AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNER AS AN AGENT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL MYTH-MAKING, WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE 2013 NELSON MANDELA POSTER PROJECT

by

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SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS

The term 'myth' is commonly associated with mythical narratives, depicting magnificent dragons and heroic fighters with above-average human abilities in imagined worlds. In design studies, the term 'myth' is often critically approached as a problematic ideological construct that should be deconstructed in order to emancipate societies from a false truth. This ideological approach to myth has less to do with dragons and mythical creatures, and more to do with the ideological notions and ideas that guide human societies and cultures. Myth acts as a powerful and influential language construct that, through neutralised speech, has the power to guide and inform the actions of these cultures and societies. As a result of the impact that myth has on societies, myth is often seen as a powerful and persuasive construct that should be carefully studied and exposed.

However, this study argues that myth, and especially socio-political myth, can be seen as a constructive force in the reformation of societies and myth should be acknowledged rather than criticised. Furthermore, this study argues that myth is adaptable, and that designers are to some extent responsible for the reformation of myth by acting as agents in the myth-making process. As such, designers who use visual rhetoric to convey myths in their designs have a social responsibility towards the societies affected by their communication. Socially conscious design is one practical application of design where myth can be applied in design outcomes and design processes to act as a constructive tool in societies where positive societal change is needed. One means by which these myths are communicated is through the poster as effective vehicle for mythic communication. Therefore, this study considers posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), depicting the myths of Nelson Mandela as case study that exemplifies the constructive potential of myths created by designers and conveyed visually through posters.

Key terms used in this study include: myth, constructive myth, popular culture theory, ideology, semiotics, rhetorical theory, *mythopoeisis*, design, designers, social design, posters, *the Mandela Poster Project* (2013), and the myth of Madiba.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this research dissertation is my own original work. Where someone else's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), referenced and/or appropriated, acknowledgement is provided.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Popular movies such as *Fantastic beasts and where to find them* (2016), *The Lord of the Rings* (2001), *The Hobbit* (2012) and *Clash of the Titans* (2010) are an indication of the popularity of the concept of myths,[1] especially in generalised popular culture (Caweliti 2004:6). The word 'myth' is so frequently used that one can expect to not only find it in most books on literary and cultural studies, but also in forms of popular entertainment such as the fantasy, table-top, role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons* (Coupe 2009:1).

Just as in literature and popular culture, one may also expect to see the word 'myth' in design discourse. Within design studies, myth is often used synonymously with ideology.[2] From the perspective of ideological critique, myth is regarded as problematic and should be exposed in order to presumably emancipate people from a false truth (Coupe 2009:148). However, it may be argued that myth can be seen as having constructive potential in societies, especially if these societies have experienced a particular historical scenario leading to some degree of societal separation. According to Matti Megged (1985:211), by taking into consideration various even opposing opinions about myth, it can be argued that some basic human needs such as racial equality and gender parity may be satisfied by the existence and application of myths.

One example of such a scenario may be the myth of Nelson Mandela, South African human rights freedom fighter and anti-apartheid leader. Mandela, also known as Madiba, Tata and father of the nation (du Preez 2013:144), became the icon of a post-apartheid era that positively influenced not only South African values and beliefs, but also notions of anti-racism and human rights on a global scale (Boehmer 2013). Although the myth of Madiba can certainly be critiqued, there is positive potential in the conscious collective adoption of this myth.

Myths, such as the Mandela myth, are often visually communicated through images, symbols and icons. These visual manifestations of myth are generally created or imagined by social actors such as communication designers, graphic artists and producers of mass media images as a means of visually communicating an idea (Aiello 2006:91). Designers recognise myths in

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1 Different meanings can be ascribed to the term myth. Here, 'myth' refers to classical myths, which concerns itself with ancient cultural stories, and the conventional interplay of myth opposing reality (Caweliti 2004:6).

2 Ideology can be defined as a set of socially constructed ideas that become embedded in culture to such an extent that they are perceived as a norm (Aiello 2006:92).

popular culture and adapt or extend these myths through the creation and use of images and icons to convey specific messages. As a result, designers can be seen as agents in 'myth-making' by contributing consciously or subconsciously to the process of visual *mythopoesis*, essentially defined as the act of creating myths (Kazlev 2010:8). According to Christopher Crouch and Jane Pearce (2012:14), designers function within a social framework where design actions and their validity take place in political, cultural and social contexts. As a result, designers need to continually consider how their actions impact the social world. Thus, as mentioned, if myth is regarded as having constructive potential, it can also be argued that myth may be used as a communication tool for designers to contribute towards positive societal change.

Furthermore, in order to effectively convey these messages, designers implement icons and visual texts in the form of print media, digital media and other modes of visual mass communication. One of these vehicles of communication is the poster. Since the advent of print media, the poster has been a common vehicle for designers when visually communicating certain ideas or messages, especially when the messages are politically or ideologically driven (Yanker 1970:215). This is because posters can be used as a platform for persuasion or propaganda, more so if the messages being communicated are ideologically bound. As such, socio-political posters can be seen as a significant vehicle or platform for mythic communication.

The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), is an example of a poster collective argued to be an embodiment of icons and visual elements aimed at conveying the myth of Mandela. The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) was founded[3] as a means of contributing to society by celebrating the life of Mandela and raising funds for the Mandela Children's Hospital. Although the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) differs from other functional political posters as it was not created for political reformation purposes; yet, it still effectively communicates a myth based on an icon, which was formed in a political environment. Moreover, the designers participating in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) exercised graphic authorship by participating in their personal capacity. By doing so, these designers acted as agents in communicating and supporting the myth of Mandela.

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[3] The project was initiated by two South African designers, Mohammed Jogie and Jacque Lange with the initial intention to act as a social media campaign. Later, the project was continued by Icogranda, the International Council of Graphic Design Associations, as the *Mandela Poster Project Collective* (2013), which reformed the project into an international poster project (Visi 2013).

1.2   Literature review

This study considers a range of literature from different fields, including myth, popular culture, semiotics, ideology, rhetorical theory, *mythopoesis*, socially conscious design, poster design, and the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). In this literature review, seminal theorists and key insights are introduced and discussed. This preliminary review of literature thus introduces the seminal sources, expanded on in more detail in Chapter Two, which theoretically ground the research focus of this study.

1.2.1 Myth, popular culture theory and semiotics

Firstly, this study investigates and discusses the concept of myth. Therefore, Roland Barthes' ideas relating to myth are considered theoretically essential. In his book, *Mythologies,* Barthes (1991:107), discusses and defines myth by firstly noting that myth is a communication system that can be seen as a form of signification. Everything can be a myth as long as it is delivered by a discourse, since myth is a type of speech. What makes something a myth is not the content of the message, but the way in which it is delivered. Thus, a myth is defined by form, and not by content (Barthes 1991:107). A myth's function is to distort meanings by acting simultaneously as both neutralised meaning and form. This allows for myth to be read as factual, rather than purely semiotic (Barthes 1991:130). In other words, a myth functions as a 'second-order semiological system' that changes an original meaning for a second level of meaning to be read as truth. In doing so, myth does not take away meaning, but merely distorts it by making us forget certain truths about the history of a concept in order for the perceiver to accept what is left of the meaning as fact. The perceiver believes myth, because the original message is not replaced, merely distorted (Barthes 1991:127).

Mythologies (1991) provides a theoretical background of myth that may be applied to better understand the concept thereof. Furthermore, Barthes is a key influencer in mythic theory and his theories have been widely studied and considered by many seminal theorists. However, it should be noted that Barthes considers myth as something to be both criticised and exposed. Barthes' intention in studying myth is to decode and break away from the meanings established and communicated by the bourgeois norm (Aiello 2006:100); therefore, myth is often seen as having deceptive characteristics.

To expand on the concept of myth and to consider the possibility of myth as being a constructive force, this study considers relevant ideas of key theorists such as Rebecca Houze (2016), Giorgia Aiello (2006), Roland Barthes (1991), Richard Buchanan (1985, 1990),

Laurence Coupe (2009), Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2001, 2006) and Matti Megged (1985). These authors discuss myth in relation to different disciplines and theoretical viewpoints such as popular culture, science, iconology, rhetorical theory, social semiotics, design studies and literature. As such, the broad perspective allows this study to present a holistic understanding of myth. In researching these authors' accounts on myth, it becomes clear that myth plays a large role in societal formation and communication. Furthermore, in relation to their respective point of views, some authors such as Coupe (2009), Megged (1985) and Aiello (2006) argue that myth may have qualities other that demystifying or deconstructing a message or idea. In his book, *Myth* (2009), Coupe (2009:1) states that: "...there is a lot more to myth than deception or distraction." Aiello (2006:100) supports this theory by adding that reading into the neutralising characteristics of myth can be beneficial to socio-semiotics.

Moreover, myth is often linked to different fields of studies within the scope of semiotics. Popular culture and ideology are relevant concepts that this study explains and discusses in relation to myth. In doing so, this study regards theories of key authors, including Stephen Heller (2009), Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause (1992) in order to understand popular culture. Nachbar and Lause (1992:5) state that popular culture refers to entities that have been greatly accepted by macro- or micro-cultural societies. Furthermore, popular culture not only reflects, but also shapes views and beliefs. Terry Eagleton (1991) and Aiello (2006) define and discuss the concept of ideology. Ideology, according to Aiello (2006) can briefly be explained as a set of ideas that become embedded in social fabric in such a way that those notions become common sense.

As this study undertakes a semiotic sub-approach to interpreting images, theories from authors Gillian Rose (2007), and John Berger (1972) are also consulted. Berger (1972) discusses how we look at images in relation to the environment that we find ourselves in. Rose (2007), on the other hand, discusses semiotics as a methodological approach to visual studies and design. Whereas Bergers' (1972) theories are consulted to better understand the way in which the social fabrication informs and is informed by images, Rose's (2007) theories are used throughout the study as a guide to interpret images semiotically.

1.2.2 Rhetorical theory
In order to understand design's communicative value in advocating myth, theorists Leslie Atzmon (2011) and Barbara Emanuel (2010) are considered in this study for their theories on rhetoric, and especially visual rhetoric. Atzmon's (2011) theories are consulted for her

perspective on the way in which design artefacts can function as rhetorical structures in providing meaning aimed at influencing an audience to believe in a certain set of ideas or ideologies. Emanuel's (2010) theories are considered throughout this study in order to gain a clear understanding of visual rhetoric theory and the application thereof in design studies. Furthermore, Emanuel's theories are regarded as seminal in Chapter Four as her theories form the basis of criteria for the visual rhetorical analysis conducted using a selection of posters in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013).

1.2.3 Mythopoeisis and socially conscious design

This study explores the notion of designers acting as agents in the myth-making process, consciously or unconsciously participating in the act of *mythopoesis*. In doing so, this study consults both Alan Kazlev (2010) and Harry Slochower (1970) in order to define the concept of *mythopoesis*. According to Kazlev (2010:2), *mythopoesis* is the act of myth-making through imagination. Although, particularly useful to this study as a source for defining *mythopoesis*, Kazlev and Slochower discuss myth-making from a literary point of view. Therefore, this study also considers the theoretical underpinnings of theorists such as Sarah Beach (1983), Carl Jung (1963), and Laurence Coupe (2009) in order to investigate the act of myth-making in relation to design and other disciplines.

Furthermore, as a result of designers' active or subconscious role in the myth-making process, this study discusses the constructive potential of myth in socially conscious design. Therefore, throughout this study, the theories of Jorge Frascara (2004), Stephen Mayo (1993), Audrey Bennet (2002), Noah Scalin and Michelle Taute (2012), Ann Tyler (1992), Aidan Ricketts (2012), Rebecca Houze (2016) and Richard Buchanan (1990) are considered as a means of discussing the role of design and the designer in contemporary societies, and to discuss the notion of socially conscious design. Frascara (2004), Buchanan (1990) and Tyler's (1992) theories are considered for their discussions and definitions on design and the role of the designer and audience for purposes of effective communication. Bennett (2002), Ricketts (2012), Scalin and Taute (2012) discuss the definition of socially conscious design and elaborate on the importance of design activism in relation to design for socio-political change. Lastly, Houze (2016) and Mayo (1993) discuss myth's political and ideological underpinnings in design practice and contemporary society. Both Houze (2016) and Mayo (1993) also provide practical examples of how myth functions in design; hence, they are seminal sources for this study.

1.2.4 The poster as a vehicle for mythic communication

In researching modes of mythic communication often implemented by designers, this study considers socio-political posters as a vehicle for communicating myth. Theorists GM Rege (1963), James Kimble and Lester Olson (2002), Angharad Lewis (2006), Max Gallo (2001), and Susan Sontag (1999) are considered for their theories in this field. *Poster as an effective medium of communication* (1963), an article by Rege (1963), discusses the efficacy of posters for conveying designed communication. Rege (1963) argued, at the time of writing, that posters are used in modern society as a means of communication as it is comprised of stimuli that evoke involuntary attention. Kimble and Olson (2002) discuss myth and rhetoric in posters by analysing Howard Miller's *"We can do it!"* poster. Lastly, Susan Sontag (1970) considers the poster as an aggressive vehicle of communication; she discusses the poster as a powerful rhetorical device.

1.2.5 Theories on the Mandela Poster Project (2013)

This study explores the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)* as a case study, and therefore considers seminal sources including Noel Solani (2000), Peter Limb (2008) and Amanda du Preez (2013) for their discussions surrounding Mandela and the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). In *Nelson Mandela Biography* (2008), Limb contributes by depicting the life story of Nelson Mandela, providing a historic overview of the politics and life lead by Mandela during apartheid and, subsequently, post-apartheid. Solani (2000) deconstructs the myth of Mandela from a South-African perspective. Lastly, du Preez's article, *Mandela poster project collective: Mandela: icon lost and regained* (2013) provides a short oversight and history of the *Mandela Poster Project Collective* (2013) and the relevance of Mandela as a globally recognised icon.

1.3   Aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate myth as having constructive potential within design discourse and practice. Furthermore, this study aims to investigate the designer's role in the myth-making process. In doing so, this study places particular focus on the socio-political poster as a vehicle for mythic communication. Lastly, this study aims to explore these concepts within the context of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013).

In order to achieve this aim, the first objective of this study is to explore the concept of myth and situate myth within design practice and discourse. As previously mentioned, this study considers relevant theoretical underpinnings of key theorists such as Rebecca Houze (2016), Giorgia Aiello (2006), Roland Barthes (1991), Richard Buchanan (1985, 1990), Laurence

Coupe (2009), Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2001, 2006) and Matti Megged (1985) in order to investigate and discuss the concept of myth. By exploring the mythical, iconographical and ideological concepts set out by these theorists, as well as other linked concepts such as popular culture theory, semiotics and mythic criticism, this study gains insight on myth and design in order to discuss myth within design discourse and practice. Furthermore, by situating myth in design, this study gains insight in order to discuss the possibility of myth as being a constructive force that may have the potential to influence behavioural change in people that may ultimately lead to constructive societal change.

The second objective of this study is to explore the notion of designers as agents in the myth-making process, consciously or unconsciously participating in the act of visual *mythopoeisis*. *Mythopoeia*, a derivation of *mythopoeisis* is often used by linguists to refer to a writing genre that combines mythological themes and fiction (Kazlev 2010:1). Visual *mythopoeia* thus refers to a visual storytelling, or myth-making. By investigating myth as being adapted and visually communicated by designers as a form of visual *mythopoeia*, this study situates myth within design practice, and considers the active role of designers in the myth-making process. In doing so, this study places particular focus on the adaptability of myth and potential of socio-political myth in socially conscious design.

The third objective is to investigate socio-political posters as one vehicle for mythic communication in order to create a better understanding of the significance and potential of mythic communication in societies. Although this study acknowledges that there are many vehicles for mythic communication, this study places primary focus on posters. Through a brief investigation of posters, in light of their use for political propaganda, this study discusses and showcases the possibility of posters as a medium for mythic communication through its links with mass communication and a poster's persuasive nature, two qualities closely linked with myth.

The final objective is to explore the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as case study in order to illustrate and conclude the theory discussed throughout this study. By conducting a visual rhetorical analysis of a selection of posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), this study aims to investigate the designer's role in the myth-making process. Furthermore, this final objective serves to provide a relevant example of the way in which socio-political myth can contribute positively to societal transformation.

1.4 Theoretical framework and research methodology

This study considers three methods of investigation that fall within a qualitative research study methodology. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:139), researchers who follow a qualitative research methodology understand that the research problem of study has many layers and dimensions. Therefore, in the context of this study, multiple research methods are employed in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role that myth plays in design.

The first method of this qualitative study is a review of literature in order to theoretically ground different aspect of this study (Hofstee 2006:91). A literature review, according to Crouch and Pearce (2012:135), may be viewed as an in-depth analysis of literary works that investigate topics that relate to the specific area of this study. Therefore, literature reviews are conducted in Chapters One and Two in order to investigate seminal theories that relate to myth in design. Furthermore, in conducting the literature reviews, this study aims to cite relevant arguments in order to underpin the research premise and different aspects of this study.

The second research method is a visual rhetorical approach to interpreting images. According to Buchanan (1985:6), rhetoric is a way of communicating to shape patterns of individuals and communities in order to guide new actions. In the same way, visual rhetoric is the act of communicating persuasively through visual imagery. A visual rhetorical approach to interpreting images thus concerns how images convey specific meaning, towards persuasion. Within the scope of this study, images are used a means of understanding how myth functions within design practice. Images are also used to explore concepts such as denotation and connotation, directly relating to myth. Therefore, this study considers a semiotic approach to interpreting images as a sub-approach to the visual rhetorical analysis that is conducted in Chapter Four. According to Gillian Rose (2001:69), semiology concerns how images make meaning through signs. Furthermore, semiology regards an image itself as a critical site of meaning, but also refers to the 'social modality' of an image in order to interpret the social effects of an image's meaning. Therefore, semiology in not merely studying images, but also interpreting an image as part of a broader system of meaning. Although this study does not conduct an in-depth semiotic analysis of a specific case study, semiotics will be used throughout the study as a means of interpreting specific imagery and iconography.

The third research method, used specifically to illustrate the theories presented in the literature reviews in practice, is a visual rhetorical analysis of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as the case study.[4] According to Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack (2008:545), a case study should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer questions that ask how a phenomenon occurred and give reasons to why an occurrence is taking place. Therefore, this study uses a selection of ten posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as a collective case study and asks how these posters act as persuasive devices that communicate the myth of Mandela. The particular selection of posters and the reason for their selection are discussed in Chapter Four. In addition, this study investigates how this myth constructively acts as a force that aims to facilitate social cohesion, specifically in a post-apartheid South Africa.

1.5   Outline of chapters

The first chapter of this study provided a background and introduction to the study. Furthermore, this chapter provided a brief review of literature in order to introduce key concepts, theories and theorists considered throughout this study. Chapter One also contributed to this study by providing the aim and objectives as well as theoretical framework and methodology used for this study. Lastly, Chapter One provides the following outline of chapters to frame the content discussed throughout the study.

The second chapter of this study investigates and discusses the concept of myth by means of a literature review. Hence, Chapter Two aims to answer the first objective of this study, namely to understand the concept of myth, and to understand how myth is situated within design practice and discourse in order to introduce the idea of myth as being constructive in nature. Firstly, this chapter introduces myth as a semiological system and ideological concept within the broader scope of visual culture in order to define myth. Thereafter, Chapter Two discuss current approaches to investigating myth by providing a critical perspective on myth. Furthermore, Chapter Two discusses myth in design discourse and practice with the specific aim of relating myth to design. Lastly, this chapter discusses the possibility of myth having constructive potential when examined within socio-political contexts.

Chapter Three discusses myth in design from the perspective that designers may be seen as agents in the myth-making process and socio-political posters a vehicle for mythic

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[4] It should be noted that this case study is used to show the theory in practice and does not fall within a case study methodology.

communication. This chapter relates to the second and third objective of this study: to investigate myth as being visually communicated and adapted by designers, and posters as one medium through which these designers communicate socio-political myth. Chapter Three firstly defines the notion of *mythopoesis* in order to discuss the adaptability of myth within design discourse and practice. Thereafter, this chapter discusses how designers can be seen as myth-making agents, adapting and extending existing myths for specific communication. Furthermore, Chapter Three discusses the constructive potential of socio-political myth, specifically within the context of socially-conscious design. The second part of Chapter Three provides a brief introduction to posters as a powerful medium of mass communication. This introduction on posters provides a greater understanding of the origin of socio-political posters and why this study will regard socio-political posters as an important platform for mythic communication. Thereafter, Chapter Three investigates the socio-political poster in light of political propaganda in order to demonstrate how posters act as vehicles that convey ideological messages or ideas. The last section of Chapter Three briefly investigates the significance that posters still have in contemporary society and how posters, as traditional print medium, are represented within the digital era.

Chapter Four investigates the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as a case study. This chapter includes the final objective of the study, to show the theory in practice, by means of applying it to a practical case study. Firstly, Chapter Four investigates and discusses the myth of Mandela to contextualise the case study. As such, the first section of Chapter Four includes two sub-sections. The first of these two sub-sections provide a brief historical overview of South Africa, from the apartheid era up to a post-apartheid era, to provide contextualisation of how and why Nelson Mandela became a popular culture and political icon that, even after his death, still represents a constructed set of ideas and ideologies. The second sub-section of this chapter is a continuation of the content in the first as it investigates Mandela as a popular cultural icon and a myth in modern society. Thereafter, Chapter Four undertakes a visual rhetorical analysis of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) in order to illustrate the theory discussed throughout the study. This second part of Chapter Four firstly contextualises the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) in order to provide relevant background to the poster collective and to rationalise the selection of posters that comprises the case study for analysis in this study. Furthermore, this study makes use of rhetorical and semiotic theories to discuss the first two levels of meaning, namely denotation and connotation in relation to myth. The final part of this chapter discusses the significance of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) based on the discussions and findings throughout the study.

In conclusion to this study, Chapter Five includes a summary of the chapters, contributions of the study, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research. Lastly, this chapter ends the study with concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTRUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF SOCIO-POLITICAL MYTH IN DESIGN DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

In order to situate myth as being potentially constructive, it is important to first understand what myth is, the perspective from which myth is predominantly studied, and how myth is situated specifically within visual culture and design. Therefore, Chapter Two firstly introduces myth as a semiological system and ideological concept within the broader scope of visual culture in order to define myth. Thereafter, Chapter Two discusses the critical perspective from which myth is generally approached in visual and cultural studies in order to understand why myth is often regarded as being destructive. Furthermore, Chapter Two discusses myth in design discourse and practice with the aim of relating myth to design. Lastly, this chapter discusses the possibility of myth having constructive potential within social and socio-political environments.

2.1   An introduction to myth in visual culture: myth as a semiological system and ideological concept

According to Rebecca Houze (2016:1), signs and symbols are practical tools to help us understand and explore our environment. Signs are an essential part of our imaginative lives and are necessary for the formation of our personal and collective identities (Houze 2016:1). We make sense of signs in order to know where we are, and how we fit into our respective settings. In order for us to make sense of our environments, we combine elements into a language of forms that we can easily comprehend. In doing so, these signs and symbols form part of a shared visual language wherein the same signs and symbols have the same meaning for different people. We read the shared visual language from the semiotic landscape in which we live. Visual communication in our society is understood in the context of the forms of public communication as well as their uses and appropriations (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006:35). This collective vocabulary, which we recognise and interact with, resonates through culture, history, politics and social change (Houze 2016:2). As such, we perceive visual information in everything we do. Think, for example, of driving in a vehicle. The arrows on the road signs indicate direction. We understand that a blinking orange light on the left rear of a motorcycle indicates that the driver intends on turning left. Three lights on a pole at an intersection indicate when we must stop, go or drive with caution just by showing a single colour; red, green or orange. We reach our destination. A mermaid on a green circular sign tells us that we are now at Starbucks, a popular coffee house.

All information we consume appears natural, but because of the influence of media and arts, reality is in fact historical and therefore constructed (Houze 2016:2). This means that most of what we perceive to be natural, is essentially a set of preconceived notions that has formed through history and now *appears* natural. Media and arts are modes or platforms through which we perceive reality, therefore the way in which media and art delivers information influences the natural consumption of reality. The information and messages communicated by the media and arts consist of myth, a semiotic language system that makes use of signs to communicate preconceived ideas that are consumed as fact. Because of the potentially misleading nature of myth, Houze (2016:2), states that it is imperative that we continue to investigate and comprehend the layers of signification, locating myth within history. In doing so, we are urged to understand why we make the cognitive decisions we do. Houze (2016:3) explains that unless we investigate and understand myth within history "...we cannot understand what motivates us to long for that perfect pair of athletic shoes, what compels us to buy one electronic device rather than another, or what causes us to insist that our children play with wooden blocks instead of video games."

By looking into and understanding myth, we study how to read the images that we barely notice and give thought to (Houze 2016:3). We see myth all around us, disguised in the communication and visuals that we interact with. The signs and symbols and the messages they portray are in the graphics, corporate identity systems and even the socio-political messages that we consume on a daily basis (Houze 2016:3). Essentially, one of the most important ways of defining and understanding myth, and especially socio-political mythmaking, would be to firstly look at the theory of myth by consulting the relevant theories of Gillian Rose (2001), Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) and Roland Barthes (1991).

In her book, *Visual mythologies* (2001:69), Gillian Rose discusses semiology as one method to analyse how images make meaning. Rose (2001:69) refers to the 'Saussurean sign' as an important semiological tool in understanding how meaning is created: the reason being that the essential concept in any semiotics is the sign (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006:6). Rose (2001:74) states that the sign was developed by Ferdinand de Saussure as a way of understanding how language functions, thus arguing that the sign is a unit of language and can be seen as a form of communication. De Saussure (1966:67) defines a sign as a combination of a concept and a sound-image. According to de Saussure (1966:66), we can recall images by thinking of words or concepts, and in doing so, these concepts become 'sound-images' in our imagination. A sound-image is exactly as the name implies: an image created by the mind in connection with a

sound that is heard or thought of. Therefore, a sign is a simple unit that represents something else. For example, an arrow is a sign for a specific direction and an exclamation mark on the side of a road may infer caution.

