

Archotyping race, gender and class: advertising in *The Bantu World* and *The World* from the 1930s to the 1990s

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If only we could find the right formula of selling to the Bantu, all would be well.

A. M. Parker (1964)

Abstract: This article sets out to interrogate the ideological hegemony of the superstructuring narrative voice in advertisements by studying linguistic, structural devices and encoding that are employed, in order to expose its racial, class and gender undertones embedded in the authorial voice. The sample of advertisements discussed is derived from *The Bantu World* and its two sequels, *The World* and *The Sowetan*. The sample is thinly dispersed over a period of five decades. Most of the advertisements selected were duplicated in the sister newspapers, *Mochochono* (Sesotho) and *Imvo* (isiXhosa), which were published under the auspices of the Associated Bantu Press. In the latter case the advertisements in the different languages were directly translated from English. The thrust of our argument is that the narrative voice, together with the images, are loaded with a stereotyping preconceived notion of the “other”, which is either conscious or subconscious. We also suggest that the change of the newspaper’s name is accompanied by a perceptible evolution of ideological bias in both the images and the narrative voice.

Key words: Bantu World, advertising, newspapers, stereotyping race, class, and gender

Introduction

The proceedings of a marketing and advertising convention which was held in Cape Town in 1964 (Parker, 1964:7-8) made it explicit that advertisers present viewed the South African market a black-and-white dichotomy; by the hedge that Jan van Riebeeck planted at the Cape when he arrived and settled in the middle of the seventeenth century, to separate the new settlers from the indigenous inhabitants. The convention looked back to trends in marketing and advertising strategies. One of the brief presentations sought in particular to address the question of the Bantu (as Africans were called at the time)

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as a market distinct from the European (a nomenclature used for whites) market.

The main presenter started and concluded by suggesting that the 'Bantu' constituted a market different from 'Europeans'. He also drew a dichotomy between the urban and rural Bantu. The latter difference was, as he saw it, based on income and spending capacity, that the urban Bantu earned more than their rural counterpart. The Bantu had potential to provide a market for goods other than necessities. The presenter sought authority from Psychology and asserted that:

It has been pointed out by psychologists that the changes taking place from the traditions and customs of tribal life to that of a higher civilised state bring about upheaval which is not easily overcome by the Bantu because there is no adequate substitute for the psychological controls provided for his former existence. He is in a 'no man's land' groping for anchor which will support him in his efforts to widen his horizon in a new society lacking a solid form (Parker, 1964:7-8).

He further observed and diagnosed that:

(C)ommunication directed straight at the Bantu is finding a reading audience. However, [the] Bantu will still read newspapers and magazines bought by Whites, but they will get more satisfaction from reading their own newspapers to understand the news and read their own gossip column" (Parker, 1964:8).

These observations were made thirty-two years after the establishment of a tabloid newspaper which was known as *The Bantu World*. In announcing its third anniversary the paper referred to itself as "the interpreter of African aspiration ... and a bright imitation of European journalism" (13/04/1935:1), and, quoting from the *Pretoria News*, the editor asserted that:

(T)hrough the pages of *The Bantu World* ... we seek to mirror a life, a society, a drama endeavour, with which Europeans, taken by the large, are curiously unacquainted with ... we are able to catch a glimpse of the black races as they struggle from barbarism to civilisation, from ignorance to knowledge, from an Africa that has been theirs from the dawn of history to an Africa moulded by the alien hand that has reached down from Western Europe - a hand of culture, but a hand that can chastise (13/04/1935:1).

The *Bantu World* was founded in 1932. Although in layout it was a quality paper, its content leaned more towards that of a tabloid, which it subsequently became in both form and content. The editorial stated that the growth of the paper "reflects the remarkable educational advance made by Africans ... due to increasing literacy of the Africans" (13/04/1935:1). Obviously the target audience of this paper was exclusively the African people who could read mainly English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans; then in the third place some Bantu languages in which several articles per issue were published, namely "Zulu (isiZulu), Sesuto (Sesotho), Xhosa (isiXhosa) and Sechuana (Setswana)" (13/04/1935:1). Later on a sprinkling of articles in Venda (Tshivenda) were published.

Marketing through advertisements, like in any newspaper, was clearly one of its major concerns. In the idiom of *The Bantu World* there is a discernible though unconscious stratification of the target audience into class (urban, educated and male, as opposed to rural, uneducated, and female respectively) stereotypes, underlying the racial superstructure of South African society and racial capitalism at the time. We also find in it the dominant voice that appropriates and ventriloquises the African voice, mainly because the white South African community was meant to overhear the discourse that was going on in the newspaper. In this regard the same editorial intimated that the paper “has revealed to European existence of a fertile but undeveloped market in their midst”. The mention of the role of the voice of racial capitalism in creating and directing the course of the discourse was of course vicarious, as in all other matters concerning Africans in South Africa. By this we are referring to the authority which white capitalist South Africa usurped the authority and power to speak for and on behalf of Africans in every matter which concerned their lives; determining through legislation and other ways where they should live and work, what wages and salaries they earned, where their children should be educated and the content of the curriculum, etc.

The word ‘Bantu’ fell out of favour and general use because of abuse by the 1948 Nationalist government. Thus, in 1956 the newspaper dropped the qualifier in its name, and called itself *The World*. In explaining the rationale for the change of name the editorial of the paper traced the etymology of the word ‘Bantu’ and observed correctly that it was first used by Bleek in 1856 as a nomenclature referring to a group of languages that had certain common linguistic features. It went on to explain the reason for the change of name and reluctance to adopt the epithet ‘African’:

It is a common error to use Bantu as both singular and plural ... The name ‘Bantu’ has come as a new designation for what [sic] are sometimes called ‘Natives’, a name which became popular and as soon discarded its universal meaning, and became a discriminatory label for a particular group ... the term ‘African’ has been described as hazy, general and geographical (*The World*: 07/01/56:1).

