. This quote by Fanon (1952: 68) explains simply his views on the effect and impact that colonialism and apartheid had in South Africa:

> In South Africa, there are two million whites against almost thirteen million native people, and it has never occurred to a single black to consider himself superior to a member of the white minority.

Similarly, according to Thesnaar (2017: 7), "the historical legacy of colonialism, as well as the structural legacy of apartheid, continue to reinforce old patterns of racism, dehumanisation, white power and prejudice". The ramifications of "these patterns are still visible in the physical injustices" faced by millions of South Africans daily (Thesnaar, 2017: 7). Moreover, Joel M. Modiri (2012: 406) writes that the "long and tragic history of racial segregation and institutionalised, race-based discrimination and oppression, continues to persist in post-apartheid South Africa with wealth, education, and power being largely divided along the lines of race". Modiri (2012: 406) believes that in order for change to occur, "the implications of life under law after apartheid, particularly the reproduction and maintenance of white supremacy and white privilege as well as

the systemic exclusion of black people through direct and indirect forms of racial marginalisation" must be challenged.

A further point to consider comes from scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a) who write that colonial and apartheid structures did not just dominate and eradicate indigenous social, political and economic organisation, but more importantly, it also dominated and controlled the mind and imagination of the people impacted by it. Given that this study seeks to establish if the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* perpetuate western and European beauty ideals as the standard of beauty in South Africa, and if so, why, the discussion on how colonialism and apartheid impacted the mindset of people is important. Scholars such as hooks (1992) and Hall (2013) believe that, because such structures have such a powerful influence mentally, it can indeed manipulate people's perceptions about representations of Black people, including that of Black beauty. Dennis Masaka and Munamato Chemhuru (2014: 6), who conducted a study on skin bleaching and identity in Zimbabwe, believe that the institutionalised structures of colonialism "wield a degree of power over people's mindsets and behaviour", also where beauty is concerned. According to Masaka and Chemhuru (2014: 6), "the colonisers deliberately imposed their own paradigm of beauty as the standard that the colonised must strive to imitate". They believe that one of the outcomes of the colonial experience is how it "inferiorised" the skin colour of Black people. Masaka and Chemhuru (2014: 6) believe that, even though colonisation has legally ended, it left a legacy of "cultural models that have immensely influenced the aesthetic standards and values of the indigenous people in Africa". Therefore, "the European aesthetic standards have now unjustifiably become the standard reference points of beauty with western influence on the colonised people forcing them to idealise concepts and behaviours that are of an alien origin at the expense of their own" (Masaka and Chemhuru, 2014: 6). According to them, this imposition, influenced, and continues to impact "issues of identity and sovereignty in terms of thought, way of life and political space" (Masaka and Chemhuru, 2014: 6).

Masaka and Chemhuru's (2014) study on skin bleaching and the question of identity, substantiates the point that Black women in South Africa (and Africa) have long been haunted by

western and European standards of beauty. As already discussed in this chapter, one example of this is South African Khoisan woman, Baartman who was exhibited in nineteenth-century freak shows because her physical features were different to that of European women (Cf. pages 26-28). According to Sander Gilman (1985: 232), these European audiences and scientific experts viewed the features of Baartman as the "antithesis of European sexual mores and beauty" stating "the essential black, the lowest rung on the great chain of being, is the Hottentot". The legacy of Baartman's features being viewed as grotesque and not beautiful, continue to affect Black South African women, with many still associating small waists, small buttocks, and light skin as ideal beauty. A quick glance at social media pages advertising weight loss and skin lightening products helps one gauge how desperate many South African women are to be fair and thin, perpetuating western and European standards of beauty. According to Janell Hobson (2005: 55-86), due to western imperialism, colonialism and apartheid, historical perceptions and values of Black beauty in South Africa appear to have been overshadowed by Eurocentric ideas (and ideals) of beauty. Seen in various mass media campaigns, including those in advertising, are western models, with straight hair, long noses, blue eyes, long legs, small waists, and light-coloured skin, among other features.

Hobson's (2005: 55-86) views lends itself to another example of how western and European ideals of beauty have infiltrated the South African beauty landscape, and that is the high number of white South African women who have won the country's national beauty pageant, Miss South Africa, in comparison to the number of Black women. Having originated in the United Kingdom and USA, it is a well-established fact that beauty pageants worldwide are known for celebrating western standards of beauty, even in South Africa with its majority Black population. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in the pageant's 65-year history, out of the 68 women crowned; only 16 have been Black. Additionally, the majority of Black women who have won, also exhibit western and European beauty traits of being tall, having straight hair, and small waists.

However, in saying that, it must be noted that Miss South Africa 2019, Zozibini Tunzi, turned heads, as she was the first "black" women to win Miss South Africa with her natural, short hair. She is also the first Black Miss South Africa to win the Miss Universe pageant, beating a blonde,

blue-eyed Miss Puerto Rico. Even though many of Tunzi's beauty features are anglicised – her sharp and long facial features, as well as her weight and height – through her dark brown skin, and her insistence on wearing her hair in its natural form, she has educated the world on Black beauty. She had previously entered Miss South Africa in 2017, donning a weave, but in that year, she only made it to the semi-finals of the pageant. In 2019, she returned with her natural hair and a new outlook and took home the crown. There were various comments on her winning Miss South Africa with her natural look, with many Black women (and men) praising her for promoting natural Black beauty. However, there were also comments from Black women, who do prefer wearing hair extensions and weaves, who took offense to the conversation that by wearing these fake hair extensions, they were not showcasing true, African beauty, and were instead trying to be white (Maputla, 2019).

Another example from the Miss South Africa 2019 pageant is Sasha-Lee Laurel Olivier, who placed second, and was subsequently crowned the winner following Zozibini's Miss Universe victory. Sasha-Lee, who is from the "coloured" population group in South Africa, has a curvy body shape. Due to this, her weight has been a debated topic since she entered the pageant, with some calling her "plus-size" and others arguing that she does not represent fuller-figured women (Canham, 2020). In a more recent example, the Miss South Africa 2020 judging panel continued to shatter beauty stereotypes when they crowned Shudufhadzo Musida, a Black bald-headed woman, who also has a curvy body-shape as the winner (Singer, 2020). A brief look at the social media comments regarding her win reflect that most Black South Africans are celebrating as they feel that their beauty ideals are being represented (Singer, 2020). What these three examples demonstrate is that conversations on Black beauty ideals and mind shift changes are taking place in some spaces, even though they are varied and contested, and this is vital for this study.

Hair, as hinted at above, and in the introduction, is another important aesthetic feature that must be considered in a study of this nature. According to Jenna-Lee Marco (2012: 14), the love/hate relationship between Black women and their hair, has its roots in colonialism and apartheid, as "these systems were not only critical, but also derogatory in manipulating Black people's perceptions towards understanding representations of, and for Black beauty". Marco's (2012:

125) research on hair representations among Black South African women, highlights why the type of hair that a woman has is important within the "social, political, personal and professional spheres of South African society. She explains that "hair does not only hold a degree of physical authority in society, but also a symbolic power; both of which mediate and instruct Black women's performances in society". Historically, in Africa, hair was a symbol of identity, and various cultural practices, such as "marriage, engagements, age, wealth and ranking in society" (Marco, 2012: 13). However, with the arrival of the slave trade and colonialism, that dissipated. It was "white European images of beauty, described as delicate, and fine, with light features, that were seen as the ideal discourses of beauty in western society and Black women were perceived as strong and exuding animal sensuality" (Marco, 2012: 14). According to Marco (2012: 13-14), this meant that the "femininity of Black women's hair, and how it was celebrated and communicated, no longer held strength as a leading aesthetic appeal in the new society". Marco (2012: 13-14) writes that the slave trade, and colonialism, is therefore, "historically important to consider when discussing representation for Black women, as it was one of the main catalysts for the behavioural and psychological mind shifts" which took place, regarding representations and notions of beauty for Black women".

Marco's (2012) views are substantiated by an investigation conducted by Yan Yan and Kim Bissell (2014) who "examined the portrayal of female beauty worldwide through a content analysis of 5 577 female models in four top beauty and fashion magazines from 12 countries/regions". South Africa was one of the countries investigated, with findings indicating that magazines distributed in the country largely conformed to western norms of beauty (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 194). According to Yan and Bissell (2014), while different magazines used different standards to frame stories and select models, the image of beauty was dependent on the editor's choice, with North American and European magazines dominating the beauty standards. In the case of South Africa, advertisements in magazines favoured western beauty ideals over models who portrayed local beauty attributes (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 207). The scholars also indicated that western faces dominated cover pages of the magazines in South Africa. Non-US and non-UK models only occupied around one-third of the space in the local version of international magazines, and there

was almost no opportunity for them to appear on the cover of US or UK magazines (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 207).

In other words, according to Yan and Bissell (2014: 207), "fashion and beauty magazines do not view non-western and non-European models as the ideal image". They described this pattern of "adopting a similar standard of beauty with the North American magazines as a dangerous trend" (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 210). They, moreover, found the westernised trend in South African magazines surprising. They questioned why the use of American and European models were favoured more than the use of native African models given that the Caucasian beauty ideals have few physical similarities with the South African readership (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 210). They highlighted that the western features that the models portrayed were blonde hair, and slim, tall bodies. Additionally, Yan and Bissell (2014: 210) illustrated that even the appearance, make-up, and dress styles of the African American Hollywood celebrities showcased in these advertisements, portrayed western beauty ideals for readers to imitate. They called out the South African fashion and beauty magazine industry for "presenting the mainstream Caucasian standard of beauty as the paragon of attractiveness on the one hand and showing westernized [sic] African American celebrities as achievable goals for the readers to pursue on the other hand" (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 210).

The above research and findings by Yan and Bissell (2014) highlight how the colonial message – that African beauty ideals and the African female body are unflattering – has been transported from colonial times into apartheid, and continues to be disseminated in post-apartheid South Africa. As Gary Kynoch (2005) explains, while the "political practices of apartheid and colonialism came to an end in 1994, the remnants of these practices remain within social spaces, impacting on Black women's psyches and perceptions towards ideas of beauty and ideals". Nadia Sanger (2009) similarly articulates how the western racist ideology that has been entrenched among South Africans for over 350 years has affected the beauty ideals of the Black body. In her research, Sanger (2009) discusses the ways in which racialised femininities are differently presented in three South African magazines targeting female readers – *Femina*, *Fair Lady* and *True Love.* Her findings indicate that, in the advertisements of these magazines, apartheid

discourses that governed what was beautiful and acceptable still persist. With the use of mostly white models or celebrities from the west in *Fair Lady* and *Femina*, and mostly black African local models and celebrities used in *True Love*, all three magazines presented a western ideal beauty type of "slim, with long, straight or straightened hair" (Sanger, 2009: 139). Additionally, in the *True Love* magazine, while there were images of "darker-skinned, darker-haired and sometimes physically bigger models", most female models appeared to be a fairer shade of black, which according to Sanger (2009: 139) has been documented by scholars "as preferred presentations of feminine beauty".

In a similar study, Josefine Åkerlund (2013) investigated four South African fashion magazines whose target market are Black people, to determine "how South African women from socially diverse areas, experience and perceive representation". Her study found that due to the effects of apartheid, the white race was overrepresented in each magazine which she believed made it "impossible for Black people to relate to and identify themselves". Nomalanga Leander Masina (2010: 26), in her study, *Black Like Me: Representations of Black women in advertisements placed in contemporary South African magazines,* illustrates how the effects of colonisation and apartheid still linger in representation. According to Masina (2010: 8), even with changes taking place in South Africa's mass media, the industry is still faced with many challenges where representation is concerned. She writes that, while there has been a "liberalisation of the broadcasting sector, the local production of tabloid newspapers, the surge in internet usage for media distribution, and the shifts in media ownership pattern", these structural changes are highly flawed (Masina, 2010: 8). She states that research into representations of beauty within mass media "has shown that dominant discourses still favour certain subjectivities". Her research findings illustrate that a visual language of whiteness is very explicitly present in the advertisements of the magazines she analysed. These magazines, *True Love* and *Destiny*, while managed and produced by mostly Black people, still maintained a western ideal of beauty through the selection of their advertisements which focused on relaxing and straightening black women's hair and skin products that lightened black women's skin tone. Masina (2010: 30) believes that the mass media, and advertisements in particular, have become "a space where

ideologies are developed and repeated until they are taken to be common sense", which explains why there are certain dominant perceptions about an ideal feminine beauty. She explains that a possible reason for this is linked to the history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, which infused European ideals of being – including ways of being beautiful – into African and South African beauty values (Perry, 2006: 4-5). Therefore, the history of the country, and its media industry, must be considered in any research on representation of feminine beauty in mass media. Correspondingly, Natalia Molebatsi (Masina, 2010: 86) explains that "the power of white supremacy is still active in Black women's lives and that Black women are still forced, through the signs embedded in repeated media, to emulate the beauty ideals of white women".

A similar perspective comes from Mpho Motseki and Toks Oyedemi (2017). Their research, much like my study, focused on feminine beauty in the online advertising media space. Their study explored social media and the cultural ideology of beauty among young Black women in South Africa and illustrated how celebrity culture perpetuated the ideology that "Black beauty can only be achieved through natural skin colour erasure, extended artificial weaves and a thin body frame". Motseki and Oyedemi (2017: 139) examined "how celebrities and celebrity culture influenced young people's ideas of culture and the perception of self and identity". With social media "increasingly becoming spaces of influence for celebrities", Motseki and Oyedemi (2017: 139) investigated how celebrities use this internet-based electronic communication platform to advertise perceptions of beauty and the feminine body. They highlighted that, through social media, many Black South African celebrities perpetuated a "hegemonic cultural ideology of proximity to whiteness", with the legacy of political and cultural colonisation as the reason for this "closeness to European culture as ideal". This means that the "African cultural identity remain debased or relegated in cultural performances of many African youth" (Motseki and Oyedemi, 2017: 146). They also found that an "aspirational desire for materialism" was created by celebrities as they flaunted their wealth, taste, lifestyle and bodies. According to Motseki and Oyedemi (2017: 146), the implication of this trend is that the media's influence robs young women of their natural confidence. Furthermore, it "instigates the obsession with perfect and flawless celebrity beauty". Moreover, Motseki and Oyedemi (2017: 146) assert that celebrity

"performances" of self and beauty on social media platforms have real-life implications for young Black South African women. They explain that many women have fallen prey to media-portrayed imagery of "thinness equals beauty". Additionally, after being inundated on social media with images that show the ideal feminine body as thin and small; fair in complexion (thereby promoting the bleaching of one's skin), and with European or Asian looking hairstyles in contrast to natural African hair, South African Black women have become dissatisfied with their version of beautiful.

Regarding the continuous constructions of Black female beauty in relation to whiteness, and the erasure of Black beauty in South Africa, this literature review will now expand on the constructs of Black Consciousness and decoloniality. A reason for doing this is because these constructs can assist Black women in reclaiming and reaffirming their beauty and being. It can help Black women to assert, and be proud of, their Blackness, allowing them to be free of the colonial chains that hold them captive to western and European ways of beauty, power, working, studying, living, thinking, and being. One of the most prolific scholars on this subject was Fanon. In his seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), the French, West Indian scholar critically explores the psychology of racism amidst colonial domination. Fanon's work (1952) illustrates the lived experiences of Black people or the colonised subject, and how damaging it is to their psyche when they are constantly fed negative narratives about their dark skin. According to Fanon (Wilton, 2015:47), this can lead to a "breeding ground for self-hate or identity crises" among Black people. Marion Wilton (2015: 47) explains that for Fanon (1952), "the colonial enterprise is solely responsible for the dissemination of Eurocentric aesthetic ideals which privilege Caucasian physical features, devaluing and negating Blackness, dark skin and typical Black features".

Fanon's seminal works is believed to have had an influence on Bantu Stephen Biko who is the father of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The Movement, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in South Africa, is essential to this study. The BCM is an approach that allows one to embrace their Blackness irrespective of which "non-white" race group they belong to, as it is based on a mental attitude rather than the pigmentation of one's skin. According to Mathias Fubah Alubafi, Molemo Ramphalile, and Agnes Sejabaledi Rankoana (2018), Black Consciousness,

which aids in the development and articulation of Blackness, encompasses the South African race groups of "black", "coloured", and "indian/asian" which were created during the apartheid era in South Africa. Alubafi et al. (2018: 3) write that Black Consciousness critiques the four colonial and apartheid racial classifications, and instead of following these categorisations, Black Consciousness believes that the only racial difference is that between whites and, what apartheid termed, the "non-whites". Black Consciousness also contends that the creation of a hierarchy between the people of colour in these four racial categories, is "an attempt by the colonial and apartheid regimes to create divisions that would help in nullifying a unified struggle against white supremacy" (Alubafi et al., 2018: 3). Activists in the Black Consciousness Movement also argue that the creation of the four race groups and its hierarchy, further promotes the "entrenchment of colonial and apartheid nationalist ideology", one that seeks to "create, naturalize [sic], and make rigid a range of ethnic, cultural, racial, and national identities that were non-existent prior to colonization [sic]" (Alubafi et al., 2018: 3).

One of the important goals of Black Consciousness is for people of colour to mobilise under one political banner, thereby positioning itself against white domination; this is how the concept of Blackness, as it is interpreted by the BCM, came to be. According to Alubafi et al. (2018: 3), being Black meant that a person rejects whiteness and its associated categories as the only "authentic" form of identification. By carrying out this rejection of whiteness, a person creates a consciousness for themselves that allows "self-insight into the true nature of the colonial and apartheid racial system which had white supremacy as its ultimate objective" (Alubafi et al., 2018: 3). Many Black Consciousness scholars will attest to the fact that white supremacy rendered any "non-white" person as insufficient, even within the hierarchy that it created of "non-white" people. White supremacy proposes that anybody that is not white is inferior, however, there are certain physical characteristics that create different levels of inferiority treatment; these are the straightness of one's hair, the lightness of one's skin or the slimness of their body.

Essentially, if one possesses physical features associated with whiteness, they are treated better than those who do not. In response to this, the Black Consciousness Movement educates people on identifying as Black, and on why they should be proud about their Blackness. According to

Alubafi et al. (2018: 3), it affirms "reclamation of those physical, cultural, linguistic, aesthetic, and epistemological characteristics of non-whites that had been systematically and violently ridiculed, diminished, and eroded by white supremacy". Simply put, the definition of Blackness that arises from Black Consciousness, means that Black people should love themselves and radiate pride in their Black skin and hair, even though their Black aesthetic features "have been considered the antithesis of what is desirable" (Alubafi et al., 2018: 3). Rozena Maart (2013) explains that Black Consciousness, as a process of "self-interrogation and self-examination", forces one to look at their lived experiences, and how they participate in destructive pigmentation politics, or how their minds have been systematically conditioned to prioritise whiteness. This is what Maart (2013) and other Black Consciousness scholars refer to as colonisation of the mind, "for it is the mind, that was (and remains) central to the process of colonisation and thus central to the process of decolonisation". Similarly, Tendayi Sithole (2012) labels Blackness as a state of the mind, thereby arguing that a "psychological decolonisation" must take place.

While there is no denying that the philosophical foundations of Black Consciousness are useful for embracing and affirming Blackness, scholars such as Sithole (2012), and Pumla Gqola (1999) also critique Black Consciousness for its (in)capacity to dismantle institutions that give power to whiteness and white privilege. For example, Gqola (1999) examines how "Black Consciousness rested on the premise that Black people had been, and would continue to be, oppressed because of internalised inferiority due to institutionalised racism". According to Gqola (1999), Black Consciousness used literature as a way of presenting "positive images of Black people, something that was lacking in the South African literatures written prior to this". However, Gqola (1999) believes that this method was flawed as it had clear sexist overtones, with the Black Consciousness literature exhibiting sexist nuances. In other words, while the "philosophy of Black Consciousness was essential to the liberation of the minds of Black people", it had its shortcomings, because even in its literature, it failed to address institutional issues that affected women. In his critique, Sithole (2012: 56) believes that while "psychological decolonisation" is needed, Blackness cannot be repaired by psychological forces alone, it requires physical action

and dismantling of policies that privilege whiteness. Sithole (2012: 56) contends that "no programme of self-worth or psychological empowerment can bring blacks into humanity, because the structures that militate against blackness are designed to keep the anti-black world unchanged".

Sithole's (2012: 56) view lends itself to another important point that must be covered in this literature review, and that is the decoloniality movement currently taking place in South Africa. Decoloniality forms an important component of this research, as it is a vital paradigm that can help Black women to unlearn western and European constructs of beauty and reclaim their Blackness and Black beauty. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013c: 3-4), decoloniality is an appropriate epistemology for Black people to embrace as they continue on their journey to freeing not only their institutions, but also their minds from colonial and apartheid shackles. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013c: 3-4) writes:

> Decoloniality is against all vestiges of colonialism and realities of coloniality; it is a redemptive epistemology which inaugurates and legitimates the telling of the story of the modern world from the experiences of colonial difference. Decoloniality materialized [sic] at the very moment in which imperialism and colonialism arrived in Africa. Decoloniality is both an epistemic and a political project seeking liberation and freedom for those people who experienced colonialism and who are today subsisting and living under the boulder of global coloniality. Development is linked to liberation and freedom from domination and exploitation. This is why decoloniality is distinguished from the imperial version of history through its push for shifting of a geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the 'world is described, conceptualized [sic] and ranked' to the ex-colonised epistemic sites as legitimate points of departure in describing the construction of the modern world order.

While decoloniality is not a new term to the Latin American and Asian communities, the majority of Black South Africans appear to have only embraced the decolonial project in the last five years. This is since the 2015 #RhodesMustFall student campaign, which resulted in the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town, as it represented everything colonialism stood for (Thesnaar, 2017: 1-8). Since then there have been numerous protests challenging the outcomes and transition process of the South African liberation struggle, questioning whether it

had truly freed Black South Africans from colonial and apartheid structures and institutions. Therefore, the project of decoloniality has become a robust part of the narrative by Black South Africans against cultural, social, political and economic inequality. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (Thesnaar, 2017: 7), a reason for this "eruption" of protests, and the strong narrative of decolonisation is due to the need by young Black South Africans for physical justice, restitution and transformation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (Thesnaar, 2017: 7) elaborates further:

> This narrative of decolonisation actually represents the depth of the reaction against the power of racist imperial colonists who for centuries were responsible for the dehumanisation of Black Africans on the continent. This reaction was based on the premise that colonialists were not interested in treating indigenous Africans with dignity and respect but instead, their intentions were to gain as much as possible from the people, including resources and the continent.

Simply put, what young Black South Africans are now fighting for is an end, not only to the "materialness" of colonialism, but also to the psychological colonisation of their minds.

According to Maldonado-Torres (Thesnaar, 2017: 2), South Africa is currently experiencing coloniality, which is the "global imperial power structure that survived the end of direct administrative colonialism". Moreover, "this structure managed to exist far beyond the limits of colonial administrations by keeping long-standing patterns of power intact, which determined how culture, labour, intersubjective relations and knowledge production should be defined and understood" (Maldonado-Torres in Thesnaar, 2017: 2). In the 2017 Decoloniality Summer School held by the University of South Africa (UNISA), Maldonado-Torres was one of the keynote speakers who spoke on the decoloniality struggle in South Africa and why it came as a "surprise" to white South Africans. His lecture on this topic was based on discussions he had conducted with South African students, scholars and community members. According to Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017), "the South African youth were bound to take on the struggle to decolonise various institutions across the country because they had experienced democracy to be a myth". In taking physical action such as protests and by the removing of statues, the South African Black youth brought to light what they believed was the false narrative of democratisation. Additionally, Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017) stated that young

South Africans no longer believed the 1994 democratic message of a nation that lives as equals because they continued to experience physical segregation and material inequality daily. According to Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017):

> The demand for decolonisation is massive interruption of democratisation, meaning that people believe democratisation is a myth … The youth have played a critical role in revealing this myth. They grew up with the rhetoric of democracy but when they became adults, they realised the reality is different. The youth are the spear of decolonial time and space … That is why the youth created an earthquake in South Africa.

Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017) addressed the "dominant forms of power in South Africa, and questioned how whites, who are a minority in the country, remained dominant. He stated this dominant power was achieved by owning land and ownership of means of production – in this way, white interests in South Africa will always be prioritised, even though they are a minority". Furthermore, Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017) said that "this white dominant power also impacted the working-class whites who can become resentful towards Black people who they believe are benefitting from post-apartheid policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Employment Equity (EE)". He contended that the working-class white population should in fact "be resentful against the powerful whites who keep their privileged structure in place" (Maldonado-Torres in Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017). Additionally, Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017) critiqued Black South African leaders within the political system, stating that even though they were present in the social, political and economic leadership structures, it did not mean they were serving Black interests. Moreover, Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017) reiterated the importance of engagement and physical action to dismantle colonial structures in the country's quest to decolonise institutions as well as the mind.

The above discussion on decoloniality is vital for a study of this nature. It contextualises why decoloniality is critical to this research project as my primary concern in this study is to understand if South African Black beauty ideals are erased in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*, through the perpetuated use of western and European beauty ideals. This discussion has laid the foundation for how the decolonial project can aid Black women in South

Africa in reclaiming their Blackness and promoting their South African, Black beauty ideals. By highlighting acts, such as the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue, the literature speaks to how the decoloniality project, if pursued with vigour and dedication, has the power to dismantle institutions such as the media, which continue to disseminate messaging that favours hegemonic western and white ideals.

The work of authors such as Alubafi et al. (2018), Motseki and Oyedemi (2017), Maldonado-Torres (Naidu-Hoffmeester, 2017), Thesnaar (2017), Masaka and Chemhuru (2014), Maart (2013), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013c), Sithole (2012), Marco (2012), Sanger (2009), Biko (2005) Hobson (2005), Gqola (1999), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), Sander Gilman (1985), and Fanon (1952), among others, were reviewed here to contextualise how colonialism, slavery, and apartheid, are responsible for the erasure, side-lining, and discrimination of Black female beauty ideals. Additionally, their scholarship points to the fact that the desire in the minds of Black women to assimilate to western and European beauty ideals, cannot be separated from the historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Fanon (1952: 19) explains that it is "imperative to liberate Black people from the arsenal of complexes that germinated in the colonial situation". More simply, Fanon (1952: 19) writes "that it is necessary for Black people to overcome inferiority and superiority complexes that are hidden in western knowledge systems". Similarly, Biko (2005: 22) writes "that colonialism left Black people with an inferiority complex, which crippled them psychologically"; therefore, it is important for Black people to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim. Additionally, Shose Kessi (2018: 106) illustrates that decoloniality "brings to the fore issues of power, knowledge and identity; it is a term that immediately frames the historical context of colonisation as a point of reference in terms of what needs to change". It is evident that decoloniality and Black Consciousness are much needed constructs for changing how Black women view themselves, and for arming themselves in the battle for knowledge, power, dignity and recognition, where their being (and beauty ideals) is concerned.

This sub-section considered the erasure of Black beauty in South Africa by unpacking the acts of colonisation and apartheid in South Africa; as well as post-apartheid South Africa. In doing so, it explored how the western and European acts and ideology of colonialism and apartheid impacted

and shaped South African culture and ideology on beauty. It expanded on the projects of Blackness and decoloniality in an effort to reverse this erasure of Black beauty ideals in South Africa. This brings to conclusion the study's literature review. The following sub-section is the chapter summary and provides a summation of the scholarship presented.

2.5 Chapter summary

The literature review presented in chapter two allowed me to position this study in relation to other researchers and theorists. It highlighted how this research investigation addresses a topical issue in the country, and worldwide, thereby contributing to this body of knowledge. The exploration of the scholarship brought to light information on the markers and makers of beauty. It highlighted the history of why western and European beauty ideals are considered the markers or standard of beauty in mass media in various societies the world over. The scholars referenced indicated that the acts of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery, have ensured that the beauty ideals of Europeans are perpetuated, via mass media tools such as advertising, worldwide in "non-white" countries, and even among Black people found in western and European countries.

Literature on the "otherisation" of Black women was also examined, highlighting and explaining how the beauty ideals of Black women are viewed around the world. This subsection first provided an overall explanation on the concept of "otherisation", and then applied the concept in the context of visual images in mass media. In doing this, it explored "otherisation" in visual images from across the world, thereby covering a range of ethnic and racial groups.

Narrowing the scope to the South African context, the final section of this chapter reviewed literature on the construction of Black beauty in South Africa. The sub-section explored how western and European acts and ideology of colonialism and apartheid, as well as post-apartheid occurrences, influenced and shaped South Africa's cultural, social, political, and economic being.

In doing this, it considered how these constructs aided in the erasure of Black beauty in South Africa, as well as impacting and shaping South African culture and ideology on beauty. The sub-section expanded on the projects of Black Consciousness and decoloniality as ways of reversing

and undoing the negative effects that colonialism and apartheid has had on Black beauty ideals in South Africa.

This overview creates an appropriate foundation for part two of the literature review, which will be presented in chapter three. It will focus on the landscape of the mass media, exploring literature related to the mass media, with a particular focus on the internet, social media, and advertising, all of which form an integral part of the study.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW PART TWO: THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

3.1 Introduction

Scholarship throughout history, and currently, points to the fact that feminine beauty is socially constructed. This is due to the fact that women are constantly receiving messages through various mass media channels, that are constructed and produced to reinforce particular "values, norms, and ideals of fashion and beauty" (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 194). As this research is centred on *Facebook* advertisements pertaining to beauty ideals, the intention of part two of the literature review is to showcase international and local scholarship that addresses representations of feminine beauty in mass media, and in particular, that of advertising on the internet via social media platforms such as *Facebook*. In this regard, it is crucial for this study to unpack the scholarship available on the mass media with particular reference to the internet, social media, and advertising.

Understanding the literature available on these topics forms an integral part of the study. As explained by Andrew S. Denney and Richard Tewksbury (2012):

> A literature review is a comprehensive overview of prior research regarding a specific topic. The overview both shows the reader what is known about a topic, and what is not yet known, thereby setting up the rationale or need for a new investigation, which is what the actual study to which the literature review is attached seeks to do.

While part one of the literature review provided a historical account of feminine beauty representation by covering a range of international and local scholarship, this chapter will provide an overview of the mass media landscape in relation to beauty ideals. The discussion begins by setting the global and local scene of the mass media.

3.2 Mass media: setting the global and South African scene

The information revolution has profoundly changed the environment of communication. If anything is dynamic in today's world, it is the constantly evolving nature of mass communication. Mass communication, as explained by Tony Chalkley, Adam Brown, Toija Cinque, Brad Warren,

Mitchell Hobbs, and Mark Finn (2012: 8-9) is when information, such as advertising, is exchanged between large groups of individuals via mass media channels such as newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, film, and the internet. Differing from other forms of communication, such as interpersonal or organisational communication, mass communication focuses on transmitting information to a large number of receivers using the mass media channels mentioned above. Mass communication research is mostly concerned with how the content, disseminated via the various mass media channels, persuades or affects the behaviour, attitudes, opinions, or emotions of the person or people receiving the information (Chalkley et al., 2012: 8-9).

Due to the nature of this research investigation, which involves an analysis of the beauty ideals portrayed in the selected *Facebook* advertisements, it is vital to understand mass communication. Additionally, it is important to understand how, through the use of mass media channels, such as the internet, mass communication can culturally, socially, and politically impact society. However, before exploring this, it is important for this study to provide literature that traces an overview of the mass media, documenting its background, and where it finds itself today, with specific reference to the South African mass media landscape.

In providing a brief overview on the history of the mass media, one of the most influential mass communication scholars and social scientists, Denis McQuail, was consulted. His book, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (2010)*,* provides valuable scholarship for this study, as it accounts for media, society and culture. It also serves as an appropriate starting point for this section. According to McQuail (2010: 23-46), communicating to the masses has progressed over time since its early beginnings. He explained that "what began as limited and basic exposure has developed into a complex stream of messages that has engulfed people in every aspect of their daily lives".

> The occurrence of human communication over time and at a distance is much older than are the mass media now in use. This process was integral to the organization of early societies, which persisted for long periods and extended over large areas. (McQuail, 2010: 24)

McQuail (2010: 24) states that in the early times, the spreading of ideas and messages occurred on a large-scale platform due to the "propagation of political and religious awareness and obligations". He writes that "by the early Middle Ages, the church in Europe had elaborate and effective means in place to ensure transmission of messages to everyone" (McQuail, 2010: 24). Even though this was "largely independent of any media", as the term is understood today, this could be viewed as mass communication (McQuail, 2010: 24). He further explains that when independent media emerged in the form of printing, it alarmed the church and state authorities, as they were concerned that they would lose control of the messages that were being disseminated. They were also concerned about the opportunities that the newly established independent media had to spread "new and deviant" ideas to large masses of the population. This is evident, writes McQuail (2010: 24), in the "bitter propaganda struggles of the religious wars during the sixteenth century". He also remarked that it was a "historical moment for mass communication when the printing press irrevocably acquired a particular social and cultural definition" (McQuail, 2010: 24).

According to Laurie Thomas Lee (2009: 158-183), mass media has developed over the last 500 years. She provides a brief, but thorough, overview of this history. She begins by explaining that books are the oldest form of media, and the first known book was written in Egypt around 1400 B.C. However, books were not available to the masses until the printing press was invented in 1456. According to Thomas Lee (2009: 158-183), newspapers are documented to be the oldest mass medium. When it comes to magazines, she explains that development regarding this particular mass medium was slow. Originating from the French word "magasin", it was not until 1704 that the first English magazine was published (Thomas Lee, 2009: 158-183). She then addresses the development of electronic media, which she writes occurred much quicker than print media.

According to Thomas Lee (2009: 158-183), "radio emerged as a mass medium in the 1920s largely due to the growing popularity of mass entertainment and technological advances stemming from the development of the telegraph, telephone and the wireless". Following this was the "worldwide race to add pictures, which resulted in the creation of television, one of the most

important inventions of the twentieth century". Thomas Lee (2009: 158-183) states that television reached prominence in the 1940s, thereafter, there was the emergence of cable television, and in the latter half of the century, satellite communication was developed. Then came the mass medium known as the internet, which, according to her (2009: 158-183), has revolutionised communications. Due to the nature of this study, which analyses the feminine beauty ideals in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*, and whether these are based on western and Eurocentric ideas of beauty, the internet will be expanded on later in this chapter.

It is evident that, over the years, the various forms of mass media have developed and adapted in conjunction with the social, political, cultural, and technological happenings of the time. As will be explored in the theoretical framework of this study (Cf. pages 88-135), these developments are vital for this research given the prominence that social, political, and cultural occurrences occupy in this study. However, before this literature review delves into the mass media and its association with social, political, and cultural constructs, the history of the mass media in South Africa will be explored.

For purposes of this literature review, the history of the mass media in South Africa is categorised according to the country's main historical developments, that is, colonisation, apartheid, and post-apartheid. According to Libby Lloyd (2013: 12-13), these categories define the fundamental changes that have occurred within the country's media landscape. According to Keyan G. Tomaselli (2002: 112-114), the South African mass media has a long-standing tradition of newspaper journalism that dates back to colonial times. He writes that the South African media roots can be traced back to the British takeover of the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch in 1806, with Thomas Pringle introducing a libertarian press into the Cape in 1824. Even though Pringle's press identified itself as independent from colonial authorities, the papers at the time "were written and edited by whites for whites; and included stories from England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany – the home countries of the whites who settled in South Africa". According to Tomaselli (2002: 112-114), the early South African newspapers were compiled in English or Afrikaans, "the two languages spoken by the dominant white groups in the country", with limited news on the indigenous people of South Africa. As the political problems

between the English and Dutch increased, the problems spilled over into the media arena. Tomaselli (2002: 112-114) explains that with the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s, and the entrenchment of the apartheid state in 1948, the media began operating under laws that made it almost impossible to publish any information without authorisation from the government. This was especially related to news items on political and national security issues. Lloyd (2013: 12-13) writes that, "under apartheid, the mainstream print media were run by four big publishing houses, which were predominantly owned by big capital – either the mining houses, which controlled the English language press, or Afrikaans business interests". It was in the 1980s when changes in the media space began taking shape, with the arrival of anti-apartheid newspapers supported by foreign funding. Lloyd (2013: 12-13) states that the establishment of these newspapers were in response to the mainstream media who failed to fully report on the brutality of apartheid. She adds that, during this time, there were also independent journals and newsletters that were published, targeting people and addressing matters that were neglected by the "commercial media". Lloyd (2013: 12-13) further states that the apartheid government were threatened by these independent media publications, thereby banning many of them and detaining some of their journalists.

With regard to the broadcasting media space in South Africa, Lloyd (2013: 12-13) writes that it was controlled by the state, with the national state broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), "operating as a propaganda arm for the government". According to Fourie (2017: 6), who is a seminal author on this topic, the "historical development of broadcasting in South Africa is also largely the history of the SABC, simply because the SABC monopolised the airwaves at its inception". Fourie (2017: 6-7) explains radio was the first form of broadcasting in South Africa and was established between 1919 to 1936. He writes that radio broadcasting began with a few enthusiastic amateur radio hams, followed by several experimental broadcasts, and later by regular programming on a more organised basis (Fourie, 2017: 6). According to Fourie (2017: 6), the early development of broadcasting in South Africa followed a similar pattern to the United Kingdom (UK). The South African History Online (2019) states that it was in April 1927, when an hour of Afrikaans programming was introduced, and one daily news bulletin in Afrikaans

was broadcasted. According to scholars such as Carin Bevan (2008), Lloyd (2013), Fourie (2017), and history sources, such as South African History Online (2019), financial challenges as well as insufficient funding hampered the progress of radio broadcasting. This "prompted an investigation into all aspects of broadcasting in South Africa, which was launched by the then Prime Minister of South Africa, James Barry Munnik (JBM) Hertzog". As a result of this investigation, the SABC was formed, and by 17 July 1950, Springbok Radio, a commercial radio service was created to provide news bulletins in both English and Afrikaans (South African History Online, 2019). While radio broadcasts were initially only available in the Johannesburg area, it was eventually expanded to most major centres in the country. According to Fourie (2017: 8-14) and South African History Online (2019), the "SABC grew in the 1960s and 1970s as more radio stations, broadcasting in selected African languages, were established, however, these were still considered to be mouthpieces of the Nationalist Party (NP) government throughout the 1970s and 1980s". According to Bevan (2008: 59-60), as radio became popular, government realised that they would need to regulate the broadcasts. She writes that previous challenges with finances, licensing and commercial broadcasting, "demonstrated that, if the government wanted to regulate the quality of the broadcasts and the equal treatment of English and Afrikaans, the whole broadcasting industry would have to be controlled by a state corporation that was responsible to Parliament [sic]" (Bevan, 2008: 59-60).

As the nature of broadcasting expanded, Fourie (2017:14) states that television was introduced in South Africa in the latter part of the 1970s even though the South African government prevented this for many years before. According to Fourie (2017:14), "the SABC's first test television broadcasts began on 5 May 1975, and a regular service was introduced by 5 January 1976". He states that this medium, as with radio, was controlled by government, thereby pandering to government ideology and promoting their interests. Additionally, Bevan (2008: 59-60) explains that by the time of world war two, "broadcasting legislation was already in place in South Africa to control not only radio, but also a possible future television service". This meant that when television was introduced in South Africa, "all broadcasting services in the country could only be introduced by the SABC, and only with the government's permission". Moreover,

Bevan (2008: 159) explains that there were certain ideologies from the apartheid government that underpinned the South African television landscape. One of them was the fact that the government wanted to have "tight control over the manufacturing industry", thereby demonstrating "that they intended to keep a close watch over the South African television service for many years" (Bevan, 2008: 159). Secondly, "it was clear that South African television, just like South African government and society, would be segregated along racial and ethnic lines" (Bevan, 2008: 159). A third point, according to Bevan (2008: 159), is that programmes to be aired on South African television would have to "uphold specific values, particularly those of the ruling apartheid-led party, the NP". She explains that "programmes that did not conform to these values and which did not reflect the NP's apartheid ideology, would not be shown on South African television" (Bevan, 2008: 159). In this regard, Bevan (2008: 175-176) highlights that television, as a medium of mass communication, has played a critical role in South Africa's social, cultural and political life.

The introduction of democracy significantly changed the broadcasting landscape. Lloyd (2013: 13-14) states that "an independent regulator was established shortly after the 1994 elections, and the SABC was declared a public broadcaster, with a publicly nominated board of directors accountable to Parliament". According to the Government Communication and Information System (2012), in their publication entitled, *Media Landscape 2012: Reflections on South Africa's media environment*, when the South African Constitution was developed as a guideline for the country's "young democracy", the democratic government was keen for the media to operate free and fairly, and without state control. They were determined that freedom of expression should exist within the mass media (Government Communication and Information System, 2012: 6). The idea was for the mass media to have "the freedom to receive or impart information or ideas", be it artistic, creative, academic, and scientific – this was "an intrinsic part of the new South Africa". Moreover, the newly established democratic government envisioned that the media would function in a manner that would cater for the diverse views of all South Africans and include a range of voices that would be free of government and state control. The only time at which "press freedom would be limited, would be in cases where war or violence was incited,

and when hatred was being advocated against anyone based on race, gender or ethnicity" (Government Communication and Information System, 2012: 6). Furthermore, the publication of the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 6) states that, together with the Constitution, a number of laws were also passed. These laws, such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 153 of 1993; the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999; the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act (ICASA Act) of 2000; the Electronic Communications Act of 2005; and the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) Act of 2002; were vital as they "created enabling environment in which the public, private, and community mass media outlets could operate".

Scholarship indicates that the above legislature, together with the Constitutional framework has ensured a major transformation in the South African mass media landscape. Lloyd (2013: 13-14) writes that the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), now the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), has since the dawn of democracy, "licensed more than 200 community radio and five community television channels, 20 commercial radio stations covering different languages, cities and towns, and one national free-to-air private television channel". According to Lloyd (2013: 13-14), ICASA's legislation stipulates that it must regulate the broadcasting sector in the interest of the public, ensuring that it is free from political and commercial interests and influence. This is also "reinforced in the South African Constitution, which states that broadcasting must be independently regulated to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society" (Lloyd, 2013: 13-14).

However, according to Lloyd (2013: 13-14), this is not occurring. She asserts that while there are considerable differences between the apartheid-controlled mass media sector, and the independently regulated post-apartheid mass media sector, there are significant financial and leadership crises in the current mass media sector that does not give life to the ICASA legislation and the South African Constitution. Therefore, ensuring fairness, freedom of expression, and a diversity of views that represent and reflect South African society, are lacking in the mass media space (Lloyd, 2013: 13-14). In relation to this, the publication by the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 7) also explores the trajectory of the print media in South Africa

post 1994. According to the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 7), although some shifts have occurred in the print media landscape, there are still a number of challenges. These challenges are linked to the traditional ownership structures of the print media, which they consider as a "hangover of the apartheid past". As a solution to this, a Print and Digital Transformation Task Team (PDMTTT) was established in 2012 to guide the industry in creating a shared vision and approach for transformation. However, there is the concern that "commercial print media is driven by the profit motive and is structured in such a way that it simply cannot play an effective role in facilitating government's engagement with citizens" (Government Communication and Information System, 2012: 7).

Additionally, in 2011, print media was criticised by ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), and were accused of inaccurate news reporting. Following this, the ANC called for a media appeals tribunal to be instituted in order to oversee the press and provide Parliament with feedback. According to the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 7), "this was met with strong resistance from those wanting to maintain self-regulation of the press". Thereafter, the Press Freedom Commission (PFC) was launched "to debate these and other issues of concern and to suggest a regulatory system and a press code that could address these". To this end, in 2013, the Protection of Information Bill was passed, in spite of resistance from many corners of South Africa, including civil society and opposition parties, who have labelled it unconstitutional. With regards to community media, both print and broadcast, there have been a number of successes, "although there are newly-emerging challenges ranging such as skills and capacity in the sector, to access to advertising, to support for financial sustainability" (Government Communication and Information System, 2012: 7). It is important to state at this juncture, that even though this study is not focused on print and broadcast media, the literature exploring these forms of mass media, as they pertain to South Africa, is important, because it contributes to the overarching discussion on the history of the mass media in South Africa.

In considering the digital mass media space, the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 8) explain that as innovations in information and communication technology drive mass media changes around the world, the South African mass media landscape has also been

impacted by how people access, interact and receive information. According to South African Media (2016), "in comparison to the rest of Africa, the South African digital media sector is reasonably big", but still in its early stages in comparison to the rest of the "developed world". The South Africa Media (2016) explain that "the first IP address in South Africa was granted to Rhodes University in 1988, but the first connection was only made in 1991". Thereafter, in 1992, when the first *.co.za* subdomain was registered, internet access for commercial and private use began (South Africa Media, 2016). Additionally, according to the Government Communication and Information System (2012: 8), various media pieces, such as news stories, opinion pieces, images, and photographs, are now easily available on a variety of media devices such as tablets and mobile phones that people carry around with them. They explain how "the internet, and social media platforms such as *Twitter* and *Facebook*, provide instant and immediate access to news and information, with these interactions happening in a much more equal way as more and more people own at least one or more of these technologies" (Government Communication and Information System, 2012: 8).

Similarly, according to *South African Media* (2016), the "rapid evolution of the digital era has had a tremendous impact on South Africa – it is the most advanced and widespread digital media industry in Africa". Moreover, they explain that South Africa's digital environment is fast "catching up with the rest of the world in terms of technological advancement with the internet, mobile technology, and telecommunications sectors have been experiencing rapid growth over the past few years" (*South African Media*, 2016). In this regard, *South African Media* (2016), digital media "has opened a world of unprecedented choices to consumers". According to the Government Communication and Information System publication (2012: 8):

> In light of these advances, freedom of expression and access to information is becoming more real, and the unfolding debates about freedom of expression will have to take these technologies into account.

As a result, the South African government has been forced "to respond to technological changes, and where convergence of technologies has had an impact on the broadcasting and telecommunications environment, laws have been repealed or enacted" (Government Communication and Information System publication, 2012: 8). One such law is that of the

Broadcasting Digital Migration Project that "outlines the process of migrating the country's broadcasting from analogue to digital platforms". There has also been a full policy review of the communications environment with a national integrated Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy having been gazetted in 2014.

This brings to conclusion the literature on the history of the South African mass media, and the history of the mass media in general. What is gleamed from the scholarship presented thus far is that the mass media landscape is vibrant, dynamic, and ever-changing. Due to technological advancements, there are daily radical shifts in this environment. Mass communication is no longer passive or one-way. With major developments such as the internet and social media platforms, it is now largely citizen-driven, instant, and increasingly interactive. It is from this perspective that the literature review will now explore the internet as a mass media channel. The scholarship will also focus on social media, in particular *Facebook*. Social media, by design, is internet-based and provides users with quick electronic communication. This is detailed in the next section.

3.3 The internet as a mass media channel

As a channel of mass media, the internet forms one of the largest parts of the information revolution. According to Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu (2011: 1-2), as the number of its audience members keeps increasing, the internet's prominence in the mass communication landscape increases, with it becoming an integral part in disseminating information such as advertising. Ohiagu (2011: 1-2) explains that the internet is a distribution system for online and digital information, "it is a network of all computer networks worldwide". Elaborating, Ohiagu (2011: 1-2) explains:

> The Internet allows for instantaneous exchange of information to and from any part of the globe. Through its electronic mail often referred to as email for short, instant messaging or chat facilities, the Internet makes it possible for people to communicate with others both at the interpersonal and mass levels of communication. It also allows its users' access to volumes of information available on the World Wide Web. Data, more voluminous than any known encyclopaedia, can be transferred from one part of the world to the farthest

part of the globe at the speed of light. Thus, users can download or upload information at a startling speed.

According to Jim Macnamara (2005: 18), the internet has immense communicative powers, and can significantly impact "public awareness, perceptions, and sometimes even behaviour, such as buying decisions". In this regard, it is important to consider certain attributes of the internet. As explained by Ohiagu (2011: 2-6), these attributes are the internet's extensive reach; its anonymity, its ability to enhance simultaneous communication through tools such as social media; as well the heterogeneity of its audience with a **"thoroughly mixed group in sex, age, location, status, class, race and culture"**. Ohiagu (2011: 7-10) also discusses how "the internet constantly challenges conventional concepts of mass communication". With the ability of the internet to combine features of other media, be a medium for two-way communication with the flexibility of usage and its "ability to empower audience as active users", the internet constantly enhances its relevance, keeping it from extinction.

It is important for this literature review to note that, due to the rapid expansions of the internet, there is constant confusion on the definitions and roles of the internet, online media, and digital media. Even though these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a slight difference. This study does not seek to explain these differences in detail but briefly outlines them in order to move forward with the analysis of the *Facebook* advertisements of *H&M* and *Mr Price*. Having already defined the internet, an explanation on the difference between online media and digital media will now be offered. According to Chalkley et al. (2012: 7-20), online media is a range of communication technologies that use the internet to present or exchange information. Online media takes the form of digitised content such as text, graphics, audio, and video to disseminate messages to large audiences (Chalkley et al., 2012: 7-20). Online media, via its global reach, has the power to mediate, reflect and create specific messages. Societies around the world are constantly inundated with online imagery and messaging (texts) that promote not only products, but moods, attitudes, and a sense of what is, and is not important (Chalkley et al., 2012).

In explaining the meaning of digital media, Lucy Küng, Robert G. Picard and Ruth Towse (2008), state that the "term digital refers to technology that stores data in binary form". Therefore,

digital media is digitised content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. Examples of digitised content is text, photography, graphics, video and audio, therefore, advertisements such as those from a television network, newspaper, or magazine, that is presented on a website, blog or social media, fall into the category of digital media. At first glance, it does appear that online media, and digital media, have the same meaning, however, Yamil Amed Abud (2019) and Shaday Stewart (2017), explain that the meaning of digital media extends to products that have been downloaded such as movies and eBooks. This means that online media is accessed while the user is "online", i.e., connected to the internet via WiFi, etc. and digital media, while also accessed while "online", can also be accessed after it has been downloaded or transferred from one digital device to another.

The above explanations differentiating between the internet, online media, and digital media, hold significant relevance for this study as its main goal is to analyse the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *H&M* and *Mr Price.* The next classification to explore is that of social media as *Facebook* is a social networking website. Ohiagu (2011: 2) writes that the creation of social networks on the internet, such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and *Myspace*, amongst others, has changed the landscape of mass communication. She comments that these networks have enhanced the interactional and socialisation aspects of mass communication. In describing social media, Jan H. Kietzmann, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian P. McCarthy, and Bruno S. Silvestre (2011: 241), state that social media is the use of mobile and web-based technologies that enable users "to create highly interactive platforms" to share content and to participate in social networking. In this way, "individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content". Kietzmann et. al (2011: 241) state that because social media has grown in popularity, it has impacted the communication and consumer landscape. With members of society (consumers) increasingly using "platforms such as content sharing sites, blogs, social networking, and wikis, to create, modify, share, and discuss internet content, social media can significantly impact a firm's reputation, sales, and even survival" (Kietzmann et al., 2011: 241).

Similarly, Hyoungkoo Khang, Eyun-Jung Ki, and Lan Ye, (2012: 279) write "there has been a steady increase in the use of social media for sharing various forms of user-generated content", such as

advertisements. For example, companies are more frequently using social networking sites such as *Facebook* as part of their online advertising campaigns in order to appeal to larger audiences. Linchi Kwok and Bei Yu (2013: 84) also explain that this trend to use social media is because this form of communication has become a significant force in consumer decision making. With its ability to reach billions of people across the world, of different ages, genders, races, and ethnicities, companies are taking their advertising to social media platforms. In doing so, they are able to, more than ever before, increase awareness, share information, encourage people to form opinions and attitudes, impact purchasing habits, and evaluate post purchase experience.

One of the most favoured social media platforms that companies and consumers are increasingly using is *Facebook*. Founded in 2004, the creators of *Facebook* describe it as ''a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers … we build technologies to give people the power to connect with friends and family, find communities and grow businesses'' (*Facebook*, 2020). According to Daniel Nations (2019), with over two billion active users, the social networking site "has become one of the most successful forms of social media". Through *Facebook*, users, which includes businesses, post comments; publish photographs; share links to news, advertisements, or other related and relevant content on the web; chat live; and watch videos. Explaining further, Nations (2019) writes that on *Facebook,* "shared content can be made publicly accessible, or it can be shared only among a select group of friends or family, or with a single person". He believes that *Facebook's* success is due "to its ability to appeal to both people and businesses, and its ability to interact with sites around the web by providing a single login that works across multiple sites". Nations (2019) states there are certain "attractions" of *Facebook* that has ensured its success. For example, it is "user-friendly and open to everyone, therefore the "least technical-minded" people can sign up and begin posting on *Facebook*". Another attraction, which is of relevance to this study, is that although *Facebook* was initially created to "keep in touch or reconnect with long-lost friends", the social networking site is "rapidly became the darling of businesses". Given the user-friendliness and the reach of the site, businesses are "able to closely target an audience and deliver ads directly to the people most likely to want their products or services" (Nations, 2019). Additional features of

Facebook, that is of benefit to businesses, is that it supports interactive online chat; its developer network delivers advanced functionality and monetisation options for businesses; and business events and launches can also be video streamed live using *Facebook* Live.

In concluding this section, it is important to emphasise that social media, and in particular *Facebook*, has become one of the most popular tools for advertising purposes. Companies are regularly using social networking sites to disseminate their advertising messages online to reach the masses. The reason for re-emphasising this is that this research investigates the feminine beauty ideals of the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Therefore, advertising, a mass communications tactic, which involves promotional messaging, occupies a noteworthy space in this study, and will be explored in the section that follows.

3.4 Advertising as a tool for mass communication of messages

In today's world, one cannot avoid advertising as we are exposed to it in almost every space of our lives, from the images on a bus or a street pole when travelling, to the pop-up advertisements on our electronic devices when reading or playing games and the imagery that we are surrounded by on social networking sites such as *Facebook*. Hosney M. El-daly (2011: 25) explains that the term advertising is derived from the Medieval Latin verb "advertere" and means "to direct one's attention to; it is any type or form of public announcement intended to direct people's attention to the availability, qualities, and/or cost of specific commodities or services". According to El-daly (2011: 25), there are three main components to consider regarding advertising. The first is "consumer advertising", which involves promoting services and products to members of society (El-daly, 2011: 25). A second component is that of "trade advertising", which is aimed at "dealers and professionals through appropriate trade publications and media" (El-daly, 2011: 25). The last main component is "public relations advertising, which is directed towards society by citizens or community groups, or by politicians, in order to promote some issue of social concern or political agenda" (El-daly, 2011: 25). In the case of this study, which is investigating the feminine beauty ideals of *Facebook* advertising by *Mr Price* and *H&M*, components one and three, that is consumer advertising and public relations advertising, are important to consider. Lars Hermerén

in Sofia Karlsson (2015: 3) explain that both consumer advertising, and public relations advertising, share common traits with each other, with the most comment trait for purposes of this study, being the process of persuasion.

According to Herbert W. Simons, Joanne Morreale, and Bruce Gronbeck (2001: 275-297), "advertising is one of the most prevalent forms of persuasion". They explain "that advertisements have become so integral to the fabric of our lives that we may believe that we hardly notice them, and therefore, we downplay their ability to influence us" (Simons et al., 2001: 276). As the core mission of advertising is to persuade, Hermerén in Karlsson (2015: 3) explains that an advertisement is produced with the aim to guide the audience through this process of persuasion. He explains that this process of persuasion in commercial and public relations advertising is achieved through the following four steps: (1) comprehension, (2) acceptance, (3) attitude change, and (4) retention of the message. In this regard, Karlsson (2015: 3) writes that, "in order for a message to have a persuasive effect on the receiver, the receiver first has to comprehend the message and accept it as well as being ready to develop a positive attitude towards what is being promoted". Additionally, while the reaction to an advertisement might appear as "a personal choice, research shows that the way people process information lies outside of their conscious control of awareness" (Karlsson, 2015: 3).

The above assertion positions advertisers with a great advantage because it does not depend on whether the "advertisement is noticed as an advertisement or not, it will still be processed in the receiver's mind as essential information" (Karlsson, 2015: 3). The effect of this persuasive information is seen in how the receiver adjusts their perspective on the matter (Karlsson, 2015:3). Moreover, Hermerén (Karlsson, 2015: 3) states that advertisers have no interpersonal relationship with the audience or receivers of the message, they depend on visual and linguistic sources to create one. Attempts at creating this interpersonal relationship can take different forms such as addressing the receiver as if they were an old friend, having a celebrity deliver the message, and using cultural or gender stereotypes that the viewer will recognise and engage with (Karlsson, 2015: 3). Considering this, the discourse of advertising is an important point to investigate, because discourse is one of the hidden persuaders used in advertising. In her book,

The Language of Advertising (1998), Angela Goddard explains that advertisements are designed to influence, and therefore, use hidden persuaders to achieve this goal. One of these hidden persuaders is known as the language or discourse of advertising (Goddard, 1998: 5-10). The author explains that many consumers are unaware that the complex process of advertising communication, and its language, including both text and visual, can have a powerful influence over their behaviour. Goddard (1998: 5-10) states that advertising has become "so familiar to modern readers", that very few consider how powerful it is as a form of discourse.

Explaining how the use of discourse came to be one of the most prominent hidden persuaders, El-daly (2011: 26-27) writes that with the advent of industrialisation in the nineteenth century, advertisers began changing the structure and use of language and visual communication by using "ingenious new techniques". With the twentieth century approaching, advertisers, especially those in America, began "exploiting certain effective rhetorical devices to attract attention to a product or service while also using more colloquial, personal, and informal language to address the customer" (El-daly, 2011: 26-27). Similarly, Marcel Danesi (2015: 5) states that advertisers began developing "sophisticated rhetorical techniques" to construct their discourse, thereby suggesting meanings through, irony, humour, analogy, allusion, images, metaphor etc. By the early decades of the twentieth century, this new form of persuasive advertising had become part of social discourse which began changing the "ways in which people communicated with each other, and in which they perceived products and services" (El-daly, 2011: 26-27). This saw an upsurge in the number of advertising agencies who attempted to "build a rhetorical bridge between the product and the consumer's consciousness" (El-daly, 2011: 26-27).

The above-mentioned primary techniques from the "era of persuasion in advertising" are about positioning and image creation. Advertisers "have moved away from describing the product in itself, to focusing on the consumer of the product, creating product imagery with which the consumer can easily identify" (El-daly, 2011: 26-27). Additionally, scholarship on advertising suggest that rhetorical or persuasive strategies consist of three categories. The first is pathos, which appeals to the consumer's emotions. The second is logos, which appeals to logic or reason by providing statistics and evidence as to what the product does. The final category is ethos,

which appeals to the credibility or character, convincing the consumers that the company is reliable, honest, and credible; therefore, you should buy its product (Bolatito, 2012: 10). Advertising literature highlights that these three categories are based on Aristotle's studies of rhetoric, where he analytically investigated all the ways in which persuasion can take place in a given situation (Varpio, 2018: 207).

With the above understanding of the three persuasion techniques of pathos, logos and ethos, it is possible to consider how advertisements work as a form of social discourse. According to Danesi (2015: 3), this is so because advertisements are highly intertextual, often alluding to cultural themes; and are inter-discursive because they involve various discourses. This intertextual and inter-discursive nature of advertisements demonstrate how the advertiser is constantly reaching "into the same subconscious regions of psychic experience that were once explored only by philosophers, artists, and religious thinkers". Therefore, advertisements in contemporary society form "part of the broader social discourse that people tap into on a daily basis in various ways, and to varying degrees, depending on social factors such as class, background, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other variables" (Danesi, 2015: 3). In relation to this, El-daly (2011: 26-27) contends that, in contemporary society, "most of our information, intellectual stimulation, and lifestyle models, come from, or are related to, advertising images". Additionally, he believes that attitudes towards advertising can impact people's social, and ideological positions as well as their personalities. He states that "advertisements are forms of discourse which make a powerful contribution to how we construct our identities" (El-daly, 2011: 26-27). He however does caution that not all advertisements promote positive societal behaviours and values, some can also degrade communities, their culture and languages.

Understanding the discourse of advertising as a hidden persuader is vital to this study as it investigates whether the feminine beauty portrayed in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* perpetuate western and Eurocentric mediated forms of beauty. An analysis of the discourse used in these advertisements is therefore critical to this investigation. As Gillian Brown and George Yule (1983: 1) explain, an "analysis of discourse is an analysis of language" (both text and visual) in use. The focus is less on the formal properties of language, and more on the

investigation of what the language is used for. Similarly, Danesi (2015: 3) states that the analysis of discourse considers "specific constructions of language for social or psychosocial purposes". Hall's (2013: xxii) views on language, and how the semiotic and discursive approaches form part of understanding how culture and representation work (Cf. pages 137-151), are also vital for this discussion. According to Hall (2013: xxii), semiotics is concerned with how representation generates meanings, and discourse considers the influence and effects of representation. This aids researchers who are analysing the discourse in advertising to gain a deeper understanding of history, and the politics of meaning and issues, in relation to power.

Based on the above, the next section focuses on the mass mediated images of beauty used in advertising. It considers how such representations draw on racial, political, social, historical, and gendered ideas. According to scholars such as Thomas Lee (2009: 158-183), the mass media has, and continues to, make "a tremendous impression on the political, economic, social and cultural trends of every nation". Similarly, McQuail (2010: 24-25) feels that the mass media can be organised into four main elements that are of significance to culture and society in contemporary society. These are, "certain communicative purposes, needs, or uses"; "technologies for communicating publicly to many at a distance"; "forms of social organisation that provide the skills and frameworks for organising production and distribution"; and "forms of regulation and control". He was of the view that while "these elements do not have a fixed relationship with each other and depend very much on the circumstances of time and place", there are instances when they can, and will be, combined. These combinations are dependent on both, aspects of the social and cultural climate, as well as material factors. It is from this perspective that the literature review will now unpack how the mass mediated images used in advertising, have a major influence on how people view themselves and others.

3.5 The social, cultural, and political impact of mass mediated images used in advertising

Based on the literature that has been presented thus far, it can be argued that the mass media is a cultural socialisation agent. Scholars in the human and social sciences explain that this is due to the mass mediated images that appear in print, broadcast or online media. For the purposes

of this study and aligned to the research problem defined in chapter one, the mass mediated images referenced are the ones found in advertising. In this study, the aim is to investigate whether the beauty ideals in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* perpetuate and promotes western and Eurocentric constructs of beauty as the standard of beauty in South Africa. In order to achieve this, the influence that mass mediated images can have on how people view beauty, or what they consider beautiful, is a vital component to research and include in a literature review.

