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SELLING ASPIRATION, RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCE: RACE, CLASS, AND THE POLITICS OF

ADVERTISING IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the history of racialized consumer citizenship in South Africa from the

perspective of those who create advertising. In the history of South Africa, constituting racial hierarchies

involved Blacks being denied the status both of citizen and consumer. As well justifying the political

exclusion of Blacks through racist notions of their supposed inferiority to Whites, dominant racial

ideology during colonialism and then apartheid framed Blacks as cheap labor for Whites, rather than as

modern consumers of commodities; during this time, many Whites in the advertising industry and

corporate world considered Blacks to be unworthy of having advertising directed at them. On the other

hand, in post-apartheid South Africa Black consumers have become a prime target of advertising,

described by many corporations, advertising agencies, and marketing research companies as an

untapped source of profit. As the majority-White advertising industry turns its marketing efforts towards

Black South Africans, it must engage with historically shaped imaginaries of citizens and nation, race and

class. Drawing on 15 months of fieldwork in South Africa which included archival research of advertising

industry periodicals; ethnographic research conducted at advertising agencies; in-depth interviews with

advertising professionals situated at various institutional sites throughout the industry, and analysis of

ad campaigns, I provide an historically situated examination of the advertising industry's attempts to

address and constitute Blacks as consumers, asking how these attempts explicate changing notions of

race, class, consumers and political subjects.

This dissertation contributes to scholarship investigating the changing relationship between race, class,

and consumption in the context of South Africa, examining the transition of South Africa from a 'society

of control' to a 'society of consumption' (Mbembe 2014) through the lens of creating advertising, thus

elucidating the tensions of creating equal consumer citizens within a context of stark inequality and a

history of racial capitalism. I shows how both advertising and political actors grapple with the

relationship between difference and inclusion, presents and futures, the contingencies of desire on the

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one hand, and attempts to stabilize projects of value on the other. I argues that advertising offers to resolve these tensions through the transformative promise of 'aspirational recognition', which refers to how advertising attempts to show consumer both 'who they are' and 'who they want to be', thus offering to actualize their ideal selves. On the other hand, I argue that the ethnographic vantage point of racialized consumer citizenship in South Africa demonstrates how the structure of advertising's mode of address in an era of branding serves to calibrate social hierarchies in relation to hierarchies of consumers. In this way, it contributes to scholarship on the political implications of the global spread of the techniques of advertising into the non-commercial realm. Specifically, I show how interpellating consumers through advertising involves a series of tensions – between the universal consumer and consumers marked by particularity; between commodity desire in the present and brand love in the future, and between a stable brand identity and the fluidity of a social landscape in flux. I argue that the context of South Africa elucidates how advertising may become caught up in shaping the dynamics of social and political inclusion and exclusion, as these tensions, inherent to its mode of address, are projected onto a series of consumer 'others', thus constituting an unmarked consumer citizen 'self'. I trace how both these tensions and the 'others' onto which they are projected have transformed historically, and the shifting place of race and class in this process.

Introduction

In the history of South Africa, constituting racial hierarchies involved Blacks being denied the status both of citizen and consumer, framed by many as unworthy of ad-spend. In contrast, in post-apartheid South Africa Black consumers have become a prime target of advertising, described by many corporations, advertising agencies, and marketing research companies as untapped sources of profit. What are the continuities and differences in these configurations of race, class, consumption and citizenship? This dissertation investigates the history of racialized consumer citizenship in South Africa from the perspective of those who create advertising. It explores how as advertising professionals attempt to interpellate consumers, they must engage with historically shaped imaginaries of citizens and nation, race and class. It also approaches advertising as a mode of socioethnography which generates forms of knowledge – both about these social categories and about advertising as a mode of address itself – that lives beyond the ads. Drawing on archival research of advertising industry periodicals; ethnographic research conducted at an advertising agency; in-depth interviews with advertising professionals situated at various institutional sites throughout the industry, and analysis of ad campaigns, I provide an historically situated examination of the advertising industry's attempts to address and constitute Blacks as consumers, asking how these attempts explicate changing notions of race, class, consumers and political subjects.

On the one hand, this dissertation contributes to scholarship investigating the changing relationship between race, class, and consumption in the context of South Africa. it shows how examining the transition of South Africa from a 'society of control' to a 'society of consumption' (Mbembe 2014) through the lens of creating advertising provides insight into the tensions of creating equal consumer citizens within a context of stark inequality and a history of racial capitalism. It shows how both advertising and political actors grapple with the relationship between difference and inclusion, presents and futures, the contingencies of desire and attempts to stabilize projects of value. It argues that

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advertising offers to resolve these tensions through the transformative promise of 'aspirational recognition', which refers to how advertising attempts to show consumer both 'who they are' and 'who they want to be', thus offering to actualize their ideal selves. On the other hand, I argue that the ethnographic vantage point of South Africa – in which figurating consumers was so tightly intertwined with configuring racial inequalities – provides insight into the implications of the global spread of the techniques of advertising into the non-commercial realm, as it demonstrates how the structure of advertising's mode of address in an era of branding serves to configure social hierarchies in relation to hierarchies of consumers, thus contributing to scholarship on the politics of advertising and branding. Specifically, I show how interpellating consumers involves a series of tensions – between the universal consumer and consumers marked by particularity; between commodity desire in the present and brand love in the future, and between a stable brand identity and the fluidity of a social landscape in flux – and that the context of South Africa elucidates how these tensions may become caught up in shaping the dynamics of social and political inclusion and exclusion, as these tensions are projected onto a series of consumer 'others'. I trace how both these tensions and the 'others' onto which they are projected have transformed historically, and the shifting place of race and class in this process. Tracing these shifting tensions allows us to see changing possibilities for entrenching or transforming unequal consumer citizens through advertising.