In the late 1970s, under Prime Minister B. J. Vorster’s regime, the tabloid was banned but expediently re-emerged with a new name, calling itself *The Sowetan*. It was obvious that the producers of the paper were manoeuvring for political space. In keeping with this, the content of the paper manifested a certain political and ideological consciousness that seemed to evolve in keeping with the change of names.

The purpose of this article is to study the ideological hegemony of the superstructuring voice in the newspaper through its advertisements, by studying linguistic and text structural devices that are employed to interrogate its racial, class and gender undertones. The sample of advertisements to be discussed is derived from *The Bantu World* and its two sequels, *The World* and *The Sowetan*, ranging from the 1930s to

the 1990s. Most of these advertisements were duplicated in the sister newspapers, *Mochochono* (Sesotho) and *Imvo* (isiXhosa), which were published under the auspices of the Associated Bantu Press. In the latter case the advertisements in the different languages were directly translated from English

The major thrust of Africans' migration from rural to urban South Africa was precipitated by the *Native Land Act* of 1913, which spatially divided the country into white (85 per cent) and black (15 per cent). In the urban areas the African people, especially men, were to become sojourners and a labour reservoir for the fast growing industrial sector. This status was to be reinforced by the *Urban Areas Act* and a plethora of other laws which controlled the influx of Africans to the industrial cities. Thus the African had to perpetually negotiate the tension between his or her rural origin and urban migrant status, culturally and politically. This writer finds these tensions reflected, if not reinforced, either consciously or subconsciously, in the advertising strategies of *The Bantu World*.

The third anniversary editorial of *The Bantu World* stated:

It may not be out of place to glance through the pages of "The Bantu" World, which seeks to mirror a life, a society, a drama of endeavour, with which Europeans, taken by the large, are curiously unacquainted. In the pages of "The Bantu" we are able to catch a glimpse of the black races as they struggle from barbarism to civilisation, from ignorance to knowledge, from an Africa that has been theirs from the dawn of history to an Africa remoulded by the alien hand that has reached down from Western civilisation – a hand of culture, but a hand that can chastise (13/04/1935:1).

With this editorial in mind, one discerns in the advertisements an authorial perspective anchored in the narrative voice and images that are pervaded by the ideological thrust of racial capitalism. The dialogue and narrative in the advertisements arguably contradict the self-confession and proclamation of interpreting the aspirations of the African people of South Africa, at least from their own perspective. Our interest is in the mediating nature of the voice, which, through juxtaposition of the third-person and first-person narrative purview, makes a bold claim to authenticity. This is, however, subverted by the unconscious use of the Free Indirect Style, third person and director observer point of view, and use of racial labelling. We shall study a few samples of advertising texts to illustrate how they build on racial capitalism's mainstream discourse and imagination of the 'Other' through the use of epithets such as "Africans" and "Bantu leader".

The basis of our close reading of the images and written texts will be Free Indirect Style. Its classical definition refers to the use of the indirect speaker's perspective being merged with or superimposed on that of the direct speaker. Traugott and Pratt suggest that it:

... involves a two-way pointing, in which pronouns and verbal inflections are anchored in the narrator and all other deictics in the fictional character. We as readers are placed in a particular vantage point in which we are distanced from the character and the narrator and bring us into the character's immediate purview (1980:301).

What we propose to do is to adopt this definition, but adapt it to include use of nomenclature such as racial and gender epithets, stereotyping imaging and pockets of silence. The implication here is that, for instance, certain contexts do not call for racial labelling, say from a direct speaker's perspective, within and outside direct speech. An example of this is an advertisement where two African women are depicted watching children playing. One of them says to the other: "John is a healthy picanin." (20/04/35). The last word in the utterance used to be a derogatory word referring to Africa children, adopted and corrupted from the Portuguese word for 'child'. In South Africa it was used by white people to refer to African children, and when Africans use it they do so in satirically in mimic of the master's racial attitude. These words are meant to be uttered by an African woman, referring to an African child. The voice of the creator of the pictorial and written texts mediates and intrudes through the racial label that the speaker of the group would not use. In another example two African women are engaged in a dialogue which reads: "You do look well Lettie," and the reply is: "Of course I do Jane - I drink Ovaltin every day" (08/05/37:18).

In this dialogue the names used are reminiscent of the monosyllabic, at the most two syllabic names, that were often given to Africans to replace their supposed tongue-twisting names. A similar advertisement marketing the same product appears where two men call each other "Philip" and "John" (01/05/37:5). The names vary but are in most cases monosyllabic (see advertisement [14] later). It is this unconscious subversion of the super-narrator's view that diffuses through the "character's immediate purview" which raises a point of interest. This is how our borrowing of the definition of Free Indirect Style will be applied. In this discussion we will continuously bear in mind the impressions of the Cape Town Convention's wisdom as the mediating voice of Free Indirect Style.

Establishing canonical paradigms: 1930s-1950s

The Bantu World's images of Africans in urban areas are predominantly of a particular kind, and in terms of size and positioning within the frames in which they appear they seem to upstage the variety of products that they are intended to market, ranging from essentials such as food, clothes, soap, paraffin and medicine to luxury items such as hats and ties. We proceed to select a sample of these adverts for close reading.

[1] Enjoy your work. This medicine keeps you fit and ... Full of energy. Life is good when you can enjoy your work. When you feel fit and do not tire easily, work becomes pleasure. But it is hard to stand the strain, day after day. You need something to keep your energy up. Many Africans have learnt to depend upon Phosferine, the greatest of all tonics ... Phosferine also relieves toothache, neuralgia and other nerve pains (13/02/1937:5).

The picture accompanying this text portrays an African man wearing a postman's uniform, holding letters in his left hand and balancing a bicycle with his right hand. In the distant background there are city buildings. The man is urban, but only as a worker who delivers mail for his employer – the Post Office. Emphasis and lexical reiteration in the text is on physical performance, energy, work and strain, which are supposed to be a pleasure to him. The word “work” recurs in many advertisements, repetitively or in parallelism. Reference to, “many Africans” suggests a non-African voice with assuming sociological authority.