The sign consists of two integrated parts, as illustrated in Figure 1. The first part of a sign is the signified, being the 'concept'. The second part of a sign is the signifier or 'sound-image' (de Saussure 1966:67). According to Rose (2001:74), the reason for distinction between the signifier and the signified is to infer that there is no necessary relationship between a signifier and its signified. This means that a signifier can mean anything and that the meaning is subjective to the perceiver. Furthermore, the signifier can have more than one meaning (Rose 2001:74), which implies that the signified can have many signifiers at the same time and is not bound to one. According to Rose (2001:74), identifying the disconnect between the signified and the signifier is important in semiology, because it means that different relationships between signs can be interrogated and explored.
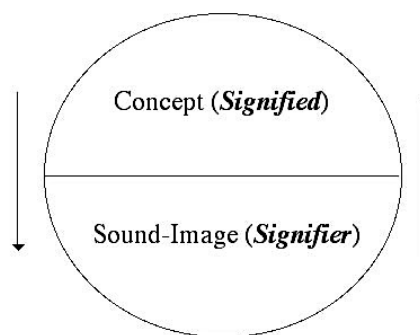
Figure 1: An illustration of the concept and sound-image. (de Saussure 1966:66)

One simple example of the Saussurean signified and signifier may be as follows. The signifier is the word 'hat'. The signified is 'a shaped covering for the head'. The word hat, being a sound-image, thus signifies a shaped covering for the head. The disconnect between the relationship of the signifier and the signified is noted in the way that different languages use different words for the same signified (Rose 2001:74). For example, the Welsh word for 'hat' is *het*. *Het* is also the Afrikaans word for 'has', which has nothing to do with a shaped covering for the head, but rather a grammatical term used to refer to something that has already happened.

Furthermore, Rose (2001:78) notes that there are different ways in which signs can be described. Signs can be distinguished based on their level of symbolism. Signs can be

denotative in nature, meaning they describe something clearly and are fairly easy to decode (Rose 2001:78). On the other hand, signs can also be connotative. Connotative signs embed a range of complex or 'higher-level' meanings (Rose 2001:82). Van Leeuwen (2001:37) illustrates the difference between connotative and denotative signs by using the word 'white' as an example. The word 'white' denotes anything that can be white in colour, such as paper, snow, sea foam, etc. On the other hand, the word white also connotes the abstract concept of 'whiteness', whereby all white things can be referred to with one word, 'white'. According to Rose (2001:88), connotative signs pertain to "wider systems of meaning". Signs that are connotative in nature, are more difficult to read and require a deeper understanding of the sign's meaning to decode. Essentially, myth can be classified as a connotative sign system.

In his book, *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes refers to a myth's connotative sign systems as mythologies. Barthes (1991:107) asks: "What is myth, today?". It should be noted that *Mythologies* was written in 1957 in French and translated and published in English in 1972; as such, Barthes' examples of myth relate to the time and culture it was written in and may not be as relevant in a contemporary context. It goes without argument that the 1950's French popular culture differs much from the popular culture of modern globalised communities, but Barthes' theories in *Mythologies*, however, form the theoretical foundation from which many studies of myth and ideology have expanded, thus making the theories of Barthes' myth deeply influential and therefore seminal (Coupe 2006:147). In her book, *New mythologies in design and culture: reading signs and symbols in the visual landscape* (2016), Houze includes contemporary examples of Barthes' myth. Houze (2016:2) simply states that Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957) is an examination of the way in which socially constructed notions become naturalised through a linguistic process described as 'myth'.

On Barthes' (1991:107) question: "What is myth, today?", he answers: "I shall give at the outset a first, very simple answer, which is perfectly consistent with etymology: myth is a type of speech." Barthes (1991:107) explains by affirming that myth is a type of language. For Barthes (1991:107), it is crucial to acknowledge that myth is a communication system, or rather a message. Myth is not a concept, or an observable object, however myth is a form, or a mode of signification (Barthes 1991:107). This means that myth is read and appropriated through signs. According to Barthes (1991:107), anything can be myth as long as it is delivered through discourse, as it is a form of speech. Myth is not defined by the object of the message, but with the way in which the message is conveyed. A top hat, for example, is a top hat. However, when a top hat is being discussed as an appropriate item to wear to a formal event, the top hat has

moved from a status of non-existence into an 'oral state' and has thus become exposed to societal appropriation. In other words, social usage has been added to the top hat (Barthes 1991:108). The myth lies not with the top hat, but the fact that the top hat has been selected, in a conversation, as an appropriate clothing item to wear to a formal event, thus making the top hat (in that specific conversation) an icon or signifier of class and formality.

It should also be noted that myth is not restricted to speech alone but may also be appropriated through imagery. Myth relies on modes of writing as well as visual representations to convey meaning. Photographs, cinematography, graphic signage, public events, etcetera are all mediums through which myth can be conveyed (Barthes 1991:108). Keeping with the example of the top hat, when the top hat is discussed as an example of attire that represents class, that discussion is not limited to a conventional verbal 'oral state' but extends to visual culture publications such as magazine articles, advertisements, and other means of visual communication.

Furthermore, myth is always rooted in history. Barthes' (1991:108) believes that human history is the only way that myth can exist, as it is history that changes reality into a spoken state. Mythology, according to Barthes (1991:108), can only have a historic underpinning. The reason for this is because myth, by choice, is always selected within a historical context. Myth can never develop from a natural state but is always a product of history (Barthes 1991:125). In other words, myth is dependent on history for meanings. A myth comprises of meanings that were created in the past. For example, Figure 2 and Figure 3 are visual examples of how myth is rooted within history. Figure 2 is a poster advertisement for 'The Man's Shop Harrods' that illustrates a man wearing formal attire and a top hat, attending Ascot in 1937. This advertisement is embedded with myth. The word Ascot is a symbol for the Ascot Horse Racecourse. The unstated embedded meaning, however is that the Ascot Horse Racecourse is a Royal British establishment that hosts prestigious events for upper-class people. By including the word 'Ascot' as an element, this advertisement thus indicates that a person who wears a top hat is a person who intends to look wealthy and upper-class. The myth in this advertisement is embedded within the history of Ascot and depends on the reader to know the history of Ascot in order to naturally read the intended message. Figure 3 is a 2014 cover of the popular culture magazine, *Esquire,* that features a popular British actor, Benedict Cumberbatch. In Figure 3, the top hat is the symbol for class. No explanation or added content is needed, because the myth is read through the history of the top hat ensured by posters and similar historical visual culture publications as 'The Man's Shop Harrods' advertisement.

Figure 2: Hilary Morgan, *The Man's Shop Harrods* poster Advertisement, 1937 (Pictorem 2018).
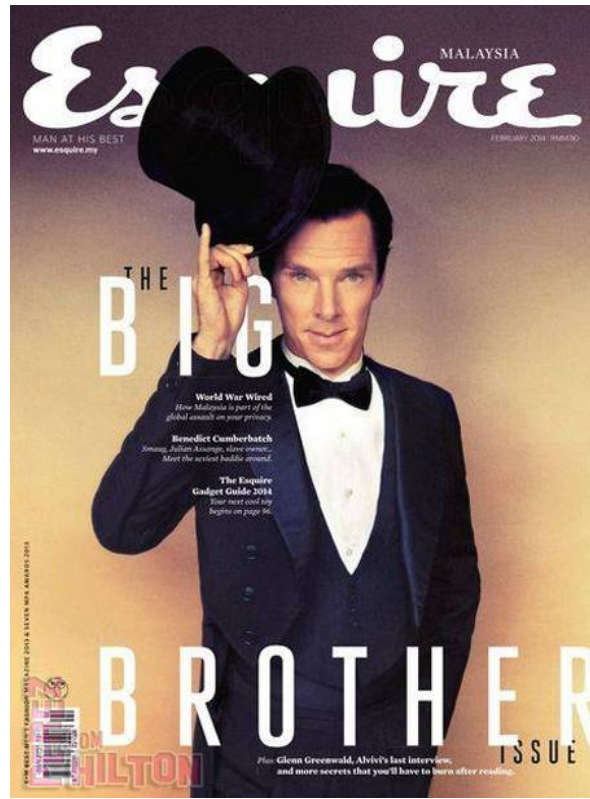
Figure 3: Designer Unknown, Malaysia *Esquire* magazine cover, 2014 (Perezhilton.com 2014).

As mentioned previously, myth is a semiological system. Myth can therefore be studied within a semiological framework. According to Barthes (1991:113), first off, there exists a tri-dimensional pattern within myth. The tri-dimensional pattern that Barthes (1991:113) refers to is the signifier, signified and the sum of the first two terms, the sign. Rose (2001:90), refers to the tri-dimensional pattern as denotation, and suggests that the symbolic meaning of a denotive sign is easily read and understood.

Moreover, myth is a 'second-order semiological system', as it is constructed from an already existing semiological system, which is that of the sign. A second-order semiological system, is a symbolic system that builds on denotive signs (Rose 2001:90). The sign in the first system, becomes a signifier in the second (Barthes 1991:113). Barthes (1991:113) clarifies that the media of mythical speech, such as posters, photography and cinematography, initially has an already existing message, then becomes a pure signifying function as soon as myth is portrayed.

Barthes (1991:108) also explains that in the same way that myth is not defined by the object of a message, myth is also not defined by the media through which the message is delivered. Just like an object has its own meaning separate from myth, the material through which the message is delivered is also a carrier of meanings. Mythical speech relies on material that was created with its own purpose of communication, because it makes use of the messages already embedded within the specific material. Within this process, the tri-dimensional pattern becomes a unified, global sign that forms the first semiological 'chain'. This system can be visualised as myth forcing the first semiological system into unified meaning that will be used in a greater semiological system. The denotative sign, which forms the 'language-object' is shifted to the left. Herein, this system or pattern becomes the signifier within the greater semiological system of myth.

In order to simplify the intricate, second-order semiological system, Barthes (1991:115) created new terminology as illustrated in Figure 4. The first-order semiological system, illustrated in black, is known as the Saussurean sign system or the tri-dimensional pattern. Within this illustration, this system is called the language system. As mentioned, the tri-dimensional system is denotative in nature and fairly easy to understand. Figure 5 is an example of the semiological system. Within this example, the language signifier is a red rose. The red rose is signified by romance; thus, the sign is a red rose of romance. The sign forms one unit consisting of the signifier and the signified. Myth builds onto this unit or semiological system by changing the sign and all its meaning into a new signifier for the second-order semiological system, illustrated in purple (In Figure 4). Barthes (1991:115) calls this new signifier 'form'. Our red rose of romance is thus transformed into a new signifier called form. The signified in the second-order semiological system is called 'content' or 'concept' since the signified forms the concept for the mythic message (Barthes 1991:115). In the example, the red rose of romance is now signified by the abstract concept of love/devotion, thus creating the myth that offering the red rose is a declaration of love. The myth, which is the sign of the second-order semiological system, is called 'signification' (Barthes 1991:115).
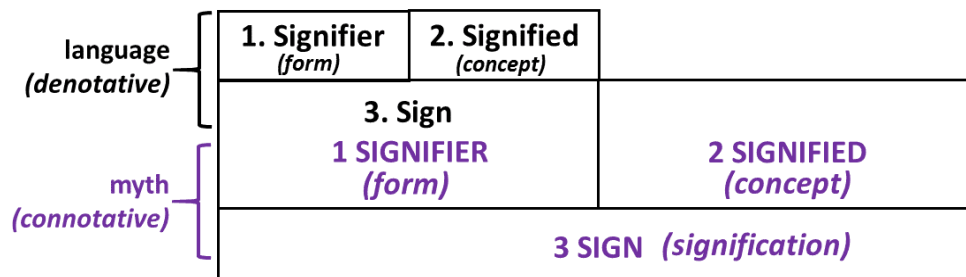
Figure 4: Roland Barthes' Semiological Structure of the myth, 2016 (Particulations 2016).

Figure 5: Barthes' second-order semiological system, undated (Silvertant [sa]).

According to Barthes (1991:116), the signifier in myth (which, as stated already, is the global sign), is at the same time both meaning and form. While it is already embedded with its own meaning (signifier and signified of the language system), myth urges it to convert to form for the sake of becoming a mythic medium. Myth can develop a second-order semiological system from any meaning (Barthes 1991:131). Furthermore, Barthes (1991:116) states that when the signifier becomes form, it becomes regressively improvised and left without history. Form does not discard meaning, but merely alters it by displacing the focus or the value thereof (Barthes 1991:117). The history that is disregarded in form is adopted by the concept. This binding factor between a myth's concept and meaning is a relationship that Barthes (1991:121) calls 'deformation'. According to Barthes (1991:121), the meaning is not only adopted, but also distorted by the concept. Essentially, this ability for the concept to adopt the history of form is the reason why myths exist (Barthes 1991:117). This history, in passing from form to content, loses some information. As such, the meaning behind the myth is deformed. It is not a pure representation of history, but a hint at historical content (Barthes 1991:118). The concept distorts but does not take away meaning; the meaning is merely estranged by the concept (Barthes 1991:117).

The signification in myth, just like the Saussurean sign, is the actual global unit of myth itself. This system is what Rose (2001:82) refers to as a connotative sign system as it comprises a range of higher-level meanings. According to Barthes (1991:120), this is the only part of myth that should be accepted as fact. When looking at the construction of the signification, including both form and concept, it should be noted that no part of myth is unequal to another. All parts of myths are exposed at all time (Barthes 1991:120). Therefore, myth's signification does not hide or draw attention to either form or concept but rather creates a mere variation of the message (Barthes 1991:128).

According to Barthes (1991:124), an important element of myth's signification is motivation. Myth always finds a motivation to be acknowledged. In the Saussurean language system, meaning is unmotivated, as there is no direct connect between the signifier and the signified (Rose 2006:74). This connect between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary (Barthes 1991:124). On the contrary, mythical signification is never arbitrary. Myth is always partly motivated and inevitably contains some sort of analogy between meaning and form (Barthes 1991:124). This analogy between meaning and form is the reason for myth's duplicity. Without motivated form, the myth cannot be recognised and therefore would not exist (Barthes 1991:125). Therefore, form is an analogy of embedded meaning. It stands for the global sign formed by the Saussurean tri-dimensional pattern. According to Barthes (1991:125), motivation is inescapable; mythical signification always finds a way to exist. Barthes (1991:125) exemplifies the instance where seemingly no meaning is present and explains that even in this case, the form will objectify the absence of meaning to become readable. Thereby making disorder, irrationality, surrealism and absence, a myth itself.

Finally, Barthes (1991:126) compares mythical signification to an ideogram. An ideogram is a sign or symbol that represents an idea or a sound (Collins 2017); an example of an ideogram is Japanese lettering or numerals. According to Barthes (1991:126), myth is an ideographic system. Forms are still motivated by the concept presented, yet forms do not represent everything that is capable to represent. Moreover, just as ideographs lose their original meaning, being recognised only for the sound or idea they represent, myths can be recognised by their signification as a whole (Barthes 1991:126).

The example that Barthes (1991) uses to illustrate myth is well-known, therefore this study also makes use of this example to illustrate mythic theory. Figure 6 is the cover of a popular French

magazine, *Paris-Match*, published in the year 1955. Barthes (1972) makes use of this cover throughout his discussion in order to explain myth. Barthes (1991:114) writes in *Mythologies*:

> I am at the barber's, and a copy of Paris-Match is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. I am therefore again faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (a black soldier is giving the French salute); there is a signified (it is here a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); finally, there is a presence of the signified through the signifier.

There are three ways of reading myth. According to Barthes (1991:127), in order to read myth, one must look at the duplicity of the signifier, being both meaning and form. In the first instance of perceiving myth, one must clearly analyse the form of the myth to such extent that the signification becomes literal. In this instance, the focus will be on an empty signifier. In Figure 6, the young saluting soldier represents French Imperialism by becoming a symbol thereof. This type of mythical reading is practiced by a person who produces myth (Barthes 1991:127). With the second instance of perceiving myth, the meaning and form is clearly distinguished. Furthermore, the distortion which is imposed is also identified. In Figure 6, the French soldier becomes the reason for French Imperialism. This type of mythical reading is done by a mythologist who has sufficient knowledge of myth and understands the distortive properties of myth. This person conducts an exclusive mythographic analysis with the intent to demystify myth (Barthes 1991:127). Finally, the third way to read myth is to regard the mythic signifier as a unit encompassing both meaning and form. In this type of mythic reading, the soldier in Figure 6 is not an icon or an alibi of French Imperialism but becomes the presence of French Imperialism itself. In this instance, the mythic reader responds to the very purpose and mechanism of myth to become 'naturalised' meaning (Barthes 1991:127).

The principle of myth is to naturalise meaning, transforming historical content into a natural state. This principle of myth means that mythical speech is read as a reason, instead of as a motive (Barthes 1991:128). When looking at the saluting soldier in Figure 6 again, it seems that the concept was naturally manifested by the image as if the signifier provided a foundation for the signified (Barthes 1991:128). Myth is consumed automatically, because it is not read as a semiological system, but it is read as fact (Barthes 1991:130).

Figure 6: Designer Unknown, Cover of *Paris Match*, 1955 (Boal 2014).

Myth is not only a semiological structure, but myth is also ideological in nature. According to Barthes (1991:10), not only is myth part of semiology, because it is a formal discipline, but myth is also part of ideology as it is deeply rooted in history. In order to understand how myth is part of ideology, one must first understand the definition of ideology. According to Giorgia Aiello (2006:92), ideology can broadly be defined as a collection of constructed meanings that become embedded and accepted in the cultural fabric in such a way that that these meanings become accepted as natural. In his book, *Ideologies*, Terry Eagleton (1991:1) describes ideology as 'text' consisting of different ideas that formed throughout history. Both these definitions are important and relevant as Aiello's (2006:92) definition speaks to the way in which ideologies are normalised in general society, and Eagleton's (1991:1) definition speaks to the historical background of ideologies. Essentially, if we combine both these definitions, an ideology can be defined as a notion consisting of a variety of meanings, rooted in historical contexts. These ideologies are then commonly accepted by societies to such an extent that it becomes normalised and accepted as general knowledge.

Eagleton (1991:18) also states that, for French philosopher, Louis Althusser, ideologies are particular organisations that produce the conditions or lived relations by which people are connected in any given society. Ideologies allude to the way in which we are unconsciously living in a designed social reality. With this statement, Eagleton (1991:18) suggests that ideologies can often be seen as dominant or overarching formations. Ideologies are therefore 'performative' or suggestive in nature. Ideologies persuade people to act upon them, and as such, these ideologies unconsciously guide particular actions of a society to such an extent that societal structuring takes place.

This suggestiveness of ideologies implies that, similar to myth, ideological language holds a form of duplicity. This duplicity can be ascribed to ideological language often being both descriptive, including current conditions, and emotive or connective, relating to lived reality and achievements (Eagleton 1991:19). According to Eagleton (1991:19), Althusser suggests that ideology expresses will, hope or nostalgia over expressing a reality. It does so by often embedding into discourse, which makes it seem that the discourse is accurately describing reality. In combining both 'emotive' language and 'descriptive' notions, an ideology becomes a set of abstract principles that are both subjective and universal. At once, an ideology includes a set of ideas that describe who we are, giving us identity. At the same time, ideology becomes impersonal to the extent that it presents itself as a common fact or a universal truth.

According to Barthes (1991:142), myth's task of normalising historical messages and making the eventuality thereof appear timeless, is exactly the same as that of bourgeois[5] ideological process. For Barthes, the terms myth and ideology are considered interchangeable (Coupe 2006:147). Barthes (1991:142), states that myth is the most appropriate mechanism for ideologies to be embedded into society. Thus, myth is a prominent medium through which ideologies are communicated. Therefore, as stated, myth is not only semiological, but also ideological and the way that myth is perceived is therefore often as a form of ideology.

Furthermore, myth forms the basis of the narratives and notions from which ideological constructs of cultures and societies are derived. According to Joseph Campbell (1960:3), mythical motives are witnessed throughout all cultures, not just in the form of play, such as light-hearted storytelling, but even as revelations being factually accepted by a particular culture to mobilise the meaning and existence of these groups. Campbell (1960:4), further states that a person cannot maintain himself in a culture without believing in some form of mythic construct. As such, myths are concerned with many aspects of a culture and act as social bonding agents since they serve as shared familiar narratives (Rath 2016:89).

One way in which ideologies are lived and accepted in a contemporary society is through popular culture. Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause (1992:10), define popular culture as any event, person or text that has been widely accepted by societies within a micro- or macro-culture. The popular culture of any given society consists of a cornucopia of different texts, events, people and objects that form a whole. Popular culture is all around us and undoubtedly easy to obtain (Nachbar & Lause 1992:2). In order to identify the popular culture of a society one can examine the cultural artefacts that most represent a particular society at a particular time. These artefacts are what Martin Kemp (2011:3) refers to as the 'iconic imagery of an era'. In other words, icons are a form of visual manifestation of the popular culture of a society and these popular culture icons are often made believable and culturally acceptable through the ideologies they portray. As such, ideological myth is embedded and widely accepted in popular culture. Myth is imbued in the books and online articles we read, the movies we watch, the music we listen to and even the political viewpoints we assume.

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[5] Barthes (1991:137,142) refers to bourgeois ideology as the dominant ideology of the capitalist ruling class. The term, bourgeois, has since been embedded in the term 'nation', and has been abandoned as the result of ideological and mythical premise to normalise meaning (Barthes 1991: 137,142)

According to Barthes (1991:142), within an ideological societal construct, myth can be defined as "depoliticised speech". With the term 'political', Barthes (1991:142) refers to human relations within a social structure. As such, myth is essentially socio-political in nature. The prefix 'de-' in depoliticised speech must also be acknowledged as it pertains to the nature of myth to appear neutral. The essence of mythical speech becomes innocent (Barthes 1991:143), so the socio-political factor in myth appears normal and is easily read as factual. The ideological nature of myth urges the mythical perceiver to act upon the myth and, in doing so, forms a persuasive inclination towards the particular socio-political views expressed. A person, depending on their situation within a social structure, is then either for the message expressed or against it.

This concept can be exemplified by looking at the myth of Nelson Mandela, human rights freedom fighter and anti-apartheid leader. Because of Mandela's history and participation in South Africa's anti-apartheid endeavours, Mandela has become a globalised popular icon associated with notions of freedom, peace, justice and anti-apartheid (du Preez 2013:144). It could be argued that the myth of Mandela naturalised the political contexts associated with Mandela, making the associated ideological underpinnings acceptable in a society where societal separation and political turmoil was previously experienced.

2.2   A critical perspective on myth

Although this study argues for the constructive potential of myth, it is important to understand the dominant perspective through which myth is studied. In cultural and visual studies, myth is often seen as an ideological construct in need of demystification. By understanding that myth is more often critiqued than embraced as a social mechanism for change, this study considers both the constructive potential and destructive perspectives on myth as an ideological concept.

Many theorists, including Barthes (1991), believed that myth constitutes a false truth and that by demystifying myth, people will be liberated from the control that myth as ideology has over social structures. Coupe (2009:148) states that Barthes' take on myth is a form of demythologisation inasmuch Barthes proposes that ideology persuades us that cultures are naturally constructed, herein trying to expose myth as 'sinister deception'. Furthermore, Coupe (2009:148) notes that Barthes' take on myth is essentially critical as Barthes' exclaims that myth is captivating and when myth is demystified, one can presumably transcend myth. Throughout popular culture and cultural studies, the term 'myth' is also often used to connote

falseness or lies. According to William Doty (2006:[sa]), popular publications regularly use myth as an idiom when the intention is to discredit customary opinions. For instance, when scrolling on social media it is not uncommon to see titles for blogs such as "50 Anti-Vaccine Myths and Misinformation (Iannelli 2017)" or "5 #UX #lies, damn lies and absolute #myths" (Smith 2012).

According to Sigurd Skirbekk (2005:3), Karl Marx, the founder of the Marxist economic and socialist movement, regarded ideologies as 'social deceptions ruled by social agents'. Since Marxism developed as a way to examine historic, economic and social issues, ideology poses potential harm to the central beliefs of Marxism "as an agent of social change" (Eagleton 1976:551). According to Eagleton (1976:551), Marxist ideological critique delineates ideology as 'definite forms of social consciousness' as it consists of different social aspects such as religion, politics, ethics, etcetera. For Marxists, the function of ideology is to empower the ruling class by legitimising their ideas over those of the working class (Eagleton 1976:555). As a result, Marxist criticism is developed with a specific focus on ideological and mythical narratives and suggests that these narratives should be demystified for social change to develop naturally.

As such, the popular perspective on myth as ideological construct is that myth is destructive due to its subliminal influence on the formation and function of societies. In saying this, it is important to note that many mythic theories regard myth as a negative construct. Since myth is often viewed as being destructive, a popular means of understanding myth is often by deciphering and exposing myth. However, the aspects of myth, such as the influential nature of myth, that make myth seem destructive can also be potentially constructive. The constructive potential of myth is discussed later in this chapter.

2.3   Myth in design practice and discourse

The Swedish Industrial Design Foundation (2018) briefly defines design practice as the process of developing functional and aesthetic solutions based on the needs of the intended user. Design is concerned with the development of goods, services, communication and environments (Swedish Industrial Design Foundation 2018) and is often produced either as form of objects or as organised management systems (Crouch & Pearce 2012: viii). Victor Margolin (1989:236) states in his book, *Design discourse: history, theory and criticism* (1989), that we are surrounded by design insomuch that design is infused in every material object and every immaterial service. Design is in the shoes that we wear, the wayfinding systems that we use to

navigate, the clips we watch on YouTube, and even the operating system we use to search content on the internet. Thus, the intellectual, emotional, visual and physical environment that we live in, is formed and influenced by design objects and processes (Crouch & Pearce (2012: x).