Histories of race and consumption, from colonialism to apartheid

In understanding how interpellating Blacks as consumers through advertising came to be implicated in these processes of racialized consumer citizenship, it is necessary to consider the longstanding historical interrelationship between consumption, the shaping of racial difference, and configuring political inclusion/exclusion in South Africa and southern Africa more broadly. There is a rich body of scholarship that considers various aspects of this history. Jean and John Comaroff (1997) have shown how for missionaries amongst the Tswana in the 19th century, fostering the appropriate desire for western

commodities such as soap and European garments was believed to precipitate a change in the being of

black converts, bringing them out of a state of savagery and closer to the status of White, 'civilized'

individuals. Timothy Burke (1996) shows how branded commodities related to personal hygiene such as

soap playing a role in constituting boundaries of race and gender in early 20th century Zimbabwe. Along

similar lines, Anne McClintock (1995) examines early 20th century British advertising drawing on imagery

from the colonies, showing how commodities used for household cleaning and personal hygiene were

framed as capable of whitening and civilizing simply through proximity to black subjects.

This ideology of the 'whitening' effects of consuming western commodities, and the concomitant

articulation between access to consumer goods and whiteness, also informed the configuration of racial

categories during apartheid, as Deborah Posel (2001, 2010) has shown. In the absence of clear legal

definitions of race, common-sense understandings of racial difference were caught up with judgments

based on relative poverty and affluence, often assessed in relation to the commodities a person bought

and displayed[1]. In this circular logic, where to be poor and to be Black came to be seen as synonymous,

poverty was read as evidence of the inferiority of blackness, while serving as a defining criterion for

being classified as Black in the first place[2]. Attempting to limit Black consumption was part of the

apartheid state's effort to fix the place of Blacks within the South African economy as a source of cheap

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[1] Cf Hansen [2012] who argues that there is a long-standing duality in ideologies of race in South Africa, where race is conceptualized as inhering in the physical substance of the body, as well as coming into being through bodily performance, through elements of appearance such as dress, adornment, and bodily disposition that may be the product of conscious cultivation.

[2] The relationship between race and unequal access to a consumer lifestyle was never as clear cut as hegemonic constructions of racial difference might suggest; there was a small number of Black South Africans during the apartheid years – which grew significantly from 1960 to 1970 – who had some disposable income and engaged in (moderately) conspicuous consumption (Southall 2004). With their roots in the mission-educated Black elite, this class consisted mainly of professionals, traders and senior government and municipal employees (Kuper 1965). Thus the alignment of race with class as part of consolidating White supremacy was unstable from its inception, and required constant ideological and political work to maintain (Kuper 1965, Wolpe 1990). The apartheid state rode this ambiguity in attempting to hold on to power, shifting in the 80s from characterizing Blacks as non-modern and traditional, in need of 'protection' from the onslaughts of advertisers, to utilizing media images of Black South Africans living a middle-class consumer lifestyle as part of its propaganda in defense of the apartheid project (Tomaselli 1988).

labor for White-owned business, especially mining, rather than as consumers (Rogerson 1994). This effort had both practical and ideological dimensions. Practically, Blacks that only bought what they 'needed' rather than what advertisers told them they wanted could be paid lower wages. Ideologically, aligning racial classification with class boundaries bolstered constructions of Black poverty as both a symptom and a confirmation of inferiority to Whiteness. Consuming commodities was constructed as indexing a modernity required for participating in a modern state; thus excluding Blacks from participating as consumers was caught up with justifying their exclusion from the polity.

However, there was a long-standing tension between Blacks as laborers and Blacks as consumers. From the earliest days of missionary interaction with Black South Africans, Blacks were encouraged to desire commodities in order to drive them into wage labor to serve the needs of the White economy, and to create a market for White-manufactured commodities. Further, learning appropriate modes of consuming commodities was considered a central part of achieving 'progress' and civilization (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). This imperative to constitute Blacks as consumers existed in tension with the requirement that they remain a cheap source of labor for White industry, and with the dominant construction grounding White supremacy in the supposedly inferior status of Blacks as consumers and thus of political subjects[3].

This tension was complicated by the drive amongst White manufacturers and their affiliates in the advertising industry to create national mass markets from the early years of the 20th century. The sheer

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[3] In fact, the 'civilized labor' policy – which was introduced in the 1920s to protect high White wages in the face of more Blacks being able to perform skilled and semi-skilled labor previously performed only by Whites – justified unequal wages for blacks and whites performing the same work in terms of levels of consumer aspiration: "Civilized labour is the labour rendered by persons whose standard of living conforms to the standard of living generally recognised as tolerable from the usual European standpoint. Uncivilized labour is to be regarded as the labour rendered by persons whose aim is restricted to the bare necessities of life as understood among barbarous and undeveloped peoples" (quoted in Feinstein 2005: 86). The civilized labor policy together with various pieces of legislation upholding the color bar served to force mines to hire only Whites for certain jobs, and pay them higher wages than they were paying Blacks for the same work.

size of the Black population relative to Whites made it seem a potentially lucrative market for White-produced commodities, even if the wages paid to individuals remained low. In order to sell this fantasy of a way for Whites to extract economic value from Blacks in addition to the cheap labor they provided, Black difference had to be made commensurable with being a consumer. At the same time, such constructions had to avoid threatening the ideological basis on which racial capitalism was based, where being a consumer was conflated with constructions of universal whiteness, and where racial difference was articulated to unequal capacities to consume.

Following from this, I argue that the figure of the 'Black consumer' was an object evoking both the fantasies and the fears of Whites working in the advertising industry – the fantasy of a profitable mass market, and the fear that hailing Blacks as consumers equal to Whites could disrupt the ideology of White supremacy, and that advertising to them might engender consumer desires that could not be controlled to benefit White interests. These tensions were made manifest in the enduring typification of Blacks as 'developing' consumers, needing Whites to actualize them, thus maintaining a vision of Blacks as dependent on Whites, and as potential versions of Whites whose consumer desires were thus knowable and educable. However, this vision of Blacks as identical versions of Whites in potential was haunted by a suspicion of the utter alterity of Blacks, as consumers and human beings, which occasionally disrupts the universalizing vision of all South Africans on a shared journey to a consumerist lifestyle epitomized by Whites, albeit at different stages. In this way, the figure of the 'Black consumer' became implicated in the impasses and contradictions of the apartheid project, and those in the advertising industry had to grapple with these impasses in the campaigns they produced.