[2] Happy People Get the best jobs. This wonderful medicine has helped many Africans to keep fit and well! HAPPY people can work hard and enjoy doing it. People who do not get tired easily are the ones who do not worry. They are happy people. They get the best jobs, because employers like their African workers to be cheerful and willing. It is hard if you do not feel well and strong. Many leading Africans who enjoy well-paid jobs, have found that Phosferine is a wonderful medicine which keeps them fit and happy (27/03/1937:19).

The second text [2], contrary to the first, gives the observer a close-up view of a man and a woman, both spruce and formerly clad, complete with hats. In the distant background, across a diving road, there are two African men wearing short pants, and short sleeved shirts. During the period of the 1930s to the 1960s these were uniform worn by male domestic workers. The men are watching the couple with apparent admiration if not envy. The contrast is drawn sharply by the foregrounding and backgrounding of the images. The couple is symbolic of the upwardly mobile Africans who had acquired or were striving for middle class status. Despite their separation from the working class characters, they are levelled to the African stereotype by reference to their proverbial cheerfulness and willingness. They can never become employers, because “employers like their African workers”, and their middle class status is only an illusion, as they have to be “well and strong”, a reference to ability to do physical rather than white collar work.

[3] Become a leader of your people. The man who works with a pick and a shovel can never be a Bantu leader. The man who is educated commands the respect of his people and becomes a leader. He earns more money and can dress better and have a comfortable home with a happy family. The UNION COLLEGE will show you the way to better education and all the advantages that come with it. Simply fill in the coupon below – it will cost you nothing for the information (01/05/1937:14).

The social class stratification in the above advertisement is further reinforced by the definition of two types of Bantu, the working class and the middle class. In the image we see the contrast between a working class man wearing working clothes, with a shovel full of earth, and on

the opposite end there is a man standing next to a board which has arithmetic calculations written on it. He is wearing a suit and spectacles, and is pointing at the sums with the air of aplomb. The setting suggests that he is undoubtedly a teacher. The contrast between the two characters is underlined by the dialectical positioning of the two men in the picture – the working class man is in the upper left hand corner, while the teacher is in the lower right hand corner. The second person deictic in the opening of the written text, ‘your’, does more than act as speech directed at the addressee for immediacy, but also establishes the distance of identity between the implied speaker on the one hand and the receiver on the other. In the first two advertisements, [1] and [2], the distance is established more subtly by the nomenclature and qualifiers used, “many Africans”. One would like to suggest that an insider would not have used the word as self-consciously as it sounds in the tone of the indirect speaker.

The idea of the African as a worker or member of the proletarian class is further displayed in an advertisement about a window-cleaning product called Bon Ami, which this writer found only in isiZulu:

[4] Windows that are cleaned with Bon Ami are wonderful. Bon Ami makes them shine and shine ... Buy Bon Ami! (24/04/37:3) [my translation].

The visual text of this advertisement shows an African man in an ambiguous dress code. He is smiling and facing the camera (viewer). One cannot tell whether he is dressed casually or in working clothes. This creates some ambiguity, in that the house that he is cleaning might be his. This interpretation is, however, subverted by the classic gender and race division of labour in South Africa, where African men never did any household work in their own homes, but were content to do it the homes of their domestic employers. In discursive analytical terms one would in this manner seek recourse cataphorically, that is, in reference to aspects which are outside the text.

The question of racial stereotyping is usually tied up with that of class. An illustration can be drawn from an advertisement marketing a distant education college, amongst others.

[5] Today if you are working for a small company, follow the example of men who have doubled their income. Learn to do your work better. Study in your spare time. A Union college correspondence course will give you good training (29/03/1954:3).

In the written text of this advertisement there are no nuances of race positioning, but the accompanying image imposes it. In the foreground of this advertisement there is a white man, in close-up, wearing a hat, a shirt, tie and jacket, and is smiling. In the background we see three Africans, wearing short trousers and working clothes, one in the forefront with a broom in hand. They are in a long shot. This creates an impression that the white man is a provider of education and work. The Africans

aspire not to his status but to earning better wages. The idea of the white man as a provider not only of work and better wages but also as producer of commodities and paternal adviser is reinforced in the advertisement which we quote below.

[6] "I didn't know SUNLIGHT had a new dress. When I went to buy my Sunlight soap, the storekeeper gave me a bright yellow packet."

"No", I said, "I want Sunlight".

The storekeeper laughed "This is Sunlight - wearing a new dress."

"When I got home and started washing I knew it really was Sunlight. No other soap makes such soapy water" (15/05/1954:6).

The images in this advertisement are presented in four still frames connected by a developing narrative thread. The first two lines comprise the caption of the narrative, with an establishing image of the I-narrator, who is an African woman wearing a head kerchief.

The first dialogue between this anonymous narrator and the shopkeeper is in the second frame. The two characters are segregated by a counter. In the third we see the woman spreading her arms out in amusement, with a foamy bath in the forefront. In the final shot she is sitting at table, enjoying tea with two friends. The theme reinforces the same subtext as in the preceding advertisement. The shopkeeper is a white male, impeccably dressed with tie and jacket. This suggests that even when at work, he is still smartly dressed. He provides advice to an African woman who does not know the product that she is after, or the latest developments in its packaging. He is a producer of goods (owner of the means of production and member of the capitalist class) while the African woman is only an uninformed consumer of the commodity. A generous reading may suggest that at worst this relationship suggests paternalism or male condescending. The latter reading would be tenable in a society which is not as racially (racism almost always coincided with capitalism) polarized as South Africa at the time. Even though the story is told from her point of view and perspective, it has marginalised her authority over the narrative by making her anonymous and reducing her status as the central character. Actually the shopkeeper has been elevated to the status of protagonist, in that even in the last shot his witty reference to Sunlight in a new package ("new dress") echoes over the tone of the text as he is quoted. The mediating voice is also superimposed on the narrator's voice in the pun "sunlight had a new dress", which associates the woman with the product. Here we find undertones of gendering, where certain products are associated with women. The advertisement also reinforces racial stereotypes, to which we shall refer later in this discussion. For the present we shall pursue gender stereotyping in a further sample of advertisements.