The definition of design is always in flux owing to its ever-questioned position and role in society. According to Richard Buchanan (1990:77), the design profession has experienced a reappearance in the late twentieth-century owing to integration between design and other disciplines. Buchanan (1990:77) states that design is often questioned about its role in society and design's potential for contributing to 'human experience'. Moreover, Buchanan (1990:78) adds that design is an increasingly important profession and that the adoption and acceptance of design thinking could be valuable for design and other disciplines moving forward. However, despite the many renditions of the meaning of design, Buchanan (1990:78) provides a succinct definition of design. According to him, design is concerned with "... the conception and planning of the artificial[6]." (Buchanan 1990:78). Thus, design thinking forms the basis from which all products are formed, whether it is material objects, verbal and visual communications, organised services or 'complex systems or environments' (Buchanan 1990:78). Buchanan (1990:78) adds that basically all definitions of design are variations of this premise, each emphasising the important aspects of the meaning in accordance with different theoretical or philosophical stances from which the definition is discussed.

Design is practiced within many disciplines that range from cybernetics to engineering (Crouch & Pearce 2012: x,1). As such, design practice has extended into a variety of design disciplines including industrial-, graphic-, service-, digital-, communication-, environmental-, educational-, information- and communication design to list a few. According to Crouch and Pearce (2012:2), the unifying factor between the various design disciplines is the social and cultural changes that happen as a result of designing. These transformations that take place as a result of designer's actions are increasing owing to a growing interaction between local and global communities (Crouch & Pearce 2012:2). The designer is also influenced by these changes, as designers work as individual or community members within both a society and a culture (Crouch & Pearce 2012:2). There are distinct differences between a society and a culture as Crouch and Pearce (2012:2) explain:

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[6] Here, Buchanan (1990:78) uses the term "artificial" to refer to anything that is man-made.

A culture is the network of objects and ideas that *communicate meanings* to the members of a particular group of people. A society is a group of people who *live together* within a particular physical territory and who share a sense of identity. Some societies can be very big, others very small, but all share the phenomenon of having attitudes and behaviours characteristic to the group, and shared objects and ways of living (or material practices) that produce a culture of mutually understood meanings and values.

Different societies create different cultural expectations of the designer. The first view of the designer is of someone in a 'planned community' who designs the 'collective environment' for individuals (Crouch & Pearce 2012:3). This view has to do with notions about the production and intention of design. The second view is of the designer who creates material things for individuals who want to personalise their environments. This idea has to do with the material production of objects. As such, the designer works in an 'ecology' that is both ideological and material (Crouch & Pearce 2012:3).

According to Crouch and Pearce (2012:14), designers exist within a social framework and their ideas about design objects, practices and processes take place in a combination of political, social and cultural contexts. Thus, the designer has a subjective view of the world that is objectively influenced and defined by their existing environment (Crouch & Pearce 2012:7). This existing environment, according to Crouch and Pearce (2012:7), is highly institutional and guided by a set of ideas that form the ideological basis of these environments. As such, design is often ideological in nature inasmuch as designers are influenced by the embedded ideological notions that guide these political, social and cultural environments. As a result of the ideological influence on designers, design is embedded in the dominant ideologies of a society.

The ideological nature of design often evokes critical design discussions. One pertinent critique on design is on the way in which popular or 'mainstream' design supports the dominant ideologies of a society. According to Jan van Toorn (in Buwert 2011:12), the automaticity of design results in design increasingly functioning as 'an aesthetic legitimation of the dominant ideology'. This perspective of design is critiqued because of the way in which ideology imposes the idea of a normalised society exclusive of power structures and imposed notions. van Toorn (in Bewert 2011:12) clarifies that design plays an important role in integrating consumers into the "social regulatory mechanisms of the market, politics and services." As such, design enforces and ensures the continuous normalisation of power structures in a society (van Toorn, in Bewert 2011:12). One example of such a power structure is consumerism. Stephen Mayo (1993: 42) explains that labels and brands have 'immense power' in asserting status. Owning

the right brands grants social acceptance, while not owning that brand indicates inadequacy. The alluding argument of ideologies in design based on the abovementioned critique is that design should be used to challenge the dominant ideologies instead of supporting it. According to Buwert (2012:13), designers occupy a powerful, communication-related position in society, and therefore should be increasingly aware of the ideological notions they portray in their work. Designers can either be in denial of the system, or they can work towards accepting and changing the system (Buwert 2012:13).

As mentioned previously, myth forms the basis of the narratives from which ideological constructs of cultures and societies are derived. As such, myth is common in design discourse and is often applied consciously or unconsciously within design practice. Mayo (1993:41) states in his article, *Myth in design* (1993), that we live in a society that is saturated with myth, and design both uses and is strongly influenced by these myths. Because of the ideological social framework in which designers function, myth often forms the narrative basis of stories told by designers to communicate intended messages to their audience. According to Mayo (1993:43), design is concerned with ideas and stories and myth is traditionally conveyed through these stories. Design has a means to make these myths visible and accessible through the design of objects and management systems. In doing so, designers often make use of mythic imagery and texts in their designs to actively communicate certain messages, instructions or ideas. The mythic imagery used by designers consist of signs and icons in the form of text, photography, illustration and even motion graphics. Clive Dilnot (1989: 236) states that design as a practice is embodied in images and objects which exist within and influences various functions within a society, including economic functions, cultural implications and social effects. As such, designers are inexorably involved with the images and signs that form the shared familiar visual narrative from which societies are shaped.

The application of myth in advertisements is one example of the intended presence of myth in design. According to Mayo (1993:42), advertisements are arguably one of the strongest conveyers of myth in traditional societies. Mayo (1993:42) explains that: "Advertising is one of the richest sources available for surveying the state of modern mythology and its truncated form necessitates concentration of symbolism and imagery." Advertorial design is rich in imagery and narrative used by designers to create a specific brand narrative. The images and stories used by designers in advertisements are saturated in intentional and unintentional myth. Moreover, advertisements are placed in magazines, online platforms, social media and more, making advertisements a popular means of communicating to mass audiences.

When it comes to mythical reading, designers take on the role of both the 'mythologist' and the 'mythographer'. The mythologist, according to Barthes (1991:127), is a person concerned with deciphering myth. This person is aware of the way in which myth functions to neutralise meaning. The designer as mythologist researches and deciphers myth in other designs in order to understand how myth functions within designs. A designer thus accepts the role of a mythologist, when regarding myth, in the research section of the design process. In contrast, the mythographer is a writer of myth and functions on the empty signifier in order to create meaning for specific communication purposes (Barthes 1991:127). The designer as mythographer is shaped from the role of the designers as mythologist. After researching and deciphering myth, a designer who intentionally employs myth in the narrative of their design, would do so by making use of an empty signifier to create a specific mythic message for their intended audience.

An example of how designers employ myth in design by taking on the role of both the mythographer and the mythologist when it comes to mythical reading can be seen in Figure 7, a popular Wilkinson Sword advertisement specifically created for Valentine's Day in 2012. The advertisement depicts a large, furry, red heart and a by-line that reads: "Love needs a bit of upkeep". At the bottom of the advertisement is a Wilkinson Sword Hydro 5 logo and a text line that reads: "Have a smooth Valentine's Day". Wilkinson Sword is a shaving brand and Wilkinson Sword Hydro 5 is the name of a shaver that was released around the time in which the advertisement was published. The audience of the intended advertisement would have read the myth in its neutralised form: love equals having a beautiful appearance, and in this advertisement, a beautiful appearance means having a shaved body instead.

In this example, the designer as mythologist, is aware of the myths portrayed in this advertisement and intends to decipher the myth. This designer would identify in the *Wilkinson Sword* advertisement that love is one myth portrayed in this advertisement and the myth of love is read through the red heart that symbolises love through meaning and form. The designer who created the advertisement fills the role of the mythographer. This designer used the red heart symbolising the myth of love and added another layer of meaning which is that unshaven 'love', depicted by the red heart with hair, is not as attractive as shaven love, which would have been depicted as a normal read heart icon. In doing so the mythographer used an iconic image that already symbolises an existing myth to portray a second myth: love equals a smooth-shaven body.

Figure 7: Designer Unknown, *Wilkinson Sword* Valentine's Day Advertisement, 2012 (Macleod 2012).

Myth in design practice is often criticised in design discourse. According to Coupe (2009:13), 'myth criticism' and mythography are inseparable terms. When a designer takes on the role as mythographer or mythologist, designers essentially participate in the act of deconstructing myth. Therefore, the occurrence of myth in design practice is often criticised. One particular example is the myth of modernism. Essentially, the myth of modernism is that modernist aesthetics and discourse are the best way to do 'good design', implying that modernist aesthetic is superior to non-modernist idioms (Michl 2014:37). According to Paul Greenhalgh (1990:2), the Modernist movement can ideologically be described as a set of ideas of how design can "transform human consciousness and improve material conditions." Within the design world, modernism often refers to an aesthetic style. Modernist aesthetics are focused on minimalism, sans serif typefaces, clean aesthetics and objective nature. Modernism in design narrative is concerned with simple, intelligent ideas and as little written information as possible. Kal Raustiala and Christopher Sprigman (2012:6) state that Helvetica is one of the most popular fonts in the world and is "emblematic of typographic modernism" and that "[i]t's no surprise to see a variant of Helvetica – Helvetica Neue Light - in use on Apple's iPod, for example. The font fits the marketing message that Apple wants to send: clean and cool" (Raustiala & Springman 2012:6).

According to Jan Michl (2014:36), the modernist visual idiom has become increasing popular to the point where the word 'design' symbolises the modernist minimalist aesthetic. However, Michl (2014:36) adds that the success of the modernist idiom is problematic. Michl (2014:37-38) explains his critique on modernism in design by firstly stating that modernism is essentially a monopolist ideology as the 'absent aesthetic unity' of modernist style is based on past epochs' elite ideals of wealth. Furthermore, Modernists choose to ignore different styles and aesthetic idioms that essentially represent the aesthetic preference of the majority of the common and rising society (Michl 2014: 39). However, despite the critique on the myth of modernism in design, the modernist movement in design has also had a positive impact on societies. The modern movement, according to Greenhalg (1990:6), is characterised by social morality, truth, technology, function, progress, anti-historicism, internationalism and "transformation of consciousness". It can be argued that, for many people, the embedded notions of the modern movement presented a positive set of ideals to believe in. Hence, through the application of modernist style in advertisements, posters and other means of mass communication, a society is reminded to perform in ways that would match beliefs such as progression, truth, social morality, etcetera.

2.4   A contrasting notion: constructive myths

From the exploration of the nature of myth thus far in Chapter Two, it is clear that myth is often studied from a critical perspective. As mentioned previously in this chapter, mythic theory in visual and cultural studies is generally viewed as negative, deceiving and in need in demystification in exchange for 'truth'. However, it can be argued that myths may have constructive potential in social and socio-political environments, especially if these environments can be improved by societal change.

Ideological myth can be highly persuasive as myth neutralises meaning while simultaneously building on the innate values and beliefs of a society, thus making the meaning of a message easily consumable for these societies. This neutrality of myth is an important characteristic of myth which makes mythic narrative a highly effective tool for persuasion in communication design. An audience of a communication design would view a design, unintentionally reading embedded mythical narratives, and as such consuming and being influenced by these messages. This type of persuasion in communication is often seen as deceptive as the audience is unwillingly required to read the mythic message, and in turn the audience is reluctantly influenced by a message.

However, mythical messages in design may also be positive and as such, can have a positive and even a persuasive effect on an audience. According to Mayo (1993:50), not all myths are destructive. In fact, there is a symbiotic relationship between myth, design and society. By making mythic narrative accessible to the audience, and thus tangible, a mythic narrative can affect a person's thought patterns, actions and behaviours. As such, myth does not only reflect our past and present, myth can also guide the actions that determine our future (Mayo 1993:50).

One arguable example of constructive myth in a social (and commercial) context is the myth of *real beauty* communicated by the well-known cosmetic brand, Dove. According to Meredith Nash (2013), Dove released a campaign focussed on the myth of *real beauty* reflecting Dove's philosophy that *real beauty* is "inclusive, attainable and rooted in taking good care of one's self." In Dove's *real beauty* campaign, Dove challenges the dominant beauty standards based on 'thinness, whiteness and perfection' by featuring women and girls varying in age and body type in their advertisements (Nash 2013). The myth of *real beauty* essentially means that previous conceptions of beauty (based on thinness, whiteness and perfection) are false and that *real beauty* is attainable by just taking care of oneself. The intent of this myth is to empower women to challenge norms of beauty raised by the beauty industry. The myth of *real beauty* is based on

strong consumer values and beliefs surrounding feminism, and bodily ideals. Consumers reading the myth of *real beauty* are confronted with a message that challenges them to re-evaluate unrealistic, ideal ideologies posed by the beauty industry. As such, the myth of *real beauty* acts as constructive myth by persuading the audience to act upon the myth of *real beauty* in a constructive way by accepting the myth and accepting the reality of *real beauty*, in return achieving 'self-acceptance' and 'positive body image' (Nash 2013). It can of course be argued that Dove's *real beauty* myth is constructed for commercial gain and not just social good. The extended message that can be read into Dove's myth of *real beauty* is that caring for one self is done by purchasing and using Dove's products (Nash 2013). However, even if this is the case, the myth of *real beauty* still promotes positive change through the embrace of the myth and the acceptance of the mythic message.

It can be further argued that myth has specific constructive potential in social-political contexts. According to Matti Megged (1985:211), in his introductory journal article of *Myth in contemporary life* (1985), by taking into consideration various, even opposing, opinions about myth, it can be argued that some basic needs such as racial equality may be satisfied by the existence and application of myths. Essentially, the collective embrace of myth, as an ideological construct, has the potential to bring about change in societies where racial separation, oppression or other such socio-political scenarios exist. According to William Form and Nico Wilterdink (2017), social change is the change of mechanisms within a social structure (such as a community or society) that can be characterised by changes in cultural symbols, behavioural rules, social organisations or values systems. Moreover, social change is incited by ideological, economic and social movements (Form & Wilterdink 2017). As such, ideological myth arguably has the potential to influence societal change. This change can be either destructive or constructive, depending on the content of the mythical message and the ideology (or ideologies) embedded in the myth.

The collective embrace of myth, and as such the potential influence of myth on societal change, is dependent on the ideologies portrayed by myths. According to Form and Wilterdink (2017), ideologies or 'ideas' are one of the significant reasons for societal change. New ideologies or changed ideas can bring about significant changes in societies' actions. Myths influence cultures and societies through shared ideologies based on beliefs and values of individuals in a society. Shared ideologies form the basis of cultures and societies. According to Timothy Quinlan (2016:1), "myth is central to the development of culture in all its manifestations...". Myth conveys the dominant ideologies that act as structural pillars within a society. These deep-

rooted ideologies are persuasive in nature, and thus, people act upon these ideologies. As such, decisions and actions form the basis of the culture or society. Hence, if societal actions are based on constructive ideological myths, these myths can bring about constructive societal changes.

Many scenarios exist where the embrace of myth has in some way constructively influenced positive societal change, including the Enlightenment movement of the seventeenth century that evolved the concept of progress that later influenced anthropologist Lewis Henry and economist Karl Marx, two distinct initiators of pronounced societal change (Form & Wilterdink 2017). Another arguable example of how myth had a constructive influence within a socio-political environment is the myth of *change* in the Canadian Quiet Revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) during the 1960s.

According to Dominique Milette and René Durocher (2017), the Quiet Revolution was a political revolution that called for change from dominant conservative ideologies based on francophone societal ideals to progressive and modernised means of government. Milette and Durocher (2017) further state that, the Quiet Revolution resulted in a "period of rapid social and political change experienced in Québec during the 1960s". In the 1960s, Québec was under the governance of the Union *Nationale* party which held to an "anachronistic" and conservative ideology which defended "dated traditional values" (Milette & Durocher 2017). The Québec Liberal Party led under Jean Lesage, aimed to reform the ideologies instituted by the Union *Nationale* Party. In order to reform the ideologies of the Union Party, Lesage instituted opposing ideas based on new ideologies that promoted change, enforced by the party slogan "It's time for a change." (Milette and Durocher 2017). The myth of change, based on the ideologies instituted by Lasage, was widely accepted by English-speaking Québecers as the rising middle class called for control over Québec's economic resources by divisive attempts to reform the role of the French society in Canada at the time (Milette & Durocher 2017). The myth of change resulted in the policy of official French and English bilingualism that improved federal-provincial relations and encouraged national participation of both English and French speaking people in national institutions (Milette & Durocher 2017). Furthermore, the governance of the Québec Liberal party based on the myth of change ensured a renewed Constitution in 1969 which included a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that protected individual rights of both official linguistic communities (Milette & Durocher 2017). According to Milette and Durocher (2017), the Quiet Revolution is a significant point of reference used by successive Québec governments to distinguish between a previous 'old-guard' socio-political system and

the progressive 'post-Revolutionary' paradigm. It can thus be argued that the myth of change, based on ideologies of progression that embedded the leading values and beliefs of the time, influenced the people of Québec to act upon the myth of change by accepting the myth and voting the Liberal Party into order, ensuing progressive social and political change in Québec.

Naturally, it can be argued that constructive change is subjective. What seems constructive and progressive to one party experiencing social-political change, might not seem positive to another party experiencing the same socio-political change. According to Amanda Diekman and Wind Goodfriend (2007:401), substantive social change inherently causes a disruption of the status quo. The disruption of the status quo often results in individuals, motivated to preserve the current social systems to such an extent that even social change initiated for positive outcome may evoke ambivalent reactions. Diekman and Goodfriend (2007:402) explain that system justification theory posits that individuals often have a strong motivation to justify the current state of their society, even when the current status quo is harmful to the individuals. It is therefore important to acknowledge that this study argues that myth has the potential to act as a constructive force, acting through the influence of societal change in societies that may experience socio-political turmoil. As such, this study maintains that constructive and positive change pertains to change that is initiated for positive outcome, and that the positivity of the outcome of the change is subjective to the audience who perceives these changes.

It can thus be argued that myths may act as constructive forces in societies by influencing the people in societies and communities to change their ideological standpoints by acting on their beliefs and values which are embedded in myth. These changes can be positive and constructive if the ideologies embedded in constructive myths encourage the individuals and groups of a community or society to act upon changing negative behaviours, thus ensuing progressive positive societal change.

2.5   Conclusion

In Chapter Two, specific information on myth was investigated and discussed, all of which provide an understanding of what myth is; how myth functions; how myth is perceived; how myth fits into design discourse and practice; and why this paper argues that myth may also be seen as constructive. The greater purpose of Chapter Two was to provide context, information and examples of myth and to situate myth within design discourse in order to essentially discuss and support why this paper views myth as a constructive force for progressive societal change.

From the critical discussion in Chapter Two, it is clear that myth has a remarkable influence on the way that people perceive the general visual landscape in which they live. Moreover, myth acts as a powerful force that, through neutralised speech, can influence the way that people function within their cultures and societies. In saying this, this impact that myth has on societies, is often criticised as being deceitful, but can also have a constructive influence on societies in need of socio-political change. When positive myth is actively applied within design, myth can influence people to change their behaviour and act towards positive societal change.

The next chapter, Chapter Three, is a continuation on the broader topic of myth discussed in this chapter. Chapter Three will focus on the designer's role in myth-making and the poster as vehicle through which designers can effectively communicate myths for different intents and purposes.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGNERS AS MYTH-MAKERS AND POSTERS AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL MYTH-MAKING

As argued in Chapter Two, myth can also be considered as having constructive potential. Chapter Three is a continuation on the discussion on myth. Therefore, Chapter Three firstly discusses the concept of *mythopoeisis*, the act of myth-making, in order to identify how myth and mythical narratives are 'created', changed and reformed to fit the needs of societies. Thereafter, this chapter focuses on the designer as an agent in the process of myth-making. In Chapter Two, it was already identified that myth is common in design practice, and that designers use mythic messages to communicate specific ideas. Hence, Chapter Three considers the designer as an agent in the myth-making process, actively participating in the act of *mythopoeisis*, thereby adapting myths for communication purposes. Moreover, this chapter investigates how designers can constructively use myth in socially conscious designs when considering that design is used for purposes of social change.

The second part of Chapter Three investigates the poster as a particular medium through which mythic messages can be communicated. To this end, Chapter Three provides a brief introduction to posters to determine why posters act as effective communication devices. Thereafter, Chapter Three investigates the poster in light of political propaganda to demonstrate how posters act as vehicles that effectively convey ideological and mythic messages. Lastly, Chapter Three briefly studies and discusses the significance of posters, as traditional print media, in a contemporary era to discuss the relevance of posters in an increasingly digital epoch.

3.1   The designer as mythographer in the act of designing for social good

The first section of this chapter focuses on the role of the designer in light of myth-making and adapting myth for specific visual communication purposes. This study argues that designers do not only function within a society, but that designers are active role-players in the forming of myth, values and beliefs. Moreover, designers actively participate in societal reform by means of public communication of specific ideas, most of which, containing highly influential mythical messages. As such, designers can effectively use myth as a highly influential and constructive tool when considering socially conscious design.

3.1.1 An introduction to mythopoeisis, the act of myth-making

As discussed in Chapter Two, myth is a communication system consistent with etymology (Barthes 1991:107). Etymology, briefly defined, is a linguistic discipline concerned with "the

origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history" (Oxford University Press 2018). Therefore, it can be deduced that the concept of *mythopoeisis* is inextricably linked to literary studies. According to Alan Kazlev (2010:1), in his article *Mythopoeisis in the modern world* (2010), the word *mythopoeisis* is derived from the Hellenistic Greek, meaning "myth-making". *Mythopoeia,* a variation on the word *mythopoeisis*, was originally used by linguist and fantasy writer, JRR Tolkien in the 1930s and has since been used by many other linguists and theorists writing on the topic of myth (Kaslev 2010:1). *Mythopoeia*, according to Coupe (2009:14), is a term referring to "the making of myths". Kaslev (2010:1,2) adds that, fundamentally, myth-making is storytelling and therefore *mythopoeisis* is the act of making myths through imagination.

According to Kaslev (2010:2), *mythopoeisis* has to do with both imagination and reason. Kaslev (2010:2) explains that people have generally resorted to two approaches in creating narratives by which reality can be understood: imagination and rationalism, also known as *mythos* and *logos* respectively. *Mythos* and *logos* are two terms that often overlap but are polarities of each other (Kaslev 2010:2). Kaslev (2010:2) explains that the concepts of *mythos* and *logos* are essential to human understanding, and function in relation to a person's ego-consciousness. On the one side, *mythos* relates to subjective themes appropriated through imagination. *Mythos* is represented by concepts such as art, religion, ideology and magic. The latter, *logos*, is lived through realism or reason and relates to objective themes. *Logos* is represented by concepts such as science, history and scepticism. Both *mythos* and *logos*, imagination and rationalism, are necessary for human understanding and should thus be seen as equally important in the process of myth-making. In other words, the creation of myth depends on both reality and imagination. On the one side, myth is embedded with ideological notions, which forms the non-physical *mythos*. On the other side, myth has realistically to do with people and history, forming the *logos* side of understanding. As such, in order to create or adapt sustainable myths, the myth-maker/writer/storyteller/mythographer needs to consider that myth will only be understood and read appropriately when it consists of ideologies, informed by human history.

The adaptability of myth or the concept of myth-making becomes feasible when considering mythic narratives as part of an ever-changing socio-cultural sphere. According to Barbara Emanuel (2010:19), societies and the conventions based on those societies are immutable and constantly change according to factors such as technology and cultural beliefs. As cultures and societies modernise, the ideologies and ideas essential to the socio-cultural environment adapt to fit the needs and behaviours of the society. As a result, mythic narratives have to be

constantly reinvented and adjusted to stay applicable to the most recent historical and socio-political forms (Kaslev 2010:15). Therefore, myths, even if historical in nature, are according to Kaslev (2010:16), "... not static representations of changeless Platonic truths...", but rather ever-changing socio-cultural representations of made up realities that influence the actions of individuals and societies.

One example of mythical narrative that has experienced changing meaning over time is the so-called 'green' myth. According to Houze (2016:8), there are many associations with the colour green. The colour green is often linked to concepts such as freshness, nature and sustainable living. Emerald green and the American green dollar are associated with richness and luxury. Moreover, the colour green is often associated with political, social and environmental change (Houze 2016:8). However, these associations with green are newfound. Green, according to Houze (2016:8) is originally read in history and folklore as the colour of sickness, poison and envy. One adaption of the mythical narrative surrounding the colour green was sparked in the second half of the twentieth century by environmentalists' reactions to oil industries' destructive practices (Houze 2016:8). The environmentalists' reaction called for a new legislation and focus on protecting the planet Earth. Companies like British Petroleum reacted to these movements by the inclusion of the colour green and natural elements in their logo (Figure 8) to show their awareness of the situation and their promise for environmental change (Houze 2016:8).

Figure 8: Landor, BP Logo, 2000 (Logo Design Love 2010).

Another noteworthy instance where the myth of green has previously been employed is in socio-politics. In 2009 for example, Iran experienced a dramatic change in their socio-political environment when protests ensued by supporters of reformist coalition 'Green Path of Hope', led by Mir-Houssein Mousavi, in demand for the conservative Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad votes to be withdrawn. The Green Path of Hope adopted the colour green in their posters, signs and scarves, calling for a "Green Revolution" defined by "peace and democracy" (Houze 2016:8). These movements sparked by environmental and socio-political change has since caused a redefinition of the mythical narratives associated with the colour green. Today the word and the colour green are widely adopted by companies to connote environmentally-friendly policies and to advocate the political ideological notions of progression, change and peace associated with the colour green (Houze 2016:8).