Race, consumption and the politics of advertising in post-apartheid South Africa

This history of racialized consumer citizenship shaped the politics of advertising as South Africa transitioned from apartheid to democracy, with the first democratic elections inclusive of all races held

in 1994. Whereas during apartheid, Blacks were excluded from participating both in the national market as consumers and the national polity as citizens. Since 1994, Blacks have formal political inclusion. However, this has not led to widespread access to the consumer lifestyle with which citizenship was associated during apartheid. After a brief honeymoon period in which the new 'rainbow nation' was celebrated as a model of racial reconciliation and peaceful political transition, a sense of disillusionment set in amongst many that democracy could bring upliftment to the poor (Mbembe 2014).

 After the transition to democracy, the ANC-led government implemented policies to restructure the economy and redistribute wealth to the previously-excluded Black majority. However, these policies soon shifted away from the socialist principles that the ANC had propounded during the struggle against apartheid, to a much more neoliberal vision of economic growth led by economic liberalization to attract FDI (Bond 2004[4]). Although GDP increased significantly in comparison to that of the final years of apartheid, this growth was mainly due to the tertiary economic sector, with the financial and banking sector doing particularly well, while the labor intensive manufacturing which the government tried to promote failed to generate sufficient jobs (2013, Industrial Development Corporation, Department of Research and Information). In this context, in which mining and manufacturing have actually shed jobs since 1994, unemployment has increased – reported to be at 24.9% at the end of 2012 – and income inequality has grown – with South Africa consistently ranked as one of the most unequal societies in the world according to the World Bank's Gini coefficient (http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/income-gini-coefficient).

At the same time, policies of affirmative action (known as BBBEE – Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment) have bolstered both a politically well-connected Black elite as well as a growing Black

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[4] But see Carmody 2002 for a discussion of the specificities of these policies as not simply expressing neoliberal orthodoxy, but as embracing extreme deregulation on the one hand, and protection of labor on the other.

middle class which is now said to outnumber the White middle class[5] – here, 'middle class' is defined through levels of income, education, and profession, although the meanings of the term are hotly debated in South African society, as we will see in the chapters that follow. However, this new Black middle class and those aspiring to join its ranks, exhibit high levels of debt, placing them under significant financial strain (James 2015).

In addition to the Black elite and growing Black middle class, structural divisions within contemporary South Africa involve a relatively wealthy but small White population, a Black working class affiliated with the trade unions, and a large underclass of unemployed Blacks, marginalized from both production and consumption (Nattrass & Seekings 2005, Southall 2016, Ferguson 2013). In this way, race is not the only fault-line around which inequality is structured. However, there continues to be a pervasive articulation between wealth and whiteness on the one hand, and poverty and blackness on the other. In an investigation into the demise of the ideal of non-racialism in South Africa, veteran journalist and anti-apartheid activist Ferial Hafajee quotes a Black South African explaining that "white isn't race, it's wealth…my gardener calls me mlungu [the Nguni word for White person]" (2015 location 1375-1384). Further, a removal of explicitly race-based legislation in post-apartheid South Africa in conjunction with Black empowerment and employment equity policies that rely on racial categories without defining them, results in a situation in which apartheid-era racial categories continue to be the default mode of racial classification (Maré 2014). In this way, post-apartheid South Africa may be understood as a

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[5] This claim was made for example, by President Jacob Zuma at the Forum Forbes Afrique in Congo-Brazzaville 2013, in an address titled "Emergence of an African Middle Class: Conditions, Issues and Challenges", in which he draws on a study of the emerging Black middle class conducted by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing (http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=15784). This institution has been influential in shaping ideas about the Black middle class in broader South Africa society as we will see in the following chapters. However, measuring the size of the Black middle class relative to White is made difficult by conflicting approaches to how one defines 'middle class' in the first place (See Southall 2016 for an analysis of these difficulties and an overview of approaches to defining the Black middle class in post-apartheid South Africa). Some have argued that income is not a good measure as Blacks have burdens on this income from family members who have been 'left behind' that Whites do not have, known as the 'Black tax' (see Chapter 5), which eats away at the disposable income available to Blacks in well-paying jobs.

context in which racial categories continue to be keyed to the capacity to consume as they were during colonial and apartheid South Africa, while at the same time, intra-racial inequalities – especially amongst Blacks – have grown. In this context, the 'Black consumer' remains an ambiguous figure, and an ideal site for investigating dynamics around race, consumers and citizens.

Race and the ambivalence of advertising

In investigating the politics of advertising in South Africa, it is also important to understand the historical shaping of an ambivalent attitude towards the medium of advertising itself, which was seen as both necessary for kindling Black consumer desire and channeling it for the purposes of Whites; but also potentially dangerous in its capacity to evoke consumer desires that could not be channeled for the benefit of Whites. On the one hand, part of the apartheid state's attempt to limit Black consumption involved regulating access to the commodity images of advertising, which were believed to have the potential to elicit uncontrollable consumer desires on the part of Black South Africans (Rogerson 1994). Advertising in townships was severely restricted from 1956 until the mid-1980s (Rogerson 1996). Door-to-door canvassing, vans with loudspeakers, travelling film shows and demonstrations (cinema advertising was allowed as long as it was 'educational' rather than political) were specific targets of regulation. This was in line with the general attitude of the apartheid state towards Blacks as lacking the capacity to resist the influence of mediated images and sounds, an argument that was used to justify banning television from South Africa until 1976, as even televisions owned by Whites could pose dangers if Blacks in their domestic employ gained access to sets and the sounds and images they broadcast (Krabill 2010, cf. Mazzarella 2013)[6].