Most advertisements which portray African women do so in their stereotypical roles. We often see them carrying babies, doing domestic

chores, or as young women aspiring to be married by handsome young men:

[7] Teach your children the Lifebuoy habits. Washing with Lifebuoy is a good habit! Teach the children to rub lots of Lifebuoy well into their skin, for Lifebuoy kills those dangerous germs picked during their play. Lifebuoy is not only for children, all grownups who want to keep healthy and strong should use Lifebuoy (08/05/1937:4).

[8] African mothers! The Good News is Spreading! Babies sleep soundly with Ashton & Parsons' Infants' Powders. Bantu women in the towns and locations first heard how white mothers keep babies healthy and happy so that they grow fat and strong. Now the country women in the kraals are hearing it too. When [your] baby cries, he has a small pain somewhere. Ashton & Parsons' Infants' Powders stop the pain (10/05/1937:2).

In the preceding advertisement [7] we see a kneeling woman washing a little boy in a tub. The narrative reveals a sharp class division between African women on the one hand and white women on the other. The latter are a class above, and therefore trend, standards and benchmark setters. If one were to drive this point home it might perhaps be helpful to study an advertisement meant for whites, and investigate whether white women were ever portrayed doing household work and babysitting, which was strictly reserved for African women within the white household. Among the advertisements of the 1930s to 1950s this writer could find one advertisement in which a white woman appears in an advertisement with a child. The African woman is dressed in urban clothes, and there is no suggestion that she is in a rural setting, yet the written text seems to be informed by the idea that African women are basically rural. This adds another variable which creates a wider social gap between the two classes of women. In the second advertisement [8] we see a woman carrying a baby girl, and immediately below her, on the left (her right) is a man, carrying a baby covered in a blanket, probably a boy. The woman is not merely a mother but is 'African' and 'Bantu'. These epithets in the body of the imperative mood of the text repeating the lexical item "teach", anchor the voice of the perspective of the implied speaker. The woman is the carer, while the man appears as the protector. There is a coincidence of dual social stereotyping in the narrating voice and the images, that of race and gender.

In a number of advertisements this role gendering trend is followed religiously. A comparison of three advertisements advertising Laurel paraffin reinforces gender roles without any subtlety. In one a woman is putting an iron on a Primus (one-plate paraffin) stove, with the caption: "Women! make your work easier" (17/04/1937:4), and in the next she is frozen in the act of pouring paraffin into a lamp (07/05/1937:6). In another we see a stark contradiction, where a man is sitting comfortably on a settee, holding a cigarette in his left hand. In the background there is a paraffin heater (01/05/1937:2). Noteworthy in these advertisements is that in the first two the paraffin stove and the lamp are in the foreground,

in contrast to the third one, where the woman is in the foreground. The point to note here is that when it comes to women, the product is put on a higher pedestal and the character serves as the background to the product, whereas in advertisements which feature men, the opposite is true, as mentioned earlier. Women are always foreshadowed by their work and the service they provide. We find this is another advertisement marketing tea, where a smiling woman is holding a tea tray with cups, and the caption announces: "How to please your husband" and after some seventy words of advice it concludes, "Husband, family and friends will say to you 'This is the best tea we've ever had!'"(16/06/1956:7).

The role of African women as child-bearers is reinforced in a number of advertisements in dramatic dialogue, creating an illusion that they are speaking for themselves:

[9] This African mother has fat happy twin babies. She believes that all mothers should use ASHTON & PARSONS' INFANT POWDERS.

"I have seven children" writes Mrs. M. Rosie Nffikoe. "The first five were sick when their teeth came. They cried every night and they got very thin. Now I have twins, and I use Ashton & Parsons' Infants Powders. My twins are eight months old; one baby has three teeth and the other has two. They sleep all night and they are still fat..."

From her own experience in bringing up children, Mrs. Nffikoe has found the way in which white mothers for many, many years, have ensured the health and comfort of their babies ... (20/03/1937).

[10] Happy motherhood comes only to STRONG WOMEN.

If all women, before and after married life, were to use Feluna Pills for females only, there would be more happy parents and fewer weakly children ...

"Elsie, you are now leaving us to join your husband."

"Goodbye, mother, I shall be a credit to our family."

"Be a good wife and bear strong healthy children."

"I love babies mother and I hope to have some."

"I have had 8 as you know. All healthy and strong. You know why?"

"I think I do. Since before your marriage you told me you used Feluna pills."

"Yes, my child. They have kept my blood strong and healthy. Take them and be sure."

"I know I cannot be a successful wife and mother without good health. I shall certainly take Feluna pills." (14/04/37).

We have already remarked about the role assigned to white women as trend and standard setters, thus we shall pass the penultimate line of the first advertisement without any comment. In the advertisement we hear Mrs. Nffikoe describing her children as "fat". This word lacks any affectionate and maternal feelings associated with the term "chubby". The narrating voice mediates by making Mrs. Nffikoe write about her children. Who she is writing this to is a question that exposes this voice. In the second one the characters are supposed to be speaking in their own voices, but the mediating voice is superimposed. It is through it that we hear the stereotype of the African woman as a breeder of many

children. It is hardly plausible that Mrs. Nffikoe would remind her own daughter about the number of her children. It is inconceivable that a member of the family would forget the number of her siblings. This is how it reads, despite the dramatic authenticity tag, “as you know”. Once again the mediating voice breaks through the mask and unintentionally reveals itself. It is also noteworthy that the name “Nffikoe”, is orthographically and phonologically not permissible in the consonant structure of any Southern Bantu language. An alveolar nasal can never be followed immediately by a denti-labial fricative. The constraints in Nguni or Sotho languages would dictate that the nasal becomes a bilabial nasal, so that it is articulated as “Mfikoe”. The orthography does not permit “ff”. This suggests that the authorial voice is not vested with the morphology of the language of the characters, from which their surnames are derived, and therefore reinforces our argument about a racial authorial voice.