Yan and Kim (2014: 194-195) believe that through the use of various influencing factors, an ideal of feminine beauty is promulgated and reinforced through media formats such as advertising. They illustrate how the "mass media often portrays attractive people as more desirable, credible, and inspirational". Their finding is substantiated by their analysis of the representation of female beauty worldwide. This was done "through a content analysis of 5 577 female models in four top beauty and fashion magazines from 12 countries/regions" (some of the findings of this research was also discussed in chapter two of the study (Cf. pages 42-44)). According to Yan and Bissell (2014: 194-195), additional findings reveal that it is common to open an internet site, read in a magazine, or switch on the television and be bombarded with advertising depicting concepts and notions of who is beautiful based on body size and shape, skin colour, dress code, hairstyle, facial presentation and expression, amongst other factors. This means that at any given time and place, what is thought to be a beautiful woman is dictated to society, in part, by those constructing and creating the messaging in the mass media (Yan & Bissell, 2014: 194-195). Therefore, as a mass media tool, advertising, is part of the culture and economics of a society, and a part of our every-day lives. Moreover, Sarah Britten (2005: 135) explains that advertising is "inextricably" linked with the mass media and plays a central role in the formation of identity, representation, and in the generation of common knowledge. She discusses how the mass mediated images and word choices used in advertising, is a powerful instrument that perpetuates power and specific dominant ideologies about feminine beauty. This highlights how the mass media is responsible for shaping contemporary representations of beauty.

Stig Hjarvard (2008: 105-106) states that the mass media in today's society can no longer be seen as separate from cultural and other social institutions. He writes that the mass media is not just about the technologies used by members of society, businesses, civic organisations, political parties, and government, but more importantly, about the messages and ideologies that these groups want to share with the public. Hjarvard (2008: 105-106) explains that, by using the technologies of mass media, these messages and ideologies are structured, coordinated and transmitted in specific ways to reach the public. According to Kho Suet Nie, Chang Peng Kee and Abdul Latiff Ahmad (2014), mass media, more than ever before, has the ability to connect people. They write that, because humans are interactive beings who want to be part of their society, the mass media plays a pivotal role in connecting them with their society, while simultaneously embedding and promoting contemporary culture in their minds and lifestyles (Nie et al., 2014: 364-365). Moreover, Nie et al. (2014: 365) explain that culture is increasingly influenced by the mass media, as the media industry in contemporary society are "providers of cultural products and belief, rather than a mere medium and carrier".

Friedrich Krotz (2017: 105) shares similar views on the mass media and culture, but his scholarship is focused on the technology used in mass media. His views are critical to this study as this research is based on social media advertisements. Krotz (2017: 105) states that due to technological advancements, the infrastructure of mass media "no longer consists of specific and unique media or media groups, but all media are now hardware and software systems of a similar type with additional gadgets", such as earphones, smartphone, screens and digital spectacles, amongst others. According to Krotz (2017: 105), this "technological mass media transformation has changed the human communication environment in a fundamental way because various operations of a society and culture are organised in a digital computer-controlled infrastructure". In other words, people are increasingly being social and engaging with each other or content, via computer programs and the internet, and through the use of digital devices.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand, that "besides the transformation of the media, there is also a second transformation, which is the transformation of everyday life, culture and society, in the context of the transformation of the media" (Krotz, 2017: 105). To this end, Krotz (2017:

107) advises researchers in cultural studies, that due to the "rapidly changing conditions" of mass media communication, any investigation in this field must be, "process-oriented, empirical and theoretical work on both actual and historical questions". According to Krotz (2017: 107), this is necessary, because in today's society, "most of the media-related conditions for communication are rather new and open with reference to their social and cultural meaning and their future". Krotz (2017: 107) believes that this creates a space for scholars to "reconstruct how new technologies have arisen, and how people have appropriated and used them in the different areas of their lives; they can then analyse their meaning for everyday life, culture and society and draw conclusions about this". Krotz's scholarship will be applied to this research investigation as it aims to understand the historical, political, social, and cultural notions that underpin the beauty ideals displayed in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*.

In light of the aforementioned on the mass mediated images used in advertising, this subsection will now present scholarship from around the world that has focused on similar topics to that of this research investigation. The literature and studies reviewed were carried out in different countries, focusing on various ethnic and indigenous people worldwide. The studies also varied in focus – from print to broadcast to online advertising. In spite of the geographical and contextual differences, a common denominator or focal point in all the studies is how, through advertising, an ideal image of beautification and perfection is represented, creating a feeling of inadequacy and dissatisfaction among Black women in society. By presenting these studies, the literature review expands on the cultural, political and social impact of the mass mediated images used in advertising. Additionally, given that previous and similar research is important in any investigation, the scholarship that follows is significant as it ensures that the literature review is presenting ample information on the research topic. It is noteworthy to mention that most of the examples of similar African and South African studies were presented in chapter two (Cf. pages 33-53), and therefore, will not feature much in this part of the review.

According to Francesca Albani (2005: 1), "the visual impact of an image is one of the most immediate and straightforward influences of modern socialisation, conveying feelings, and building societal and cultural ways of seeing through which people interpret and understand the

outer world". She states that, while people's perceptions and visual response to an image may be based on personal life experiences, "it is also the result of pre-determined, profit-driven marketing strategies" (Albani, 2005: 1). With advertising images bombarding women every day, Albani (2005: 1) asserts that advertising and the media shape attitudes about race and gender, "creating images of women that forge needs and necessities based on false and misleading marketing campaigns". Explaining the importance of why scholars should undertake research that explores the social ramifications of advertising, Albani (2005: 1) writes:

> Advertising affects everyone. The idea I explore in my work is that advertising images do not simply depict changes in women's fashion, accessories, or household products. They are also part of a cultural and social system within which femininity and women are defined and constructed into an ideal of female beauty: a young, thin, white, toned, and flawless body.

Of importance to my study is when Albani (2015: 66) explains that there is a "global culture where the dominant gaze is not only male, but white", emphasising "how this racist trend is particularly true when it comes to representations of Black women". She states that a close inspection of contemporary advertising highlights that women of colour from various ethnic groups around the world, "are not represented, or mostly excluded from the representation of the ideal body type" (Albani, 2005: 11). However, if these women are present, "they are normally displayed as the 'other', that is being positioned outside the standards of ideal beauty perfection in order to frame and define the characteristics of Western ideals about the flawless thin body". Additionally, Albani (2005: 11) writes that this western ideology of beauty, such as thin is ideal and fat is "contemptible", is fast spreading to non-western cultures. Women of colour constantly want to change their features believing that they must change their ethnic and cultural aesthetic features into the westernised version of the ideal body type – white, young, skinny, tall – in order to feel beautiful and / or see themselves represented in the dominant culture in advertising.

With the dominant culture prioritising western and European beauty ideals and the need for female bodies to reflect social and cultural images, Albani (2005: 33) understands why "most Black models appear in mainstream magazine advertising only if they resemble white western physical features". Citing the example of an African-American model, Albani (2005: 33) points out

that "they are only present when they construct their body according to white beauty standards and look like a white model". In other words, due to the visual language of whiteness, Black women used in photographs for advertisements cannot display their beauty attributes of larger hips and breasts or curly hair, among others, as these features are in contrast with white beauty ideals, which are preferred by advertising agencies. This results in "Black models being asked to erase their cultural, ethnic and social heritage through their bodies", thereby further increasing the preference of whiteness in visual language (Albani, 2005: 33). As Margaret Wilkerson in Albani (2005: 67) points out:

> White women suffer under the notion of beauty but black women suffer doubly, triply under them because in one sense the standard for white beauty has been defined in opposition to the black norm […] thin lips, aquiline nose, color [sic] of eyes, are in direct conflict to what is the norm for blacks.

According to bell hooks (1992), Black women portrayed in advertising, tend to adopt western and European beauty values, behaviours and beliefs. In her book, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), hooks asserts that, "in order to enter the mainstream media, one must look and sound as white as possible, altering voice, diction, and appearance in order to present a close ideological fit with the status quo". She describes the producers of these images as either white people who are in denial of their racist tendencies, or people of colour who have internalised racism, and see the world through the lens of white supremacy. hooks (1992: 17-18) comments that, "in spite of progressive moments such as the civil rights struggle, the Black power movement, and the power of slogans like Black is beautiful", the majority of Black people continue to be misrepresented and socialised through advertising, thereby internalising white supremacist thoughts and values. According to hooks (1992: 17-18), there needs to be "ongoing resistance struggles and progressive black liberation movements for self-determination in all spheres of life, including advertising, or else Black people (and everyone else) will have no alternative worldview that affirms and celebrates Blackness". If this does not happen, hooks (1992: 17-18) believes that Black people will continue to assimilate to the beauty values upheld and promoted by western and European culture.

Similarly, Sarah Banet-Weiser (1999: 87-122) writes that the beauty of Black women is only valued by mass media and advertising when it is "deconstructed, and then re-constructed according to western white beauty standards". She believes that for Black women to be present in mainstream media, "they need to alter themselves to present a close ideological fit with the status quo". In her study on negotiating beauty ideals, Swain (2012: 1) found that even in countries where the majority of citizens were not of European descent, messaging on beauty was created using mostly images that represent Eurocentric ideas of beauty. She explains that this is referred to as beauty whitewashing and acculturation to western and European ideals of beauty. Swain (2012: 1) further states that it is due to the imposition "of white cultural values and a European colonial past that women of various cultural and racial backgrounds" are subjected to these practices.

According to Bryant (2013: 80-81), Black women have always been, and continue to be, subjected to "incessant" messages about European beauty ideals by the mass media. She states that the messages distributed (and received) on beauty ideals, prioritises European and western beauty characteristics as the features that all girls and women should aspire to have. She highlights that indicators of what is considered beautiful are "closely related to whiteness, such as, lighter skin, straight hair, a thin nose and lips, and light coloured eyes" (Bryant, 2013: 80-81). She states that European and western beauty standards permeate all spheres of life for Black women, impacting relationships with friends and spouses, as well as employment opportunities. Moreover, Bryant (2013: 82-85) details that there is a racialised beauty standard of light skin versus dark skin even within the Black community due to these European and western beauty ideals. This means that "Black girls and women with darker skin are more vulnerable than their lighter-skin peers to negative messages from the media about their physical appearance and attractiveness" (Bryant, 2013: 80-81). According to Kai Nelson (2016: 1), this racialised beauty standard of light skin versus dark skin within the Black community, finds itself in virtually every facet of the mass media industry. He asserts that this is due largely to the practices of whitewashing and Black erasure in mass media. Explaining these practices, he states:

> White Washing [sic] can be defined as a racist practice of removing visible
> minorities in popular media by making their skin appear lighter, or even

replacing them altogether with white actors. Black Erasure [sic] can be described as the tendency to ignore, remove, and falsify Black bodies and Black voices in academia, news, media, and other outlets (Nelson, 2016: 1).

Aligned to, and influencing the practices of whitewashing and Black erasure, is the notion of the colour bar, an invisible beauty hierarchy that exists among Black women – with light-skinned women being "at the top of the hierarchy, and darker skinned women are at the bottom" (Aujla, 1998: 1-3). According to Aujla (1998: 1-3), the colour bar has long been perpetuated by mass media, and is prevalent in the beauty ideals of many non-western cultures. According to Sol Maria Fernandez Knight (2018), an example of this can be found in many African countries, where women are known to align their beauty features to meet European and Western standards. She writes that many African women bleach their skin or use skin-lightening creams to make their skin lighter. Additionally, the use of hair straightening instruments and products, as well as wigs and weaves, have increased or become the norm. Fernandez Knight (2018) states that, for Black women in Africa, hair is a site of contestation, therefore, the hair straightening ritual starts from a very young age.

Aujla (1998: 1-3), in turn, provides examples from the Arab world, Brazil, Asia, and India, where the colour bar can be recognised if one is conscious of it. Beginning with the Arab world, Aujla (1998: 1-2) illustrates that the lighter skinned you are, the more attractive you ares. She states that it is "common for women in the Arab upper classes dye their hair blonde"; one's social class and job opportunities are impacted by the fairness of their skin; and women "undergo surgery to correct certain phenotypical characteristics which stray from the European-based ideal of a small, straight nose, straight soft hair, big eyes (preferably blue) and fair-skin". In Brazil, Aujla (1998: 2) writes that anthropologists have noted that in mixed race Brazilian communities, people with dark skinned tones are always stigmatised. Additionally, "the higher you get in Brazilian society, the whiter it is", something that Aujla (1998: 2) argues has its roots in Brazilian history when the "last Brazilian emperor married a blonde Austrian woman making the aristocracy very white and very blonde". Additionally, Aujla (1998: 2) states that, in Brazil people do not want to be Black because the mass media and advertising associate it with "poor and stupid"; everyone wants to be blonde and white, because in Brazil, they are taught this is a symbol of power and wealth.

In South Asia, Aujla (1998: 2) recalls that, during childhood, girls are constantly encouraged to stay away from the sunlight for the "fear of growing darker, as becoming darker meant becoming less attractive". She highlights how the mass media and businesses also perpetuate the colour bar in South Asia. They do this by casting light-skinned actors in popular Indian movies, which is in contrast to the true skin colour of South Asians. They also indicate that a person is light skin in the matrimonial section of newspapers "to upgrade their chance of finding a suitable match". Aujla (1998: 2) states that the cosmetic industry continually promotes skin-lightening products to women promising to lighten their skin as light skin is desired in India. Furthermore, according to Aujla (1998: 2), in other parts of Asia, women undergo cosmetic surgery to "create folds in their eyelids, in mimicry of the western eye-shape" as well as to change the shapes of their noses and lighten their skin colour. Moreover, the media in certain parts of Asia, such as Japan, create their anime characters using western beauty features (Aujla, 1998: 2).

In a similar study, Kaidi Wang (2013) looked at the "impact of advertisements, and how female magazine readers in China view fashion magazine advertisements, and white skin". Wang (2013: 1-6) writes that "one aspect of western culture that has been introduced into China is that of body image, with Caucasian features being viewed as attractive and desirable in Asian countries". This has tipped over into mass media, in particular the advertising industry, with Chinese women bombarded with magazine advertisements "depicting white skin as a beauty ideal for Chinese women". Wang's (2013: 69-70) findings revealed that "most of the models in current Chinese fashion magazine advertisements are Caucasian women". She highlights that "white skin, as it is one of the Caucasian characteristics, is particularly emphasised" (Wang, 2013: 69-70). Thereby, millions of Chinese women are inundated every day, "with advertising's message that having white skin is beautiful" (Wang, 2013: 69-70). Wang's (2013: 69-70) research also paints a picture of how this kind of adverting perpetuates the idea of whiteness ideal beauty. She states that the "prevalence of Caucasian models in magazine advertisements selling whitening products are affecting the body-esteem and self-esteem of Chinese women" (Wang, 2013: 69-70).

Also looking at the Asian advertising and feminine beauty industry, Lie Zhang (2013: 4-8) writes that, as globalisation and western media "have increased their influence in East Asia, the

universal ideal of beauty has become increasingly Eurocentric". She highlights that many Asian women undergo plastic surgery, and use cosmetic products, in order "to achieve features associated with western beauty, such as round eyes, defined noses, and double eyelids" (Zhang, 2013: 4-8). Focusing on the causes of this Eurocentric ideal of beauty, Zhang (2013: 4-8) examines the "convergence of historical Asian classist divisions, western colonialism, and globalisation, to uncover the historical basis of this standard and examine how it persists today". She writes that "colonialism fused European ideals of beauty with Asian cultural values to produce the universal Eurocentric beauty ideal that is seen in Asia today" (Zhang, 2013: 6). She also explores how "Eurocentric standards of beauty have become a form of structural violence, causing unique ethnic characteristics to fade, as women of colour unconsciously conform to a single perception of beauty, while viewing this conformation as an investment for the future" (Zhang, 2013: 8-10). She suggests that, "while Asians may claim that their motives for undergoing surgery is to appear more attractive overall, and not to look more westernised, an understanding of societal factors proves that the Eurocentric standard of beauty is indeed the global ideal to which Asian women unconsciously conform" (Zhang, 2013: 8-10). What concerns Zhang (2013: 10) is that, "over time, unique ethnic characteristics will be lost in Asia as society selects for one appearance type, creating a uniformity in beauty that is not genetically Asian". She also believes that this "Eurocentric standard of beauty is naturally unattainable for most Asian women, therefore leading to detrimental psychological effects, and can result in poor self-image and self-esteem" (Zhang, 2013: 8-10).

Rebecca Gelles (2011: 2) explains how the expansion of globalisation has led to beauty ideals from the west influencing India. She began her study by focusing on what Indian standards of beauty were historically, then shifted gears to current Indian beauty standards, and concluded with the effects that the westernised mass media and westernised beauty ideals have had on Indian women. In tracing the traditional beauty standards of Indian women, Gelles (2011: 7-11) writes that art, religious imagery, and written texts from ancient periods, revealed that Indian women had hourglass figures with darker skin tones. They were described as having "wide hips, tapering legs, large breasts, black wavy and flowy tresses, and skin like gold". Unfortunately,

according to Gelles (2011: 11-22), the modern-day Indian woman does not hear these messages of ancient beauty ideals. Instead, they are bombarded with western ideals of beauty disseminated through television, Bollywood, fashion magazines and their families. The message on skin and hair is to have a fair and clear complexion; hair must be medium to long in length, with a growing trend of lightening one's hair colour, straightening one's hair, and permanently removing body hair with the use of laser treatments. Regarding a women's figure, Gelles (2011: 11-22) states that, "while the historical images of Indian women are dominated by curvy hourglass figures, and even the occasional hint of extra fat in the stomach area, the modern beauty ideal for Indian women is all about slim figures". She writes that "slim is what families seek in brides for their sons, slim and trim is what women admire in their favorite [sic] actress's appearance and being thin is what women get complimented on by their cousins" (Gelles, 2011: 18). In her investigation on the Indian mass media, Gelles (2011: 2) concludes that the Indian media industry, with its "increasingly western style, shares television space with advertisements from corporations that are often foreign in origin". By examining the impact that the globalised mass media has on its audience, and, in particular, on their views of beauty, she is able to scrutinise the effects of these western standards of beauty on Indian women.

Conducting her study with residents in the cities of Delhi and Jaipur, Gelles (2011: 31-32) found "that cultural standards of beauty in India are narrowing and conforming to more international and western standards, and that these changes are causing new physical and psychological problems to Indian society". She writes that there is paramount proof that shows "how India is gradually absorbing western ideals of beauty, primarily through its entertainment industry, and that these foreign concepts of beauty are modifying the way Indians define what is attractive" (Gelles, 2011: 31-32). Additionally, Gelles (2011: 31-32) states "that these new beauty standards, when coupled with traditional Indian social values, have the potential to be both physically and emotionally damaging for Indian women". Highlighting the problems of eating disorders, low self-esteem, and damage from skin lightening creams, Gelles (2011: 31-32) writes that these challenges are not unique to India alone, and can be found across Asia and Africa. Moreover, Gelles (2011: 32) drives home the point that imposing western beauty standards on women in

India does not empower the Indian woman. She states that "a narrowing of beauty standards appears to decrease female empowerment, as women have fewer choices, and experience greater pressure to fit into an increasingly tight mould of conventional beauty ideals" (Gelles, 2011: 32).

Also focusing on India, Anne R. Roschelle, Sunita Bose, and Omar Nagi (2011) presented a paper at the American Sociological Association entitled*, Changing Images, Distorted Realities: The Social Construction of Beauty in India*. They highlighted that, in India, images of beauty and representations of women in advertising, feature light skinned, very thin women who, despite being Indian, have very western, Anglo-Saxon features. Calling out mass media for the practice of superimposing American ideals of beauty and success on Indian women, they said that the images used in advertising in India, were "extremely disturbing" because they reflected the "pervasive cultural imperialism of the west" (Roschelle et al.: 2011). In addition, the women in the advertisements did not resemble the majority of Indian women – they represented whiteness as beauty. As such, they labelled these representations of Indian women, which were being used to sell products, and promote modernity, as "offensive". The researchers explained that beauty is not a static and fixed concept, and that it can differ from one culture to the next. Moreover, Roschelle, et al. (2011) believe that people in positions of power are constantly defining what is considered beautiful. These "definitions of beauty are often racialised and represent how power is distributed in society" (Roschelle, et al., 2011).

In their paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association on "gender roles and beauty ideals in visual representations of women", Olga V. Mayorova and Samantha S. Kwan (2003) spoke on beauty ideals in the USA, India, Mexico, and Russia. Selecting the bestselling magazines from each country, their comparative study focused on representations of women's role in magazines as a reflection of women's participation in the workforce. They also looked at how globalisation has contributed to the exportation of a white beauty ideal, which is of relevance to this study. Explaining their results on beauty ideals by beginning with skin colour, Mayorova and Kwan (2003: 8) stated that colour distribution "unambiguously" showed the predominance of light skin colour. In India, over half of the pictures

portrayed women with light skin, and only 3% with dark skin. In Mexico, the percentage of light-skinned women was even higher. Although Russia has practically no dark-skinned ethnic groups, there was at least 1% of the pictures that represented dark skinned women, whereas in Mexico, where you would expect dark skinned models, there were none. The USA was the most diverse in their representations of women of colour. Looking at the hair colour of women in the selected magazines, Mayorova and Kwan (2003: 8) highlighted that India and Mexico had a higher presence of dark-haired women than Russia and the USA. However, the percentage of women with blonde hair and other light-haired women was also very high in these countries.

According to Mayorova and Kwan (2003: 8), these results are not what one would expect if the rate represented the population phenotype. Discussing the eye colour results, the researchers found the following. In both India and Mexico, about 40% of the pictures feature women with blue, grey, and green eyes – "a fascinating finding, considering that a combination of dark hair and coloured eyes is not so common" (Mayorova & Kwan, 2003: 8). They stated that they did expect the Eurocentric beauty ideal to be highly visible across all four countries. Expanding briefly on the USA, the researchers state the white beauty ideal, as a preferred ideal of beauty, is possibly linked to colourism or colour consciousness. Colourism or colour consciousness is "the notion that the overall blackness of a person in terms of darkness of skin, eye colour, hair texture, nose shape, and lip prominence, are important and aligned to western beauty features" (Mayorova & Kwan, 2003: 8). They write that colourism "suggests that individuals with less typical Black features are preferred or more privileged in society" (Mayorova & Kwan, 2003: 8). For example, the magazines analysed from the USA, revealed that the "Eurocentric model has become the norm, even in Black magazines" (Mayorova & Kwan, 2003: 8). Additionally, Mayorova and Kwan (2003: 8) state that "there is also evidence that magazines tend to over represent blonde women, while in general, minority models tend to be underrepresented". Furthermore, Mayorova and Kwan (2003: 8) state that their "findings suggest the privileging of a Eurocentric beauty ideal of fair skin, light hair, and coloured eyes, among other features".

Addressing beauty ideals in the United States, Roschelle et al. (2011) write that whiteness is considered beautiful and is the standard by which all others are judged, as this maintains the

racial status quo. According to Roschelle et al. (2011), this idealisation of whiteness is what has been exported to Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and has had significant political, social, and economic ramifications. Speaking on feminine beauty in online mass media, and in particular, that of advertising, they also highlighted how massive the internet has become as an instrument in the "hegemonic promotion of whiteness" (Roschelle, et al., 2011). Shedding light on skin lightening products, they write that from multinational corporations, to skin doctors, to sellers on eBay, the internet is now used to promote, and sell these products, offer advice on how to maximally lighten one's skin. In this regard, the internet brings together all the actors in these global marketplaces. They cite the examples of *IndiaParenting.com* and *sukh-dukh.com,* which are chat rooms specifically designed for South Asians to discuss skin care and skin lightening, as well as blogs where women express dissatisfaction with their skin tone as they want to be fairer.

This brings to conclusion the section on the social, cultural, and political impact that mass mediated images used in advertising can have on societies around the world. The above-mentioned studies are just a few examples found in the literature available on the topic at hand. Due to the expansiveness of the literature available, the studies that were most similar and relevant were mentioned. Furthermore, even though the research population and geographical location of the studies highlighted above are unique, and context specific, what is relevant for this investigation is that their research shared similar findings on western and European beauty ideals, highlighting the prevalence of whiteness in mass media. It also showcased how the beauty features of women of colour have limited space in mainstream fashion advertising unless they employ western aesthetic standards and align their features to whiteness, which is also what this research project aims to test.

3.6 Chapter summary

Chapter three was devoted to unpacking literature relevant to this study. This chapter focused on understanding the integral role that mass mediated images used in advertising occupy in the social, political, and cultural landscape of various nations around the world, including South Africa. In order to understand this, part two of the literature review presented an outline of the

mass media landscape. It started with a detailed discussion on the evolution of the mass media from its early beginnings where it was used by religious leaders; then to its large-scale development in print, and broadcast; moving onto its digital growth; and where it finds itself now due to every-day technological advancements. This section also included literature on the history and current mass media landscape in South Africa.

Following this was a discussion on the internet as a channel of mass media. The section considered how the internet has changed the landscape of mass communication, and the mass media industry. One of these changes is the creation of social networking sites or social media, which are websites and applications designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time. Given that this study involves *Facebook* advertisements and that *Facebook* is one of the many social networking sites available online, that makes it easy for one to connect and share with family and friends online, it was critical for the literature review to consult scholarship on this topic. The chapter, therefore also explored *Facebook*, and its increasing use by companies for advertising.

The next discussion centred on advertising, and considered how persuasive information is compiled and constructed by those doing the advertising, as well as those disseminating the content via various mass media channels, including the internet. The section also explained how discourse is one of the most prevalent tools of hidden persuasion in advertising. It was important to explain this in order to showcase how advertising influences culture, politics, economics, and society, and therefore, our everyday lives.

Finally, this chapter also explored how the mass mediated images that appear in print, broadcast or online media advertising can influence how people view beauty, or what they consider beautiful. This was done by reviewing literature on similar studies from around the world. It is the body of work that this study aims to contribute to. Following the detailed literature review presented here; the next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework within which the study is situated.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework within which this study is situated and sets the tone for the research investigation carried out in this dissertation. It starts out with as discussion of the overarching theoretical framework, namely, cultural studies. This is followed by discussions on critical race studies, critical whiteness studies (CWS) and decoloniality, as well as feminism. The applicability of the theories to the study is also explained.

According to Cynthia Grant and Azadeh Osanloo (2014: 12), "the theoretical framework is a crucial aspect in the research process; it is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed for a research study". They explain that a theoretical framework "serves as the structure and support for the rationale of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions – it provides a grounding and an anchor for the literature review, and most importantly, the research methods and analysis" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014: 12).

In light of the aforementioned, because the main concern of cultural studies is to study culture and its effects on society, the theory of cultural studies is a suitable theory to anchor this investigation. Given that the selected *Facebook* advertisements from *H&M* and *Mr Price* form part of popular culture, cultural studies provide a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary framework for investigating both visual and textual elements to determine how meaning is created. According to Hua Hsu (2017), "cultural studies is not just one arm of the humanities, it is as an attempt to use all of those arms at once" while also drawing from other fields such as economics.

Critical race theory (CRT) as it forms part of cultural studies, is also used in this study. This theory was selected because issues of race have to be explored in this investigation to determine how social and political factors converge in the construction of power and beauty ideology in South Africa. Aligned to issues of race is CWS, which is also explored in this chapter. Thereafter, decoloniality, which is linked to CRT, is discussed in the context of the political history as well as

the current political climate of South Africa. A final theory that supports this study is feminism. Due to the nature of the research, which involves analysing *Facebook* advertisements aimed at the female market of *H&M* and *Mr Price,* it is important to include a feminist viewpoint in the theoretical framework of this investigation.

The chapter will also speak to the interconnectedness of these theories. Given that cultural studies draw on theories from fields such as literary studies, sociology, communications studies, history, cultural anthropology, and economics, this chapter will consider how the theories are aligned to each other and to the research objectives of this study. The first theory to be expanded on below is cultural studies.

4.2 Cultural studies

As the pioneer of contemporary cultural studies, Stuart Hall once said "that cultural studies is experience lived, experience interpreted, experience defined; and it can tell us things about the world that more traditional studies of politics or economics alone could not" (Hall in Hsu, 2017). The above sentiment by Hall is a fitting start to this section on cultural studies as it sets the tone for how this investigation into the *Facebook* fashion advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M* will unfold. Hall's seminal work in cultural studies has created an academic space for cultural studies practitioners to question the various social, political and economic forces that converge in media, and specifically for this study, social media (Hall, Morley, and Chen: 1996). Hall's work has its intellectual origins in the works of Karl Marx, Max Weber, George Herbert Mead, Howard Becker, Raymond Williams, EP Thompson, Roland Barthes, Georg Lukas, Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, and Michel Foucault, among others. Explaining that "cultural studies is constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects", Hall (1997: 6) encourages cultural studies practitioners to engage in analysis or theory that is dedicated to understanding the "structuring, packaging and distributing processes" that inform the thinking of societies and the diverse groups within them. Even though there is no set definition for cultural studies, Hall (1997) explains that cultural studies combine "the strengths of the social sciences and the humanities and draws on methods and theories from fields such as literary studies, sociology, communications studies, history,

cultural anthropology, and economics". Hall (1997 & 2013) believes that cultural studies can inform us about the world in a way that conventional scholarship, education and research of politics or economics cannot. Moreover, due to its interdisciplinary nature, "cultural studies address new questions and problems of today's world, developing flexible tools that adapt to our rapidly changing world" (Hall, 1997).

However, before delving into a contemporary understanding cultural studies, and its appropriateness as a theory for this study, it is important to provide a historical background on cultural studies. In this regard, Hsu (2017) explains:

> Having emerged in England, in the 1950s and 1960s, when scholars from working-class backgrounds, such as Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, began thinking about the distance between canonical cultural touchstones— the music or books that were supposed to teach you how to be civil and well-mannered — and their own upbringings. These scholars believed that the rise of mass communications and popular forms were permanently changing our relationship to power and authority, and to one another. There was no longer consensus.

According to David Morley and Bill Schwarz (2014), the foundations of cultural studies can be traced to the insistence by scholars such as Hoggart, Williams and Hall, to take "popular, low-status cultural forms seriously, and tracing the interweaving threads of culture, power and politics". In response to this, when Hoggart was appointed as Professor of English at the University of Birmingham, he founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964. His intention was to conduct research into mass culture, which was realised as the "Centre operated at the intersections of literary criticism, sociology, history and anthropology" Hoggart was the Centre's first director, and was followed by Hall, Richard Johnson, and Michael Green until it was closed in 2002 (University of Birmingham, 2020).

According to David Rowe (2017: 1) and the University of Birmingham website (2020), the Centre's research did not focus on "high" culture, but rather on conducting "group research on areas of popular culture such as chart music, television programmes and advertising – this approach went profoundly against the grain of conventional academic practice" (University of Birmingham, 2020).

Given that the Centre had few staff members, much of its work was generated from collaborations between staff and students (many whom were from backgrounds that were under-represented in universities). According to the University of Birmingham website (2020), "work produced at the Centre showed that popular culture was not only worthy of academic study but often also politically significant". The University of Birmingham website (2020) explains in more detail:

> It showed, for example, the importance to young people of subcultures based around style and music, the ideological influence of girls' magazines over their young readership, and why a 'moral panic' over the presence of black communities had evolved in 1970s Britain. The Centre's focus on the 'contemporary' in Birmingham, Britain and later around the world was combined with an engagement with critical theory, often introduced from the continent. The application of these theories to contemporary society was rigorously debated during weekly 'sub groups'. The Centre also had an important influence outside the academy, with numerous former students playing significant roles in altering the political and cultural landscapes of Birmingham and beyond.

Scholars such as Rowe (2017: 5) indicate that, while the Centre closed in 2002, there has been an "extraordinary ripple effect" of the Centre's work on "interdisciplinary, reflexive social theory within and beyond Britain, and cultural studies is undeniable". Since the 1950s, cultural studies has grown in scope and broadened its approaches. Additionally, even though it originated in Britain, where the focus was on British Cultural Studies, this field has become a global school of thought with different countries and continents applying the main framework within their contexts. This demonstrates how cultural studies has evolved throughout the years, providing a diverse range of critical perspectives from various fields and theories as well cultures. Based on this, the theory of cultural studies is relevant to my study given that this investigation explores the relationship between culture and communication, and how connotations of beauty are constructed in the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Furthermore, given that this study intersects with the social, political, and economic conditions in relation to the ideology of beauty, cultural studies is a suitable theory for this research.

In unpacking how cultural studies is appropriate for this study, it is important to first consider some of the recommendations given to cultural studies researchers as they embark on their investigations. According to Ziauddin Sardar and Brian van Loon (1998: 8), one of the recommendations is for them to understand that cultural studies "connects the intellectual and academic landscape from old established disciplines to new political movements, intellectual practices and modes of inquiry such as Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism and poststructuralism". They state that because cultural studies move from discipline to discipline, methodology to methodology, it is not a discipline, but a collective term, allowing for any cultural studies research project to use multiple methodologies and/or theoretical frameworks.

Similarly, Gilbert Rodman (2017: 2) explains that those undertaking cultural studies research should understand that the central purpose of a cultural studies investigation should be twofold. According to Rodman (2017: 2), the first step is "to produce detailed, contextualised analyses of the ways that power and social relations are created, structured, and maintained through culture; and the second step is to circulate these analyses in public forums suitable to the tasks of pedagogy, provocation, and political intervention". Rodman (2017: 2) states that not all scholars will agree with this "idealised" definition of cultural studies as cultural studies is known for constantly refashioning itself in "order to meet the shifting intellectual and political demands of different historical and geopolitical contexts".

Additionally, given the fluidity of cultural studies, Rodman (2017: 3) advises practitioners to consider two crucial points; the first being that any definition of cultural studies "will force one to take sides in a series of debates that cannot be resolved neatly". The second is "that one of the fundamental principles of cultural studies is that knowledge is never neutral or objective" (Rodman, 2017: 3). This advice by Rodman (2017: 3) is crucial to this study as there is a personal connection between myself as the researcher, and the subject matter being investigated, therefore, it is necessary to consider Rodman's (2017: 3) point of view when carrying out the analysis of the selected *Facebook* advertisements, determining its findings, and providing recommendations.

Furthermore, cultural studies is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study due to the nature of the research. As discussed earlier, this study involves an analysis of the *Facebook* advertisements by *Mr Price* and *H&M*, where culture and communication, and how the meaning of beauty is constructed in the selected advertisements is investigated. This investigation intersects with the social, political, and economic conditions in relation to the ideology of beauty. In this regard, it is important to unpack some of the key concepts of cultural studies that are informed by Hall's influential essays. One of the first concepts to consider is the circuit of culture (Hall et al., 2013: xvii). Hall et al. (2013: xvii-xxvi) explain that there are five steps within this circuit, "Representation, Identity, Production, Consumption and Regulation", and "meaning can be produced at any of these five stages and then fed back into the circuit". Hall et al. (2013: xvii-xxvi) write that "meaning must enter the circuit of culture and circulate until it has been received or decoded at some other point in the chain; it is through this circulation that shared meanings are developed, understood, represented in language and are tested and adapted by society".

In relation to this, Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (2013: xxii) discuss the semiotic and discursive approaches to language as they believe that languages provide a "model of how culture and representation work". With "semiotics being the science and study of signs and symbols, it is more concerned with the how of representation; while the discursive approach looks more at the effects and consequences of representation (Hall et al., 2013: xxii). Even though the scholars consider both as effective frameworks for analysis within cultural studies, they emphasise that the discursive approach is a "significant shift of direction in our knowledge of society" allowing researchers to gain a more profound comprehension of history, and "the politics of meaning and issues in relation to power" (Hall et al., 2013: xxii). The semiotic and discursive theoretical approaches will be expanded on later in this dissertation in the methodological framework chapter.

In order to apply the theory of cultural studies to this study, one of the books consulted in this investigation is *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, by Chris Barker and Emma A. Jane (2016). The authors explain that cultural studies, as a theory, "seeks to explore representations of, and for, marginalised social groups, as well as the need for cultural change". They highlight eight key

interconnecting concepts that are vital for any cultural studies investigation. These concepts are, "culture and signifying practices; representation; materialism and non-reductionism; articulation; power; ideology and popular culture; texts and readers; and subjectivity and identity" (Barker & Jane, 2016). Given that these concepts are necessary for a cultural studies research project, they will therefore form part of the theoretical framework that underpins this study. The concepts will be explained below.

4.2.1 Culture and signifying practices

To understand the concept of culture and cultural signifying practices*,* the article, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Hall, 1997 & 2013) was used as a seminal source. From this foundation, Barker and Jane (2016: 9) explore culture and signifying practices by first focusing on culture and a possible definition of culture, which they claim is a difficult task. Sharing Hall's (1997 & 2013) views, the authors believe "that culture is one of the most difficult concepts in the human and social sciences as there are many ways of defining it". Similarly, Vitus Nanbigne (2015: 619) states that, due to its non-static existence, there is no clear and one-dimensional definition of culture. Nevertheless, Nanbigne (2015: 619) speaks to this multi-dimensional nature when stating that it "encompasses many things including media, mediation, identity and representation" which themselves are "fluid concepts because culture can be described as an arena for interactions, for negotiations, for interpretations and for the sharing of knowledge and experiences, which themselves are continuously in transformation".

Additionally, Barker and Jane (2016) state "that culture is concerned with questions of shared social meanings and the various ways we make sense of the world"; but they caution that these social meanings are not "just there"; they are created, generated and exchanged through signs, most notably those of language. The authors contend "that, in order to understand culture, we need to explore how meaning is produced symbolically in language as a signifying system" (Barker & Jane, 2016: 9). They state that, within this signifying system, language is used "intelligently" in various ways, such as in visual images, to provide material objects and social practices with meaning (Barker & Jane, 2016: 9). This process of meaning production is what Hall (1997 & 2013)

refers to as "signifying practices". He writes that signifying practices focuses on the intersections between language and culture, as well as "how shared meanings are constructed and represented using language" (Hall, 1997 & 2013). According to Hall et al. (2013: xvii), language can construct shared meanings and build a culture of shared understanding amongst a group of people, who then begin to share values and interpret the world in the same way. Hall (1997 & 2013) explains that "language is able to do this because it operates as a representational system" using signs and symbols; "language is one of the media through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings, are represented in a culture" (Hall et al., 2013: xvii).

Furthermore, Hall (1997 & 2013) explains that "meaning is constantly being produced whenever people interact with each other, and is also being produced at increasingly rapid speeds when people interact with any form of media". Even though Hall (1997 & 2013) might not have referred directly to the internet and social media when addressing the media and meaning production, his view in relation to this is important for this study as the units being analysed are *Facebook* advertisements, which forms part of social media, which is a form of mass media. Furthermore, Hall (1997: 9-10) emphasises "that meaning is never truly fixed and is always being negotiated and inflected, to resonate with new situations". He, moreover, stressed that different groups of people will have different understandings of the world; and because they develop different shared meanings, they develop different cultures. This view by Hall (1997) is applicable to this study because the investigation takes place in a country with a diverse population profile, who already belong to specific cultures, but who, at the same time, in response to the messaging they receive from the media, strive daily, to shape their narratives, identities, and understandings of the world.

While scholars agree that there is no set definition for culture, for purposes of this study, Nanbigne's (2015: 619) interpretation of culture is most appropriate given the multidisciplinary nature of this research investigation. This study, in its quest to answer the research questions presented in chapter one (Cf. pages 11-13), draws from various fields such as the mass media, feminism, and politics. Therefore, when considering how to define culture for this study, it is vital

to consider the multiple aspects and dimensions of culture as explained by Nanbigne (2015: 619). Moreover, based on what has been explained thus far, this concept of culture and signifying practices is crucial for this study because it lays the foundation for how language works within a system using signs and symbols such as sounds, words, or digital images for representational purposes. This lends itself to the next key concept explored, which is representation. According to Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) representation "is an essential part of the process of production and exchange of meaning between members of a culture".

4.2.2 Representation

In unpacking *Representation, Meaning and Language,* Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) explain that "visual signs and images, even when they closely resemble the things they refer to, are still signs and they carry meaning that must be interpreted". This lends itself to the understanding that such objects or material things do not have meaning, rather we construct meaning using systems of representation. Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) describe three approaches explaining how representation works. The first is the reflective approach, which implies that language (which include visual images) is like a mirror that reflects the real world, it reflects on already existing meaning. The second is the intentional approach, which suggests that the creator of the media text expresses a personally intended meaning. The third is the constructionist approach, which focuses on the social character of language, constructing meaning in and through language (Hall et al., 2013: 1-59). The third approach is the one most suitable to this study. According to Hall et al. (2013) the constructionist theory has two approaches, (1) the semiotic approach which originated from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, and (2) the discursive approach, which was brought to life through the work of Michel Foucault. These approaches will both be used in this study as they help us understand the cultural power of the media, by explaining that the images we see have an intended meaning, and that the meanings of objects are socially constructed. While the semiotic and discursive approaches will be expanded on in greater detail in this study's methodological framework chapter, they are briefly explained here as they relate to the concept of representation.

According to Alisa Acosta (2012), "Saussure believed that language was a rule-governed system that could be studied with the law-like precision of a science (deemed structuralism)". She explains that "semiotics is the study of signs in a culture (culture as language)"; with words, images and objects "functioning as signifiers in the production of meaning" (Acosta, 2012). However, the semiotic approach does not consider how, when or why language is used. As Hall (2013:19) states, Saussure's theory "failed to address questions pertaining to power in language", and this is where the work of Foucault comes into representation, meaning and language. Acosta (2012) explains that "Foucault used the word representation to refer to the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning), through the use of discourses (rather than just language)". She states that for Foucault's, **"**discourse was less concerned about whether things exist, as it was with where meaning comes from - discourse is always context-dependent" (Acosta, 2012).

In relation to the above, Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) explain that "meaning is produced within language, it is the practice of representation created through signifying". They state that within this process of representation, meaning-making relies on concepts and language, which are two different, but inter-related systems of representation. Hall et al. (2013: 7-8) state that the first system, which is concepts, "connects objects, people and events with a set of concepts or mental representations that we carry in our heads, and through this system, we interpret the world meaningfully". They refer to this as sharing the codes. Moreover, Hall et al. (2013: 7-8) state that the "meaning is not in the thing itself, nor is it in the word, but a particular culture or society fixes the meaning so firmly that it later becomes natural and inevitable" (Hall et al., 2013: 7-8). He further states that "meaning is fixed by the code, which sets up the link between our conceptual system and our language system" (Hall et al., 2013: 7-8). Therefore, in simpler terms, Hall et al. (2013: 7-8) emphasises that we must "think about culture in terms of shared conceptual maps, shared language systems, and the codes which fix the relationship between concepts and signs". This process allows "meaning to pass from speaker to hearer and so meaning is effectively communicated within a culture" (Hall, 2013: 7-8).

The second system of representation is language. Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) explains that language, as a system of representation, does not only refer to the literal written language or spoken word, but also to objects, images or anything else when they are used to express meaning. Therefore, any sound, word, image or object, which functions as a sign, and is organised with other signs into a system capable of carrying and expressing meaning, is a language (Hall et al., 2013: 1-59). Additionally, Hall et al. (2013: 14) write that people formulate meaning through these concepts and signs, thereby creating their own meanings of objects through their own language. Hall et al. (2013: 14) explain further:

> Language consists of signs organized [sic] into various relationships. But signs can only convey meaning if we possess codes which allow us to translate our concept into language – and vice versa. These codes are crucial for meaning and representation. They do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions. They are a crucial part of our culture – our shared 'maps of meaning' – which we learn and unconsciously internalize [sic] as we become members of our culture. This constructionist approach to language thus introduces the symbolic domain of life, where words and things function as signs, into the very heart of social life itself.

As discussed above, when focusing on language and representation, Hall et al. (2013: 5-7) believe that "people who belong to the same culture share a similar conceptual map, and therefore they share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language"; this shared interpretation means that they can effectively exchange meaning. In summing up these two systems of representation, Hall et al. (2013: 1-59) highlight that the relationship between objects, concepts and signs "lies at the centre of the production of meaning in language, and representation is what links these elements together". However, Hall et al. (2013) also caution that "since meaning is established by our social, cultural, and linguistic conventions, meaning can never be finally fixed".

Representation occupies a noteworthy spot in cultural studies as it connects meaning and language to culture. Given that much of cultural studies is premised on questions of representation, it is vital for this study to focus on how the world is socially constructed and represented to, and by us. Also, of importance to consider in a cultural studies analysis is that "cultural representations and meanings have a certain materiality" (Hall et al.: 1996). Embedded

in sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, books, magazines, television programmes and the internet, are specific agendas that are produced and approved for mass media consumption. Therefore, the next key concept to be discussed is that of materialism and non-reductionism.

4.2.3 Materialism and non-reductionism

Barker and Jane (2016: 11) explain that "cultural studies, for the most part, has been concerned with modern industrialised economies and media cultures organised along capitalist lines". They explain that "mass representations are produced by corporations that are driven by profit, and it is within this context, that cultural studies has developed a form of cultural materialism that is concerned with exploring how and why meanings are inscribed at the moment of production" (Barker & Jane, 2016: 11). In this regard, "as well as being centered on signifying practices, cultural studies tries to connect them with political economy; this is a discipline concerned with power and the distribution of economic and social resources" (Barker & Jane, 2016: 11). According to Hall, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen (1996: 39, 146-7, 233&244), culture and economics cannot be separated. They based their views on Marxist thinking of historical materialism, which indicates that the development of societies throughout history is the result of material conditions rather than ideas, and that a society's economic organisation essentially determines its social institutions. An example of this could be the images published in advertisements, which could reflect the economically privileged within society, therefore indicating that the dominant ideas and interests reflected in the media, are those of the ruling class which governs a capitalist economy. On this topic, Hall et al. (1996: 41) writes:

> … though we cannot ascribe ideas to class position in certain fixed combinations, ideas do arise from and may reflect the material conditions in which social groups and classes exist … I think this is what Marx meant in the Eighteenth Brumaire when he said that it was not necessary for people actually to make their living as members of the old petty bourgeoisie for them to be attracted to petty bourgeois ideas.

The above quote by Hall et al. (1996: 41), when applied to this study, is understood to mean that even though the majority of the South African female population do not possess European aesthetics, they are possibly seduced by an influx of western and European ideals of beauty by

the media due to the capitalist link between the media, culture, and economics. It is within this understanding of materialism, that Barker and Jane (2016: 11) then emphasise that cultural studies is concerned with three factors, (1) the owners and controllers of cultural production; (2) the instruments used to distribute cultural products; and (3) the consequences of the patterns of ownership and control of the outlines of the cultural landscape.

Furthermore, in considering the economy and cultural studies, Hall et al. (1996) also speaks of economic determinism and economic reductionism. According to Hall et al. (1996: 43-45) economic determinism refers to the "economic forces that determine, shape, and define all political, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological aspects of a society". Closely related is the notion of economic reductionism, a theory, which in brief, reduces a complex social reality to one factor, which is the economy, insisting that this one factor causes all other social phenomena. Providing a more concise description, Hall et al. (1996: 117) write:

> Economic reductionism maintains that economic relations, thought of as a virtually static mode of production (the base) controls and produces (determines) everything else in society (the superstructure). Hence, every element in society (including changes in those elements) can be reduced to (explained by) the operations of the corresponding mode of production—and those operations alone.

Even though much of Hall's scholarship on cultural studies is inspired by Marxism, Hall (in Williams, 2012) rejected this notion of economic determinism and economic reductionism. According to Luiz Felipe Ferreira Stevanim (2016: 174), Hall used the "concrete perspective of materialism without being limited to economic determinism". This is due to Hall's "tense and provocative" relationship with Marxist heritage, writes Ferreira Stevanim (2016: 174). Hall (in Williams, 2012) explained why there is this "tense" relationship:

> I got involved in cultural studies because I didn't think life was purely economically determined. I took all this up as an argument with economic determinism. I lived my life as an argument with Marxism, and with neoliberalism. Their point is that, in the last instance, economy will determine it. But when is the last instance? If you're analysing the present conjuncture, you can't start and end at the economy. It is necessary, but insufficient.

Stevanim (2016: 177) further points out that "for Hall, economic determinations would be made by shaping the material conditions in which ideas are produced, distributed and consumed, but it does not define the specific content of each of them". Simply put, "these are determinations without guarantees, without absolute predictability, without reductionism" (Stevanim, 2016: 177).

In referring to Hall's take on economic determinism and economic reductionism, Barker and Jane (2016: 11) speak of non-reductionism. They state that the idea of non-reductionism has come about because "cultural studies has waged a battle against economic reductionism; that is, the attempt to explain what a cultural text means by reference to its place in the production process". According to Barker and Jane (2016: 11):

> For cultural studies, the processes of political economy do not determine the meanings of texts or their appropriation by audiences. Rather, political economy, social relationships and culture must be understood in terms of their own specific logics and modes of development. Each of these domains is 'articulated' or related together in context-specific ways. The non-reductionism of cultural studies insists that questions of class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nation and age have their own particularities which cannot be reduced either to political economy or to each other.

With reference to what the scholars above are saying, it would appear that the economy alone, cannot determine, shape, and define all political, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological aspects of a society. Instead, what is understood by their disapproval of economic determinism and economic reductionism is that all these elements categorically operate in their own specific ways, but they can converge in media texts such as this study's *Facebook* advertisements, and can relate to each other, to create specific meanings within a society and culture.

Based on the above discussion, the concepts of materialism and non-reductionism are of relevance to this study, as the investigation aims to unpack the kind of beauty ideals perpetuated by the *Facebook* advertisements of clothing corporations, *Mr Price* and *H&M*. The next concept that will be explored is articulation which, according to Hall (1996), is important for any cultural studies investigation. This concept builds on materialism and non-reductionism, because it

explores the "articulation between the economic, political and ideological happenings in order to explain the social phenomena" found in society (Stevanim, 2016: 176).

4.2.4 Articulation

According to Ronald L. Jackson and Michael A. Hogg (2010: 2), the concept of articulation in cultural studies "aims to account for the powerful material consequences of the ideas, principles, and beliefs that make up ideologies". They contend that articulation "provides an insightful means by which to account for the ways in which discourse and discursive formations are able to bind people and their sense of identity together in concrete ways". Aligned to this is Barker and Jane's (2016: 11-12) explanation that "articulation is used to theorise the relationships between components of a social formation". Similarly, Rodman (2017: 8-9) expresses that articulation is crucial for any cultural studies investigation as it provides a "general understanding of how the world works". The scholarship by Rodman (2017), Barker and Jane (2016), as well as Jackson and Hogg (2010) are based on the views of articulation offered by Hall et al. (1996: 113-129) who illustrate that by using articulation; cultural theorists conceptualise the world, analyse it, and participate in shaping it.

According to Jackson and Hogg (2010: 3), articulation is necessary for researchers undertaking cultural studies investigations, because it focuses on the question of "how a particular set of ideological elements and discursive formations come to define how we understand our social world" (Jackson and Hogg, 2010: 3). Therefore, instead of attributing these formations to one element such as economics, articulation considers how different elements such as race, gender, economics, sexuality, and language, among others, are connected. Another aspect of articulation is the activism component. In this regard, Hall et al. (1996: 212-220) explain that articulation is focused on the practice of it, rather than just ideas, i.e. there is always someone who is doing the articulation, such as speaking, organising, advertising, among other actions. For Hall et al. (1996: 212-220), the activism component of articulation is necessary because it helps marginalised groups to be active in articulations of themselves.

It is also important to highlight that because articulation is a process, it is not just something that cultural studies practitioners analyse, but it is also an important part of cultural studies practice. Rodman (2017: 9) explains that:

> It is what cultural studies practitioners do when they transform their research into communicative events – not just in the sense that the practitioner speaks the results of his/her research, but also in the sense that s/he creates connections between different phenomena in an effort to help her/his audience see the world in a new and (hopefully) better way … the good cultural studies practitioner both analyzes [sic] the articulations forged by other people and institutions and forges them him- or herself in the process of doing and reporting on their research.

Additionally, Hall et al. (1996: 113) explain that there are three levels at which articulation work – the epistemological, the political and the strategic. Describing these three levels, Hall et al. (1996: 113) write:

> Epistemologically, articulation is a way of thinking the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities. Politically, articulation is a way of foregrounding the structure and play of power that entail in relations of dominance and subordination. Strategically, articulation provides a mechanism for shaping intervention within a particular social formation, conjuncture or context.

In relation to what has been presented, the concept of articulation is applicable to this study, as this study will analyse the *Facebook* advertisements compiled and published by *H&M* and *Mr Price*, and an understanding of articulation will aid in determining whether these retailers perpetuate western and European beauty ideals. By employing the concept of articulation, this study will consider how certain ideological elements and systems come together, and form an "interlocking set of connections, which are then articulated at specific conjunctures to particular subjects" (Jackson and Hogg, 2010: 3). As Rodman (2017: 9) states, "articulation happens across all forms of cultural texts and practices, including advertising which is a major form of cultural expression where the practice of articulation is particularly easy to see at work". Additionally, *Facebook* advertisements, due to the interactive nature of social media, also allow for readers to post their comments and viewpoints. Therefore, the activism feature of articulation will also be applied, showcasing that this study is serious about viewing and understanding culture as the

acts of human beings rather than just as an abstract set of ideas. This concludes the subsection on articulation. The next subsection focuses on the key concept of power, which is also relevant for a cultural studies investigation of this nature.

4.2.5 Power

Hall (1997 & 2013) explains that cultural studies is essentially about hegemonic power and how it is circulated to define meaning in culture. In an interview with Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal entitled *Culture and Power* (1997)*,* Hall states that even though there are all kinds of cultural studies taking place, "the interest in combining the study of symbolic forms and meanings with the study of power has always been at the centre of cultural studies enquiries". For Hall et al. (2013: 247-253), "hegemony manipulated beliefs and values to suit the ideas of the ones in power". Through the use of language, which includes visual images, dominant ideologies were made prevalent, and as a result, culture was not about being appreciated and celebrated, but it was the place where power relations were established (Hall et al., 2013: 247-253).

According to Hall (in Schoenmakers, 2012: 65), cultural studies considers the unequal social relationships of the so called "high" or "elite" culture and "low" culture, "and the striving of dominant groups to enforce their conceptions of culture". Hans Schoenmakers (2012: 65) illustrates that, due to these unequal social relationships, "cultural forms are related to class and power structures – therefore, culture is laced with power, and power is shaped by culture". Schoenmakers (2012: 65) further explains that cultural studies views culture in the "context of the social relations in which it occurs and questions the expressions of power". Barker and Jane (2016: 12) also explain that power enables "any form of social action, relationship or order, and can be a coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another". This sentiment is in line with what Hall (2013: 250-251) writes about power "operating in conditions of unequal relations". This point is especially important to consider when conducting a cultural studies investigation in a country like South Africa. As highlighted by Statistics South Africa (2019) in their report, *Inequality Trends in South Africa: A multidimensional diagnostic of inequality*, South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world. The statistical body states that the reasoning

for South Africa being one of the most unequal countries in the world "has its roots in the history of colonisation and apartheid" (Statistics South Africa, 2019: 2). The report highlights that in addition to being extremely high, South African inequality is "remarkably persistent", and the many efforts by government to reduce inequality since 1994, has not yielded much results (Statistics South Africa, 2019: 2). It is therefore crucial for a cultural studies investigation such as this study, to understand the power relations and dynamics within the country if the objective of this study is to be realised.

Hall et al. (2013: 250-251) caution that those undertaking cultural studies investigations must not only view power as "one group having monopoly of power", i.e. a simple domination from above. According to Hall et al. (2013: 251), power is circulative because it operates on a micro and macro level, and it not only "constraints or prevents", it also constantly produces new knowledge, discourses, practices and institutions (Hall et al., 2013: 251). Moreover, according to Hall et al. (2013: 251), because "cultural studies aims to examine its subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power", the goal of a cultural studies investigation must unpack subjects such as history, race, ownership of the media, and disposable expenditure, among others, in order to expose power structures in all its relationships. By employing this approach, this study will be able to examine how these relationships influence and shape cultural forms and practices, as well as ideology (Hall et al., 2013). Examples of these relationships is the interplay between power, popular culture, and ideology. In this regard, the concepts of ideology and popular culture will be explained below.

4.2.6 Ideology and popular culture

According to Storey (2009: 2), "ideology is a crucial concept in popular culture". Therefore, an understanding on the importance of both these concepts is key to the success of any cultural studies research. To comprehend how ideology and popular culture form part of cultural studies, it is imperative to first define the two concepts. Beginning with the definition of ideology, Storey (2009: 2) points out that the definition, and the use of ideology in cultural studies is continuously shifting and, like the term culture, it has many competing meanings. He explains that

understanding ideology when carrying out a cultural studies analysis is often complex because it is used interchangeably with culture, both of which cover much of the same conceptual landscape. However, Storey (2009: 5) aims to distinguish between the two, explaining that the main difference between culture and ideology is that ideology covers a political aspect of any cultural studies investigation. In his book, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (2009), he provides cultural studies analysists with five possible definitions of ideology. Storey's (2009: 2-5) definitions are explained below, each of which is applicable to this study due to its nature of analysing *Facebook* advertisements where signification, representation and ideology will be investigated:

1. The first is that ideology can refer to a "systematic body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people".
2. A second definition is what is labelled as capitalist ideology because it masks, distorts or conceals, and refers to how some texts and practices present distorted images of reality, producing a "false consciousness".
3. The third definition looks at "ideological forms" and its use is intended to draw attention to the way in which texts always present a particular image of the world. This definition depends on a notion of society as conflictual rather than consensual, structured around inequality, exploitation and oppression.
4. A fourth definition focuses on the semiotics of ideology based on Barthes' definition. It looks at connotations and the unconscious meanings that texts and practices carry, or can be made to carry.
5. And the fifth definition is from Althusser who views ideology as a "material practice" is based on practices in everyday life and not just ideas of everyday life. He is referring to rituals and customs of a society that become a "social order" that creates "enormous inequalities of wealth, status and power".

Storey's (2009: 1-5) five definitions of ideology is premised on Hall et al. (1996: 25-26) who describe "ideology as the mental frameworks – the language, concepts, categories, imagery of thought and system of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works". More simply, ideology is seen as an organised body of ideas that a particular group of people in a particular society may have.

In linking ideology to popular culture, scholars such as Ben Agger (1992: 4), Hall et al. (1996: 25-26), and Storey (2009: 1-5), contend that ideology can be seen in popular culture, influencing certain cultural texts and practises, which can present distorted images of society, occurrences, and circumstances. The sentiment of all these scholars is that, when considering popular culture, it is important for cultural studies practitioners to understand that popular culture matters like never before. According to Agger (1992: 4), cultural studies scholars cannot "bypass the extensive terrain of electrified popular culture in theorizing [sic] about, and intervening to change the present social world". He writes that the rise of popular culture reflects and reproduces the rise of capitalism, "sedating" large groups of people against their own alienation. Simultaneously, the rise of popular culture, considers the profit of priming cultural production and consumption (Agger, 1992: 4). According to Storey (2009: 5), popular culture, like ideology, cannot be summarised with one definition, therefore the author offers five definitions of popular culture, all of which are of relevance to this study. Storey (2009: 5) elaborates on the five definitions below:

1. The first and most straightforward definition is that popular culture is simply culture that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people.
2. A second definition begins to explain the class divide that could occur by viewing popular culture as the culture that is "left over" after what is decided to be "high culture". Therefore, popular culture, "accommodates texts and practices that fail to meet the required standards to qualify as high culture".
3. Thirdly, popular culture can be defined as "commercial culture" that is mass produced for mass consumption. The culture itself is "formulaic, manipulative and is consumed with brain numbed and brain-numbing passivity".
4. A fifth definition which originate from Gramsci is based on the politics of popular culture. In this case, popular culture is seen as a "site of struggle between the resistance of subordinate groups and the forces of incorporation operating in the interests of dominant groups". More simply, it is politically focused on the exchange and negotiation between the masses and the dominant power.
5. The last definition is informed by postmodernism which postulates that due to postmodern culture, there is no longer a distinction between high and popular culture.

It is clear that the concepts of ideology and popular culture are integral to this research investigation. Firstly, due to the nature of social media being an ever-present, large-scale, and pervasive form of mass media, the *Facebook* advertisements selected for this study fall within the realm of popular culture. As Agger (1992: 4) states, "popular culture is a legitimate subject of academic inquiry because culture matters; it is serious business, and should therefore be taken seriously". Additionally, given that *Facebook* is a medium of communication that sees "unprecedented numbers of people channel their political energy and is being used in unforeseen ways with societal repercussions that were never anticipated", the concept of ideology will be considered when analysing the study's selected *Facebook* advertisements (Chakrabarti, 2018). This bring to close the discussion on ideology and popular culture. The next concept that will be discussed is that of the cultural text and reader.

4.2.7 Cultural texts and readers

According to Barker and Jane (2016: 13) text does not only refer to the written word but also to all practices that signify. Therefore, the making of meaning through images, sounds, objects, such as clothes, and activities such as dance and sport, are sign systems, and signify the same mechanism as a language. All of these can be referred to as cultural texts (Barker and Jane, 2016: 13). Relating the cultural text to the reader, Agger (1992: 20) states that a cultural studies investigation cannot occur if the researcher treats a cultural text strictly on its own terms, i.e. outside of the context that makes it a social text in the first place. Similarly, Hall et al. (2013: 373-374) write that a cultural text gains relevance when meaning is transferred to that text by the people who create and/or use it, however, he believes it is not as simple as described, and that the relationship between cultural text and reader is a complex one. Hall et al. (2013: 373-374) state that is important to understand that the meanings that researchers of cultural studies give to cultural texts might not be the same as those produced by active audiences or readers. Another point to consider is that by Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (1980: 155). The scholars state that the audiences or readers of the text will also not share the same meanings of the cultural texts with each other. Hall et al. (1980: 155) illustrate that this is because

"at the moment of textual encounter other discourses are always in play besides those of the particular text in focus". They add that such discourses are dependent on other discursive formations based on the reader's placing in other practices such as their cultural and educational surroundings; "these other discourses set some of the terms in which any particular text is engaged and evaluated" (Hall et al., 1980: 155).

Related to the above, Hall et al. (1980: 155) explain that "cultural texts, as forms of representation, are polysemic" in nature, meaning that the "cultural texts contain multiple meanings that have to be realised by the readers who give life to the words and images" found in these texts. This is an important point to consider in a cultural studies investigation such as this study of female beauty in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M.* Additionally, Hall et al. (1980: 155) contend that if the researcher comprehends the polysemic nature of cultural texts, it can help them understand why the investigation might be challenging. Based on this, the concept of cultural text and reader can also be aligned to Hall's views on reception theory. Hall developed the theory in 1973 in his essay *Encoding and Decoding Television Discourse* which focuses on the encoding and decoding of the content produced and presented to the audience. While the focus was on media form of television, the theory is applied to various channels of mass media. This theory is briefly included in the theoretical framework of this dissertation as it guides the investigation.