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[6] In fact, the Blacks who had access to White television sets comprised a very small segment of Black South Africans, with many remaining peasant proletarians that inhabited 'traditional' lifeworlds that were minimally commoditized, and actively rejected commoditization (Comaroff 1985).

On the other hand, advertising was held to have the power to 'develop' the consumer potential of Blacks, shaping their consumer desires and making these tractable by Whites. This view is evident both amongst advertising professionals and by individuals representing the apartheid state, and continues to be evident today in advertisers' attempts to shape what I call the 'developmental brand', which I discuss in Chapter 5. I explore the historical shaping of this faith in the pedagogical and actualizing power of advertising as it manifested in early advertising industry publications in Chapter 1. Here I show how the advertising industry framed the medium of advertising as possessing a powerful transformative capacity – papering over anxieties that it may be incapable of harnessing the consumer desire of Blacks – portraying it as a medium that could constitute Blacks as consumers useful to White economic interests.

In the contemporary moment, debates and anxieties about the power of advertising to effect change continue to be caught up with imaginaries of race and class. The greatest fears and fantasies around the power of advertising – expressed primarily by Whites, both within the advertising industry and in broader society – focus on low income Blacks, who are typified by advertising professionals as the most 'literal' consumers. Some express the fear that advertising will manipulate these 'literal' consumers into spending their money on what they can't afford, but others express the hope that advertising can control them, and prevent them from becoming politically radical.

Advertising and 'transformation'

This deep faith in the pedagogical and transformative power of advertising – both of the individual and the collective – is evident not only within the advertising industry, but in broader South African society, and shaped public discussion of the medium in the 1990s and early 2000s as South Africa began to build its fledgling democracy. Voices in the industry, in the new ANC-led government, and in the media called on advertising to shoulder its responsibility to create new aspirational visions of society in which race no longer divided South Africans. In 1993, an article appeared in the industry journal *Marketing Mix*

reporting on a marketing roundtable that had been held on 'crossover' advertising. During the 80s, TV

and radio were racially segregated – building on the already racialized media environment of

Black/Coloured/White/Indian targeted newspapers and magazines – with different channels screening

programing for Blacks and Whites respectively, and Black channels/stations featuring only Black

actors/DJs and vice versa. In the early 90s, 'crossover' TV advertising arose, which involved ads designed

to be screened to audiences of all races, depicting social interaction between different races. Although

some participating in the roundtable worried that this was a poor advertising strategy, as within a

racially segregated society such as South Africa, racially targeted advertising was necessary to connect

with consumers, others expressed the opinion that advertising had a responsibility to create nation

unity. One executive commented that "I personally think that at this point in time there is a national

need to show unity. I think we have a responsibility in a philosophical sense. I take off my brand

marketing hat and put my national marketing hat on. We need to bring the country together." (n.a.,

1993: 20).

Voices in government echoed this opinion concerning the national responsibility of advertising in South

Africa. For example, Trevor Manuel, then Minister of Finance, addressing the AdFocus conference in

2002, tasked the advertising industry with creating a unified national culture: "Does [advertising] truly

capture those moments of national unity on which we can build consumer confidence?...We are South

Africans, and our communication strategies must therefore use our collective experiences, our culture

(if you wish) to develop the paradigm to effect the changes in our national psyche…for the impact of

advertising to be felt in economic growth in South Africa, it simply has to engage with and define that

truly South African social experience in order to effect behavioural change" (quoted in Britten 2005:

137). And further: "Cultures are forged, and they're forged by focusing on particular sets of experiences.

Advertising has a distinct role to play in raising the temperature of the forge" (quoted in Britten 2005

193). Here we see the retroactive logic of a public which both assumes the prior existence of a 'truly

South African social experience', and helps to 'forge' it (Warner 2002). We also see how Manuel sutures 'national unity' to 'consumer confidence' and 'economic growth'. However, as we will see in the chapters that follow, the relationship between changing 'psyches' – the identities, desires, and aspirations of consumers on the one hand – and changing economic structures to improve material circumstances – is often a matter of ambivalence and anxiety, especially for those who create advertising and who claim to be able to direct its transformative power.

At present, imaginaries of the transformative power of advertising continue to be caught up in negotiations about 'transformation' in South African more broadly, a frequently-used term which refers to attempts to undo the legacies of apartheid, and dismantle the long history of White supremacy, through such efforts as employment equity policies. In 2015 year, a range of protests around the lack of transformation in South African higher education erupted, both on campuses and on social media, organized on social media around the hashtags #RhodesMustFall and later #FeesMustFall[7]. in the #FeesMustFall protests, the place of consumption as a marker of transformation is clear – although students complain about a range of issues one leader of the student protests, Mcebo Dlamini, encapsulated his grievances thus: "we also want to be able to eat at Rosebank" – a mall in Johannesburg with trendy, expensive bars and eateries, frequented by many of the new Black elite (quoted in Haffajee 2015 location 1903, cf. Nuttall 2004). In late 2013 and 2014, while I was conducting fieldwork, these tensions around transformation had not yet erupted into full blown protests, but questions about what

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[7] These protests initially focused on the predominance of EuroAmerican material in the syllabi, lack of funding for poor Black students, cultural insensitivity of lecturers and white students, and not enough Black lecturers. Later, it turned to focusing predominantly on bringing about free, decolonized education for all (see http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/rhodes-must-fall-the-movement-after-the-statue/). 'Rhodes' references the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at University of Cape Town, which served as a focal point for the protests, and which the students participated in removing.

the 'transformation' of South Africa entails, and what it has to do with consumption and wealth, were implicit in the advertising campaigns fashioned by my interlocutors.