The African man, on the other hand, is given a share of patriarchy, as we see in the advertisement where one dressed in a white shirt, a checkered tie and a jacket, proudly displays a clean shirt to his audience and announces the product of his wife’s domestic labour. This remark is uttered with broad smile splashed across his face.

[11] “I tell my wife she must always use RINSO for the washing ... my wife likes using Rinso because she does not have to rub and scrub, and that saves my clothes from wearing out ...” (02/03/56:11).

In the above advertisement there is no authorial commentary that labels the man in racial terms. But most noteworthy is the man’s concern for his clothes but not his wife – “that saves my clothes from wearing out.” The woman might as well be a machine meant to deliver service. This is demonstrated in the tendency of most advertisements, where in most if not all cases African women are not portrayed alone. They are always doing nothing else but some household chores or are placed in a family milieu. In an advertisement of a maize meal brand called Impala we see a family seated at the table, ready to eat (14.04.56:3). The husband is in the foreground, his back turned towards the viewer but his smile is clearly visible in profile. On his left sits his son, body in profile and face in three-quarter. The girl is seated opposite the father, facing the viewer. The woman is standing next to her husband, serving the son from a bowl. She seems to be going moving clock-wise in serving them, so that after serving the father, she attends to the son and to conclude with the daughter. The gender hierarchy (patriarchy) is well reinforced in this family setup, where the role of the female members of the family is to serve, and when they are served they come last.

Let us conclude this section with reference to an advertisement which shows three stereotypical images of the urban African woman and man. This is an advertisement of an antiseptic ointment called Germolene, herewith translated from isiZulu.

[12] No matter how you got injured, whether you were fighting, kicked by a horse, cut yourself with a knife, use Germolene for your wound immediately. Keep this ointment in your home all the time and use it no matter how small your wound is (27/03/48:16).

The above quote begins after about six lines of information on what the product can do. Accompanying the above imperative text are three still frames. In the first one there is a man carrying a bucket, approaching a stabled horse from behind in a vertical sequence. The fourth shows a tin of Germolene, without a frame. If one were to be open to what may be an alternative reading, namely that the suggestion that approaching the horse from behind does not necessarily suggest lack of knowledge as to how horses are handled, the written texts certainly subverts this reading, in that a person well acquainted with horses would not find himself in a situation where he is “kicked by a horse”, as the text says. In the second there are two men fighting with sticks, and in the third there is a woman wearing an apron. She has cut her hand with a knife and she is seen throwing it away. There are three stereotypes that are portrayed in these images. In the first frame the man is a servant, for he cannot own a horse, and his lack of knowledge about the animal is revealed by approaching it from a dangerous position, without knowing its temperament. The written text informs us of the consequences of his ignorance. In the frame the typical fighting African is presented in a manner reminiscent and echoing a Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills advertisement, in which we see three frames, in the first and third there are running men carrying spears and shields, and in the second there is a woman. The text suggests:

Be fit and strong like your forefathers. Warriors of the past lived free lives in the country. They were strong, healthy men. To-day, even if you live in a big city, you can be just as strong and healthy if you know the right way (02/01/43:6).

In the last frame the woman is doing household chores, either in her house, or for that matter the ‘missies’. The first and the third frames, with the fighting scene in between, suggest a symmetry that informs the reader that the characters depicted in the two images are servants.

The general trend of the advertisement goes in keeping with the grand plan of segregation, where African characters are separated from white characters. However, there are very few where the two racial groups are seen in the same advertisement. In such cases the overtones of master-servant relationship are consistently adhered to, accompanied by undertones of class consciousness.

[13] “You can see Bona Ami never scratches yet it cleans very quickly.”

[14] JOSEPH GETS THE JOB! (The title of the narrative)

“Morning Andrew! I hear you have been given a better job.”

“Yes, Mr. Scott; I think it’s because I took your advice about keeping smart from top to toe.”

“I suggest we give Andrew’s job to Joseph. He is a neat lad!”

“Yes, I’ve noticed his shoes are always so well polished”

JOSEPH THINKS THAT'S MY SHOES, THANKS TO NUGGET"

"We will make you lift boy, Joseph. We've noticed you are a smart chap."

"Goodbye Andrew. Thanks for everything, especially for telling me about NUGGET, - I use it everyday as you do!" (28/01/56).

In the first advertisement [13] above the words are spoken by a man wearing a suit, with a tie. He is standing and talking to a white boy who is seated, facing him. Connotations of racial superiority are very subtle, in that one reading may lead to the conclusion that the man is giving advice to the boy. The absurdity of this reading is belied by the assumption that the boy will never find himself in a situation where he will have to use a dish or glass cleaning liquid. The most plausible reading is that the man is working in the kitchen as the boy's parents' domestic servant, and that he is trying to amuse the boy. In the next advertisement there are five frames in which the dialogue is taking place. In the sixth and final frame a tin of the product being advertised occupies the whole frame. In the first two frames a white gentleman, formally dressed, with tie and hat, addresses an African man. The latter is also formally dressed but his status is lowered one rung by lack of a jacket, over and above the terms of address. He is simply "Andrew", and the white gentleman is given a title of "Mr". In the third frame two white gentlemen are seen talking to each other and in the third Joseph is back, standing in front of Mr. Scott's desk, with a radiant smile on his face. In the fifth frame Joseph is bidding Andrew good-bye. We notice that earlier he thanked Mr. Scott for giving him advice, while in the last frame we hear that it is actually Andrew, whose job he has now taken, who gave him the advice. There seems to be two possible readings to this text. It is either meant to be humorous, with a twist of irony when we realise that Joseph took Andrew's job by using his own advice. On the other hand it may be intended to show the supposed deceptive nature of the subservient African when dealing with his white superiors. He flatters his employer by attributing Andrew's advice to him.

In the next advertisement we see the unequal relationship represented from a slightly different angle; reminiscent of the Sunlight soap advertisement discussed earlier [6]. This is rendered in Sesotho, but translates as follows:

[15] Aspros are a medicine which is used by people all over the world. This is the way in which you can use Aspro. When you have a headache, take two Aspro tablets and your headache will disappear immediately. When you have a toothache ... back ache and body pains ... fever cold ... tonsillitis ... (27/03/54:6).