Myths adapt to the needs of societies and the needs of societies are constantly changing owing to human progression. Myths are therefore adaptable and ever-changing. However, some mythic theorists believe that myth cannot be created, but only be adapted from existing myths. Sarah Beach (1983:27) argues that people who participate in the act of *mythopoeisis* are merely "sub-creators" and that the act of *mythopoesis* takes form by means of "derivation". According to Beach (1983:27), there will always be a limited number of stories, but that these stories are told through infinite tales derived from limited core concepts. Similarly, it is suggested that myth works in the same derivative way: a limited number of myths exist, but countless new mythic narratives can be derived from existing myths.

These limited myths mentioned above are known as mythic archetypes. According to Carl Jung (1963:97) in his essay, *The psychology of the child-archetype*, certain mythological motifs exists, and human stories are universally based on these motifs. These motifs, also called 'primordial images' and 'types' are best known as '*archetypes*', as named by Jung (1963:100). Mythic archetypes are independent of any culture, religions and traditions and are, consequently, "myth-forming" structural elements found in the "unconscious psyche" (Jung 1963:99). Jung (1963:101) also explains that myths are not invented, but that all myths expand from these mythic archetypes by stating that "[t]he primitive mentality does not invent *myths*, it *experiences* them. Myths are original revelations of the pre-conscious psyche..." and that "archetypal content is always expressing...*Figure of speech*." (Jung 1963:105). Coupe (2009:3) suggests that the four archetypes of myth are: 'fertility myth', 'creation myth', 'deliverance myth' and the 'hero myth'. These four archetypes, according to Coupe (2009:4) form the basis

of all legitimate mythic narratives which humans use as *mythopoeic* devices that form a fundamental part of our understanding of the world.

The first of the four mythic archetypes, fertility myth, is commonly associated with themes regarding vegetation, nature, birth, reproduction, women, children, growth, ritual, and gods (Coupe 2009:2,6,7). The fertility myth is considered to be a foundational myth since many mythic narratives deriving from the fertility myth are focused on origin and foundations of "actual realities" (Coupe 2009:9). Female deities such as Isis, the Egyptian goddess of motherhood and fertility, and Venus, the Roman mother goddess are typical examples of myths that expand from the fertility archetype (Burns 2017).

The second mythic archetype, the creation myth, is also considered to be a foundational myth (Coupe 2009:9). The creation myth is coupled with themes such as cosmology (Coupe 2009:5), origin, primitivism and creation. According to Charles Long (2016), the creation myth serves as a basis for humans to orient their place in the universe. The most common example of a creation myth is the 'cosmogonic' myth which is the myth of the origin of the world (Long 2016). The essence of the cosmogonic myth is that the world (Earth) we live on was created by a god, from an ultimate source or through natural means (Long 2016). According to Coupe (2009:48), "[t]he creation paradigm gives us the idea of facing up to primordial chaos, manifest in the absurdity of repetition, and so beginning life anew, as if from the very moment in which the universe began".

Moreover, the deliverance myth is a progressive myth involving "crucial choice and commitment" and promises "absolute redemption" (Coupe 2009:63). Coupe (2009:63) states that both Christian revelation and Marxism are deliverance myths since both myths are based on beliefs of sacrifice and commitment for redemption. The last of the archetypes, the hero myth, is often seen in popular culture. The hero myth is associated with notions of heroism, wisdom, power and protection. According to Coupe (2009:48), the hero paradigm is about a human protagonist acting with 'superhuman' abilities or power. The hero is often seen as a 'noble warrior' or 'king' and his business is aiding cities by facing death and troubling situations (Coupe 2009:94). Popular examples of mythic narratives based on the hero myth include main characters such as Neo from science-fiction film *The Matrix* (1999), and Luke Skywalker from episodes of the *Star Wars* (1977) film series.

At this point it should be evident, and therefore worth noting, that *mythopoeisis*, similar to myth, is not bound by literature and verbal discourse alone, but can also be manifested visually. According to Harry Slochower (1970:26), the late twentieth-century saw an increase in literary critique on the depth of content that literature can portray. At the same time, the art sphere experienced an increase of interest from psychologists and mythic theorists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Slochower (1970:26) explains that the interest with 'unconscious motivation' in art was constituted by the Renaissance notion of the 'free individual' who determines his own destiny. Other art forms such as impressionism and surrealism influenced form and poetry from the "logic and syntax of grammar" (Slochower 1970:27). Since then, the act of myth-making has extended beyond the bounds of literature and poetry and can be seen in all forms of modern visual artefacts such as posters, cinema, digital art, magazine publications and many more.

3.1.2 Designers as agents in the process of myth-making

Linguists, storytellers and fiction writers are often viewed as the authors of myth, as the concept of *mythopoeisis* is usually studied within the context of literature. Obvious examples of *mythopoeia*, such as the ubiquitous works of novelist JK Rowling, feature in popular culture and summons literary authors to mind when considering the makers of myth. Public figures such as Kurt Vonnegut (in Allen 2013) ascertain the involvement of writers in the process of myth-making by stating in an interview on Readers' Almanac that: "...writers are not marginal to our society, that they, in fact, do all our thinking for us, that [writers] are writing myths and [writers'] myths are believed, and that old myths are believed until someone writes a new one...". Yet, since the concept of myth-making expands beyond the sphere of linguistics, literary authors are not the only parties involved in the writing and communication of myth, whether fictional or informative. As such, nowadays mythic narratives are conveyed by a range of creative professionals who employ multi-modal channels of communication.

Following from the above, it can be argued that *designers*, and specifically communication designers are seminal role-players in the process of myth-making. The definition of communication design is an indication of the type of involvement that designers may have in the process of myth-making. In defining communication design, Jorge Frascara (2004:2) states:

> Visual communication design, seen as an activity, is the action of conceiving, programming, projecting, and realizing visual communications that are usually produced through industrial means and are aimed at broadcasting specific messages to specific sectors of the public.

As such, a visual communication designer, according to Frascara (2004:3), "works on the interpretation, organization, and visual presentation of messages." and that communication design "beyond cosmetics, has to do with the planning and structuring, production, and evaluation of communications". The intention of the communication designer is to influence the audience's knowledge, attitudes and ultimately their behaviours towards an intended direction (Frascara 2004:2). In other words, the act of visual communication design is the formation of messages conveyed to a specific audience with the purpose of changing the values and beliefs of that audience to ultimately bring about behavioural and social change.

Essentially, from the definition of communication design, it can be deducted that designers are involved in the formation of messages. These messages are portrayed with the intention of changing an audience's perceptions, behaviours and social actions, and as such these messages have to be highly influential. Moreover, these messages deal with the values and beliefs of the intended audience. One way through which designers can have an impact on the beliefs of their audience is through the inclusion of ideas and stories, and myth is conveyed through these stories (Mayo 1993:43). In making and adapting meaning, it can be argued that designers actively partake in *mythopoeisis* in order to effectively communicate with their intended audience.

A graphic design product, such as a poster, is one way through which visual communication designers portray intended mythic messages (Frascara 2004:2). These mythic messages are made visually accessible through the use of specific design elements such as image/s, text and icons in a designers' layout. The design elements used in communication designs are crucial to the success of a design since they are the means by which the audience reads an intended message. According to Emanuel (2010:11), "[t]he choices graphic designers make while designing a piece – compositions, typefaces, images, styles, and so on – affect the way viewers understand [the design]". The selected design elements simultaneously draw attention to the design, informs the audience and persuades the audience to act on the intended mythic message. Furthermore, these design elements are the means by which designers shape meaning in their designs (Emanuel 2010:5).

Leslie Atzmon (2011:xiv) writes in *Introduction: visual rhetoric and the special eloquence of design artefacts* that the design objects a designer chooses to incorporate into their design can be highly influential as they fulfil a rhetorical function. According to Atzmon (2011: xiii, xiv), "[w]hen we consider rhetoric, we tend to think of verbal or visual messages that have a tactical

persuasive objective – a speech that wants to convince us to vote for someone or an ad that tries to persuade us to buy a particular product". Atzmon (2011: xiv) adds that there is an even deeper level of persuasion that has to do with persuasion of ideologies and worldviews. This deeper level of persuasion through rhetoric is essentially dependant on myth since myth is an ingredient in the success of a rhetorical message. Myth, according to Daniel Smith (2005), is a key *form* of rhetoric. As such, mythic narrative, as rhetoric, acts as a highly influential device in design communication. The embedded ideological notions in myth essentially form the basis of persuasion in rhetoric since the audience reads the mythical narrative and may accept the ideologies as truth. Atzmon (2001: xiv) therefore states that design artefacts are particularly effective on both levels of persuasion in that they offer "communicative data" that convey a variety of cultural themes and ideologies. As such, "design artifacts are involved in the generation and proliferation of cultural belief systems." (Atzmon 2001: xiv). This means that the use of myth as rhetorical device in a design is essential to the success of conveying a newfound idea as it persuades the audience of the intended message.

A variety of rhetorical devices exist through which designers can create persuasive meaning in their designs. For example, some basic rhetorical devices include colour, typography reduction, consistency, image, subject, proximity, similarity and composition (Emanuel 2010:7). Each of these elements play an important role in the formation of meaning and is in their own way essential to the way in which an audience reads the intended message of a design. For instance, proximity in a design means that objects are read as a group, and in a layout, objects in a group are often perceived as being close in meaning. For instance, photos of individuals placed in a group means that the audience will generally perceive the individuals in the photos as having something in common with one another (Emanuel 2010:152). Therefore, designers as myth-makers need to carefully consider how the elements used in their design impact the message they wish to communicate.

One example of the use of myth as a rhetorical device in design is the myth of *hope* in former United States president, Barack Obama's 2008 political campaign. The visual identity of Obama's 2008 campaign is one of the most iconic and effective sets of identities created for political purpose (Arnon 2017). The logo used in the campaign is deemed highly influential and was specifically designed to convey the myth of *hope*. Moreover, the Obama'08 logo (Figure 9), through the process of myth-making, had a secondary purpose of connecting the notion of hope with Barack Obama in order for people to consider that Obama brings hope to the United States of America, and subsequently vote for Obama in presidential elections. According to

Lauren Nelson (2016) the Obama '08 logo served as a "socially influential design" that, opposed to previous block construction political logos, feature modern and clean aesthetics which aligned with the tone of Obama's campaign at the time. Another obvious association with the logo, according to Bobby Calder (in Arnon 2017), is the theme of American patriotism brought about by the use of red, white and blue colours and repeated red and white bands featured in the American flag.

The denotative association with the Obama '08 logo is with themes of modernism (and all the related cues such as progression associated with modernism) and American patriotism. The connotative association, however is concerned with the myth of hope, brought about by certain imagery used in the logo. According to Carol Cox (in Arnon 2017), the Obama logo is a mandala, which is a symbolic form used in cultures to represent the completion of a cultural cycle. The cycle of a culture, however has different levels of completion and each level can be visually manifested through imagery, and specifically mandalas (Cox in Arnon 2017). Cox (in Arnon 2017), further explains that the Obama logo "...symbolized by a circle that has been split into two halves, is an archetypal state of consciousness that has to do with the beginning of the hero's journey. It is a time when tension is felt between two opposing forces; the idea behind this is to confront opposites, to do battle with the shadow forces, and to strive for something better." In this case, the battle is between Obama and his political oppositions. Furthermore, the repeated bands at the bottom of the two halves visually represent a landscape that can be read as good fortune for a county, a hill that can be metaphorically ascended for progress, and a feeling of predictability brought about by repetition, which subconsciously reminds the reader of protection (Cox, in Arnon 2017).

Moreover, the sun rising on the horizon line formed by the white space in the logo represents "...the beginning of the resolution of conflict. It speaks of idealism and change and heralds the new" which symbolises themes of hope and transformation (Cox in Arnon 2017). At this stage of the cycle, the hero's journey is fulfilled and according to Cox (in Arnon 2017), the hero in this interpretation is Barack Obama which is made obvious by the connection with Obama's surname at the bottom of the logo. Thus, the final, overall myth depicted by the logo is that "[t]here is hope on the horizon. And that hope is Obama". The myth of hope depicted by symbolic imagery in the logo, thus featured as an instrumental form for of rhetoric in the Barack Obama presidential campaign. Moreover, the myth of *hope* associated with Obama, through the act of myth-making, became an adapted myth which can now be read as the myth of Obama, a hero who has come to stand for hope.

Figure 9: Sol Sender, Obama '08 Logo, 2008 (Nelson 2016).

The way in which mythic messages are read also plays an important role in the effectiveness of a designs' communication. Similar to the way in which writers tell stories, design also communicates through narrative. The narrative of designs, however, unfold differently from the narratives in written text. According to Atzmon (2011:xiv), design narratives typically consist of layered and interconnected meanings that are read holistically as *gestalt*[7] instead of sequentially as in written narrative. A design narrative is only successful when the meanings conveyed by the design elements tell a collective story.

Designers are not solely responsible for the recreation of myths, as myths are multimodal and can be conveyed in many ways other than using visual language. Moreover, design as a discipline is multifaceted and therefore depends on input from various other disciplines and influencers, including the audience for whom these designs are intended. According to Frascara (2004:3), designers often require contributions from photographers, illustrators, animators, programmers, typographers, draftsmen, and professionals outside the design profession. In some cases, the interdisciplinary mode of design means that the designer accepts the role of coordinator (Frascara 2004:4) in the design project but is not solely responsible for the total formation of visual information conveying mythical narratives. As such, designers can be seen as *agents* in the process of myth-making, whereby the designer often becomes a channel of communication, conveying messages through their designs. Furthermore, owing to the complex

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[7] *Gestalt,* a German word, can be defined as something that forms a whole or complete unit, and moreover, possesses the quality to be perceived as more than the sum of its parts (Cambridge Dictionary 2018)

and fluid nature of communication, lines between the mythic conveyer (such as a designer) and the mythic reader (such as the audience) are distorted.

Furthermore, societies evolve; they become modernised and expand owing to globalisation and cross-disciplinary tendencies. This societal movement complicates the relationship between the mythic conveyer and the mythic reader, thereby making it difficult to determine the origin of a message at times. According to Sabina D'Silva (2017), there has been a cultural shift from "sermonisation" to "mass dissemination"; this means that in the past information was passed from an individual to a small group. With the rise of mass media, however, we experience an increase in mass generation and dissemination of information, meaning that the origination of information becomes progressively vague as the sender and receiver of information are unaware of each other (D'Silva 2017). Frascara (2004:5) supports the view that designers are often not the source of the messages communicated. Here the relationship between the client and designer comes into play. Often, the designer ensues anonymity to uphold direct communication between the clients and the audience (Frascara 2004:5). Owing to the distance between the designer and the audience, the designer is not present at the time that the mythic narrative is read, therefore, the interpretation of mythic messages is dependent on the beliefs and values that form the opinions of the audience.

The audience, then, plays an important role in understanding the design narrative. Designers constantly make choices about the formal and material qualities of their designs based on the content they want to communicate and their intention of communicating. However, designers also need to be sure that the meaning generated by the design artefacts are clearly understood by the intended audience (Atzmon 2011:xv), since the success of a design depends on the understanding of the audience (Emanuel 2010:17). According to Ann Tyler (1992:21), there is a relationship between the audience and the communication process. During the design process the purpose of the designer is to persuade the audience to act on their designs by either accepting the provided values or rejecting the values portrayed through the design (Tyler 1992:21).

Furthermore, Audrey Bennett (2002:63) argues that the rise of globalisation, e-commerce, electronic communication and internet accessibility in more parts of the world has caused a disconnect between the designer and the audience and that the designers should not assume that they have the same relation to the visual landscape as their audience. Bennett (2002:63) explains that, in the past, designers used to communicate to an audience who generally had the same

beliefs and socio-cultural understandings, but as technology evolves and societies become more multi-cultural, designers are experiencing a greater disconnect from their audience. Bennett (2002:63) proposes that designers should add a testing phase, also known in other disciplines such as engineering and computer sciences as prototyping, before communicating to the public, thereby involving the audience in the formation of meaning of the intended message. In this sense, the audience propose their own meanings and values for the designs, making the information, and essentially the message, easier to understand. Hereby, the audience to some degree, also becomes agents in the myth-making process by participating in the actual forming of mythical messages.

Thus, designers act as agents in the myth-making process by carefully selecting rhetorical design elements to convey specific mythic narratives in their designs. These narratives are often highly influential if the audience understands and correctly interprets the mythic messages conveyed. In saying this, the designer as myth-maker has the ability to guide the behaviours and social actions of the audience. As such, designers have a responsibility towards their audience with regard to the messages they communicate. Socially conscious design is one way through which designers can positively impact a given society through design, and is discussed in more detail below.

3.1.3 The constructive potential of myth in socially conscious design

The use of myth in socially conscious design work in much the same way as it does in commercial design practices. Designers use and adapt myth as rhetoric, embedded with ideological notions of cultures and societies, to persuade their audience to act on their designs. The difference in socially conscious design is that design activists[8] intentionally choose to use these myths as design tools, rather than the occasional unintentional use of myth in commercial design. Essentially, the myths used in socially conscious designs become constructive tools for designers to promote notions that may lead to progressive societal development.

In recent years, the concept of socially conscious design has become widely acknowledged in design discourse and practice. Socially conscious design pertains to the outcome of design processes that focus on positive social change. According to Noah Scalin and Michelle Taute (2012: 23) in *The design activist's handbook: how to change the world (Or at least part of it)*

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[8] People who practice socially conscious design in their daily lives are called design activists (Scalin & Taute 2012:23).

with socially conscious design (2012), the concept of 'doing good' is a relatively equivocal theme, and as such, many names are used when discussing design for social good. Some of these names used interchangeably for socially conscious design include social design, 'green design', socially responsible design and even *"designism"*, coined by Milton Glaser (in Scalin & Taute 2012:23). The most encompassing of these names, however, is 'socially conscious design' as it includes all the issues that might concern a design activist, including themes such as the environment, human-rights, sexism and more (Scalin & Taute 2012:23).

Socially conscious design is also about the organised outcome of a design activist making conscious choices about the impact of their designs (Scalin & Taute 2012:23). The principal idea behind socially conscious design is that design thinking, and design processes can be used to solve issues in a society. According to Audrey Bennet, Fatima Cassim and Marguerite van der Merwe (2017:57), socially conscious design promotes the use of design resources to confront and solve the various problems of a given society. Moreover, socially conscious design initiatives often result in social innovation (Bennet, Cassim & van der Merwe 2017:57). Social innovation, according to Bennet *et al* (2017:58), is a new phenomenon in discussions where the word "social innovation" refers to social change. Hence, social design within design discipline is the use of design resources to cultivate a culture of social innovation.

Furthermore, myth can be used by designers as a rhetorical device in support of the message of social innovation in socially conscious design. As mentioned previously, the use of myth in socially conscious design is mostly intentional, with the purpose to influence the behaviours of an audience. According to Aidan Ricketts (2012:79), the essential aim for any social movement is to gradually change a society's ideas and attitudes about a specific issue. Ricketts (2012:6) adds that an important part of an activists' success lies in persuasive communication. Persuasive communication can be visually communicated through the specific use of visual rhetorical devices. As such, persuasive devices are essential to communication in social design. Myth is therefore one such device through which an audience of a socially conscious design can be persuaded or influenced towards positive behavioural change.

The socio-political environment is an example of a focus area where myth is often used as rhetorical device in the process of addressing socio-political concerns. Socially conscious design of this kind is generally focused on progressing or disavowing already existing ideologies. These ideologies include, but are not limited to notions of feminism, democracy, freedom and human-rights. Ricketts (2012:6) states that "[a]ctivism, social change advocacy

and the practice of democracy are inextricably linked." A common example of socially conscious design is women empowerment campaigns often aided by striking symbolic imagery and campaign rhetoric advocating the ideals of the activists involved. The campaign rhetoric of women empowerment is often centred around the myth of equality and addresses concern with preconceived gender ideologies. According to Vicki Coppock, Deena Haydon and Ingrid Richter (2014:vi,7) these ideologies often feature inequality in gender roles steered by patriarchal notions, specifically in the work, home and education environments.

One common example of the use of myth in equality in advocating women's rights is the *Woman Should campaign* (2013) which featured as an advertorial series for United Nations Women in Dubai. The *Woman Should campaign* (2013), features a series of advertorials focused on the equality of women. In the advertorials, consisting of a video and several posters, results of actual searches on Google search engine are featured and questioned. These searches start with 'women should', 'women cannot', 'women shouldn't', etcetera. The results of the auto fill in the Google search bar used in these posters and video suggest that women are still not treated as equal to men, even if many signs in society portray that women are treated in an equal manner.

Figure 10 illustrates one poster from this empowerment series which uses highly rhetorical imagery. The poster portrays a woman's face, confronting the audience with a Google search across her mouth featuring auto fill results for the search 'women should'. A notable visual rhetorical device includes the dark colour of the poster, setting a tone of importance and the placement of the Google search which symbolises a gag. On a deeper lever, a gag symbolises the mistreatment of a person whereby another person forces the gaged person to be silent. Another notable feature in the poster is the confrontational stare of the woman who is portrayed. Kemp (2012:14) expands on the concept of a staring gaze by noting that "[t]here is something disconcerting about the riveting stare from which we cannot escape". The profanity of the stare is according to Kemp (2012:16), more than "optical curiosity". The staring gaze is a representation of a "God-like" all seeing quality that surpasses material vision and places the gazer into a position of profanity. In this case, the confrontational stare of the woman places the woman in a god-like position, visually portraying the importance of the woman in question. These visual rhetorical devices, amongst other devices, form a unified rhetoric based on the myth of equality, thereby supporting the use of myth in socially conscious design.

Figure 10: Memac Ogilvy & Marther Dubai, UN Women Should campaign poster, 2013 (UN Women 2013).

3.2   The poster as a medium for mythic communication

The second part of this chapter is mainly focused on the medium through which myth is advocated. Although designers use many vehicles for mythic communication, this study specifically focuses on the socio-political poster for its effectiveness in conveying ideological notions and mythic messages. The purpose of investigating and discussing the poster as a mode of mythic communication is to provide a holistic understanding of how myth functions and how myth is accessed by societies and cultures.

3.2.1 Introduction to posters

The poster has been a vehicle for communication since before the advent of printing processes in the 19th century (Sontag 1999:197). Since then, posters have been used for various types of communication including theatre production advertising, social commentary, product advertising and even war propaganda. The success behind the poster, and the continual use of the poster however, can be awarded to the posters' unique technical and aesthetic qualities which makes the poster a timeless and effective communication device.

The definition of a poster is fairly straightforward. According to Harold Hutchinson (in Sontag 1999:198), a poster is, in its bare essence, a large written announcement combined with a pictorial element. The purpose of a poster is essentially, "to impress some message on a passer-by", by drawing the attention of a viewer with a graphic as the initial point of attraction (Hutchinson in Sontag 1999:198). This message on a poster is often persuasive, with the intent to get the audience to respond to the poster in some way, normally either to buy a product advertised in the poster, or even in the case of a socio-political poster, to change their opinions or accept something voiced in the poster. According to Max Gallo (2001:10), the function of a poster is to "appeal to our subconscious feelings and our barely conscious needs and then channel them so that we do what the sponsor of the poster wants us to do". In other words, the poster is a persuasive visual device that communicates a message to its audience in a convincing manner.

One way through which posters act as persuasive devices is through the adoption of mythic narrative as a rhetorical device. Mythic narrative in posters are often conveyed through the use of signs and symbols, which can be read in both the text and visual elements of posters. According to Rege (1963:39), effective posters are rich in signs and symbols which can aid a poster to effectively communicate a message and set a persuasive tone. Rege (1963:40) provides an example of symbolism in posters by stating that: "In a Government poster advocating the

protection of children from diphtheria by immunization the black hand of death is used as a symbol for diphtheria and is shown as about to clutch the head of a crying baby". In this example, diphtheria is personified to the point where the bacterial disease is read as a 'baby-killing' villain. It can be argued that this example implies the myth of good and evil where the baby (naturally) represents good and the bacterial disease represents a killer and a villain, which, based on folk tales and western storytelling, is wicked. Therefore, we know, without having to state explicitly, that the black hand of death in the advertisement represents something wicked, since myths allow for implicit meaning.

An important quality to note about posters, is their ability to also act as coherent icons. Posters have the ability to act as important design artefacts that portray significant information such as the visual styles, ideologies, values and beliefs of different epochs. According to Gallo (2001:9), posters act as "mirrors of a society". Hereby Gallo (2001:10) implies that posters have the ability to reflect human history and inflict specific human behaviours. Moreover, posters reflect the current state of a society, especially in terms of technology, social stances and dominant ideologies (Gallo 2001:10). Gallo (2001:10) explains that "a late nineteenth-century poster showing an electric lamp signifies that this recent invention was already in commercial production. But that the lamp should be presented by a scantily clad woman is indicative on an entirely different level." It can thus be argued that posters act as visual and cultural pillars of a society due to posters' ability to communicate mythic narratives. These myths or mythic narratives are embedded with specific cultural information that informs the audience of a society. The myths read in posters are therefore indicative of a society's norm at a given time. Posters are thus a powerful visual medium through which these myths can be read and understood.

Susan Sontag (1999), discusses in her article, *Posters: advertisement, art, political artifact, commodity* (1999), that posters possess many qualities that contribute to a poster's efficacy in delivering messages. Firstly, the poster is naturally simplistic. The poster has only a few seconds to draw the attention of the audience and communicate a specific message. Hence, the (visual and narrative) content is undetailed and simple enough to grasp in a few seconds (Rege 1963:34). Secondly, the poster is known for its placement in public spaces, which means that the poster has a large and undefined audience. Rege (1963:34) explains that a poster in a public space comprise of stimuli which instinctively evokes attention. Anyone who looks at the poster is susceptible to its message. Thirdly, the role of posters in conjunction with other forms of media has changed over the years. Posters used to be primary media, but now act as support

media to other forms of media which first introduces a message (Rege 1963:35). Therefore, posters act as repeated reminder of a message, which according to Rege (1963:35), is an important factor in communication. A fourth characteristic of posters is their aggressive nature of communication. As a result of their position amongst other posters and other forms of media, posters are often aggressive, competing with other media to enforce an intended message (Sontag 1963:167). Another poster trait can be attributed to their intent for mass reproduction which makes the poster a far-reaching communication device (Sontag 1963:167), meaning that the message of a poster can be read in different contexts. A final characteristic of posters is that some posters may have a light-hearted tone which is often achieved through exaggeration and humour (Sontag 1963:203). The application of light-hearted messaging in posters is often done so as a rhetorical device when dealing with serious topics.