The advertising agency where I conducted ethnographic research was working on the campaign for a sherry that had two contrasting market segments, as I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3. One of these market segments was called the 'Transformers'. In my early days at the agency, before anyone had explained to me how this market segment was defined, this name confused me. I thought it might refer to 'transformation' in the sense outlined above, in which efforts are made to redress the social inequalities bequeathed to South Africa by colonialism and apartheid. However, in the images that I had seen in Powerpoint presentations at the agency the consumers described as 'Transformers' looked poor, living in shacks, and did not seem to have benefited much from the 'transformation' of post-apartheid South Africa at all.

A few weeks into my fieldwork, when the account director emailed me the market segmentation model, I realized that I had totally misunderstood the references of the term 'Transformer'. These consumers were, as the images had suggested, impoverished, struggling to make ends meet and to find any sort of employment, often surviving off of government grants or those of their relatives, frequently living in isolated rural areas. The term 'Transformer' was derived from the supposed motivation of these consumers for drinking alcohol – that they drink for the intoxicating effect of the alcohol, which has a "transformation effect on their images/personalities", as one of the marketing research documents phrased it. Another member of the brand team put it more bluntly, explaining that drinking provided Transformers a way to "escape" the harsh realities of their lives. In this way, far from benefiting from the social transformation of post-apartheid South Africa, 'Transformers' had turned to alcohol to escape the realities of the failures of this project of transformation; 'transforming' through an alcoholic commodity was framed as the only sort of 'transformation' such impoverished, marginalized South Africans could hope for.

This unintended irony of the concept of transformation suggested a number of questions about the politics of advertising in South Africa – what is the role of consumption, advertising and branding in social transformation? In the face of the perceived failure of the state to transform the lives of many Black South Africans, could brands offer different modalities of transformation? And how do beliefs about the capacity of advertising to transform the national psyche and 'develop' consumers, come into tension with the structural inequalities that prevent all South Africans from enjoying equal access to commodities?

'Transformation' in the advertising industry

If one side of the politics of advertising concerns the ambivalent relationship of the medium to the 'transformation' of society, another concerns the lack of 'transformation' within the industry itself. Since the end of apartheid, there have been repeated criticisms of the continued dominance of Whites within the industry, both from Blacks working in advertising and from broader South African society. During the transition to democracy, some worried that this dominance gave Whites an undue influence in shaping the new democratic nation's conceptions of itself, and especially of Blacks within that national imaginary. For example, in 1993 ANC politician Saki Macozoma[8] expressed fears that the dominance of Whites in advertising would lead to negative representations of South Africa and Blacks in particular as "third world" (37). Quoting Daniel Boorstin on advertising in America, he expressed the opinion that advertising has the power to make "self-fulfilling prophecies", and worried that if advertising depicted South Africa as "third world", it would become such a self-fulfilling prophecy. He also criticized the way the industry advertised to Blacks, claiming "The way the advertising industry addresses black people is no different from the condescension of the frontier newspapers that were selling inferior goods known as 'kaffir truck'" (37), and attributes such advertising to the fact that advertising to Blacks is carried out

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[8] Saki Macozoma, "Advertising in the New South Africa" *Marketing Mix* June 1993 Loeries issue, 35-38

by "white men" or "black men in white masks" (37), and that these advertisers assume that "we know

our kaffirs, better than they know themselves" (ibid). These accusations that advertising misunderstands

Blacks, and fails to recognize them as equal consumers, are enduring themes in criticisms of advertising

in South Africa, and elsewhere where advertising is involved in configuring notions of consumer

citizenship, as we will see.

These accusations of the dominance of Whites in advertising did not abate as the first decade of South

African democracy wore on. In 2001, the South African Parliament held hearings into racism in

advertising, following a broader inquiry into racism in the media. One criticism expressed during these

hearings was that with Whites still made up 70% of those working in the advertising industry with Blacks

occupying almost no managerial roles[9]. Again, the accusation was made that this dominance of Whites

led both to distorted representations of Blacks in advertising images, and to a failure of advertising to

address Blacks as consumers equal to Whites. The Power Point presentation given by the Department of

Communications at the hearings contained the accusation that "Advertisers [are] unmoved by market

research indicating black patronage in substantial numbers of the products of companies" and that

there is a "Preconceived notion on the part of advertisers that Black Consumers are unimportant and do

not represent a lucrative market" (2001, n.p)[10] Here we see the conceptualization that part of Black

equality in the new democracy is to be recognized as equal consumers (cf. Dávila 2001).

As South Africa neared the end of its second decade of democracy, accusations continued to be made

that the South African ad industry was dominated by Whites. In 2012 ex-creative director Taelo

Immanuel re-ignited debate around lack of transformation in the advertising industry, in his complaint

on behalf of the Association of Black Communications Practitioners (ABCP), first made to the

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[9] http://free.financialmail.co.za/report/adfocus2002/advertising/ad1.htm.
[10] Hearing into advertising industry, Nov 6-7 2001, Department of communications to the portfolio committee on communications submission.

Department of Trade and Industry and the Competition Commission, and subsequently to Business

Unity of South Africa (Busa) and Malusi Gigaba, Minister of Public Enterprise. He complained that

whatever demographic transformation there had been in the industry amounted to mere tokenism,

rather than a real shift in power dynamics[11]. He also claimed that not much has changed since the 90s,

when Blacks in advertising were used primarily as translators and 'sounding boards' for campaigns,

while not being allowed to handle brands. This was something I heard repeatedly from Black advertising

professionals, who expressed the opinion that although there are many Black creatives these days, the

Executive Creative Directors are often still White men, who veto Black creative ideas that they don't

understand. If the idea makes it through to be presented to the client, the White CEO may veto it,

affirmed by the Black corporate marketing personnel who don't want to challenge the boss. A number

of those whom I interviewed felt that at the end of the 90s, there were more Blacks in advertising, but

that they had subsequently left the industry, attracted by the better pay in the corporate sector.