In the image accompanying the text there is a white man in a medium shot, wearing spectacles and holding out a box of the product in his right hand, outstretched towards the reader. In the background there are six unframed images starting with a baby, followed by a woman, another woman, a boy, a girl, a man and a boy. These ailing characters are probably a family. Their faces are grimaced and bodies contorted in pain,

in keeping with whatever ache among the above-mentioned is plaguing them. They are all African. The man seems to have lost his patriarchal status as the family protector, and he seems to be the sickest of them all. The family can only be redeemed by the white man, with a face smiling benevolently, the right hand holding out the solution to the African reader of the newspaper, and the left hand outstretched to the images behind him, demonstrating what the fruit of his knowledge is about to perform to rescue them from the natural aches that their bodies are heir to.

The most striking feature of the advertisements that portray white characters on their own is brevity of narrative, absence of vigorous action and reference to physical strength, and avoidance of the imperative mood, such as “use “, “make your work ...”, “teach your children ...”, “enjoy your work ...”, and “become ...”, as we have seen in some of the advertisements already discussed:

- [16] A word to those who are troubled by shins (08/05/37:6).
- [17] Shins with a bright future (21/02/48:11).
- [18] The pause that refreshes. It’s the real thing, Coca-Cola (29/05/48:18).
- [19] THE ACME OF PERFECTION Tux trousers (2 1/02/38:1 1).
- [20] Scott superior men’s wear (29/05/48:18).

In the above advertisements except for one [18] the character is a white man, standing alone. There is no impression of the background. The activities engaged in are simply reading [16] tying the tie knot [17], playing chess with a friend over a bottle of Coca-Cola [18], or frozen in a short step forward [19] and [20]. Where there is a lengthy narrative, as in the text of the second [17] advertisement, there is no reference to the character, let alone his name or for that matter his racial identity. There is no mediating voice. Reference made is strictly about the product and nothing more: “You may buy shins on their looks, but you just judge them in their laundering. And that explains why TOOTAL shining material looks well on shop counters, they equally look well after months of washdays. Their colours are crisp and bright ...”. Reference to how the products look as opposed to it being worn by the character in the picture is blatant avoidance of referring to his person. This silence confers deference to the white male. Another conspicuous absence in the image is that of a domestic context. This may be significant of his position in the larger body politic and patriarchal system. He must not be seen in a setting that reduces him to an ordinary human being – a father, husband or brother, but expression of a public figure whose authority lies in the public arena rather than the domestic space. The ultimate height to which he can climb in this patriarchy is testified by a cigarette advertisement, showing a man wearing a cowboy hat, a jacket and a tie, holding out a packet to the reader:

- [21] TEX RITTER FOR PRESIDENT (03/11/56:1)

American consumer imperialism, complete with its patriarchy, preliminarily rears its head only to be predominant in the sequel to the newspaper in the 1970s. Tex is described as a man “who comes from way out where things are bigger and better”. The intended pun is on the surface, so that the man enjoys smoking President cigarettes, and also aspires to the highest position in the ladder of Western patriarchy. The cowboy hat is a hermeneutic code that can only symbolize one culture, the bastion of Western civilisation in the twentieth century, the United States. It is this cowboy culture which annihilated thousands of native Americans from the landscape and annexed it, so that what remains are faint traces of their languages in place names such as Oklahoma, Dakota, Idaho, to name but a few. Its adoption by African men, especially in the sub-culture of the urban areas, is testimony of how South African insensitivity to destructive imperialism and patriarchy.

There are one or two exceptions to the rule of no energetic physical action or display of physical prowess when it comes to portrayal of white characters, and that is in two advertisements.

[22] Only PURITONE can do 10 things for you ... (08/12/56:7).

[23] WILSON'S XXX MINTS. Good and Strong.

In the first advertisement [22] above the man portrayed is carrying a hammer, raised and poised to strike at something that is outside the frame. In the second advert [23] the man is a body-builder, carrying a giant sized packet of the product, almost one and half times the volume of his body. The similarity between the two characters is that their muscular bodies are displayed aesthetically. They are both smiling, so that it is obvious that they are actually not doing work, but engaged in what they enjoy and are doing as a pastime. In the first one there are hints of subversion, perhaps by default or inadvertent, in the arrows that are pointing at and labelling different physical parts that the tablets work on. Among the 10 things that it can do is, “relieve constipation”, “relieve flatulence (wind)”, and “remove waste poison”. These phrases are written with arrows pointing at the relevant physiology where these ailments and waste material are lodged. Noteworthy in the XXX mints advertisement is that the word “strong”, so overused when characters portrayed are African, does not refer to the character in this case, but to the product. This is achieved by ellipsis of the subject in the second phrase of the advert. There is, however, a hint of ambiguity, where the subject may be “it” or “he”. Explicit reference would have reduced the status of the model or demystified him, by implying that he has to be strong so that he can do manual work, at the time strictly reserved for African people, mainly men.

On the whole the white male is portrayed in terms dialectic to the African male. The relaxed ambiance created around him reveals a highly sophisticated life. He does not engage in physically demanding sport

or work, as in most advertisements in which African men are depicted. He spends his leisure time playing chess [while they are shown playing football, rugby, cricket, or boxing]. The middle class sports which he is supposed to play are a blatant contrast to the amenities that are in reality available to him. This remains a dream of upward mobility, inspired by “marketing of wish-fulfilment within a societal system fundamentally antagonistic to their realization ... tap into a pool of unfulfilled desires and aspirations, channelling fulfilment through cultural commodities” (Goldman, 1992:87).

The white female is generally portrayed along the same lines as her male counterpart, but her image is restricted to a close-up or medium shot, and never a full length one, unless she is in the company of a white male. The brevity of narrative, absence of physical action and avoidance of direct reference to character do not deviate from the rules laid down for the portrayal of the male.

[24] Eczema, Pimples, sore & Rushes Quickly Soothed and Healed
(22/05/48:16).