One example of the use of light-hearted messaging in dealing with serious situations is evident in a poster which became popular in 2009, despite the fact that it was created in 1939. The *Keep Calm and Carry On poster* (1939), illustrated in Figure 11, is an iconic poster featuring the words 'Keep calm and carry on' and a crown on a red background or a Union Jack (Bigman 2013). The light-hearted poster was originally commissioned by the British Government as a message for civilians during a difficult socio-political situation. The purpose of the original poster was meant to maintain civilian morale amidst German air raids in London at the time (Bigman 2013). However, the current symbolic meaning of the poster is much different from the original intended meaning. Originally, the crown and the royal red colour used as symbolic devices signified an authorised message, which also acted as a military order, from the British Government to the civilians of the country. The mythic narrative then implied all the ideologies which pertained to the Royal British authorities at the time. Now, the meaning has significantly changed in that the iconic *Keep Calm and Carry On poster* (1939) is mass produced as a product of consumerism. The crown and royal red (or Union Jack) iconography in the poster are still symbolic of the Royal British Kingdom. However, they have become icons associated with tourism, similar to how the Eifel Tower represents France and all the ideologies that pertain to France.

Figure 11: British Government, *Keep Calm and Carry On*, 1939 (Wikimedia Commons).

The history of posters is important to gain an understanding of posters as a communication format. According to Angharad Lewis (2006:17), in his introduction chapter in *Street talk: the rise and fall of the poster* (2006), the history of the poster encompasses much more than just the poster. It includes many other themes in the areas of political, social and cultural spheres, by voicing public dissent, providing 'life-saving information', and hosting new art movements. The poster has provided a platform through which "the few and voiceless" can be heard by "the many and the powerful" (Lewis 2006:17). Lewis (2006:17) adds that the history of the poster also reflects the history of graphic design. For Lewis (2006:17), the poster is a perfect embodiment of graphic design as both can be described in its basic form as: "the composition of word and image in the service of a message". Both design and the poster have the need to effectively communicate an idea or specified body of information (Lewis 2006:17).

Different art movements, political changes and social aspects through the ages were not only inspired by posters, but also guided the change of posters to be what they are today. These changes are present in the style, purpose and sometimes the content of current posters. The end of the World War I brought about a great change in the fine art disciplines, directly influencing the poster of that time (Lewis 2006:19). According to Lewis (2006:19), avant-garde artists began breaking the traditional ideas of fine art. For example, Futurists and Dada artists incorporated pictorial typography in their posters and leaflets with the aim of disseminating social and political revolution (Lewis 2006:19). Other movements like *De Stijl* and Russian Constructivism intended to challenge Western cultural values by expressing abstraction, austerity and experimentation (Lewis 2006:19). The German Bauhaus movement in the 1920s focused on dissolving boundaries between art and practical application, in turn focusing on and progressing the nature of textile design, architecture, advertising and mass production (Lewis 2006:19). The second world war in the 1940s brought about the highly influential International Typographic Style (Lewis 2006:19). British and American artists who fled their countries due to anti-Semitism and artist persecution contributed to the war efforts by creating military propaganda posters for ministries of information. Post-war these artists contributed to economy by participating in the growing advertising industry (Lewis 2006:20). By this time, art styles began merging due to many artists having fled their home countries in an effort to escape or contribute to the war.

Over the past 100 years, the purpose and appearance of the poster has changed to suit the needs of society. Moreover, the messages and meaning in a society has changed and adapted to the beliefs of a society. Changes in technology and modes of communication such as digital media

continue transforming the context of the poster as communication medium. The format of the poster, however, remains an element of the poster which affords the poster longevity as a communication medium for conveying specific messages. Some messages are for commercial purposes, some political, some for advocating environmental change, however, the premise of the poster remains the same. Therefore, the poster is still being used by designers as a "large scale, mass communication that hones a message into snappy visual repartee" (Lewis 2006:17).

3.2.2 Posters as a medium of political propaganda

Posters act as highly effective and persuasive communication devices. This is the case, especially when it comes to political propaganda. Political propaganda posters are popular collectable items, but in their time of use, they have the power to change or influence the political opinions of its audience, which may have the potential to lead to societal change.

Political posters and commercial posters share the same qualities as the history in which they are created are intertwined (Sontag 1999:204). According to Sontag (1999:204), both types of posters expand from a capitalist society. Commercial posters reflect the side of a capitalist society with a need for people to spend money on commodities or spectacles. Similarly, political posters span from the side of a capitalist society which pertains to the "modern nation-state", with an ideology of universal education and "power of mass mobilisation for warfare" (Sontag 1999:204). Therefore, the same qualities which make a poster an effective communicative device can also be attributed to political posters. Qualities such as a poster's innate ability to appeal to its audience through visual rhetoric (Sontag 1999:198) and the pictorial nature of posters which gives it attractiveness (Sontag 1999:199) are present in both commercial and political posters. Moreover, commercial and political posters share a similar purpose: in both types of posters, something is being sold. In the case of commercial posters, a tangible product or service. In political posters, a political viewpoint or ideology. The foremost purpose for political posters, according to Sontag (1999:205) is "ideological mobilization". In saying this, the aim of a political posters is to influence the audience into believing an ideological notion. One way through which political posters can achieve ideological mobilisation is through mythical narratives embedded in the symbols and images found in these posters.

Lewis (2006:40) notes that "[a]t their heart posters are the most democratic form of mass communication." Lewis (2006:40) explains that a poster can be created by anyone, despite it being painted by hand or produced with intricate printing methods. People who want to express

their views, often do so through posters. Lewis (2006:40) adds that when designers create posters, there is a degree of personal expression, since the poster is a reflection on the designers' personal experiences and opinions. As such, the 'author'/designer of the poster is seldom objective. The relevance of a designer's degree of self-reflection in posters become pertinent when we note that a poster, according to Lewis (2006:40), is at its most powerful when it encompasses personal beliefs and emotions. Even one of the first noted posters by Toulouse-Lautrec's *Moulin Rouge* is a personal expression of Toulouse-Lautrec's personal view of women in public (Lewis 2006:40). The power of a highly effective poster is thus not only dependant on the formal qualities and rhetorical elements used, but also on the strength of opinion of the designer who created the poster.

The use of political poster is of course, specifically relevant in history. Historically, the poster was almost instantly politicised when European governments recognised the efficacy of commercial posters for advertising political messages in 1914 (Sontag 1999: 205). Political posters all over Europe were designed to advocate the leading theme of patriotism. In France, political posters appealed to citizens to contribute to war loans; in England posters were used for military recruitment; in Germany posters were used ideologically to promote a love for Germany by vilifying opposing forces (Sontag 1999: 205). According to Sontag (1999: 206), political posters rose in popularity in 1918 when new revolutionary movements in Europe exhorted posters as the primary means of patriotic persuasion. Countries like Germany, Russia and Hungary were key leaders when it came to using posters as a means of mass patriotic communication (Sontag 1999:206). The use of political propaganda posters gained further popularity in Europe and America around the time of the second world war in the 1930s. Therefore, political posters have historically been popular indications of crisis in older "nation-state" societies and these posters are mainly confined to times of war or matters that concern bourgeois-democratic political institutions such as national political elections (Sontag 1999:204).

A key aspect in the success of political propaganda posters is the use of symbolic imagery to bring across specific messages. According to Rege (1963:39), a poster should be an identifiable unit that resembles an element of familiarity. Moreover, a poster should provoke quick perception by means of stimuli. Stimuli are signs that derive objective facts, in other words, meanings (Rege 1963:39). Political posters embody various symbolic images through which they visually communicate and persuade their audience to adopt, support and act upon the various doctrines and ideologies depicted in the posters. Messages of these posters vary from a

plea to join the army as a means of supporting your country, to cultivating hatred for an 'enemy' of a country, and even to promote support and trust in the country's ideologies. The symbolic imagery in political posters are often mythical in nature as they naturally provide the audience with deep-rooted ideological notions which are based on the values and beliefs of communities for which these posters are made.

An obvious example of an iconic mythic symbol used in political propaganda posters is the *hammer and sickle* emblem (Figure 12), recognised as a symbol of Soviet power and ultimately, communism (Khutarev 2014). The emblem features three elements namely, the five-point red star, the hammer and the sickle. On a denotative level, these elements form a unified representation of the communist movement. According to Terence Ball and Richard Dagger (2017), communism is a political and economic doctrine, aimed at replacing private property with public ownership and communal control over production and resources of a society. The red star symbolises military inclination and the colour red used in the star is symbolic of revolution (Goble 2017). The hammer represents traditional associations with European working forces, and the sickle, an agricultural tool, represents the agricultural working force (Khutarev 2014). Together these elements are intended to symbolise the "unity of the proletariat and the peasants" (Khutarev 2014). On a connotative level, the symbol is indicative of all the ideologies that historically form the basis of the communist movement, identified with the political and economic organisation held by the Soviet Union, China and countries ruled by other communist parties (Ball & Dagger 2107).

Figure 12: Designer unknown, *Hammer and Sickle in red star*, 1917 (Wikimedia Commons).

The myths used in political propaganda posters are generally regarded as political myths. According to Christopher Flood (2002:42), political myths can be defined as "ideologically marked" accounts of past or present political themes. Political mythical narrative is guided by the values, purpose and assumptions of a specific ideology (or family of ideologies) that conveys an invitation to the viewer to adopt the particular ideological standpoint in question (Flood 2002:42). As mentioned in Chapter Two, the very nature of myth is to come across as neutralised meaning, making the message seem natural and 'truthful' (Barthes 1991:142), thereby making the ideological and political notions conveyed in political propaganda posters highly convincing.

According to Sontag (1999:207), "the aim of an effective political poster is rarely more than the stimulation (and simplification) of moral sentiments. And the classic means of stimulating and simplifying is through a visual metaphor". These metaphors are often mythical representations of a person. Cheret's commercial posters, for example, often included the myth of the "mechanical bride" (Sontag 1999:207). In political advertising, the myth of the hero is mostly used. Sontag (1999:207) explains that the figure of a hero can be "a celebrated leader of the struggle, living or martyred, or an anonymous representative citizen, such as a soldier, a worker, a mother, a war victim". This type of image appeal to the viewer as an 'ethical prestige'. In other words, the myth of the hero is portrayed in such a way that the audience finds the hero's position desirable and even imperative (Sontag 1999:207). Thus, mythic imagery of the hero in political posters cultivate a sense of obligation for the viewer to actualise these desires, thereby persuading the viewer to act upon the myth (Sontag 1999:207).

Moreover, these posters often act as *mythopoeic* devices through which new myths are purposefully formed. The formation of new myths in propaganda posters are essential to the message of a poster, especially if the propaganda is set around new ideas or ideas opposing existing ideologies. According to Flood (2002:44) the expression of a myth as a means of myth-making carries authority when it is communicated in an appropriate way by appropriate devices. Revolution posters, which are often socio-political in nature are prime examples of propaganda posters that act as *mythopoeic* devices as their messages revolve around the concept of change. A political myth, similar to any other type of myth can also be created through *mythopoeia*. By making use of existing myths, adopting or extending these myths, a designer (or myth-maker) can reform or create political myths according to the needs of a society.

Figure 13: Howard Miller, *We Can Do It!*, 1943 (Kimble & Olson 2006:540).

One particular example of myth and *mythopoeisis* in propaganda posters is Howard Miller's popular *We Can Do It!* (1943) poster. Figure 13 depicts and iconic poster, deeply endowed with mythical narrative and meaning which, through the ages, has adapted countless times to suit the needs of the American society. *We Can Do It!* (1943) symbolises American icon, 'Rosie the Riveter' wearing a blue-collar suit and a headband, posing with a stern expression, one arm rolling up her sleeve and another arm with a raised fist exclaiming "We can do it!".

James Kimble and Lester Olson (2006:534) state that Rosie the Riveter has become an American myth. According to this myth, in World War II women in the United States took it onto themselves to fill the roles in society left open by men attending to the war. Brave, patriotic women, according to this myth, took manufacturing positions building bombers, ships, tanks and other military machinery (Kimble & Olson 2006: 534). *We Can Do It!* (1943) is presumably a poster created to encourage women to enter the workforce and support America, while men are at war. The myth continues that women were instrumental in the war efforts, and after the war these movements revolutionised the lives of American women (Kimble & Olson 2006:534). Kimble and Olson (2006:534) further state that this myth has had a great influence on modern feminist movements globally as it represents empowerment of women. The myth has essentially been reformed from indicating the American housewife as a helpless figure, to widely representing women empowerment and notions associated with feminism.

Of course, the legend of Rosie the Riveter is an idealistic characterisation and is completely mythical in nature. The myth of Rosie the Riveter is read as women having the power to succeed in the manufacturing workplace, while owning favourable positions in society (Kimble & Olsen 2006:534). The myth of Rosie the River, demystified, reveal that most of the notions symbolised by the poster are a mere construct and does not entirely reflect the situation of the society at that time. According to Kimble and Olson (2006:534) women in the workplace faced racial and sexual prejudice, women were paid less than men, and near the end of the war women faced pressure to submit their jobs to returning war veterans. Furthermore, most of these women did not enter the workforce to support their country, but rather to profit from higher salaries caused by demand for human resources (Kimble & Olson 2006:534). While there is historic truth in the myth of Rosie the Riveter, as there was an increase of women in the workforce and the increasing number of women who supported the war effort, other facts were distorted, leaving only the idealistic story of powerful women in the workplace. Because of the demystifying nature of myth, the *"We can do it!"* (1943) poster has become an influential part of American culture inasmuch as it forms the collective memory of the World War II even still

embodying and empowering feminists by acting as a leading feminist fable (Kimble & Olsen 2005:534,536). The *We can do it!* (1943) poster is thus an example of a popular poster that altogether depicts a myth and eventually acts as a *mythopoeic* device for mythical reformation.

Furthermore, the use of popular mythic icons to advocate a political message in political posters are common. At this point it should be noted that political posters, started in support of war efforts, are now often used in support of political democratic election efforts, socio-political revolution movements, and public socio-political commentary. One example of a popular mythical icon that featured (and still features to some extent) in political revolution movements is the pop art feature of Cuban Marxist revolutionary, Che Guevara. According to Martin Kemp (2012:167), "Che Guevara has become the romantic embodiment of youthful idealism and passionate rebellion". The myth of Che Guevara, known as Che, leads that he dedicated his life to underprivileged and demoralised people of society by passionately rebelling against the oppression and exploiting of these oppressed groups (Kemp 2012:168). Che attracted a mass youth audience who were politicised by the Vietnam war at the time (Kemp 2012:168).

Figure 14 is a representation of the popular pop style icon that was informed by a well-known photograph of Che (Lazo 2016). The striking red, white and black (and sometimes yellow) representation of Che became a familiar image with and extraordinary status, and was featured in posters, graffiti and any other means of public visual broadcasting as a symbol of justice and political change. What made Che such a famous mythic icon, however, is that the representation of Che has become detached from the South American politics of the 1950s and 1960s (Kemp 2012:168), leaving only the rebellious and heroic Che as an iconic, mythical image.

This form of representation of popular cultural and political icons are often used in posters as a means of embedding the mythic narrative conveyed by these popular cultural icons in the posters. In the case of Figure 14, the iconic representation of Che and all the accompanying narrative is naturally read when viewing the poster. Here, Che is already imbued with rich mythic narrative and this narrative is used as rhetorical device in this poster to communicate a specific message. Whereas, in the case of Rosie the Riveter, the poster is embedded with various rhetorical devices which support the myth of Rosie which only formed as a result of the content of the poster after the poster was published.

Figure 14: Jim Fitzpatrick, *Viva Che*, 1968 (Jim Fitzpatrick Gallery 2012).

3.2.3 The significance of posters in an increasingly digital era

The use of posters in the twentieth century was vital to the development of mass communication, and as a result, the further development of efficient ways to visually communicate powerful messages to many people simultaneously. However, as digital forms of communication become popular in the early twenty first century, it became apparent that the need for print media declined as the capabilities of poster as print media seemed irrelevant compared to the quick and far reaching capabilities of digital communication, causing frequent debate on the relevance of posters. According to Lewis (2006:17), "The poster is in the throes of an identity crisis and its importance as a means of communication is being seriously challenged". Furthermore, modern targeted forms of marketing and public voicing such as blogs, television commercials, websites and social media advertising are challenging the egalitarian nature of posters (Lewis 2006:17).

Lewis (2006:17) also affirms that a common perception of the poster, when consulting designers, is that the poster is "[a] dead medium". However, Lewis (2006:17) adds that the perception of the poster as a dead medium is always countered with an account of the credibility and effectiveness of posters, which for Lewis (2006:17), means that the use for posters are still prevalent in modern society. According to Lewis (2006:17), "[p]eople love posters". The popularity of posters is evident in the countless websites that sell posters as collector's items, the innumerable books published (and still being published) on posters and poster designers, and importantly, the graphic designers who still design posters (Lewis 2006:17).

Perhaps the problem with the relevance of posters is not the occurrence and preference of the use of posters as a medium of mass communication, but the definition of posters in a modern world. The traditional concept of a poster, originating from the means of production by hand, is that posters are printed media, usually no bigger that A1 in paper size that communicate short and impactful messages in a visual manner. However, as digitised communication and the use of digital software for design purposes became customary, the poster became more versatile and eventually digital. According to Larissa D'Angelo (2012:46) the multimodal characteristic of posters encourages the poster as medium to adapt to the needs of a society, and therefore change with rapidly changing technologies. Essentially, posters are still used as effective communication vehicles in conveying myth. However, posters have, now more than ever, become digitised.

The digitisation of posters has an impact on how the mythic narrative embedded within online or digital posters are read. According to David Grant and Lyria Bennett Moses (2017), the concept of technology, and thereby digital technology, is in itself mythical in nature. Modern society has a conflicted view of technology, based on mythological thinking. On the one side, the concept of technology is paired with symbolic utopian environments where progress promises relief of sickness, death and more (Grant & Bennett Moses 2017:2). On the other hand, perceptions of technology are paired with fear of dystopian scenarios where technology advances human conditions through artificial intelligence (Grant & Bennett Moses 2017:2). These fears are often reflected in popular culture through films such as *I, Robot* (2004) and *The Matrix* (1999). As such, mythical messages in digital posters are impacted by the audience's individual beliefs of technology. The placement of a digital poster can promote modernity and progression, or progressive societal reflection implied by digital posters. Likewise, the placement of a digital poster can be read as negative, whereby the audience would be less likely to act upon the intended message of the poster.

Despite the placement, format and the digitisation of the poster, posters are still considered relevant mediums for mythic communication due to their distinctive visual nature and means of communicating through both visual and text elements. Therefore, the poster has been chosen by communication designers and artists as an effective communication device for communicating myth since the advent of print and will arguably traverse contemporary and traditional media for as long as myth needs to be conveyed to societies.

3.3   Conclusion

Chapter Three focused in two parts on the designer as agent in the process of *mythopoeisis* and the poster as an effective vehicle through which designers can successfully convey mythic narratives. From the discussion in this chapter it is evident that myth is adaptable and ever-changing. As the socio-political scenarios of a society change, mythic messages also change to adapt to these changes. These mythic messages change through the process of myth-making, or *mythopoeisis*, whereby myths are adapted from previous myths or mythic archetypes in order to communicate newfound or reformed ideological notions.

Moreover, Chapter Three put forward the argument that designers act as agents in the process of making myths by participating in the act of *mythopoeisis*. Designers often use mythic narrative in their designs to communicate specific messages. In doing so, designers consciously or unconsciously adapt existing myths in order to effectively convey specific persuasive messages

or new ideas. The inclusion of visual rhetorical devices to aid mythic messages and the use of mythic messages as rhetorical devices, transforms these designs into highly persuasive and influential communication platforms that has the ability to guide the actions, values and believes of a society. These societal changes can be both constructive and negative. As such, designers have a responsibility towards societies with regards to the information and ideas they convey. Socially conscious design is one means through which designers as myth-makers can constructively use myth as a tool for positive social reformation.

The second part of Chapter Three considered the poster as one way in which designers can convey mythic communication, thus acknowledging the poster as a highly effective vehicle for influential mass communication. From the introduction of the history of posters one can note that the poster possesses many traits which makes the poster an effective vehicle for mythic communication. Furthermore, the poster became particularly popular as socio-political propaganda posters at the start of World War I, when posters were predominantly used for the purpose of patriotism, support for war efforts and recruiting soldiers. The use of mythical narrative, portrayed through symbolic imagery and iconography, is essential for the success of propaganda posters as myth has the ability to neutralise and idealise the severe ideologies portrayed by some of these posters. The poster, and especially the political poster, is thus a highly effective device for conveying mythic messages.

Moreover, the use of posters, contrary to recent discussions is still relevant in an increasingly digitised era, due to the multimodal characteristic of posters. The poster, just as myth, has the ability to change in relation with the needs of a society in order to effectively convey a message, and thus adapted from the traditional print poster into the modern digital poster. Therefore, posters, now in different forms, are still as relevant in conveying myth than it was at the time of its emergence.

Following from this, Chapter Four presents the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), a case study that acts as an example and application of the theory of myth discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY: THE *MANDELA POSTER PROJECT* (2013)

Throughout this study, it has been argued that myth can be used by designers as a constructive design tool to influence positive societal behavioural change. Accordingly, Chapter Four illustrates the theory explored in previous chapters of this research paper by investigating the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as a case study. In particular, Chapter Four investigates and discusses the myth of freedom icon, Mandela and studies the rhetorical devices used in selected posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) in order to identify how visual rhetoric is used to convey the myth of Mandela. Moreover, Chapter Four investigates the relevance of the myth of Mandela conveyed in these posters as myth that acted as a constructive force in South Africa.

To this end, Chapter Four is presented in three parts. The first part of Chapter Four is discussed in two sub-sections where the first of these two sub-sections includes a brief historical overview of South Africa, from an apartheid (1948-1994) to a post-apartheid (1994-present) era. This historical overview is included in order to contextualise the environmental factors that contributed to Mandela's popularity. Then, the second of the two sub-sections includes a discussion on Mandela as popular culture icon and myth in a modern society. Following the first section on the myth of Mandela, the second part of Chapter Four initially discusses the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) in order to provide contextual information about the project. Thereafter, the chapter includes a visual rhetorical analysis of selected posters that form part of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collection in order to identify visual means of conveying the myth of Mandela in these posters. The third and final part of Chapter Four discusses the significance of the myths portrayed by designers in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as constructive devices for socially conscious practices in a South African context.

4.1   The myth of Mandela: central icon in the Mandela Poster Project (2013)

This study argues that the heroic portrayal of popular political icon, and former South African president, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is mythical, enforcing the notion of the myth of Mandela. The myth of Mandela, as with any other myth is embedded with deep rooted ideological notions which, specifically in the case of Mandela, can be linked to the history of South Africa, and specially the phenomenon of apartheid which imposed certain values and beliefs on the South African society at that time.

4.1.1 A brief contextual and historical overview of South Africa, from an apartheid (1948-1994) to a post-apartheid era (1994-present)

The purpose of historical narratives is often to fulfil people's the psychological needs. According to Noel Solani (2000:42) in his article, *The saint of the struggle: deconstructing the Mandela myth* (2000), the psychological effect of historical narratives is especially true for South Africa and the liberation struggle experienced by South Africans during apartheid. In the post-apartheid era, myths such as 'the rainbow nation', symbolising the racial spectrum of South Africans in unity, was realised in order to increase the nation's morale and to promote the needed support of reformed ideologies (Lange & van Eeden [sa]:[sp]). Hero myths were also used in attempts to reconstruct heroes of the liberation struggle. Arguably, one of the most persuasive South African struggle hero myths is the "saint" myth of Nelson Mandela (Solani 2000:42). The myth of Mandela is based on the historical circumstances of South Africa and is therefore inclusive of South Africa's history and the reigning ideologies of apartheid and post-apartheid eras. As such, it is important to understand South Africa's history and the role played by Nelson Mandela at that time.

South Africa has a rich political history, fronted by the rule of apartheid which caused social injustice within South Africa at the time. The implementation of apartheid policies, which started with the election victory of the National Party in 1948, established a system of internal colonialism in South Africa (Henrard 2003:37). Essentially, this system of apartheid was defined by a policy of divide and rule, which was supposedly aimed at ensuring white hegemony by separating white and non-white civilians according to race and ethnicity. The primary aim of apartheid was to disempower the non-white population of South Africans in order to privilege white South Africans. As a result, a majority non-white ethnic groups were separated into minority groups[9], which took away their right to vote, hindered fair living standards, education, concepts of group classification, ethnicity, race and self-classification (Henrard 2003:37).

As a result of apartheid, South Africa was sanctioned in various international, economic and social sectors[10] (Levi 1999:2). Owning to these sanctions, South Africa adopted a policy of

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[9] Henrard (2003:37) suggest that segregation policies and attempts to classify the South African population into separate racial groups were noticeable centuries before apartheid started. Notions of racial segregation in South Africa can be traced down to the early roots of Dutch colonialism due to the Dutch settlement in the Cape in 1652 (Sauthoff 2004:35). Certain racially discriminating regulations were already intact by the eighteenth century, but it was only by the end of the Anglo Boer War in the 1930s that sound ideologies of segregation emerged.

import substitution industrialisation along with extensive government to sustain economic prosperity during apartheid (Levi 1999:2). To some extent, the sanctions resulted in the Nationalist Party government stiffening its repression through further apartheid reforms in 1985. These economic and social conditions resulted in South Africa being isolated and secluded from international influence during apartheid. In this time, national identity was moulded by the dominant economic and political group, the National Party (Sutherland 2004:53).