According to Hall (1973), media texts are encoded by the producers or creators of the text who attach values and messages to the product. This text is then decoded by the audience. Hall (1973) explains that different audiences will decode the text in different ways, and this may not always be in the way the creators intended. This means that the meaning of the message can change in the way the audience sees fit as it will be based on their cultural and social context. Hall (1973: 1-6) defines encoding as "messages that usually contains shared rules and symbols common with other people". For example, the cross is commonly understood to be a symbol of Christianity. During the encoding process, the encoder (producer / creator / sender) will have to think about how the receiver will perceive the message that they create. During the decoding phase, Hall

(1973: 1-6) explains that a successful decoding depends on whether the message created and sent by the encoder is received and understood completely by the audience as it was intended.

According to Alex Teel (2017), during the encoding / decoding process, "even though the person sending the message may believe that they are being clear, because the encoding process is usually a result of one sender, only the ideologies and beliefs of the sender are encoded". Hall (1973: 16-19) explains that this can cause some "distortion" when the message is received. Therefore, the audience will receive the message in one of these three ways – dominant, negotiated, or oppositional. According to Hall (1973: 16-19), "the dominant reader receives the text the way the producer intended the text to be read, meaning that the audience will agree with the messages and ideology that the producer has placed behind the text". Teel (2017) writes that the negotiated audience "reacts with a mixture of acceptance and rejection – the audience understands the text and accepts the views of the producer but also has their own opinions and understanding of the text". Moreover, the accept the text because they do comprehend what the producer is saying but they still hold their own interpretation and views. The last type of decoding position is the oppositional audience, which as the name suggests "is when the reader rejects the meaning as they do not agree with the message that has been produced and disseminated". They create their own meaning of the text which is usually the opposite of what the sender intended (Teel, 2017).

Hall et al. (1980: 155) explain that challenges may arise due to the fact that readers can assign multiple meanings to a text, therefore analysing the meaning of the text could be difficult. Another challenge is that there are some texts, such as the symbol of cross which represents Christianity, that society or the readers may have an already agreed upon its meaning (Hall et al., 2013: 373-374). Therefore, Hall et al. (2013: 373-374) advises researchers of cultural studies, to "look for a frame of reference outside" of the text that is used by a particular audience", as well as the unconscious social structures that they have been conditioned by, as this will help during the analysis stage. This unpacking of the cultural text and reader leads to a discussion of

subjectivity and identity, two more concepts that are vital for any cultural studies investigation, and which are explained in the section that follows.

4.2.8 Subjectivity and identity

According to scholars such as Hall et al. (1996), Hall and Du Gay (1996), Paul Bowman (2003), Barker and Jane (2016), and Rodman (2017), identity and subjectivity within the cultural studies theoretical framework, are concerned with "how we become the kinds of people we are, how we are produced as subjects, and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves" such as Black, female, homosexual, young, old etc. Nurul Hidayati, Tira Nur Fitra, and Rofqi Syafiatul (2019) write that the "concepts of subjectivity and identity are closely connected, and in everyday language virtually inseparable". They write that "identity is about sameness and differences, about the personal and the social, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others" (Hidayati et al., 2019). Labelling identity as being anti-essentialist, Barker and Jane (2016: 13) state that "identities do not just exist; they have no essential or universal qualities", but that "they are discursive constructions", made by representations such as language. Similarly, Rodman (2017: 8) writes that essentialist conceptions of identity should not exist because it "inevitably (and necessarily) draws fixed, immovable borders around the populations they aim to describe: normative distinctions that unavoidably exclude people who fail to follow the rules that supposedly define them". In describing subjectivity, Hidayati et al. (2019) illustrate that it is very much a cultural construction because of the world we live in, how the mass media has influenced it, and how that has influenced our surroundings.

When considering subjectivity and identity as it relates to my study, this statement by Hall and Du Gay (1996: 4) is considered; "the debates about identity need to be situated within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively settled character of many populations and cultures, especially in relation to the processes of globalisation". As Hall et al. (1996: 18) explain, this is crucial because "the politics of experience and of subjectivity, and the focus on questions of personal identity (even if all of those

developments have many positive aspects), can also have, unless one is extremely careful, a regressive, socially narrowing effect".

Both subjectivity and identity pose challenges for my investigation because as explained, even I, as the researcher, is a subject that has been produced, and my identity influenced by the cultural texts and social phenomena that I have been surrounded by since I was born. Carl Ratner (2002) writes that, because "qualitative methodology recognises that the subjectivity of the researcher is intimately involved in the research, the researcher is advised to reflect on their values and objectives", and how these might affect the study. Ratner (2002) believes that qualitative research does have an "objectivist strand", explaining that according to "objectivism", a researcher's subjectivity, while it can bias them, can also enable them "to accurately comprehend the world as it exists in itself". Additionally, Ratner (2002) argues that one of the advantages of a researcher recognising their subjectivities is that it allows them to reflect on whether their subjectivity facilitates or impedes objective comprehension. This allows for "distorting values to be replaced by values that enhance objectivity" (Ratner, 2002). He also believes that "objectivism integrates subjectivity and objectivity because it argues that objective knowledge requires active, sophisticated subjective processes" (Ratner, 2002). According to Ratner (2002), examples of such processes are, among others, "perception, analytical reasoning, synthetic reasoning, logical deduction, and the distinction of essences from appearances".

This section on subjectivity and identity concludes the presentation on cultural studies theory. In the discussion that follows, the theory of critical race and decoloniality will be highlighted. These two frameworks are theoretical and interpretive modes that considers how race and racism operate within dominant cultural modes of expression. By using these frameworks, which are closely connected to fields such as philosophy, history, sociology, and law; cultural studies practitioners, investigate how people are affected by cultural perceptions of race.

4.3 Critical race theory, critical whiteness studies and decoloniality

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a key theoretical framework for this study because it investigates how racism can persist despite a mostly universal disapproval of it by society and state policy.

Having first emerged in the 1980s in the United States of America (USA) as legal scholarship, CRT, a term devised by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, has since spread to other disciplines, including that of cultural studies. It examines how race, law, and power relate to society and culture. In tracing the origins of CRT, it is important to highlight that the framework first emerged in order to challenge the idea that the USA had become a colour-blind country, and that a person's race group no longer influenced their social and economic standing (Bodenheimer, 2019). According to one of the main proponents of CRT, Richard Delgado, in his book Critical Race Theory (2001), which he co-authored with Jean Stefancic, in the 1970s to 1980s, there were concerns from lawyers, activists, and legal scholars that the gains made from the Civil Rights Movement had stalled. This brought about the realisation "that new theories and strategies were needed to combat the subtler forms of racism that were gaining ground" (Delgado & Stefancic: 2001: 4).

Similarly, Rebecca Bodenheimer (2019) explains that during this time, politicians and institutions were using the "colour-blind language of Martin Luther King Jr's speeches" to portray the USA as a non-racist country, instead of interrogating the "critical aspects of his speeches that emphasized [sic] discrimination and economic inequality" in order to build a more racially equal society. She highlights how this colour-blindness then created challenges such as "attacks" on affirmative action policies based on the arguments that they were no longer needed because the USA had embraced colour-blindness and that "because of the Civil Right Movement, and associated legislation, racial inequality had been solved and affirmative action was no longer necessary" (Bodenheimer, 2019). Therefore, according to Bodenheimer (2019) "CRT, as a school of thought was designed to highlight the ways that supposedly color-blind [sic] laws have allowed racial oppression and inequality to continue despite the outlawing of segregation".

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 4-6), some of the key scholars involved in the CRT movement are Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Crenshaw, Delgado, Patricia Williams, and Angela P. Harris. In their scholarly and activism work, they postulated that the foundations of American society and its legal system were underpinned by racism and white supremacy (Bodenheimer, 2019). Moreover, Bodenheimer (2019) explains that they challenged the system, arguing "for a

contextual, historicized [sic] analysis of the law that would challenge seemingly neutral concepts like meritocracy and objectivity, which, in practice, tend to reinforce white supremacy". One of the main aims of early critical race theorists was to dismantle the oppression of people of colour – "they sought to change the status quo, not just critique it" (Bodenheimer, 2019). Additionally, Harris (2015: 266-267) explains that critical race theorists demanded reasons for why "formal legal equality" had resulted in limited success in improving the lives of the majority of African Americans and people of color. They also questioned the government's lack of commitment towards ensuring social integration with whites and Black people.

Furthermore, according to Bodenheimer (2019), CRT was interdisciplinary, and drew from a wide range of scholarly ideologies, including feminism, Marxism, and postmodernism. In tracing the history of CRT, one of the important highlights to consider is the theoretical contributions by Bell, one of the pioneering African American scholars critical of civil rights jurisprudence at the time. An example of Bell's work is when he argued "that the landmark civil rights case Brown vs. Board of Education was a result of the self-interest of elite whites instead of a desire to desegregate schools and improve education for black children" (Bodenheimer, 2019). Bell is also known for critiquing the field of law itself. When he was on the faculty at the Harvard Law School, he was also very vocal in his displeasure of the School's failure to hire African American women and women of colour (Harris: 267). This prompted him to resign from his post. Another important point to highlight in the discussion on the origins of CRT is the influential work done by Black feminists. As already mentioned, Crenshaw coined the term CRT, as well as the term intersectionality given the "multiple and overlapping systems of oppression that women of colour as well as queer people of colour, immigrants of colour, among others faced, that make their experience different from that of white women" (Bodenheimer, 2019).

Following the above discussion on the origins of CRT, this subsection will now discuss the essential components that make up this theory. According to Harris (2015: 266), CRT rejects the notion that racism can only be found in the past or expressed by "poorly educated" or "troubled" people. In fact, critical race theorists claim that racism is a part of contemporary life and is entrenched in our social practices and institutions such as schools, universities and government

departments. Harris (2015: 266-270) writes that "CRT suggests that white supremacy and racial power are maintained over time, with the law playing a crucial role in sustaining this". There are a number of key themes in CRT, writes David Gillborn (2015: 278), but crucial to its understanding is that "race is socially constructed, and that racial difference is invented, perpetuated, and reinforced by society". Gillborn (2015: 278) contends that racism is "complex, subtle, and flexible; it manifests differently in different contexts, and minoritized [sic] groups are subject to a range of different (and changing) stereotypes".

Similarly, Bodenheimer (2019) explains that "race as a way to differentiate human beings is a social concept, a product of human thought that is innately hierarchical". Even though there are "physical and phenotypical differences between people from different regions of the world", Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 8) state that "these constitute only an extremely small portion of their genetic endowment", and that people, irrespective of their race, have more in common. They explain that these differences do not tell us anything about a person's intelligence, personality, and moral behaviour. Additionally, Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 8) state, "that society frequently chooses to ignore these scientific truths, creates races, and endows them with pseudo-permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory". Furthermore, Bodenheimer (2019) highlights how race as a social construct has had real and tangible effects on people. She explains that "the impact of the notion (as opposed to the reality) of race is that black, Latino, and indigenous people have for centuries been thought of as less intelligent and rational than white people" (Bodenheimer, 2019). She states that "ideas about racial difference were used by Europeans during the colonial period to subjugate non-whites and force them into subservient roles" (Bodenheimer, 2019). Moreover, Bodenheimer (2019) explains that race "as an idea" continues to negatively impact Black people in various ways and spaces such as their education outcomes, within the criminal justice system, among others.

To apply CRT to this study, there are a few key aspects that Harris (2015: 266-270) discusses that can guide a researcher embarking on critical race studies. She explains that these aspects are interconnected with legal theory and aid in "understanding race as a social construction rather than a natural fact". The first aspect that Harris (2015: 266-270) discusses is for the researcher to

critique the embracing of the colour-blindness of liberalism and its cautious approaches to race. The reason for this is that it allows for manifestations of racism, racial inequality and persistent discrimination to become more covert and obscure, which means that it cannot be addressed with the seriousness it requires. The colour-blindness of liberalism allows for the above-mentioned manifestations to invade spaces such as the workplace, schools, universities, and even the mass media, allowing people to engage in practices such as hiring processes that continue to disadvantage Black people.

Another aspect Harris (2015: 268) speaks about is the examining of power structures as well as systematic and institutional racism. In suggesting this, Harris (2105: 268) stresses the importance of interrogating ideas of white superiority that are found in everyday thinking at a systems level, which means one has to look at the complete picture of how society operates. According to Mary Frances O'Dowd (2020), institutional and systemic racism perpetuates white superiority at individual, ideological and institutional levels, and therefore, while white people might not consider themselves racist, "they can still benefit from systems (law, regulations and unquestioned social systems) that privilege white faces and voices". Moreover, O'Dowd (2020) states that because of systemic racism, there is a tendency by education, government and media to celebrate and reward some cultures over others. In the case of this study, the second aspect could explain why retailers such as *H&M* and *Mr Price* might perpetuate western and European ideals of beauty in their *Facebook* advertisements. A third aspect proposed by Harris (268-269) is to investigate and critique white privilege in order to answer critical questions about the continuous marginalisation of Black people. Another key aspect raised by Harris (268-269) is to study "how racism interlocks with other forms of oppression" such as gender, class, and sexuality. She states that it is important to consider how race operates intersectionally and "as only one axis of a multidimensional system of status oppression" (Harris: 2015: 268). Therefore, it is important to explore "the interplays of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, class, and sexuality" (Harris: 2015: 268).

From the above, it is clear that CRT is a relevant theory that can be applied to this research investigation. However, given that this study is focused on the beauty ideals of *Facebook*

advertisements aimed at South African women, CRT must also be explored from a South African perspective. This speaks to what Harris (2015: 269) calls the "migration of critical race theory into other fields of legal scholarship and other disciplines", as well as how CRT is now a movement that has gone beyond the borders of the USA. Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 8) also address this by stating that CRT has "splintered" into other race groups and ethnicities such as Asians, Latinos, and Indians. Based on this reasoning, the discussion will now focus on CRT from a South African perspective.

When applying CRT to a South African context, as is the objective of my study, it is important to consider the above-mentioned interdisciplinary nature of this theory and how it aims to change the relationship between race, racism and power. According to Marthinus Conradie (2016: 5-6) "although race is recognised as a social construct rather than a biological fact", there are numerous "assumptions about what race means for everyday interaction and how it influences society". He contends that the increased number of research outputs based on discourse analysis has led to "improved knowledge about the different assumptions, rhetoric and linguistic repertoires that impact dialogue on race" (Conradie, 2016: 5-6). Based on this body of knowledge, Conradie (2016: 5-6) lists the "persistence of systemic inequality" and "new forms of everyday racism" as two factors that are of particular significance to South Africa. He writes that, although racial hierarchy has legally ended in South Africa, racialised structures continue to disadvantage certain population groups, especially on a socio-economic front (Conradie, 2016: 7-8). In addition to this, Conradie (2016: 7-8) states that there is an "emergence of surreptitious forms of racist hostility/discrimination that are difficult to pin down in a legal sense". Furthermore, due to the fact there is an avoidance of constructive dialogue regarding hidden discrimination and hostility among race groups, denial of racist practices and institutions continues to be a challenge in South Africa. Conradie (2016: 7-12) states that, when applying CRT to a South African related study, the perspectives below must be considered. These will be applied to this research investigation.

1   Interrogating the nature, and interplay of structural disparity such as unequal access to wealth, resources, basic necessities, education, as well as examining interpersonal prejudice.
2   Examining ideologies that avoid, obscure or deny the ramifications of racism. Referred to as power-evasive discourses, these serve to justify the desire to avoid obtaining knowledge about the way race plays out in society. This leads to a lack of understanding on how race and power are connected, and how certain ideologies support racism or how racism can be systematic in a post-democratic South Africa.
3   Investigating the potential of reconfiguring dominant understandings of group boundaries.
4   Examining the way race acquires meaning through everyday practices with a focus on narrative data.

In relation to the above, a vital perspective to consider when applying CRT is the theoretical approach of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), which works in conjunction with CRT. Barbara Applebaum (2016) explains what CWS is:

> The aim is to reveal the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege. CWS presumes a certain conception of racism that is connected to white supremacy. In advancing the importance of vigilance among white people, CWS examines the meaning of white privilege and white privilege pedagogy, as well as how white privilege is connected to complicity in racism.

Applebaum (2016) further notes that CWS is essential to a cultural studies investigation because it advocates for white people to "learn and acknowledge, rather than deny" how they are "complicit in racism". Additionally, because this cultural studies project is rooted in South Africa, it is critical to consider the notion of whiteness. According to Melissa Steyn (2007: 4), whiteness is a crucial notion in contemporary debates on race, especially in South Africa. Explaining the concept of whiteness, Steyn (2007: 4) writes:

> This can be seen as the social positioning which was opened up for those of European descent in relation to "others" through the enormous differences in power, wealth and influence established over three or four hundred years, and then further rationalised in the past 150 years through "race" theories and discourses (Steyn 2001). This privileged position continues to reproduce itself socially and ideologically, through normalising itself as the invisible centre of power, while keeping attention focused on the "others" which it marginalises, and constructs as being the source of the problems that need to be solved in a multicultural context.

In this regard, it is important for a study of this nature to reflect on CWS, given the country's colonial and apartheid history, which has created the social, political, and economic inequities faced mostly by the country's Black citizens (Shabangu, 2015: 53).

Also, of importance for this investigation on female beauty ideals in *Facebook* advertisements, and linked to whiteness, are the notions of white privilege and white ignorance. As Steyn (2012: 14) explains, the "exclusive world of white privilege exists in a parallel universe to the degradation it creates; its inevitability seemingly corroborated by the material arrangements and servile black subjectivities that are themselves the products of the same social processes". On white ignorance, she writes that it arises out of "white racism or white racial domination and their ramifications' as an implicit agreement to misrepresent the world" (Steyn, 2012: 11). By examining the foundation of white privilege and white ignorance, a cultural studies' researcher can grasp the lived experiences of Black South Africans who continue to experience their Blackness in relation to a hegemonic whiteness (Shabangu, 2015: 53).

Another crucial factor to consider with CRT in a South African focused study is that of decoloniality. Decoloniality and decolonisation have become a robust part of the narrative by Black South Africans against social, political and economic inequality. While these terms originated in Latin American scholarship and has gained much traction in Asian communities, the majority of Black South Africans (and some white South Africans) have only recently embraced them. This appears to be the case since the 2015 #RhodesMustFall student campaign[1], which resulted in the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue as it represented everything colonialism

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[1] The 2015 Rhodes Must Fall student campaign, popularly known as #RhodesMustFall, was a protest movement that began on 9 March 2015 at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The movement was originally aimed at removing a statue at the university of Cecil John Rhodes. The campaign for the statue's removal received global attention and led to a country-wide student movement to decolonise education across South Africa. On 9 April 2015, following a UCT Council vote, the statue was removed. #RhodesMustFall made national headlines throughout South Africa, dividing public opinion in South Africa. However, the #RhodesMustFall movement also catapulted South Africa's colonial power structures into the limelight, thereby creating a mass call for the decolonisation of knowledge, power and being in the country.

stood for (Thesnaar, 2017). According to Christoffel H. Thesnaar (2017: 1-8) following the #RhodesMustFall campaign, there were a string of protests that challenged the outcomes and transition process of the South African liberation struggle. A new catchphrase was developed to echo the sentiments of these protests, "We were sold out by Mandela". Thesnaar (2017: 1-8) states that this points to the unsettled issues around race in South Africa that were being largely ignored, and the protests were ways in which Black people could demonstrate that they would no longer accept government's silence on race related matters. Thesnaar (2017: 1-8) describes these protests as a "decolonial turn" to racism, stating that there has been a substantial increase in the blatant racist accounts by white and Black citizens in South Africa on social media and in public places. This section of the study will therefore focus on decoloniality as a theory in general.

Latin American scholars, Enrique Dussel (Argentina/Mexico), Anibal Quijano (Peru), Ramón Grosfoguel (Peru), Walter D. Mignolo (Argentina), and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (Puerto Rico); African scholar, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (Zimbabwe / South Africa), and French scholar Aime Cesaire, are some of the leading scholars in this field. Some of their works have been consulted in this study. Describing decoloniality, Mignolo, in an interview published on E-International Relations (2017), explains that it is the "questioning of modernity/coloniality and exploring decolonial avenues of thinking, doing, and living". Mignolo (E-International Relations, 2017) explains that decoloniality "is not a field in the traditional academic sense", but it allows for people from within and outside of the academic space to search for answers about their being, answer that their current education systems, government, corporations, banks, media, and, in some cases, religious institutions, cannot give them. According to Mignolo (E-International Relations, 2017), "once people understand the universal fictions of modernity and the logic of how coloniality is enacted in order to advance the promises of modernity, the question of how to delink from that bubble becomes the main driving factor of decoloniality". He illustrates that it is up to people, the society, to take charge of their destinies in order to achieve the process of "delinking" (Mignolo in E-International Relations 2017). This is why Mignolo (2007: 429) believes that decoloniality goes beyond academic research:

Decoloniality, then, means working toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ, which is what modernity/coloniality does and, hence, where decolonization [sic] of the mind should begin. The struggle is for changing the terms in addition to the content of the conversation.

From a South African, and African viewpoint, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) adds to Mignolo's description of decoloniality:

Decoloniality struggles to bring into intervening existence another interpretation that brings forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event, and on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events in the making of the modern world. Decoloniality is distinguished from an imperial version of history through its push for shifting of geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the world is described, conceptualised and ranked to the ex-colonised epistemic sites as legitimate points of departure in describing the construction of the modern world order.

The above comment by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) implies that there has been challenges in accepting the paradigm of decoloniality as it offers an alternative view on the ideology that has for centuries been promulgated by the West as the true knowledge of how the world came to be and is. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) explains that decoloniality as a theory, and as a movement (Cf. pages 33-53), challenges the accuracy of this western knowledge that is still disseminated in former colonised countries.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) further explains that to fully understand and appreciate decoloniality, it is important to understand the difference between colonialism, decolonisation, and coloniality. He defines colonialism as a "historical process that culminated in the invasion, conquest, and direct administration of Africa" (and other colonised countries such as India) by countries such as Spain, Portugal, Britain, and France. By exploiting the natural and human resources, and exporting excess population of countries within Africa, Asia and Latin America, these states benefited their empires and enhanced their prestige (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13). He explains that colonialism in Africa came to an end in the post-1945 era. However, while there was a withdrawal of colonial administrations, there were also some within those colonial administrations who did not want to. This resulted in confrontation from African national

liberation movements (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) then writes that decolonisation encompasses the "withdrawal of colonialism from the colonies in Africa as well as the struggles raged against those empires that were reluctant to do so".

He states that in 1994, when the formal and legal system of apartheid was abolished, South Africa was the last country in Africa to become independent of its colonising country. It can be argued that South Africa was not under colonial rule during apartheid, however, as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement (2020) explains, apartheid, which is an Afrikaans word meaning separation, was "characterised by settler colonialism". According to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement (2020), apartheid enforced colonial practices. This meant that there was a "forced displacement of the native population; that the colonised people were divided into different population groups and assigned different rights; that the movement of the colonised and indigenous people was limited, and there was a violent suppression of resistance" (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement, 2020).

Lastly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) defines coloniality. He states that it refers to the long-standing patterns of political, social, and economic power that emerged as a result of colonialism. It defines culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. In other words, as explained in this study's literature review (Cf. pages 33-53), while there has been a legal and administrative end to colonialism, the negative effects of the administration can still be felt in the institutions of former colonised countries, and the minds of the former colonised people.

In relation to what has been presented thus far on CRT, CWS, and decoloniality, scholars indicate that when a cultural studies analysis is embarking on a CRT decoloniality based research study, there are key themes to consider. According to Pam Christie and Carolyn McKinney (2017), the key themes are, (1) coloniality and colonialism, (2) coloniality and modernity, (3) intersectional inequalities in the colonial matrix of power, and (4) pluriversalism and the western episteme. The following section expands on these four themes.

I begin by exploring the theme of coloniality and colonialism. Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243) highlights that coloniality is different from colonialism, explaining that:

> Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

More simply, coloniality is the after effects of colonial administration which has largely ended in most parts of the world. Therefore, while legally and formally, colonialism does not exist in a country, the members of its society are still affected by the creations, residues and results, of colonialism, such as a specific education system, certain cultural constructs, or the "multiple and entangled power relations of superiority and inferiority" (Christie & McKinney, 2017: 4).

The second theme to consider is coloniality and modernity. According to Mignolo (2007: 451), modernity is described as being built on the foundations of colonialism – the beginning of western society is often viewed, and cited, as the introduction of modernity. Pam Christie and Carolyn McKinney (2017: 4-5) explain that "the Spanish conquest of the Americas in the 1400s is believed by decoloniality scholars to be a definitive moment in the constitution of a new Eurocentric world order". Moreover, Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243-249) states that "this period of conquest established particular forms of colonialism and these, in turn, were highly significant in the development of the European Enlightenment, modernity, and early forms of capitalism around the world that was controlled from Europe as the centre".

According to Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243-249), "two major axes of power were defined in the early colonisation of Latin America: the codification of the idea of race linked to inferiority/superiority, and the establishment of new structures of labour control (including slavery and forms of indenture)". Mignolo (2011) believes that as coloniality expanded, European

Enlightenment and modernity continued to spread across the world as the ways of being and thinking. This, therefore, had "profound implications for narratives of change and progress, especially with regard to problematic aspects of coloniality such as racism, sexism, ethnocide, and genocide, and more especially in a country such as South Africa, that was (and is) dealing with a proliferation of related challenges regarding this" (Christie & McKinney (2017: 4-5). Mignolo (2013, 98), refers to such aspects of coloniality as "the darker side of modernity":

> Modernity, usually considered to be a product of the European Renaissance or the European Enlightenment, has a darker side, which is constitutive of it. Modernity as a discourse and as a practice would not be possible without coloniality, and coloniality continues to be an inevitable outcome of modern discourses.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) writes that this "darker side of modernity needs to be revealed because it exists as an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization [sic], and being good for everyone".

The third theme, intersectional inequalities in the colonial matrix of power, considers how a set of entangled hierarchies work intersectionally. According to Crenshaw, intersectionality, describes how social categorisations such as race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics "intersect with one another, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage" (Coaston, 2019). It is necessary and also crucial, to not only specify, but also understand what the entangled hierarchies are, and how they work. This helps in comprehending why the inequalities, which are a result of coloniality, cannot be erased by simply removing and breaking down colonial administrations. According to Grosfoguel (2011: 8-10), there are multiple entangled hierarchies such as the one listed below:

1 A particular global class formation with a diversity of labour forms.
2 An international division of core and periphery.
3 An interstate politico-military system controlled by Europe.
4 A global racial/ethnic hierarchy privileging European people.
5 A global gender hierarchy privileging European patriarchy.
6 A sexual hierarchy privileging heterosexual.
7 A spiritual hierarchy privileging Christianity.

8   An epistemic hierarchy privileging western knowledge and cosmology.

9   A pedagogical hierarchy where the Cartesian western forms of pedagogy are considered superior over non-Westerm concepts and practices of pedagogy.

10 A linguistic and cultural hierarchy privileging European languages, English especially, in communication and knowledge/theory production.

11 An aesthetic hierarchy where the west is considered to have superior high art and the non-West is considered as producers of inferior expressions of art.

12 A media/informational hierarchy where the west has the control over the means of global media production and information technology while the non-West do not have the means to make their points of view enter the global media networks.

13 An age hierarchy where the western conception of productive life is considered superior over non-Western forms of age classification.

14 An ecological hierarchy that privileges the western conceptions of nature as an object that is a means towards an end with its destruction of human and nonhuman life.

15 A spatial hierarchy that privileges the urban over the rural with the consequent destruction of rural communities, peasants and agrarian production at the world scale.

Furthermore, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 37), Quijano's list of "interrelated domains that make up the colonial matrix of power", are important for a CRT decoloniality based research study. These are the control of economy such as land appropriation, exploitation of labour, and control of natural resources; the control of authority in various institutions such as those in the banking industry and the army; control of gender and sexuality; and the control of subjectivity and knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 37). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 37), Africa is "still entangled and trapped within the snares of the colonial matrix of power" as the impact of this colonial order is still felt on the African continent, and noticeable in the mind-set of the African people. He states that there is much that has been documented about the colonisation of Africa, and Africans' resistance and opposition to it, however, what needs to be explored in today's society is how colonialism has continued to "wreck havoc" on the mind of the "ex-colonised" after the end of direct colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 37). Additionally, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 39) explains that, because violent colonisation was accompanied by various epistemological interventions, such as religion, the global power construction of colonisation,

with its "structure and framework, continues to shape social and political relations across the globe", including Africa. He (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 63) states that the colonial matrix of power in Africa is invisible, commenting that it "suffocates African initiatives of development and freedom", and "does not allow Africans to take control and charge of their social, economic and political destinies".

The fourth theme to explore is that of pluriversalism and the western episteme. Scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) explain that pluriversalism "distinguishes decoloniality from other existing critical social theories". This is due to the fact that it focuses on knowledge which is not just situated in Europe; it "draws attention to geopolitics and body politics of knowledge" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13). According to Christie and McKinney (2017: 6), scholars must not universalise western perspectives and claim western knowledge as the ultimate truth; it must be challenged with indigenous knowledge or precolonial knowledge systems. It is also important to understand that western perspectives do not recognise the "multiple power relations that have enabled these perspectives to be imposed on other parts of the world that are then ranked as inferior" (Christie & McKinney, 2017: 6). Additionally, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13) states that "decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future - a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals".

In addition to the four themese explained above, declonial scholars such as Quijano (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), also highlight three focus areas aligned to decolinailty theory, (1) Coloniality of Power, (2) Coloniality of knowledge, and (3) Coloniality of Being. The first focus area, coloniality of power, considers the current global power structure, how it was constructed, and its imbalances. According to Quijano (2007: 171), "coloniality of power was conceived together with America and western Europe, with the social category of race as the key element of the social classification of colonised and colonisers". Grosfoguel explains that "coloniality of power refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world system" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a: 51). Expanding on this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13-15) explains that coloniality of power provides an in-depth account of how the world was divided into the "Zone of Being" and the "Zone of Non-Being". He writes that "what needs to be understood is how modernity

deposited its fruits of progress, civilisation, modernisation and development to the Euro-American world (Zone of Being) while at the same time imposing the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid into the non-Euro-American world (the Zone of Non-Being)" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13-15).

The second focus area is that of coloniality of knowledge. Focusing on "epistemological issues, it considers politics of knowledge generation as well as questions of who generates which knowledge, and for what purpose" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13-15). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13-15), African Studies is often guilty of not "conducting serious investigations into the origins of disciplines, into epistemicides, into how knowledge has been used to assist imperialism and colonialism and into how knowledge has remained Euro-Americancentric". In his opinion, "Africa is today saddled with irrelevant knowledge that disempowers rather than empowers individuals and communities" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13-15).

The third focus area that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13-15) writes of is that of coloniality of being. He explains that this looks at "how whiteness gained ontological density far above blackness". This concept reflects on René Descartes' notion of "I think, therefore I am" claiming that it "mutated" into "I conquer, therefore, I am". According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013b: 13-15) coloniality of being is very important because it helps Africans investigate and understand how their humanity was interrogated (and minimised), as well as the processes that resulted in the "objectification / thingification/ commodification" of Africans. Additionally, he writes that one of the "continuing struggles in Africa is focused on resisting objectification" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 13-15).

In concluding this section on CRT and decoloniality, it is important to note the view of Hall et al. (1996: 10). They state that for a researcher to comprehensively apply CRT and decoloniality to a cultural studies investigation, it is crucial for the researcher to understand how structural conditions such as colonisation and decolonisation, "shapes one's subjectivity under such circumstances" (Hall et al., 1996: 10). The scholars also emphasise that researchers must consider how the economic and cultural forces of neo-colonialism can be more alive and well in today's

society. Neo-colonialism, as illustrated by Kwame Nkrumah, in his book *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), is the economic or monetary control of previously colonised countries by their former colonisers. Nkrumah (1965), the first president of independent Ghana, is credited as being the first scholar to explain neo-colonialism from an African perspective. Nkrumah (1965: ix) wrote that in a neo-colonial country:

> "control over government policy can be secured by payments towards the cost of running the state, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperial power."

Nkrumah's (1965: ix) perspective appears to still be relevant in present day society. Additionally, Hall et al. (1996: 10) reminds those undertaking cultural studies investigations that it is necessary for them to revisit the history of colonialism, in all its manifestations, in order to understand why the traces of colonialism are not so easily erased. Furthermore, Hall et al. (1996: 10) states that there is a "deeply flawed political scholarship in cultural studies which fails to connect its own analyses effectively to the global, historical structures of colonization [sic], and decolonization [sic] and without careful historical work focusing on this issue, cultural studies will never escape its complicity with western centrism". This concludes the discussion on CRT and decoloniality. The next theory that will be used in this study, and that is expanded on in the upcoming section, is that of feminist critique. The feminist viewpoint is crucial for this study given that it is reaching a higher level of cultural relevance and is now a major object of cultural discourse (Grady, 2018).

4.4 Feminist critique

Due to the nature of my study, which involves analysing *Facebook* advertisements aimed at the female market of *H&M* and *Mr Price,* it is also vital to include a feminist viewpoint as an accompanying theory. Feminism is rooted in complexity and there are multiple perspectives and theories of feminism. Ranging from liberal; radical; Marxist and socialist; psychoanalytic, black, chicana, multicultural and third world; as well as postmodern feminisms, at its core, "all feminist theories analyse women's experiences of gender subordination, the roots of women's oppression and how gender inequality is perpetuated" (McAfee & Howard, 2018). A simpler explanation is

that, at the heart of its focus, feminism remains about defining and achieving social, economic and political equality of women. While all these theories have a similar goal, Noëlle McAfee and Katie B. Howard (2018) state they all offer different proposals and solutions for gender inequality.

In examining feminism from a popular cultural view or through a cultural theory lens, Bowman (2003: 125-141) explains that even though the relationship between feminism and cultural studies has always been a tension filled one, it is important to note that "cultural studies was founded to explore issues that would, once given space, tear it apart in productive but scarifying ways" (Bowman, 2003: 128). He explains that, because feminism belongs on the political agenda, posing questions about the relationship between culture and politics, it aligns itself to cultural studies, which makes feminism, as a theoretical resource, vital in cultural studies (Bowman, 2003: 179). Hall et al. (1980: 26-27) also describes feminism as "revolutionary in a theoretical and practical way that enables cultural studies scholars to examine new areas of social experience from quite different perspectives".

When applying feminist theory to a cultural studies investigation, it is vital to begin by tracing the waves of feminism as a history of feminist theory. Even though there has been much debate about the historical beginnings of feminism, this overview of the three waves, provides some foundation for the establishment of the feminist movement. According to Sally Haslanger, Nancy Tuana, and Peg O'Connor (2012), first-wave feminism, is largely related to the women's movement in the United States of America (USA) and documents the struggle to achieve basic political rights, and overturn legal obstacles to gender equality (voting and property rights) during the period from the mid-19th century until the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. Following this, Haslanger et al. (2012) states that feminism declined during the two world wars, but it was reborn in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This became known as the second-wave of feminism, where feminists pushed for more than political rights; they were now fighting for greater equality in the workplace, at home, in education, and regarding reproductive rights amongst others. This wave of feminism lasted until the 1980s but was often criticised for not paying attention to the myriad of diversities that exists among women such as race, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion (Haslanger et al., 2012).

It is from this criticism that third-wave feminism was born as it identifies with several diverse strains of feminist activity and study, and it interlinks with other fields such as CRT. Third-wave feminists, a term coined by Rebecca Walker (n.d.), "sought to question, reclaim, and redefine the ideas, words, and media that have transmitted ideas about womanhood, gender, beauty, sexuality, femininity, and masculinity, among other things". However, according to Constance Grady (2018), while the second and third waves of feminism were underpinned by different ideologies, third-wave feminism "lacked the strong cultural momentum that was behind the grand achievements of the second wave". Grady (2018) adds that "theorists such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, a scholar of gender and critical race theory who coined the term intersectionality, and Judith Butler, who argued that gender and sex are separate, and that gender is performative", are part of the third-wave. However, even with scholars such as Crenshaw and Butler perpetuating third-wave feminism, it has been criticised for not having a central goal or producing legislation as with the first two waves (Grady, 2018).

In more recent times, scholars have even began documenting a fourth-wave in feminism, which is being described as "something different" and as "having a new feel" to the other three waves (Cochrane, 2013). According to Kira Cochrane (2013), fourth-wave feminism, with movements such as the #MeToo campaign, is taking place largely online. Grady (2018) shares this sentiment, stating that social media sites such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube,* as well as feminist blogs such as *Jezebel* (2007) and *Everyday Feminism* (2012), have become entrenched in the cultural fabric of feminism. Grady (2018), moreover, writes that while activism does occur on the streets in fourth-wave feminism, it is online where feminist discourse and debate is conceived and takes place. This is relevant to my study on the *H&M* and *Mr Price* advertisements of female clothing because the advertisements will be selected online from the retailers' social media accounts on *Facebook*. There is, however, critique of fourth-wave feminism, like with the waves before it, with varying opinions on which matters fourth-wave feminism should be addressing (Cochrane, 2013). With the objectives of my study in mind, the third and fourth waves of feminism will be more relevant for my investigation than the first two waves. However, the third and fourth waves of feminism are very western, as indicated by Haslanger et al. (2012), who believe that feminism

did not start in Europe and the USA. In relation this this, they write that efforts to obtain justice for women, and the resistance to male domination, can be seen throughout history, among various race groups, and across cultures (Haslanger et al., 2012). For this reason, this study will now explore Black feminism and intersectionality.

When exploring Black feminism in the USA, it is important to understand that, while it sometimes includes "people / women of colour", it has its historic roots in the struggles faced by the women of the African American community. Therefore, for purposes of this study, when referencing Black feminism from the USA, the capitalised "Black" will be used, and will refer to African American women whose ancestors and descendants are of the transatlantic slave trade. The term "people / women of colour" will be used to describe the USA citizens who are natives of the land or who have "non-white" ancestors from around the world. Based on definitions from the United States Census Bureau (2013), race groups in the USA that fall into the "people / women of colour" category are Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic. The Bureau (2013) defines a Hispanic person as someone with an ethnic Hispanic heritage. Hispanic or Latino refers to people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

Black feminism emerged in the USA in the 1960s, challenging perspectives and practices among white feminists that marginalised or excluded Black women. According to the Combahee River Collective (1977) who wrote the *Combahee River Collective Statement*, Black feminism called on white feminism to take differences and inequalities between women seriously, and to recognise the impact of racism on Black women's lives. The Combahee River Collective (1977) illustrates how "Black feminist research and theory makes the experiences and perspectives of Black women central". They state that "Black feminists generally oppose assumptions of a common sisterhood among women, and do not define men as the oppressor" (Combahee River Collective, 1977). The statement also points out that Black men and women must work together politically in the fight against racism. According to Krissah Thompson (2014) and AnnaMarie Houlis (2019), key figures of academia and popular culture in the Black feminism movement include, among

others, Alice Walker and her daughter Rebecca Walker; Angela Davis; bell hooks, Crenshaw; Patricia Hill Collins; Maya Angelou; Sojourner Truth; Anna Julia Cooper; Ida B Wells; Frances Ellen Watkins Harper; Mary Church Terrell; Shirley Chisholm; Pauli Murray; Dorothy Height; Rosa Parks; Audre Lorde; and even entertainment celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey; Michelle Obama; Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj.

As one of the most prolific scholars on this subject, the work of hooks (1984 & 2015) is very important for my study, and her books *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984) and *Ain't I A Women, Black Women and Feminism* (2015) are consulted. hooks (1984: preface) contends that there is a "lack of diverse voices in popular feminist theory" and argues that Black and minority voices have been marginalised. She questions the notion of equality among men and women in western culture, asking, "in white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal class structure, which men do women want to be equal to" (hooks, 1984: 18). Additionally, she illustrates "that women in lower class and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white, would not have defined women's liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status" (hooks, 1984: 18). The author also writes that if feminism is to be successful, women (and men) across all race groups must collectively work to recognise that "historically, both genders are responsible for creating the societal circumstances which exist today; feminism must hold all responsible, and then transform society instead of seeking to place blame" (hooks, 1984: 118-131). Furthermore, hooks (1984) believes that theory is important to ensure this societal transformation and therefore, through her scholarly work, she offers "a new, more inclusive feminist theory". This theory seeks to end oppression by redefining how power is obtained and maintained, with hooks (1984) also encouraging men to form part of the feminist movement. Additionally, while she encourages the "long-standing idea of sisterhood", she "advocates for women to acknowledge their differences while still accepting each other" (hooks, 1984).

The work of scholars such as Truth (1851) and hooks (1984) also paved the way for intersectionality, which forms part of the black feminist theory critique. Crenshaw in her landmark text, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of*

Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics (1989), highlighted that intersectionality theory focuses on how systems of oppression, domination or discrimination are connected in creating injustices. According to Crenshaw (1989: 139), there is "a problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" when anti-oppression work must be addressed from multiple axes. Crenshaw (1989) argues that because "Black women are discriminated against in ways that do not fit within the boxes of racism or sexism, but as a combination of both", looking at the intersection where all these discriminations meet is important. Therefore, intersectionality is a powerful concept for scholars because it allows for an analysis that looks at how Black women have to deal with multiple oppressions and discriminations, both as a Black person, who is "discriminated against on the basis of race", and then as a Black woman, who is "discriminated against on the basis of sex" (Crenshaw, 1989: 149).

Looking at the concept of Black feminism and intersectionality in the South African context, Engela Pretorius (2006) provides some historical perspective. Pretorius (2006: 3) explains that because many of the countries in Southern Africa were colonised by Britain, the "colonial gender politics in Southern Africa closely mirrored those of Britain". Therefore, "suffrage was extended first to those who were privileged on the basis of gender, namely white men, then to a few men of the labouring classes or races, next to white women and lastly to black women" (Pretorius, 2006: 3). She writes that in South Africa, white women in the Cape Province were allowed to vote for the first time in 1929 in order to "neutralise the effects of a qualified franchise granted to black men of education and property" (Pretorius, 2006: 3). Additionally, according to Pretorius (2006: 3), as in the case of the USA, when it came to standing up for Black people's right to vote, "white English and Afrikaans/Afrikaner suffragists' commitment to anti-racist politics turned out to be thin", therefore, white interests took precedence. Pretorius (2006: 16) also explains that for most of South Africa's anti-apartheid, struggle, even with the now famous South African women's protest march of 9 August 1956, gender issues was a secondary matter. It was the belief that it would be addressed once freedom of Black people is attained.

Addressing feminist theory, Desiree Lewis (1993) writes that, while the use of feminist theory in South Africa has increased, it faces challenges. These challenges are similar to those mentioned by Crenshaw (Cf. page 114-116), such as scholars "ignoring the intersection of race, class and gender". According to Lewis (1993: 535), by stereotyping Black women, and "privileging the knowledge and experience of white, western and middle-class women", feminism in South Africa reproduces oppressive racial and class ideologies. Her views are based on the first South African conference on women and gender that took place at the then University of Natal (University of KwaZulu-Natal) in 1991. The conference was attended by about 300 people from South Africa, Britain, USA, and west Europe, and while it was meant to focus on feminist theory and scholarship that considers the experiences of Southern African women (the majority of whom are Black), efforts to incorporate diversity and interaction was lacking.

While the arguments made by Lewis (1993) are more than 25 years old, it would appear that not much has shifted regarding the approach of feminist theory and Black women in South Africa. Nompumelelo Motlafi (2015) wrote about this matter in a *Mail & Guardian* news article. She explained that "Black women in South Africa do not fully embrace the feminist movement and women's rights discourse due to the historical context of the discourse, and how Black women joined it". Additionally, she highlights that "Black women have different perceptions of current pressing needs and priorities in their struggles for basic survival and broader communal liberation" (Motlafi, 2015). Pretorius (2006: 6-7) expresses a similar statement, explaining that African women and men prefer to use the term "womanism" as they are "repulsed" by the term feminism, which they consider a western ideology that is divisive and "imported to Africa to ruin the family structure" (Pretorius, 2006: 6-7). Considering this, what does a South African feminist theory take into account? Lewis (1993: 541-542) suggests that any scholar undertaking a feminist aligned study in South Africa, must consider the intersection of gender, race, and class, as well as the country's history and power of discourse, and the power that scholars have over the subjects of their interpretation. Gqola (1999: 21) believes that South African Black feminist and womanist research must not separate academic theorising, and issues of South African societies, as both are equally important. She adds that South African feminist theory and ideology must be made

relevant to the situation at hand, after all, while there might be similarities, a South African Black woman might not share or have the same experiences as a Black American woman (Gqola, 1999: 57).

4.5 Chapter summary

Chapter four set out to situate this study within an appropriate theoretical framework of this research. It provided an in-depth and comprehensive explanation of the theories that form the foundation of this dissertation. I began by discussing key elements of the overarching theoretical framework which is cultural studies. Following this explanation, the chapter then discussed the accompanying theories which are critical race, critical whiteness studies (CWS), and decoloniality as well as feminism.

The chapter comprehensively explained that the main theoretical framework, cultural studies, is based on the seminal work of Stuart Hall, and combines the strengths of the social sciences and the humanities. In-depth descriptions of the eight key concepts of the cultural studies theoretical framework were presented. These concepts, as described by Barker and Jane (2016), include "culture and signifying practices, representation, materialism and non-reductionism, articulation, power, ideology and popular culture, texts and readers, as well as subjectivity and identity".

The next theory that was explained was that of critical race theory (CRT). This theory is used in this study because issues of race have to be explored to determine how social and political factors converge in the construction of beauty ideals in South Africa. CWS was also discussed as it works in conjunction with CRT and is relevant for a study of this nature that explores whether western and European beauty ideals are preferred in South Africa by retailers *H&M* and *Mr Price*. Decoloniality was also linked to CRT and explained in the context of the political history of South

Africa. The last theory that was described was that of feminism. The chapter explained that due to the nature of the study, which involves analysing *Facebook* advertisements aimed at the female market of *H&M* and *Mr Price,* it was vital to include a feminist viewpoint as an accompanying theory.

The chapter also captured the essence of how all the theories are interrelated. As highlighted throughout the chapter, cultural studies draw from fields such as literary studies, sociology, communications studies, history, cultural anthropology, and economics. Therefore, outlined here was the associations that cultural studies has with the accompanying theories detailed. In this regard, the theories of critical race, CWS, and decoloniality as well as feminism, resonate, not only with cultural studies theory, but also with each other, as they all question the various political, economic, and social forces that converge in mass media. This ends chapter four. The next chapter focuses on the methodological framework of this study.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical, methodological framework that informs the research methodology of the study. As presented in chapter four of this study, where the overarching theoretical framework was discussed, Hall et al. (2013: xxii) emphasised the importance of semiotic and discursive approaches where language is concerned as they believe that language provides a model of how culture and representation work. They state that "semiotics is concerned with the how of representation; and the discursive approach looks at the effects and consequences of representation" (Hall et al., 2013: xxii). Both semiotics, and the discursive approach are effective frameworks for analysis within cultural studies that guide the researchers to "gain a deeper understanding of history and the politics of meaning and issues in relation to power" (Hall et al., 2013: xxii).

Based on the above, this chapter explores the theories of semiotics and discourse, and also explains the framework of multimodal discourse analysis. In relation to this, there is also a focus on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar. The discussion includes the social semiotic framework's principles of composition of multimodal texts; the representation of social actors in the image; and the grammar of colour, which will form part of this study. Chapter five is also a pre-cursor to the methodology chapter. It is separate from the study's theoretical framework as it unpacks the theories that inform the research methodology of this study.

5.2 Semiotic theory

According to Hall et al. (2013), semiotic theory is an essential component for any cultural studies investigation, therefore, it forms part of the methodological framework of this study. Hall et al. (2013) explains that semiotic theory is associated with culturalism and structuralism, of which the early theorists include, among others, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward Palmer Thompson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Ferdinand de Saussure. Based on this, Barker and Jane

(2016: 17-20) explain that culturalism stresses the importance of history and "focuses on meaning production in a historical context"; it "focuses on interpretation as a way of understanding meaning". They write that structuralism, which looks at the science of signs, "points to culture as an expression of deep structures of language that lie outside of the intentions of human actors and constrain them" (Barker and Jane, 2016: 17-20). Against this background, the theory of semiotics is detailed below.

Hall et al. (2013) explains that semiotics is relevant to a cultural studies investigation because it helps the researcher to understand the cultural power of the media by understanding the social construction of meaning. Gillian Rose (2001: 69-73) explains that semiotics, which began as an academic enquiry into the meaning of words, has since evolved into examining people's behaviour, with it now being an instrument that looks at culture and society. She (Rose, 2001: 69) explains in more detail:

> Semiotics is not simply descriptive, as compositional interpretation appears to be; nor does it rely on quantitative estimations of significance, as content analysis at some level has to. Instead, semiology (semiotics) offers a very full box of analytical tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning.

According to Daniel Chandler (2007: 1-11), "the theory of semiotics has its origins in the academic study of how visual and linguistic signs and symbols create meaning". He explains that semiotics is the science of signification, where the study of signs and "sign-using behaviour" is undertaken (Chandler, 2007). Chandler (2007: 1-11) explains that it was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, through the work of Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce that semiotics began being considered as an interdisciplinary mode for examining phenomena in different fields. For De Saussure, according to Hall et al. (2013: 16-18), the production of meaning was dependent on language. He described language as a system of signs – when words, paintings, and photographs, etc. are used to express ideas, they function as signs. Even material objects such as traffic lights can function as signs (De Saussure in Hall et al., 2013: 16-18). De Saussure theorises that the sign could be divided into two different elements, namely, form, and concept. Form refers to the actual words, sounds or photographs used, and

concept refers to the idea or concept that one associates the form with (De Saussure in Hall et al., 2013: 16-18). Moreover, the first element – form – is what is known as the signifier, and the second element – the concept or the perception of the form – is the signified (De Saussure in Hall et al., 2013: 16).

Additionally, De Saussure argues "that signs do not possess a fixed meaning"; it is the difference between signs, or the relationship between them, that defines them (Hall et al., 2013: 16-18). According to Chandler (2007: 8), De Saussure also distinguishes between langue (language) and parole (speech), positioning these two dimensions as fundamental to the semiotic framework. Chandler (2007: 8-9) writes that parole refers to "actual individual utterances, while langue refers to the underlying system of conventions that makes such utterances understandable; it is this underlying langue that most interests semioticians". Chandler (2007: 8-9) explains that when applying "this notion to semiotic systems in general, rather than simply to language, the distinction is one between system and usage, structure and event or code and message". This simply means that for the "Saussurean semiotician, what is most important is the underlying structures and rules of a semiotic system as a whole rather than specific or individual performances or practices which are merely instances of its use" (Chandler, 2007: 9).

Another seminal thinker on semiotics, Peirce's work in the field of semiotics was based on pragmatism and logic. According to Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (1988:15), "Pierce defined a sign as something which stands to somebody for something". Chandler (2007: 29) explains that Pierce's categorisation of signs into a three-part model was one of his biggest contributions to the field of semiotics. The three-part model is, (1) the representamen (the form which the sign takes, similar to De Saussure's signifier); (2) the interpretant (not an interpreter but the sense made of the sign signified); and (3) the object (to which the sign refers – this does not feature directly in De Saussure's model). According to Chandler (2007: 29), "Pierce theorised that to qualify as a sign, all three elements are essential; and that the sign is a unity of what is represented (the object), how it is represented (the representamen) and how it is interpreted (the interpretant)". Moreover, Chandler (2007: 29) writes that Peirce also hypothesised that the meaning of a sign can never be fixed. If we are too look at the De Saussurean and Peircian

conceptions, one can ascertain that there is a difference between the two schools of thinking – De Saussure demonstrated that studying behaviour was a huge part of semiotics, while Peirce's focus was on understanding logic. But at close examination, it can be seen that this is only a slight difference between these two mindsets, because both are interested in the study of signs in general; both believe meanings are not fixed or definite; and both believe in the operation of a sign system as a whole (Chandler, 2007: 13-57).

Following the above brief introduction on the history of semiotics, I will now focus on how it pertains to my investigation. Fourie (2009: 41-82) writes that semiotics embraces four principal areas of study – (1) the sign, (2) sign systems, (3) codes and (4) meaning. These are based largely on the work of De Saussure and Peirce, who are considered the founding fathers of modern semiotics (Fourie, 2009: 47), as outlined above. According to Fourie (2009: 42), the four principal areas of study that he lists stem from structuralism which was guided by the work of De Saussure, and from Peirce's scholarship which states that people think in signs, and that their understanding of the world can be reduced to signs. The main focus of De Saussure's theorising was to consider the sign and the concept it represents, the signifier or signified, while Peirce's main focus centred on how the meaning of a sign is created by the interpretation it stimulates in those using it (Fourie: 2009: 42-50).

Francis Arackal (2015: 09) states that the first step in the semiotic analysis is to note the various signs in the advertisement itself. This can be done by looking at what carries meaning for us in the advertisement – that which is referred to as the sign – something that is physically perceptible, visible, audible or tangible (Fourie, 2009: 41-82). Looking at what makes up a sign system, both Fourie (2009: 41-82) and Arackal (2015: 1-13) describe it as a collection of signs. For example, non-verbal communication (that is often present in advertisements) can constitute a sign system because it is made up of a collection of signs such as gestures and facial expressions. Fourie (2009: 41-82) then explains that the media system itself, is a very specific sign system because it encompasses numerous other sign systems such as, linguistic (language) and non-verbal (clothing) sign systems, body language, visuals (pictures), moving and digital images, as well as verbal sign systems (sounds and voice).

Therefore, media semiotics aids in understanding how the media construct a representation and interpretation of reality. Or as Fourie (2009: 40-41) writes:

> Media semiotics is to sharpen our critical awareness of the ways in which the media reflect, represent, and imitate reality or aspects of reality with the purpose of conveying a specific meaning usually in support of an underlying ideology, point of view, ideal, argument and attitude.

Another principal area of study in semiotics, is the code. Pioneer of structural linguistics, Russian-American linguist, Roman Jakobson, stated that "the production and interpretation of texts depends on the existence of codes or conventions for communication" (Chandler, 2007: 149-173). According to Chandler (2007: 149-173), Jakobson believed that, since the "meaning of a sign depends on the code within which it is situated, codes provide a framework within which signs make sense; codes organise signs into meaningful systems". Fourie (2009: 57) also describes a code as "the technique according to which signs are combined in order to convey meaning". Both Chandler (2007: 149-173) and Fourie (2009: 57) explain that, while language requires a shared code, a code in itself does not constitute a language, it just provides a framework within which signs make sense. Furthermore, Fourie (2009: 58) writes on codes of behaviour which imply that all aspects of social behaviour are codified. Codes acquire meaning based on how people use them. Linked to culture and context, codes function intertextually and as markers for a variety of social and cultural groups. When codes are used in a particular way or new codes are created, it can influence the meaning of a sign for a particular group of people.

A fourth area of semiotic study, as explained by Fourie (2009: 66), is how meaning is constructed and interpreted. He states that, in semiotics, there are a variety of meanings that researchers can explore when conducting a semiotic analysis. He lists denotative (explicit or direct meaning), connotative (associated, subjective and personal meaning) and ideological meanings as the three main components when exploring how society might attribute and understand the meaning of a text. Linked to denotative and connotative meanings are the concepts of encoding and decoding which emphasise the role of the person consuming the visual text. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (1980: 117-127) state that the circuit of encoding and decoding encompasses "production-distribution-production". They explain that produced meaning

depends on the practice of interpretation which is sustained by a reader actively using the code or what is referred to as encoding (putting things into the code), and by the person at the other end interpreting or decoding the meaning. According to Hall et al. (1980: 117-127), it is vital for researchers of cultural studies to analyse how media audiences produce messages, how they circulate messages, and how audiences use or decode the messages to create meaning.

Based on what has been presented thus far, it is understood that words and images are signs that signify more than what the audience physically sees. According to Jim Macnamara (2005: 16), this is because the various signs used relate to each other, and form a collective of signs that produce certain codes or meanings. In this regard, Macnamara (2005: 16) explains why a semiotic analysis should always consider the intended meaning by the creators of a visual text. He believes that that the creators of visual texts can be influenced by their ideology (political beliefs or a set of ideas that characterise a particular culture), therefore, when undertaking a semiotic analysis, one should consider this "ideological meaning". Macnamara (2005: 16) writes that in doing so, the researcher "exposes the ideological, latent meaning behind the surface of texts, allowing us to grasp the power relations within them". Fourie (2009: 70-71) describes this as "ideological functioning" and explains it in three ways:

1   Ideological functioning of the media as a symbolic form of expression
2   Ideological functioning of the media as a social institution
3   The public's interpretation of, and contact with ideology as produced and reproduced by the media and media texts

The above scholarship on ideology is vital for this study because, in order to determine whether *Mr Price* and *H&M* perpetuate western and European beauty ideals in the selected *Facebook* advertisements in South Africa, it is necessary to understand ideological functioning as explained by Fourie (2009: 70-71). This research investigation has to consider how "media texts produce, reproduce and disseminate ideologies"; it has to study the media as an "institution of power", and delve into the political economy of the media; and the investigation has to analyse the "relationship between subject and text and the meaning that is created by this relationship" (Fourie, 2009: 70-71).

Linked to this, Arackal (2015: 1-13) adds that, because the recipients of texts have their unique social and cultural background, as well as education and knowledge base, the manner in which they assign ideological meaning is important for any cultural studies analysis. In relation to this, if we are to look at how meaning is created in societies across the world, it is also important to consult the seminal work of Roland Barthes. This French semiotician and cultural theorist is famous for his ideological analysis of images, literary texts and the myths of popular culture. In his book, *Image Music Text,* Barthes (1977) proposed a way of reading, interpreting and understanding the meaning of photographs using semiotics. One of the main messages of his book is that images are not naturally constructed but culturally constructed and that, in creating images, such as advertisements, one must understand the cultural meanings that come through in that particular image. More simply, Barthes (1977: 26-28 & 49) believed that the meaning of images are cultural and ideological. This led him to create a vocabulary and method for critical analysis of culture. Barthes (1977: 35) stated that the photograph, for example, is a system of signs that are social phenomena and they become a code of cultural knowledge. Barthes (1977: 38-39) also labelled images as "polysemous", meaning that they could be interpreted in a myriad of ways by various people. He believed that the ideological meaning of texts must be considered by researchers of cultural studies as it forms an important part of any semiotic analysis.

Elaborating on the above discussion of ideological meaning, this methodology framework will now explain the idea of social semiotics. Scholars such as Theo Van Leeuwen (2005) and Javad Khajavi (2011), state that social semiotics considers how "meaning is negotiated during the process of reading". In this regard, Khajavi (2011:47) writes "that meaning-making is a complex interplay between the producer of the text and the social and cultural context in which the text is read". Jay Lemke, one of the first scholars in the social semiotics field, who was largely influenced by Michael Halliday's *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978), states:

> Social semiotics is a synthesis of several modern approaches to the study of social meaning and social action. One of them, obviously is semiotics itself: the study of our social resources for communicating meanings... Formal semiotics is mainly interested in the systematic study of the systems of signs themselves. Social semiotics includes formal semiotics and goes on to ask how people use signs to construct the life of a community (Harrison, 2003: 48).

Similarly, Theo Van Leeuwen (2005: preface), another scholar from the first group of "social semioticians", writes that "social semiotics is an approach that focuses on how people apply the use of semiotic resources in their own specific fields, and how they undertake specific social practices". In defining semiotic resources, Van Leeuwen (2005: 1) explains that they originated from the work of Halliday (1978) who believed that the grammar of a language is not just a code or a set of rules for producing correct sentences, but a "resource for making meanings". Elaborating more on semiotic resources, Van Leeuwen (2005: 285) states:

> Semiotic resources are the actions, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically – for example, with our vocal apparatus, the muscles we use to make facial expressions and gestures – or technologically – for example, with pen and ink, or computer hardware and software – together with the ways in which these resources can be organized [sic]. Semiotic resources have a meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized [sic] in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime.

Expanding on the description of semiotic resources, Kay L. O'Halloran (2011) states that they are modes such as "language, music, gestures, images and architecture, which integrate across sensory modalities such as the visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic". Citing Halliday (1978: 123), O'Halloran (2011: 2) adds that semiotic resources are "system[s] of meanings that constitute the reality of the culture". According to the first group of social semioticians (Kress, Van Leeuwen, Hodge, Lemke, Paul J. Thibault, Terry Threadgold, Anne Cranny-Francis, Ron Scollon and Suzie Scollon), the semiotic resources described above are found in all spaces, and as a vehicle of social communication, the field of advertising is one such space.

According to Maryam Najafian and Saeed Ketabi (2011: 65), and relating to this study specifically, advertising is a "persuasive environment" which resorts to using multiple semiotic resources – visual structures and verbal structures – to create and / or impact the meaning that the audience draws from it. Additionally, Wilton (2015:60) states that "advertisements are a combination of images and languages, and as cultural texts they are embedded with semiotic richness". Najafian and Ketabi (2011) and Wilton (2015) add that in advertisements there is a relationship between semiotic resources, discourse and ideology. Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama (2001:134) also

define social semiotics of visual communication as a process whereby "a description of semiotic resources is established, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) is investigated, and the things people say and do with images is interpreted".

This section on semiotics theory has laid the foundation for why it is well suited to this investigation into *Facebook* advertisements. It is aligned to Hall's (2013: xxii) views on language, where he emphasises how semiotic and discursive approaches inform cultural practices and representation. The discursive approach, and specifically theory related critical discourse analysis (CDA), is unpacked in the next section.

5.3 A discursive approach: critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Pioneered by scholars such as Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is said to be a practical research tool for any cultural studies investigation. My study draws from Fairclough's (1989) book *Language and Power*, which is regarded as a landmark in the developmental history of CDA. This discursive theory will be applied in my study to investigate how selected *Facebook* visual texts (past and present) are composed, and to discern how beauty is constructed in *H&M* and *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements. CDA is appropriate for my study because it is viewed as a social practice and is considered as critical for textual analysis as it helps the researcher in unveiling the hidden ideologies and invisible facts in text (Fairclough, 1989).

My main intention with the discursive approach is to understand the ideological and power relations concealed within the visual images of the study's selected *Facebook* advertisements. In this regard, Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (2003: 35) explains that CDA guides a researcher in applying a critical lens to their investigation as it helps the researcher consider the impact of power, ideology and politics. According to Machin (2007: 11-16), CDA takes into account the processes and products of discourse and their impact on social practices. He explains that the notion of discourse in semiotics follows the work of social theorist, Michel Foucault (1977, 1980), and also refers to the socially constructed nature of knowledge about reality. In semiotic approaches, it is common practice to talk about signs and how they connote meanings and complex ideas or knowledges about the world. Additionally, a more complex combination of signs

can include more specific meaning and introduce a range of associations demonstrating how signs can be used to link discourses.