Changes in the global and national economy had exacerbated existing obstacles to transformation. After

the exclusion from the global economy during the apartheid years, the South African advertising

industry has undergone a process of restructuring, with many international conglomerates buying up

local companies. This meant that successful independent Black-run agencies did not stay independent

for long, with international takeover resulting in a loss of creative independence (the most commonly

mentioned example of this was the takeover of Herdbuoys – the first Black-owned advertising agency in

South Africa – by Mcann-Erikson in the early 2000s [Ntshingila 2009]). Those who attempted to stay

independent could not compete with the resources of the internationally-affiliated agencies who

dominate the South African landscape.

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[11] http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-08-16-south-africas-great-advertising-divide/#.UfHXhjusiSp.

In his critique of the advertising industry, Immanuel reiterated the accusation that the dominance of Whites results in a warped representation of the cultural practices of Black South Africans in ads, and a prevalence of images of Blacks – especially Black women – singing and dancing. I discuss this latter criticism in particular in Chapter 4. However, there was a flipside to these criticisms that ads misrepresent Blacks; some complained that advertising was too accurate in its representations, showing Blacks 'warts and all', rather than offering them aspirational versions of themselves. In our interview, Executive Creative Director at the advertising agency Joe Public (one of the few successful independent agencies in South Africa) Xoliswa Dyeshana told me about a recent conversation he had had with a Black female CEO in the corporate sector. In his words, she had told him, "What I don't like is that you've moved from misrepresenting Black people, to portraying Black people as they are. And how Black people are in this country is not exactly that attractive yet, because we're all still playing catch up." She felt that advertising had a duty to hold up aspirational images of Blacks in particular: "You guys can represent what we can become...you're one of the drivers of popular culture". I heard this sentiment expressed repeatedly in interviews, especially by Black advertising professionals: advertising had a duty to confer dignity on Black people by offering them 'aspirational' images of Blacks; what exactly constituted an 'aspirational' image was a complex question that had to be contested in the execution of actual campaigns, as I show in Chapter 2. This paradoxical imperative – don't misrepresent Blacks, but don't represent them exactly as they are either – gets at the heart of the conundrum of actualizing the transformative potential of advertising. To offer this transformative power, advertising must calibrate what I term 'aspirational recognition'.

Aspirational recognition

In this thesis I argue that all advertising is driven by the imperative to offer consumers 'aspirational recognition', which refers to the imperative for advertising to offer the consumer recognition, but in aspirational terms – addressing both 'who they are, and who they want to be', as the advertising truism

puts it. I show how implicit in the practice of advertising professionals and in ideologies of branding is

the belief that if advertising could activating a sense in the consumer that their current self is being

addressed by the ad, while promising to take them beyond that present identity to a coveted potential

self, the gap between the self of the present and the ideal self of the future could be bridged, thus

actualizing the transformative promise of advertising, with the branded commodity framed as the agent

of transformation. Within this modes of address, there is the retroactive logic which Michael Warner

(2002) suggests is at play in all processes of constituting publics through the circulation of media.

According to this logic, a public is addressed as if it already exists, whereas it is the circulation and

uptake of public communication itself which brings the public into existence. In advertising, both one's

current and potential selves are similarly addressed as if they already exist, whereas it is the address

itself that serves to actualize identifications with both current and potential selves, presents and futures.

The need to balance aspiration with recognition is not unique to South African advertising; Shalini

Shankar writes of advertising in the US "Advertising's role is to stay ahead of consumers by creating

aspirational imagery, while it also strives to be sure audiences identify with the representations they

circulate" (2015: 3). Similarly, in Indian advertising in the late 90s advertising professionals sought to

create campaigns that could both recognize cultural difference and offer universal aspiration

(Mazzarella 2003). I argue that general imperative for advertising to offer 'aspirational recognition'

creates a set of tensions, which intersect with local histories configuring imaginaries of race, class and

nation, shaping the horizons of possibility for branding and advertising to mediate dynamics of social

inclusion and exclusion. In the context of South Africa, these tensions coalesce around interpellating

Blacks as consumers. As we saw above, there was the perception amongst advertising professionals and

broader society that advertising had a duty to offer Black South Africans in particular aspirational images

of themselves. At the same time, many insisted that advertising should 'recognize' Blacks. Just as

pinning down what constituted the 'aspirational' proved tricky for advertising practitioners, figuring out

what offering 'recognition' entailed was a slippery, ambiguous exercise, sometimes focusing on showing Blacks that the brand acknowledged their importance as consumers, sometimes focusing on showing them that the brand understood their particularities, and often attempting to do both simultaneously.

Adding to the complexities of configuring recognition in advertising was the imbrications of this practice both with global marketing ideologies of 'brand humanization' and 'relationship marketing' – in which the brand must show the consumer that it 'knows' them so that consumers will reciprocate with love for the brand – and with the particular history of making racial difference in South Africa through exclusion from a consumer-public, as Blacks were denied recognition of their status both as consumers and citizens. This has shaped a situation in South Africa where the perceived need for advertising to confer recognition is seen as stemming from a universal 'human need', as well as the particular need of Black addressees of advertising to be recognized as consumers. For example, Paul White, a researcher, strategist and head of innovation, at the Cape Town marketing research and 'seeding' company Instant Grass, explained the general need for advertising to recognize consumers as follows: "Because we know that kind of, a brand giving you attention validates you as a human being". He then explained how in South Africa, Black consumers have been denied this attention, and Black rural consumers in particular continue to be denied it. He described his experience of one young Black man in a rural area outside Pretoria commenting to him that "'it would be so interesting if I got a flyer in my postbox'. That's how starved people are for brand attention… the brand was actually coming onto their turf, and speaking to them, and caring about their opinions… It's kind of like, you care about me, that's amazing. Because, before I was a kind of an unwanted consumer, which is kind of interesting, you kind of validate yourself by your consumer status. It goes back to that human acknowledgment thing. I think that's what it really is that we try and give people…If you acknowledge another human and kind of tell them that they're a person, and help them out, they'll kind of give back to you." Here we see a vision of reciprocity between brand and consumer, based on mutual recognition, which I analyze in chapter 3.