During this time, dominant apartheid ideologies were formed around the myth of Afrikaner Nationalism; the idea of the emergence of the Afrikaner as the founding ethnic group of the South African nation, owning their right to the land (Coombes 2003:28). Therefore, much of the national visual identity of South Africa was suggestively built around the contexts and the culture of the Boer republics and the resistance of the British attempts to impose a policy of Anglicisation following the Anglo Boere war (1899-1902), from 1902 (Kallaway 2003:636). The notion of the Afrikaner *volk*, the Afrikaans term for nation, guided the policy and political propaganda of the National Party at that time.

At the same time, the formation of the African National Congress Youth League in 1948 and the adoption of the Youth League Program of Action proclaimed a new effort in a struggle against apartheid (Solani 2000:43). In 1952, Nelson Mandela was appointed national volunteer for the Defiance campaign, which stood against unjust laws in South Africa. As national volunteer, Mandela acted as spokesperson which made him popular in the eye of the public due to media coverage of the campaign (Solani 2000:43). The campaign was not well received by the National Party and lead to the imprisonment of many volunteers. Moreover, public appearances were often dangerous to the point where Mandela was risking his life in support of the Defiance campaign (Solani 2000:43).

In 1956, 156 people in support of the liberation struggle were charged for treason, including prominent leaders of the African National Congress, such as Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela (Solani 2000:43) to name a few. However, all of the accused were acquitted after a four-year trial which also included attempts to ban Mandela's liberation movements. After his acquittal, Mandela left the country in 1962 without valid travel permission to gather international support for the liberation struggle of South Africa and to address the Pan-African

Freedom Movement. Some of the countries visited by Mandela included Botswana[11], Tanzania, Sudan, Nigeria, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Algeria and later, England (Limb 2008:74). During this time, Mandela reached new levels of status in South Africa due to high media involvement. The nickname "Black Pimpernel" was awarded to Mandela by the media for his success in evading the police in the period of his travels (Limb 2008:74). Mandela's involvement in international arenas also ensured Mandela's popularity on an international level, especially in light of the apartheid regime. Soon after Mandela returned to South Africa in 1963, Mandela was punished for traveling without legal permission and imprisoned for a period of five years. However, Mandela was released in 1963, three years after his imprisonment, due to agitation from the Release Mandela Committee, led by Ahmed Kathrada and enforced by Mandela's growing support group (Solani 2000:43).

In the period of Mandela's imprisonment, the fight against apartheid continued under leadership of national liberation movement *Umkhonto we Sizwe,* also known as Spear of the Nation and MK High Command (Limb 2008:72,75). In 1963, security forces found the MK High Command headquarters in Rivonia, which led to the arrest of its leaders. Mandela, as one of the leaders of the MK High Command movement was also implicated due to documents affirming Mandela's involvement in the liberation movement (Limb 2008:75). In 1964, Mandela was charged in the Rivonia trial for conspiring to overthrow the apartheid regime by means of a violent revolution and was subsequently sentenced with life imprisonment. Mandela's speech at the Rivonia trial, whereby Mandela addressed equal rights, ensued wide publication and led to further international recognition. The period from 1956 to 1964 is the epitome of Mandela's iconic position since Mandela's action during this time caused Mandela to emerge as one of the most popular opponents of the apartheid regime; Mandela was seen by most Africans as a symbol for hope for a better life (Limb 2008:76).

According to Solani (2000:44), the 1970s saw a depression in mass political activity, whereas the 1980s is benchmarked by the revival of mass demonstrations of the struggle for political and racial justice in South Africa. The racial segregation, inflicted as a result of apartheid, resulted in major international resistance movements that caused upset in the form of sanctions and violent protests in South Africa at that time (Sauthoff 2004:35). Negotiations on equality and freedom of speech between the National Party government and the African National Congress

11 At the time of Mandela's visit, Botswana was known as the British colony of Bechuanaland, which only became independent in 1966 (Limb 2008:74)

were initiated in the 1980s when resistance protests, marches and movements caused upset with the intention of having the laws of apartheid lifted. Mandela's release in 1990 and the first multiracial election in April 1994 contributed to the first democratic election for South Africa, with Nelson Mandela becoming the first democratic president.

Since the advent of the post-apartheid apartheid era in 1994, a paradigm shift has occurred in which the separatist and isolated South African points of view have been exchanged for notions of freedom and unity. In turn, ideologies relating to apartheid have been negated in turn for notions regarding unity. Many South Africans have apparently exchanged a set of beliefs and values of separatism and division, for values concerned with cultural harmony (Sutherland 2004:52). The shift from apartheid to post-apartheid was straining on cultural identities of numerous South Africans, as large population groups in South Africa still saw themselves as culturally and racially divided. Multiple lifestyles and different cultural viewpoints meant that South Africans ideologically perceived their country in different ways (Sutherland 2004:51). Despite this apparent conflict in South Africa at the time, the new ruling party sought to showcase South Africa as a unified cultural space, as a result of a new democracy and racial freedom (Sauthoff 2004:36).

In the years after apartheid, Mandela's legacy is that he continued to contribute to equality and freedom on a global scale. One of these contributions include the Mandela administration which presumably achieved advances in living conditions in black townships and help secure economic stability in South Africa. On a global scale, the Mandela administration is argued to be used as a tool for peace administration in South Africa (Limb 2008:111). Another contribution is the adoption of the new South African Constitution in 1996, which heralds firm principles of equality, democracy, responsibility, freedom and ideas of reconciliation and diversity. Furthermore, this constitution, argued to be one of Mandela's legacies, included a bill of rights upholding human dignity, equality and freedom (Limb 2008:112). One other contribution, specifically social, that contribution Mandela made is the institution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which encompassed a widespread investigation into human right violations which took place between 1960 and 1993 to ensure that these violations do not reoccur and to purposefully reunite the South African nation (Limb 2008:112).

Naturally, the contributions Mandela made towards social justice, human rights and racial equality were aimed at creating societal change in South Africa. The myth of Mandela as 'saint' and struggle hero, supported and enforced by many people on an international scale, and

especially in South Africa, contributed to some of the positive societal shifts which occurred after apartheid. For example, some of the societal shifts include the equal treatment of all races in South Africa, economic and political freedom and the right to speak about social concerns as a form of freedom of speech. Therefore, it can be argued that the myth of Mandela served, and to some extent, still serves historical fulfilment as an attempt to strengthen political and social viewpoints (Solani 2000:42). In South Africa, these viewpoints tied back to recall general post-apartheid ideologies dealing with themes such as equality and unity. On a global scale, the Mandela myth symbolises hope and freedom, especially for those people experiencing socio-political struggles such as xenophobia and gender-based violence.

4.1.2 Mandela as popular culture icon and heroic myth

Mandela is one of the most renowned and influential Africans today (Limb 2008:xi). As mentioned previously in this chapter, Mandela's socio-political background closely links Mandela with notions of freedom, peace, justice, anti-apartheid and Africanisms (du Preez 2013:144). As a result of the associated links to Nelson Mandela and Mandela's global popularity, Mandela can be seen as a popular cultural icon. Whenever one talks about Mandela, one also implies the global icon and the associations to the icon that Mandela has become (du Preez 2013:144).

As discussed in Chapter One, Nachbar and Lausé (1992:10), define popular culture as any event, person or text that has been widely accepted by societies within a micro- or macro-culture. Popular culture icons are thus the iconic visual representations of these people, persons or texts. According to Kemp (2012:3), an iconic image is a visual text which has achieved a level of widespread recognisability and has many different associated meanings for people of different times and cultures. In simpler terms, an icon is a visual representation of an "intangible idea" (Nachbar & Lausé 1992:171) that can thus be viewed as "express carriers of beliefs, myths and archetypes" (du Preez 2013:144). Therefore, Mandela can be seen as an icon that represents a set of preconceived ideas. These ideas are associated with the historical environment in which they were formed. In particular, the ideas of freedom, peace and justice were all manifested as a result of Mandela's involvement in social justice movements, particularly the anti-apartheid struggle.

Moreover, popular culture icons have become particularly important tools for people to understand their direct environment as they reflect the values and beliefs of modern societies. Essentially, popular culture icons are carefully moulded in accordance to the values and beliefs

of the society in which they were formed (Nachbar & Lause 1992:3). According to du Preez (2013:144), icons, whether religious or secular, provide information on particular world views since they embody cultural ideologies. Icons are thus essentially representative of the values, beliefs and ideologies of the cultures and societies in which they were formed. The idea of Mandela is thus representative of a defined combination of anti-apartheid notions (such as fighting for freedom, liberation struggle and hope), and post-apartheid notions (such as equality and peace) that underpin the ideologies of a new, post-apartheid South Africa.

Essentially, Mandela is seen as a brave individual from the liberation struggle who, through self-sacrifice, saved South African from the apartheid regime by rebuilding the nation through democracy. For many, Mandela represents a hero of struggle (Solani 2000:42). According to Stephen Heller (2004:333), heroic iconography has been widely used throughout history. The hero is born with or acquires ideal attributes which makes the hero the highest form of human, a status aspired by most people. The hero is thus an aspirational human protagonist acting with superhuman power. Moreover, the hero stands for "the good" and "society" (Coupe 2009:48, 141). Mandela is seen as a heroic figure who showed superhuman power in the form of perseverance and self-sacrifice with the greater intent for good.

This superhuman representation is, of course, a mythic representation of Mandela. Based on Jungian theory discussed earlier in the study, all myths are derived from mythic archetypes. The Mandela myth is based on the hero archetype and the hero archetype is seen as the most aspirational and influential mythic archetype. Coupe (2009:56) identifies the postmodern hero myth as one type of identified hero myth. The Mandela myth falls within the scope of a postmodernist hero myth, where the task of the hero is not to slay a dragon (although the dragon could metaphorically represent the National Party and apartheid, and the slaying of the dragon could be their dismissal) but to face 'modern warfare' without surrendering to hypothetical order. At the time of struggle, Mandela had to endure pain through the deaths of many volunteers who supported Mandela's actions and ideas (Solani 2000:43). Mandela was offered freedom in return for his surrender and through his surrender his influence on his supporters to also surrender and succumb to the ruling of apartheid. However, Mandela resisted the notion to surrender, even though his freedom and the lives of many of his friends and supporters were at stake, thus not giving in to the notion of hypothetical power.

The myth of Mandela is therefore a postmodernist hero myth, portrayed by the media to the extent of being a popular culture icon. A truly iconic image, according to Kemp (2012:3), is an

icon that magnificently portrays the legend they represent, despite how long the icon (or the legend) existed. Moreover, Kemp (2012:3) notes that when the icon has reached the level of timelessness, "the bald historical facts and the original zone of function and meaning seem inadequate". Thereby, an icon is only inclusive of certain facts, distorting the original meaning and history of an icon. In the case of a true icon, it is easy to only read the myths represented by the icon (Kemp 2012:4). This is surely the case of Mandela as an icon. With regard to Mandela, one tends to only read the heroic myth of the individual who, through struggle, saved a nation. However, one tends to forget the historic essence, deaths, violence and true facts that also represent Mandela. Moreover, one tends to forget that Mandela was at the end of his life, a frail old man (du Preez 2013:144).

4.2   A visual rhetorical analysis of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013)

The focus of the second section of Chapter Four is on the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). It can be argued that the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) is an example of a poster collective that includes a range of posters, each making use of specific imagery and visual rhetorical devices to convey the myth of Mandela. Therefore, this section of Chapter Four discusses the background of the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)* first in order to subsequently contextualise the poster collection. Thereafter, this study analyses a selection of posters in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) as case study in order to investigate how the designers of these posters convey the myth of Mandela effectively through their posters.

4.2.1 Contextualisation of the Mandela Poster Project (2013)

In contextualising the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)*, this section aims to provide a background on the popular poster collective in order for one to better understand the purpose and inspiration for the project. Moreover, a contextual background on the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)* is provided in order to better understand the curatorial selection for the posters in the collection.

The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) is essentially a project initiated to celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela. The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) takes on the form of a poster collective which includes a selection of 95 posters that honour Mandela's life contribution to humanity. The project was initiated by two South African designers, Mohammed Jogie and Jacques Lange to celebrate Mandela's 95th birthday. Later, the project was managed by Icogranda, the International Council of Graphic Design Associations, as the Mandela Poster Project Collective, which extended the project into an international poster project (Visi 2013). The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collective has since evolved into a traveling exhibition that has been exhibited in

various countries, including Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the Unites States of America (du Preez 2013:140).

The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) essentially serves two purposes. The first and overall purpose, as mentioned, is to honour the lifelong contribution of Mandela through the poster collective. Therefore, a curated selection of 95 posters, from designers ranging across 37 countries, were selected from over 700 entries to symbolise Mandela's 95th birthday in the same year (Hanekom 2015). The second purpose of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) was to serve as a fundraiser for the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital in Johannesburg. One single printed set of the poster collection was auctioned to raise funds for the Hospital while another set has been printed and donated for use as part of the Hospital's interior design (du Preez 2013:140).

Ten themes form the curatorial structure of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). These ten themes, according to Hanekom (2015) are: "portraits of Mandela; Mandela the boxer; birds as symbols of freedom; cages, jail bars and hearts, Mandela, son of Africa; hands and fists as symbols of solidarity and struggle; the many names of Mandela; Mandela's life in words and images; Mandela's values; and rainbows". Each theme is representative of different aspects of Mandela's life and symbolise, through various graphic means, different ideas which form part of the iconic identity and myth of Mandela. Ithateng Mokgoro (in Hart 2016), one of the co-creators of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) elaborates on the ten themes as follows:

> First, you have the portraits. You have his face—it's recognizable. Then you have Mandela the boxer, an aspect of his earlier life that many people picked up. You have birds that represent freedom, and jail bars for obvious reasons. There's Mandela, the son of Africa; the continent has a very distinct shape. Everybody knows that shape. And then there's the black power salute, and his many names— "Madiba" (his clan name), "Tata" ("Father"), and "Mandela" itself. There's Mandela the story, written beginning to end. And there are his values, and there are rainbows. South Africa is known as the "rainbow nation" because everyone comes from different backgrounds. Mandela represents that.

Moreover, according to Lange (in van Eeden 2013:140) some of the posters featured in the collection are "clear representatives of the history and social structure of their countries or origin" and that in some of these countries of origin, such as Poland, Cuba and Mexico posters were used in their country's past as a means of reacting against political structures.

The curatorial selection of 95 works that form part the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) represent a broad demographic in that the works included feature artists, designers and image makers from high profile voices to students across the world (Hanekom 2015). The designers

participating in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) exercised graphic authorship by participating in their personal capacity. In doing so, these designers acted as agents in communicating and further developing the myth of Madiba. As such, these designers effectively act as myth-makers, who, through the act of *mythopoeisis*, contributed to the greater myth of Mandela.

4.2.2 Visual rhetorical analysis of the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)*

Throughout this study, it has been highlighted that designers make use of icons and symbols to convey ideas in their designs. These icons and symbols are also used to convey myths that form highly persuasive messages, embedded with inherent cultural ideological notions. Therefore, these myths are often used as rhetorical devices in designs, aimed at persuading the audience into believing and acting on the messages conveyed by these designs. Moreover, posters are one medium through which designers choose to effectively communicate myths and persuasive mythic narratives.

The posters featured as part of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) are rich in symbolic imagery. In these posters, visual texts such as photos, images, icons and text are applied effectively to convey the myth of Mandela. Not only are these representations iconic of Mandela, but these representations also take form as universally recognised iconic symbols, which represent the notions that collectively form the heroic Mandela myth. For example, the heart and the dove are universally recognised icons that respectively convey notions of love and peace. In analysing the visual rhetoric applied in these posters, one can identify and discuss the visual means used by designers as tools through which the myth of Mandela is conveyed in these posters.

Owing to the diversity of content and meaning in the selected posters, this study considers specific criteria for analysis to ensure credibility of the research. In defining criteria for effective analysis of these posters, this study investigates selected posters by identifying and discussing a set of specific visual rhetorical devices in each poster. The devices that are considered are drawn from Emanuel's study, *Rhetoric in graphic design* (2010), wherein Emanuel examines the use and application of rhetoric, and specifically visual rhetoric, in communication design. Emanuel's (2010) identified rhetorical devices are considered as criteria for visual analysis in this study firstly because of Emanuel's specific connection of rhetoric with communication design, and secondly, because of Emanuel's (2010) view of rhetorical devices as important design tools. The aim of Emanuel's (2010:5) rhetorical study is to "point out to graphic designers the importance of including the shaping of meaning in their creative process, and to

provide initial tools for it". Emanuel's (2010) viewpoint is specifically relevant to this study, as this study considers rhetorical devices (and myth as rhetorical device) as important design tools in aiding effective communication.

The identified rhetorical devices for criteria include: colour, typography, reduction, consistency, framing, proximity, similarity and composition. According to Emanuel (2010:141), colour is an important rhetorical design tool as "[t]he right uses of colour is fundamental in the process of communicating information". Colour can be used for various communication reasons including labelling, numbering, representation, decoration, emphasis and emotion (Emanuel 2010:141,142). In many cases, style is discussed along with colour and style refers to the aesthetic manner in which something is created. Typography includes the use of letterforms in designs and often act as important devices in conveying embedded meaning, since type is in itself mythical in nature. According to Kyle Rath (2015:88), the embedded narratives of letterforms, as mythical structures, are often used for "signification in current design contexts". Reduction is the process of simplification and stylisation, whereby only the necessary elements of a design are left for the design to function. Reduction also includes style and colour considerations such as flat vector graphic style instead of photography and black and white instead of colour (Emanuel 2010:145). Consistency is defined as the repetition of elements in a design and "constructs a design of logic and order" (Emanuel 2010:146). Framing is a rhetorical device often associated with photography. Briefly defined, framing is the way in which the objects and images are structured within a frame, which is subject to the distance between the camera and the object, the camera position and limits of the image. Framing can be structured around an image or a subject (Emanuel 2010:148,149). Proximity is the way in which images are placed close together in order for those images or objects to be read as a group, whereas similarity refers to images that look like each other to be read as a group. Lastly, composition is the divisive way that objects and elements are placed in a layout in order to produce different meanings (Emanuel 2010:152).

It is unlikely that each of the posters selected for purposes of this study use all the rhetorical devices; however, the selection of rhetorical devices form a guide by which these posters can be visually analysed. Furthermore, this study also considers these posters from both denotive and connotative points of view in order to determine the meanings conveyed in the selection of posters.

Naturally, the visual rhetorical analysis of all 95 posters in the collection falls outside the scope of this study; hence, ten posters have been selected for visual analysis. These ten posters represent the ten curatorial exhibition themes discussed earlier in this section. One poster from each theme has been selected. The selection of each poster is further considered based on the visible iconography and apparent visual rhetoric used. Most of the artworks in the collection are nameless and are therefore identified by the name of the relevant poster designer. The selection, for purposes of this study, includes Garth Walker representing 'portraits of Mandela'; Sindiso Nyoni representing 'Mandela the boxer'; Carlos Andrade representing 'birds as symbols of freedom'; Roy Villalobos for the theme, 'cages, jail bars and hearts'; Gyula Gefin representing 'Mandela, son of Africa'; Joël Guenoun for the theme, 'hands and fists as symbols of solidarity and struggle'; Marion Bantjes for 'many names of Mandela'; Fabio Testa representing 'life of Mandela in words and images'; Cristina Chiappini representing 'Mandela's values'; and lastly, Celéste Burger representing the theme, 'rainbows'.

4.2.2.1 Garth Walker: portraits of Mandela

The first poster analysed is Garth Walkers' poster (Figure 15), which represents the theme, 'portraits of Mandela'. Walker's poster features a cut-out photograph of an older Mandela's face placed in the centre of the poster. The photograph of Mandela's face is positioned within a series of consecutive circular shapes resting on a semi-transparent square which allows the viewer to see the background of the image through the square. Decorative patterns formed by various icons including roses, leave vines, praying hands, candle sticks with the name Mandela and flower motifs form a decorative pattern around Mandela's portrait. A series of radial diagonal lines meet in the middle of Mandela's forehead and, in doing so, forms a yellow circular gradient radiating from the centre of the image. The colours used include warm colours such as earthy browns and purples, paired with bright reds, yellows, orange and blue.

On a connotative level, the patterns and colours used are indicative of a South African vernacular visual style and local image that submerged in the recent years after apartheid. According to Lange (2012:11), South African designers pursued the development of a new visual language since the early 1990s. Designers sought to create an indigenous South African identity and therefore designed a unique style that included a form of expression and stylistic vocabulary unique to South Africa (Sauthoff 2004:36). Lange and van Eeden ([sa]:[sp]) state that the essential visual outcome of this approach was a fusion of cultural representation inspired by nature, street signage, vernacular language, traditional crafts and everyday life, apparently endemic to South Africa. As such, the rhetorical use of style, colours and imagery

are representative of post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, the connection of Mandela to South Africa is aided by the inclusion of proximity as rhetorical device. As mentioned, the rule of proximity pertains that elements grouped together might be seen as the same group of meaning (Emanuel 2010:152). Therefore, the close proximity of the iconic face of Mandela to these colours and styles indicate to the viewers that Mandela may be associated with the ideologies portrayed by the iconic style used in the design.

Essentially, Walker's poster is symbolic of heroic praise and worship of Mandela as public icon. Various symbolic icons used in the poster refer to religious praise and worship. For example, the use of hands pressed together is symbolic of praying in many cultures. Candles and roses are often used in prayer by different religions and are thus often used as religious symbols. Moreover, the radial yellow gradient and surrounding triangles literally represent Mandela as the sun, a natural element worshiped by many. Interestingly, the symbolic use of roses and candles in images are often representative of romance. Thereby, it can be said that, if the poster were only inclusive of roses and petals, the meaning would have changed to indicate love or romantic obsession over Mandela. However, by grouping the roses and candles in the poster with the highly symbolic praying hands, the meaning has changed. The roses and candle are symbolic of ritual in religion, opposed to their latter universal connotation to romance. This change in meaning could be a result of the implicit use of proximity and similarity as visual rhetorical devices used to group objects under the same meaning.

Moreover, the framing of Mandela's portrait in the centre of the mandala and the diagonal lines meeting in Mandela's portrait urges the eyes of the viewer into the centre of the image. Most icons in the poster are placed in the composition in such a way that they form pointing vectors that, again, draws the viewer to the face of Mandela, making Mandela's face an important and highly emphasised design element in Walker's poster. The face of Mandela is smiling, yet highly confrontational. This confrontational gaze can be attributed to the fact that Mandela looks directly at the audience, which contributes to Walker's rendition of Mandela as saint. According to Kemp (2012:16), "the primitive potency of the full face, frontally staring, has been utilized insistently in political and religious arenas over the ages". The direct gazing, full frontal face is one means of giving visual form to the concept of a god or ruler (Kemp 2012:16).

Figure 15: Garth Walker, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The visual rhetorical use of consistency is noted in the duplication and reflection of imagery in Walker's poster. According to Emanuel (2010:146), consistency in an image creates "logic and order", which increases the ethos and the credibility of an artwork. The duplication of the candle at the top and the bottom, the praying hand at the left and the right-hand corners, the duplication of the leaf veins, roses and patterns of the mandala form all creates consistency in Walker's poster.

From the analysis, it can be noted that Garth Walker's contribution to the poster collective utilises various rhetorical imagery and devices to indicate the myth of Mandela as icon that should be worshiped and praised for his contribution and role in South Africa. Walker's poster, rich in symbolism, is seemingly unique in its controversial inclusion of religion in communicating the message of Mandela's universal worship and praise.

4.2.2.2 Sindiso Nyoni: Mandela the boxer

Sindiso Nyoni's artwork, *The Boxer* (Figure 16) represents the theme 'Mandela the boxer'. Nyoni's artwork features a head-to-torso illustration of a young man with a radio on his shoulder and a clenched fist holding a piece of metal or plastic with the word '*Uthando'* written on it. The expression on the man's face is stern. Copy at the bottom right of the poster reads 'fight the power' and the number 95 is highlighted in these letterforms. Toned down colours are used, and the limited colour palette includes green, yellow, two shades of caramel brown as skin tone, white and dark brown. Geometric patterns fill the background of the image.

On a denotative level, one can assume that the young man represented in Nyoni's poster represents Mandela as a young adult. The title, *The Boxer*, is a reference to Mandela's adoration of boxing sport, which Mandela practiced as a young man. Mandela is often seen in photos where he is practicing or competing as a heavy-weight boxer (Bos 2013), and this representation of Mandela forms part of Mandela's iconic public identity. Moreover, Nyoni's poster is inspired by the film, *Do the right thing* (1989), directed by Spike Lee. The young man represented in the poster pays homage to one of the iconic characters in the film, Radio Raheem, who portrays an inspirational narrative of how hate can be overpowered by good (Studio Riot 2013). In this poster, this narrative reflects "Mandela's philosophy on human rights, forgiveness and reconciliation" (Studio Riot 2013). '*Uthando'* is Zulu word meaning love or affection (Oxford University Press 2018), and through proximity (and knowledge that a clenched fist resembles fighting), having the word *Uthando* associated with a clench fist may indicate that Mandela fights with love and affection.