The work of Foucault (1989) reflects on the overlapping of power and knowledge in relation to discourse. He wrote that discourse is powerful because it is productive, "discourse disciplines subjects into certain ways of thinking and acting". Certain discourses are more dominant than others and this dominance occurs not only because some are located in powerful institutions, but because these discourses claim to be the truth. This claim to truth lies at the "heart of the intersection of power/knowledge" (Foucault in Gillian Rose, 2012: 193). He believed that knowledge is discursive and that all discourse is saturated with power and that "the most powerful discourses in terms of their productiveness of their social effects, depends on assumptions and claims that their knowledge is true".

Drawing on Foucault's arguments, Rose (2012: 195-196) states that discourse analysis is used to explore how texts construct specific views of the social world; "… the discourse analysist is interested in how people use language to construct their accounts of the social world" (Fran Tonkiss in Rose, 2012: 196). Discourses are also organised to make it persuasive and discourse analysis must focus on these strategies of persuasion. Additionally, discourse analysis is concerned with the social production and effects of discourses. In this regard, the work of Wodak (2002) is pertinent to this study as she looks at how the notions of ideology, power, hierarchy and gender together with sociological variables are all seen as relevant for interpreting texts. She explains that the roots of CDA lie in classical rhetoric, textlinguistics and sociolinguistics, as well as in applied linguistics and pragmatics and that CDA, which see language as a social practice, takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power. Expanding on this, Wodak (2002: 8) states:

> Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but

> it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is

constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it.

In relation to the above, Wodak (2002: 11-12) explains that CDA comprises of three concepts: power, history, and ideology. She adds that a true CDA must include "theory and description of both the social processes and structures, which give rise to the production of a text, and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as social-historical subjects, create meanings in their interaction with texts". Additionally, and of specific relevance to this investigation, Wodak (2002: 8) writes:

> Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/ cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.

Wodak's (2002) views are in line with Fairclough's (1989) work, which explains that CDA reveals the interrelationship between language, ideology and power. He asserts that discourse analysis can be extended by including semiotic practice, and therefore language should be studied as discourse, both in spoken and written forms. Fairclough (1989: 4) believes that the ultimate purpose of analysing language, "is to raise people's consciousness towards manipulative social relations". He states that there are two sides to language use, the one side as a form of social practice where language is a mode of action (socially reproductive) and then the other side, where language is socially shaping, or constitutive of, (1) social identities; (2) social relations and 3) systems of knowledge and belief. Fairclough (2011: 4) writes:

> CDA is then developed as a theory of language which stresses in the multifunctionality of language and which sees every text as simultaneously having the "ideational", "interpersonal" and "textual" functions of language.

When aligning the approach of CDA to this investigation, Machin's (2007: 13) views on discourse and visual images are also relevant. He reflects on how semiotic resources such as colour, typography, settings and props, among others, are used in visual images to "connote particular discourses that allow them to define reality in a particular way". Machin (2007: 13) explains further:

> These discourses are not simply abstract ideas that we might find realised in texts or in images … they represent not only models of the world and why these are legitimate but also reasonable ways of acting in the world.

Additionally, Machin (2007) writes that "once discourses become dominant and realised in different modes of communication, they take on a quality of truth". Machin's (2007) assertion linking semiotic resources and discourse is connected to CDA because, as a discursive theory, CDA is not a single method of analysing discourse, but is a collection of various methods that interpret discourses such as speech, style, and pictures, thereby identifying any underlying ideology (Fairclough, 1989).

Supporting CDA is another set of approaches which are aligned to the discursive approach, and that is textual analysis, intertextuality, and digital interactivity. These are important for this study due to its relation to CDA. According to Barthes (1977), textual analysis refers to the meaning that emerges when the text is actualised or practiced, "it expresses how a text is unmade, how it explodes, disseminates – by what coded paths it goes off". Offering another explanation Alan McKee (2001: 138-149) writes that "textual analysis involves analysing not just the content, but also the structure or design of a text and how elements function, often as part of a larger historical and cultural context". McKee (2001: 1) believes that when researchers want to understand the role that the media play in society, and how its messages participate in the cultural construction of the population's view of the world, they have to understand what meanings audiences are making of texts such as television and radio programmes, print and online advertisements, films, newspapers, magazines, and radio. McKee (2001: 138-149), therefore, advises researchers that textual analysis involves reflecting on the audience; being meticulous about visual, written and verbal language and formatting and design elements; as well as evaluating the text for what it is trying to do. Udo Kuckartz (2014) also explains textual analysis. He writes that textual analysis ensures that the "meaning of a text is interpreted not just from that text alone, but through the inclusion of social semiotics, where a discussion of the socio-historical and cultural meaning of the textual elements is considered". This means that when a text is being interpreted, meaning is not extrapolated from the text alone, but is drawn from how the text interacts with other texts.

Furthermore, McKee (2001: 141) states that when textual analysis is applied to an advertisement, researchers must not try to find one correct interpretation of the visual text "because there is no such thing as a single, correct interpretation of any text; there are large numbers of possible interpretations". He addresses the concept of accuracy when conducting a textual analysis, highlighting that the researcher should "never claim that a text is an accurate or an inaccurate representation; never claim that it reflects reality" (McKee, 2001: 142). He also advises that no textual analysis should be conducted without context, and that there are three levels of context to consider, the rest of the text; the genre of the text; and the wider public context in which a text is circulated (McKee, 2001: 148-151). Additionally, McKee (2001: 156) illustrates that there is no certainty that two researchers will produce the exact same analysis if they are given the same text to analyse. This is so because the two researchers would have different information on the text knowledge as well as the generic and wider cultural context; or maybe their investigation of the text is to answer slightly different questions (McKee, 2001: 156). In relating the analytical approach of textual analysis to my study, it is important to consider that this approach involves closely examining various elements of the selected *Facebook* advertisements – such as the choice of pictures, words, comments, sentences, and overall structure – and collating them into attributes, themes, and patterns relevant to the study.

Another two key concepts that will be used in this study is that of intertextuality and digital interactivity which consider how texts interact with other texts around it, to create meaning. Intertextuality and digital interactivity are relevant concepts to use in order to reach the goals of this study. Coined by Julia Kristeva (1986), intertextuality means that "no text exists on its own as it is always connected to other texts". Therefore, meanings created by an image, is not just based on the image itself, but also on the meanings of accompanying or surrounding images (Kristeva, 1986). Her work on intertextuality builds on Barthes' (1977: 146) views which he expressed in his essay, *The death of the author*. In this essay, Barthes (1977: 146) writes that "a text does not only have one meaning but is instead a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash". According to Barthes (1977: 148), intertextuality is a relevant concept because it helps a researcher "unpack a text which is made

of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation". Related to this, María Jesús Martínez Alfaro (1996: 268) insists that a text does not function as a closed system. She stresses the importance of understanding intertextuality by viewing "texts not as self-contained systems, but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures". Speaking on intertextuality in popular culture, Perry Share (2006: 1) highlights that intertextuality is about "how our contemporary cultural environment is marked by duplication, interpenetration of texts, as well as the circulation and recirculation of images, sounds and words in multiple forms and formats". According to Share (2006: 1), intertextuality is visible in the various domains that make up our culture, such as songs, poetry, movies and fashion, and the premise is that "everything that can be said has already been said and, as a result, people reuse and manipulate existing texts, and images". The relevance of intertextuality for this study is linked to the historical, political, and cultural climate that it is located in (Cf. chapters 2, 3 and 4). The selected *Facebook* advertisements form part of a communications and advertising industry that is either informed, or impacted by, various social factors currently operating in South Africa. Therefore, it would be irresponsible for this study to not consider the impact of intertextuality.

Additionally, given that this study is based on *Facebook* advertisements and not print, intertextuality has to extend to the concept of digital interactivity. According to Neil Coffee, JP Koenig, Shakthi Poornima, Roelant Ossewaarde, Christopher Forstall, and Sarah Jacobson (2012: 383-422), due to the various, and different multimedia agents of the internet, intertextuality in digital texts can have a larger influence on an audience than print based texts. In defining intertextuality in the digital space, the authors describe intertextuality on the internet as extroverted, as the internet is open to different types of text (Coffee et al., 2012: 383-422). They add that the collective scholarly understanding of intertextuality is shifting, and that the ever-transforming digital space is changing how reader's view and interpret online visual texts, and how scholars define intertextuality (Coffee et al., 2012: 383-422).

In exploring digital interactivity in digital media, Coffee et al. (2012: 395) state that in digital texts, a potential moment of intertextuality depends on the reader's level of interaction with the text, as well as the subjectivity of the reader – can he or she see some similarity and significance between the various, and accompanying digital texts*?* Lev Manovich in his book, *The Language of New Media* (2001)*,* describes digital interactivity (on the internet) as the user's active relation with the text – as interaction that can be between one user and text, or between many users and text. According to Manovich (2001: 71), in digital environments, "interactivity lends itself to users accessing content, providing feedback, and transferring text – effects that require the user's action upon the text to be produced, thereby creating digital interactivity". He cautions researchers though, highlighting that they should be weary of interpreting digital interactivity in the literal sense, thereby "equating it with physical interaction between a user and a media object (pressing a button, choosing a link, moving the body)", thereby, not focusing on the psychological interaction (Manovich, 2001: 72). Digital interactivity will prove useful for my study, as *Facebook* advertisements, due to the volume of other texts (videos, written texts and images) surrounding it, can be considered examples of intertextuality. As I unpack and investigate the meanings behind the selected visual images of the chosen *Facebook* advertisements, it is imperative to understand the intertextual references to South African historical, political, social, and cultural factors. This could impact the findings of the study, therefore, intertextuality and digital interactivity are important concepts for this study.

This concludes the discussion on CDA. The next section is on multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), "a method of discursive analysis that looks at not just how individual modes communicate, but how they interact with one another to create semiotic meaning" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). It will be applied in this study in order to determine how various semiotic modes are used to construct discourse in the selected *Facebook* advertisements.

5.4 The multi-semiotic approach to critical and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA)

In their pioneering scholarship, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996 & 2006), Kress and Van Leeuwen explain "that the way we communicate is not just by one single mode of

communication, language, but simultaneously through various semiotic modes (multi-modally)" such as visual, sound, and gestures. The scholars assert that verbal language is not the single most important part of communication, and that images should be allocated the same level of importance that linguistics receives in communication science. Based on this, they present the concept of multimodality, which emphasises "the idea that communication and representation always draw on a multiplicity of semiotics of which language may be one" (Kress, 2001: 67-68). In advertising, they refer to this multiplicity of semiotics as multimodal texts as there more than two semiotic systems combined. Machin (2007: ix-x) explains that multimodality "is an analysis of the rules and principles that allows viewers to understand the meaning potential of relative placement of elements, framing, salience, proximity, color [sic] saturations, styles of typeface, etc.". A multimodal analysis emphasises that all semiotic modes need to be considered with the same kind of detail, "as semiotic systems in themselves, whose potential choices, patterns and grammar, can be described and documented" (Machin, 2007: x).

Contextualising, how the concept of multimodality originated, Rick Iedema (2003: 29-57) states that discourse analysis initially focused on language, but in the mid to late 1980s, a shift occurred, and "Hallidayan discourse analysis", came to the fore. This presented the view that the making of meaning occurred through ways other than just language (Iedema, 2003: 30). This paved the way for multimodality, which "was introduced to highlight the importance of taking into account semiotics other than language-in-use, such as image, music, gesture, and so on" (Iedema, 2003: 33). He lists the increased prevalence of images, sound, and film, available through the computer, television and internet, as some of the reasons for multimodality. Additionally, the use of this plethora of technologies is why there is "new emphasis on, and interest in, the multi-semiotic complexity of the representations we produce and see around us" (Iedema, 2003: 33). With MDA, the meaning of the text, and those who produce and receive it, are considered. Jing Liu (2013: 2160) explains that the MDA looks at how different semiotic modes are linked together to create a unified text:

> The premise of multimodal discourse analysis is that in many domains of contemporary writing, textual structure is realized [sic], not by linguistic means, but visually, through layout, color, and typography both at the level of the —

clause and at the level of — discourse. Actually, multimodal discourse analysis has become a new trend in the studies of discourse analysis, for it focuses upon the complete communicative aspects of discourse that emerge within interaction.

Iedema (2003: 39) believes that no semiotic mode in the multimodal text is dominant over another; instead all the modes work in a synergetic manner in the meaning-making process. He lists the following four points on MDA as crucial for researchers in cultural studies to consider (Iedema, 2003: 48):

1 The MDA gives proper recognition to all semiotic resources, and not just language, therefore this must be considered in an analysis of representations.
2 The MDA focuses on the relationships between these different semiotics, and on the 'division of labour' between them in particular representations.
3 The MDA aims to understand and describe in 'phylogenetic' terms the displacement of some semiotics by others (e.g. the displacement of the linguistic by the visual).
4 The MDA links the potential of the different semiotics deployed to how they affect (enable and constrain) interaction and the formation of subjectivity.

In relation to the above, it is evident that in advertisements – such as the *Facebook* ones selected for this study – the written language and the visual are always accompanied by other kinds of semiotic resources, which are integral to the meaning of the advertisement. This is what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 32) refer to as the grammar of visual communication or the visual code, suggesting that "visual communication is always coded" and this is vital to understand in a study of this nature. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 32-33), these codes perform an important role in directing the common understandings of various societies around the world, and are the vital needs that people require to function. They explain that their theory can be encapsulated in the following points:

1 Human societies use a variety of modes of representation.
2 Each mode has inherently different representational potentials
3 Each mode has specific social valuation in particular social contexts
4 Different potentials for meaning-making may imply different potentials for the formation of subjectivities
5 Individuals use a range of representational modes, and therefore have available a range of means of meaning-making, each affecting the formation of their subjectivity

6   The different modes of representation are not held discretely, separately, as strongly bounded autonomous domains in the brain, or as autonomous communicational resources in culture, nor are they deployed discretely, either in representation or in communication.

7   Affective aspects of human beings and practices are not discrete from other cognitive activity, and therefore never separate or absent from representational and communicative behaviour

8   Each mode of representation has a continuously evolving history, in which its semantic reach can contract or expand or move into different areas of social use as a result of the uses to which it is put. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 41)

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) further explain that their social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar is based on Halliday's (1978) social semiotic approach. According to Halliday (1978), because language is a semiotic mode, it must represent three communicative metafunctions – the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Machin (2007: 16-18) and Wilton (2015: 60) simplify Halliday's metafunctions beginning with an explanation of the ideational metafunction. They write that the ideational metafunction "describes the function of creating representations – a semiotic system has to be able to represent ideas beyond its own system of signs" (Machin, 2007: 16-18 & Wilton 2015: 60). The second metafunction is the interpersonal metafunction, "which refers to the manner in which language creates interactions between writers, readers or speakers and listeners – a semiotic system must be able to create a relation between the producer and receiver" (Machin, 2007: 16-18 & Wilton 2015: 60). And lastly, there is the textual metafunction, "which indicates how individual pieces of representation and interaction come together to form specific kinds of texts or communicative events, such as advertisements, interviews, and dialogues, among others" (Machin, 2007: 16-18 & Wilton 2015: 60).

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 41-44) build on Halliday's three linguistic metafunctions by extending them to visual communication. Adjusting the terminology for their social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar, they state that in order to create meaning, an image carries simultaneously out three kinds of meta-semiotic tasks. These tasks are, (1) the representational metafunction (corresponding to Halliday's ideational), (2) the interactive

metafunction (corresponding to Halliday's interpersonal), and (3) the compositional metafunction (corresponding to Halliday's textual).

Regarding the representational metafunction, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 45-78) state that this metafunction is about the people, places, and objects within an image, and answers the question "what is the picture about?" They have identified two kinds of processes under the representational metafunction – the narrative processes and the conceptual processes. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 59-69) explain that there are four kinds of narrative processes – action, reactional, speech and mental, as well as conversion. These are dynamic and serving "to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements" (Kress and & Leeuwen, 2006: 59). The conceptual processes have three kinds of processes - classificational, analytical, and symbolic. These "are static and represent participants in terms of their class, structure or meaning" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 79-106). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 114-153), in order to investigate the interactive meaning of images, three aspects must be considered – contact, social distance, and attitude. The "interactive metafunction is about the actions among all the participants involved in the production and viewing of an image" (creator and producer of the advertisement, models, readers), and answers the question, "how does the picture engage the viewer?" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 114-153). Lastly, to establish the compositional meaning of images, "there are three interrelated systems to consider – information value, salience and framing" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 175-214). The "compositional metafunction answers the question, "how do the representational and interpersonal metafunctions relate to each other and integrate into a meaningful whole?" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 175-214).

Based on the outline presented here, this study will employ Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar to carry out the multi-semiotic, critical and multimodal discourse analysis. This is a valuable tool for researching how visual and verbal relationships in multimodal texts are ordered and collated; and given that this study is focused on *Facebook* advertisements, which are multimodal in nature, Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework will therefore be consulted. However, due to the complex make-up of the

framework, only certain aspects will be used. The ones selected specifically relate to advertisements and will interrogate the way semiotic resources are used to formulate particular ideas and messages on female beauty. Therefore, in carrying out this study's multi-semiotic analysis, the denotative (explicit or direct meaning), connotative (associated, subjective and personal meaning) and ideological meanings of the selected *Facebook* advertisements are analysed by applying some of the multimodal semiotic principles of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar. The multimodal semiotic principles applied in the analysis are, composition of multimodal texts; the representation of social actors in the image; and the grammar of colour. They are expanded on below.

5.4.1 Composition of multimodal texts

In advertisements, both online and print, there can be no text (visual and language) without layout. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 175-214), "composition can be described as the spatial arrangement of elements within a semiotic space". In order to represent the multifaceted set of relations that can exist in images, compositional meaning is realised through the arrangement of various visual elements (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 176). Wilton (2015: 63) explains that "composition is the fundamental cohesive principle of space-based texts and semiotic artefacts and arrangements". In other words, compositional meaning connects the representational and interactive components in an image to each other, thereby creating meaning within the visual. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 177) explain that "composition relates the representational and interactive meanings of the image to each other through three systems: information value, salience and framing". These three systems can be applied to either multimodal texts or a single picture or visual compositions such as music, magazines, dance, speech, paintings, film and television (Machin, 2007: 129-158).

Machin (2007: 130) explains that the information value in an advertisement is analysed by considering the zones in which semiotic elements are placed. According to Thomas Lamberth Sandbjerg (2015: 21-22), the information value looks at how an advertisement is created using three axes or dimensions – one extends from the far left zone of the composition to the far right;

another dimension spans from the top zone to the bottom; and third axis is from the centre of the composition to its edges or margins. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 175-214) define the information in the left zone as given, and the information in the right zone as new. The "left is often associated with the general, past, recoverable and subsequently given, while right is associated with the specific, present, not recoverable and therefore new" (Kress & Van Leeuwen: 2006 & Machin: 2007). Simply put, given information will be something familiar to the reader, and new information will be unfamiliar making the reader/ viewer pay closer and special attention.

According to Yunru Chen and Wei He (2015: 2-3), new information can be viewed at as "problematic and contestable" and given information as "proverbial and self-evident". They state that, even though the image producers and readers of the image are not aware of Kress and Van Leeuwen's structure (2006), the information is still packaged as if it has value for the audience.

> The Given-New structure is ideological, and a poster producer may attempt to manipulate or defends his own point of view and ideology through the well-connected layout of the visual composition (Chen and He, 2015: 2)

The next pattern or compositional structure to consider when investigating the information value is the vertical dimension. This refers to the positioning of semiotic modes (the information) from the top zone (general meaning) to the bottom (specific meaning). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 186) and Machin (2007: 145), the top section portrays an idealised or generalised view of the information and whatever elements are placed in this section are considered as the ideal to strive for. The bottom section portrays "specific, informative and practical information, and is presented as the real" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 186 & Machin, 2007: 145). Similarly, Chen and He (2015: 2-3) illustrate that advertisements are designed along the vertical axis, with the top section packaged to appeal to the reader's emotions, showing them "what might be"; and the bottom section is packaged more realistically and informatively, showing readers "what is".

The third pattern is the information value of centre and margin. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 194-200), the centre is the "nucleus of the information to which all the other

elements are in some sense subservient". Based on this assertion, if a model or product is placed at the centre of an image, with other informative elements on the left or right sides, or above and below, that which is at the centre is considered to be the most important part of the layout (Machin, 2007: 147). This central point, also known as the triptych, gives meaning to all the other elements surrounding it (Machin, 2007: 147). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 196), the margin within a visual is explained as the semiotic elements that are found on the borders or edges of an image and can be defined as "ancillary" (supportive) or "dependent". Chen and He (2015: 2-3) also explain the centre and margin zone:

> The orientation of information value of the placement of center [sic] and margin is closely related to the cultural differentiation across different countries. These features are presented as either subservient or complementary to the centre and can either be presented in terms of visuals or imagery and graphics in the form of slogans, colour choices or various forms of brand signage.

Salience, as explained by Machin (2007: 130) allows for certain semiotic elements in the advertisement to stand out, making these elements the central symbolic value in the composition of the advertisement. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 201-203), irrespective of where these semiotic resources are placed, "salience can create a hierarchy of importance" between these resources, signifying some as more significant and "more worthy of attention than others". Similarly, Machin (2007: 130-138) states that the greater the visual weight of an element of a composition, the greater its salience. However, he does believe that the ideal (placed in the top zone of an advertisement), normally gets the most salience in advertisements, because they "fundamentally sell fantasies" (Machin, 2007: 145). He also states that some of the basic principles of salience are powerful cultural symbols, size, colour, tone, focus, foregrounding, and overlapping – advertisements are filled with "potent cultural symbols" that tells an audience how to read an image (Machin, 2007: 136). Additionally, Chen and He (2015: 3) explain that the evaluation of salience is determined by the audience's innate belief of the importance of various semiotic resources in an image, "the greater the importance of an element, the greater is its salience". Therefore, they believe that salience cannot be measured objectively.

The final system that works with salience and information value to create compositional meaning is framing. According to Machin (2007: 130), framing devices in visual communication such as advertisements, are used to "connect, relate, group or separate visual elements in the image". According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 177), framing "disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense." Similarly, Chen and He (2015: 3) explain that the semiotic components "in an image or page can be connected or disconnected by frame lines; discontinuity of shape; or empty space between elements". Moreover, "connection can be emphasised by vectors; in that case, continuity, complementation and a sense of belonging and involvement are indicated" (Chen and He, 2015: 3).

Framing is often helpful in identifying information value according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 203-214). For instance, there is always a dividing line to make the ideal-real structure evidential. The authors state that there are six semiotic resources for creating framing and connectivity. Summarised by Machin (2007: 157), these six semiotic resources are:

1 Segregation is the use of physical frames to create difference.
2 Separation means separation by space rather than by actual frames. Therefore, while the creator of the advertisement is telling the audience there is a difference between certain semiotic elements, it is not to the same degree as segregation. Space can be bridged.
3 Integration is when semiotic elements occupy the same space.
4 Overlap allows semiotic elements to not be constrained by frames and spaces. Their meanings can also blend into other spaces.
5 Rhyme considers colour, posture, size, etc. which can be used to create links between semiotic elements in the advertisement.
6 Contrast considers colour, posture, size, etc. which can be used to indicate the difference between semiotic elements in the advertisement.

Van Leeuwen (2006:12) also suggest "that the actual visual segregation of two semiotic spaces can also mean the segregation, the keeping apart, of what is represented in these spaces". In this regard, framing provides the researcher with the chance to analytically deduce the meaning constructed in the multimodal texts. The second multimodal semiotic principle that will be employed in this study is the representation of social actors in the image.

5.4.2 The representation of social actors in the image

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 114-153), this multimodal semiotic principle determines how social actors (models / participants in the image) are expressed in the discourse of visual communication. By understanding the representation of social actors in an image, a researcher can unpack and uncover ideological meaning, and the various "injustices hidden in the deep layers of different types of discourse" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 114-153). Similarly, Machin (2007: 109) explains that, when considering the representation of social actors in an image, the focus must be on how the models are portrayed.

In relation to the above, Machin and Andrea Mayr (2012: 70) state that images are created and controlled to depict a specific version of the identity, attitude and character of the model, and is therefore, an additional "semiotic resource by which events and comments can be evaluated implicitly". The images of models seen in advertisements often undergo numerous stages of editing and styling and restyling, with different input from various role-players such as editors, graphic designers, as well as product and marketing specialists (Machin, 2007: 109). Moreover, according to Machin (2007: 109), the final visual communication, such as an advertisement, would have been decided on at some time during this process in order to convey a particular message or attitude about the social actor in the image. Therefore, it is important to analyse these representations, and how they persuade the reader to attribute particular kinds of meanings to the image (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 70). In order to do this, the semiotic resources used in the creation of the image need to be examined. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 114) state that those "who produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions in different degrees and in different ways, regulate what may be said with images, how it should be said, and how it should be interpreted". Additionally, Machin (2007: 109-110) explains that, when investigating this, a researcher must analyse visual verbs in the same way that a textual analysis using a lexis analysis of verbs is undertaken. He writes that analysing visual verbs prompts the researchers to question, "who has agency", and "who has the ability to act upon the world" (Machin, 2007: 109).

Due to *Facebook* advertisements relying mostly on visuals to construct and formulate meaning, the appearance of the models, "their facial expressions, pose and creative use of colour, font", and so on, are important elements to analyse (Wilton, 2015: 66). In this regard, Van Leeuwen (2008: 138) list three factors that must be considered when conducting an analysis of the representation of social actors in the image. These are, the "gaze (the social interaction between the models and the viewers)", the "angle of interaction (the social relation between the models and the viewers)", and "distance (the social distance between the models and the viewers)" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 138). By analysing these three dimensions, one can ascertain what representations the models are trying to make, and how they are encouraging the reader to attribute particular kinds of meanings to the image.

When investigating gaze / social interaction in an image, the meaning of gaze and of poses of the model in the image are considered. Gaze simply refers to what extent the audience is encouraged to engage with the participants in the advertisement (Machin, 2007: 110). Simplifying Kress and Van Leeuwen's clarification of gaze, Machin and Mayr (2012: 71-74) state that in "a photograph, where a person looks, and how they look, can be one important way of encouraging particular kinds of interpretations and of relationships between viewer and participant". Explaining further, they write, "we show that we appear to have a kind of dictionary of poses in our head that can be drawn upon as reliable signifiers of kinds of attitudes, moods and identity" (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 71-74). Important to consider is whether in the advertisements, the models look upwards, downwards or at the audience. Machin and Mayr (2012: 70-74) state that "all these can be resources for guiding the viewer as to how they should evaluate the participant, even if this is not explicitly stated". Van Leeuwen (2008: 138) further explains that social interaction is determined by if the participant in the image is making eye contact with the audience. According to Van Leeuwen (2008:141), when eye contact occurs, "the picture articulates a kind of visual you, a symbolic demand". The author further elaborates that the people in the picture want something from us – this "is then signified by other elements of the picture such as facial expressions, gestures, and angles" – for example, do "they look down at us or not, or are their bodies angled toward us or not" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 141).

A seminal author to consider when discussing gaze is feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey (1975: 6-18). In her essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), she combines film theory, psychoanalysis, and feminism to describe the heterosexual, male gaze that is present in classical Hollywood films. Influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, which she describes as "political weapons", she states that traditional Hollywood cinema assumes that the viewer is masculine, similar to the male protagonist in the movie, thereby always placing the female in the movie into a position of desire (Mulvey, 1975: 6-18). She explains that these "movies are filmed in ways that satisfy masculine scopophilia" – the sexual satisfaction involved in looking (Mulvey, 1975: 8-14). In the essay, Mulvey (1975: 6-18) criticises the male gaze, and analyses cinematic codes that create an unrealistic representation of pleasure and female beauty. In order to end the male-centric Hollywood system that only provides men with "narrative pleasure", she encourages filmmakers to employ feminist methods in movie production. Even though Mulvey's (1975) scholarship is based on cinema, her essay on the male gaze is important to this study as it forms part of feminist theory, which is presented in the theoretical framework of this dissertation.

The angle of interaction / social relation refers to the angle at which the viewer sees the model. As Machin (2007: 113) explains, all viewers will view the direction of the angle differently, therefore the relationship between the people represented (models) and the viewer will be different for different groups of people, thereby influencing the context of the image. Investigating the angle of the models in the image also takes into account "physical association of being removed from a scene, a moment in time and our physical associations of height and power" (Machin, 2007: 113). Moreover, Van Leeuwen (2008: 139) explains that there are two angles to consider, horizontal and vertical, with Machin (2007: 115) adding a third one, the oblique angle. Both scholars emphasise the importance of the meaning potential of the angles when analysing images. Van Leeuwen (2008: 139) states that the "angles express two aspects of the represented social relation between the viewer and the people in the picture: power and involvement". The horizontal angle refers to the "frontality and profile" of the participants (models) in the image with the viewer either confronting them face to face or feeling detached if

the model is portrayed from a side view or it can create a feeling of togetherness (Machin, 2007: 113-114). Additionally, Van Leeuwen (2008: 139) highlights that the horizontal angle indicates "symbolic involvement or detachment", but the precise meaning will be "coloured" by the specific context the viewer finds themselves in.

The vertical angle considers how the viewer either has to look down or up to the participants in the images which impacts power relations as it influences the way the viewer assesses the relative power of the person in the image (Machin, 2007: 114). In explaining that the vertical angle is related to "power differences", Van Leeuwen (2008: 139) states that "to look down on someone is to exert imaginary symbolic power over that person, to occupy, with regard to that person, the kind of high position which, in real life, would be created by stages, pulpits, balconies, and other devices for literally elevating people in order to show their social elevation". On the flip side, to "look up at someone signifies that someone has symbolic power over the viewer, whether as an authority, a role model, or something else while to look at someone from eye level signals equality" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 139). Lastly, the oblique angle is when the camera positions the models titled – this usually gives an unsettling effect or suggests tension but can also connote energy and movement due to the "playfulness of the angle" (Machin, 2007: 113-115).

In pictures, as in real life, "social distance signifies social relations" (Machin, 2007: 117) or what Van Leeuwen (2008: 138) describes interpersonal relationships. They explain that in real life, we choose who we want to be close to or who we want to keep our distance from and similarly, in pictures, the same is done with distance being articulated in the form of the size of the frame, and either close, medium or long camera shots (Machin, 2007: 117). Simply put, these camera shots can be associated with distance and/ or physical proximity in real life. For example, close-ups imply a sense of closeness between the model and the viewer because the viewer is aware of the model's faces and expressions, making the viewer see the model as an individual whom they can feel close to, while on the other hand, a long camera shot creates distance, therefore creating anonymity and isolation between the model and the viewer (Machin, 2007: 117).

Additionally, Van Leeuwen (2008: 138) highlights how "distance indicates the closeness, literally and figuratively, of relationships – whether such closeness is temporary, lasting the duration of a particular interaction, or more permanent, and whatever more precise meaning it gains in specific contexts".

This concludes the subsection on the representation of social actors in the image. Another multimodal semiotic principle that will be applied during the data analysis is the grammar of colour. An explanation is presented below.

5.4.3 The grammar of colour

Colour is an important element that forms part of the composition and make-up of advertisements, including those created for digital platforms. For most members of society, colour in advertisements, might on the surface, appear to be selected for aesthetic purposes, but colour is also a semiotic resource and there is intentional meaning behind the selection of colours used in adverts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002). According to Machin (2007: 63), the creators of advertisements (sign makers) use certain colours deliberately when producing visual communication to promote a specific type of messaging that is aligned with their product and / or company's ideology. In Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2002; 2006) view, the semiotic mode of colour performs several functions in the making of meaning and can be used to denote ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning, fulfilling all three meta functions. Firstly, the ideational function looks at how colour is used in advertisements to express ideas, addressing the "function of creating representations of the world" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 228). The second meta function, the interpersonal function, considers how colour attempts the "function of enacting (or helping to enact) interactions characterised by specific social purposes and specific social relations" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 228). Lastly, the textual function focuses on the "function of marshalling communicative acts into larger wholes, into the communicative events or texts that realize [sic] specific social practices". (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 228). Additionally, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002; 2006), even though as a communicative mode, colour may not be as well established and articulated as written or verbal language, researchers can still

use it in terms of grammar analysis as there are some "observable rules and regularities". Moreover, resources of colour are often combined with other modes when conducting multi-semiotic analyses therefore colour is a valuable tool for investigating meaning-making (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002: 351).

Machin (2007: 69) explains that Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2002) grammar of colour contributes to meaning-making in two ways. The first is to do with the cultural and historical associations that colour might have. Regarding how meaning is ascertained for colour during an investigation, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002: 355) write that "a plausible interpretation can usually be agreed on as long as the analysis takes into account the context of production and interpretation". The second source for meaning-making is the distinctive features of colour. When analysing the use of colour in an advertisement, the following dimensions of colour must be considered – value (brightness), hue, saturation, differentiation, modulation, luminosity, and purity (Machin, 2007: 69-80).

The dimensions of colour, are summarised below (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002: 354-358) and (Machin, 2007: 68-80).

1. Value (brightness): The meaning potential of this term is found in the fundamental experiences the receiver has with light and dark. Bright colours are associated with truth and good values and dark colours with negative values such as depression, evil, etc. This kind of meaning is only realised with other colour values and semiotic modes.
2. Hue: This considers the scale that ranges from blue through violet, green, yellow, and orange to red. The blue side is associated with meanings such as cold and distance with the opposite side of red meaning warmth and energy.
3. Saturation: This refers to the richness of a colour, and this scale ranges from "intensely saturated" to "pale" or "pastel". Its meaning potential considers the "emotional temperature" of the colour. Less saturated colours are subtle, gentle and peaceful, with intensely saturated colours engaging more with the receiver.
4. Differentiation: This scale looks at whether there is a full range of colours or monochrome and classifies the meaning with low and high differentiation. Low differentiation could mean restraint or classiness and high differentiation could mean energetic or adventurous or brash and lacking in subtly. However, as with the other features, the meaning is made

5 Modulation: The modulation scale is related to the value scale. While value describes the lightness or darkness of a colour, modulation describes the colour's variation in value. The scale ranges from colours that are evenly light or dark, termed flat, to colours with "different tints and shades", termed textured.

6 Luminosity: This scale looks at whether light shines through or is opaque. This value is linked to magic, fantasy, "otherworldliness" and can be found on Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings posters.

7 Purity: This scale runs from purity to hybridity, where your primary/ solid colours are considered pure and the shades in between are considered hybrid and with this there is associated ideology.

in combination with other values.

Additionally, it is significant to note that colour does not have one fixed meaning; it has many different characteristics that influence the way people assign meaning to it. Furthermore, colour schemes are more important than individual colours (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2002 & 2006). This concludes the discussion on the theories of semiotics, discourse, as well as multimodal discourse analysis, and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar.

5.5 Chapter summary

Chapter five has presented the methodological framework that will be used in this study, namely semiotics and the discursive approach. Highlighted in the chapter was how these frameworks are relevant to the study, and how they will be applied to the research investigation based on the *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements concerning female beauty, and whether these retailers prefer western beauty ideals over other forms of beauty.

Having explored theories disseminated by seminal authors such as Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, De Saussure, Fairclough, and Wodak, the chapter proceeded to outline the critical link between semiotic and discursive theory and how a combination of the two are necessary in order to answer the research questions of this study.

To determine how various semiotic modes can be used to construct discourse in advertisements, the framework of multimodal discourse analysis was discussed. Based on scholarship, in

particular by Kress and Van Leeuwen, it was established that this framework is a method of discursive analysis that looks at not just how individual modes communicate, but how they interact with one another to create semiotic meaning.

Following this, the chapter detailed that this study will undertake a multi-semiotic, critical and multimodal discourse analysis in order to investigate the research questions posed. It was explained that Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar will be utilised. The multimodal semiotic principles that form part of the social semiotic framework, which will be applied in this study are, composition of multimodal texts; the representation of social actors in the image; and the grammar of colour. In relation to this, the next chapter will present the research methodology of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodologies that were used to conduct the research aimed at resolving the questions identified in chapter one (Cf. pages 11-13). It begins by explaining that the research design falls into two paradigms, quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative approach accounts for the numerical aspects of the study, while the qualitative approach considers the descriptive attributes such as themes, characteristics, values, opinions, and different levels of denotative, connotative, mythical / ideological meanings revealed in the study. Additionally, it highlights that there is a comparative element to the research investigation as this form of analysis offers possible explanations for similarities and / or differences exposed in the findings.

The chapter then expands on the data collection process, research population, units of analysis and sampling technique. It explains the strategy that is used to collect data and obtain meaning from it in order answer the research questions. In doing so, it details the difference between the primary and secondary data sources that form an integral part of this study. The primary data-set consists of *Facebook* advertisements with female models from *Mr Price* and *H&M*, and the literature review is the secondary data source. The chapter also highlights that purposive sampling was chosen in order to carry out the data collection in a three-year time frame.

Following this, is an explanation of the techniques that are employed to analyse and interpret the data. In explaining how the quantitative, qualitative and comparative analysis will take place, the chapter highlights that the overall data analysis is informed by the literature review. It also explains that the analyses employ approaches based on the study's main theoretical framework, namely cultural studies (Cf. chapter 4), as well as the methodological framework, namely, semiotic theory, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis (Cf. chapter 5). The chapter also details the reliability and validity of the research methods and discusses the researcher's ethical considerations.

6.2 Research design

The aim of this research is to discover whether the *Facebook* advertisements of *H&M* and *Mr Price* promote and perpetuate western and European beauty ideals as the standard beauty ideal in South Africa. In order to do this, the research techniques employed in this investigation will be both, qualitative and quantitative; therefore, the investigation employs a mixed-method research design. As Jennifer Wisdom and John W. Creswell (2013: 1) explain, a mixed-method research approach "advances the systematic integration or mixing of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation". They assert that this approach "allows for a more complete and synergistic utilization [sic] of data" as opposed to a separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013: 1). They, moreover, highlight that a benefit of using a mixed-methods approach is that findings from both quantitative and qualitative data sources can validate each other and produce thorough conclusions. According to Wisdom and Creswell (2013: 2), an appropriate way to carry out a mixed-method research study is to "collect both types of data around the same time; assess information using parallel constructs for both types of data; separately analyse both types of data; and then compare results", which caters for displaying both forms of data analysis and findings.

In light of the aforementioned, this study will also employ a comparative element in its analysis. The choice to include the comparative analysis is based on its significance for this research investigation. By comparing and contrasting a local example (*Mr Price*) of *Facebook* female fashion advertisements to an international one (*H&M*), the findings of the study will be strengthened, thereby contributing to its validity and reliability. According to Frank Esser and Rens Vliegenthart (2017: 1-2), in recent years, the use of comparative research methods in communication science has grown as it offers tremendous prospects for research. They explain that this is because "comparative research offers the opportunity to address a particular set of questions that are of crucial importance for our understanding of a wide range of communicative processes" (Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017: 1-2).

Based on what has been explained thus far, this study's research design is based on a mixed-method approach. This design was selected because it is important to identify the individual features of qualitative and quantitative methods as both "emerge from different paradigms and have different worldviews about the nature of knowledge" (Madlela, 2014: 44). Thereafter, it is also important to compare the findings that result from using these two approaches. Furthermore, a comparative analysis will be undertaken in order to identify recurring patterns and themes which emerged from the mixed-method analysis as they pertain to the research questions. Each research design is discussed below.

6.2.1 Quantitative research design

Modelled on a scientific method of inquiry, a quantitative research design emphasises objective measurements. According to Bryan Greetham (2009: 192), this is possible due to the fact that conclusions are based on statistical findings and empirical data. Scholars working in the field of quantitative analysis explain that in its emphasis on objective measurements, quantitative methods involve the collection and analysis of statistical, mathematical, or numerical data which is generalised "across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon" (USC Libraries *Research Guides*, 2020).

The goal of embarking on quantitative research is to "determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) within a population" (USC Libraries *Research Guides*, 2020). Moreover, according to Daniel Muijs (2011: 11-55), quantitative research designs can either be "non-experimental or descriptive (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment)". A non-experimental study "establishes only associations between variables; and an experimental study establishes causality" (Muijs, 2011: 11-55). According to the USC Libraries *Research Guides* (2020), the main characteristics of a quantitative research design are the following:

1 The data is usually gathered using structured research instruments.
2 The results are based on sample sizes that are representative of the population.

3 The research study can usually be replicated or repeated, given its high reliability.
4 The researcher has a clearly defined research question to which objective answers are sought.
5 All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected.
6 Data are in the form of numbers and statistics, often arranged in tables, charts, figures, or other non-textual forms.
7 Project can be used to generalize [sic] concepts more widely, predict future results, or investigate causal relationships.
8 Researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or computer software, to collect numerical data.

The reason for applying this research design to my investigation is because an overarching aim of a quantitative research is to classify features, count them, and create statistical models in the forms of tables or graphs that will attempt to explain what is observed. Based on this, the quantitative design will be applied to the preselected criteria (Cf. pages 12) that are relevant to the study's research questions and analysis. Additionally, the quantitative design of this investigation is non-experimental, or descriptive, as the numerical findings of the preselected criteria will only be measured once and will be used to augment the findings of the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, as Muijs (2011: 3-4) explains, utilising a quantitative research design, will allow for a form of objectivity in the findings. However, even though such a research design presumes to be objective, and the results may be statistically significant, the quantitative approach lacks the human component of a research investigation, and that is a key reason for why this study also employs a qualitative research design, which is detailed below.

6.2.2 Qualitative research design

In addition to the quantitative design, a qualitative research approach was chosen because it is based on the way in which human experience, and actions related to visual texts in media content, can be interpreted. In this study, the visual texts are the selected *Facebook* advertisements from *Mr Price* and *H&M.* Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 25) explain that "qualitative research has a longstanding history of contributing to an understanding of social structures, behaviours and cultures". In contrast to quantitative research, which is frequently critiqued for its simplistic interpretation of visual components, qualitative research provides precise

descriptions of visual texts, and explores the in-depth reasoning of hidden ideologies (Nina-Pazarzi and Tsangaris, 2008: 31). According to Natasha Mack, Cynthia Woodsong, Kathleen N MacQueen, Greg Guest, and Emily Namey (2005: 1-2), qualitative research is a powerful method of enquiry as it is able to specify "complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Moreover, Mack et al. (2005: 1-2) state that it furnishes data that covers the human side of an investigation. In this regard, it is valuable in detecting intangible factors, such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender roles, religion, and social norms.

Additionally, Quinn Cochran and Michael Patton (2007: 2) explain that qualitative research is "characterised by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life and its methods which generate words" rather than numbers. More simply, unlike quantitative research, the qualitative research approach is more subjective; it is empirical research as the data is not in the form of numbers. Moreover, Greetham (2009: 193) explains that qualitative research takes into account people's thoughts, behaviours, emotions, artefacts and environments, which is then represented in the form of words, feelings, sounds, opinions, pictures and ideas; it helps the researcher to better understand the complex reality of a situation. Given that this study seeks to understand the social reasons behind the imagery and text found in the *H&M* and *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements, a qualitative design is also a suitable technique for this study.

According to Uwe Flick (2009: 12-22), qualitative research is multi-method in focus and operates in a complex historical field. Similarly, to what Cochran and Patton (2007: 2) explain, Flick (2009: 12-22) states "that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to research"; and is a philosophical exploration of hybrid discourses that allows the researcher to study "how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and produced". This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural form with the aim of identifying and interpreting a variety of things with the regards to the meanings people associate them with. Additionally, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005: xii) state "that qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case studies, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts". Furthermore, qualitative researchers utilise several interconnected approaches, hoping

to always get the best solution on the topic being investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 2). Moreover, Flick (2009: 12-22) writes that qualitative research is based on methods of analysis and explanation, and requires an understanding of complexity, detail and context.

As is evident from the above discussion, the qualitative research design is also relevant to this study because it is best suited for a research investigation that explores a hybrid of discourses, such as the ones in this study, i.e. colonialism, apartheid, decoloniality, gender, mass media, the internet and advertising, as well as the social, historical, cultural, and political construct of beauty. Additionally, as Nina-Pazarzi and Tsangaris (2008: 31) highlight, "the quantitative approach does not investigate advertising as an intermediary system between economy, culture and society", therefore it does not take into account various factors and discourse that examine how a person or society could create meaning or interpret visual texts, or why they choose to view these visual texts in the ways that they do. This is an essential point for my study, and therefore, the qualitative approach forms an integral part of the research design. This concludes the discussion on the qualitative approach. Once the quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted, the findings will be subjected to a comparative analysis. This will be done in order to contrast the findings of the two retailers, thereby further authenticating the outcomes of this study. The section that follows details the comparative research design that will be employed in this investigation.

6.2.3 Comparative research design

A comparative research analysis is also employed in this study in order to compare and contrast the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the *Facebook* advertisements of local retailer *Mr Price*, to those of international retailer, *H&M.* The reason for including the comparative component is to examine if there are similarities and / or differences regarding the perpetuation of western beauty ideals in the *Facebook* advertisements of the two retailers.

According to Livingstone (2003: 478) "within the field of media and communications, comparative research – a study that compares two or more nations with respect to some common activity – is much advocated and increasingly conducted". Similarly, Esser and Hanitzsch

(2012), in their book, *Handbook of Comparative Communication Research (2012)*, state that comparison has become one of the most powerful tools used in intellectual inquiry in communication science. They write that this approach to communication science is a valuable research method "for advancing our understanding of communication processes", and "it opens up new avenues of systematic research" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 3-4).

Elaborating further, Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 3) explain that:

> In more and more sub-fields of the communication discipline, comparative research is moving from description to explanation, from simplification to theoretical sophistication, from accidental choice of cases to their systematic selection, and from often anecdotal evidence to methodological rigor [sic]. These advancements clearly speak to the rich potential of the comparative approach to inaugurating new lines in communication research.

According to Livingstone (2003: 478), the "salience of globalization [sic]" has seen an increase in comparative research, as many communication researchers have been encouraged to address the transnational dimensions of cultural institutions and audiences, as is evident with this study.

Elaborating further, Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 5-6) explain:

> Comparative communication research involves comparisons between a minimum of two macro-level units (systems, cultures, markets, or their sub-elements) with respect to at least one object of investigation relevant to communication research. Comparative research differs from non-comparative work in that it attempts to reach conclusions beyond single systems or cultures and explains differences and similarities between objects of analysis against the backdrop of their contextual conditions. Spatial (cross-territorial) comparisons ought to be supplemented wherever possible by a longitudinal (cross-temporal) dimension in order to account for the fact that systems and cultures are not frozen in time but are constantly changing under the influence of transformation processes, such as Americanization [sic], Europeanization [sic], globalization [sic], liberalization [sic], or commercialization [sic]. It seems useful to highlight a third dimension of comparison, the functional (cross-organizational or cross-institutional) comparison.

Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4) state that one of the reasons comparative analysis has become a crucial aspect in communication science research is due to the "need for international comparison in areas where there is a strong relationship between communication phenomena,

on the one hand, and political systems and cultural value systems, on the other". They explain that "this is certainly the case in political communication, media policy and regulation, and development communication, as well as in interpersonal and intercultural communication (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4).

In light of this, as this study seeks to identify whether western and European beauty ideals are perpetuated in the *Facebook* advertisements of a local fashion retailer, *Mr Price*, and an international one, *H&M*, a comparative approach is necessary once the quantitative and qualitative analyses have been concluded. Given that the two retailers are from separate countries and cultures, with *Mr Price* being a South African company, and *H&M* originating in Sweden, comparing the findings from the analyses of both retailer's accounts for the spatial longitudinal dimensions that Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 5-6) discus, thereby addressing differences and similarities beyond single systems and cultures. Moreover, because this study considers historical and current processes such as colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, and decoloniality, as well as the mass media, advertising, social media, gender and feminism, a comparative element will help address the transformation processes that Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 5-6) highlight.

Emphasising that there are benefits that comparative research has in specific areas of communication and media studies, Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4) detail six generic areas in which "comparative research can clearly prove its superiority". The first generic area is "that comparative research is valuable, even indispensable, for establishing the generality of findings and the validity of interpretations derived from single contexts". They explain that this forces researchers to revise their "interpretations against cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4). It is through comparative research that "theories across diverse settings can be tested, and the scope and significance of certain phenomena, which itself is an important strategy for concept clarification and verification", can be evaluated (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4). Moreover, "since the real world cannot be subjected to experimental control, comparison can act as a substitute for experimentation" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4).

The second generic area focuses on how comparative research can help scholars from overgeneralising from their "own, often idiosyncratic, experience" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4). Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4) explain that knowing this helps researchers realise that "western conceptual thinking and normative assumptions underpin much of the work in the communication science field and that imposing them on other cultures may be dangerous". In this regard, Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4) state that the comparative element "can clearly contribute to the development of universally applicable theory, while at the same time, it challenges claims to ethnocentrism or naïve universalism".

The next point, which is the third generic area, is related to the previous one, write Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4). They state that the "default assumption that one's own country could be taken for granted as normal went surprisingly unquestioned in our field for a fairly long time", and in this way the comparative mode of enquiry "can act as a corrective measure in that one of its primary function is to calibrate the scope of our conclusions" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4). Additionally, they explain that comparative analysis provides "exceptional" prospects for communication researchers to challenge existing scholarship and theories in their field (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4).

A fourth generic area is that comparative research helps communication science scholars develop and contextualise the understanding of their own societies. According to Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4), comparison makes researchers "aware of other systems, cultures, and patterns of thinking and acting, casting a fresh light on our own communication arrangements and enabling us to contrast them critically with those prevalent in other societies" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4). They elaborate that without the comparative element, "national phenomena may become naturalized even to the extent that they remain invisible to the domestic-bound researcher" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4).

The fifth point explains how undertaking comparative work aids researchers in fostering international scholarship and sustaining networks of researchers across the world. Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4-5) explain that "it facilitates international exchange of knowledge between

scholars and institutions, including those operating in regions not yet adequately represented in our field". They write that "in treating the world as a global research laboratory, comparative research enables scholars to learn from the experiences of others" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4-5). By doing this, the field of communication science contributes significantly to a global knowledge society. Additionally, they highlight that "this line of research can nurture the discipline's global identity and contribute to its intellectual and theoretical foundation worldwide" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4-5).

According to Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4-5), a final generic area the additional advantage of undertaking comparative research. They explain that it offers a "wealth of practical knowledge and experience" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4-5). They explain that "as we gain access to a wide range of alternative options, problem solutions, and trajectories, comparative research can show us a way out of similar dilemmas or predicaments-as long as these solutions can be adapted to our own national contexts" (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012: 4-5).

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that all six points have value for the comparative analysis that will be undertaken. This is because it aligns to the intentions of this study. In answering the research questions (Cf. pages 11-13), this investigation aims to use the "wealth of practical knowledge and experience" that a comparative analysis offers in order to provide interpretations on cross-cultural differences and inconsistencies; test theories across diverse settings; and highlight alternatives to western conceptual thinking. Moreover, the study intends to challenge existing paradigms in the communication science field; compare and contrasts local systems, cultures, and patterns of thinking to those from other parts of the world; thereby contributing to scholarship on this topic within the communication science discipline.

6.3 Data collection

According the Syed Muhammad Sajjad Kabir (2016: 202) "data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes". He explains that, while methods vary by discipline and fields of study, the emphasis

is on collecting accurate and honest data. This is to ensure that quality evidence is obtained and deciphered into a "rich data analysis", thereby ensuring that there is a "convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed" (Kabir, 2016: 202). Given that this study is quantitative, qualitative and comparative in nature, data is sourced from the literature review as well as the *Facebook* accounts of fashion retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*. This is what Greetham (2009: 200) and Kabir (2016: 205-206) refer to as primary and secondary sources or data. Greetham (2009: 201) classifies primary sources as material that the researcher has collected themselves, and in the case of this study the data-set that I collected over a three-year period are the *Facebook* advertisements from *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Additionally, Greetham (2009: 200-202) explains that secondary data are documents that report, analyse, discuss, or interpret primary sources or other secondary sources. Similarly, Kabir (2016: 205-206) writes that secondary data is "collected from a source that has already been published in any form".

In this study, the literature review, while a secondary source, forms an integral part of my data collection. This is because the information gleaned from the review has guided the preselected criteria used for the quantitative and qualitative analyses. This study's literature review has also directed the sampling process of the investigation, which resulted in the primary data been collected. Both the preselected criteria and sampling process will be explained later in this chapter. Anthony Onwuegbuzie and Rebecca Frels (2016), in their book *Seven Steps to a Comprehensive Literature Review: A Multimodal and Cultural Approach,* further emphasise that the literature review is a form of gathering information for a particular study. They explain that because the word data refers to a body of information, which can be found in a variety of sources such as images, text and video, among others, the information collected as part of the literature review can therefore represent data. Elaborating on their statement, Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016: 49) state:

> As a data collection tool, the literature review involves activities such as identifying, recording, understanding, meaning-making, and transmitting information. Indeed, the literature review process is actualized [sic] through data collection. In its optimal form, the literature review represents a formal data collection process wherein information is gathered in a comprehensive way.

According to Greetham (2009: 202), a literature study allows the researcher to establish what research has already been done in the specific field of study and how a particular subject has been analysed and interpreted by various scholars. Similarly, Kabir (2016: 206) explains that "a clear benefit of using secondary data is that much of the background work needed has already been done". That is evident in this study because presented in the literature review is similar scholarship and case studies that have been carried out. Also, of importance to this research is that, by beginning the investigation with the literature review (even though it is a secondary source), the comparative element of the investigation is also accounted for. As Greetham (2009: 201) advises that it is good practice when using secondary sources is to compare data from different sources, and the interpretation of those who use the same data. Moreover, Kabir (2016: 206) explains that "secondary data can also be helpful in the research design of subsequent primary research and can provide a baseline with which the collected primary data results can be compared to - therefore, it is always wise to begin any research activity with a review of the secondary data".

However, primary data collection is also crucial to any research investigation. Greetham (2009: 205) writes that by gathering primary sources, the researcher is able to tailor the collection methods to meet the precise needs of their research. Kabir (2016: 208) also emphasises this point, explaining that the "key point" about primary sources "is that data collected is unique to the study and until it is published", no one else has access to it. Therefore, primary data is also collected in this study. The primary data for this investigation is the *Facebook* advertisements of retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M.* A detailed explanation of how the data-set was collected will be explained later in this chapter. The data was generated in order to conduct the quantitative and qualitative analyses, which will also be subjected to a comparative analysis. This provides new material and insights into beauty representations of *Facebook* advertisements. In this regard, the research investigation offers original material that has not been documented by other researchers. Additionally, "using primary sources such as the ones used in this study, ensures that up-to-date data is collected" (Kabir, 2016: 208). The main components that are significant

to collecting primary data for this study include the research population, units of analysis and sample. These are detailed in the subsections that follow.

6.4 Research population

According to Nestor Asiamah, Henry Kofi Mensah and Eric Fosu Oteng-Abayie (2017: 1607), "a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that become the main focus of a study". Asiamah et al. (2017: 1607) explain "that the research population has one or more characteristics of interest, and as the primary source of data, the population of any scientific enquiry, can influence research credibility based on the researcher's understanding, definition, and choice of it". They indicate that there is a need for researchers to "sufficiently understand their study population" to ensure credibility of the research. They elaborate further by explaining that "a proper definition or specification of the population is critical because it guides others in appraising the credibility of the sample, sampling technique(s) and outcomes of the research" (Asiamah et al., 2017: 1607).

Asiamah et al. (2017: 1611) define the general population "as an entire group about which some information is required to be ascertained" and is the broader group of people or objects to whom the results of the research will apply. The general population is also a total set of objects, elements and people that have some common characteristic. Due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual person, element or object in that population. In relation to this, it is important for the researcher to understand that the general population can often contain participants or objects "whose inclusion in the study would violate the research goal, assumptions, and/or context" (Asiamah et al., 2017: 1612). In the case of this study, the general population refers to all online advertisements of fashion retailers, therefore as Asiamah et al. (2017: 1612) explain, part of the general population must be "refined"; and in doing so, this process leads to what is known as the target population.

The target population, or the theoretical population, usually has varying characteristics. SAGE Research Methods (2011: 02) explain that the "target population defines the units for which the findings of a survey are meant to generalise". Moreover, "target populations must be specifically

defined, as the definition determines whether sampled cases are eligible or ineligible for the survey" (SAGE Research Methods, 011: 02). The target population for this study would have to be precise, and cannot be all online advertisements of fashion retailers. Therefore, the target population for this study is specified to be the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion retailers. Having established the target population, the next step is to determine the accessible population. A reason for this is found in the book, *Content Analysis An Introduction to its Methodology* by Klaus Krippendorff (2013: 98-125). He explains that for logistical reasons, the whole target population is not always accessible for a research study, and therefore, it has to be downscaled. Krippendorff's (2013: 98-125) reasoning is evident in this investigation, given magnitude and size of the internet, and online media texts like *Facebook* advertisements.

Krippendorff (2013: 98-125) explains that the accessible population is the population in a research investigation to which the researcher can apply their conclusions. The accessible population is also known as the sample from which data is collected. It is a representation of the target population and is the group that a researcher can actually measure. Moreover, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 49), an accessible population is identified by virtue of its relationship with the research questions; therefore, the population must be able to "provide the most relevant, comprehensive and rich information". Therefore, in this study, the accessible population is the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of *Mr Price* and *H&M.* These advertisements were collected from 1 October 2016 to 31 October 2019.

The accessible population highlighted above, also forms the units of analysis for this research. This is because the units of analysis also refer to the major entity that is studied in the research. The selected *Facebook* advertisements of this study are what researchers refer to as social artefacts and are products of social beings or their behaviour; therefore, each one represents a unit of analysis. Each online advertisement will be characterised by its content in relation to objectives of the study (Krippendorff, 2013: 98-125). In relation to what has been presented thus far, the next subsection will explain the sampling technique that was used, and how it aided in the collection of the primary data necessary for this study.

6.5 Sampling

In this study, in order to identify the primary data-set that was collected, and subsequently analysed, a purposive sampling technique was employed. Mack et al. (2005: 5) explain that this form of sampling is based on preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Additionally, according to the Laerd Dissertation website (2012), purposive sampling is described "as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling that relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g. people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied". Guided by this explanation, a sample of visual texts were chosen based on preselected criteria relevant to the study's research questions. The criteria include, race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary.

Moreover, as the sample was collected over a three-year period, it can be described as a relatively small sample, which is how samples selected as part of purposive sampling are often described. Furthermore, because the sample are *Facebook* advertisements selected from the retailers' social media profiles, purposive sampling is preferred. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 78) explain why:

> Sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study … The units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or groups within the sampled population.

Additionally, the *Facebook* advertisements selected in this study are indicative of homogeneous sampling, a technique that forms part of the purposive sampling process. This technique insists that the sample must share a set of characteristics which "allow for a detailed investigation of social processes in a specified context" (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 78). In this regard, the sample which forms the basis for this research investigation, was selected because they share a set of characteristics which was informed by the literature review. They were chosen to give a "detailed picture of a particular phenomenon which also allows for a detailed investigation of social processes in a specified context" (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 78). The characteristics are:

1   The *Facebook* advertisements selected in this study contain photos of Black and white female models in specific advertising campaigns.
2   The photos do not include children and men.
3   The advertisements selected are not from posts related to fashion news, and feature news items on fashion, or posts that included celebrities, socialites, and fashion bloggers.
4   The advertisements are of still images, and do not include video and audio as they are selected from the photo gallery of the retailers' *Facebook* accounts.
5   Photos that depict behind the scenes of advertising campaigns are not considered in this study.

Based on the aforementioned, the following process was undertaken. I first decided that the *Facebook* advertisements of female models for *Mr Price* and *H&M* will be collected over a three-year period from 1 October 2016 to 31 October 2019. This equals to 37 months. I chose this time frame to collect my samples due to the controversial launch of *H&M i*n South Africa in late 2015 (Cf. pages 1-2), which spiralled over into the following years. Additionally, in this time frame, there were various political, cultural and social discourses taking place around race and decoloniality in this time frame, and therefore this time period was well suited to this study (Cf. pages 3-5). The images collected were chosen from the retailers' social media profiles, namely their South African *Facebook* profile accounts, *@southafricahm* and *@MRPFASHION*. Due to rapidly evolving technology and the complex and sophisticated make-up of the *Mr Price* and *H&M* social media profile accounts, it is important to clarify that the advertisements collected for data analysis formed part of the regular posts made by the retailers on their *Facebook* profile accounts. More specifically, the advertisements collected were chosen from the photo gallery of the retailers' *Facebook* accounts, and not from the *Facebook Ads/ Sponsored Content* which appear directly in a user's news feeds, alongside status updates, photos, and videos from their friends.

I then carried out the following steps for each *Facebook* account. I opened the *H&M* and *Mr Price Facebook* profile pages and clicked on the Photos Tab situated on the left-hand side of the webpage. The images then appear on the webpage in a tabulated gallery format. I then scrolled down to 1 October 2016 and clicked on the image that was posted on the *Facebook* profile account on that day. Once that image had opened into a large and singular format on the

webpage, I took a screenshot of it, and filed it into a folder that I created entitled, *H&M* Photos Data Analysis folder and *Mr Price* Photos Data Analysis folder, respectively. Instead of returning back to the tabulated gallery format of the images, I then clicked on the arrow positioned on the left side of the image in order to move onto the next image. Once I clicked onto the next image, I then proceeded to take a screenshot of it, and filed it, as I did with the first advertisement. I repeated this process until I reached the date of 31 October 2019.

In addition to the above, I also took screenshots of the tabulated gallery format of *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* photos found under the Photos Tab. This was to ensure that there was a coherent structure to my sample selection. Due to the technicalities of how *Facebook* accounts are designed, there is a possibility that I might have not accounted for all advertisements during my first selection process. However, when I consulted the screenshots of the tabulated *Facebook* gallery format, all of the images, based on this study's selection criteria, were accounted for.

Following this process, I then printed the screenshots of all these adverting posts. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the preliminary data collection sample consisted of 995 advertisement posts – 595 advertisements from *Mr Price* and 400 from *H&M.* Based on the preselected criteria and characteristics gleaned from the literature review, I then sieved through these 995 advertisements to downsize the sample. After I had printed the 995 *Facebook* advertisements, based on the preselected criteria already highlighted, I then chose one advertisement per retailer per month. This totalled 74 advertisements. Added to this were an additional 36 advertisements out of 995 advertisements from both *Mr Price* (18) and *H&M* (18)*.* These advertisements were selected because the audience comments in the comments section of the images were of a political, social and cultural nature and matched this study's preselected criteria and characteristics.