The image accompanying this text is of a female, in close-up and three-quarter profile, scrutinizing her face in the mirror. There is no reference to the person, or any words spoken by her. First-person dialogue is reserved for royalty, real or fictional, as in the advertisements that follow.

[25] “Pond’s Creams are ideal for my skin” says the Duchess of Argyll
(01/03/37:1).

[26] “I always use Pond’s Creams” says Her Royal Highness Princess Murat”
(15/05/54:1).

In comparing the last two and the previous one there seems to be a hint of class distinction, where aristocracy is given a voice, and the middle class none.

[27] Keeps baby’s skin spotless. Soothes soreness chafing and irritation
(02/10/48:12).

The woman is not doing anything consciously. She is simply holding the baby’s leg. Perhaps this is in keeping with the idea that the person who looks after children in a white family is an African nanny. The white woman’s status should not be reduced to that level.

The most peculiar advertisements are those marketing the pen and the automobile. Those advertising the former are of two types. Firstly there are those without any *dramatis personae*. All that the reader sees is a pen suspended *en l’air*. Then there are very few with only the tips of the fingers holding the pen.

[28] Thousands have asked for this eye-catching, streamlined pen, with the finger-fitting barrel, nickel-silver push-on cap, built-in clip and the famous velvet smooth Platinum Nib (18/10/48:3).

[29] Conway Stewart. The easy writing and perfect ink-flow are appreciated by every type of writer - The quality of the pen at a reasonable price. THE POPULAR PEN WITH THE MARVELLOUS NIB (16/10/48:10).

The omission or substitution of the word “thousands” for “African” or “Bantu” in the first [28] advertisement, and “every type of writer” in the second [29] is obvious when one draws a comparison with other texts. Substitution and silence are the discursive devices used to deprive the African of a higher class status. It seems the suggestion is that Africans and writing are not compatible. There is, however, an exception where a smartly dressed African man is sitting at a desk and writing a letter. Although the pen features here, it is not, however, about pens, but about writing pads. The semblance of admission that an African man can engage in a learned activity such as writing is defeated by the caption of the advertisement, which reads: “When you write for a job ... be sure you write on Croxley, ‘the path of a million pens’” (29/02/56:5). This suggests that the man writes as a matter of necessity, but not as part of his culture, to communicate with relatives or friends, or simply for the pleasure of it. The automobile, like the pen, has no manipulating subject. Whenever a car is advertised there is no occupant in it. We see only the whole car or the deck.

When the African man is portrayed in a scene where he is not performing manual work, the tendency is to make him look ‘civilised’, an extension of Western civilisation. This tendency is manifested clearly in advertisements which pitch him against his rural counterpart.

[30] “If I had not come along with my Eveready torch that snake would have bitten you.”

“You cannot see a snake in the dark ... If you see it, you hit it with a stick and the snake dies - not you” (17/04/37).

[31] “I am not afraid of darkness, because I carry daylight with me.” (09/05/37:3).

In the first advertisement [30] we see a boy, staring at a man who is dressed formally, hat and all, shining a ray of torch light onto a live snake. In the second one [31] a boy is peeping through a door that is slightly ajar, and a man, dressed as in the previous advertisement, is shining torch light into his face. The boys in the two pictures are startled and frightened. The symbolism of light is not lost to the observer. The urban African has brought light, both literal and figurative, to the rural scene, where people live in fear of snakes. The theme of this advertisement recurs through a number of others that advertise “Eveready Electric Torches”, and one cannot help but hear the ring of the Victorian idea of the African as a “child of nature” and “the white man’s burden”. One has to consider that in the larger context of South African, or even European imperialism, light, virtual in the advertisement and figurative in other respects, was brought to the African by Western civilisation. It therefore

stands to reasons that the connotation in this advertisement is that the urban African is literally a torch bearer.

In search of new combination and selection: 1960s -1990s

The 1960s seem to usher a new era in the advertisement of *The World*, and this is carried through to the 1990s. The most striking features in the advertisements of this period are the change of products that are being advertised, and the pictorial and linguistic style in which they are presented to the reader.

Other emerging stylistic features in the text and layout are: Relatively short narrative, introduction of African characters in advertisements that would in the past have portrayed white characters and change from line drawing to photographic images. Characters are given personality by reference to names, real or fictitious, so that they are no longer part of the African mass without any individual identity. We also see Africans in automobile advertisements. Reference to character in racial terms also disappears and white characters are few and far between. The rural African is no longer there. One could suggest that the mediating voice's perspective begins to disappear, together with the racial stereotype.

This apparent paradigm shift seems to be in keeping with the changing status of the urban African in the eyes of white capitalism. New items begin to abound. The products include hair styling cream, automobiles, spirits, liquor, writing pads, germicide, furniture, perfumes, bank services, hire purchase offers, insurance, and so forth. There is a bias towards luxury items.

[32] Score a hit with all the guys with VIKKI Imported French Perfume!
(13/02/75:6).

[33] Brylcreem keeps you hair straight and black (26/03/65:2).

[34] Those who know, know to ask for WHITE HORSE WHISKY
(19/02/65:11).

[35] The successful man drinks Castle stout for health and strength
(19/02/65:2).

[36] Hats off to a successful man. He's smart enough to wear a good hat and
clever enough not to spoil it with greasy hair dressing. He uses Vitalis (/
10/02/65:4).

[37] MEN ONLY POWA PILLS (11/01/65:7).

The scenario presented in the above advertisements is relaxed, showing people enjoying themselves over one type of drink or another, not always working hard or relating obsequiously to their white superiors. The background setting is mainly indoors. Men even smile and relate intimately with women. In the whiskey advertisement there are three men and a woman, all well dressed and enjoying glasses of the liquor. There is an impression of a picture frame on the background wall, suggesting that they are in a posh bar. In the Brylcreem advertisement [33] a man

and a woman are standing close together, admiring a trophy. The man is looking at the woman, with a romantic smile on his face.