Figure 16: Sindiso Nyoni, *The Boxer*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The bold use of style and colours in Nyoni's poster serves more than an aesthetic function as it also plays an important role in the communication of this poster. Colour and style as rhetorical devices are often used to convey embedded meaning, and to provide a specific tone of a message (Emanuel 2010:141). Firstly, the textures, limited colours and geometric cut forms used in this poster indicate that this poster is produced with a process called screen-printing, whereby layers of different colours are painted over each other using a stencil and a unique paint screen. This style is often used by activists in politically-charged posters, thereby charging this poster with political meaning. Secondly, the use of green, yellow and dark brown can be seen as a reference to the African National Congress, identified by the colours black, yellow and green. The African National Congress is the political party that Mandela supported at the time when he became the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

Moreover, the application of the style throughout creates consistency and similarity, two visual rhetorical elements used in this poster. According to Emanuel (2010:146), consistency in style and elements create a sense of familiarity, logic and order which gives the design some form of credibility and makes the audience feel comfortable in exploring deeper narratives set in the design. Similarity, on the other hand, has the same effect as proximity where elements grouped together are perceived as having the same meaning. Here, all elements are representative of Mandela the boxer and are all perceived as part of the same narrative.

Overall, Nyoni's poster portrays a strong twofold message of Mandela obtaining power for righteousness and Mandela's love and humanity (Hanekom 2015). As such, Nyoni used visual rhetorical devices to portray the myth of Mandela as an activist for human rights and celebrated the life of Mandela by conveying one part of who Mandela was. In doing so, Nyoni used the myth of Mandela as rhetoric device to portray one aspect of Mandela's life and identity to convey the celebration of Mandela's life and contribution to humanity.

4.2.2.3 *Carlos Andrade: birds as symbols of freedom*

Carlos Andrade's poster (Figure 17) represents the theme 'birds as symbols of freedom'. The poster features a black and white photographic portrait of an elderly Mandela, facing away from the camera. Mandela's face is overlaid with black and white images of doves. Mandela's shirt body is overlaid with two sets of images; on the left, Mandela's shirt is overlaid with black and white photos of an African wildlife landscape; and on the right, Mandela's shirt is overlaid with African kids looking up at a camera. Copy that reads "95 Nelson Mandela" is positioned in the top left corner of the poster. Finally, the background of the poster is a flat dark teal colour.

Figure 17: Carlos Andrade, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The use of iconic images such as birds, African landscape and African people in Andrade's poster, make the message significantly straightforward. On a denotative level, an old man is featured along with birds, landscapes and people. On a connotative level, four concepts instantly come to mind: Mandela, peace, freedom, humanity and Africa. In connecting these themes, one can easily deduct that Andrade's poster represents Mandela as an African icon of peace, freedom and humanity. Furthermore, by knowing the purpose of the *Mandela Poster Project (2013)*, acting as a celebration for Mandela's 95th birthday, one can deduct that the 95 at the top hand corner indicates Mandela's 95 years of life at the time the poster was created.

Arguably, the most notable aspect of Andrade's poster is the iconic use of birds to connote freedom. More specifically, the use of doves which adds another layer of meaning, peace. The use of birds to convey the meaning of freedom is not uncommon. According to Dorothy Resig (2009), the symbol of the dove has a rich tradition in iconography, originating in religious texts and visual representations. Birds generally connote freedom because of their ability to fly. Doves specifically connote peace, as a result of Greek and Christian references to the dove in biblical and mythical texts.

The use of colour in Andrade's poster is also significant. In Andrade's poster, the colours used are black, white and teal. The use of black and white in this case serves a dual purpose. Firstly, the use of black and white symbolises the mythic differentiating titles used to appropriate different races in the apartheid era. Caucasian people were classified as white, and all non-Caucasian people, were classified black. Therefore, the use of a black and white photograph contributes a specific embedded narrative to Andrade's poster as it acts as a subtle reference to apartheid, the reason for the need for peace and freedom in the first place. Secondly, the use of black and white photographs often convey a feeling of timelessness, due to the association with old black and white film photographs that were popular before the advent of colour film photography and digital photography. The feeling of timelessness underwrites the feeling of peace in Andrade's poster. Then, the use of the colour teal further supports the message of Mandela as peacemaker as teal is a combination of blue and green, in turn symbolising nature and sky/water which, due to its own embedded narrative, is often seen as symbols for peace and tranquillity.

The rhetorical tool reduction is also seen in Andrade's poster. Reduction is the act of reducing and flattening elements in a design to make the design clearer. Moreover, the use of reduction in designs make the content seen neutral and objective (Emmanuel 2010:145). The use of black

and white imagery, a central grouping of design elements and a flat colour background are all indications of reduction in Andrade's poster. The purpose of reduction in Andrade's poster is thus to ensure neutrality of content to support the rhetoric narrative of peace.

South Africa is often symbolised by wildlife landscapes due to the ecological nature of South Africa and the history of South African Tourism's (SATOUR) international advertising campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s. In an attempt to promote South Africa as a tourist destination, most advertisements included specific rhetoric of South Africa as a mostly outdoor and exotic destination (Lange & Van Eeden [sa]:[sp]). This 'exotic' myth of South Africa is still often used in narratives to symbolise South Africa. Since Andrade is from Venezuela, the obvious rhetoric of exotic South Africa is applied in Andrade's poster to indicate Mandela's connection to Africa, and specifically South Africa. Furthermore, the faces of people, and especially children are used to connote Mandela's humanitarian nature. As evident in Jung's archetypal fertility myth mentioned earlier in this study, women and children are often linked to fertility and nature (Coupe 2009:2). Therefore, the use of children, and especially girl children in Andrade's images support the rhetoric of Mandela as a humanitarian leader.

According to Hanekom (2015), Andrade's poster can also connote Mandela looking back on his life achievements of peace, freedom and humanity. Specific framing of the subject such as Mandela's position and age indicate Mandela's reflective nature. The facial expressions and the way that Mandela faces away from the camera indicates that Mandela is thinking. The smile on Mandela's face, further indicates that Mandela's thinking is of something positive. By the inclusion of Mandela as an aged man, one can deduce that Mandela might be contemplating his life's achievements and feeling peaceful about the results. Essentially, Andrade uses rhetoric in the form of both iconic imagery and mythic connotations of these images to bring across the myth of Mandela as peacemaker.

4.2.2.4 Roy Villalobos: cages, jail bars and hearts
Roy Villalobos' poster (Figure 18) represents the theme 'cages, jail bars and hearts', however, this poster has a specific focus on a human heart. In this poster, a black and white side profile of Mandela's face is presented as a vector style graphic. The back of Mandela's head is a depiction of an anatomical heart in the same style. Four coloured dots in blue, yellow, green and red are placed just left of the centre of the poster on Mandela's cheek. Black and white copy at the bottom of the poster reads 'A good heart and a good head is always a good combination',

followed by the word 'Mandela'. All elements of this poster are placed on a flat, dark-red background.

The denotative association in Villalobos' poster is that Mandela was an intelligent person with good intentions and that these characteristics contributed to Mandela's efforts in forming a unified national identity for South Africa after the abolition of apartheid. The term, 'having a good head' is a part of the idiom, 'having a good head on your shoulders' which means being intelligent and being able to make good decisions (MacMillan Dictionary 2018). Similarly, having a good heart is a derivation of the term 'good-hearted', which can be defined as "having a kindly generous disposition" (Merriam-Webster 2018). The association of Mandela to these terms is again attributed to the rhetorical device, proximity. By combining a representation of Mandela's head with a representation of a heart, Villalobos influences the reader to accept that Mandela is the bearer of the good heart and the good head. In this case, a literal combination of a heart and a head is formed and figured as Mandela. By portraying Mandela in this way, Villalobos not only conveys Mandela as public figure, but also aims to show Mandela's "spirit and ideology" (Villalobos, in Hanekom 2015). Mandela's spirit and ideology here refers to "a human being, who by his example made it clear that freedom in life is within ourselves; our prejudices, racial, social and cultural differences create those barriers that keep us prisoners believing to be free" (Villalobos, in Hanekom 2015).

Colour plays an important role as a rhetorical device in Villalobos's poster. Firstly, the four dots in the centre of the layout combined with white and the black used in the poster references the South African national flag. The colours black, white, red, blue, green and yellow were combined in the design of a new national flag when Mandela was elected president. Thus, the reference to the new South African flag is a direct link to the word 'nation' highlighted in white in the copy. The word 'nation' thus refers to South African nation and the ideologies maintained by the South African nation. Secondly, the red background may indicate blood or passion, both conveying the required association to spirit and heart.

By centrally aligning all the elements of the poster, specifically not cropping any of the elements, Villalobos ensured that attention and detail is given to all the objects in the poster. This rhetorical device, framing (and to an extent composition), ensures that the white space around these objects create a 'frame' which completes the poster and allows the audience to focus on the objects, instead of metaphorically completing the objects as one would have done if some elements were cropped (Emanuel 2015:150).

Figure 18: Roy Villalobos, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The flat vector style used by Villalobos is indicative of the implicit, rhetorical function of reduction and serves the same purpose as the reduction technique used in Andrade's poster, discussed earlier in this section of the study. Reduction is used to convey neutrality of the content in this poster. This neutrality may further indicate that the relationship between the message and the image is an essence and not a culturally learned fact (Lupton in Emanuel 2010:144), hereby indicating that Mandela in naturally good- hearted and that this fact is not learned but assumed through Mandela's actions. Hence, through the use of specific universally recognised symbols and idioms, and the addition of visual rhetorical elements such as text, style, reduction, colour, proximity and framing, Villalobos contributed meaning to the poster collection by communicating the 'essence' and ideology of Mandela.

4.2.2.5 *Gyula Gefin: Mandela, son of Africa*

Gyula Gefin's artwork, Figure 19, represents the theme 'Mandela, son of Africa. Gefin's poster portrays the words '*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika'*, forming the shape of the African continent including Madagascar. These letterforms are formed by a black and white photograph of Mandela in a later stage in his life. The words 'Mandela 95' shape the island of Madagascar next to the iconic representation of Africa.

The initial connotation with Gefin's poster is that, firstly, Mandela is a positive representation for the continent of Africa and, secondly, that Mandela represents the idea of what it is to be an African. The representation of Mandela as African icon is common in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collective and can be seen in the works of other artists including Charis Tsevis, Fabio do Prado, Jacques Lange, Lavanya Asthana, Levente Szabo, and Maria Papeaefstathiou.

The myth of Africa is based on anthropological and cultural study of Africa from a western point of view. These ideas of Africa, based on the history of Africa, African ecological environment, societal beliefs, cultural values and African identity, firmly form the way in which African people are viewed, and subsequently treated (Koenigsberg, in Hammond & Jablow 2012:6). The connotation to Africa in Gefin's poster is thus that Africa can be paired with the positive notions and identities that Mandela portrays. The essential connection of Mandela to Africa is through his historical support in the Pan African Congress and his intervention in peace movements throughout Africa. Another connection of Mandela to Africa is through Mandela's physical location, South Africa, which forms part of the African continent.

The representation of Mandela as an icon of the myth of Africa (and the accompanying African ideologies) can be attributed to the rhetorical function of similarity. The first rhetorical device used in this poster is the pictorial layout of the type in the image to form a representation of the continent of Africa. Secondly, the black and white photo of Mandela fills the text in such a way that the letterforms become unified. Thus, through the rhetorical device of similarity, the concept of Africa and the idea of Mandela is paired to form one narrative: Mandela is a representation of Africa, and similarly, Africa represents Mandela.

The use of type as a rhetorical device also plays an important role in the formation of meaning in Gefin's poster. The typeface is iconic of 'new African typography' design style which constitutes of typefaces that represent Africa in a modern way. According to Serge Akwei (2014), traditional African typography is stereotypically limited to "tribal imagery", rough lettering and unstructured geometric shapes. Therefore, African designers sought to design new typefaces that would be iconic of Africa, yet also portrays Africa as a progressing continent. New African typography includes geometric shapes inspired by African patterns presented in a modern structured and digital format. Thereby, new African typefaces present the cultural heritage of the continent in a modern and digital style (Akwei 2014). Gefin's typographical letterforms are clear representations of the new African type style, thereby portraying Africa in a positive manner. This concept of portraying Africa in a developing light, also links the idea of Mandela as a positive African icon.

The readable content of the text also forms another layer of meaning in the poster. The words '*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*' refer to the South African national anthem which was changed from the traditional Afrikaans '*Die stem van Suid Afrika*' (The call to South Africa) to include a selection of national languages of South Africa after apartheid. The Zulu and Xhosa words '*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*' directly translate to "God/Lord Bless Africa" (South African Government 2018). The use of the term, 'God bless Africa' is not necessarily a religious term, despite the use of the term 'God' or 'Lord'. The term is often used as a positive gesture in whishing someone or something prosperity. The inclusion of the iconic national anthem of South Africa is an indication of the positive change that Mandela ensured for the African continent, and especially the South African society. As such, Gefin's poster is a typographical representation of Africa which places particular focus on Mandela's African identity. In doing so, this poster contributes to the myth of Mandela as iconic African symbol.

PHOTO OF NELSON MANDELA © THE ESTATE OF YOUSUF KARSH

Figure 19: Gyula Gefin, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

4.2.2.6 Joël Guenoun: hands and fists as symbols of solidarity and struggle

Joël Guenoun's poster, Figure 20, represents the theme 'hands and fists as symbols of solidarity and struggle'. This poster features a raised black fist centred in the middle of a white background. The fist is shaped by typographical letterforms and spell the word, 'Mandela'. From the onset, the poster symbolises a raised fist formed by letters that spell the word Mandela. However, on a connotative level, these elements together form the myth of Mandela as leader in a struggle for power and unity.

The poster is a simple, yet powerful representation of pictorial typography consisting of three elements: type, image and colour. All three elements play a significant role in portraying connotative meanings of the message. The first symbolic visual representation is the raised fist. The raised fist, also known as the clenched fist is often used in political and propaganda posters as a visual rhetorical device indicating power, strength and unity of people (Hake 2017:319), unusually people on the brink of a revolution. Moreover, the clenched fist is mostly associated with politics and oppressed groups (Chadbourn 2016). The use of a clenched fist in Guenoun's posters is symbolic of Mandela's revolutionary struggles against the apartheid regime. Moreover, the clenched first was often used by Mandela in public appearances, such as when Mandela was released from Victor Verster Prison in 1990. These public appearances often formed key 'triggers' used by designers as icons in portraying the myth of Mandela.

Secondly, the use of type also plays a significant rhetorical role in conveying the message in Guenoun's poster. According to Rath (2015:106), type can be viewed as rhetorical devices. Type often functions as mythic structures, embedded with their own set of ideological notions. According to Campbell (2009:46), research into the use of typefaces in the last century show that letters and letter types could be approached as channels for the abstract ideas of nationhood that reflect cultural meaning. The specific use of type in Guenoun's poster is symbolic of South African vernacular typography which can be identified through the inconsistent edge lines and letter sizes, indicating a handwritten font. South African vernacular typography is a uniquely South African typographic style based on handwritten lettering in township signage and is consistent with South African visual styles that arose in the time after apartheid, making them icons for the myth of post-apartheid South Africa. As such, the use of vernacular typography in Guenoun's poster is indicative of ideologies of 'freedom' of expression and identity, values that came to light at the start of the democratic era for South Africa.

Figure 20: Joël Guenoun, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

Furthermore, the use of colour in Guenoun's poster is indicative of the use of reduction as rhetorical element in order to create a sense of neutrality. At the same time, the great contrast between the use of simple black forms on a white background, creates drama, indicating movement and power. Moreover, the use of black as the colour of the fist is in some way indicative of the power struggle that black people had to endure in the times of apartheid.

The use of Mandela's name to form the image of a fist is an indication of proximity as the rhetorical device. The name, Mandela, forms a visual grouping with the imagined representation of the fist, thereby grouping the meanings. As such, Mandela is associated with both the myth of the raised fist and the ideologies associated with South African vernacular typography. Thus, in Guenoun's poster, the myth of Mandela is portrayed as Mandela, the icon of unity and empowerment of South African people.

4.2.2.7 Marian Bantjes; many names of Mandela

Marian Bantjes artwork, Figure 21, is selected to represent 'the many names of Mandela'. Bantjes' artwork titled, *Mandela Mandala*, features two pattern motifs on a white background. The first motif is a circular pattern created with black lines varying in thickness. The circular pattern consists of seven consecutive rings descending in size. Each ring includes a different repeating typographical letterform, which together spells the repeating word, 'Mandela'. Thin lines connect these letterforms and create complex triangular shapes and circles. The lower quarter of the poster features the second motif which consists of multiple horizontal lines, varying in thickness, which span across the poster. At the centre of these lines, small rectangles shape the number '95'. A grouping of thicker lines at the bottom of the poster creates a pattern band wherein similar rectangles form a repeating triangle pattern.

In considering the connotative meaning of Bantjes' poster, the first assumption or deduction made is that the circular pattern is a mandala. As discussed earlier in this study, mandalas are circular symbols often used in spiritual and cultural rituals and may convey rich cultural meaning. Moreover, geometric patterns are also used in some African cultures to convey cultural meaning. Together, these motifs and patterns indicate to the audience that Bantjes' poster is concerned with Mandela and cultural meaning. Bantjes (in Hanekom 2015) states that her poster is a visual wordplay between Mandela and mandala, thereby portraying Mandela as a cultural symbol with cultural meaning. The varying linework and shapes used in the poster is inspired by the black and white lines and patterns used in original Thembu art, and that Mandela has ancestral roots in the Themba culture (Bantjes, in Hanekom 2015).
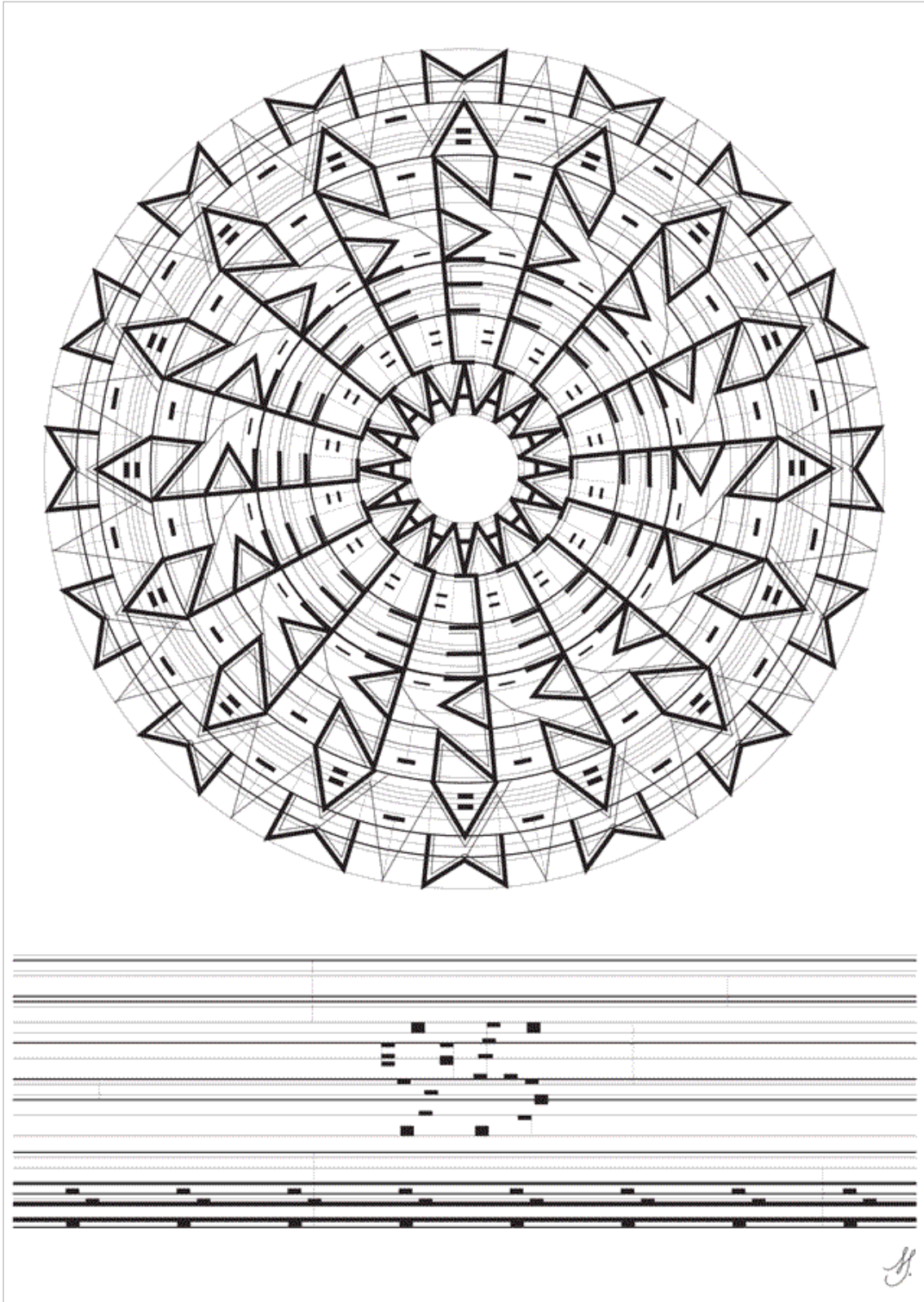
Figure 21: Marian Bantjes, *Mandela Mandala*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The use of consistency as a rhetorical device in Bantjes' poster is essential to the poster's communication. Consistency can be described as the repetition of visual elements (Emanuel 2010:146), and in Bantjes' poster, the repetition of lines, shapes and letterforms as visual elements ensure that the viewer reads and interprets the visual information as a mandala, cultural patterns, Mandela's name, and the number 95. The consistency of lines and shapes in the same colour also allows the audience to feel comfortable with the layout and explore the poster in detail.

Furthermore, the use of black and white colours in the poster mimics the colours used in traditional Themba artworks, and therefore adds informational meaning to the poster. Moreover, the use of only black and white creates drama through contrast, similar to the way that the black and white colours in Guenoun's poster creates drama and power. Therefore, the use of colour as rhetorical device in Bantjes' poster also conveys emotion. As such, subtle drama and conflict is created by the varying line-widths and contrasting colours.

The varying line-widths and inconsistent change in shape sizes and circle ratios also create movement in the poster. Movement in composition is a rhetorical device often applied to designs to persuade the audience to view the poster in a certain order, or to urge the audience focus on a certain part of the poster. The purpose of movement in Bantjes' poster is to eventually lead the focus of the audience to the centre of the Mandela to indicate the importance of Mandela's "cultural roots and universal symbolism" (Bantjes, in Hanekom 2015).

4.2.2.8 Fabio Testa: life of Mandela in words and images

The work of Fabio Testa (Figure 22) titled, *The life and times of a great man*, is one poster selected from the category theme, 'life of Mandela in words and images'. Testa's poster features 96 black linework illustrations on a light-beige coloured background. These illustrations are placed in organised rows next to and beneath each other, forming a grid of eight across and twelve icons vertically stacked. Each of the illustrations vary in content. Some, in the beginning depict a baby, later a boy. Other, in the middle of the poster, depict lines, which forms prison bars. Other, at the end of the icon collection, depict an aged man. One illustration, three rows from the bottom, features an inverted image of a clenched fist, drawn in light lines, in a black block.

When considering Testa's poster a connotative level, this poster clearly depicts the life of Mandela. Each illustration depicts a year in Mandela's life, including Mandela's childhood,

Mandela's prison sentence, Mandela as first elected black president in South Africa, highlighting the end of apartheid, and ending at Mandela as an aged man (Testa 2018). This deduction is, of course, confirmed by Testa's poster title, *The life and times of a great man*. Testa's communication relies on the audience's knowledge of Mandela's life to make the relevant deductions of what each illustration depicts, and ultimately, that the collection of illustrations depicts Mandela's life story.

Colour plays an important rhetorical function in Testa's poster. According to Emanuel (2010:142), colour can be used to draw attention to certain parts of a layout, thereby highlighting and placing emphasis within a layout. In Testa's poster, colour inversion is used to emphasise the clenched fist illustration which indicates the end of Mandela's power struggle against the apartheid regime. By emphasising only one illustration, Testa draws the audience's attention to that specific illustration, thereby indicating the significance of the end of a power struggle in Mandela's life.

A combination of colour and iconographic style is suggestive of the rhetorical function of reduction. The use of black and white colour is not only valuable for emphasis in this poster, but also allows for Testa's objectivity in the poster. The use of simple, thin linework contributes to the tone of neutrality in Testa's poster, as the audience often associate reduction and simplicity with neutrality and objectivity (Emanuel 2010:145). In the implicit application of the rhetorical function of reduction, the meaning of the poster is less focused on the political and ideological undertones accompanying these illustrations, but rather becomes an overall celebration of Mandela's life.

In addition, composition is also used as a rhetorical device in Testa's poster. The placement of elements in a layout is vital to the way that the audience perceives these elements (Emanuel 2010:152). In Testa's poster, illustrations are placed in such a way that the audience must read the poster from left to right, top to bottom to chronologically understand that these illustrations each depict a year in Mandela's life. Thus, Testa's poster relies on the western norm of reading from left to right. If this poster were to communicate to cultures using a different reading system, such as the Japanese, who read from right to left, the poster's communication would have been misunderstood.

Figure 22: Fabio Testa, *The life and times of a great man*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

4.2.2.9 Cristina Chiappini; Mandela's values

Christina Chiappini's poster, as seen in Figure 23, represents the theme of 'Mandela's values'. On a denotative level, this poster consists of several typographical elements including a quote at the top of the page stating that 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world', the word 'Mandela' in the bottom left corner and the number 95 in the bottom right corner. The type in the image consists of several colours including black, red, green, yellow, and blue, wherein most of the letters consist of more than one of those colours. Finally, all elements are featured on a white background.

On a connotative level, Chiappini's poster represents one of the many values which Mandela stood for. This poster places particular focus on the value that Mandela put into education. The quote featured in the poster, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world', is a well-known quote by Mandela himself. This quote, extracted from an address at the launch of Mindset in Johannesburg in 2003 (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2018), is often used to promote the importance of education at educational forums, and is used so frequently, that it has become part of Mandela's iconic identity.