Therefore, a total number of 110 sample advertisements were selected during the downsizing stage (Addenda A and B). These 110 advertisements were subjected to the quantitative analysis. Following this, using the same preselected criteria, 10 advertisements – five from each retailer – were selected from the downsized sample of 110 advertisements and were subjected to the

qualitative data analysis. Both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses, findings and discussion will be presented in the chapters that follow. This concludes the sampling subsection which explained how the primary data-set for this study was collected. The next step is to focus on how the data will be analysed and interpreted.
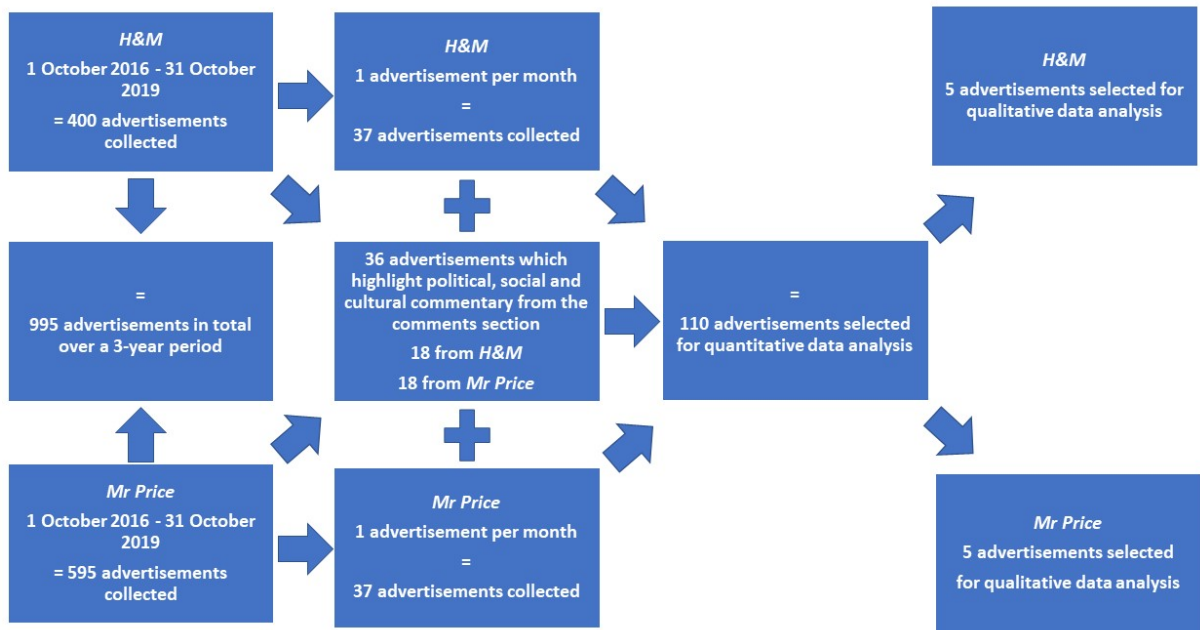
Figure 4.1: Chart depicting the order of the data collection process of the Facebook advertisements

6.6 Data analysis and interpretation

This subsection provides a description of how the data was analysed and interpreted in this research study. In order to interpret the research findings, the data was subjected to a quantitative, qualitative and comparative analysis. The overall data analysis was guided by the literature review (Cf. chapters 2 and 3), the study's main theoretical framework, namely cultural studies (Cf. chapter 4), as well as the methodological framework (Cf. chapter 5). The study's data analysis and interpretation thereof, is aligned to Hall's (2013: xxii) assessment of how semiotic

and discursive approaches influence the language used in texts such as advertisements, thereby impacting how culture and representation work.

The first analysis conducted is the quantitative analysis. Presented here are the numerical findings of the selected *Facebook* advertisements, which are based on the preselected criteria and characteristics listed in the previous subsections (Cf. page 12). In order to explain what has been analysed, the quantitative research investigation classifies the preselected criteria, and counts them, presenting the numerical findings in statistical models in the forms of tables and graphs. The measurements from this study's quantitative analysis is used to augment the findings of the qualitative analysis.

Following the quantitative research investigation is the qualitative analysis. As discussed in chapter five (Cf. page 137), Hall (2013: xxii) explains that semiotics is the science and study of signs and symbols, and is concerned with the "how" of representation. In relation to this, the multi-semiotic approach, that is multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), informed by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar, will be used for qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

Hall (2013: xxii) also explains that the discursive approach looks at the "effects and consequences" of representation, emphasising that it is a "significant shift of direction in our knowledge of society" allowing researchers to gain a deeper understanding of history, and the politics of meaning and issues in relation to power (Hall, 2013: xxii). In this regard, the analytical approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be used in this study to analyse an interpret data.

Therefore, the following steps will be taken:

1 The visual texts (*Facebook* advertising post) are identified and selected based on the criteria outlined earlier.
2 The most important signifiers are identified and described, accounting for the denotative design of the selected visual text (*Facebook* advertising post).

3   The major sign systems these signifiers belong to are identified by exploring the connotative meaning of the selected visual text (*Facebook* advertising post).

4   The semiotic codes are used in the text are described.

5   The myth and ideological meanings in the selected visual text (*Facebook* advertising post) are explained.

Based on these steps, the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *H&M* and *Mr Price* will be analysed and interpreted according to themes in order to attain the most significant explanation of how the semiotic elements used in the advertisements work together to influence power, ideology and politics, thereby influencing beauty ideals in South Africa. Crucial to the analysis and interpretation process, is the understanding that while MDA and CDA have different focuses, the combination of the two is considered a substantially effective method of interrogating the true nature of advertising texts. This is explained by Ke Liu and Fang Guo (2016: 1082):

> Although these two strands of discourse studies have different focuses towards discourse analysis, as MDA mainly investigates different modes' meaning-making potential, their practical usage and interactions with each mode and with the social and cultural context, while CDA put more emphasize on exploring the relationship between language and power by studying how social ideologies are revealed from discourses, they do share some fundamental understandings, as both MDA and CDA view discourse as social and is interactive with certain social context.

In relation to the above, Wilton (2015: 82) states that the MDA and CDA "jointly have the ability to identify how different semiotic performances are specifically deployed to evoke desired effects from audiences and contribute to dominant narratives and ideologies imposed by power structures". Therefore, combining the MDA and CDA approaches can only strengthen the data analysis and interpretation process.

Once the quantitative and qualitative analyses are done, a comparative analysis of the findings from both retailers will be conducted. This method of analysis is employed to compare and contrast both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the two retailers in order to identify the differences and / or similarities (Greetham, 2009: 36). As explained earlier (Cf. pages 173-177), adding a comparative element to this research investigation helps to ascertain how the findings

of each retailer, correlate with the other. In an effort to achieve this, the following four steps will be carried out in this study. The steps are informed by Esser and Rens Vliegenthart's book, *Comparative Research Methods in Mass Communications: An overview (2018)*. According to Esser and Vliegenthart (2018: 6), because communication research is a "combination of substance (specific objects of investigation studied in different macro-level contexts) and method (identification of differences and similarities following established rules and using equivalent concepts)", these steps provide a practical way for researchers to navigate the comparative analysis (Esser & Rens Vliegenthart, 2018: 6).

The first step involves the description of differences and similarities. Therefore, this research investigation provides contextual descriptions of systems, cultures and processes such as the history of South Africa, colonialism, and imperialism, among others, aligned to the research objectives. This is to enhance understanding and my ability to interpret diverse communication arrangements. Moreover, by providing these detailed descriptions, it will contribute to knowledge about topics and facts that may be important for explaining similarities and differences during the comparative analysis.

Esser and Vliegenthart (2018: 6-7) explain that the second step must consider the knowledge necessary for recognising functional equivalents across systems or cultures. This means that the specific objects and concepts of analysis must have the same function or role, and that is the way that it can be meaningfully compared to each other. In the case of this study, this refers to the *Facebook* advertisements of the two retailers, the local one, *Mr Price*, and the international one, *H&M*. These advertisements, even though they are from different retailers who originate from different parts of the world, the target audience for both retailers are South African females, and due to the mass medium through which they are communicating their messages, *Facebook*, the objects and concepts of analysis are considered as performing the same function and / or role.

The third step supports steps one and two as it considers the *classifications and typologies* that must be established. According to Esser and Vliegenthart (2018: 7), "classifications seek to reduce the complexity of the world by grouping cases into distinct categories with identifiable and

shared characteristics". They state that "key characteristics that allow for a theoretically meaningful differentiation between systems or cultures serve as dimensions to construct a classification scheme" (Esser and Vliegenthart, 2018: 7). Additionally, Esser and Vliegenthart (2018: 7) explain that typologies are "considered the beginning of a theory on a subject matter, such as media systems, and can help to classify cases in terms of their similarities and differences".

The final step in the comparative analysis is explanation. Esser and Vliegenthart (2018: 7) write that "once things have been described and classified, the comparativist can move on to search for those factors that may help explain what has been described and classified". In my study, this is when the research questions posed in chapter one will be explained and answered. The explanation, description and classification made in relation to the findings of this investigation will also identify and highlight key information. Not only will this knowledge speak to the study's research objective, but it will also contribute to scholarship in the communication science field on beauty ideals in South Africa. This could prove useful for future research by scholars from this country as well as other countries facing similar challenges regarding the perpetuation of western and European beauty features in mass media.

6.7 Reliability and validity in quantitative, qualitative and comparative research

Given that the study employs a mixed-methods research approach, measuring reliability and validity will consider two perspectives. The first perspective is focused on reliability and validity in relation to quantitative research. According to Roberta Heale and Alison Twycross (2015), reliability and validity work in conjunction with each other. Validity in quantitative research is the extent to which a concept is accurately measured, and by stating that a measurement is valid, the researcher is also confirming its reliability. In this study, the instrument of measurement for quantitative research is the analysis quantifying the preselected criteria in relation to the study's research questions. This will be applied to the *Facebook* advertisements for *H&M* (55 advertisements), and *Mr Price* (55 advertisements) (Cf. chapters 7 and 8).

According to Du Plooy (2009: 135-137), there are four types of validity – (1) face validity; expert jury validity; criterion-based validity; and construct validity. Based on her explanations of these four types of validity, criterion-based validity is most suited for the quantitative research in this study. Du Plooy (2009: 135-137) describes this form of validity as an instrument that measures the same variable. Following this, correlations are done to determine the extent to which the different instruments measure the same variable. In applying this to my study, the correlations will be done between the quantitative analysis of the preselected criteria, and the qualitative multi-semiotic, critical and multimodal discourse analysis. In doing this, the study will determine reliability, as it will confirm the consistency of the measurements.

Concerning reliability and validity in qualitative research, Hilla Brink (1993: 35) explains that the focus is on the ability and effort of the researcher to demonstrate the trustworthiness of their data. She states that the nature of qualitative research is not dependent on statistical or empirical calculations of validity, therefore reliability and validity within a qualitative study centres on aspects of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity (Brink, 1993: 35).

In this study a qualitative multi-semiotic, critical and multimodal discourse analysis of 10 *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of clothing stores, *Mr Price* and *H&M* will be carried out (Cf. chapter 8). Brink (1993: 35) states that when carrying out such an analysis, the researcher must have consistent responses or habits when analysing the data to ensure reliability and validity. However, there are concerns with reliability in qualitative research. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 270-271) comment that reliability is focused on the replicability of the study undertaken, and whether it will be able to produce the same results if repeated using the same or similar methods. Therefore, the concerns are centred on the extent to which replication can occur. Due to these concerns, experts in this field rely on "similar issues, using terms and concepts that are felt to have greater resonance with the goals and values of qualitative research" (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 270-271).

In terms of validity, Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 273-276) state that it is important for the researcher to question whether they are accurately reflecting the subject matter they are studying as perceived by the study population. Because qualitative research involves humans understanding humans, validity can be a complicated concept, but there are techniques to establish a reasonable level of validity. Examples of such techniques include, having a good moderator, abiding by ethical principles, looking at research from multiple perspectives, and actively seeking alternative measures.

For the purposes of the qualitative analysis, to showcase validity and reliability, I will focus on trustworthiness, confirmability, credibility, authenticity, and dependability, when discussing criteria for evaluating the scientific merit of qualitative research (Brink, 1993: 35). In ensuring that these qualities exist within my study, and that I am able to demonstrate them, I need to be aware of my bias to safeguard the research process, and ensure findings are carried out fairly. This is linked to the point that Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 270-273) make about reflexivity, which is a useful technique in qualitative research. Even though, in qualitative research, the researcher does not have to claim objectivity, it is my responsibility as a researcher to identify honest answers to the research questions posed. Therefore, reflexivity must be the attitude that I adopt when collecting and analysing the data. My bias must not influence the research process I have undertaken. In order to ensure trustworthiness, confirmability, credibility, authenticity, and dependability, I will embark on the following:

1 Keep a journal, call it the reflexive journal and document reflections of what is happening in the research process, with regard to my values and interests.

2 Utilise multiple methods, data sources and theories in order to have a more complete understanding of what I am researching and to ensure robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed research findings.

3 Undertake persistent observation and pursue various viewpoints and approaches derived from the literature.

4 Peer debriefing, taking into account the perceptions, insights, analyses and interpretations after sharing my findings with an authority in this subject matter.

It is also important to highlight that the comparative element of this research investigation enhances reliability and validity of the study. According to Esser and Hanitzsch (2012: 4), the very nature of comparative research establishes reliability and validity. This is because researchers by comparing and contrasting two or more caste studies are able to thoroughly test, evaluate and verify their research, thereby ensuring reliability and validity of the research. This section explained the reliability and validity method that will be carried out in this mixed-methods research project. The next section to be discussed ties in adequately with this one as it explores the ethical considerations of the research and researcher.

6.8 Ethical considerations

To guarantee that my research is conducted in an ethically sound manner, I will ensure that all data collected is reflected in the research and that no changes are made to the data. I will, moreover, acknowledge the sources of the data throughout the research, as well as in the list of references. Greetham (2009: 128) states that work done by others raises ethical issues of citing and plagiarism and that the researcher has an ethical responsibility to draw a clear distinction between their own work and that of others.

I will practice integrity and honesty during the research process when working with the *Facebook* advertisements, and literature, ensuring that the information is not misconstrued to suit a specific agenda, but utilised to find evidence that supports the research objectives. My actions are informed by what Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 80) state about purposive sampling, especially when there is qualitative research involved:

> This should not suggest any bias in the nature of the choices made. The process of purposive sampling requires clear objectivity so that the sample stands up to independent scrutiny. So although the researcher or funders may well have hypotheses they want to test, the opportunity for these to be proved or disproved needs to be equal.

Additionally, I will follow the three core principles from *The Belmont Report* (Mack et al., 2005: 09), which are respect for persons, beneficence and justice. Although these ethical principles apply to researchers who are conducting studies with participants, they can also be applied to

my research. Firstly, there must be respect for the literature and data being analysed; secondly, there must be a commitment to minimising the risks, and maximising the benefits associated with the research in order for the community to benefit from the findings that will be produced; and thirdly, there must be a commitment to fair distribution of the knowledge gained from this study.

This study will be conducted in full compliance with the ethical requirements as specified by the Policy for Research Ethics of Unisa (University of South Africa, 2007).

6.9 Chapter summary

This chapter put forward the research methodology and emphasised its importance in solving the research problem. The design of the research is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, with a comparative analysis element. Therefore, it is classified as a mixed-methods approach. The quantitative design is used to provide numerical findings while the qualitative design focuses on human experience, and how actions related to visual texts in media content, can be interpreted. The comparative analysis is a crucial component to this research investigation as it is necessary to compare the findings of the local retailer, *Mr Price*, to an international one, *H&M*, in order to identify similarities and / or differences. The comparative element in the analysis allows for a further authentication of the findings.

The research population and units of analysis have also been discussed. Purposive sampling was described as the preferred sampling technique as it is based on preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The primary data collected for this research investigation is in the form of *Facebook* advertisements of female models of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. The literature review, which is the secondary data source, also forms part of the data collection.

The data was collected from the period of 1 October 2016 to 31 October 2019. Following this, in order to downscale the sample, one advertisement per month per retailer is selected, which totals 74 advertisements. Added to this is a further 36 advertisements that were selected based on the audience comments in the comments section. These were of a political, social and cultural

nature and matched this study's preselected criteria and characteristics. This brought the downscaled sample to 110 advertisements. These 110 advertisements were subjected to the quantitative analysis. From this downsized sample, aligned to the preselected criteria and characterises, 10 advertisements – five from each retailer – were subjected to the qualitative analysis.

This chapter also discussed the techniques that are employed to analyse and interpret the data. The reason for using the selected methods to analyse and interpret data has been detailed. Discussed is the appropriateness of the numerical findings ascertained from a quantitative analysis, as well as the analytical approaches of MDA and CDA, in soliciting answers to the research questions. Also explained were the steps that would be taken in order to conduct the comparative analysis. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of quantitative, qualitative and comparative research, as well as the ethical considerations were explored. The next chapter will present the quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER 7: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

The goal of this investigation is to assess how female beauty ideals in South Africa are represented in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Additionally, the study seeks to examine whether these retailers, through the use of various semiotic and discursive practices, propagate western and European ideals of feminine beauty as the standard of beauty in the country.

Underpinned by the theories of cultural studies, critical race and decoloniality, as well as feminism, and the methodological approaches of semiotics and discourse analysis, the data will be subjected to a quantitative as well as a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis based on data collected from the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. Finally, the results of the analysis of both retailers will be compared in order to authenticate and validate the research findings from both retailers and draw conclusions. According to Adi Bhat (2019), the data analysis stage is an important process in any study as it helps researchers to reduce data from "large chunks" into smaller fragments that makes sense in order to present it to others. Bhat (2019) explains that researchers rely heavily on the data analysis as they have a story to tell or problems to solve. Offering a more detailed explanation, Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen (1998:157) note that:

> Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing [sic] them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing [sic] them, searching for patterns, discovering that is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others.

The data selected for the quantitative and qualitative analysis is based on preselected criteria that is based on the literature review, and which is outlined earlier in this study (Cf. page 12). There was first a preliminary data collection that consisted of 995 advertisements – 400 advertisements from *H&M* and 595 from *Mr Price*. This was then streamlined into a smaller

sample. In line with the preselected criteria and characteristics, one advertisement per retailer per month was selected from these 995 advertisements. This means that there were 37 advertisements from each retailer that were selected when narrowing the scope of the sample. This reduced the sample size to 74 advertisements. However, when combing through the preliminary data, there were an additional 36 advertisements from both *Mr Price* (18) and *H&M* (18) that were selected because of the commentary in the comments section, which was of a political, social and cultural tone, and which matched the preselected criteria and characteristics. These advertisements were, consequently, added to the sample. Based on this explanation, the total number of sample advertisements that were selected during the streamlining stage are 110 advertisements (55 advertisements from each retailer).

It is important to highlight that the data analyses are presented in three separate chapters. Explained first will be the quantitative analysis of the 110 *Facebook* advertisements from *Mr Price* and *H&M.* Nine categories are developed and the data coded. Tables are used to present the statistical data. In order to gain an in-depth interpretation of the visuals and text used in the *Facebook* advertisements, the chapter that follows details a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis analysis. For this analysis, 10 out of the 110 advertisements (five from each retailer), aligned to the preselected criteria, are selected. Lastly, the findings of the comparative analysis will be presented based on the outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

7.2 Advertising profiles of *Mr Price and H&M*

As an introduction to the quantitative analysis of both retailers, a brief description of the retailers' advertising and marketing strategies are outlined below. This is followed by a presentation of the research findings in the form of tables, pie charts and discussion.

7.2.1 Advertising profile of *Mr Price*

The *Mr Price Group* is a South African value fashion retailer. Originating in the city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, the company sells mainly own-brand products, and is one of the nation's largest

clothing retailers and consists of an apparel division and a home division. The *Mr Price Group* (2018) states that their vision is "to be a top-performing omni-channel retailer". Their purpose is "to add value to our customers' lives and worth to our partners' lives, while caring for the communities and environments in which we operate" (*Mr Price Group*, 2018). According to Aaron Orendorff (2018), an omni-channel retail strategy is an "approach to sales and marketing that provides customers with a fully-integrated shopping experience by uniting user experiences from brick-and-mortar to mobile-browsing and everything in between". He also explains that omni-channel retail "focuses on every customer interaction and their overall experience of your product and brand" (Orendorff, 2018).

According to the *Mr Price Group* website (2014: 1), one of the main target audiences is the "younger customers in the mid to upper living standards measure categories". They explain that *Mr Price* clothing defines itself as a "bunch of fashion obsessed individuals who know how to save a buck or two" (*Mr Price*: 2017). Their belief is that "fashion is for everyone", which is why they claim to offer the latest looks and outstanding value. The website states: "Whether you're after the need-it-now trend or an everyday essential, you'll be sure to find it at MRP. From clothing and shoes, to sleepwear and accessories, we've got the whole family covered" (*Mr Price*: 2017). The *Mr Price Group* states that they are "conscious about creating a longer lasting impact on the world"; therefore, they are invested in having meaningful partnerships with their community and customers. In order to do this, one of their focuses have been a marketing shift towards in-store, digital and social media (*Mr Price*: 2014: 27). The company drives the message of people, passion, performance and positivity as indicated on their website (*Mr Price:* 2018):

> Passion means ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It's our engine and the positive attitude and enthusiasm of all our associates who approach each day smiling and projecting a positive image – believing that work is fun.

Moreover, the website states that the *Mr Price Group* is "actively taking steps to improve our processes and make a positive difference within our global community".

7.2.2 Advertising profile of *H&M*

According to the *H&M Group* website (2019), their vision and strategy is to "democratise" fashion, making it sustainable for as many people as possible, for many years to come. The website states that the advertising of *H&M* campaigns is one of the many ways in which the group communicates their business ideas. According to the *H&M* marketing team, they work with some of the world's best photographers, models and style icons, to achieve their goal of inspiring a wide and diverse target group across their 61 markets. Some of the countries in which the company operates in are India, Russia, China, Taiwan, Peru, Portugal, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Belgium, and Switzerland. The *H&M Group* (2019) state that it is essential for their marketing to convey a "positive image". They explain that they "don't aim to communicate any specific ideal, but rather a large range of styles and attitudes" (*H&M Group*: 2019).

H&M Group's advertising campaigns are constructed in-house at their head office in Stockholm, Sweden. According to the *H&M* Group website (2019), this is done by the marketing department in co-operation with creative professionals located in the major fashion centres of the world. The website further explains that the "campaigns are designed to be clear and simple and aim to inform their customers of what is new at *H&M*" (*H&M Group*: 2019). They state that all the campaigns showcase the season's designs, and the price of the clothes pictured. They write that all the advertisements that are produced are "largely identical in all of their markets, however, the media strategy is adapted to local requirements and conditions" (*H&M Group*: 2019). The *H&M Group* (2019) stresses that each season they "strive" for feature models with "different looks, styles and cultural backgrounds to advertise their conceptions for women, men, teenagers and children". According to them, the "models are selected in collaboration between internationally recognised agencies, and their own representatives". The *H&M* Group (2019*)* explains that, outlined in their advertising policy, is the importance for models to depict and "portray the current fashion in a positive and healthy manner" (*H&M Group*: 2019).

Taking into account the above outline on the *Mr Price* and *H&M* marketing and advertising strategies, which claim to contribute positively to the fashion industry and the community they serve, which in the case of this study are South African citizens, this data analysis employs both these advertising and marketing assertions. It will consider if *Mr Price* and *H&M* have delivered on their objectives based on the analysis of the sample *Facebook* advertisements during the period of 1 October 2016 to 31 October 2019. In relation to this, the subsection that follows presents the quantitative findings of the 110 sample advertisements – 55 from each retailer.

7.3 Tables of the *Mr Price and H&M* quantitative analysis

As highlighted earlier, quantitative analysis was used to analyse data from a sample of 55 *Facebook* advertisements from *Mr Price*. Nine categories were defined based on the preselected criteria, namely race, hair colour, hair length, hairstyle, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary. Following this, the data was coded, and the percentages were calculated. These results are presented in the tables below.

7.3.1 Tables of the *Mr Price* quantitative analysis

Table 7.1: Racial breakdown of models in the 55 *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)			
Total models featured: 66			
Black	32		
White	33		
Unclear/Not Visible	1	"black"	16
		"coloured"	15
		"indian/asian" and Indian/Asian	0
		unclear / other race grouping in the Black category	1

Table 7.2: Beauty traits showcased by models in the 55 *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)											
Total models featured: 66											
Hair colour		**Hair length**		**Hair style**		**Body Type**		**Skin tone**		**Height**	
blonde	18	Long / medium	45	natural African / frizzy / curly	27	slim	65	light	40	tall	-
brown/ dark	42	short	15	straight / wavy	36	Muscular / athletic	-	medium	13	short	-
other / unclear	6	unclear / not visible	6	unclear / not visible	3	plus size / full figured	1	dark	10		
								unclear/ not visible	3		
Totals	**66**		**66**		**66**		**66**		**66**	**Unable to determine**	

Table 7.3: Traditional African attire versus western attire showcased by models in the 55 *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)	
Total models featured: 66	
Western attire: 55 out of 55 advertisements	**Traditional African attire:** 0 out of 55 advertisements

Table 7.4: Political, social and cultural commentary in the 55 *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)	
Advertisements with comments: 21 out of 55 advertisements	**Advertisements without comments**: 34 out of 55 advertisements

7.3.2 Tables of the *H&M* quantitative analysis

Table 7.5: Racial breakdown of models in the 55 *H&M Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)			
Total models featured: 90			
Black	51		
White	39		
Unclear/Not Visible	-	"black"	28
		"coloured"	-
		"indian/asian" and Indian/Asian	7
		unclear / other race grouping in the Black category	16

Table 7.6: Beauty traits showcased by models in the 55 *H&M Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)											
Total models featured: 90											
Hair colour		**Hair length**		**Hair style**		**Body Type**		**Skin tone**		**Height**	
blonde	22	Long / medium	56	natural African / frizzy / curly	50	slim	75	light	44	tall	-
brown/ dark	61	short	30	straight / wavy	40	Muscular / athletic	2	medium	32	short	-
other / unclear	7	unclear / not visible	4	unclear / not visible	-	plus size / full figured	10	dark	7		
						unclear / not visible	3	unclear/ not visible	7		
Totals	**90**		**90**		**90**		**90**		**90**	**Unable to determine**	

Table 7.7: Traditional African attire versus western attire showcased by models in the 55 *H&M Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)	
Total models featured: 90	
Western attire: 54 out of 55 advertisements	**Traditional African attire:** 1 out of 55 advertisements

Table 7.8: Political, social and cultural commentary in the 55 *H&M Facebook* advertisements (selected sample texts)	
Advertisements with comments: 18 out of 55 advertisements	**Advertisements without comments**: 37 out of 55 advertisements

7.4 Discussion on the *Mr Price and H&M* quantitative analysis

An overall snapshot of the 595 *Mr Price* posts (from 1 October 2016 – 31 October 2019) reveals that the retailer's official advertising campaigns, while locally produced, and equally inclusive of Black and white models, does have a preference for very young, and very thin models. This however might be indicative of their target audience, which they explain are "younger customers in the mid to upper living standards measure categories" (Cf. page 197). The *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements also include posts on celebrity culture and trends, but their advertisements are very western and Eurocentric in nature, with these beauty characteristics emphasised, and the beauty features of other cultures, seldom featured.

Considering, the 400 *H&M* advertisements (from 1 October 2016 – 31 October 2019), a general glimpse indicates that while the retailer's advertising campaigns use mostly European and western looking models, and also have a European and western aesthetic preference, there are instances of inclusions of other cultures, Black models, celebrities, socialites and other professionals in the images used in their *Facebook* account. This appears to align to their vision and strategy to "democratise" fashion, making it sustainable for as many people as possible (*H&M Group*: 2019).

Zooming in on the 55 sample texts of the local retailer, *Mr Price* (Table 7.1), the analysis revealed that 33 out of the 66 models in the *Facebook* advertisements are white, 32 are Black, and the race group of one of the models is not visible. Regarding the analysis of the 55 *H&M* sample texts (Table 7.5), it would appear that the use of Black models outnumbered the white models, with 51 of the models in the *Facebook* advertisements being Black, and 39 white. While these figures point to Black models being featured more equally, it is important to note that in this study, the definition of Black includes South African "coloured", South African "black", South African "indian", as well non-South African Asian, Indian, and Black models (Cf. pages 5-7). Therefore, if one had to break down the numbers for the models that fall into the Black group, the number of the white models would then be higher in comparison to every group within the Black category.

Based on the above, in the case of *Mr Price,* out of the 32 Black models featured, 16 were "black"; 15 were "coloured"; and one model formed part of the unclear/other race grouping in the Black category because only her hand was visible. Therefore, I could not determine which Black group she belonged to. Additionally, there were no "indian/asian" and Indian/Asian (Cf. pages 5-7) models in the *Mr Price* sample texts.

The *H&M* results indicated that out of 51 Black models, 28 were "black"; and seven were "indian/asian" and Indian/Asian (Cf. pages 5-7). In the *H&M* analysis, based on the retailer's assertion that they use mostly international models (Cf. pages 198), the study was unable to determine which of the Black models fell into the South African "coloured" group unlike in the *Mr Price* analysis in which this was easily identifiable. Therefore, the 16 other Black models were included in the unclear/other race grouping in the Black category.

With regards to the beauty traits of the models in the 55 *Mr Price* (Table 7.2) and 55 *H&M* (Table 7.6) *Facebook* advertisements, the following beauty descriptors were identified and categorised: hair colour; hair length, hairstyle, body type; skin tone; and height. Concerning hair colour, the *Mr Price* analysis revealed that 18 out of the 66 models had blonde hair (including one Black model), with the majority of the models (42 out of 66) having brown/dark hair. The hair colour

of six of the models from the *Mr Price* sample could not be identified due to the images being in black and white, or their heads and faces being covered with clothes, or the top if their heads being cropped in the images.

In the case of *H&M,* 22 out of 90 models (including three Black women) had blonde hair and similarly to *Mr Price*, most of the models had brown/dark hair – 61 out of 90 models. There were seven models out of 90 photographed in black and white images in the *H&M* sample, and therefore, their hair colour could not be established.

In terms of the hair length, 45 out of the 66 *Mr Price* models had long/medium hair; 15 out of 66 had short hair; and the hair length of six of the models was unclear. The latter statistic is because the heads and faces of the models were either not visible in the images or they had hairstyles that prevented the hair length from being determined. The *H&M* analysis revealed that 56 out of 90 models had long/medium hair; 30 out of 90 had short hair; and the hair length of four models could not be determined for similar reasons to the ones highlighted in the Mr Price analysis.

The findings of the models' hairstyles indicated that, in the *Mr Price* advertisements, 36 out of 66 models had straight/wavy hair (including three Black models); 27 out of 66 had natural African/ frizzy/curly hair; and the hairstyle of three models were not visible. In these three cases, the hairstyle is not visible due to the following, the researcher was unable to see the heads and faces in the images; they had hairstyles that prevented the hair length from being determined; their faces and heads were covered with clothes; and the top if their heads were cropped in the images. The findings for *H&M* revealed that 40 out of 90 models had straight/wavy hair; and 50 out of 90 had natural African/frizzy/curly hair.

In relation to body type and skin tone, the *Mr Price* analysis indicated that 65 out of 66 models were slim (there was only one model that was plus size/full figured and she was modelling underwear); 40 out of 66 models were light skinned (this category included the white models), 13 were medium in complexion, and 10 were dark-skinned models.

With regards to *H&M,* the results were slightly more varied. There were 75 out of 90 models that were slim, with 10 being plus size/full figured; and two muscular/athletic. Three of the models' body types could not be identified due to only their faces being pictured. In terms of the *H&M* analysis for skin tone, 44 out of 90 models were light skinned (including white models), 13 were medium in complexion, 32 were dark-skinned; and the skin tone of seven of the models could not be determined as the images were in black and white. The height of the models in both sets of *Facebook* advertisements could not be determined. Also important to highlight is that, in both the *Mr Price* and *H&M* analyses, all of the models appeared to be very young and none of the models were visibly pregnant.

In summarising the analysis of the race groups and beauty features, it is important for this study to explain why there is a need to categorise the race groups of the models. This is because it helps to identify whether western and European beauty ideals are perpetuated by *Mr Price* and *H&M*. It is vital to benchmark these findings on the race groups and beauty ideals against the South African population statistics (Cf. pages 5-7), which indicate that Black people (and women) makeup the majority of the country. In relation to this, the assumption would be that advertising campaigns in South Africa would mostly represent this group of people.

In looking at the statistical findings from *Mr Price*, the retailer had used almost the same number of Black and white models in the sample texts. This is concerning for a local company, operating in a country where the majority of the female population are Black (Cf. pages 5-7). Additionally, of interest to the *Mr Price* statistics, was that there were no "indian/asian" and Indian/Asian models (Cf. pages 5-7) in the sample texts. This can be viewed as peculiar considering that *Mr Price* is a South African company originating in Durban, and with Durban being home to the largest population of people of Indian descent outside of India (Cf. page 36). If *Mr Price* believes that "fashion is for everyone" (Cf. page 197), then this should be reflected in their choice of models as this choice pertains to race and beauty characteristics of hair colour, hair length, hairstyle, body type, skin tone, and height.

Additionally, as a local company, *Mr Price* should be more in touch with the South African reality when it comes to representation as the representation of women in these categories mostly mirrored European and western beauty features (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). With the exception of the hair colour (most models had brown/dark hair), the majority of the models had long/medium hair which were styled straight/wavy; they were mostly light and medium in complexion; and most of them were thin, with only one model being plus size/full figured.

In the case of *H&M,* the findings highlighted that there were 12 more Black models than white models in the sample texts that were analysed. Even when the Black category was further broken down into the race groups that make up the category, it was fairly representative of all the population groups that are found in South Africa. However, unlike *Mr Price,* where the majority of the models were local, the *H&M Facebook* advertisements had a mix of international and South African models, with the majority of models being from their international campaigns, especially in the first two years of the analysis period. An observation made on *H&M* from this quantitative analysis with regards to race groups, is that around the time of the racist incidents detailed in the introduction of this dissertation (Cf. pages 1-16), the international retailer increased their use of Black South African models. This is possibly linked to their marketing strategy. They explain that all of their advertisements are largely identical in all of their markets; however, they can adapt it to local requirements and conditions (Cf. pages 198).

Concerning the numerical findings on the beauty characteristics of hair colour, hair length, hairstyle, body type, skin tone, and height, the overall analysis revealed that while Black women were represented more, similarly to the *Mr Price* findings, their appearances were mostly aligned to anglo-saxon beauty traits (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). In the *H&M Facebook* advertisements, most of the models had long/medium hair, and the majority had a light and medium skin tone. However, the results differed slightly from *Mr Price* in two categories as the majority of the models in the *H&M*, advertisements had natural African/frizzy/curly hairstyles; and while most of the models were slim (75), the international retailer had more representation of body types, with 10 plus size models and two models with a muscular/athletic physique. It can be argued that

the *H&M* quantitative analysis paints a slightly better picture than the *Mr Price* analysis, especially considering that *H&M* is a European company operating in South Africa, however, this study believes that the figures still point to the same conclusion for both retailers, which is that they both disseminate western hegemonic ideas of beauty.

Regarding the political, social and cultural commentary, made on the advertisements, the quantitative findings indicate that there were related comments in 21 out of the 55 *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements, and 18 out of 55 in the *H&M* sample. The comments reflected are the ones that were only visible in the screenshots of the *Facebook* advertisements. The screenshots were taken during the data collection stage (Cf. page 177-189). This means that, based on the technical make-up and algorithm of *Facebook*, the advertisement on screen, when opened, reflects a certain amount of comments in the comments pane. The *Mr Price* commentary included remarks about beauty features such as smile, hair, and body types. Findings revealed that there were both white and Black women who found the white models beautiful, with comments such as "natural" and "wow you beautiful". However, the comments on the beauty of Black models were only made by Black women (based on the *Facebook* user profiles). Comments such as "she's so gorgeous"; "love her hair; "such a beautiful lady"; and "gorgeous smile" appeared in the *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements.

There was one white woman who commented on the fact that the *Mr Price* clothes "does not look good on fat people"; and a number of comments from Black women in this regard. Some of the remarks were made on a swimwear advertisement dated 7 October 2017. One Black female commented, "Why y'all showing us thin girls we need to see real girls with stretch marks big booty" and the responses from fellow Black women were in defence of the thin model (who was white). The responses read, "skinny girls are also real"; "Nna its photoshop"; and "bcoz skinny girls have summer bodies".

Additional comments in this regard were from two advertisements in the underwear range dated 9 May 2018 and 16 October 2018. The first advertisement had the only plus size/full figured model in the sample, and the comment was, "wow does all your branches have these bra sizes".

The second advertisement had the following comments, "we need in bigger sizes, stop making us look like gogos"; what about us big gals"; and "big girls are not considered mrprice when it comes to underwears". Other comments made by Black women related to clothing cuts being too small. Additionally, there were observations on two advertisements (one with a Black model and one with a white model) regarding the fact that the clothes did not fit the models well. A Black woman commented on the Black model and a white woman commented on the white model.

There were also comments about the content or artwork on the *Mr Price* clothes, such as the acknowledgement of "brown" faces on their t-shirts. Commenting on an advertisement from 23 October 2018, a Black female said, "Refreshing to see a few options of brown faces on your tees. We are in Africa but forced to wear European women's faces on our tees. Fell in love with this one from your website and went to [buy] myself one [the] same day".

Another noteworthy comment from a Black woman was one made on the advertisement dated 28 October 2019 and is related to the naming of a dress type. It read, "peasant dress? Really MRP? That's what your department comes up with?". This comment was selected due to the *Facebook* user's tone which implied a sense of disapproval on naming the dress a peasant dress based on the meaning associated with the word peasant within the context of the country's social, political and cultural history and current climate (Cf. pages 33-53).

In the case of the *H&M* comments, many of them were aligned to the racist incidents detailed in the introduction of this dissertation (Cf. pages 1-16). There were many remarks on the "coolest monkey in the jungle" and the associated racist connotations in the comments pane of the *Facebook* advertisements. These were found in 10 out of 18 advertisements dated 21 March 2018, 12 and 17 April 2018; 18 and 25 August 2018; 20 September 2018; 9 and 17 October 2018; 28 march 2019; and 1 April 2019. All of the comments were made by Black people. Some of them were:

1 Why open a shop in a jungle? Do you think monkeys will come and buy?
2 All the Coolest monkeys will be there.

3 /?is this the racist shop that caused havoc with their racist advert?

4 I knew boycotting H&M wouldn't last for long..so many black girls here even wanting other branches to be opened and purchasing the item…lol

5 even if you use black models … we won't come and buy there.

6 We haven't healed…we are not coming…monkeys dont have money.

7 Are we monkeys allowed in your jungle?

8 Is this the same H&M that insulted blacks saying we look like monkeys? Yoh you guys forget easily str8.

9 we dont need it…your bloody racists.

10 South Africans forget fast, After the racist h&m advert some vowed to never buy from their stores. However not much has happened.

With regard to comments on beauty features, the comments varied with some Black women admiring the features of Black models such as the comment from 14 October 2016, "forget da dress, the model is beautifull"; with other comments referring to the youthful looks of the female models. In an advertisement dated 25 May 2017, which had one white model and one Black model of Indian ancestry who had anglo-saxon beauty features (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22), the user commented, "Doesn't H&M still use child slavery?". Additionally, in an advertisement from 8 December 2016, a Black woman commented on the anglo-saxon beauty features of one of the Black models regularly used in the *H&M* advertisements. The remark was, "This girl needs some weight training in her life". A similar looking Black model was used in another advertisement on 27 October 2017 and a Black female commented, "I don't mean to be petty; but I doubt the jean size on this model is your South African target market. Not really flattering".

Also, noteworthy to mention is the commentary made on the plus size/full figured models used by *H&M.* Unlike *Mr Price*, in the samples analysed, *H&M* had used more plus size/full figured women. Two of the comments related to the swimwear advertising that used one white model and one Black model of Asian ancestry. The comments were made by a Black woman and a white woman, and read, "It would be great if we could see more full figured / plus size models for H&M. We sometimes feel left and not represented"; and "How nice to see outsize model".

Regarding how *H&M* selects their models, there was a comment by *H&M* dated 5 December 2016 in response to a Black women's request to model for them. The retailer said, "Hi Patricia, we

work with international modeling agencies when choosing our models. If you are interested in modeling please contact a modeling agency". There was also a comment on the model selection in one of the first *H&M* advertisements (3 June 2017) that appeared to use South African Black models (3 June 2017). A Black South African woman commented, "Congratulations on finding perfect models! now I might also look good in one of these".

A summary of the analysis of the comments in totality reveals that the history of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid as well as the current political climate do indeed influence social and cultural views even those regarding beauty ideals. From the comments, it was found that both white and Black women commented on the beauty of white models, while only Black women commented on the beauty of Black models. This indicates that some Black women might still value European and western beauty traits, with white women not even considering the beauty of Black women. Even though there were comments from some white women on the use of plus size/full figured models, or the lack thereof, the majority of these comments came from Black women who felt that their body types were not represented. However, there were also Black women who defended the use of a slim white model, which aligns to the point above on how Black women appear to value white beauty characteristics.

The comments regarding African women being forced to wear European women's faces on their clothes, as well the naming of the "peasant dress" from the *Mr Price* advertisements; the myriad of comments related to the *H&M* "coolest monkey in the jungle" incident (Cf. pages 3-5) and the *H&M* comment of using international modelling agencies, further allude to how advertising in South Africa is shaped by European and western patterns of thinking. Based on these findings, it would appear that these thought-processes have been influenced by the legacies of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, which continue to linger in South Africa, blooming in spaces such as advertising.

Lastly, in terms of the kinds of clothing that the models were advertising, aligned to the study's research objectives and informed by the literature review, this analysis included a category of traditional attire versus western attire. The analysis revealed that all of the models used in the

Mr Price sample texts advertised western attire; while in the *H&M* texts, one out of the 55 *Facebook* advertisements included two Black models wearing traditional African attire. It is noteworthy to include this in the analysis even though the retailers do not claim to sell such items. The reason is because *Mr Price* (the local company) and *H&M* (the international company) are operating in South Africa, and therefore serving mostly South African consumers, the majority of whom are Black women (Cf. pages 5-7). Moreover, there are various ethnic groups within the Black South African race category, and the cultures of these groups should ideally be represented in the retailers' merchandise and advertising.

This quantitative analysis was valuable in showcasing statistical figures about the beauty characteristics in the selected *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements. It provided numerical insight with the aim to support the qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis that follows in the next chapter. The qualitative analysis is a vital component of this investigation as it could possibly corroborate the quantitative findings, by delving deeper and analysing in detail the visuals and text used in the selected *Facebook* advertisements.

7.5 Chapter summary

The quantitative data analysis and findings of the *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements were presented in this chapter. The analysis was applied to 110 advertisements (55 from each retailer). These advertisements were selected following a downscaling of the preliminary data collection of 995 advertisements (595 from *Mr Price* and 400 advertisements from *H&M*). In order to reduce the initial sample size, in line with the pre-selected criteria of race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary, one advertisement per retailer per month was selected from the 995 advertisements. This means that there were 37 advertisements from each retailer that was selected during the sample downsize, reducing the sample to 74 advertisements. However, when combing through the preliminary data, there were also 36 advertisements from both *Mr Price* (18) and *H&M* (18) that was added to the sample because of

the commentary in the comments section, which was of a political, social and cultural tone, and which matched the preselected criteria and characteristics.

The 55 advertisements from each retailer were subjected to quantitative analysis. The analysis was categorised into nine sections and the data was coded accordingly. Tables were used to present the statistical information. The findings revealed that the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* were locally produced, and equally inclusive of Black and white models, which is problematic considering that *Mr Price* is a local retailer whose advertising should mostly represent the majority of the country's population (which is Black and female) and their aesthetic features. Additionally, the beauty traits represented in the majority of the *Mr Price* advertisements favoured European and western beauty ideals (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). With the exception of the hair colour (most models had brown / dark hair), the majority of the models had long / medium hair which were styled straight/wavy; they were mostly all light and medium in complexion; and most of them were thin, with only one model being plus size/full figured.

In the case of *H&M,* the findings highlighted that there were more Black models than white models and that there was a fair representation of all the population groups that are found in South Africa. However, unlike *Mr Price,* where the majority of the models were local, the *H&M Facebook* advertisements had a mix of international and South African models, with the majority of models being from their international campaigns, especially in the first two years of the analysis period. With regard to the statistical findings on the beauty characteristics of hair colour, hair length, hairstyle, body type, skin tone, and height, the overall analysis revealed that the while Black women were represented more, similar to the *Mr Price* findings, their appearances were mostly aligned to anglo-saxon beauty traits (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). In the *H&M Facebook* advertisements, most of the models had long/medium hair, and the majority had a light and medium skin tone. However, the results differed slightly from *Mr Price* in two categories as the majority of the models in the *H&M*, advertisements had natural African/frizzy/curly hairstyles; and while most of the models were slim (75), the international retailer had more representation of body types, with 10 plus size models and two models with a muscular/athletic physique.

Findings from the analysis of the comments highlighted that the history of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, as well as the current political climate, influence social and cultural views, including those regarding beauty ideals. The findings raise the point that advertising in South Africa is shaped by European and western patterns of thinking that have been influenced by the physical, legal, and mental structures of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid. The analysis of the final category revealed that both retailers advertised mostly western attire, with only one advertisement out of the 110 featuring two models in dresses in traditional African print.

This brings to conclusion the quantitative analysis and findings chapter. The next chapter presents the study's qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 8: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

8.1 Introduction

This research investigation employs a mixed-methods data analysis approach to understand how social structures, behaviours, and cultures, impact the feminine beauty ideals represented in the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. To achieve the outcome of this research investigation, this analysis included a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of a sample from both retailers' Facebook advertisements, as well as a comparative aspect. Wisdom and Creswell (2013: 2) explain that when using a mixed-methods approach in data analysis, "the two types of data can provide validation for each other, thereby creating a solid foundation for drawing conclusions".

In light of the aforementioned, this chapter presents the qualitative analysis and research findings of the study. In order to do the analysis, 10 advertisements, based on the study's preselected criteria of race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary, were selected from the downscaled sample of the 110 *Facebook* advertisements (Cf. 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5). There are five *Facebook* advertisements from each retailer selected, which will be subjected to a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis informed by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar (Cf. 5.4).

The sample of texts will be analysed as follows:

1 The signs and codes on each advert will be examined to determine the denotative meaning.
2 Using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar, what the signs signify will be explored, thereby establishing the connotative meaning of the beauty images.
3 The ideologies, culture, and values that each image promotes about beauty, will be

identified, interpreted and discussed by applying critical discourse analysis (CDA), and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA).

The analyses and discussions will also incorporate the literature review in order to establish and interpret its relevance and link to the study. In so doing, the analysis aims to synthesise the literature review with the analysis and findings, allowing for a coherent interpretation of the research findings.

8.2 *Mr Price*: a qualitative analysis

The five advertisements selected for the *Mr Price* qualitative analysis are titled as follows, *We will never be royal (Figure 8.1), In my sister's shadow (Figure 8.2), I'm a Barbie girl (Figure 8.3), Poli-tee-cking (Figure 8.4),* and *Wild thing (Figure 8.5).* The titles, generated by myself, are based on the analysis of each advertisement. While these are common phrases in popular culture in contemporary society, I chose to name these advertisements using such expressions as a play on popular words and meaning that relate to this study.

8.2.1 We will never be royal
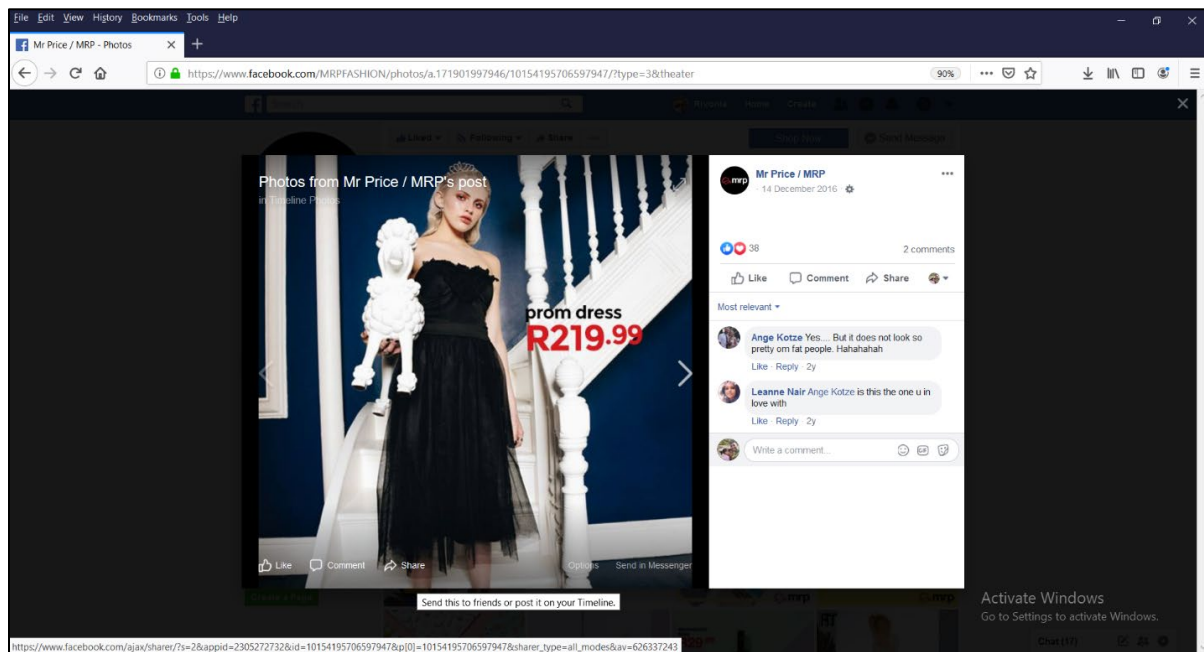
Figure 8.1 Advertisement from the *Mr Price* Facebook photos gallery (14 December 2016)

The first advertisement (Figure 8.1) to be analysed and discussed in the *Mr Price* sub-section appeared on the *Mr Price Facebook* photos gallery on 14 December 2016. The advertisement shows a young, white women wearing a black strapless dress that is made of ruffles on the top part, and straight tulle on the bottom. The length of the dress is just below her knees. She is standing at the foot of a white staircase, holding a white poodle ornament. Her hair is long, straight, and blonde, and there is a crown on top of her head. It is not possible to identify the colour of her eyes. The staircase, poodle ornament, and model are in front of a very dark blue wall that have white cornices in the middle of the wall and at the bottom. There is a white frame which appears to be a window frame that is partially visible. There is some text within the image of the advertisement which reads *prom dress* in lower case black letters, and is accompanied by the price of the dress which is listed in a bigger font than the *prom dress* black text, and is in bright red. The other text that appears on the picture is the name of the picture, *Photos from Mr Price / MRP's post,* as well as the options*, Like, Comment, Share, Options, Send in Messenger, and Send this to friends or post on your timeline.* These, however, only appear on the image if the reader moves the computer cursor over the image. The red, black and white *MRP (Mr Price)* logo with the date appears at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are two comments in the comments section, one of which is related to the nature of this study, and the advertisement received 38 likes.

The immediate meaning that is gleaned from this advertisement is that it is a picture with an attractive, young, and thin white model, standing at the bottom of a white staircase holding a white poodle ornament. However, it is evident that there is connotative and ideological meaning that can be drawn from it. The first step is to consider the composition of the advertisement. As it has already been established (Cf. 5.4.1), the information value of an advertisement is found in various zones. In this regard, on the left side of the image, which presents "given information" that is familiar to the audience, there are the white cornices, which are ornamental mouldings found at the meeting point between walls and a roof or ceiling. Given that cornices are common in households, this information presented in the left zone is indeed familiar to the audience. The

following information is presented in the right-hand zone – this is information that is new and unknown to the audience. Firstly, there is the text and pricing, which is new information that the audience must pay close and special attention to. Secondly, there are the comments which is also new information that the reader needs to engage with. Of interest to this study, based on the preselected criteria for analysis (Cf. pages 12) is one of the comments, which reads, "Yes … But it does not look so pretty on fat people. Hahahahah".

The top zone of the image reflects the upper body of the model as well as the mannequin poodle that she is carrying. Given that the top of an image represents an ideal that is packaged to appeal to the reader's emotions, illustrating an ideal way of being, in this advertisement, the ideal meaning being communicated is that by wearing this dress, and crown, you would be considered beautiful. The crown and poodle also symbolise elements of wealth, upper-class status, and royalty and therefore by copying the look of this model, you too can be seen in society as someone who is rich and important. Also, at the top of the image are the beauty features of the thin, tall, white, and blonde model; therefore, her beauty features are promoted as the ideal kind of beauty that one needs to possess in order to be considered beautiful. The bottom section of this advertisement, which displays the length of the dress and the bottom half of the staircase, is packaged in a more realistic and informative manner, showing readers what is already there, and what they already know. The centre of an advertisement usually presents the "nucleus of information" and is the central aspect of the layout (Stoian, 2015: 27). In this advertisement, the centre of the image contains the name of the clothing and the price, as well the entire body of the model, which means that her look and aesthetic features, as well as the clothing item and its price, are the most important messages. Additionally, because the model is framed by the elegant looking staircase, the cornices, and the partially visible window frame, she becomes the most important element in the advertisement, she is the most salient feature.

The next principle of the social semiotic framework to consider is the gaze of the model. In this advertisement, while the model's facial expressions appear passive and directed downwards; her eyes are staring straight at the readers. The direction of her gaze means that she is addressing

the readers directly, and by engaging with them in this manner, she is establishing a relationship. If we are to determine what kind of social relationship the model is creating with the reader, we need to look at the angle of interaction, more specifically, the angle at which the reader sees the model. In this case, the reader would be looking up at the model, because even though she is perched somewhere near the bottom of a staircase, her head is titled downwards, which means she is looking down at the reader. This implies that she is wielding some form of emblematic authority over the audience, so the device, that is the staircase, is elevating her, indicating her social ranking and power. Additionally, the fact that the reader is staring up at her, creates the impression that she is a role model or authority figure of sorts. Furthermore, linked to establishing the kind of social relationship that exists between the model and the reader, is the social distance principle, which is informed by the different sizes of the image frame, namely, the camera shot which is used, such as close-up, medium or long (Stoian, 2015: 26). As in real life, we choose the people we want to be close to or who we want to keep our distance from, and similarly, different camera shots are used to create this closeness or distance in pictures. In this advertisement, a long camera shot is used which means that the model is far away from the reader and the distance created implies a sense of isolation and anonymity between the model and the reader.

Colour is another valuable tool for investigating meaning-making. According to Najafian and Ketabi (2011: 72-73), "advertisers use colour to not only reflect their specific brand but to communicate a certain mood and ideal dictated by the product itself". Colour, they write, plays a vital role in the success of an advertisement, and is one of the first things that the reader pays attention to – "using proper colour seems to be the quickest way to create mood without saying a word". Najafian and Ketabi (2011: 72-73) also explain that colour can signify classes of people, places and things; and it can show the personality of a product. Additionally, colours and "their underlying sociological and historical connotation certainly do produce specific reactions in particular contexts" – they evoke certain emotions, associations and even physical effects (Najafian and Ketabi, 2011: 72-73). In this advertisement, the colours are white, black, dark blue

and silver. The white in the antique looking staircase, and in the cornices and window frame suggests that the house is regal in nature. White (which is also the racial group to which the model belongs) is also considered to be the colour of perfection. It is associated with "safety, purity, and cleanliness, and usually has a positive connotation and can represent a successful beginning" (Color Wheel Pro, 2015). The colour black, on the other hand, has multiple meanings, both positive and negative. In this case, black, which is the colour of the tulle and ruffles dress that the model is wearing, is associated with power, elegance, prestige, and formality – elements that often define wealthy people. Similarly, the dark blue represents royalty, power, integrity, knowledge, and seriousness (Color Wheel Pro, 2015). Furthermore, the colour of the crown, silver, may be connoted to the idiom "born with a silver spoon in your mouth", implying that one has a high social position and is rich from birth. It is clear that the colours in this advertisement were selected purposefully to communicate the message that if you buy and wear this dress, you will feel like royalty, thereby associating yourself with a certain sector of society – the posh, upper class, and wealthy.

The image also portrays a form of kitsch art, which is appreciated in an "ironic way" (Pereira, 2015). According to Lorenzo Pereira (2015), kitsch art is viewed to be in "poor taste" because of "excessive garishness or sentimentality" and it is "low-brow style of mass-produced art or design using popular or cultural icons". She uses a quote from cultural critic and philosopher, Walter Benjamin (Pereira, 2015) to best describe this form of art, "kitsch is, unlike art, a utilitarian object lacking all critical distance between object and observer; it offers instantaneous emotional gratification without intellectual effort, without the requirement of distance, without sublimation". In this advertisement we can see how kitsch art has been used by the producers (*Mr Price*) to perpetuate the idea of a posh and lavish lifestyle. It is modelled on current popular cultural trends that are being propagated by celebrities – the idea that even though you are not born into certain lifestyle, you can reinvent yourself into modern day royalty. This trend links back to what has already been analysed about high society. The message communicated in this advertisement further implies that European and western beauty traits are ideal. This is because

even though royal families exist in various cultures around the world, due to the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, the European royal families are considered the standard of royalty. Therefore, what they portray in terms of aesthetic features, fashion, wealth, class and stature is often considered as an ideal way of being, one that is constantly promoted by the media. This is also aligned to the heading chosen for the analysis of this advertisement. It is a play on the words of the song *Royal* which is sung by Lorde. According to Thomas Van (2013), in the song, Lorde makes references to how the "media glorifies the fancy lifestyle and lures people into it". Therefore, the song is all about being proud to be from humble origins and not needing the lifestyles of the rich and famous to be happy.

In summary, the combination of all the semiotic elements that have been analysed in this advertisement reveal that the connotative meaning behind the advertisement situates white, young and slim women as the ideal beauty type. The signs used here have worked together to signify a mythical and ideological meaning about feminine beauty. The advertisement also speaks to what I am going to refer to as "the glow of the white women", because it has positioned the white model as a prominent person who is royalty-like, powerful, elegant, and prestigious.

8.2.2 In my sister's shadow
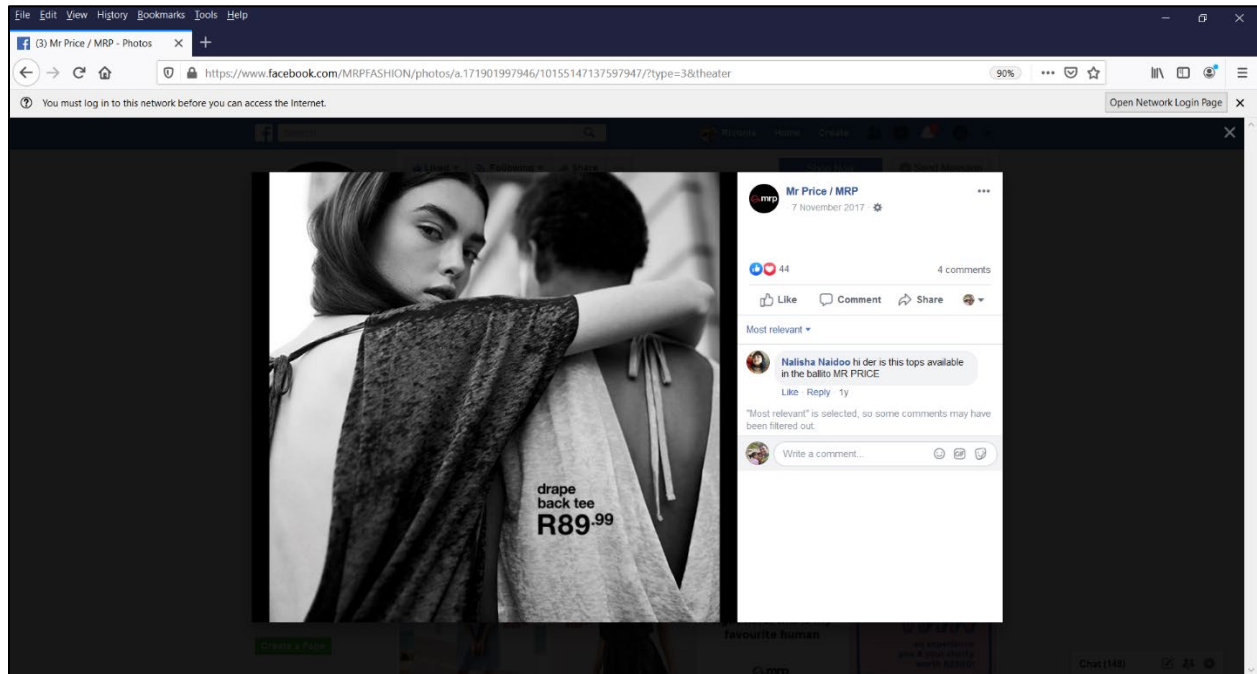
Figure 8.2 Advertisement from the *Mr Price* Facebook photos gallery (7 November 2017)

This advertisement (Figure 8.2) appeared on the *Mr Price Facebook* photos gallery on 7 November 2017. The photograph of the advertisement is in black and white, and there are two models, one white, and one Black. Both the models are photographed from their mid-section upwards. The white model is staring at the camera and has her right hand around the Black model who is looking away from the camera and downwards. Both models are wearing the same attire which is quite bare at the back, therefore revealing their backs. The back of the Black model is more visible. Due to the image being in black and white, it is not possible to say what the colour of their eyes and hair are. However, it is possible to see the style and length of their hair. The white model has long hair that is swept to one side and is pulled to the front of her body. The Black model has short hair, which appears to be styled naturally. Additionally, while the colour of their tops is not visible, the white model is wearing a darker top than the Black model. It would appear that the photograph is taken in front of a high-rise building. There is also some text within the image of the advertisement. The text reads *drape back tee* in lower case black letters and is accompanied by the price of the clothing item which is listed in a bigger font than the *drape back*

tee and is in black. The red, black and white *MRP (Mr Price)* logo with the date also appears in the advertisement at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are four comments in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement post, but only one is visible. The advertisement received 44 likes.

To unpack the connotative meaning, the composition of multimodal texts, which uses various photographic techniques, must be analysed. In order to do this, I will look at the information value found in the different zones of the advertisement. In the left zone, which represents familiar or given information (Cf. 5.4.1), is the face and upper body of the white model, implying that the reader is familiar with the information that she presents, including her beauty features. In opposition to this – the right zone of the image – presents information that is new, and / or important. In the case of this advertisement, given that the Black model is placed on the right, and is facing away from the camera, the new and important information would be the style of the top she is wearing, as that is what the retailer is selling. Additionally, by placing the Black model on the right of this advertisement, it implies that she herself is something that readers are unfamiliar with, and this extends to her aesthetic features as well.