In analyzing the impasses advertising professionals encounter while attempting to 'recognize' consumers, I draw on scholarship investigating discourses of recognition in the political realm. Scholars have shown how this discourse shapes a political terrain in which marginalized groups petition states for recognition both of their status as equal citizens, and of their cultural difference (Markell 2003, Povinelli 2002, Brown 1995). These forms of recognition frequently come into conflict, as being recognized on the basis of an 'identity' has the (often unintended) consequence of paralyzing individuals burdened by 'culture', which limits the course of action to only those acts deemed culturally 'authentic', inhibiting them from functioning as equal citizens. In this way, citizens are caught between being recognized as different, and recognized as universal, just as the figure of the consumer 'other' is caught between being recognized on the basis of their difference, and on the basis of being an unmarked consumer.

In this thesis, I show how the politics of aspirational recognition has both parallels and divergences from the politics of recognition explicated by these scholars. The aspirational recognition of advertising aims to offer recognition of particularity, while taking you beyond that particularity; advertising promises self-actualization through the brand, aligning 'who you are' with 'who you want to be'. However, examining the practices of advertising professionals shows how this promise can only be made to those who are already freed from particularity; default consumer citizens, those who don't require recognition of their difference in the first place. I show how in the context of South Africa, whitened middle-class consumers are interpellated by being offered modes of aspirational recognition where the ideal and current selves advertising constitutes are brought into alignment in the moment of being addressed by the ad. The aspiration they are offered is articulated to an idealized whitened middle-classness, while simultaneously, whitened middle-class consumers are recognized as already being these ideal consumers. On the other hand, 'other' consumers – marked by race, gender, class or culture – are recognized on the basis of differences that fix them in place, interpellating them as 'developing' consumers, and deferring the transformative promise of advertising. In what follows, I show how the

analytic of 'aspirational recognition' provides insight into the politics of advertising; as advertising professionals attempt to balance imaginaries of current and ideal selves – and the gap between these – they must configure shared and disjunctive temporalities of social mobility, and relations of sameness and difference within the nation-as-target market.

Arguments and theoretical framings

As I explore various attempts by advertising professionals to offer South African consumers aspirational recognition – focusing on the early days of the advertising industry, the transition to democracy, and the current moment in which many have lost hope in the promises of the 'new' South Africa – I argue that the historical intertwining of race, class and consumption in South Africa has shaped the contemporary context in which the figure of the Black consumer continues to function as an ambivalent object for the advertising industry; on the one hand – bolstered by the growing Black middle class benefiting from the post-apartheid government's policies of Black Economic Empowerment, as well as theories promising wealth at the "Bottom of the Pyramid" (Pralahad and Hart 2002) – Black consumers continue to hold out the fantasy of massive profits, especially in the face of stagnant growth in the White market. On the other hand, Black consumer desire poses a persistent potential threat. Now that Blacks have formal political equality with Whites, I argue that this threat has shifted, stemming from the anxiety amongst majority-White advertising professionals and the clients they represent that Black aspiration and commodity desire may be unharnessable by advertising and capitalist market structures more broadly. Uncontainable Black aspiration is framed in one of three ways: 1) as dormant 2) as excessive, or 3) as moving unpredictably in and out of a consumerist register. In the chapters that follow, I examine the various incarnations of this fantasy/fear, and trace the ways that advertisers try to assert control over Black consumer aspiration, dealing with the historical legacy of the construction of advertising as both a powerful pedagogical tool, and an ambivalent and dangerous medium of address.

I argue further that examining how advertising configures the ambivalent object of the 'Black consumer'

in South Africa can elucidate changing intersections between the political and commercial realms

beyond the specific context of South Africa. All advertising must attempt to channel consumer desire,

harnessing it to the project of generating profits. In the same way, political projects in mass society must

generate and channel the affect and desire of political subjects. Advertising as a practice – which has

long embraced the importance of affect in generating these projects of value – is becoming an

increasingly important model for all mass communication, as politicians cultivate their brands, and

brands offer the political goods of community development – through initiatives such as Corporate

Social Investment – and (as I argue in this thesis) recognition. However, the unpredictability of affect and

desire makes channeling it an elusive goal, generating anxiety for the advertising professionals who

claim expertise in maximizing this sort of value. In South Africa, Black consumer desire came to stand in

for this general anxiety around the unharnessability of desire, emerging out of constructions of Blacks as

lacking the ability to contain their desire for commodities, sex and alcohol (Mager 2010, Rogerson 1994).

In this way, examining anxieties around Black consumer desire can tell us about broader transformations

in the tensions of advertising – which I locate as intertwined with the rise of the 'humanized brand' –

and thus about broader intersections of commercial and political projects of value.

My analysis of the politics of advertising in South Africa draws on and contributes to anthropological

scholarship on the political and social meanings of producing advertising. Anthropologists have used

ethnographic research to investigate producing advertising as one element in a broader structure of

how capitalism generates value and meanings (Miller 1997, Kemper 2001, Schudson 1984). Some focus

on how the structure and culture of the institution of the advertising agency, and its interactions with

corporate clients, shape these processes (Moeran 1996, Malefyt & Moeran 2003, Malefyt & Morais

2012, Davila 2001, Shankar 2015, Mazzarella 2003). These ethnographies demonstrate how processes of

contestation and compromise at the micro level are caught up in complex ways with national and global

flows of commodities, discourses and images. In the contemporary moment, when marketing straddles

a wide range of activities, involving multiple agencies in a single brand campaign, such as the ones I

observed, such processes of contestation have only become more complicated. Some of these scholars

have shown how creating advertising is involved in projects of self-making for advertising practitioners,

as these professionals must calibrate their own social identities in relation to the consumers they

address (Davila 2001, Shankar 2015, Mazzarella 2003). Further, in national contexts such as the US in

which advertising targets 'minorities' defined by ethnoracial or cultural difference, scholars have shown

how advertising constructs a default 'normal' (Shankar 2015) or 'Anglo' (Davila 2001) in relation to

which 'difference' or 'diversity' is configured. In other national contexts, local advertisers perform

cultural expertise in relation to their international clients, mediating the relationship between a

universal global and a particular national consumer (Mazzarella 2003).