One cannot help but notice that gender role-modelling is still persistent. In the Brylcreem advertisement the trophy seems to belong to the man, which obviously suggests that he has won it but not the woman. In the previous one, where men are drinking, there is only one woman, a minority among men. One, advertising beer, shows a man holding a glassful, with two women standing behind him and watching, with a twinkle of admiration in their eyes. The written text announces: "The successful man drinks Castle Stout" (19/02/65:2).

Necessities that are taken for granted in developed countries such as life insurance, electricity, cars, houses and telephones begin to feature prominently in advertisements during this period.

[38] Most of the people we help don't even know yet ... Our electrification programme reaches out to improve the lives of thousands of people every day many of whom go on to create jobs in their communities (14/06/99:7).

[39] To see how we've improved the dash on the new Corolla, take a closer look at the gear stick (20/10/99:17).

[40] Start easy, travel easy. Caltex gives your car extra power you need (19/02/65:5).

[41] Serame Motihabane writes home on Croxtey. Mr. Serame Motihabane, a rising star of journalism and Sotho language editor of "Bona" writes this: "Busy, you bet I am..." (12/02/65:2).

[42] Our pledge. As a life assurer, when dealing with WV, we will do our best to ensure equity ... (15/10/99).

In the Croxley advertisement [41] there is a picture of a man sitting at a desk, writing. Unlike in the Croxley advertisements of the 1930s, the reader realises that the African character is a professional, and that his career prospects are wider than they would have been suggested in the early decades of the newspaper. It is also noteworthy that men outnumber women by far in advertisements, even though there is an apparent slow shift from portraying them in domestic settings. In most of them women still advertise products such as washing powder, rice, cleaning agents and other household wares.

The bias towards American goods becomes a predominant feature in the 1980s. Some American singers and boxers started visiting South Africa in that period, and were followed closely on their heels by American capitalist imperialism. Among the first were boxers Bob Foster and John Tate. The harbinger of singers was Percy Sledge, followed by other fellow musicians like Isaac Hayes and the Staple Singers. Some of them had their fair share of appearing in South African advertisements, marketing American products. Local talent was also used.

[43] Bob Foster says: "Mayfair apparel packs plenty of punch". Bob Foster, light heavy-weight champion from America, says that it is great to see Mayfair apparel available in South Africa ... Mayfair in the American mood (27/01/75:1).

[44] Get the million Dollar look of Lybro American All-Star slacks (27/01/75:3).

[45] Mrs Connie Ntsona well-known Business-woman Urban Councillor of Dube [Soweto] says: "Every day in every way - American Rice is so good for you!" (22/01/75:3).

[46] Step forward in Washington. A pair of Washington 'quality' slacks, superbly tailored - lets you step forward with a difference ... Washington American styled slacks (10/01/75:19).

[47] DORIAN HATS American style (26/03/75:8).

[48] Black and blue is beautiful, Lee Rider jeans and jackets (02/02/75:17).

It seems that this period marks upward mobility and acquisition of middle class trappings, as access to luxury begins to open up new areas that were hitherto not accessible to Africans, including housing, which was highly restricted under the *Urban Areas Act*, and education, which was limited by different legislation that prohibited Africans from getting education in certain institutions that were reserved for whites.

[49] Earn R200-R400 per month by taking a job like this one. Bookkeeper Damelin Institute of Professional Studies (13/02/75:4).

[50] A NEW HOME FOR YEAR 2000 (25/10/99:12).

[51] International Diplomas (25/10/99:12).

[52] Look no further for the lowest prices on building materials! Guaranteed! (25/10/99:13).

[53] Pick 'n Pay's wisest investment is earning a lot of interest ... In under two years, some 1000 Pick 'n Pay workers have graduated in courses ranging from Adult Basic Education and Training to internationally recognized MBAs ... The company investment goes beyond its employees (26/10/99:13).

In the last advertisement [53] there is a photo of six people wearing academic gowns with hoods. There is a gender and race mix: three African men, one white man and three African women. This is in line with many other advertisements that feature non-racial groups, in line with the unofficial national motto, "Simunye" - "We are One". Although one cannot say without contradiction that South African racial capitalism seems to be slowly becoming sensitive to race and gender issues, there is definitely an apparent shift in advertisements, which manifests this consciousness. However, the shift from racial stereotyping seems to be giving way to more pronounced class distinction.

Conclusion

In concluding this discussion I would like to indicate other ways in which this reading of advertising texts could have been executed. There are a number of extra-textual and sociological ways in which advertisement can be read, and various theoretical frameworks which can be applied. For instance, this discussion did not read them sociologically in terms of the development of mainstream ideological paradigms in the racial capitalist system and African liberation and Black ideological evolution, over the decades of the existence of the newspaper. A socio-economic reading might also have shed light on the impact of globalisation, especially in the 1990s, after South Africa emerged from international isolation. This discussion also did not pay any attention to the packaging and designing of the product and its supposed aesthetic appeal to the intended addressee. All that it simply did was to choose a close reading strategy for analysing the texts in terms of their linguistic and visual encoding. Perhaps a more eclectic reading would have benefited the article and the reader by engaging in discourse about the production of the texts of advertisement, and consumption in relation to living standard measurements and class taste, and also by studying advertisements which were directed at the white South Africans for comparative purposes.

Another shortcoming of this discussion is that it paid attention to the advertisements that fall within a specific framework, for the purpose of narrowing my sample to fit the limits of a discussion of this length. I might perhaps have left out other variables that might skew my suppositions. I sacrificed minutiae for a wider temporal scope. Nonetheless this does not invalidate the preliminary findings that I have discussed in this paper.

The apparent shift in the racial capitalism that I mentioned may be accelerated, hopefully, by the trends that are taking shape in the conscientisation of the South African population since the advent of multiracial democracy in 1994. Perhaps the twenty-first century will see the fruition of all the endeavours that have been engineered in order to address the imbalances of the past with regard to race, gender and class. One would like to hope that marketing through print media advertising, though driven by capital and the profit motive, should play some significant role in subverting stereotyping and mediation that is motivated by purely economic, political, and social power, but this would be undermining the power of capitalist interest over cultural imperatives.

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