The next set of information zones to consider are the top and bottom zones. The top zone presents to the reader an ideal to attain, while the bottom presents factual information. At the top of this advertisement are the heads of the models. Only the white model is facing the camera, which means she is the most important model, and therefore her beauty characteristics, which are western and Eurocentric beauty, are prioritised over those that the Black model represent. This creates the message that the features of the white model are the ideal for the reader attain. In the case of this advertisement, there is no information at the bottom. The price and name of the garment is positioned at the bottom of the image. It is also positioned toward the centre, which is another zone of information, and is the essential communication of the image. Therefore, in this advertisement, given that the price is very close to the centre, it signifies the important information that the reader needs to know. Additionally, the white model's face is also close to the centre at the top, making her a focal point. In this regard, not only are her features

the ideal to attain, she has been positioned as part of the core information that has been packaged for the reader.

The white model is the most salient feature in the advertisement, because she is the element that appears to have the most importance in the image. This is enhanced by the framing in this image. Framing is used in advertisements to connect or disconnect the elements in the image. According to Esmat Babaii and Mahmood Reza Atai (2016: 11), framing refers to dividing lines or actual frame lines in an image which suggest whether the various components in the image belong together or not. In this advertisement, the body and the arm of the white model frames the Black model, thereby pushing the Black model into the background of the image and allowing the white model to feature more prominently.

Understanding the representation of social actors in the image also helps to unpack ideological meaning. In this instance, three factors must be considered – "the gaze (the social interaction between the models and the viewers), the angle of interaction (the social relation between the models and the viewers), and distance (the social distance between the models and the viewers)" (Babaii & Atai, 2016: 9). In this advertisement, the gazes of the models are different. The white model is gazing directly at the camera, and therefore directly at the reader; while the gaze of the Black model is not visible. The direct gaze of the white model means that she is demanding something from the reader; she wants the reader to engage solely with her. On the other hand, the Black model is not gazing at the reader, in fact, her face is not even visible in the advertisement. This creates a sense of something that is unfamiliar and unknown and, in this way, she is possibly offered to the reader as an object of scrutiny to try to understand who she is, and why she is not visible to the camera (Babaii & Atai, 2016: 9).

The angles used in advertisements communicate two traits of the represented social relation between the reader and the model, namely power and involvement (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 139). In the case of this advertisement, while the white model is looking directly at the reader and the camera, her head is also tilted slightly downwards, which means she is looking down at the readers. As with the first image analysed, this symbolises that the model has dominance and

power over the reader. Additionally, because the Black model is facing in the other direction, the angle of interaction in this advertisement highlights how the white model has power over the Black model as well.

Concerning the social distance between the models and the reader, both models are captured in a medium close-up shot from the waist upwards. The medium shot used in this advertisement allows for a relationship between the models and the audience. However, while the audience is encouraged to engage with the models due to the camera placement, and the white model's gaze, they are being told by the position of the models (mostly backs facing the camera), and their body language, that they cannot be close to the models. The body language of the white model appears to be possessive over the Black model, if one considers how her hand is situated around the Black model's neck and shoulders. This creates the impression, that they are a group, and the audience is not welcome, and closed off from this group. Additionally, if we are to consider the historical and political scholarship presented in this study on colonialism, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and apartheid, the white model's possessiveness communicates a specific social and cultural ideology aligned to ownership and whiteness as being superior. This, coupled with the Black model's invisibility, can also be linked to hegemonic western beauty standards as being ideal.

In looking at how colour is used in this advertisement to create meaning, the first aspect to consider is that the image is digitally altered to create its colour palette. it is noteworthy to mention that the two colours used in this advertisement, black and white, are at the two most extreme ends of the colour spectrum – they are binary opposites. White represents innocence, purity, righteousness, peace, goodness, and is considered safe. It projects clarity, cleanliness, and salvation. White is said to promote creative thoughts and is also synonymous with fresh beginnings. According to Fat Rabbit Creative (2020) as a positive, clear and open colour, white can direct communication in a powerful way. Black, on the other hand, is considered to be a deep and serious colour, and is visually heavy (Fat Rabbit Creative, 2020). While it can be conservative or intimidating, it can also be associated with sophistication, luxury, confidence, and strength. Additionally, in "stories of good versus evil, black and darkness is always symbolic of the villain.

It is also viewed as a colour of mourning and mystery. It is for this reason that too much black can become overwhelming" (Fat Rabbit Creative, 2020).

As mentioned above, the meaning behind the colours black and white are considered to be opposite. One of the most famous examples of this is the Taoist Yin-Yang symbol, which embodies opposing forces of good and evil. Another example of how black and white are in opposition to each other can be found in martial arts, where wearing a white belt signifies someone who is a beginner, while the black belt represents the topmost position in the sport. According to Fat Rabbit Creative (2020), there are so many more examples that showcase how black and white are opposites, such as, "black traps space, while white opens space; and black evokes fear, while white communicates innocence". Drawing from this, and applying it to this advertisement, it is noticeable how the colours black and white are used to show opposition and difference. The white model with her Eurocentric beauty features, has dark hair, dark eyebrows, and is wearing a black top. Therefore, all the positive associations with the colour black, such as power, sophistication, luxury, confidence, and strength, apply to her because she is centrally placed in the advertisement and is the only model staring at the camera. This means that her beauty features are further promoted as an ideal form of beauty. On the other hand, the Black model is wearing a white top, and while white symbolises all things good, pure, and innocent, in this advertisement, those associations cannot be transferred to the Black model, because aside from the back of her head and the upper part of the back of her body, she is absent from this advertisement. Even though she belongs to the Black race group, and we have established that in this advertisement, the positive associations of the colour black are being used, they do not apply to her. She is in fact being overshadowed by the colour black as its positive features are being used to elevate the white model.

The final point to be made about this advertisement is the way in which it builds on the illusion of inclusion, and how it "others" the Black model. It is my analysis that the Black model is just included in this image to address the issue of including different race groups and presenting diversity. However, she is marginalised in this advertisement – in fact, she is hidden in this advertisement, and with her back facing the camera, she is almost erased. This then allows the

white model to shine and be the centre of attraction in this advertisement. Additionally, the results of the multimodal semiotic principles investigated in this advertisement, when combined, indicate the multiple ways in which the Black model has been depicted as the "other".

Van Leeuwen's (2008: 41) three strategies that are used to visually represent people as "others" and as "not like us" can be used to substantiate this analysis. The first is distanciation, which shows the social actors (models) as strangers and "not close to us". In the case of this advertisement, all three strategies are interrelated. The first strategy, distanciation, applies to the distance between the two models and the reader, but also between the white and Black model, where the Black model is "othered". Then there is disempowerment, which depicts people as "below us and downtrodden" – again this applies to the Black model due to her invisibleness in this image, and the fact that she seems to be a possession that belongs to the white model. The third strategy is objectivation, which represents the models as "objects of scrutiny rather than as subjects addressing the viewers with their gaze" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 41). Due to the positioning and almost erasure of the Black model in this image, she becomes an object of scrutiny, because she becomes something that needs to be understood in relation to the white model. This is one of the reasons why she becomes the "other", and therefore, this analysis finds that the "otherisation" of Black women is present in this advertisement.

8.2.3 I'm a Barbie girl
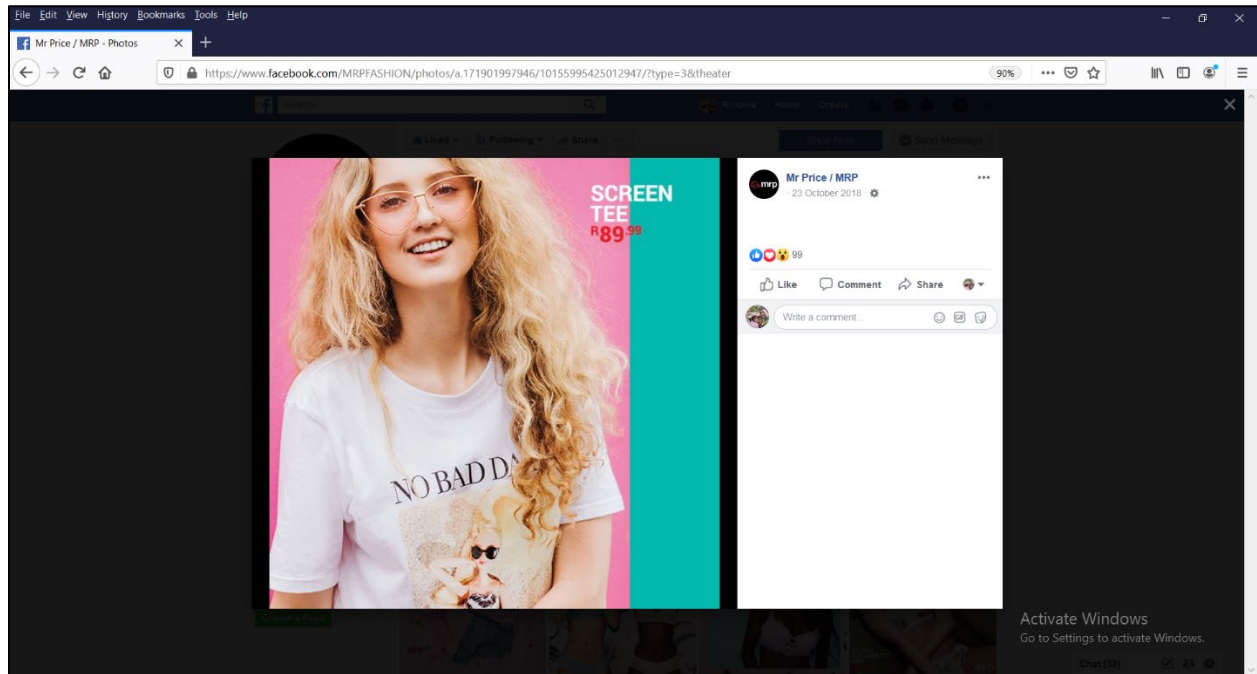
Figure 8.3 Advertisement from the *Mr Price* Facebook photos gallery (23 October 2018)

This advertisement (Figure 8.3) is from the selected *Mr Price* texts and appeared on the *Mr Price* *Facebook* photos gallery on 23 October 2018. The advertisement features one white model, who is facing forward from the waist upwards – with a bit of the top of her head cut off. She has light coloured eyes, either blue or grey, and long blond hair which is curly. She is wearing glasses, which appear to be reading glasses, and a white t-shirt that has a picture of a white doll on it. The words on the t-shirt read, *No Bad Day*. The doll that is pictured on the t-shirt is wearing a bathing suit and sunglasses which implies that she is either at a beach or pool and is sunbathing. The doll is very similar to the original Barbie doll, with her small frame and blonde hair. The majority of the background of the image is in bright pink and there is a thin strip of bright blue. There is also some text within the image of the advertisement. The text reads *screen tee* in lower case white letters, and is accompanied by the price of the clothing item which is listed in a bigger font than the *screen tee*, and is in red. The red, black and white *MRP (Mr Price)* logo with the date also appears in the advertisement at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are

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zero comments in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement, and the advertisement received 99 likes.

On a denotative level, the image appears to be a young woman advertising a simple t-shirt, but there is connotative and ideological meaning behind the signs and symbols used in this advertisement. This signifies that the image was carefully constructed with a particular message in mind. This analysis begins by looking at the composition of the advertisement, which takes into account the information value, framing, and salience (Cf. 5.4.1). In this advertisement, with regard to the given and new information value, there is not much to analyse, except for the description and price of the garment being advertised. This information is located on the top right corner of the image, making it new and important information that the reader needs. Additionally, the description and price of the garment as well as the model's face, which is well lit, is positioned at the top of the image, alluding to the fact that this is ideal information, which is highly valued. Furthermore, the model, and the image and the wording of her t-shirt is the most centred element. This means that these signs, which reflect western and Eurocentric beauty traits, are being promoted as the core message of the image. Given that these features stand out and draw the reader's attention, they are the most important elements in the advertisement, and therefore also the most salient aspects. The framing devices used in this image perpetuate the importance of the Eurocentric beauty traits. The model is framed by the bright pink border, which makes up the larger part of the image's backdrop. Due to the pink section of the backdrop being larger than the blue section, it places greater emphasis on the model and what she represents.

In looking at the interactive meaning that is created in this image, this analysis considers the following three categories – the gaze, the angle of interaction, and social distance (Cf. 5.4.2). In this advertisement, the model is staring directly at the reader. This indicates an interpersonal relationship. This relationship is also influenced by the model's facial expressions – her smile and happy face – encouraging the reader to feel close to the model and further engage with the advertisement. In this image, the camera shot is a medium close-up horizontal angle, as the model is not looking up or down at the reader. This camera angle creates an intermediate

distance between the model and the reader, meaning that the reader will feel some level of connection and disconnection with her. While the horizontal frontal angle allows the reader to be fully engaged with the model and her t-shirt, I believe that there is a degree of social detachment between the model and the reader. Typically, this kind of gaze, camera shot, and angle means that the reader views themselves as an equal to the model but based on all the other multimodal principles that have been analysed thus far, the model and the content of her t-shirt has been positioned to glow. Therefore, if you do not possess her aesthetic features or that of the doll on her t-shirt, you cannot feel equal to her.

Considering the meaning of the colours used in this advertisement, the analysis reveals that even though there is a large, digitally altered bright pink and small bright blue background, everything about the model appears light and white. Her hair is light and blonde, her t-shirt is white, her skin is white, and even the Barbie-like doll on her t-shirt is white with blonde hair. The bright pink background that frames the body of the model also holds significance because pink is a colour widely associated with the white-doll that is Barbie. Bright and light colours such as white and pink are associated with themes such as purity, truth, angelic, innocence, and compassion – essentially all that is good about the world. This meaning also applies to this advertisement because the colours as well as the meaning associated with the Barbie doll, reveal a certain ideology behind the advertisement, one that promotes the aesthetic features of white women as the epitome of beauty.

The stereotype of the Barbie doll or white dolls as a form of ideal female attractiveness is emphasised in this advertisement, and therefore so is the glow of the white women. Pearl Boshomane Tsotetsi, in her column *Barbie is a white supremacist in woke clothing* (2018), explains that Barbie, since her creation in 1959, has been a symbol of white beauty features that are considered flawless. She writes that if we are to use the western world as a reference, Barbie's beauty features – "white, with porcelain skin, a small waist, come-hither eyes and bright red lips – ticks all the boxes of what a woman is supposed to look like". By making the model emulate similar features to the Barbie doll on her t-shirt, together with the wording of the garment, the creators of the advertisement have generated a beauty theme, where the beauty

features of white women are validated. The argument can be made that the Barbie brand and those that are similar, have started making attempts to diversify racially, culturally, and by embracing different body types. However, in this advertisement, the original, iconic, Barbie-like doll is featured – with all its original connotations. This sends a specific message about what is considered beautiful, as Barbie is "very much a figure promoting white womanhood and white standards of beauty" (Bowser, 2019). It is my analysis that the message delivered by this advertisement elevates the beauty of white women, thereby encouraging *Mr Price's* target audience, and by implication also young Black women, to aspire to whiteness.

8.3.4 Poli-tee-cking
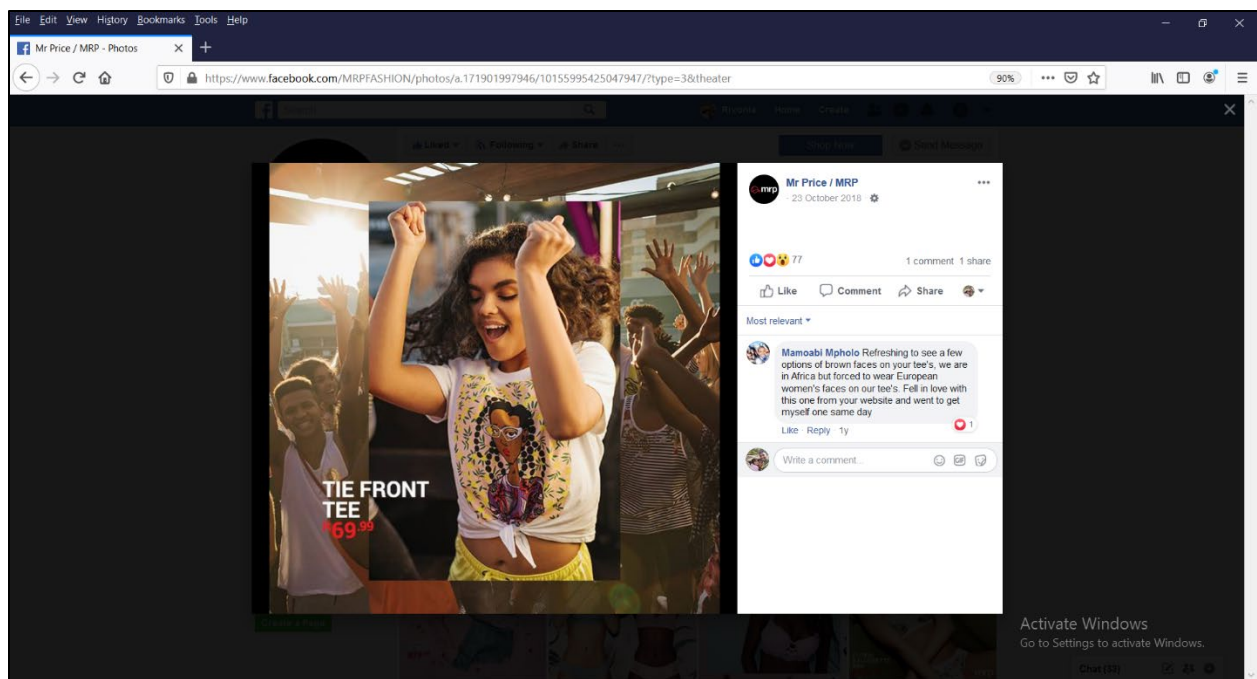
Figure 8.4 Advertisement from the *Mr Price* Facebook photos gallery (23 October 2018)

The next advertisement selected (Figure 8.4) appeared on the *Mr Price Facebook* photos gallery on 23 October 2018. On a denotative level, the advertisement shows a young, Black women, who appears to be in a celebratory mood, and who is jovial. She is photographed from the waist up and is modelling a short-sleeved t-shirt. The t-shirt is white with a colourful artwork printed in front. The artwork is of a Black woman who has her hair in dreadlocks, has big dark brown eyes,

and is wearing reading glasses. The main model's hair is light brown, medium length and curly. As her eyes are closed, the eye colour cannot be determined. This advertisement has been digitally altered to have two photographs in one composition space. The first and smaller photograph is of the main model, and the second and larger photo shows a group of happy people. The people in the group, many of whom have their hands in the air, belong to the different racial categories mentioned in this study's introduction (Cf. pages 5-11). This group of people are all in casual wear and are photographed in a communal space with high-rise buildings in the background. It appears to be a warm and sunny day. The smaller photograph, which has the main model in focus, is placed on top of the larger photograph, which means that not everything and everyone is visible about image number two. Therefore, the smaller image has two backgrounds, one that is blurred out behind the main model, and the larger photograph with the group of people also serves as a background. There is text within the image of the advertisement. The text reads *tie front tee* in upper case white letters, and is accompanied by the price of the clothing item, which is listed in a bigger font, and is in red. The red, black and white *MRP (Mr Price)* logo with the date also appears in the advertisement at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There is one comment visible in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement, and the advertisement received 77 likes and one share. This advertisement was selected due to the nature of the comment made on it. The comment, which will be discussed later, reads: "Refreshing to see a few options of brown faces on your tees. We are in Africa but forced to wear European women's faces on our tees. Fell in love with this one from your website and went to [buy] myself one [the] same day".

This advertisement has combined various semiotic elements. In order to unpack its meaning, I will begin by looking at the compositional make-up of the advertisement (Cf. 4.2.1). In this image, the use of the framing devices stands out due to the first image of the main model being superimposed on the second image with the group of people. This suggests that there is a clear dividing line that has been created by an actual frame line. The advertisers want the main model in the smaller image to stand out from the larger photograph, but the joyous emotion and the positive vibe of her reaction is also connected to the happiness portrayed by the models in the

group image. Given that the main model is placed at the centre of the advertisement, what she exhibits is the core of what is being communicated. In that regard, she, together with the t-shirt she is modelling, is the most salient feature of the advertisement.

The above analysis is supported by the positioning of certain elements in the different information zones. At the top of the image is the perception of a beautiful summer's day. It gives the reader a warm feeling, by creating a scenario of summer holidays, partying, and happiness. In the bottom zone, where the real information is presented, is the name of the garment and the price. This is placed strategically, because it is the factual information that the reader needs. On the left of the image, there is happiness and joy, which is a familiar feeling for most people during summer and during a party. This supports the ideal that is presented in the top zone. The right zone is meant to present new information to the reader, but in the case of this image, it does not offer any new visual information. However, included in the advertisement is the comments section on the right, and in this comment section, the new information is the comment on beauty aesthetics regarding Black women. While the user referred to Black women as "brown faces", an analysis of this comment reveals that Black women in South Africa do notice that the media and beauty standards favour European and western ideals. It also highlights that there is a sense of Black women taking control of the narrative of how they are represented. By commenting on this advertisement, this *Facebook* user has questioned the current politics and history that surround the perpetuation of white women as an ideal form of beauty.

Concerning the representation of social actors in the image, I will analyse the two photographs separately based on social interaction (gaze); social relation (angle of interaction); and social distance (distance) between the models in advertisement, and the reader (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 138). By analysing these three dimensions, we can ascertain what representations the image producers (*Mr Price*) are trying to make, and how they are encouraging the reader to attribute particular kinds of meanings to the image. In the larger image that is in the background, the models are looking in different directions, some are looking at the camera, some are facing away, and the gaze of some are not visible. This implies that there is no social relation between the reader and the models. Additionally, given that the group photograph is a wide-angle camera

shot, it implies a large distance between the group of people and the reader. This is an intentional camera shot because the reader is actually not meant to engage with the group of people but rather with the main model in the smaller image placed in the centre. If we are to consider the gaze of the main model, it is noted that we cannot see her eyes, and therefore, cannot determine her gaze. However, she is looking downwards. Her stance, with her hands up in the air and hair moving, suggests that she is dancing, and her facial expressions convey feelings of happiness, excitement and joy. The medium camera shot suggests a closeness between her and the reader. There is not a big distance created between the two, therefore, she is engaging with the reader. The reader can easily see the model's facial expressions; therefore, the reader sees the model as an individual with whom they can feel close to and emulate.

In analysing the colours used in this advertisement it is evident that in this image bright colours have been selected to highlight a message of warmth, happiness and positive energy. The light from the sun can be categorised by the luminosity scale in the grammar of colour (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002: 354-358). This is because the rays of the sun shine so bright from the top left corner of the group photo, bathing everything and everyone in the image, including the main model in the smaller image. Her skin is glowing in this image. I believe that the choice of this colour palette is a deliberate attempt by the creators of the advertisement to sell the idea of vibrant and happy lifestyle. Given that the retailer's head office is in Durban, South Africa, it is the place that sprouted the inspiration behind the *Mr Price* brand (Cf. pages 196-197). Therefore, many of their advertising campaigns are inspired by, and photographed, in this city. Durban is known for its warm climate throughout the year and is also nicknamed by locals as the "sunny" or "surf" city. This links with the bright and warm colours as well the sun rays used in this advertisement. Additionally, the artwork on the t-shirt also represents the message above, as it is associated with a specific lifestyle that the advertisers want to promote. With the use of this colour palette, the advertisers are not only selling the clothes, they are selling the idea of perfect summer days, that are happy and carefree, and by implication, if you wear their clothes, you could achieve that state of being.

Based on the analysis presented on this image and the related comments, it is found that this advertisement connects beauty and politics. It showcases how Black women in South Africa feel about representation in media spaces. Even though the Black model used has anglicised beauty features – she is thin, fair, has high cheekbones, and a sharp and pointed nose – she is celebrated and appreciated by the user's comment because her brown skin, together with the aesthetic features of the Black women on her t-shirt, provides some symbolic form of change in beauty ideals in South African media spaces. The user's comment, coupled with the semiotic visuals in this advertisement points to how politics cannot be ignored when considering the beauty ideals promoted in the media, and it highlights that there is a historical, social and cultural aspect to these beauty ideals.

8.3.5 Wild thing
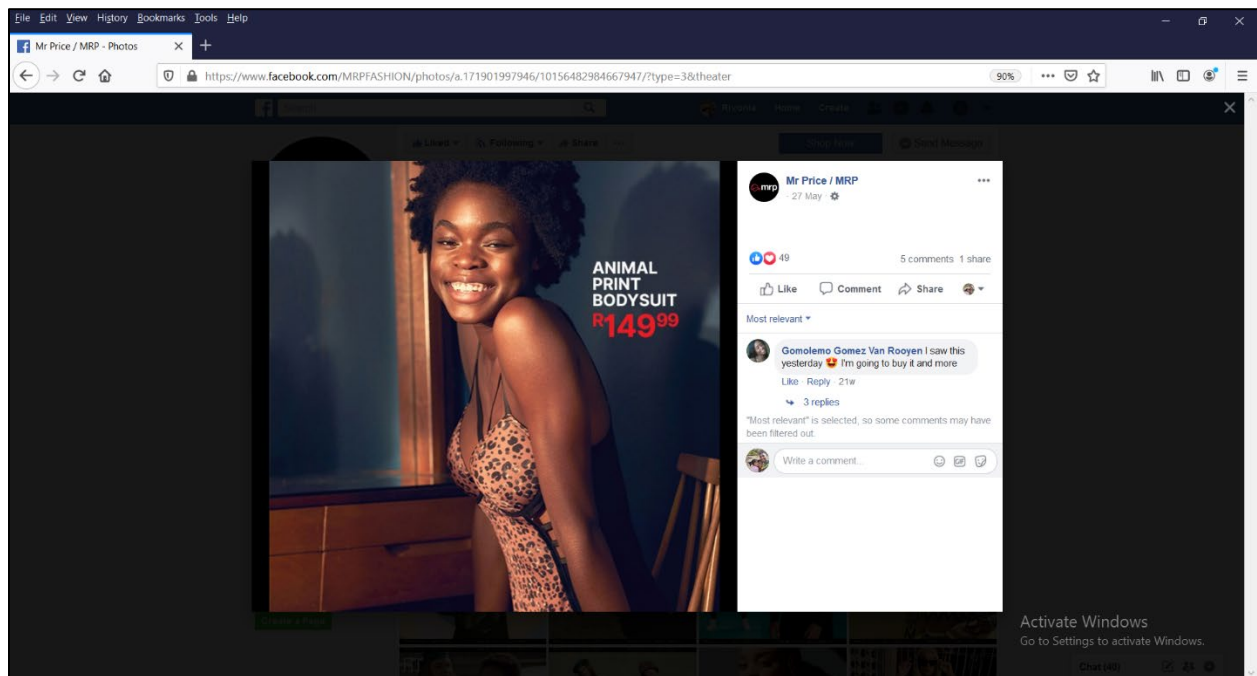
Figure 8.5 Advertisement from the *Mr Price* Facebook photos gallery (27 May 2019)

This advertisement (Figure 8.5) appeared on the *Mr Price Facebook* photos gallery on 27 May 2019. On a denotative level, the advertisement contains a picture of a Black model advertising an animal print bodysuit/underwear. The model's face is photographed facing the camera, and

her body is photographed from the waist upwards but is facing the left. She has dark skin, dark eyes, and short hair which is styled in its natural form. The model is sitting on a brown stool in the foreground, with a brown wooden dressing table and mirror in the background. There is also shades of dark grey in the background. There is a shadow that is also in the background and it is created by the model's body. The shadow is seen in two sections of the background, the first is behind the model to the right, and the second instance, is a partial reflection in the mirror of the dressing table on the left. There is also some text within the image of advertisement. The text reads *animal print bodysuit* in upper case white letters, and is accompanied by the price of the clothing item which is listed in a bigger font, and is in red. The red, black and white *MRP (Mr Price)* logo with the date also appears in the advertisement at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There is one comment visible in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement, and the advertisement received 49 likes and one share.

To analyse the connotative meaning in this advertisement, the first step is to consider the information value. This is dependent on the elements that are placed into the various zones of the image. In the case of this image, the model's shadow can be seen in the background in both the left and right zones. On the left side, there is a partial shadow which is a reflection in the mirror from the main and full shadow on the right. Even though the left and right zones have different meaning, of familiar information and new information, in this instance, both shadows imply something negative. A shadow, which is a dark area or shape visible when projected onto a bright surface such as a wall or pavement, commonly represents darkness, sadness, gloom, feeling unsafe, and something that is hidden (Sadowski, 2020). The concept of the shadow, first formulated by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1995: 95), is considered dark in nature. It represents the dark aspects of someone's personality – all the negative characteristics of a person is relegated to the darkness of their unconscious. Jung (1999: 95-97) explains that the shadow is "emotional in nature", and in this way it "holds its own autonomy", separate from the conscious mind. Further to this, Jung (1999: 95-97) explains that the shadow is prone to "psychological projection", which means that people commonly assign to others all their "evil" and "inferior" qualities that they do not recognise or want to admit are in themselves. Similarly, according to

Piotr Sadowski (2020), a person's shadow is a representation of their "dark equivalent". He explains that while a shadow is real, it is "strangely elusive". One cannot touch or feel a shadow, one cannot jump over it or shake it off, and if it is behind a person, they cannot run away from it. Sadowski (2020) believes that while a person's shadow imitates their appearance and movements, it can sometimes be perceived as having a substance and life of its own, independent of its owner. A shadow is also viewed as a "dark" alter ego. This is a vital point to consider in this study due to the use of shadows in this advertisement in particular.

Additionally, given that Sadowski's (2020) scholarly work on shadows is aligned to semiotics, it also of importance when analysing this advertisement. It appears that the shadows created by the model's body, shows her as a dark silhouetted figure. Therefore, it is without texture or surface detail, and can be interpreted as "menacing, mysterious and suggestive" (Sadowski, 2020). The partial shadow in the left zone that represents given or familiar information, implies that the mysteriousness of the Black model is familiar, accepted, and widely known. Similarly, even though the visual elements placed in the right zone are meant to present new information to the reader, this full shadow cast on the right further enhances the cryptic and unsafe feeling associated with shadows and darkness, thereby positioning the model and the physical features that she represents as something unknown to the reader. This unfamiliar information makes the reader pay closer and special attention to the advertisement. Another crucial observation is that the two shadows mirror each other, as the one on the left is a reflection of the one on the right. Before proceeding with the analysis of the other information zones, it must be noted that the name and price of the garment also appears in the right zone, over the shadow, as this is also new and important information for the reader.

The next zones to consider are the top (ideal) and bottom (real information) zones, as well as the centre. In the top part of this image, are the model's face and head. Her aesthetic features are prominent and placed in the zone that is referred to as the ideal to attain. Therefore, there is the perception that the beauty features of the Black model are something that girls and women should strive to attain – it is the "ideal" way to be beautiful. However, if we are to combine the findings of the analysis of the other multimodal principles in this advertisement, it would seem

that this is not the case. For example, within the centre zone of this advertisement is the upper half of the model's body – she is the principle and most centred focal point with the other information and elements framing her. Even if this is case, it is vital to note that in the absolute centre of this advertisement, is her bust area which is covered by an animal print bodysuit – it is the central aspect of the layout, and therefore, the nucleus of the communication in the image. This central point of an image, also known as the triptych, gives meaning to all the other elements surrounding it (Machin, 2007: 147). This means that the animal print on the bodysuit, her breasts, and the dark shadows are the features that stand out in this composition, making it the most salient elements in the advertisement. Based on this, the analysis finds that the model is being stereotyped as she is perpetuating a common narrative connoted to Black female models being selected to advertise and portray predatory animal print clothing.

Concerning the representation of social actors in the image, it is noted that the model's gaze is directed at the camera, and therefore, she is making direct eye contact with the viewer. She appears to be smiling and happy. Even though her body is not directly facing the camera / viewer, her gaze invites the viewer to engage with her, and therefore what she represents. The angle at which she is interacting with the viewer also suggests that she is on the same level as the viewer, implying a form of equality between herself and the viewer. This, together with the camera angle, which is a medium shot, suggests that there is little social distance between the model and the viewer; therefore, there is a closeness that is created. In relation to other elements already analysed, it would appear that this closeness created by the advertiser's use of camera angle and gaze sets a false tone of engagement. While the model is happy, and smiling, her face is not what the audience is meant to take note of, it is the animal print lingerie garment that she is modelling. Therefore, the audience will not engage with her, but merely with the item of clothing that is being sold by the retailer.

The grammar of colour in this advertisement also connects to the overall theme presented in this image. The colours used are shades of brown, black, and grey. With its connection to nature, and the earth, the colour brown is used in various elements, such as the model's skin tone and the furniture to create a sense of warmth. The brown of the animal print on the bodysuit is also vital

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because its meaning is linked to the wild due to the predatory nature of an animal such a leopard. The warmth from the brown helps to negate the feelings of coldness and mysteriousness that is created by the dark grey wall and the black shadows. Even though there is bright light on the model's face and shoulder, and she is made to glow in this regard, she appears to be drowned out by the darkness that emanates from the wall and shadows.

Linked to the analysis presented above, factors such as the representation of beauty, race and "otherness" are important to consider. It must be noted that, in this advertising series of *Mr Price* undergarments, the Black model was the only one wearing an animal print bodysuit. This is a common narrative when it comes to Black female models (Cf. pages 30-33 and 39-53). Often in advertising campaigns, the majority of clothes patterned after predatory animals, such as leopards, cheetahs and panthers, are modelled by Black women (Smith, 2015: 15-16). In the case of this advertisement, not only is the predatory animal print clothing item being worn by a Black model, the garment is also sexual in nature, and the model is pictured in front of a dressing table, which suggests she is in a bedroom.

This kind of representation perpetuates the stereotype of Black people having animal-like and savage features, as well as the stereotype of the oversexualised Black woman. As discussed in the literature review (Cf. chapter 2), these concepts emerged during the periods of colonisation, slavery, and apartheid. This means that, since the time of women like Baartman (Cf. pages 26-28 and 39-40), Black women have been portrayed as animal-like, particularly in pornographic and sexual contexts. And this has, and is, constantly propagated through advertisements such as this one. By continuing to perpetuate the stereotype of Black women as ferocious animals and sexual beings, Black women are viewed as the sexually aggressive, and exotic other. Such demeaning portrayals suggest that Black women are lacking in beauty, femininity, and attractiveness – creating a "tainted concept of beauty and identity in relation to black women" (Smith, 2105: 13). This is the antithesis of how the beauty, femininity, and attractiveness of white women is often portrayed. Therefore, while this advertisement has tried to imply that the Black model is the ideal kind of beauty, the creators have fallen short in their communication of this message by

perpetuating the use of the sexual and ferocious animal-like elements that have been presented in this advertisement.

This brings to conclusion the qualitative analysis of the five *Mr Price Facebook* advertisements. Presented next is the qualitative analysis of the sample of H&M advertisements.

8.3 *H&M*: a qualitative analysis

The five advertisements selected for the *H&M* qualitative analysis are titled, *Touched by an angel (Figure 8.6), Jungle fever (Figure 8.7), The blonde and the beautiful (Figure 8.8), "Coolest monkey in the jungle" (Figure 8.9),* and *The spectacle of the other (Figure 8.10).* I created the titles at the end of the analysis of each advertisement. The reason for selecting such titles is to play on the common phrases used in popular culture that summarises the meaning of the advertisement.

8.3.1 Touched by an angel
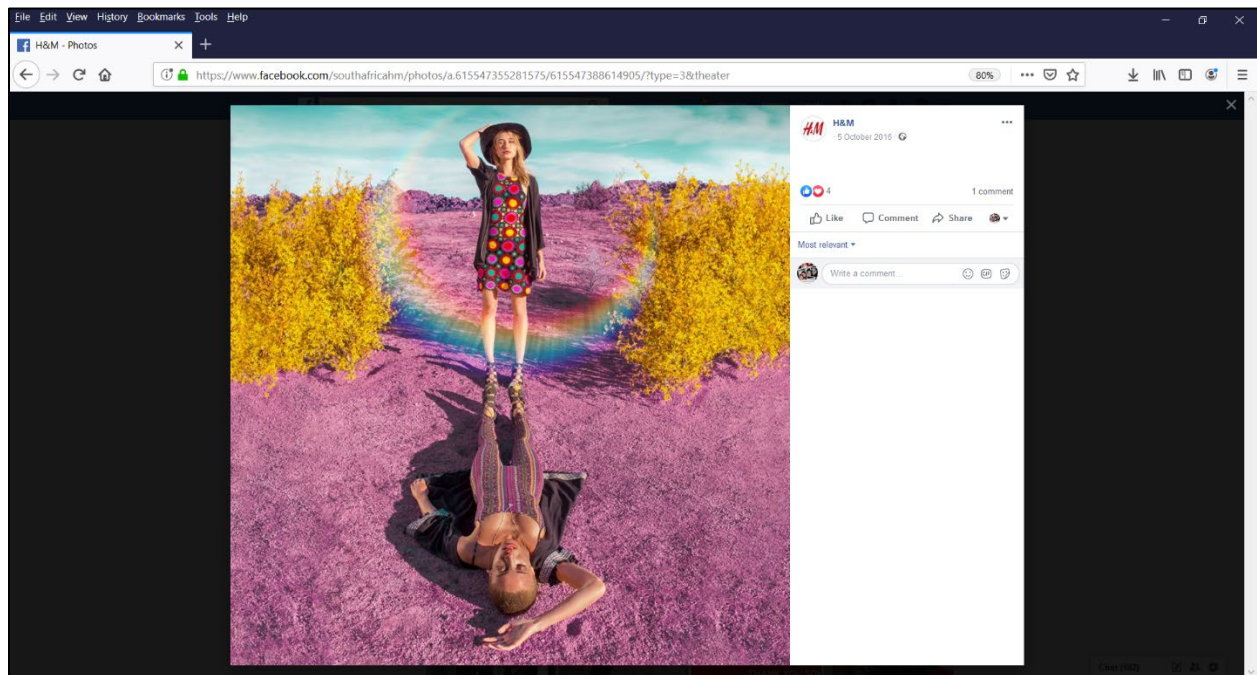
Figure 8.6: Advertisement from the *H&M* Facebook photos tab (5 October 2016)

The first advertisement (Figure 8.6) that will be analysed and discussed appeared on the *H&M* Facebook photos tab on 5 October 2016. At first glance, the advertisement pops out at the reader

drawing the reader in because of its bright colours, and vibrant lighting. The advertisement has two models in it, one is a young white girl with blonde hair, and the other is a young, light in complexion, Black girl with light brown natural hair. Both models are positioned at the centre of the advert, however, the white model is standing at the feet of the Black model, and is facing the camera directly, while the Black model is lying flat on the ground at the feet of the white model, facing her. Regarding their gazes, the white model is gazing directly into the camera, and the Black model has her eyes closed. The clothing that they are wearing matches the colours of the colourful landscape and is casual and colourful. The only text in the advertisement is the red *H&M* logo with the date that appears at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are no comments in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement post, even though the statistics at the top indicate that there is one comment. The advertisement received four likes.

The above description speaks to the literal meaning of the advertisement, in which the reader would see two young women advertising *H&M's* funky and colourful clothing range. They would also see an artistic composition of the landscape in which the mountains and grounds are shades of magenta; yellow/ gold trees on either side of the models; a partly cloudy blue skyline, and a rainbow light in the shape of a crescent glowing of the body of the white model. However, according to Stoian (2015: 23), advertisements "perform several metafunctions simultaneously in order to convey deeper meaning" than the literal one presented here. In order to unpack the connotative meaning of an advertisement, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 181-229) explain that a researcher must begin by unpacking the compositional, interactive and representational metafunctions of an advertisement – all three metafunctions are interrelated, and work together to create ideological meaning (Cf. 5.4).

Compositional meaning is realised by understanding how the systems of information value, salience, and framing, work together to create meaning (Cf. 5.4.1). When analysing the information value in this text, it is found that the two models are centrally placed, but the white, blonde model is the most central element as she is standing over the Black model who is placed in the bottom half of the image. The white model is bathed in a rainbow of light, which illuminates her, creating the perception of a vision or dream-like status. Also speaking to the dream-like

interpretation of this image, is the fact that the Black model appears to be sleeping, because she is lying on the ground, and her eyes are closed. Therefore, it can be argued that the light that illuminates the white model, suggests that the Black model is dreaming, and the white model, in her mystical and angelic glow, is a manifestation of the dream. The white model is also in the upper part of the image, almost as if she is descending from the sky. Given that the top section of an image is the idealised part of an advertisement, whatever or whoever is positioned in this part of the image epitomises qualities such as perfection and flawlessness. The metaphorical value of being placed at the top of an image is considered as being "lofty", having "power", being "upper class" or royal (Machin, 2007: 145). Elements placed on the margins of an advertisement are described by scholars as "ancillary or "dependent" on the central element. The elements in the margins are also often identical or similar to each other, which ensures that there is no sense of a division between the elements of the other two axes of given and new, and/or ideal and real (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006: 203-211). This is visible in this sample text as the trees placed on the left and right sides of the white model are similar. Additionally, the Black model who is placed in the lower part of the image, and at the feet of the white model, is also considered to be in the margins of the image, thereby making her a secondary and "subservient" element.

In the composition of an advertisement, certain features stand out and draw the reader's attention. This is what is referred to as the salience value of the advertisement (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 183-188). According to Machin (2007: 145), the "ideal normally gets the most salience in advertisements, because they fundamentally sell fantasies". This is relevant because, as established, the white model represents the ideal in this advertisement. The features in this advertisement that create the salience value are the look and feel of the models, the positioning of the models, the bright colours, and the trendy clothing. The advertisement has vibrant features, almost as if it is a painting, and therefore, it is likely to draw an audience in. If the objective of salience is to guide the reader to the important elements in the advertisement, then the features mentioned above contain the central symbolic view in this composition.

Based on Machin's theorisation of potent cultural symbols (Cf. page 158), given the prominence that the white model occupies in the image, one can identify the cultural symbol of beauty as

one of the most salient features. In looking at the size of the elements, the white model and the cultural symbols of beauty that she represents are again most salient because she appears to take up the most space in the image, emphasised by the rainbow crescent-shaped halo surrounding her. The same applies when looking at the digitally altered colour and tone of the advertisement. The reader is firstly drawn to the image because the entire image is colourful and bright, but the white model and the cultural symbol of beauty is further emphasised because of the brightness of the rainbow that illuminates her, and not the Black model lying on the ground. Additionally, with regard to focus, and foregrounding, the western beauty characteristics of the white model are presented as the ideal and therefore, the most salient, because she is the model that is most in focus, even though the Black model is in the foreground and closest to the camera.

The final system that works with salience and information value to create compositional meaning is framing. In applying Kress and Van Leeuwen's framework (Cf. 5.4), regarding framing in an advertisement, the analysis of this advertisement looks at the use of colour as a framing device. Colour can be used as a frame to create both connectedness and disconnectedness. In the selected advertisement, colour plays an important part in framing because the white model is the one that is most prominently framed. She is framed by the yellow / gold bushes on either side of her, and by the colourful rainbow crescent-shape that circles almost her entire body. She is also framed by the Black model laying at her feet, and the dark colour of the shadow that is created by the positioning of Black model. In this regard, colour is used to separate elements that are closely positioned, and which can otherwise be viewed as framed together. Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006: 2014) framework speaks of the "discontinuities of colour", and when applied to the selected advertisement, the "discontinuities of colour" can be seen in the use of the rainbow crescent-shape that frames the white model, separating her from the Black model. By separating the two models, the white model is singled-out as the main ideal of this image. Therefore, further emphasis is placed on the characteristics of the white model, with particular reference to her western beauty traits of thin, tall, white, blonde hair, long hair, and sharp nose.

Additionally, with relevance to the meaning potential of colour, we begin to explore how various other semiotic tools in this multimodal composition function jointly in realising representational

and interactive meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) theory on the grammar of colour, is one of the vital components to consider when doing so (Cf. 5.4.3). In this advertisement, it is mostly bright colours that are used, with the exception of a few dark shadows, the biggest one being around the Black model. It is highly saturated, meaning that the reader engages more with the image. A high luminosity scale is visible with the light shining through the rainbow prism effect. Luminosity is known for its association with the glow of magic, and supernatural beings or objects (Machin, 2007: 78-79). Therefore, this advertisement is linked to magic, fantasy, and otherworldliness. The crescent-shape rainbow prism effect that illuminates the white model positions her as angelic, especially since it appears as if she is descending from the sky. A rainbow, like a crescent moon, symbolises hope, new beginnings, the makings of dreams into reality, thereby allocating the white model a celestial persona. The light that emanates from the rainbow colours symbolises purity, goodness, enlightenment, immortality, and a higher power (Lile, 2017). The yellow/gold bushes support this as this bright colour also represents happiness, warmth, energy, truth, and light (Machin, 2007: 70). The magenta grounds and fields also represent universal harmony, emotional balance, spiritual growth, love, compassion, support, kindness, imagination, innovation, and creativity (Herman Cerrato, 2012: 17).

The dark shadow on the left side of the Black model also has meaning for this image. While in contemporary society, the colour black has come to mean power, strength, elegance, and formality, it is still largely overshadowed by its negative associations of mystery, death, evil, fear, and the unknown (Cerrato, 2012: 15). In the case of this advertisement, the black shadow is interpreted negatively, simply because the colour black is not used in a positive way. By using it in a shadow, the creators of the image have presented two different meanings for the light used in this image. Shadows are associated with darkness, negativity, inferiority and gloom, while rainbows are associated with light, hope, promise, and happiness. Therefore, this image, positions the white model as the ideal of light, happiness, spirituality, and beauty; while implying that the Black model represents the opposite.

The angle of interaction and social distance in the advertisement further supports the binary opposition of the Black model with the white model. Only the white model is engaging with the

readers through her direct gaze, and even though it is a long-distance shot, the semiotic elements framing her immediately captures the reader, allowing them to engage with her. With regard to the angles of interaction, this will be applied to the models themselves in the image. While the white model is not looking down at the Black model, she is standing above her, thereby imposing a form of symbolic power over the Black model, and because the Black model is positioned at the feet of the white model, it implies that she is looking up at her, which signifies that the white model has symbolic power over the Black model.

Based on the analysis and discussion above, the mythological and ideological meaning presented in this image speaks to the glow of the white women. This glow encapsulates how she is presented as the most important, the most beautiful, she is unique, she is special, and she is the person who exhibits positive traits such as kindness, gentleness, happiness, purity, goodness. Additionally, the combination of the semiotic elements in this advertisement positions the white women as the ideal beauty type, while simultaneously erasing the Black model as she is not featured adequately or represented appropriately – the image creators have positioned her as "lurking in the shadows". Therefore, readers engaging with this advertisement might disregard the Black model all together, and strive to attain western and European beauty standards, believing them to be the markers of ideal beauty.

8.3.2 Jungle fever
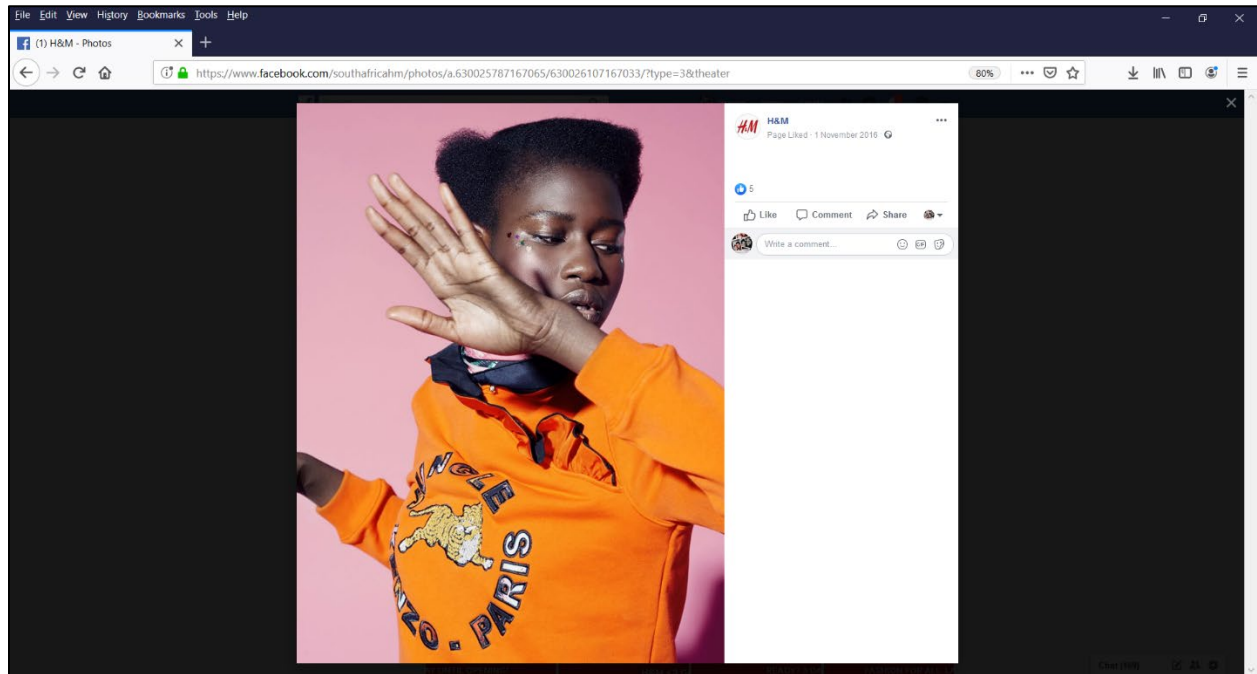
Figure 8.7 Advertisement from the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery (1 November 2016)

This advertisement (Figure 8.7) appeared on the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery on 1 November 2016. Seen in the image is one model who is a dark-skinned and Black model. The young woman has short hair, which is styled in its natural texture. Her eyes, which are not facing the camera, appear to be a shade of dark brown, and her hand is blocking her face. Next to her right eye, which is on the left side of the image are make-up stickers shaped in hearts and stars. She is wearing a bright orange long-sleeved sweater, with the words "jungle", "Kenzo", and "Paris", as well as a picture of a tiger, visible. The background of the image is a light shade of pink, and there is a small shadow being cast by the model that is visible on the bottom right side of the picture. The angle of the image is a medium close-up. The only text in the advertisement is the red *H&M* logo with the date that appears at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are no comments that appear in the comments section of the *Facebook* advertisement post. The advertisement received five likes.

On a denotative level, the Black model signifies a particular woman who has been photographed advertising a sweater. However, there are also connotative signs that indicate the second level of meaning as well as the mythological meaning or ideology behind the image. These meanings "come from our culture, some of which we can easily recognise consciously, and others which are unconsciously recognised and only become clear once we look for them" (Bignell, 2002: 32). As there is only one model in this advertisement, the compositional, interactive and representational meaning is analysed around her positioning, gaze, camera angle, make-up, clothing, race group, skin colour, hair, and her slim physique. Even though the model is positioned in the centre, drawing the reader to her, her head is facing to the right, and her eyes are looking downwards at something that the reader cannot see. Her face is obscured by her hand, which is placed directly in the upper part of the advertisement. Her hand is positioned centrally, which also makes it a focal point for a reader. The light is shining on the side of her face that is almost blocked by her hand and her face is only partially visible to the reader. The model also has stickers that look like shiny jewels that are placed on the side of her eye. Additionally, the bright orange jersey, with the words, jungle and Paris, and with an image of a tiger on it, is the most visible object in the image. Due to this, the model seems to disappear into the background of the advertisement.

When considering the three main visual areas in the composition of the advertisement (Cf. 5.4.1), because there are no objects or models on the left and right side, or in the margins of this image, the centre, and the top sections will be analysed. It is uncertain as to what ideal is being communicated by the advertisement because the top part of the image is the model's face, but she is mostly concealed from the reader. This could mean that the ideal information being presented to the reader is to ignore the Black model, and in doing so, ignore what she might represent, with particular reference to her beauty traits of her dark and shiny skin, and natural hair.

Additionally, the model's hand, which is also in the upper part of the image, obscures part of her face. However, her hand is very well lit, and because of this, it casts a small shadow on her face and a part of her neckline. Therefore, unlike in Figure 8.6, where the glow is to enhance the white

model's beauty, the glow created by the light in this advertisement results in a shadow, which is not meant to highlight or enhance the Black model's features; instead it is meant to hide or conceal her beauty features. With the shadow, which is dark, the advertisement further creates the impression, that the face of the Black model is not meant to be seen or regarded as important. Moreover, her face is not directly facing the camera, and her gaze is not directed at the reader, therefore, the reader is not encouraged to engage with her. According to Machin and Mayr (2012: 71-74), in an advertisement, the direction in which a model looks, and how he or she looks, encourages particular kinds of interpretations, and relationships between the audience and the model. In this advertisement, the reader is not encouraged to engage with the Black model, thereby shifting her into the background of the image, and creating the impression that the jersey holds the most importance in the image.

The jersey is the most centred element in the advertisement and, consequently, its artwork and wording is the focal point of the advertisement. This means that the jersey's bright colour, orange; and its words, "jungle" and "Kenzo" (slightly visible due to the crease in the jersey), and "Paris" (situated in the centre but towards the bottom); and the image of a tiger (in the centre of the jersey), all of which are in shades of orange, black and white, is being communicated as the most salient aspect of the advertisement. The connotations of the words, and the tiger image, highlights the real information that *H&M* wants to communicate. Paris is often referred to as the "fashion paradise" and "fashion capital" of the world; and *Kenzo* is a French luxury fashion house owned by Kenzo Takada. By placing the word "Paris" on the jersey, you are creating an impression in the reader's mind about elevating their fashion style and sense by wearing something that has associations with the "fashion elite" of Paris. Also noteworthy is that, even though Takada was born in Japan, he moved to Paris, and became famous for his fashion in this city. His first fashion clothing boutique in Paris was called *Jungle Jap,* which is a possible explanation for the use of the word "jungle" on the jersey (Sowray, 2012). The image of the tiger, on the jersey is the brand's official iconography, which came to be in 2012 to raise global awareness on endangered wild tigers. Tigers are indigenous to Asia, and given that Takada was born in Japan, the tiger holds cultural significance for his brand (Ardhia, 2018). However, because the model used is Black, and

taking into consideration the layout of the composition, where she is obscured, the association of words such as "jungle", and animal iconography to Black people, is noteworthy for this study (Hund and Mills, 2016). Aligned to the jungle and animal iconography association is the use of the colour orange. Because orange is a bright, and intensely saturated colour, it usually implies warmth and energy, which are words usually used to describe a jungle.

In light of the aforementioned, the associated ideology presented in this advertisement, can be linked to the long history in European culture of Black people being compared to animals, in particular, apes and monkeys, which are found mostly in jungles in Africa (Hund and Mills, 2016). According to Hund and Mills (2016), Africa and Black people, have since the beginning of time, "occupied a special place in the white imaginary, and are marked daily by the most shameless misrepresentations". They explain that the simianisation – "the comparison or likening of a member of a racial or ethnic minority group to an ape or monkey" – has been, and continues to be, popularised by literature, arts and everyday entertainment. Hund and Mills (2016) state that "animalisation is a widespread element of racist dehumanisation", and by the labelling of others in popular culture, with this "language of contamination and disease", a racist ideology is created and perpetuated in the minds of people. They write that Africa has long been labelled as a "contagious continent incubating pestilences of all sorts in hot muggy jungles, spread by reckless and sexually unrestrained people", therefore Africans, and people of African descent, have always been described as having "animal-like", "barbaric", and "savage" qualities (Hund & Mills, 2016).

Taking into consideration this history of associating Black people with animals, it can be surmised that the mythological and ideological meaning presented in this advertisement speaks to the "otherisation" of Black women. In this regard, this analysis is similar to the analysis conducted on Figure 8.5 with the Black model wearing the *Mr Price* print lingerie. The stereotypical label of the "exotic other" has long haunted Black women, as they are frequently portrayed in popular culture in natural and animal-like settings, wearing animal-printed clothing, unruly hair, using bold make-up, and often being positioned in animal-like postures, all in an effort to accentuate their ethnic

origins. According to Gabrielle Dunkley (2017), the "other" is a "subject considered separate from an established, conventional group", such as white women, and their conventional image of ideal beauty. She writes that Black women, since the times of Baartman (Cf. pages 26-28 and 39-40) in the mid-1800s have been placed in "human zoos" and are referred to as the "exotic other". Dunkley (2017) states that colonialists responsible for the "earliest human zoos did not place the other in a position of power or authority on their own culture". By removing the power from Black women, as was the case with Baartman, the "human zoos" were "limited to ogling a human being for his or her exotic otherness, ultimately dehumanizing [sic] someone for the sake of entertainment" (Dunkley, 2017). Based on all of these elements, this analysis deduces that the Black model in this advertisement is presented as the "exotic other".

8.3.3 The blonde and the beautiful
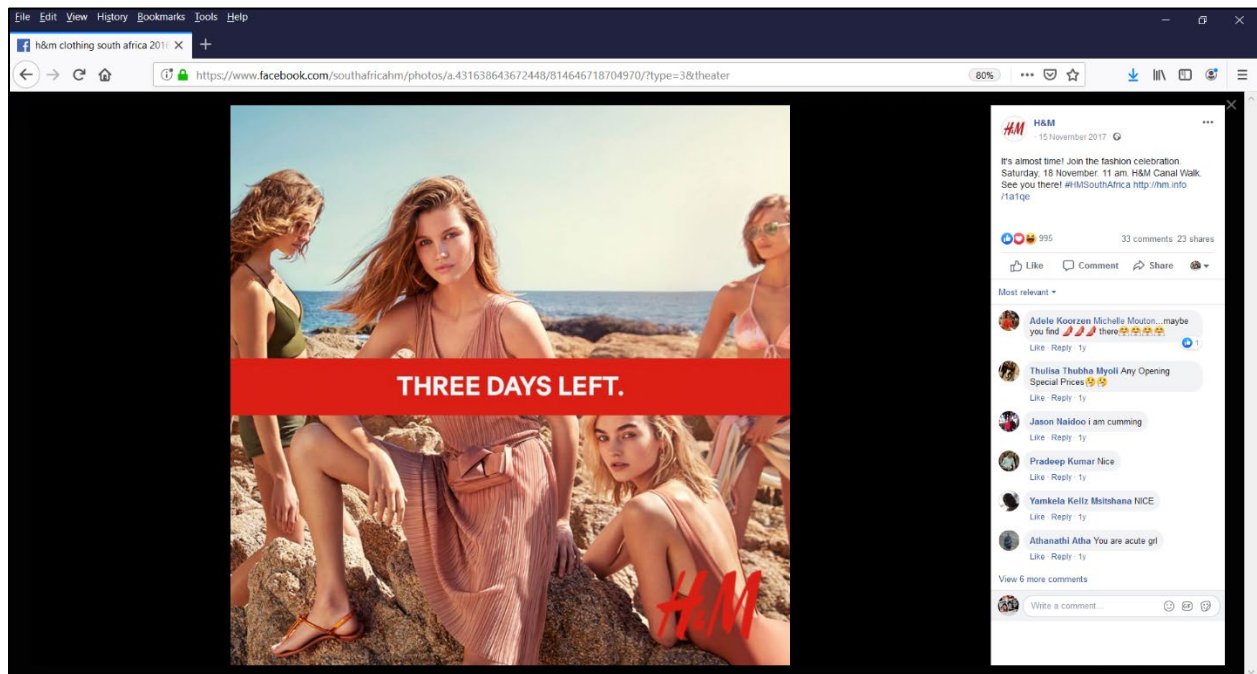
Figure 8.8 Advertisement from the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery (15 November 2016)

The eighth advertisement (Figure 8.8) that will be analysed appeared on the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery on 15 November 2017. At first glance, the advertisement shows four women who all have blonde hair of different lengths, are slim, and tall, have tanned bodies, and two of them

appear to have blue or light-coloured eyes. The models are positioned on rocks near the blue ocean which is visible in the background. Their clothing consists of casual and beach attire, three of which are in shades of bronze, and one is an army green colour. Two of the models are looking straight at the camera, while the model on the left of the advertisement is looking down, and the model positioned on the right is glancing in a left direction. Both, the models looking down, and the one looking away, are wearing sunglasses. The two models that are looking directly into the camera, are placed at the centre of the advertisement, with one perched higher than the other on a rock. The model perched on the rock is facing the camera directly, while the other model who is gazing directly into the camera, is positioned slightly below her.

The text in the advertisement includes the red *H&M* logo in the bottom, right hand corner of the advertisement and a solid red banner with white text reading, *Three Days Left*, spread across the centre of the photograph. This banner obscures the top section of the head of the model that is laying on the rock, and cuts through the middle section of the other three models. There is a caption accompanying the image, and it is placed outside of the image in the comments section of the advertisement. The caption reads: "It's almost time! Join the fashion celebration. Saturday, 18 November. 11am. H&M Canal Walk. See you there! #HMSouthAfrica". There is also a website link positioned next to the caption, which if clicked, takes the audience to another *H&M* webpage. Another piece of text that is featured, is the red *H&M* logo and the date that appears at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. Not all of the comments made by the followers of this advertisement are visible in the screenshot. However, the ones that are visible, highlight excitement and happiness that the store is about to open. Also found in the comments section, which is of interest to this study, is the audience's uses of emoji's, which are small digital images or icons used to express an idea or emotion. While not created by the advertiser, it does add to the meaning of the advertisement. In this advertisement, there are a total of 33 comments, and the advertisement was shared 23 times to other *Facebook* profiles. There was a total of 995 clicks on the Like button.

The direct meaning of the advertisement suggests that the store is advertising and selling beachwear for the summer since the advert is published in November 2017. November is the

season of summer in South Africa. It is also the time of year when the business and schooling calendars start drawing to a close, therefore, indicating that the summer holidays are about to start. Additionally, the advertisement highlights that the *H&M* store in Canal Walk is opening. Canal Walk is a popular area in the beach city of Cape Town, therefore the advertising of beachwear appears appropriate. Based on these points, it would appear that the retailer is aware of the summer needs of its clientele and is appealing to this need by advertising beachwear with the use of these models.