Colour is used as a rhetorical device throughout this poster. The six colours used namely, black, white (as the background colour), red, green, yellow and blue represent the post-apartheid South African Nation flag which was commissioned as a means to indicate the unified diversity of South Africa as a nation. Moreover, the use of colours and shapes in the 'o' letterforms symbolise a target consisting of the African National Congress party colours. This could be a specific reference to the African National Youth Congress, where Mandela started his political career. Herein, Chiappini intentionally wishes to draw the attention of the audience in indicating the importance of youth education (Chiappini in Hanekom 2015).

Furthermore, the particular proximity and framing of the typographical elements in the poster allows the audience to make certain grammatical connections. The placement of Mandela's name at the bottom left of the page under the quote indicates that the top copy is a quote by Mandela and that Chiappini is referencing Mandela without adding quotation marks. Here, the audience relies on previous reading experience, made possible through education, to make relevant grammatical associations.

Figure 23: Cristina Chiappini, *Untitled*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

The typographical interplay between sans serif type and similar weighted forms have the same effect, wherein the audience depends on their previous reading education to decipher the letterforms in order to read and understand the text. As such, the use of type also has a rhetorical function in communicating the value that Mandela placed in education as key message of the poster and contribution to the myth of Mandela.

4.2.2.10 Celéste Burger: rainbows

Celéste Burger's artwork (Figure 24), titled *Before and After*, is a symbolic representation of the years before apartheid and post-apartheid. From a formal perspective, Burger's poster portrays a series of parallel bars. The bars are split at a third width of the length of the page. On the top part of the split, the bars are interchanging black and white. On the bottom the page, the bars are multi-coloured. On top of the bars is the name, Nelson Mandela shaded with bars of different colours. The number 95 features at the bottom right hand side of the poster, also in bars of different colours.

Similarity is used as a rhetorical device to indicate to the audience that the top and the bottom half of the poster is split into a 'before' and 'after' section. According to Emmanuel (2010:152), images created similar to each other are perceived as a group. In the case of Burger's poster, the split of the page is owed to the use of different colours, black and white, for the top half of the bars and different colours, the rainbow colours, for the lower half of the bars. This split serves an important function in the design, as it indicates the past and the present. The past, indicated by the top half of the page, symbolically indicates the apartheid period. Likewise, the lower half of the page indicates the present time, devoid of apartheid ideologies concerned with separation.

On a connotative level, Burger's poster clearly represents a split between two categories. These two categories indicate how people in South Africa were seen (by themselves and by others) before and after apartheid. The top section represents the binary identification of people split into groups of black and white based on their race. Caucasian or fair skinned people were categorised as white and any other race or skin colour was categorised as black. Likewise, the lower section of the poster is indicative of the myth of the rainbow nation (or *rainbowism*), whereby all races and cultures are seen as a unified, all-inclusive group, which became one of the seminal means of identification for South African nation after the abolition of apartheid.

Figure 24: Celéste Burger, *Before and After*, 2013 (Mandela Poster Project Catalogue).

According to Lange and van Eeden ([sa]), Archbishop Desmond Tutu metaphorically described South Africans in the post-apartheid era as a 'rainbow nation', owing to the apparently unified culture, in terms of race, gender and beliefs. The situation at that time was described as the rainbow nation's convergence of cultures, races and inclusive ideologies (Lange & van Eeden [sa]:[sp]). Lange and van Eeden ([sa]:[sp]), further state that "Rainbowism" became the fundamental post-apartheid myth. In a radical shift, South Africa was internationally presented from being a country driven by separation and isolation to portraying a reflection of peace, transformation and cultural unity. Owing to the introduction of the 'rainbow nation' cultural identity, South Africans were encouraged to foster a new national and cultural identity, through the implementation of a visual identity, that would portray an image of a country that has found unity in its diversity (Sauthoff 2004:36).

Furthermore, it can be argued that the bars at the top section of the poster represent prison bars, which according to Burger (in Hanekom 2015) leaves the people in South Africa "locked in" and "closed off", forging a society of separation. The concept of a prison cell is resembled in two ways. Firstly, the black bars literally simulate prison bars against a light background, forming a literal representation of a prison cell. Secondly, the black and white bars are symbolic of the typical prison clothes featured in popular culture renditions of life in prison. The representation of a prison is also closely linked to Mandela's life in the apartheid era, since Mandela is known for spending 27 years in prison, where after Mandela became the first democratically elected black president of South Africa.

Burger's poster thus represents the difference that Mandela ensured in his selfless efforts in abolishing apartheid. It can be assumed that Burger's poster message is the depiction of Mandela as a figure who brought about the concept of the rainbow nation, which played a highly influential role in the formation of the South African national identity.

4.3   Significance of the Mandela Poster Project (2013)

The *Mandela Poster Project (2013),* and the portrayal of the myth of Mandela plays a significant role in the greater good of the South African society. Throughout this study it has been continually discussed that myth has the potential to act as a constructive force in aiding positive societal formation. Thereby, it is meant that some myths can be seen as constructive rhetorical devices. The use of constructive myth in design allows the designers to act as mythographers, who, through *mythopoesis*, can persuade an audience to align their behaviour towards positive change.

The myth of Mandela is one example of a myth that effectively acted as a constructive force in the societal formation of the new South Africa, a society that strove for socio-political change at the time. This myth acted constructively by simultaneously aiding the abolition of apartheid and suggesting new, positive ideologies as a means of building a unified South African nation after apartheid. These new ideologies are concerned with concepts focusing on the unity of people, regardless of their race, culture or identity. It reaches far beyond the limitations of the ideologies set out by the apartheid regime, which focused on the complete separation of race and culture. The new ideologies are not only focused on race and culture but is also focused on the identities of South African individuals and South Africa as a nation.

In doing so, the Mandela myth, depicting Mandela as a hero, saint and struggle icon acted as a highly influential myth that guided and persuaded both the oppressed and the greater support group of Mandela to act towards social justice. These actions included powerful revolutionary actions of persistent revolt, which formed part of a larger movement that, at the end, managed the society of South Africa towards a country devoid of separatist ideological notions paired with apartheid. After apartheid, the Mandela myth and all the ideologies associated with Mandela formed the national identity of the 'new' South Africa, aided by other myths such as the myth of the rainbow nation, describing South Africa as a nation, unified as a single collective identity.

Years after the fall of apartheid, the positive notions of freedom, peace and humanity, depicting the myth of Mandela still influence and inspire the behaviour of many. For example, every year on the 18th of July, Mandela's birthday, South Africans celebrate Mandela Day. This day is celebrated by doing good deeds with the purpose of helping others and the environment. Mandela day is celebrated in honour of Mandela's legacy to "change the world for better" (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2018). Therefore, the consistent reinstatement of the myth of Mandela in popular culture is one way through which people are continuously influenced to aim their behaviour towards the greater good of humanity.

The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), is one example of how the positive myth of Mandela is still conveyed and widely accepted in different communities around the world. Designers who participated in the *Mandela Poster Project (2013),* conveyed the myth of Mandela in their posters as a means of celebrating the life of Mandela. Mandela, whether portrayed as a saint, a peacemaker, an icon of power through struggle, a leader of the rainbow nation or an iconic representation of Africa, is always seen in light of the myth that Mandela represents. Each of the

posters within these themes are direct in communicating specific aspects of what people believe Mandela signifies. In summary, the posters analysed each represent a different narrative related to Mandela, however, when these narratives are read together, they collectively convey the myth of Mandela. Garth Walker's poster depicted Mandela as a saint; Sindiso Nyoni depicted Mandela as a freedom fighter; Carlos Andrade's depiction of Mandela was concerned with the notion of peace, thereby depicting Mandela as peacemaker; Roy Villalobos depicted Mandela's good spirit and ideologies; Gyula Gefin depicted Mandela as the positive icon of African identity; Joël Guenoun depicted Mandela as an activist against power struggle; Marian Bantjes depicted Mandela as a cultural icon; Fabio Testa celebrated the life of Mandela in entirety; Cristina Chiappini depicted the value that Mandela placed in education; and lastly, Celéste Burger depicted Mandela as the leader of the rainbow nation. Collectively these narratives contextualise the myth of Mandela.

The intentional use of design elements such as imagery, typography (as mythic structures) and icons were essential in conveying the myth of Mandela in these posters. Moreover, the application of specific visual rhetorical devices, namely colour, typography, reduction, consistency, framing, proximity, similarity and composition was evident in the success of communicating the different narratives that convey the myth of Mandela. In some instances, rhetorical devices were applied in the posters to aid the overall communication of the myth of Mandela. Chiappini's poster is an example of a poster that used design elements to convey the overall narrative of Mandela's value in education. However, most of the designers also applied mythical narratives within their posters, and in doing so, reformed the meaning of those messages in order to communicate a new collective narrative of Mandela. Walker's depiction of Mandela as saint is an example of how designers used embedded narratives in their design contexts. In Walker's poster, the embedded mythic narrative of religion is portrayed by religious symbolism and icons in order to create a new message: Mandela as saint. This reformation of meaning is a form of *mythopoeisis*, as these designers adapted existing myths in order to convey new meaning.

It can be further noted that, by applying embedded meaning in these posters, the act of *mythopoeisis* formed a type of narrative reduction, wherein the simplification of messages was achieved by relying on the narratives already embedded in the icons and symbols used. Andrade's depiction of Mandela as peacemaker is a clear example of how *mythopoeisis* can be seen as a form of reduced visual stylisation. Andrade's poster depicts doves, an African wildlife landscape and African girl children. Each of these depictions are saturated with mythical

narratives and specific connotations of peace, Africanism and humanity. By intentionally including these narratives, Andrade expects the audience to acknowledge these meanings and form a simple new collective meaning, thereby reducing the need to explain and over-communicate these concepts yet including the needed connotations in the overarching narrative of Mandela, African peacemaker and humanitarian.

Furthermore, through the visual analysis of these posters, it must be considered that most of the design elements used in these posters are inextricably linked to a South African culture. Visual styles such as the post-apartheid South African vernacular style in Walker's poster, South African typography such as the hand lettering style in Guenoun's fist, and specific use of colours such as the duplicated use of green black and yellow to reference the African National Congress are all indications that the myth of Mandela is strongly linked to South Africa. And moreover, that the success of these designs is contingent on a local context. This notion of the dependence of the success of the narrative relying on South African cultural knowledge is interesting, since the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collection is part of a travelling exhibition. Thereby, two ideas must be acknowledged. Firstly, the collective memories of South Africans play a vital role in the strength and impact of the message of Mandela, since Mandela's identity relies on historically embedded notions of struggle and heroic feat. As such, the impact and significance of the Mandela myth may be less so in a different country, and more impactful in South Africa, since the events that support the myth of Mandela had a far greater impact on South Africa, than other countries. Secondly, the myth of Mandela may be perceived differently when read in a non-South African context. For example, in South Africa, the myth of Mandela is concerned with how Mandela heroically fought for the abolition of apartheid and eventually played a vital role in the formation of a new South African national identity. However, elsewhere, a person is differently influence by the myth since the historical context is less prominent or that person was exposed to mediated historical contexts. In this case, the myth of Mandela may for example be read as Mandela, humanitarian and human rights advocate. Of course, the second view of Mandela still forms part of the greater Mandela narrative, however, the second view is exclusive of a South African cultural context and therefore may be read differently when applied as a form of rhetoric in a new message.

Finally, it is worth stating that the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) is a form of socially conscious design. From the outset of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), the intention of the project was to celebrate the life of Mandela and to make a positive contribution to society. However, the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) also had an unprecedented impact in sustaining

the myth of Mandela, thereby unconsciously contributing to the continual influence that Mandela's myth had on the behaviours and values of the South African society. It is this continual representation of Mandela which secures the myth of Mandela and the continuous support of legacy that Mandela left behind. The *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) can therefore be seen as an example of how myth can effectively be used as a constructive tool in aiding positive societal change through the behavioural influence of societies affected by these designs.

4.4   Conclusion

Chapter Four focused on the myth of Mandela and the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). This chapter illustrated, through the visual examples, theories and discussions presented in previous chapters of this study. In doing so, this study considered the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), as a relevant case study to show the aforementioned theories in practice.

The first section of this chapter discussed the history of South Africa and the role that Mandela played in the abolition of the apartheid regime. This historical context of Mandela and South Africa is explored to contextualise the history of Mandela, needed to understand the myth of Mandela. Through this brief historical analysis, it is clear that Mandela played an important role in establishing notions of freedom and social equality in South Africa. Moreover, Mandela's actions resulted in his manifestation as a popular cultural icon and globally recognised brand. Mandela's iconic representation in popular culture is symbolic of all the narratives which together form the collective myth of Mandela. These notions are characterised by themes concerned with humanity, freedom, and heroic action. Furthermore, the myth of Mandela is regarded as a highly influential myth that once guided the actions and behaviours of many South Africans. In saying this, the myth of Mandela is one example of a constructive myth in society that effectively acted as a force of societal change. Through Mandela's actions, the myth of Mandela became an inspiration for many South Africans to change their values and beliefs in accepting new ideologies that would at the end result in constructive societal change.

Through a visual rhetorical analysis on the posters of Garth Walker representing 'portraits of Mandela'; Sindiso Nyoni representing 'Mandela the boxer'; Carlos Andrade representing 'birds as symbols of freedom'; Roy Villalobos for the theme, 'cages, jail bars and hearts'; Gyula Gefin representing 'Mandela, son of Africa'; Joël Guenoun for the theme, 'hands and fists as symbols of solidarity and struggle'; Marian Bantjes for 'many names of Mandela'; Fabio Testa representing 'life of Mandela in words and images'; Cristina Chiappini representing 'Mandela's values'; and lastly, Celéste Burger representing the theme, 'rainbows', it is clear that rhetorical

design elements are applied by designers in these designs as a means of effectively communicating the myth of Mandela. Moreover, most designers also embedded mythical narratives within these designs in order to reform the meaning of these narrative to effectively convey a new message. By doing so, these designers effectively conveyed the myth of Mandela through the act of *mythopoeisis*, which can also be seen as a form of rhetoric in communicating Mandela's story.

Furthermore, the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), as socially conscious design, can be seen as an example of how myth can act as a constructive design tool in aiding positive societal change. This is noted, as the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) played an important role in successfully communicating the myth of Mandela, which still has a positive influence on people's behaviours and beliefs. As such, the continual affirmation and reformation of the myth of Mandela through the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), means that the mythic narratives portrayed by these posters have a positive influence on the behaviours and beliefs of people exposed to the project. In other words, the constant re-imagination and reminder of the myth of Mandela, persuades the audience of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) to revaluate their beliefs and values and gear them towards change for societal good.

In conclusion to this study, Chapter Five includes a summary of the chapters, contributions of the study, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The final chapter of this study, namely Chapter Five, serves as a conclusion of this study's research. As such, this chapter includes a brief summary of the contents and structure of Chapters One to Four, the contributions of this study, the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research into the topics discussed. Lastly, this Chapter provides concluding remarks on this study.

5.1   Summary of chapters

In Chapter One, this study suggested the need and premise of this study. In suggesting the research premise of this study, the study firstly included a background to the study wherein it was discussed that myth, and especially ideological and socio-political myth is often seen as deceptive. However, within the scope of social design, myth can be regarded as being a constructive force in societies where social change is needed. Moreover, designers act as agents in the myth-making process and can utilise myth as a design tool when considering design for constructive change. The aim of the study is thus identified as the need to explore and discuss myth as constructive force within design discourse and practice, and the role of the designer as mythographer, since this premise is not widely discussed or researched. Moreover, Chapter One recognised several objectives, methods, theoretical frameworks and relevant literature that aided the research endeavour of this study.

Chapter Two provided a literature review with an in-depth focus on myth. The intention was to firstly introduce and define the concept of myth in order to gain a greater understanding of myth. The second intention was to understand how myth is situated within design practice in order to argue that myth may be seen as a constructive force in aiding positive societal change. By means of these aims, this chapter firstly introduced myth as a semiological system and ideological concept within the broader scope of visual culture. Thereafter, this chapter provided a critical perspective on myth as a means of discussing current dominant approaches to investigating and studying myth. Furthermore, Chapter Two discussed myth in design discourse and practice with the specific aim of relating myth to design. Finally, this chapter discussed the possibility of myth having constructive potential when regarded within socio-political contexts.

Chapter Three discussed myth in design from the perspective that designers may be seen as agents in the myth-making process and socio-political posters an effective vehicle for mythic communication. Chapter Three, therefore, had a specific focus on the process of myth-making,

who the creators of myth may be and how myth is conveyed by these myth-makers in society. Overall, the content in this chapter formed a continuation on the content discussed in Chapter Two. Hence, the discussion in Chapter Three is a continuation on the greater discussion of constructive myth and design. In doing so, Chapter Three firstly defined the notion of *mythopoesis* in order to discuss the adaptability of myth within design discourse and practice. Thereafter, this chapter discussed how designers can be seen as agents in the process of 'creating' myths, adapting and extending existing myths for specific communication. Moreover, Chapter Three discussed the constructive potential of socio-political myth when considering socially conscious design, the practice of designing with intent for positive societal change. The second section of Chapter Three provided a brief introduction on posters and discussed socio-political posters in light of political propaganda. This discussion in Chapter Three argued how posters act as effective mediums for mythic and ideological communication, indicating some of the reasons why designers may choose and still chooses the poster as one way of conveying mythic messages. Lastly, this chapter discussed the poster as feature in an increasing contemporary digital era and how the digital transformation and application of posters may have an impact on the mythical messages conveyed by these posters.

Chapter Four presented a case study, investigating the myth of Mandela in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate the theory discussed throughout this study. In achieving this purpose, Chapter Four discussed how the myth of Mandela is conveyed through a selection of posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collective. In doing so, this chapter was unpacked in two parts, the first discussing the myth of Mandela and, the second, providing a visual rhetorical analysis on a selection of posters by Garth Walker, Sindiso Nyoni, Carlos Andrade, Roy Villalobos, Gyula Gefin, Joël Guenoun, Marian Bantjes, Fabio Testa, Cristina Chiappini and Celéste Burger from the collective. The first section of Chapter Four included two sub-sections of which the first provided a brief historical overview of South Africa, from the apartheid era up to a post-apartheid era, to provide contextualisation of how and why Nelson Mandela became a popular culture icon that represents a certain set of ideas and ideologies. The second sub-section of this chapter investigated Mandela as a popular culture icon and a myth in modern society. Thereafter, Chapter Four conducted a visual rhetorical analysis on the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) by making use of rhetorical and semiotic theories to discuss the first two levels of meaning, namely denotation and connotation in relation to myth in order to illustrate the theory discussed throughout the study. The final part of this chapter discussed the significance of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) based on the discussions and findings throughout the study.

5.2   Contributions of the study

Throughout this study it was argued that myth has constructive potential within design discourse and practice. This is especially true when regarding myth within socio-political contexts. Some basic human needs such as equality and freedom of speech may be satisfied by the existence and application of myths (Megged 1985:211). Essentially, this study argued that the collective embrace of myth, as an ideological construct, has the potential to bring about change in societies where racial separation, oppression or other such socio-political scenarios exist. In arguing for the potential of myth, this study found that myths may act as constructive forces in societies by influencing people in societies and communities to change their ideological standpoints by acting on their beliefs and values which are embedded in myth. These changes can be positive and constructive if the ideologies embedded in constructive myths encourage the individuals and groups of a community or society to act upon changing negative behaviours, thus ensuing progressive positive societal change.

Furthermore, this study discussed that myth, and specifically socio-political myth, has a strong presence in design discourse and practice (Mayo 1993:41). In saying this, myth is so frequent in design practice that design naturally becomes one way through which myth is made accessible to societies. The reason for myth's palpable presence in design is that designers often use myth as rhetoric in their designs to communicate specific ideas or messages. In doing so, designers often partake in the act of *mythopoeisis*, making the designer an agent in myth-making. Therefore, this study found that designers frequently use myth (and specifically socio-political myth) as a highly effective rhetorical device when considering socially conscious design, making myth a constructive force in design practice.

This study furthermore found that designers often make use of different visual devices to communicate these myths. The poster is regularly used by designers as an effective vehicle for mythic communication due to its timeless format and efficacy in communication to masses. Therefore, this study included a visual rhetorical analysis on a selection of posters from the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collective as case study. In analysing these posters, this study found that the selected works represented various aspects of the myth of Mandela, which together formed a *gestalt* representation of Mandela, hero and South African freedom fighter.

The aim of this study was to investigate and discuss myth as having constructive potential within design discourse and practice, and to furthermore discuss the role of the designers in the myth-making process within the context of the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013). The findings

mentioned above indicate that, through actioned objectives set and discussed in Chapter One, this study contributed to a greater understanding of myth. Moreover, this study discussed myth (a topic often researched and discussed within psychology and cultural studies) within the context of design, contributing towards limited academic information on constructive myth in design by confronting these research questions and considering myth as a constructive force.

5.3   Summary of chapters

Owing to the scope and length of this study, this study does not include a rhetorical analysis on all 95 posters represented in the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) collection. As previously mentioned in Chapter Four, a selection, comprising ten posters, was considered for analysis based on the themes that underpin the curatorial structure of the collection exhibitions. Even though these posters were selected based on the same criteria, a selection as wide as 95 posters cause for the exclusion of many posters that may have offered valuable information that may have contributed to the findings of this study. As such, one suggestion for further study within this regard, would be to do an extensive and exclusive study and analysis of all the posters in the collection. This would allow for a broad and substantial amount of information to be gathered on the topic of myth in design, and especially the constructive myth of Mandela.

In addition, this study prominently considers the mythic theories of Roland Barthes, especially within the literature review in Chapter One. Therefore, the theoretical basis of this study is focused on the understanding of myth from Barthes' philosophical and theoretical standpoint. Although other theorists such as Houze, Coupe and Rose's theories form part of the theory of myth considered within this study, the viewpoints of Barthes were considered seminal to the understanding of socio-political myth within this study. Barthes' theory on myth was specifically considered seminal because of Barthes' ideological view of myth. Therefore, a suggestion for extended and a more encompassing theoretical understanding of myth would be to consider other essential mythic theorists such as Joseph Campbell, Karl Jung and Sigmund Freud. When considering the works of these theorists, one must also understand psychology and the function of myth within the psychological environment to fully understand how myth functions from the viewpoint of these critical theorists. As such, a collaborative study alongside someone with an understanding of psychology could be considered for further studies on the topic of myth in design.

In addition, owing to the scope of this study, this study only considers one vehicle, namely the poster, for mythic communications chosen by designers in communicating mythic messages to

their audience. The poster is one of many other forms of media that can be seen as vehicles for mythic communication. As such, one suggestion for further study with this regard is to consider other vehicles for mythic communication when investigating myth in design or the designer as myth-maker. These may include and is not limited to film, digital website banners, magazine prints and even wayfinding systems.

Finally, owing to the scope of this study, only one case study, the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013), is considered to illustrate the discussions and findings of the study. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to include more than one case study to investigate myth, and specifically socio-political myth. Furthermore, since the *Mandela Poster Project* (2013) deals with South African socio-political concerns and the author of this study is South African, an international example way be considered to solidify and further explain the concept of constructive myth in design. The inclusion of an international example may yield interesting findings if the studies are considered from either another South African author or an author from another country who may view the socio-political scenarios of both South Africa and their own country from a different perspective.

5.4   Concluding remarks

When considering the discussions on myth throughout this study, it is notable that myth is present in almost every aspect of human societies and cultures. In popular culture, the term 'myth' is often associated with magical creatures, folktales and heroic fighters with superhuman abilities. However, myth is also ideological in nature as it is embedded with deep-rooted notions through which people form an understanding of their direct environments. Within these environments, myth is manifested in strong religious, political and social beliefs which often guide the actions of societies and cultures. Here, myths are accepted as truth, essentially ensured by myth's ability to come across as neutralised speech. Myth is therefore a formidable and influential language construct that can influence the behaviours and actions of societies and cultures. For example, myth's ability to influence is often seen in commercial and political environments where people are influenced to buy certain products or to cast a certain vote as a result of myth's inclusion in advertisements and political campaigns. Hence, the influential nature of myth is often questioned and seen as something that human societies should be emancipated from.

However, in saying this, if the nature of myth's influence is positive, myth has the ability to act as a constructive device that may be used in the positive reformation of societies in need of

socio-political change. The collective embrace of myths in societies and communities may change the way people perceive their environment and result in people acting towards societal change. One pertinent example considered in this study is the myth of Mandela, freedom fighter and human-rights activist. Nelson Mandela, fought for the liberation of South Africans from the clasps of the apartheid regime, which dictated the believes of many South Africans based on notions of severe racial segregation. The myth of Mandela influenced many people in South Africa to change their ways of thinking, and therefore also their behaviours. These behavioural changes were actioned in the form of protest action, as part of a greater campaign, against the apartheid regime, in turn influencing the upliftment of apartheid and believed racial equality of many South Africans. In the post-apartheid era, the myth of Mandela is still associated with notions of freedom and equality. Consequently, the iconic presence of Mandela in popular culture, even after Mandela's death, acts as a reminder of the new South African ideologies, based on unity, and a South Africa devoid of racial segregation, that formed as a result of the change in beliefs of many South Africans at the time.

Finally, designers play a vital role in aiding the positive reformation of societies through the inclusion of constructive myth in their designs. This is especially true when designers are considering socially conscious design. Designers often participate consciously or unconsciously in the reformation of societies when their designs influence the audience to believe in the message conveyed and essentially act in favour of change. Protest action, environmental campaigns and even political uprisings are all examples of change as a result of the collective embrace of constructive myths. Posters, digital communication, street art designs and magazine publications are all platforms through which constructive myth may be communicated and opinions may be voiced. As such, constructive socio-political myth may be used by designers as a tool for constructive societal change. Designers therefore have the responsibility to be aware of their influence on a society, especially if their involvement may promote positive societal change, which in turn can better the lives and environments of many.

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