In unpacking the associated and ideological meaning of the advertisement, it is important to consider the various zones of the image in which information value can be analysed (Cf. 5.4.1). In the case of this advertisement, the model perched on the rock as well as the red banner with the white text is the most central focal point with the other information positioned below, and on the right side. Therefore, the model most centred, together with the red banner, is the most important part of the picture. The red *H&M* logo in the bottom right corner presents important, factual, and new information to the audience. In this advertisement, the information is that *H&M* is selling the beachwear attire that the models are wearing. Linguistically, this means the that most important information in the advertisement is that *H&M* is the store to find the clothing items in.

Additionally, the caption that accompanies the advertisement is also positioned on the right, but at the top of the image. The wording of the caption pertains to the retailer's opening of its Canal Walk branch, which is located in Cape Town's Century City and is described as the shopping centre that "merges the world's most desirable brands with shopping convenience, all in a majestic setting" (Canal Walk, 2019). Therefore, with phrases like "it's almost time"; "fashion celebration"; and "see you there", the audience is being provided with the ideology of an ideal lifestyle, making them believe that if they are not at the store opening, they are missing out on a specific lifestyle connoted with summer, sun and a carefree existence. Linked to the narrative of an ideal lifestyle that this advertisement presents, is the clear blue summer sky, and the sparkling blue, calm ocean in the background, both of which are positioned towards the top of the image. Machin (2007: 35) writes that beaches, especially a calm ocean, carries the association of

freedom, pleasure, relaxation, and calmness. He states that a blue sky connotes freedom and peace of mind. Based on this understanding, there is an ideal lifestyle that is presented to the audience in this advertisement and that is the possibility of having a carefree and relaxing summer if you wear these *H&M* beachwear garments.

The colour palette of the advertisement can also be connected to the above connotations. The shades of gold in the advertisement, from the bronze clothes, to the brown of the rocks and sand, to the yellow of the warm sun illuminating the tanned bodies of the models, especially the most centred one, also impact the ideological meaning of this advertisement. According to Jennifer Bourne (2010), the colour gold is associated with extravagance, wealth, grandeur, and prosperity, as well as sparkle, glitz, and glamour. It is also a warm colour that is associated with brightness. Machin (2007: 69-81) explains that bright colours, such as gold, are associated with truth and good values. This implies that the gold tones in this advertisement, and the hue in the colour palette, creates a feeling of warmth. Additionally, the richness of the gold tones creates an intense, and high saturation level, that draws the audience in. This forces them to engage with the advertisement and interpret meaning from it. Given that there are no Black models in this image, the use of only white models together with the gold colour palette can create the impression that truth, good values, extravagance, wealth, grandeur, prosperity, and glamour, are only associated with white women, thereby creating the desire to emulate them.

In addition to the connotations created by the use of the gold colour palette, ideological meaning can be attached if people understand the history of gold in South Africa, which is as rich and complex as the metal itself. According to the Minerals Council South Africa (2019), gold was discovered in Witwatersrand, South Africa in 1886. Known as the Witwatersrand Gold Rush, "this gold discovery was a turning point in the history of South Africa, and it led to the change of the country from an agricultural society into the world's largest producer of gold" (Minerals Council South Africa, 2019). This was a substantial contributing factor to the development of the early Republic of South Africa as gold mining in the country quickly became "the largest and most important part of the country's economy and it is still a major contributor to its economy" (Minerals Council South Africa, 2019). During the period of 1886 and 1900, the Randlords, a group

of European financiers, emerged and controlled the gold (and diamond) mining industries in South Africa. In 1904, Chinese indentured labourers were brought to work in the gold mines but many of them returned home in 1910. They were replaced by migrant black labour, many recruited from neighbouring territories in Southern Africa. Over the course of the years, there have been many racial, political, and social challenges associated with gold mining, with many people losing their lives in strikes and revolts such as The Rand Rebellion when white workers protested against their jobs being given to black workers who were paid a lower salary in order to cut costs. Even though this history of gold in South Africa is not directly related to beauty, gold, occupies various narrative spaces within the country, thereby conjuring a wealth of different meaning associated with it.

The gaze and poses of the models, which represent social interaction in the advertisement, are also important in ascertaining associated and ideological meaning. Machin and Mayr (2012: 71-74) state that, "in a photograph, where a person looks, and how they look, can be one important way of encouraging particular kinds of interpretations" from the audience. This is coupled with the angle of interaction and social distance, which indicates how the audience sees the model. In this photograph, the gaze of the two models staring directly at the camera, draws the audience in, especially the gaze of the model perched on top of the rock. While her body language appears casual, her posture, especially the upper part of her body, as well as her gaze, is very regal. This cements her queen like status and positions her as superior to the other models in the picture, especially since the two models in the background are looking down and away from the camera, and the other model in the mid-foreground is laying at her side.

The camera angle of the photograph also carries meaning (Van Leeuwen, 2008: 138). In the case of this image, the angle is a medium close-up, which allows for the audience to see the background and the models, but it also allows for the audience to engage directly with the most centred model. In this way, they can easily see her facial expressions and aesthetic features. This allows the audience to feel that she is within their reach, and that they are close to her. The audience might, thus, feel that her beauty standards are attainable, and therefore, they might

want to reproduce her aesthetic style and beauty features, which in the case of this advertisement, are western beauty characteristics.

In summarising the myth and ideology behind this image, I believe that the advertisement is selling the idea that western and European beauty features are an ideal beauty type that compliments an ideal lifestyle of wealth, and a carefree disposition. It communicates this by the use of the four models who are all white, and therefore have western and European beauty characteristics. They glow in this advertisement with their blonde wavy beach hair, blue eyes that complement the colour of the sea and sky; golden clothes that match the warm glow of the sun; as well as their tanned, slim and tall bodies. This advertisement clearly promotes the myth of beauty, youth, and health as well as the glow of the white woman. The cultural symbols of beauty, in particular western beauty, is salient in this advertisement (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). This is because the models' aesthetic features, their beachwear attire, and the landscape, are the semiotic elements that draw more attention in this advertisement; therefore, what they represent, in terms of beauty and lifestyle, and how that is connected to each other, is considered most important in this advertisement.

8.3.4 "Coolest monkey in the jungle"
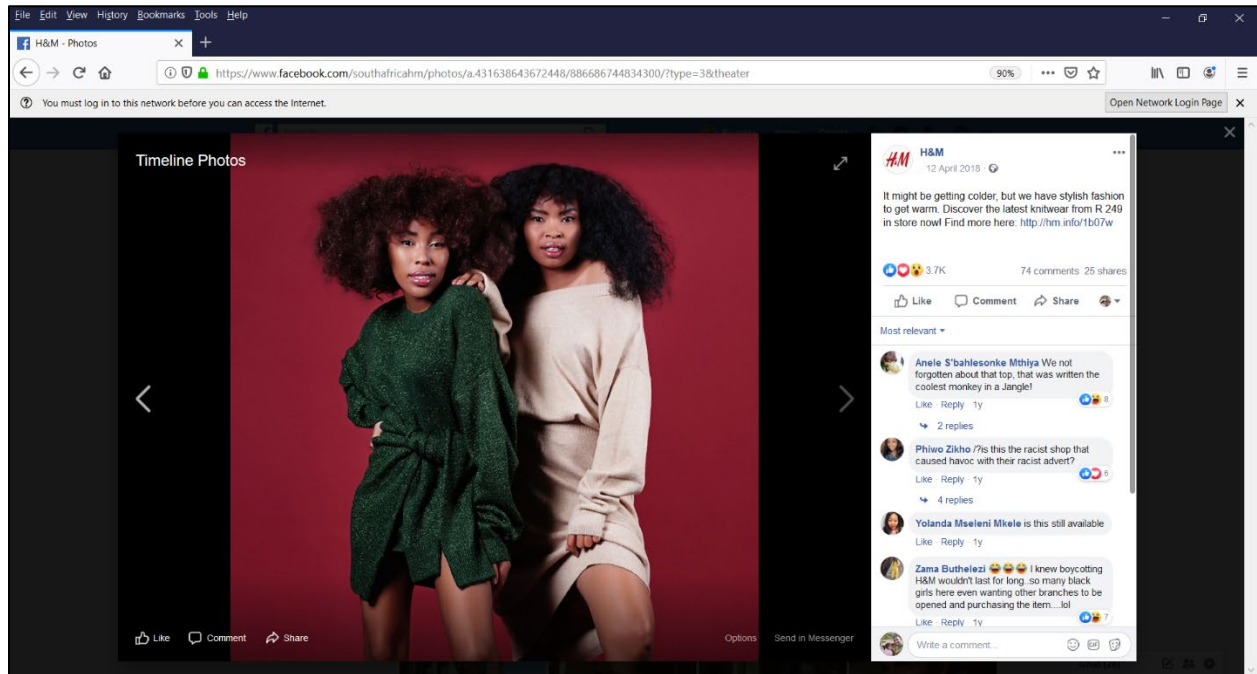
Figure 8.9 Advertisement from the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery (12 April 2018)

The advertisement selected (Figure 8.9) appeared on the *H&M Facebook* photos gallery on 12 April 2018. It was included in the sample due to the nature of its comments, which will be discussed later. On a denotative level, the advertisement shows two young Black women, standing very close to each other. The model on the right is wearing an off-shoulder, knee-length, beige/cream knitwear dress, and the model on the left is wearing an emerald green off-shoulder, above-the-knee, and short, knitwear dress. The poses of both models are almost identical. Both have their right legs jutting out with their knees bent, and their left legs straight, creating a slight gap between each of their thighs. The model in the green dress has her left hand on her hip, while the model in the beige/cream dress has placed her left hand on the shoulder of the other model. Both ladies are staring directly into the camera and have their hair naturally styled. They both also have similar facial expressions and features. These include, pouty lips (as their lips are slightly parted), dark eyes, high cheekbones, make-up consisting of shiny bronze tones, highly arched eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes, and round noses. While the model on the right appears to be

slightly bigger in frame than her counterpart, both are slim in their body type. The photograph is taken in a studio with a maroon backdrop. Most of the light in the image is shining on the thinner model on the left. There are shadows in this advertisement which can be found on the left-hand side of the model wearing the beige/cream dress as well as around the thighs of both ladies.

The text in this image consists of the red *H&M* logo and the date that appears in a thumbnail size at the top of the comments section on the right-hand side of the image. The caption appears below this date, and reads: "It might be getting colder, but we have stylish fashion to get warm. Discover the latest knitwear from R249 in store now." There is also a website link positioned next to the caption, which if clicked, takes the audience to another *H&M* webpage. Unlike the previous advertisements analysed, this advertisement was selected due to the comments that appear in the comments section. This *Facebook* post received 3 700 likes, 74 comments, and 25 shares. While only four comments are visible in the screenshot taken for the analysis, the visible comments are reflective of the theme of the commentary made on this post that advertised the garments.

To understand the connotative meaning and ideology behind the advertisement, I will begin by looking at the compositional meaning of the advertisement (Cf. 5.4.1). This method of analysis is preferred for multimodal texts such as this advertisement, as it is not just the picture that is being analysed, but the text that accompanies it in the comments section. In this regard, the analysis finds that, in the composition of this advertisement, the two models are positioned in the centre of the photo. Having them centrally placed creates the meaning that they are the most important part of the advertisement, and therefore, the clothes that they are advertising is at the most important element being disseminated to the audience, making it the central and most important aspect of the advertisement. In looking at the top to bottom composition, the advertisement appears to portray the aesthetic features of the black models as the ideal. Given that the models are wearing their hair in its natural form of dark and curly, by placing them in the centre of the advertisement, and their hair at the top, the advertiser is portraying this form of hair as an ideal form of beauty. Additionally, found in the top composition of the advertisement is the *H&M* logo

and caption. The wording of the caption encapsulates the point that *H&M* is the ideal place for South African consumers to find their ideal winter clothes.

The central and top composition arrangement of this advertisement is unique to the other *H&M* advertisements analysed in this study because most of them have positioned white and light-skinned models, and therefore western and Eurocentric ideals of beauty, as the forms of beauty that are preferred. This advertisement, by making the Black models and their beauty features the most salient in the composition, due to size, foregrounding and the absence of framing them with other elements, has slightly overturned that narrative of western beauty as the ideal. However, when analysing this particular advertisement, the timing of its online posting must be considered.

According to the caption and comments in this advertisement, it was posted by *H&M* on their South African *Facebook* account on 12 April 2018. In January that year, the retailer came under fire in South Africa for advertising on their global online platform, an image of a Black boy wearing one of their hoodies with the catchphrase "Coolest monkey in the jungle". Many Black South Africans were enraged by this due to the connotations associated with Black people and monkeys (Hund & Mills, 2016). There was also a global outcry from members of the African diaspora as they found the advertisement displaying "a serious lack of social awareness and racial sensitivity", and labelled it as "racist, offensive, derogatory and negligent" (Carole, 2018). While this study is focused on female beauty, the "monkey" advertisement has relevance. According to Edith Campbell (2019), associating Black people and monkeys "implies a racist undertone because of its historical use for demeaning and dehumanising people of African descent".

Additionally, the comments posted on this advertisement by some of the followers of the *H&M* South African *Facebook* account also allude to the "monkey" advertisement. There were comments such as, "we not forgotten about that top, that was written the coolest monkey in the jangle"; "is this the racist shop that caused havoc with their racist advert"; and "I knew boycotting H&M wouldn't last for long. So many black girls here even wanting other branches to be opened and purchasing the item. Lol". These comments appear in the right-hand section of the

composition of the advertisement, which according to the MDA framework, presents new information. This is significant in many ways because the new information presented through the comments can be analysed from two points of view.

The first is that it informs those looking at the image about the *H&M* "monkey" advertisement and how Black people felt about it, and how they continue to feel about. In this way, it creates more awareness on how the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and slavery, still permeate various structures of society including advertising. A second point is that it also communicates a message to *H&M.* The comments allude to the point mentioned above about how millions of people around the world viewed the image as "a shocking admission that white companies still saw Black consumers as a degrading and ugly stereotype" (Wang, 2019). Through South African consumers constantly posting new messages on this past incident, *H&M* is constantly receiving new information on the emotions and needs of its target market in this country, which can help the Swedish retailer become more socially and culturally conscious of its consumers. Through such comments, they are constantly reminded that they need to live up to their advertising strategy which is for "models to depict and portray fashion in a positive and healthy manner" (*H&M Group*: 2019).

Other important multimodal semiotic principles to consider when analysing the advertisement is that of the gaze and poses of the models as well as the camera angle and distance. This represents the social interaction and social distance in the advertisement and are crucial in determining associated and ideological meaning. In this advertisement, the models are staring directly at the camera. The direct gaze and body gestures of the models creates a connection between themselves and the reader, thereby inviting the reader into the narrative that is being created by the advertisement. The neutral eye-level angle also suggests an equality between the models and the reader (Hu & Luo, 2016: 162). As in our everyday life, there are certain codes or regulations that impact on social relations, and how we interact with each other (Hu & Luo, 2016: 160). The same can be applied to social distance that is created in advertisement by various camera shots and angles. Medium camera shots such as the one in this advertisement allows for the reader to feel close to the models. The frontal angle of the models, an angle which is frequently used in the

construction of images so that the audience has a greater feeling of being involved, also suggests that special attention must be paid to the model and their body language. Therefore, it can be concluded, that the advertisers chose it because they wanted the readers to engage with the self-confidence and pride that is displayed in the body language and facial expressions of the two Black models.

The next aspect to consider is the grammar of colour in the advertisement in order to determine the meaning created by using certain colours. The colours used are the beige/cream and emerald green knitwear dresses, and the maroon backdrop of the studio. The colour of the dresses are in line with the message of the retailer, which is that these are outfits for colder days, as these colours are usually associated with the autumn and winter seasons. The three main colours, beige/cream, emerald green, and maroon are solid colours which according to the social semiotic framework creates an impression of positivity and pureness within the image. Maroon is a shade of red and is therefore associated with warmth and energy. Even though it is a darker shade of green, the emerald green colour represents refinement and wealth due to its earlier links to royalty; it symbolises balance and harmony due to green having a strong association with "nature and the environment"; it is also seen as the colour of "luck, freshness and renewal; and within colour psychology, green is thought to help balance emotions and promote a sense of calm and clarity" (Canva, 2020). Similarly, the beige/cream colour is associated with gentleness, peacefulness and calmness.

In light of the aforementioned analysis and discussion, it would seem that *H&M* designed this advertisement with specific goals in mind. It is the finding of this study that, by constructing this advertisement in a way in which the aesthetic features of the Black models are presented as the ideal beauty to attain, the retailer set out to write the wrongs of the "monkey" advertisement. *H&M* were trying to communicate a positive message about Black women and their beauty features. However, what needs to be considered is the frequency and consistency of such advertisements, and whether or not, they do ultimately make a difference in how beauty ideals are perceived and performed. From this study's sample of 55 *H&M Facebook* advertisements, there were 25 images, which at first glance, appears to position the beauty features of Black

women as ideal. However, this statistic is merely a guide, as it cannot account for the connotative and ideological meanings of the advertisements. An in-depth qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis would have to be applied separately to each image to identify the connotations, myths and ideologies that each image promotes.

The analysis and discussion surrounding this particular advertisement also highlights the connection between politics and beauty, and how the history of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, have shaped the media's use of western beauty as the ideal in South Africa. The users' comments with regards to the "monkey" advertisement and accusing the retailer of being racist suggest that there is a political, social and cultural connotation to the advertisement. Additionally, the users' also call out their fellow Black people for not boycotting the retailer. Their comments suggest that the minds of the Black women who are requesting for more *H&M* stores to be opened, in spite of witnessing the "racist" tendencies of the retailer, have been colonised. While not speaking directly on this advertisement, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 63), in this study's literature review, comments that one of the worst forms of colonisation that continues to "wreck havoc" in Africa is the "epistemological one (colonization [sic] of imagination and the mind) that is hidden in institutions and discourses that govern the modern globe" (Cf. pages 33-53).

8.3.5 The spectacle of the other
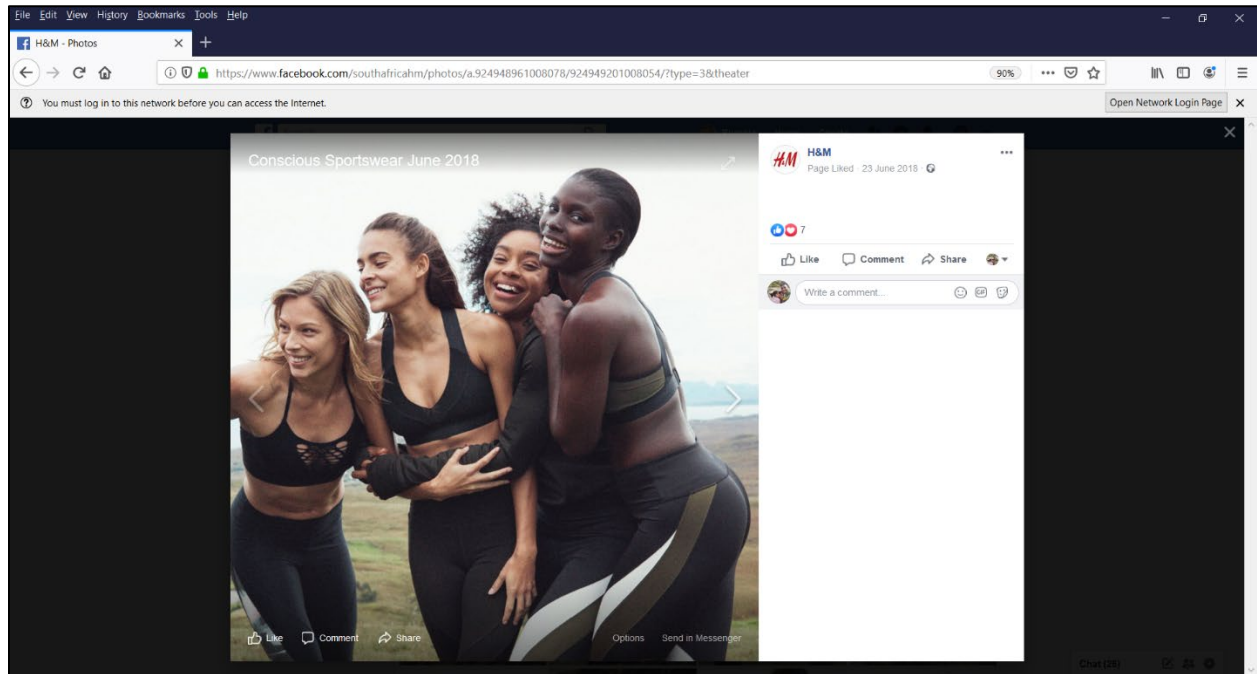
Figure 8.10 Advertisement from the *H&M* Facebook photos gallery (25 June 2018)

The next advertisement selected (Figure 8.10) appeared on the *H&M Facebook* photos gallery on 23 June 2018. On face value, the advertisement shows four young women, two Black and two white, all holding onto each other, almost in a hug-like embrace, and they are laughing and smiling. They are all wearing dark coloured sports and exercise attire, and their body type is slim, tall, and muscular. While all four women are wearing exercise pants, three of them are wearing short tops or sports bras, with one of them wearing a long-sleeved exercise top. Three of the women have dark hair, and one is blonde. The two white women have long wavy hair, while one Black woman has very curly hair, and the other Black woman has short hair. Both Black girls appear to be wearing their hair in its natural form. The photograph is taken outdoors with a grey skyline at the top of the image, a mountain range and dam in the far background, and a hilly terrain in the mid-background.

The models are arranged as follows, the first and second model from the left are white, and the third and fourth models are Black. It is noteworthy to highlight that model number three is lighter

in complexion than model number four. The two Black models are staring directly into the camera, with the eyes of the third model almost closed. The two white models are looking away from the camera. As with the Black models, one of the white model's eyes are open, and the second white model has her eyes almost closed. None of the models are making eye contact with each other. There is very little text in the advertisement, except for the name of the picture, *Conscious Sportswear June 2018*, which only appears on the image if the reader moves the computer arrow over the image. The name of the picture disappears once the reader moves the computer arrow away. The red *H&M* logo and the date appears at the top of the comments section in a thumbnail size. There are no comments in the comments section of the *Facebook* post and the advertisement only received seven likes.

In looking at the literal meaning of the advertisement, a reader would see that this a group of healthy young women, who appear to be friends. They seem to be very happy as a group. Because they are in sports clothes, and are outdoors, they appear to have taken a hike or jogged together. Additionally, their bodies appear to be very toned and fit, therefore, it makes it easier to believe that they chose to be outdoors and engage in some form of exercise.

To unpack the associated and ideological meaning of the advertisement, I begin by looking at the composition of the advertisement (Cf. 5.4.1). One of the observations made is that the women are lined up from light skin and hair to dark skin and hair. Aligning this to the "given-new" structure, this advertisement then reveals that the western and European beauty features presented on the left side of the image, in the form of the two white models, is widely accepted, and that the two Black women, and their representation of beauty is something that is still undecided on.

Hall et al. (2013: 215-219) explain that there is no right or wrong meaning in visual images, and that meanings can be multiple, and highly ambiguous. So, when analysing this advertisement, an important question to ask is, which meaning do the image producers (*H&M*) aim to privilege in this advertisement? While Hall et al. (2013: 215-219) are not specifically referring to this advertisement, their scholarship, when analysing an image such as this one, has provided several

points to consider regarding beauty representation, race and "otherness". When the advertisement is examined in closer detail, one notices that the beauty features of the white women are privileged, due to the fact that they are placed on the right of the advertisement. They also appear to be less masculine than the two Black models which in western culture is a sign of feminine beauty, with known descriptions of beautiful white women being slender and delicate (Painter, 2010: 45-46).

Additionally, the white models are facing the light in the image, and not the camera, so they are better lit than the two Black models, and therefore, they have more of a glow, which also speaks to them having "admirably beautiful features" such as "lily-white complexions" (Painter, 2010: 45-46). Moreover, Black women, especially those in athletic spaces, are sometimes ridiculed for being masculine, which is considered unfeminine and unattractive by western and European beauty standards (Foster, 2009: 4). Furthermore, their "shiny dark skin tones" have the connotation of being the "exotic other" (Foster, 2009: 4). According to Ramona J. Bell (2008: 16-39), "even though most sports emphasize [sic] stereotypically masculine qualities, such as strength, competition, and aggression, Black women who participate in sports, are still expected to conform to strictly western, feminine, gender norms". And if they do not, then they are called out for it, facing repercussions such as discrimination, mistreatment and harassment. Most recent examples of such women are Caster Semenya[2] and Serena Williams.

Within the context of the "given-new" structure, the direction in which the models gaze also gives meaning to the image. Additionally, consideration must be given to the angle of interaction,

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[2] According to the Associated Press (2019), Caster Semenya "was legally identified as female at birth and has identified as female her whole life". However, due to her "masculine features", she is constantly subjected to discrimination and harassment. This is largely due to the views of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) who says "she is one of a number of female runners in athletics who have medical conditions known as differences of sex development and who were born with the typical male XY chromosome pattern". The Federation believes that because of this, women such as Semenya have "some male biological characteristics, male levels of the hormone testosterone after puberty, and an unfair advantage over other female athletes" (Associated Press, 2019).

i.e. the angle at which the viewer sees the model. With regards to the gaze of the models in this advertisement, only the dark toned Black model is looking directly at the camera, and the others are looking away or their eyes are closed. This forces the reader to engage with the dark-skinned Black model, who also appears to be the most masculine of the group. Even though the Black model appears to have been given agency by gazing directly at the audience, with her placement on the right, under the "given-new" structure, whatever she represents is considered as something new and unexpected, and something that the audience might not understand (Chen & He, 2015: 2). In other words, the readers are almost forced to engage with an image that is new to them, and they might struggle to define or understand it. This is what Bell (2008: 16) refers to when she writes about the representations of Black women in media. She explains that when Black women are represented in advertisements, specific meanings about race and gender are produced. Bell (2008: 16-39) states that producers of advertisements "use visual texts as a language system to communicate their ideas about the Black female form", often in a negative way. By communicating their ideas, the producers construct meaning about Blackness, black female beauty, race and gender (Bell, 2008: 16-39). In light of this, consideration must be given to the negative connotations created by an advertisement such as this one being analysed on Black beauty and its aesthetics. If the features of Black women continue to be presented as "unknown" and "new, surprising, problematic or contestable", then it can create the perception that their beauty features are undesirable in comparison to the western and European standards of beauty.

Also, of importance to consider in this image is the use of colour. Even though the image is taken outdoors in a green field area, the colour scheme of the advertisement is grey and dull. While it is daytime, the skyline in the background appears grey and foggy, and there is no sunlight or shades of yellow, therefore there is no brightness in the picture. Even the sports attire worn by the models are in dark shades. This kind of colour palette suggests the feeling of distance and coldness. A final point to discuss in this advertisement is how the ideal-real structure has been used by the producers to evoke emotions from the reader. In this advertisement, the upper part communicates an ideal narrative of happiness and friendship among these four women. Even

though they belong to different race groups and cultures, and might be very different from each other, the advertisement creates the appearance that their different races, culture, and beliefs, does not matter to them. Because the ideal is often made the most salient part of an image, it is considered the most significant part of the advertisement and creates an idealised and generalised view of the situation or world (Kress & van Leeuwen in Chen and He, 2015: 2-3). Locating this image within the context of South African history, and the current racial tensions facing the country (Cf. pages 3-5 and 119-120), the advertisement creates an illusion of inclusion, as it is hard to believe that the advertisement's ideal of happiness and friendship exists among four women of different race groups in such an effortless manner in South Africa.

8.4 Chapter summary

The qualitative data analysis, and discussion of the findings, were presented in this chapter. Five advertisements from each retailer were subjected to a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis in order to identify the denotative, connotative and ideological meanings of the advertisements. Applying Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar, the ideologies, culture, and values that each image promoted about beauty, was identified, interpreted, and discussed. The analysis revealed that white women and their beauty features were positioned as the core of what is considered beautiful. Even with the inclusion of Black models in the advertisements, the retailers, through the use of specific visual composition, layout and colour choices, perpetuated certain stereotypes about Black women and their aesthetic features, thereby promoting European and western beauty as the ideal.

Based on the analysis, findings revealed that the beauty of the white models were privileged, and therefore, they were positioned to glow. This emphasised that there is a visual language of whiteness perpetuated in the advertisements. The Black models who appeared in the advertisements were stereotypically portrayed in a sexual, exotic manner, which placed them in the category of the "other". Additionally, while there was a fair representation of Black models, their placement in the advertisements only created an illusion of inclusion. It was found that

including them in such a manner, is dangerous because when you include Black models but subject them to the peripheries of the advertisement, it plays a role in erasing Black beauty.

Another finding was related to the social, political and cultural connection to beauty. This was revealed after analysing advertisements that had commentary located in the comments section of the *Facebook* posts. The nature of the users' comments revealed that what is considered beautiful is impacted by political, social and cultural values. The analysis revealed that the historical and political legacies of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid continue to re-inforce the dominant narrative that western and European beauty features are preferred, and therefore that is the ideal that is perpetuated by the media.

In light of the analysis presented in this chapter, and taking into consideration the findings of the quantitative analysis (Cf. chapter 7), the next chapter presents a comparative analysis of both retailers. Also, in the next chapter will be the conclusion of the study, a discussion of the limitations, and suggestions of recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 9: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The intention of this study was to examine how images of feminine beauty are constructed in the *Facebook* advertising of retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*. The investigation centred on whether western and European ideals of feminine beauty are promoted by these retailers as the standard of beauty in South Africa. The reason for selecting these two stores was due to their popularity in South Africa, the fact that both sell similar apparel, homeware and sportswear, and are similarly priced. Additionally, *Mr Price* is a local store and *H&M* is an international company, which lends more credibility to the comparative element of this study. Data was collected over a three-year period, from October 2016 to October 2019. It is important to clarify that the advertisements collected for data analysis formed part of the regular posts made by the retailers on their *Facebook* profile accounts. Specifically, the advertisements were chosen from the photo gallery of the retailers' *Facebook* accounts, and not from the *Facebook Ads/ Sponsored Content*, which appear directly in a user's news feeds, alongside status updates, photos, and videos from their friends (Cf. page 183).

With reference to the above, this dissertation endeavoured to answer three questions. The first question related to the ideals of feminine beauty, and whether the South African media, specifically the *Facebook* advertising of *Mr Price* and *H&M*, perpetuated and promoted western and European ideals. The second question considered the semiotic elements (linguistic and visual resources) used in the *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements, and whether these generated meaning and contributed to reinforcing certain dominant discourses on female beauty in South Africa, by propagating certain ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions. The final question deliberated on whether change is taking place in the way feminine beauty is constructed in South Africa based on the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M.*

In an effort to answer these questions, this study was theoretically grounded by theories of cultural studies, critical race, critical whiteness studies and decoloniality, as well as feminism.

Semiotics and discourse analysis formed the methodological framework of the study. Preliminary analysis criteria were identified for purposes of the analysis based on the literature review. These criteria were race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary. Using the preselected criteria, selected images were subjected to a quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical discourse, and multimodal analysis. Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar was applied during data analysis, where the denotative, connotative, and ideological meanings of the selected *Facebook* advertisements were analysed and interpreted. The extensive literature review, which discussed the mass media, social media, *Facebook*, and advertising; the history of whiteness, white privilege, and beauty whitewashing; the "otherisation" and erasure of Black women in visual images, and the concept of decoloniality informed the data analysis.

This chapter presents the findings of a comparative analysis based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis. In so doing, the chapter demonstrates whether the findings of the study answer the research questions, thereby addressing the research problem. The strengths and limitations of the study will also be illustrated. Lastly, there will be suggestions for future research.

9.2 The research findings: a comparative analysis

This section highlights the research findings of the investigation. Based on the comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative analyses, three prominent themes have emerged as part of the findings. These themes are, (1) Privileging white beauty, the glow of white women; (2) The otherisation of Black women and the illusion of inclusion; and (3) The politics of beauty. Each of the themes are unique, but also correlate with each other. The themes help establish if the findings answer the study's research questions, thereby addressing the research problem. The discussions presented also incorporate the literature review in order to establish and interpret its relevance and link to the study.

9.2.1 Theme one: privileging white beauty, the glow of white women

From the literature review it is apparent that, for many decades, scholars and critics have been engaging about the hegemony of the stereotypical western and European views on ideal female beauty. The media, as a powerful communication tool, has played an instrumental role in perpetuating and constructing stereotypes on ideal beauty. Women are constantly bombarded with advertisements in social media, magazines, television, radio, and various other media outlets, on the definition of ideal female beauty. These "perfect" beauty traits are centred on being fair in complexion, tall and slender, with light coloured eyes, big breasts, and long and thick straight hair (mostly blonde). The ideal and beautiful woman shown is these advertisements is usually represented by white women, and therefore, their beauty features are privileged over other forms of beauty, and are positioned, packaged and highlighted to glow.

As explained in a 2015 art exhibition by Hank Willis Thomas, images used in advertisements are actually selling a "very white, highly controlled ideal of femininity". This is done by using various semiotic elements such as lighting, camera angles, colour, and location, among others. Sean Redmond (2003: 176) states the following in his research:

> White women in adverts are often narrativized [sic] in symbolically loaded white settings, with carefully selected iconography that uses both the colour white to connote ideas of purity and innocence and radiance, and high-key light to bathe the female model in an imaginary halo that therefore marks her out as heavenly. These white women are invariably thin, often blonde, and through the combination of setting, colour scheme, and lighting effect are constructed as corporeal 'real' but yet translucent, ephemeral, spiritual/heavenly representations. This is an idealized representation, which, by corporeal and symbolic definition, only thin white women can achieve.

Given that advertisements are largely comprised of photographic images, Richard Dyer's (1997: 89) explanation that photography, and the light that accompanies it, aids in privileging and constructing whiteness, is also valid for this discussion. He writes that photographic media was created by white people for their use; and therefore, it did not consider the technicalities that would be needed to photograph Black people. On the construction of the ideal white feminine beauty in photography, Dyer (1997:122) writes "that idealised white women are bathed in and

permeated by light. It streams through them and falls on to them from above – in short, they glow". Additionally, he suggests that blonde hair is also responsible for giving white women their specific glow. Furthermore, Dyer (1997:125) explains that the glow emitted by white women is realised by cosmetics and clothing through "the use of haloes, backlighting, soft focus, gauzes, retouching and all the other conventions of feminine lighting". The glow of the white woman remains a dominant component in idealised depictions of beauty in photographic media as proven by the analysis represented in this study.

As argued, one way to confirm a society's belief in whiteness as ideal beauty is to look at the most common images presented in the media as beautiful women. This has been demonstrated through the analysis and interpretation of Figure 8.1, Figure 8.3, Figure 8.6 and Figure 8.8 (Cf. pages 216, 228, 240 and 250). These four *Facebook* advertisements from *Mr Price* and *H&M* respectively revealed that western and European beauty features are privileged over other types of beauty ideals that emanate from other race groups. This study finds that, even though Black women are featured more in advertisements in contemporary society, the beauty attributes of white women are continuously made to stand out and are reinforced through the use of various semiotic elements such as lighting, camera angle and colour. Additionally, some of the Black models used in the advertisements are used because they possess anglicised features such as blonde or straight long hair, smalls waists, high cheekbones, and long legs (Figure 8.4 & Figure 8.6). This shows that valuing whiteness as beauty is more than just about skin colour. These advertisements send a message that is clearly racist in its tone, as it implies that the more you can look like a white woman, the prettier you are.

This research investigation has found that white women, and their beauty features, are made to glow in advertisements, even in a country like South Africa, where the majority of the women are Black. This proves that there is a visual language of whiteness in these advertisements. Such constant exposure to these European and western beauty standards can have a discouraging impact on Black women. It can be emotionally exhausting to see endless photos of a standard of beauty that looks nothing like you, which tells the viewer that beauty is unattainable because

they are not, and never will be, white. This can lead to a range of other challenges. For example, it can lower the self-esteem of Black women by making them question their attractiveness, and whether or not they are accepted in society because their beauty features do not match the message of whiteness that they constantly receive. Creating such inferiority complexes can be dangerous for health reasons, forcing Black women to diet and engage in unhealthy eating habits which could have dire psychical health consequences (Motseki and Oyedemi, 2017: 139-140).

In summarising this theme, this study finds that the media has immense power in setting society's standard for what beauty means, and therefore it can be challenging for Black women to feel beautiful, when they do not see their faces and diversity represented in advertisements. Even though there does appear to be an increase in the number of Black models being used in advertising, this investigation has brought to light the importance of questioning the nature of this inclusion of Black models. Based on this, the next theme that will be discussed is the otherisation of Black women, and the illusion of inclusion.

9.2.2 Theme two: the otherisation of Black women, and the illusion of inclusion

The second theme that emerged from the comparative analysis explains that while Black women are represented more in the advertisements, the way in which they are packaged and presented, appear to still limit and marginalise them. Take for example the Black women used in Figure 8.1, Figure 8.2, Figure 8.4, Figure 8.5, Figure 8.7 and Figure 8.10 (Cf. pages 215, 221, 230, 234, 245 and 261). While Black women are included in these images, the quality of the way in which they are represented is inferior and mediocre in nature. They are portrayed in restrictive ways, by either obscuring their own faces, or they are hidden or blocked by other models. In some instances, their faces are not visible to the camera, or they are dressed or depicted using stereotypical tropes associated with Black women, also in the media. In this quantitative inclusion, the advertisers have created an "illusion of inclusion" with regard to Black female models, which in actual fact perpetuates the otherisation of Black women. According to Sean Redmond (2003: 175), "models coded along ethnic lines are used to convey the sense of the exotic, and their otherness", as is evident in Figure 8.2, Figure 8.5, Figure 8.6, Figure 8.7 and

Figure 8.10 (Cf. pages 221, 234, 239, 245 and 261). This, he argues, acts to "normalize [sic] and entrench the dominant ideal of white beauty" (Redmond, 2003: 175). Similarly, Helen Turnbull (2017) states that when "othering" occurs in advertising, it is due to the "immutable forces" at play, such as the "dynamics of a dominant culture, and the impact of unconscious bias", as well as the "permeable forces" such as "affinity bias, assimilation and political correctness".

The analysis makes it clear that there are idealised Western standards of feminine beauty displayed in the selected *Mr Price* and *H&M* advertisements. Even though Black women are represented in these images, their aesthetic features are not highlighted or positioned as a preferred form of beauty. Instead, they are positioned as the "other" who fall outside of the parameters of western beauty ideals. Moreover, these advertisements highlight the "exotic" beauty of the Black models, so while they are included in the images, they are included according to the terms and norms of hegemonic western and white beauty standards, which therefore, continues to "other" them. The findings reveal that there is almost an erasure of Black beauty in the *Mr Price* and *H&M* advertisements, which leads to the important question of: What is Black beauty? It would appear that there is no answer for this due to how Black women have been portrayed and represented for centuries in various mediated forms.

As alluded to in the literature review (Cf. chapter 3), historically, and even in contemporary media, the beauty of Black women has been disparaged, and this notion has been supported by the findings of this analysis. Whether the advertisers are aware of this, or not, their artistic choices in compiling these advertisements have perpetuated European and western values of beauty. They have done this by using the negative manifestations of Black beauty such as the oversexed jezebel (Figure 8.5) or the masculine aggressive Black sportswoman (Figure 8.10). Positioning Black women through the lens of the "exotic other" or representing them in a way that makes them invisible (Figure 8.2), is an easy trap that advertisers fall prey to. Due to the history and legacies of colonisation, imperialism, and apartheid, this study finds that whiteness, and therefore white beauty standards, has become, and remains an authority in mainstream media. As a result, other identities, discourses, perspectives, and voices are marginalised. This

study reveals that, in the analysed samples, western and European beauty ideals are established as the centre or the norm, which then "others" Black beauty ideals, and renders them absent. In relation to this, the next theme that is detailed considers beauty ideals and the politics that surround it.

9.2.3 Theme three: the politics of beauty

Hall (2013: 228) explains that there are three major periods in history with regard to the western world and its encounters with Black people. The first moment can be traced back to the sixteenth century affiliation between the European traders and the West African kingdoms. This association between the two groups resulted in three centuries of "black" people being used as salves. The consequences of this were not only seen in slavery, but in the post-slave societies of the modern world (Hall, 2013: 228). The second major period is the European colonisation of Africa and the "contest between various European countries and powers for the control of colonial territory, markets and raw materials in the period of high imperialism" (Hall, 2013: 228). Hall (2013: 228) lists the third major period as the migration of people from the third world countries into Europe and North America following world war two.

Hall (2013: 228) believes that these three periods in history are important because it has brought about "an avalanche of popular representations based on the marking of racial difference". Simply put, it was during these three eras that "western ideas about race were shaped" – this includes ideas about ideal feminine beauty that is still reinforced in today's society. In relation to this, as explored in the literature review (Cf. chapter 2), the historical legacy of imperialism and colonisation, and the structural legacy of apartheid, cannot be separated from an analysis such as this one. These western ideas about race, which Hall (2013: 228) writes about, are still being perpetuated in a country such as South Africa. The physical and mental effects and consequences of the legacies of colonialism and apartheid are still experienced on a daily basis by the country's, majority Black, population. Due to these systemic issues, patterns of racism, dehumanisation, and white privilege are still evident in the social and cultural injustices Black South Africans face. An example of such an injustice is linked to the white feminine beauty ideals that are

disseminated in various South African media spaces, including the *Facebook* advertisements analysed in this study.

Comments from the readers highlighted in the quantitative and qualitative analysis (Cf. chapter 7) as well the comments in Figure 8.4 and Figure 8.9, synthesised with this study's literature review, demonstrate that there is a politics of beauty. Moreover, while all the advertisements analysed in the investigation appear to highlight, and in some instances, celebrate, beautiful Black women, the ideology revealed from the qualitative analysis indicates that there is indeed a political underpinning of beauty characteristics that favour whiteness as ideal beauty. It seems that there is an ongoing struggle to affirm Black aesthetic features as beautiful. The reason for such a struggle stems from historical discourse, but this struggle is further perpetuated by the media, who sustain the cultural and political consciousness on beauty, by prioritising white beauty ideals at the expense of Black beauty. Whether intentional to or not, beauty features such as the shape of one's nose, waist, breasts or buttocks, or the texture of one's hair, makes a political statement.

Therefore, it is the finding of this study, that beauty is a political project that has been reaffirmed over decades by the modelling and advertising industries who have long reproduced European standards of beauty as the ideal. The media has worked extremely hard to keep white beauty aesthetic hierarchies in place, and they have remained largely unchallenged. However, that does appear to be changing. Through, for example, the decoloniality movement (Cf. pages 119-128), "Black lives matter", and "Black girl magic", among others, Black women have increasingly made efforts to push for more diversity in the modelling and advertising industries. Demanding that their Black bodies be recognised as beautiful beyond the sexualised and exotic stereotype that "others" them, Black women are taking up spaces in the beauty narrative, challenging the notion of western and European beauty ideals as the norm. As Tunzi (Barr: 2019) states in her final statement at the Miss Universe 2019 pageant:

> I grew up in a world where a woman who looks like me – with my kind of skin and my kind of hair – was never considered to be beautiful. And I think that it is time that that stops. I want children to look at me and see my face and I want them to see their faces reflected in mine.

Based on the above, it is evident that there is a connection between beauty and politics, one that has social and cultural connotations. "Black lives matter", "Black girl magic", decoloniality, and Tunzi's triumph at Miss Universe 2019 are only smalls steps forward in the struggle for Black beauty to be recognised and celebrated without reservation by the world, but most importantly, by Black people themselves. This study finds that Black women must take ownership in defining their standards of beauty. They must do this in order eliminate them from being the "other". According to Staszak (2009: 2), groups such as Black women, will only stop being the "other" when they "manage to escape the oppression forced upon them" and "when they succeed in conferring upon themselves a positive, autonomous identity such as black is beautiful, and in calling for discursive legitimacy, and a policy to establish norms". Additionally, on the importance of agency of Black women, Marco (2102: 13) suggests that there is a critical need for "Black women to take ownership of the complex aesthetic space and define the language of black beauty for themselves". It is also important that "this sense of agency transcends the physical, psychological and historical barriers, which played a role in, and continues to play a pertinent role, in Black women's performances in society" (Marco, 2012: 13). Similarly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013a: 63) writings on the decolonisation of the Black mind, can be applied to achieving a framework that perpetuates and promotes Black beauty ideals. While not speaking specifically to beauty ideals, we learn from Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013a: 63) scholarly work that there is a need for the struggle for epistemological freedom for Black people, as this is the only way that a postcolonial African world, one where Black beauty ideals is valued as equal to European beauty features, can be realised.

This brings to conclusion the comparative analysis and the discussion of the research findings based on the analysis of the selected *Mr Price* and *H&M Facebook* advertisements. The next section explains how the research questions identified in chapter one (Cf. pages 11-13) have been answered, thereby addressing the study's research problem.

9.3 Research questions and problem addressed

By critically exploring the construction of feminine beauty in the *Facebook* advertising of retailers *Mr Price* and *H&M*, and whether western and European ideals of feminine beauty are perpetuated by these retailers as the standard of beauty in South Africa, the following research question were answered:

9.3.1 Do the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of *Mr Price* and *H&M* promote western and European beauty standards as the ideal in South Africa over other beauty ideals?

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, as well as the comparative analysis of the *Facebook* advertisements from October 2016 to October 2019, it would appear that both, *Mr Price and H&M*, do indeed promote western and European beauty standards as the ideal in South Africa, negating other beauty ideals. These findings were realised following the analyses which considered preselected criteria related to the study. The criteria included, race, gender, hair colour, hair length, hair style, body type, skin tone, height, western attire or traditional African attire, as well political, social and cultural commentary. At the start of the study, there were 995 *Facebook* advertisements that were collected over a three-year period – 595 were from *Mr Price* and 400 were from *H&M.* These advertisements only contained images with models, and not celebrities and socialites. As the sample needed to be downsized, a decision was made to select one advertisement per month, per retailer, out of the three years. This means there was a total of 74 advertisements. Due to the nature of the study, when downsizing the sample, advertising posts that had *Facebook* user comments of relevance to the study were included. This brought the total number of advertisements in the downsized sample to 110 – Both *Mr Price* and *H&M* had 55 advertisements. This sample was subjected to a quantitative analysis, aligned to the pre-selected criteria.

The analysis was categorised into nine sections and the data was coded accordingly. Upon examination, it was revealed that western and European beauty ideals were preferred by both retailers as they both seemed to have a standardised beauty style which favoured whiteness.

While the *H&M* advertisements had more of an international style, the ones produced by *Mr Price* were locally created. In the *Mr Price* analysis, there was almost and even number of Black and white models. And in the *H&M* analysis, the Black models outnumbered the white models. While this might appear as a positive finding, when the category of Black was broken into the different race groups that form part of it, it was evident that the use of white models dominated. Furthermore, the Black models were used in understated ways that further positioned the notion of whiteness as beauty. Both retailers did not appear to use models older than 25, however, *Mr Price* had a preference for very young, and very thin models. While this might be indicative of their young target market, the message delivered – that if you are young, you need to be thin – is alarming.

Findings on the numerical analysis of the beauty traits indicated that the majority of the *Mr Price* and *H&M* advertisements favoured European and western beauty ideals (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). In the case of *Mr Price*, with the exception of hair colour (most models had brown/dark hair), the majority of the models had long/medium hair which were styled straight/wavy; they were mostly all light and medium in complexion; and most of them were thin, with only one model being plus size/full figured. The *H&M* analysis revealed that the while Black women were represented more, similarly to the *Mr Price* findings, their appearances were mostly aligned to anglo-saxon beauty traits (Cf. pages 3, 20, 21 and 22). In the *H&M Facebook* advertisements, most of the models had long/medium hair, and the majority had a light and medium skin tone. However, the results differed slightly from *Mr Price* in two categories as the majority of the models in the *H&M* advertisements had natural African/frizzy/curly hairstyles; and while most of the models were slim (75), the international retailer had more representation of body types, with 10 plus size models and two models with a muscular/athletic physique. The quantitative analysis of the comment emphasised that the history of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid as well as the current political climate influence social and cultural views, including those regarding beauty ideals. The analysis of the final category revealed that both retailers advertised mostly western attire, with only one advertisement out of the 109 featuring two models in dresses in traditional African print.

The qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis followed the quantitative analyses (Cf. chapter 7). In line with the preselected criteria, 10 texts (five from each retailer) were selected from the downsized sample of 110 advertisements for analysis. The findings of the qualitative analysis corresponded with the quantitative one. The *Facebook* advertising of both retailers revealed that whiteness is considered a marker for beauty in their *Facebook* advertisements. Highlighted and emphasised was how whiteness is valued as beauty. Not only were the majority of the models in the advertisements white, but most of the few Black models that were represented, had anglicised features such as blonde or straight long hair, smalls waists, high cheekbones, and long legs. These physical characteristics indicate what the media classifies as ideal female beauty in South Africa. The beauty features of the white models were also accentuated by imagery that was created using various elements such as lighting effects, creative and unrealistic styling of the background, specific props, clothing, and even through the peculiar placement of the Black models and their actions. This speaks to the fact that the advertisements were highly stylised and manipulated in favour of whiteness as ideal beauty.

Following the quantitative and qualitative analyses of *Mr Price* and *H&M*, a comparative analysis was employed, comparing and contrasting all the findings, and it validated that the style of the advertisements for both retailers were western and Eurocentric in nature, with these beauty characteristics emphasised and privileged, and the beauty features of other cultures seldom featured. Based on the comparative analysis, it is evident that idealised European and western features of beauty are constructed to compliment the hegemonic preferences of mass media, and specifically, in the case of this study, social media, and that of *Facebook* posts advertising the retailers' products both locally and internationally. The comparative element also guided the study in establishing the three themes that were discussed in detail in subsection 9.2 (Cf. page 268).

9.3.2 How does the semiotic make-up of the *Facebook* advertisements of female fashion of *Mr Price* and *H&M* shape the ideologies, beliefs and socio-cultural notions about female beauty in South Africa?

Based on the qualitative, multi-semiotic, critical discourse, and multimodal analysis that was applied to the 10 *Facebook* advertisements – five from each retailer – this study has proven that there were various semiotic elements used to shape a certain ideology, belief, and socio-cultural notion about female beauty in South Africa. Whether the producers of the advertisements intended to or not, the comparative analysis revealed that both *Mr Price* and *H&M* creatively used semiotic resources that favoured a particular ideology and hegemonic construct of beauty. In doing so, their beauty aesthetic message was one that was largely Eurocentric in nature; and therefore, they constructed, and perpetuated whiteness as the ideal beauty type.

For example, in the *Facebook* advertisements of both retailers, the comparative analysis indicated that there were remarkable similarities in the particular ways in which the white and Black models were styled and framed to project and communicate a certain message. The study found that the message being promoted, was that western and Eurocentric beauty is the ideal kind of feminine beauty. It was revealed that, in all 10 advertisements, specific visual resources, digital alteration and photographic techniques were used to convey this message as the beauty norm. The beauty features of white women were privileged over any other form of beauty. This, therefore, detracted from definitions of feminine beauty that may be found in other South African cultures. White women in this study glowed. The advertisements were designed to portray them as radiant; as wealthy and as royalty; they had blonde hair, and blue eyes; and they were always positioned as superior, and photographed as dominant, with the Black models providing supportive roles.

Even in the advertisements that appeared to focus on Black models, most were represented portraying western standards of beauty – they were either light skinned, had blonde hair, or were thin and tall. Additionally, the Black models were also portrayed as predatory or wild and animal-like as they were dressed in predatory animal-printed clothing. This study revealed that in most

of the advertisements, Black female representation was emblematic of stereotypical roles of Black women. Reinforced in the sample texts were imagery of Black women as seductive, masculine, and sporty. This revealed that the producers of the advertisements compiled their creative compositions based on a cultural and historical discourse that is steeped in stereotypes and racism. Furthermore, when it came to the Black models, the findings also indicated that there was an illusion of inclusion where there is a supposed encouragement of ethnic diversity, and an inclusion of multiple racial backgrounds. However, the inclusion of Black models in these advertisements further reinforced the belief that western and Eurocentric beauty features are the valued signifiers of idealised beauty in the *Facebook* advertisements.

In light of the aforementioned, the findings from the qualitative and subsequent comparative analysis of both *Mr Price* and *H&M* advertisements highlight that a visual language associating whiteness with beauty and perfection was used. The semiotic make-up of the 10 *Facebook* advertisements – camera techniques; function ranking and poses of the models; the background and foreground; props, and items of dress – served to sustain hegemonic standards of beauty. Even though there were attempts to emphasise Black identity, Black beauty, and Black culture, the research findings indicate that these attempts were inauthentic, allowing the retailers to perpetuate the ideology of white beauty as the ideal and norm, ensuring that the message of idealised western and Eurocentric beauty values remain consistent.

9.3.3 Has there been a change in the construction and packaging of feminine beauty in the selected *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* and *H&M?*

Given that this study occurred over a three-year period (October 2016 to October 2019), this question was included to ascertain whether there were visible changes in the way the beauty ideal was depicted and communicated during this time period. The study has found that both, *Mr Price* and *H&M* initially had very few Black models in their *Facebook* advertising posts. Most of the models, as well as the celebrities and socialites featured in profile stories during the early stages of the study, were predominantly white females. These models were also thin and possessed western traits of beauty such as long hair, long legs, and blue eyes. Therefore, from

the commencement of this study, the data has shown that there is a visual language of whiteness as ideal beauty. As time progressed, and towards the latter part of the study, the retailers appeared to make an effort to be more inclusive of different race groups in their *Facebook* advertising. This was possibly due to the uproar that followed various controversial incidents such as the *H&M* "monkey" advertisement (Cf. pages 3-5), and other political occurrences that occurred in the country, such as the push for decolonisation of racist practices and institutions (Cf. chapter 2). However, even though, there were such efforts made, the attempts were minimal, as revealed in the analyses.

Part of the preselected criteria for the data analysis included users' comments on the *Facebook* advertisements. These comments were posted in the comments pane of the post. As evidenced in the quantitative, qualitative and comparative analyses, the comments reflected that the hegemonic constructs and ideologies of European and western beauty standards as perfection, were constant in the retailers' female fashion advertising. The *Facebook* users remarked that they were aware of the "racist" practices of the retailers, with specific reference to *H&M.* They also commented positively when there were plus size / full-figured models utilised in advertisements or when the models advertised clothing items that featured artwork or images of Black women. The users commented on the need for more such elements in a country like South Africa. The comments posted in the selected *Facebook* texts, combined with the literature review, revealed the link between beauty and politics, and its relevance to social and cultural practices.

The study found that the historical and political legacies of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid reinforce the dominant narrative that whiteness is beauty, and this message is constantly disseminated by the media. This kind of advertising discourse highlights how historical and racist discourses continue to repeat the visual language of whiteness as beauty. Rooted in these messages is the association of Eurocentric beauty values with everything good and positive. Therefore, texts, such as the ones analysed in this study, revealed that these messages on Eurocentric beauty values as ideal, can affect how Black women view themselves, and shape their definitions of beauty.

In relation to the above, the study explained the need for decolonisation of institutions such as the media, by highlighting movements such as #RhodesMustFall and "Black Girl Magic". The importance of decolonising the mind, more specifically the Black mind, was also detailed. As explained in the literature review (Cf. chapter 2), there is a psychology of racism that came with colonial domination and apartheid. Scholars such as Fanon (1952), Biko (2005), and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a, 2013b & 2013c) explain how the constructs of colonisation and apartheid are solely responsible for the dissemination of Eurocentric aesthetic ideal, thereby teaching Black people (and white people) that their dark skin has negative connotations. These scholars indicate that this has resulted in a breeding ground for self-hate among Black people and has created an identity crisis (Cf. chapters 2 and 4). In this regard, the study's findings further emphasised that Black standards of beauty have long been devalued, negated and erased by repeated racist advertising discourses. This assertion is included in this subsection because it could be the reason for why there has been a slight change in the construction and packaging of feminine beauty in the selected *Facebook* advertisements. However, despite evidence of some efforts to change, the benchmark for what is considered beautiful appears to have shifted marginally, with the basic premise of whiteness as beauty, remaining the same.

This concludes the discussion on if the study's research questions were answered. The next sub-section will present the conclusion of the study. This will be followed by an explanation on the strength of the study; as well as the study's limitations and suggestions for further research.

9.3 Conclusion

This study has revealed that the dominant cultural narratives in the *Facebook* advertising discourse of *Mr Price* and *H&M* from 2016 to 2019 produced and perpetuated an idealised Eurocentric and western version of feminine beauty in South Africa. Based on this investigation, it is evident that the retailers' subscribed to a hegemonic standard of feminine beauty when designing their advertising posts for *Facebook*. The study's findings were revealed following a quantitative and qualitative multi-semiotic, critical, and multimodal discourse analysis, as well as a comparative analysis.

The investigation has found that there are socio-cultural meanings attached to western and Eurocentric ideals of beauty. It was exposed in this study, that despite the various transformations that have taken place since 1994, in a post-apartheid South Africa, hegemonic and discriminative discourses continue to occur within the media space, with specific reference to the *Facebook* advertising of *Mr Price* and *H&M.* These discriminative discourses stem from policies and ideals that were constructed during the eras of imperialism, colonisation, and apartheid. The messages from these ideals continue to influence contemporary media, and impact mediated discourse of beauty ideals, as can be seen in the analysed *Facebook* texts.

Moreover, the analysis of these advertisements has shown how there is a repetition in the media of hegemonic western beauty standards as the norm in the country. This is done by creating and styling compositions in a specific way that continue to promote and sustain the belief that whiteness is the only authentic architype of beauty. Therefore, any other form of beauty is considered as the "exotic other" – simply put, what is considered beautiful in the different South African cultures, is considered as something that is unusual, bizarre, outlandish, and mysterious, and therefore it cannot be the norm or the standard against which beauty is measured. Additionally, the study revealed how the *Facebook* advertisements of *Mr Price* & *H&M* emphasised messages of white superiority, thereby promoting a visual language of whiteness. This kind of message was also found in the use of Black models who had anglo-saxon beauty features.

This study concludes that western and Eurocentric ideals of beauty are indeed promoted and perpetuated by *Mr Price* and *H&M* as the standard of beauty in South Africa. The study further concludes that in doing this, the retailers contribute to devaluing, negating and erasing forms of Black beauty and Black identity.

9.4 Strengths of the study

One of the foremost strengths of the study is that it contributes to a topical issue that is currently underway in the country, and the world at large. With social movements such as "Black Lives

Matter", #RhodesMustFall, and "Black Girl Magic", it is evident that matters of decolonisation and Black consciousness are starting to reverberate throughout the world. Activists, and others who belong to the community of people affected and impacted by these movements, have taken, not only to the streets, but also to social media, and classrooms, to spread their messages. In this regard, this study has relevance as it contributes to academic discourse and literature on the matter, thereby influencing content that is disseminated via various channels. In order to change the narrative of a hegemonic standard of feminine beauty, studies such as this one is crucial as it supports the overall project of social and cultural reform.

Another strength of the study is that it employed triangulation research techniques by using quantitative, qualitative and comparative research approaches. In using more than one approach to verify the research findings, the study was able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the results than simply relying on one approach to do so. According to Roberta Heale and Dorothy Forbes (2013), there is confidence in the triangulation technique as it is a way to avoid potential biases arising from the use of one methodology. Additionally, they explain that the technique, aids in, not only confirming findings, but it also accounts for the completeness of data. As seen in this study, the findings of the quantitative analysis matched with the findings of the visual qualitative analysis. Moreover, the comparative analysis that followed validated the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The fact that the comparative analysis identified the three themes discussed earlier (Cf. 9.2) in two separate retailers' visual narratives, enhances the credibility of this study. The comparative aspect also has implications for localisation of knowledge and challenging eurocentrism, with particular reference to "improving general comprehension of South Africa" which is "key to understanding not only how, but also why, representations of whiteness are the way they are here" (Marx Knoetze, 2015: 97). By employing the comparative element in this research investigation, I was able to position the importance for the need to interpret the history and cultures, including that of beauty ideals, of South Africa from locally informed perspectives. Based on all of the above, there is strength in the findings of this investigation.

A third strength of the study is its focus on *Facebook* advertisements, thereby adding to the literature on online advertising. This is a compelling contribution given the prominent role that the internet now plays in everyday life, and how it can influence social and cultural ideologies. According to Hazel Gordon (2017: 8), because there is such repeated interaction with technology and computers, people are always increasingly exposed to advertising, and not just when they choose to expose themselves. She explains that the interactive media technologies that people are bombarded with in modern everyday life, "has emerged to complement and supplement" the traditional means of communication such as newspapers and magazines (Gordon, 2017: 8). Similarly, Danesi (2015: 5) highlights that "cyberspace is becoming a dominant, and ever-evolving advertising medium as the internet provides graphics, audio, and various visual techniques to enhance the effectiveness of advertisement texts". However, he cautions that while the effect of new technologies is changing the ways in which advertising is delivered; advertising's basic persuasive strategies are not changing. In relation to this, the study's strengths are further emphasised, because it proves that investigations of this nature are necessary to understand the important role, impact, and influence that advertising, within the digital age, has on society.

9.5 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The four main limitations of this study are presented in this section together with suggestions for future research. The first limitation considers how my subjectivity and identity as the researcher might have impacted on the analysis and findings. As explained in the introduction, one of the reasons for this study is due to the inadequate ways in which I felt represented in the media. As a Black South African woman, with Indian cultural heritage, my version of beauty, and my ways of being, cannot be boxed into one perspective. Unfortunately, this boxing of people into particular categories occurs daily in the media. Ever since I have understood this, I have felt that South African "black", "coloured", and "indian" women are constantly fed a dominant narrative of how they should look and portray themselves. Personally, I have never fitted into the dominant narrative created by western media on what South African "indian", as well as what Indian women worldwide, should look like. The ideal beautiful woman in my culture has been created to look fair, tall, skinny, have long legs, light brown eyes, small breasts – essentially, she has to

portray anglo-saxon features to be considered attractive. Additionally, for a culture that is steeped in the worshipping of Goddesses, the ideal "indian" / Indian woman has to be coy, quiet, and virtuous, to be considered beautiful. As I am short and round, with large arms, wide hips, big dark brown eyes, and thick curly hair, and I am loud, and opinionated, I do not fit into the box created for beautiful women in my culture. In this regard, I feel that the media has never represented me, as I never saw myself reflected in the media, and therefore, growing up, I have always felt unattractive.

Also aligned to this limitation that considers my subjectivity and identity is my potential biases. It is important to highlight that my background, race, gender, age, class, level of education, among other social factors, could have influenced the way I read and assigned meaning to the texts. It is vital to include this as a limitation because in qualitative research the researcher is an instrument for data collection and analysis (Cf. pages 177-192). In light of the aforesaid, my subjectivity and identity does form part of the study. As documented in the theoretical framework, literature review and research methodology chapters (Cf. chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), the researcher is a subject that has been produced, and whose identity has been influenced by the cultural texts and social phenomena that they have been surrounded by throughout their life. However, throughout this study, in order to showcase validity and reliability, I focused on trustworthiness, confirmability, credibility, authenticity, and dependability, when conducting this research. It was important for this study to contribute to, and expand on, literature on the topic, and therefore, it was important to me as the researcher, to ensure that I practiced objectivity - even though it is not required in a qualitative analysis. I, therefore employed processes of perception, analytical reasoning, synthetic reasoning, and logical deduction, when conducting this study.

Another limitation is that the selected *Facebook* advertisements are only reflect a very small sample as not all posts in the photos gallery of the two retailers were analysed. As indicated in previous chapters (Cf. chapters 5 and 6), the advertisements with female celebrities and socialites were not included in this study. Additionally, the advertisements selected were not from the

Facebook Ads/ Sponsored Content, which appears on *Facebook* directly in a user's news feed, alongside status updates, photos, and videos from their friends. Furthermore, the advertisements represented a fraction of online advertising, and only considered two retailers who sell female fashion in South Africa. If a study is extended to include all these additional areas, it would possibly yield more significant results.

A third limitation is that there were no participants interviewed in this study. This offers an opportunity for future research to include commentaries from female members of society, as well as officials from senior management, and the marketing teams of *Mr Price* and *H&M*. By including these interviews in the investigation, it could further validate the results of this study.

Another limitation is that there is inadequate literature that defines Black beauty ideals. Much of the literatures speaks to Blackness, Black consciousness, and Black identity, and while that was necessary for a study of this nature, it would have been even more impactful to have used resources that lists specific Black beauty ideals. Therefore, unlike the particular list that exists for Eurocentric and western beauty ideals, such an explanation is lacking on Black beauty ideals, and there is need for research in this area, with specific reference to "black" women in South Africa and Africa. Furthermore, within the South African context, more studies are required to ascertain beauty ideals that exist within the specific cultural groups of "coloured" and "indian". If this literature is realised, it can produce even more substantial findings with regards to studies such as this one.

Lastly, this study recommends that an in-depth investigation into the depiction of Black South African women in advertising discourse be conducted. If the media is to aid in changing the narrative on beauty ideals, particularly in South Africa, those in the communications industry – academics, professionals, government officials, teachers, and students, among others – must undertake a nationwide collaborative research project. Such an investigation should be spearheaded by an academic department within a university, for example, the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa. The project should be developed into an ongoing project that is multi/inter/trans – disciplinary and is therefore carried out by a team

of researchers from various fields. It is recommended that the project expand into various domains of social, political, and cultural experiences, challenges, and occurrences.

Additionally, the project must consider imperialism, colonialisation, and apartheid, and research the ways in which constructs such as decolonisation and Black consciousness can change the hegemonic dominant narrative of anglo-saxon, western, and Eurocentric beauty features as the ideal. As my study has revealed, currently the portrayal of whiteness as ideal beauty is problematic, therefore the suggestion for a collaborative and ongoing research project must also include the diverse cultural groups represented in South Africa. The project must ultimately demonstrate the overall ability of communication science as a discipline to make a tangible difference to social, political and cultural existence in South Africa.

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ADDENDUM A: 55 Mr Price Facebook advertisements selected between 1 October 2016 – 31 October 2019.

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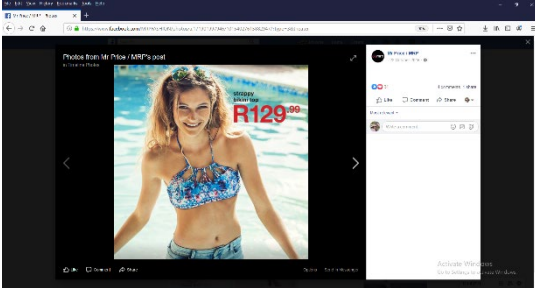
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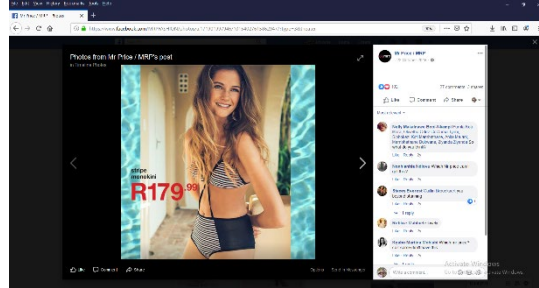
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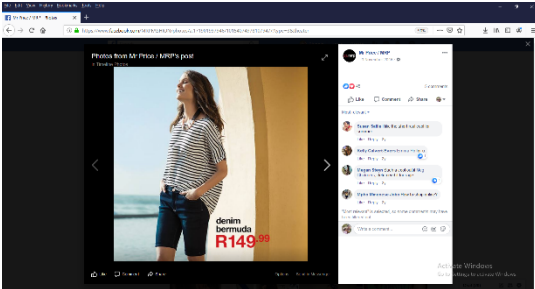
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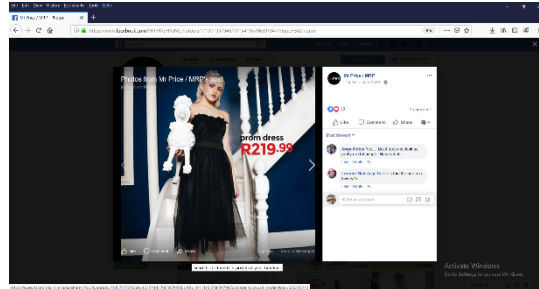
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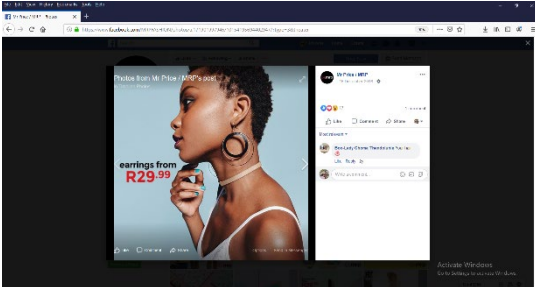
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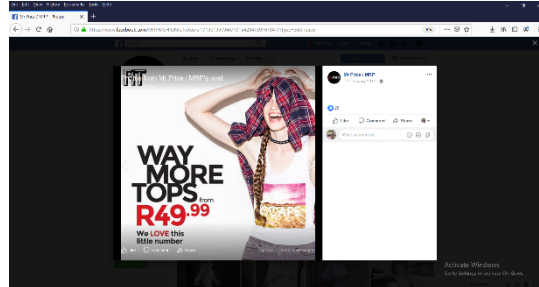
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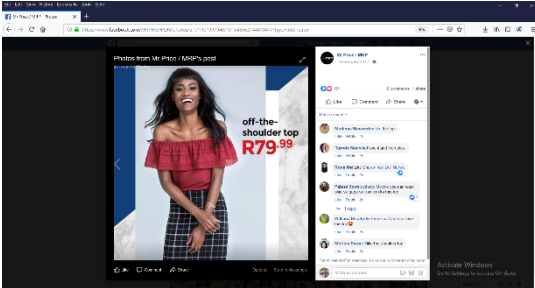
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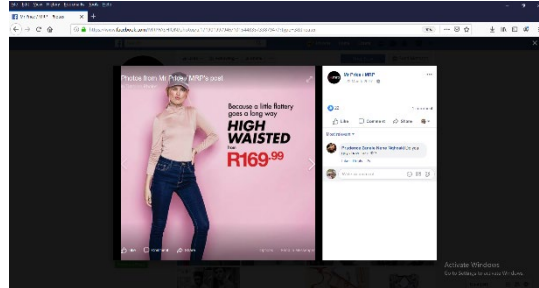
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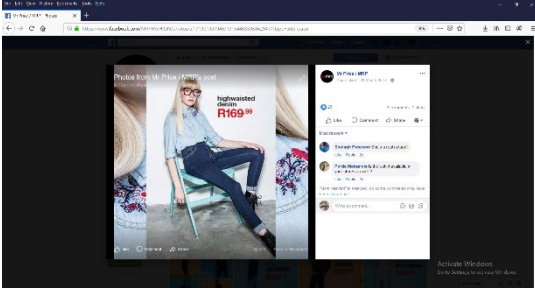
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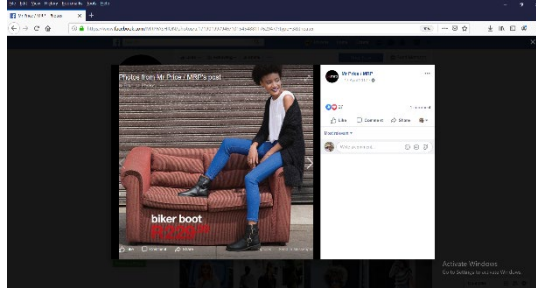
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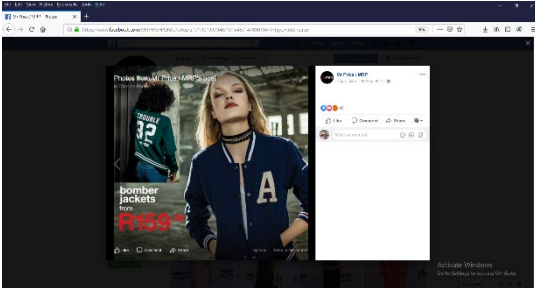
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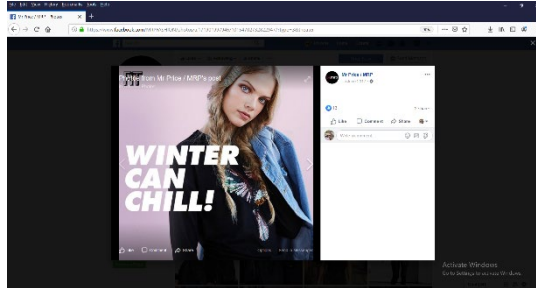
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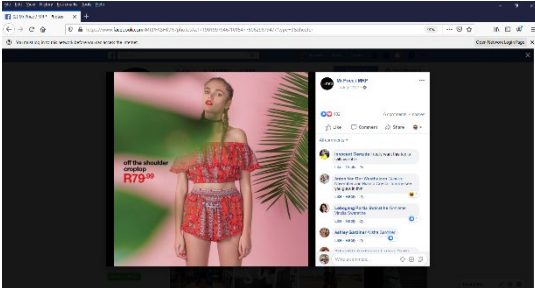
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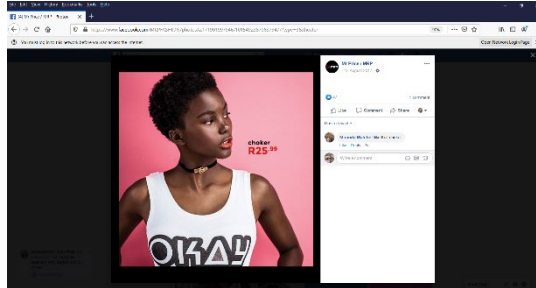
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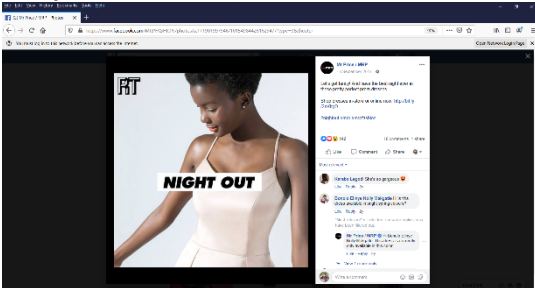
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323
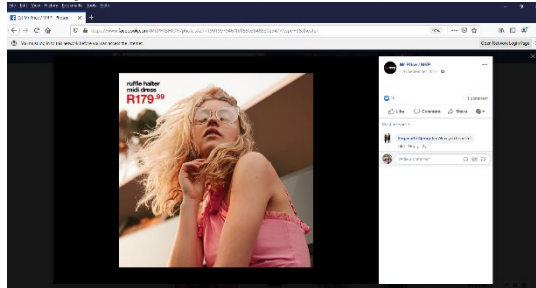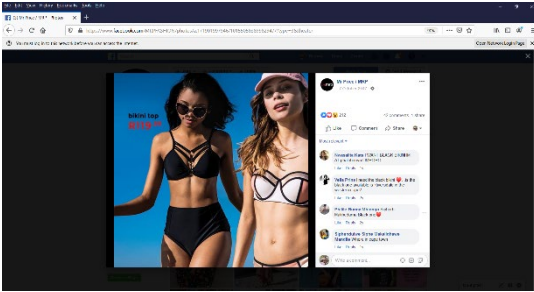
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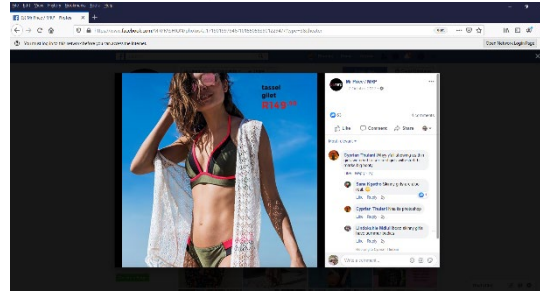
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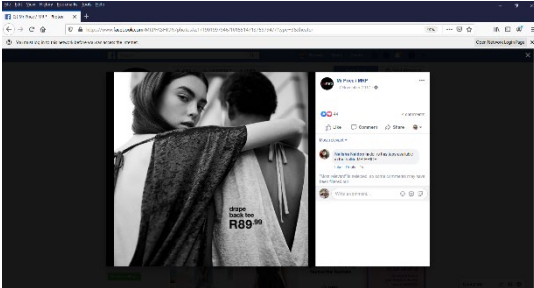
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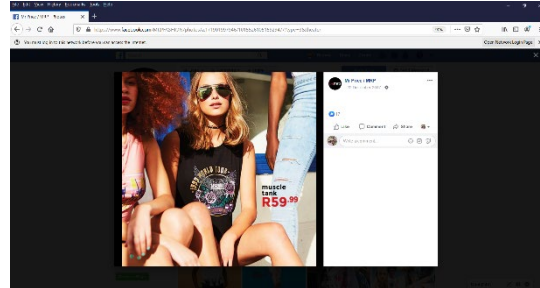
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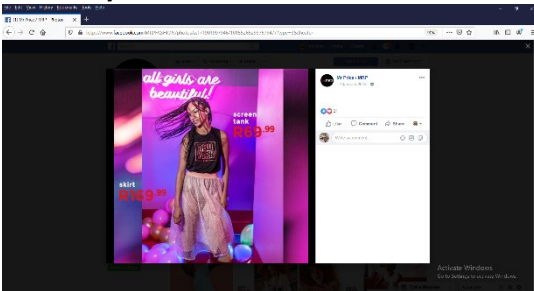
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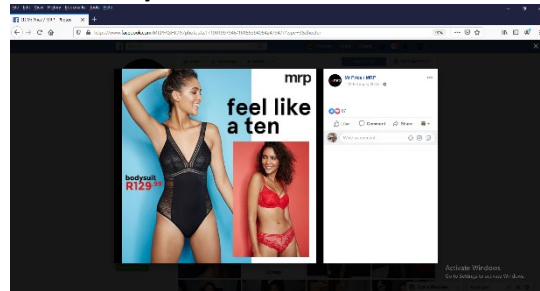
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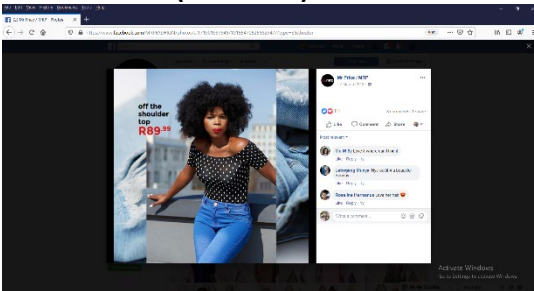
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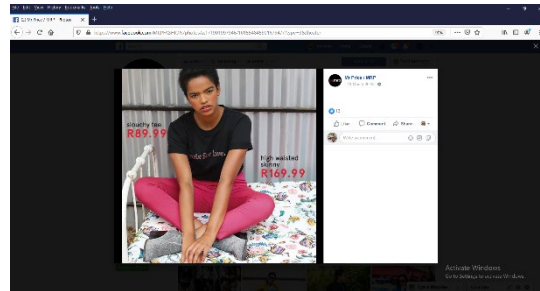
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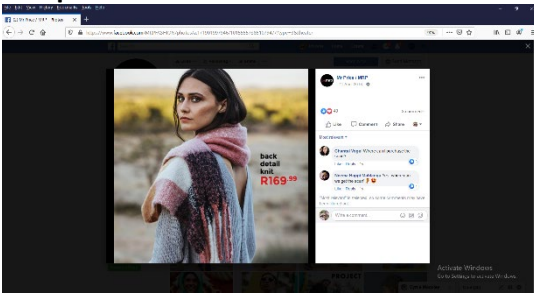
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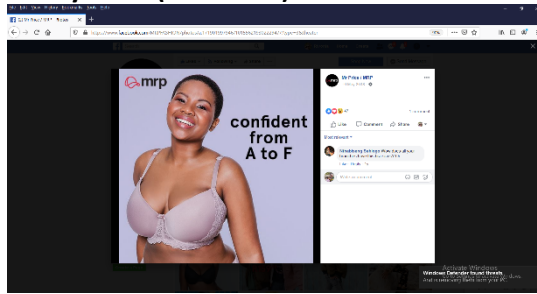
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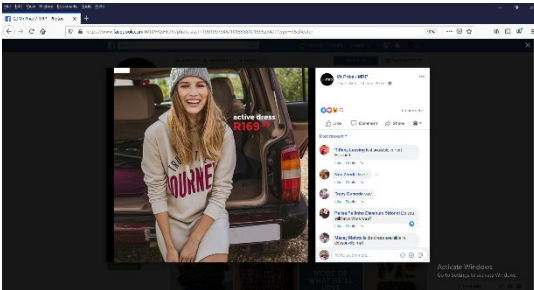
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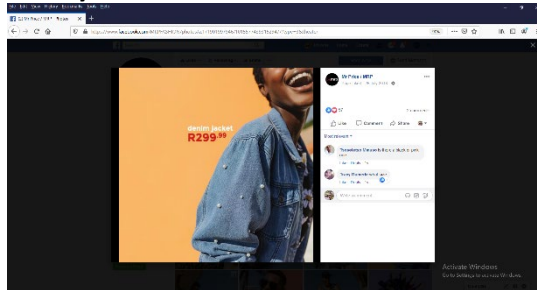
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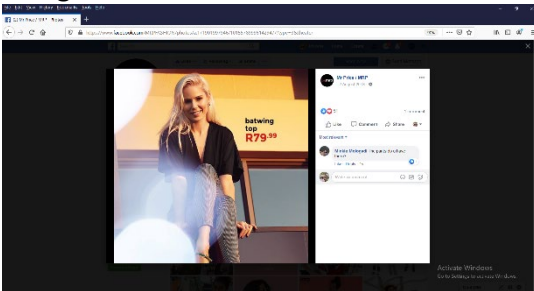
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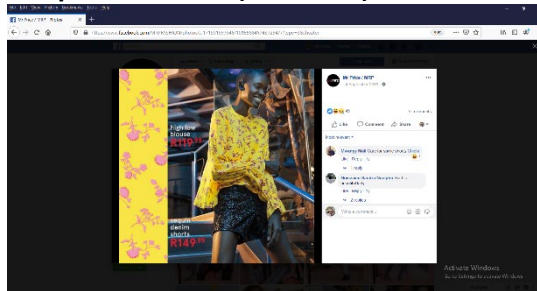
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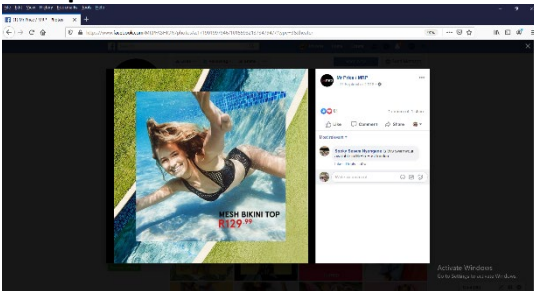
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325
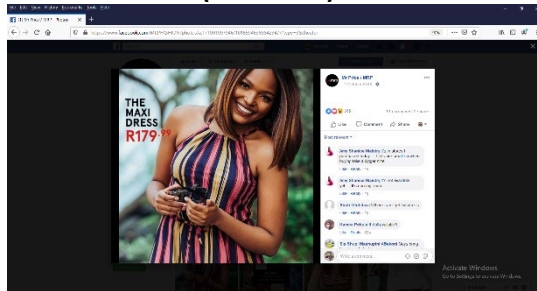
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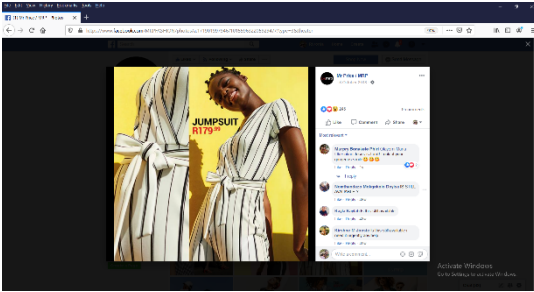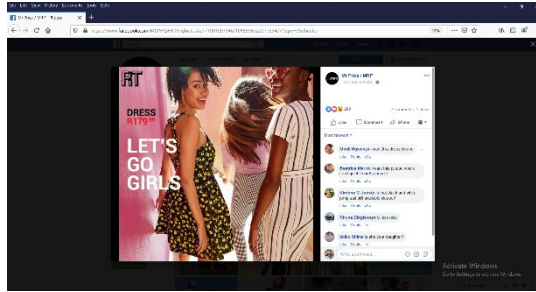
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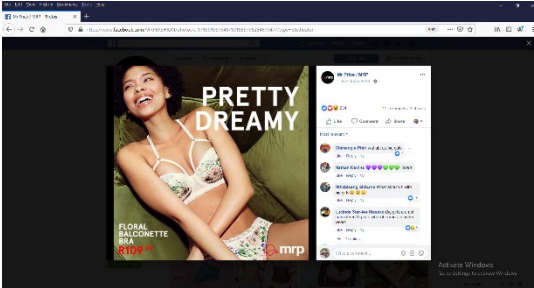
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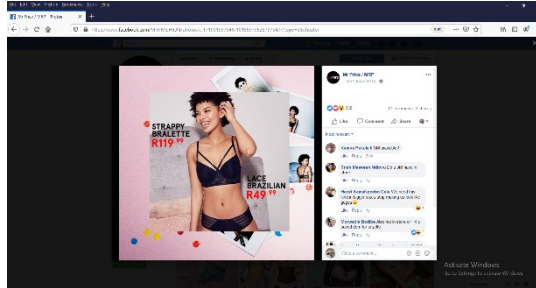
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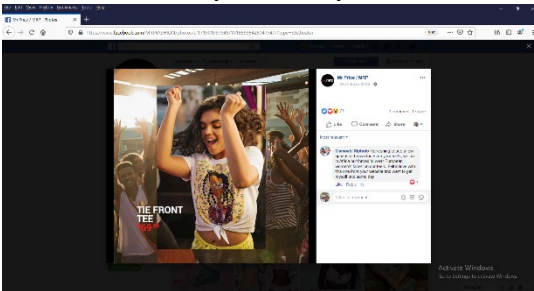
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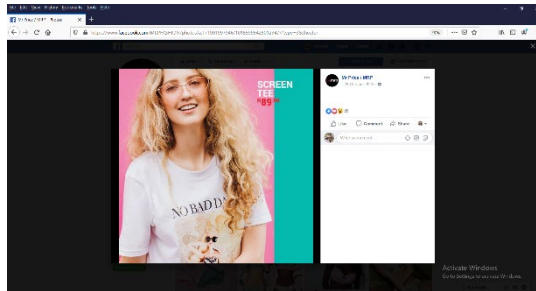
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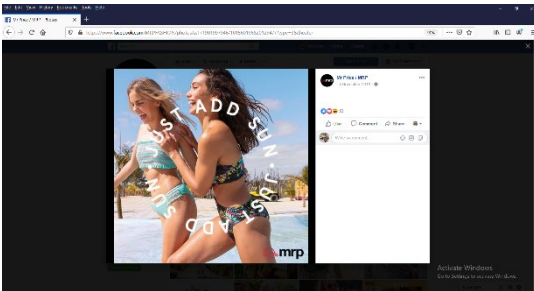
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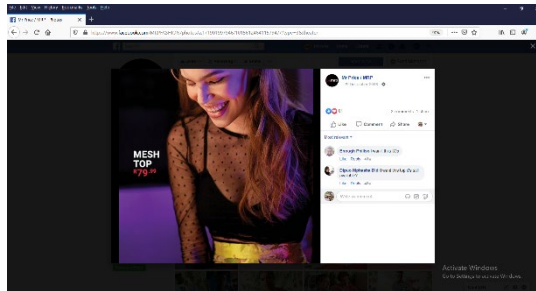
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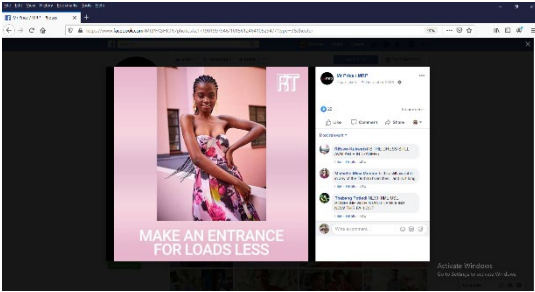
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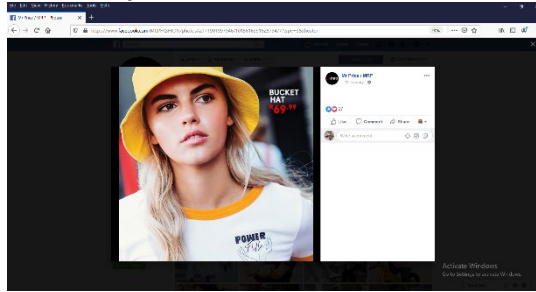
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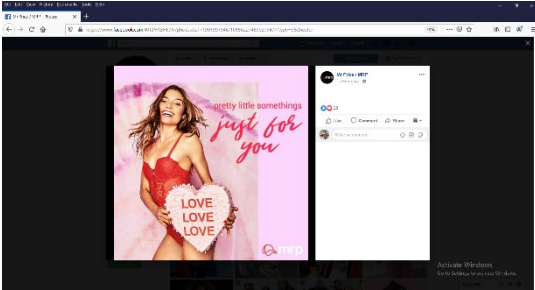
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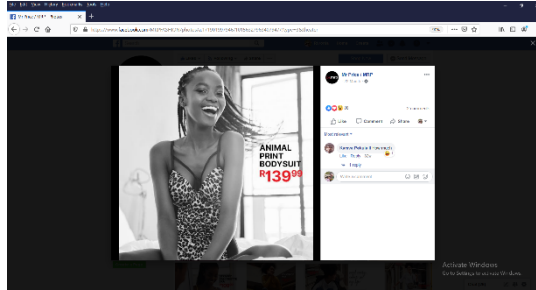
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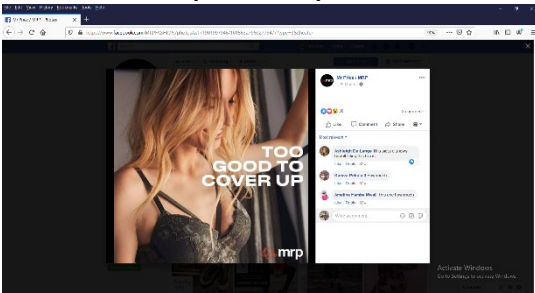
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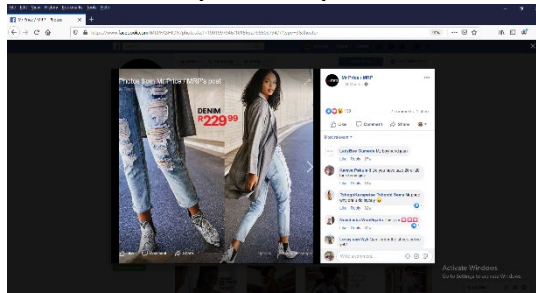
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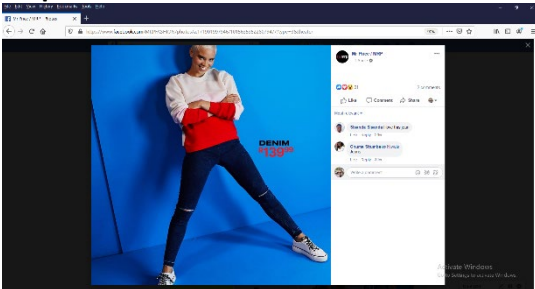
27 May 2019
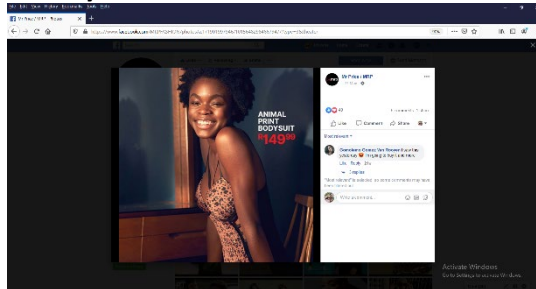
18 June 2019
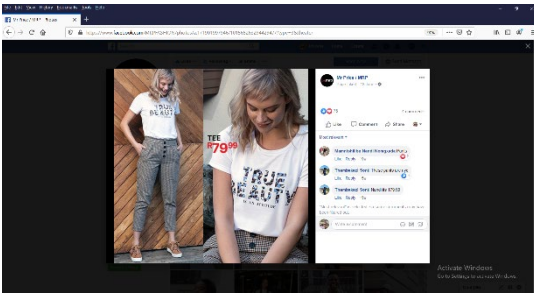
10 July 2019
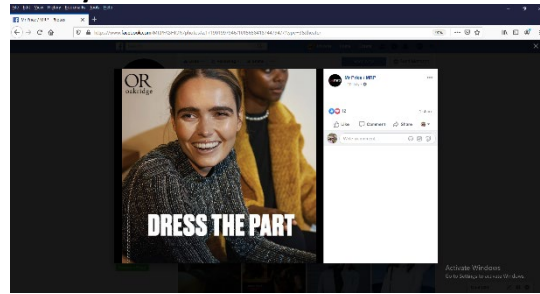
13 August 2019 (comment)
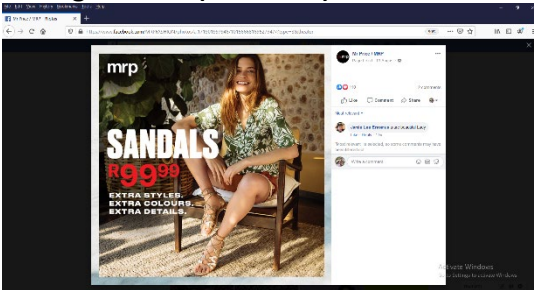
30 August 2019
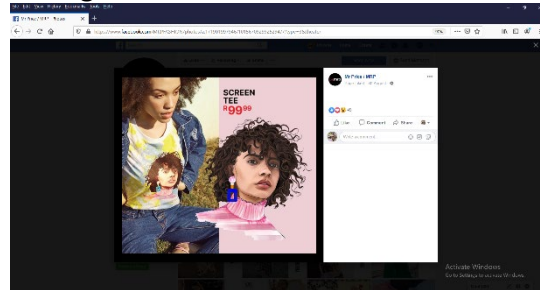
16 September 2019
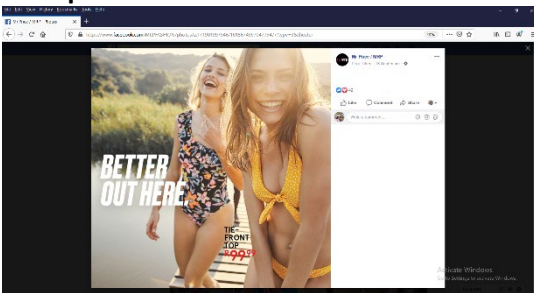
28 October 2019
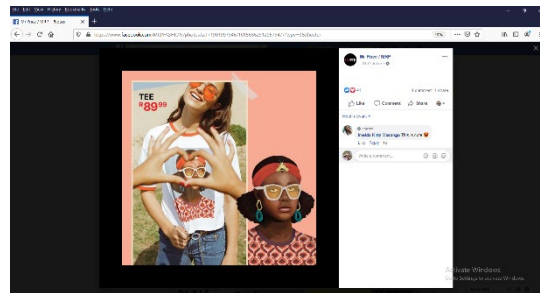
28 October 2019 (comment)
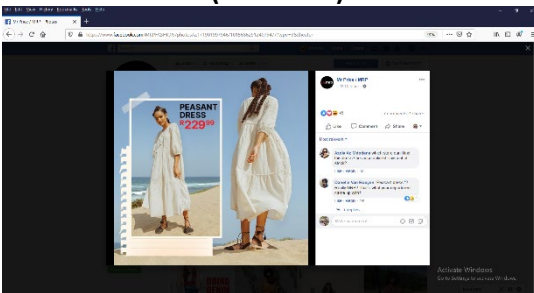
ADDENDUM B: 55 H&M Facebook advertisements selected between 1 October 2016 – 31 October 2019.

5 October 2016
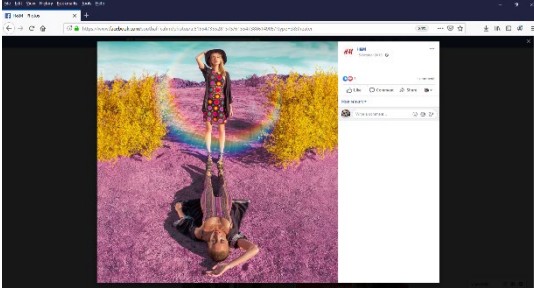
14 October 2016 (comment)
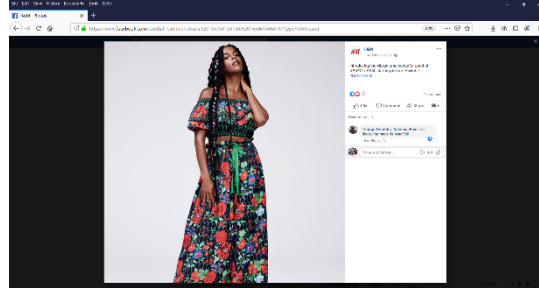
1 November 2016
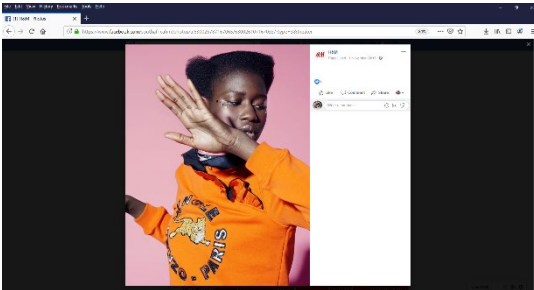
1 December 2016
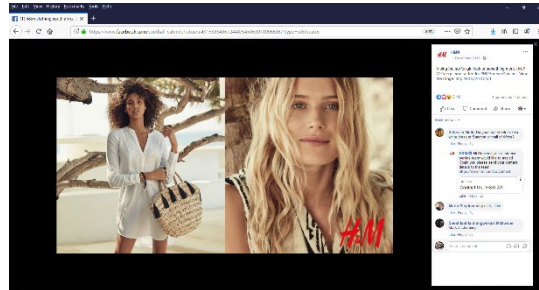
5 December 2016 (comment)
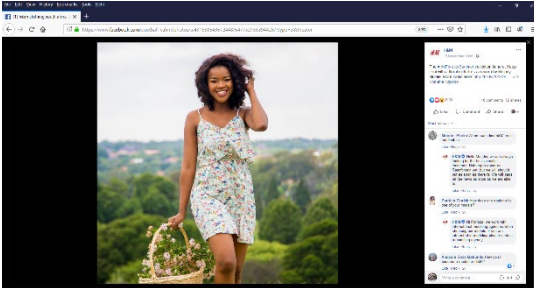
8 December 2016 (comment)
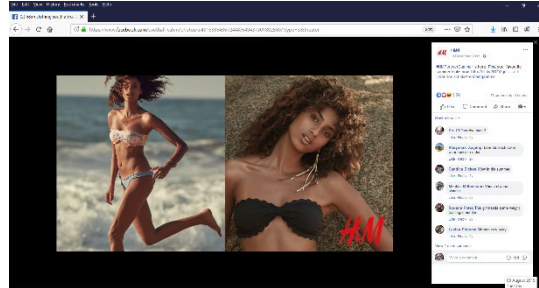
5 January 2017
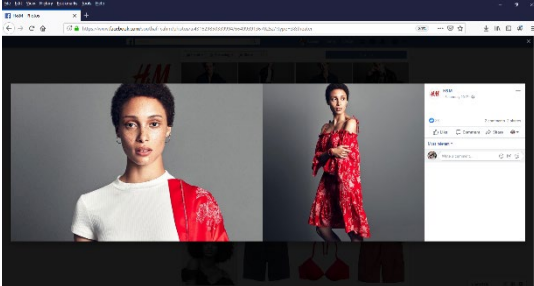
14 February 2017
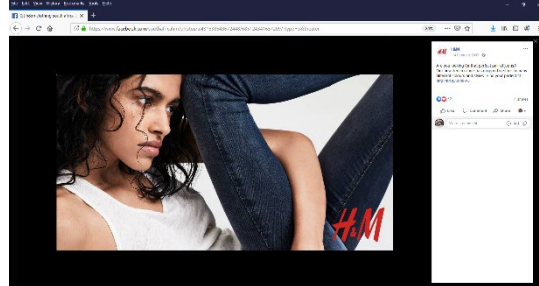
17 March 2017
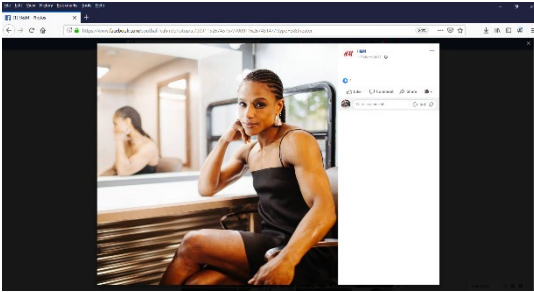
5 April 2017
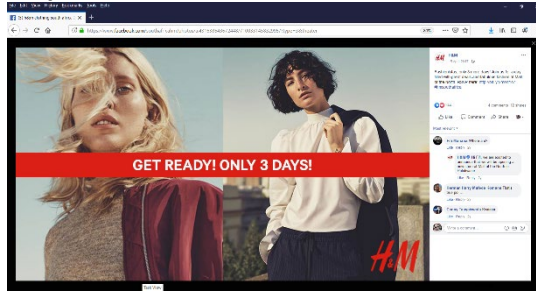
25 May 2017 (comment)
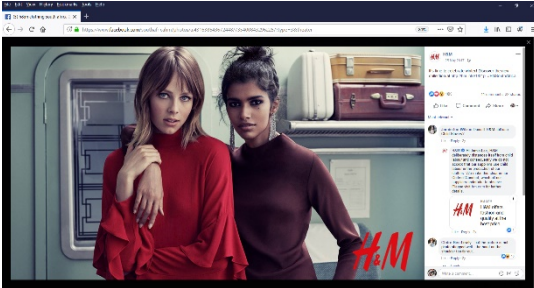
30 May 2017
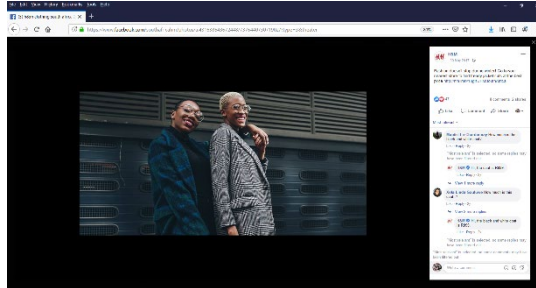
3 June 2017 (comment)
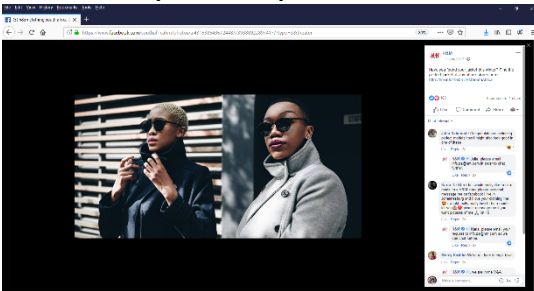
16 June 2017
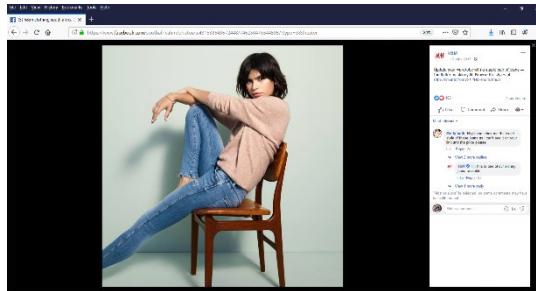
14 July 2017
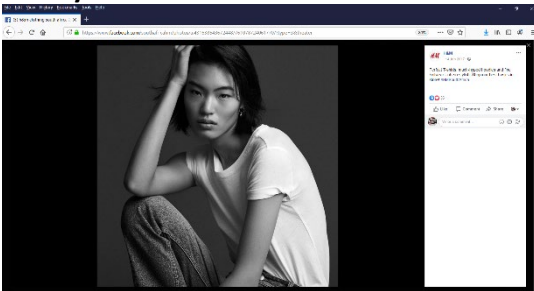
9 August 2017
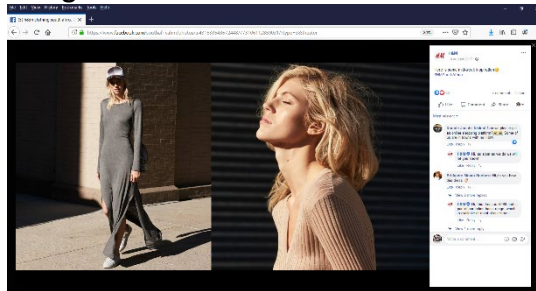
18 September 2017
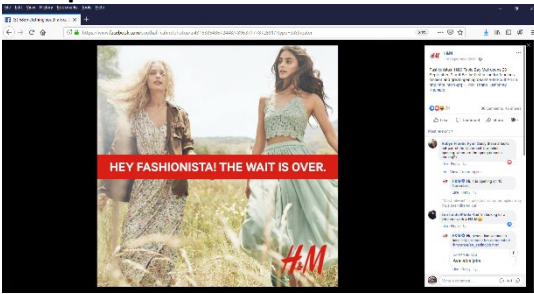
11 October 2017
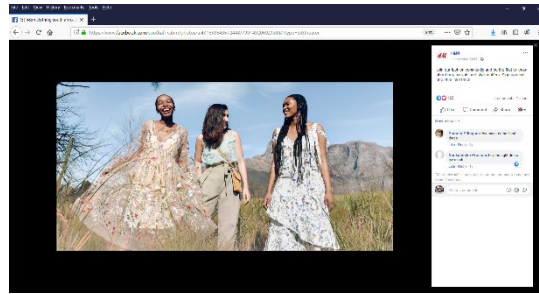
27 October 2017 (comment)
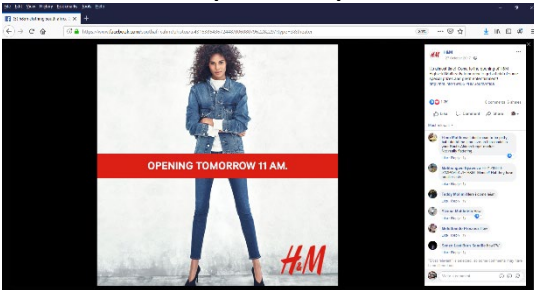
15 November 2017
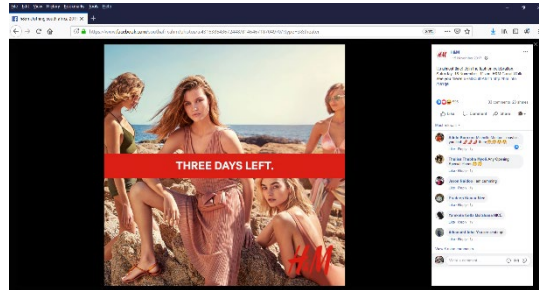
14 December 2017
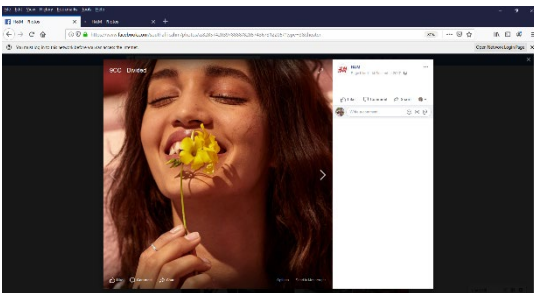
1 January 2018
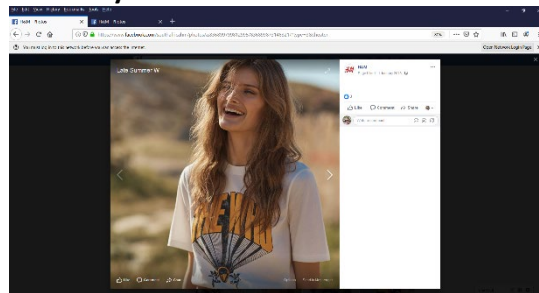
27 February 2018
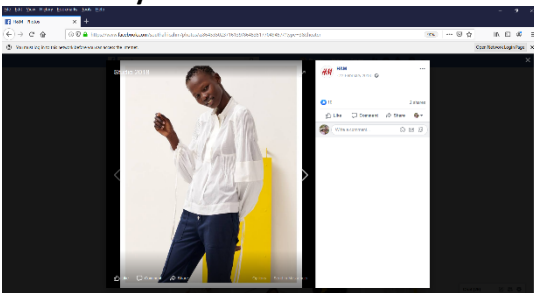
1 March 2018
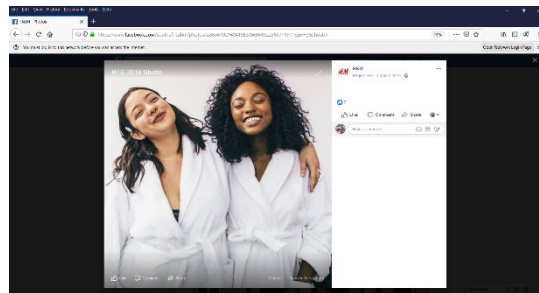
21 March 2018 (comment)
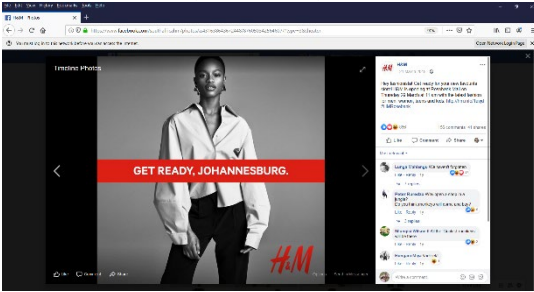
1 April 2018
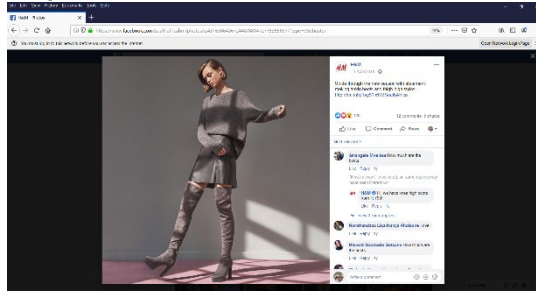
12 April 2018 (comment)
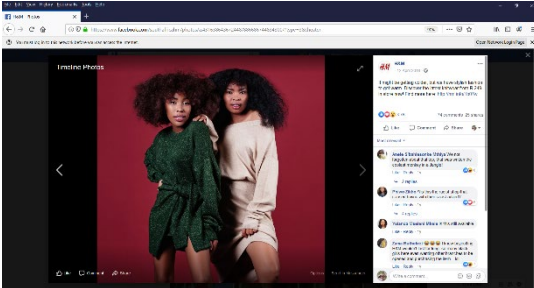
17 April 2018 (comment)
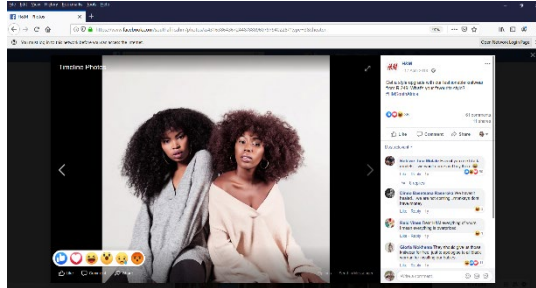
4 May 2018
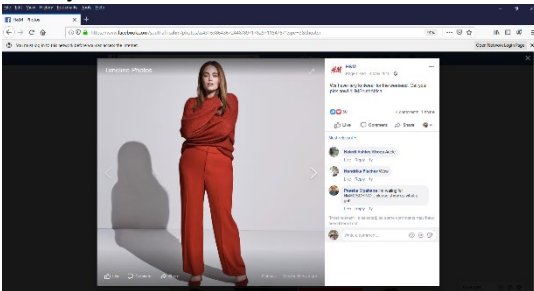
23 June 2018
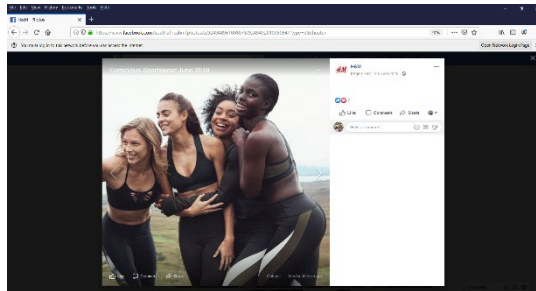
20 July 2018
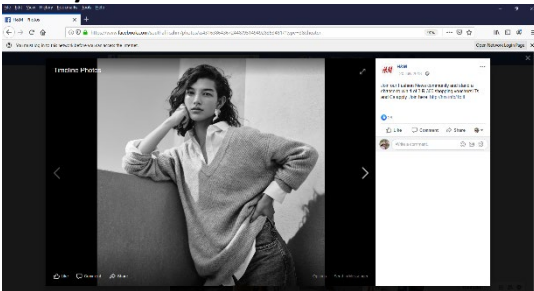
2 August 2018
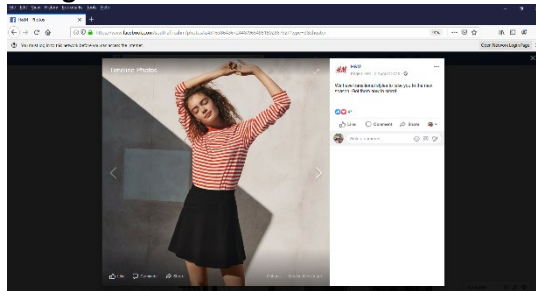
18 August 2018 (comment)
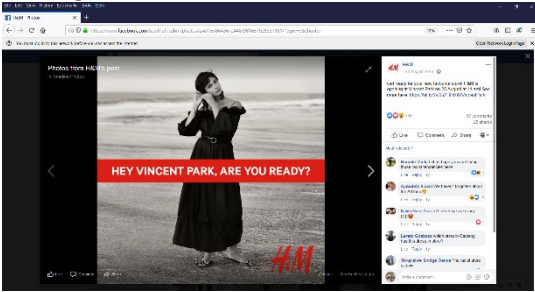
25 August 2018 (comment)
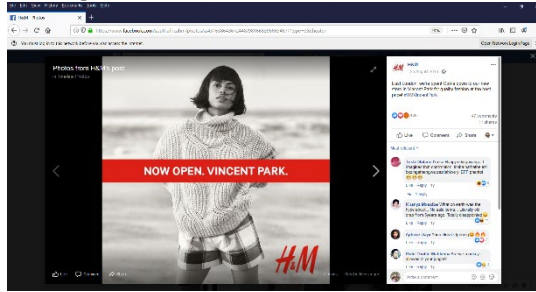
6 September 2018
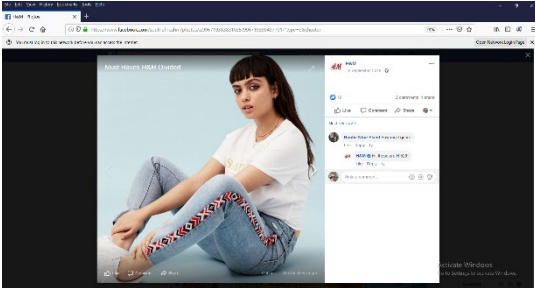
20 September 2018 (comment)
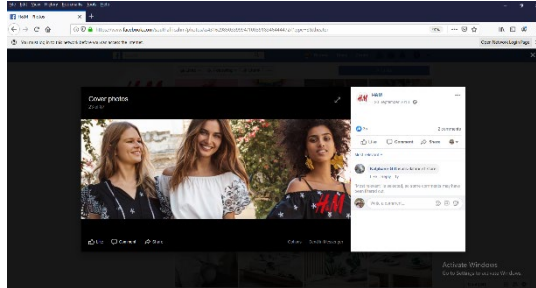
9 October 2018 (comment)
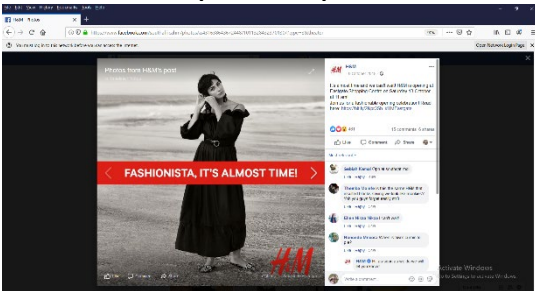
17 October 2018 (comment)
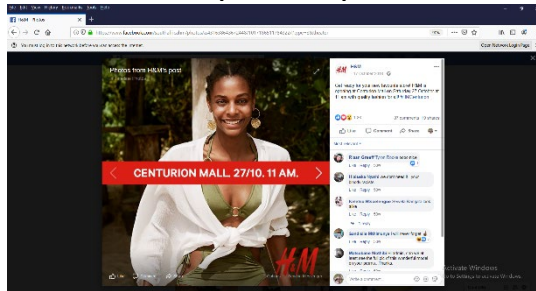
26 October 2018
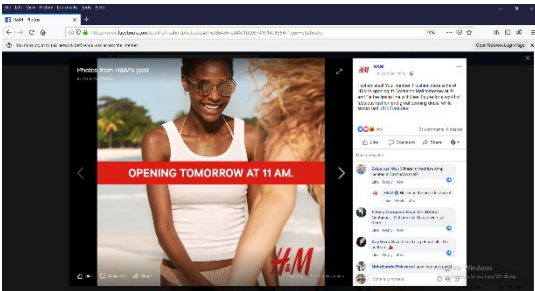
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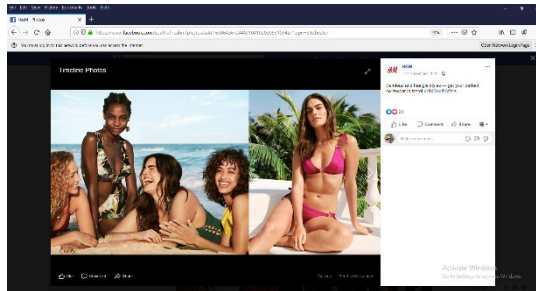
28 November 2018 (comment)
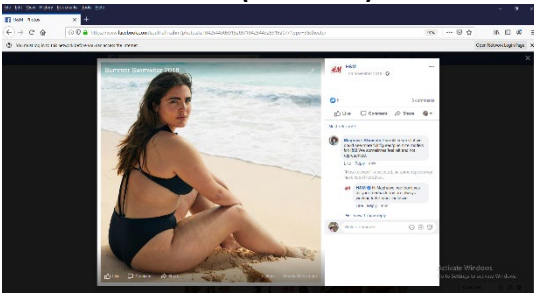
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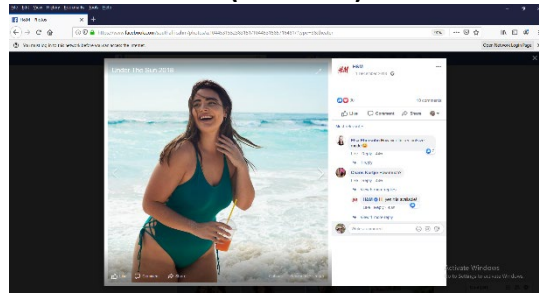
1 December 2018
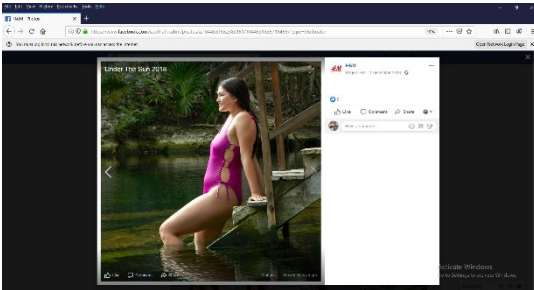
28 January 2019
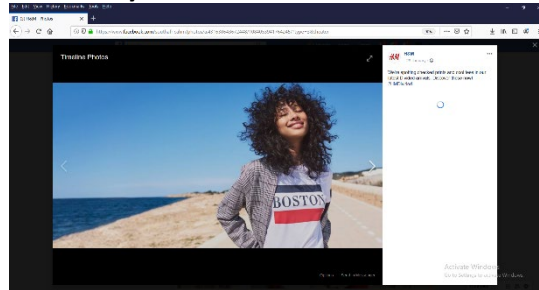
27 February 2019
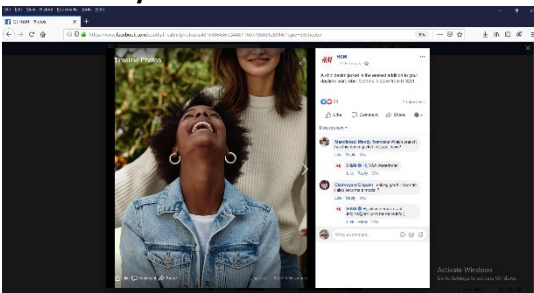
13 March 2019
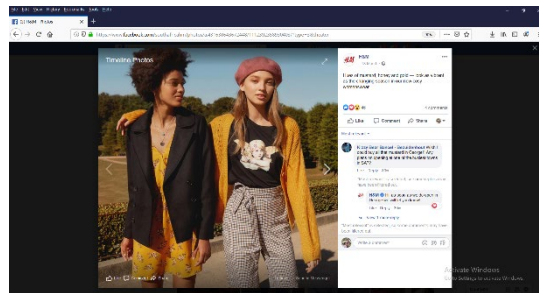
28 March 2019 (comment(
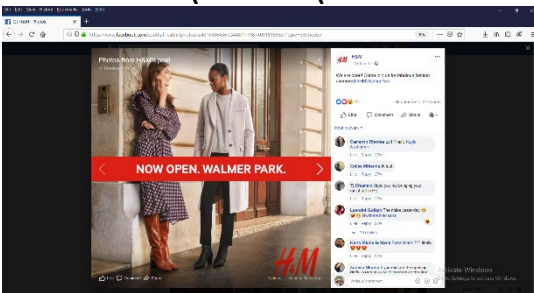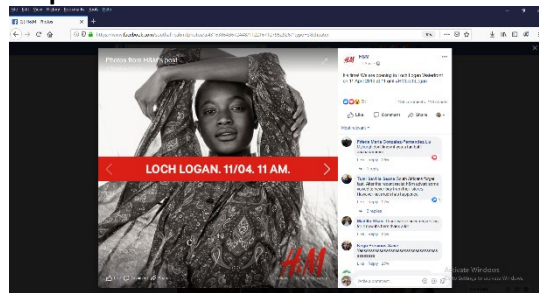
1 April 2019

11 April 2019
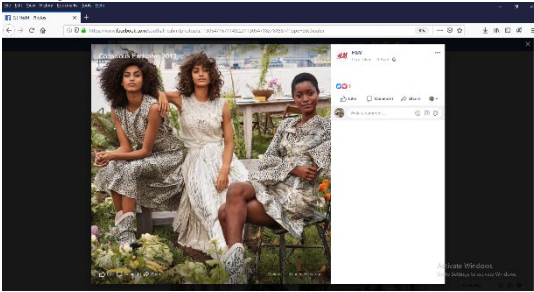
17 May 2019
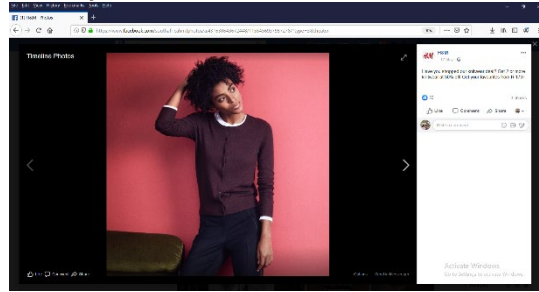
5 June 2019
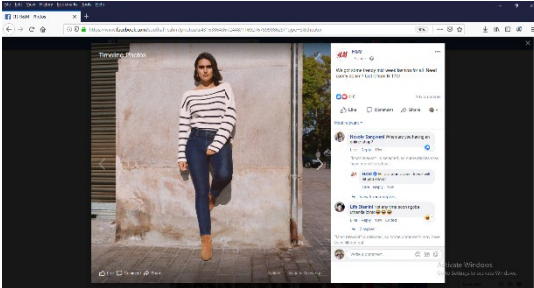
10 July 2019
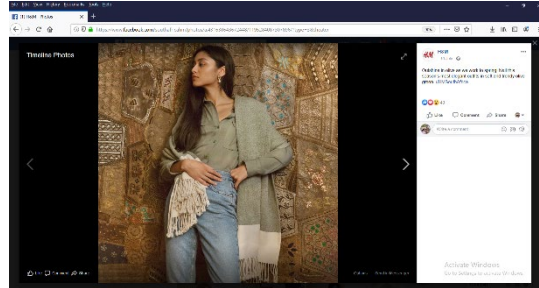
15 August 2019
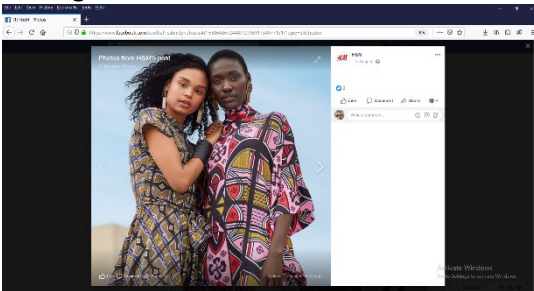
5 September 2019

4 October 2019