In the South African context, advertising is similarly involved in projects of self-making, in ways that

exhibit both continuities and contrasts with these other national contexts. For advertising agencies and

the clients they represent, the numerical dominance of Blacks, and the upward mobility of some since

the end of apartheid, contributes to their characterization as the only growth market in South Africa,

and has made them the focus of much advertising. This has been fed by various institutions and

individuals trying to 'sell' the value of Blacks as consumers, and positioning their own expertise as

indispensable in this process (for example, marketing research bodies such as the Unilever Institute –

see Chapter 5 – and 'insights' agencies focusing on Black consumers). At the same time, the advertising

and corporate world remains dominated by Whites. This forms part of a national context in which Blacks

have been described by some as a numerical majority, but a cultural minority (see Haffajee 2015 –

although in the corporate world, Whites are often a numerical majority as well, especially at the level of

senior management [Southall 2016]). This is what makes the dynamics of advertising in South Africa

specific – an advertising industry and corporate world dominated by Whites must address and capture

Blacks as consumers, not as a niche market, but as the majority of the national market. This has created

a context in which Black advertising professionals often serve as 'cultural brokers' for the entire Black

market, simultaneously emphasizing the difference of the Black South African consumers from Whites,

while declaring their equality with Whites.

This is a dynamic very similar to that observed by Mazzarella in India (2003), where Indian advertising

professionals insisted on both the cultural difference and global equality of the 'Indian consumer', while

participating in shaping notions of an Indian 'middle classness'. In South Africa, Black advertising

professionals also participate in configuring a Black middle class identity, insisting on 'positive'

representations of blackness, which attempt to separate blackness from its historical equation with

poverty. Some expressed great frustration that White clients would at times refuse their role as brokers,

rather asking their domestic worker for insight into what a 'real' Black South African thought of a

particular idea for a campaign, thus hindering the attempts of these Black professionals to separate

Blackness from poverty. Here we also see parallels with the context in the US described by Shankar and

Davila, where Asian American and Latino advertising professionals worked to represent minority

consumers as culturally distinct as well as equal to unmarked White consumers, while attempting to

erase 'negative' characterizations of these minorities, erasing structural inequalities between minorities

and Whites in the process.

However, whereas in the US context, these 'cultural brokers' must convince corporate America of the

importance of these 'minority' consumers, and in the Indian context, Indian advertising professionals

framed themselves as the gatekeepers to the Indian middle classes, selling them as a lucrative untapped

market, in South Africa, the consensus within the advertising industry and within corporate South Africa

is that Black consumers are the most important market that must be captured and tapped through

advertising – not only the new Black middle class, but also those currently poor, but who may join the

ranks of the Black middle class in the future, given the characterization of this market as upwardly

mobile. Thus, it is not only Black advertising professionals that must address Blacks as consumers, but majority White advertising agencies such as the one I spent time at in Cape Town. In this context, we see a similar characterization of Blacks as different/Blacks as the same in relation to Whites, but in a way that participated in a very different self-making project from that of Black advertising professionals.

In this construction, Black consumers are 'the same' as the White advertising professional's self in so far as they can be subsumed within a particular construction of what it means to be 'middle class', which draws on the historical relationship between middle classness, whiteness, and being the 'default' consumer citizen. During the segregationist and apartheid periods in South Africa, the default consumer was explicitly White and middle-class. In post-apartheid South Africa, I argue that this explicit whiteness has become implicit, replaced by the racially-unmarked category of 'middle-classness'. However, this definition of middle-classness is still implicitly based on standards determined by Whites, shaped by the long history of conflating middle-classness, whiteness, and the supposed capacity to restrain desire. On the other hand, Black consumers are constituted as 'different' in one of two ways: as 'less developed' versions of whitened middle class consumers, who find whitened middle classness aspirational, and which advertising can develop, thus protecting the superiority of Whiteness (in this conception Black difference is just a chimera, that will be erased as they become 'developed'); or as 'others' to this middle class self – either in the figure of the 'new' Black middle classes, or in the figure of unruly low-income Blacks, both of which are figured as lacking the capacity for restraint and sublimation of desire which characterizes the figure of the whitened middle class self. In this way, attempting to configure a non-racial middle class through advertising must engage with the historical context of South Africa in which racial difference was produced by aligning class with race, as well as the co-existing construction of race as bodily difference which at times disrupts these attempts[12].

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[12] At times, this characterization of whitened middle class consumer as unmarked and Black consumers as particular intersected with ideas about globally unmarked consumers and nationally particular South African

As advertising professionals attempt to interpellate this default whitened middle class consumer, they draw on international ideologies of branding. Increasing scholarly attention has been paid to the brand, recognizing its growing centrality in marketing practice (Moore 2003), with some conceptualizing the brand as a sign of broader changes in capitalism (Lury 2004, Arvidsson 2006). Advertising practitioners grapple with the same challenge that those studying the brand do: the difficulty of defining what a brand is (Manning 2010). In this dissertation, I examine how those in the advertising industry attempt to bring the brand into existence through processes of mediation, striving to make a coherent and stable entity from material that is inherently unstable, in order to resonate affectively with consumers so that they will buy the branded product. Here I draw on the work of other scholars who have similarly examined how branding engages with affect and emotion in order to produce value (Foster 2005, 2008a, 2008b); how it manages relations of sameness and difference for profit (Nakassis 2012); how it mediates the relationship between concrete encounters with products and abstract notions of brand (Moore in Manning 2010); and how it attempts to harness the excess produced in encounters between brand and consumers, and the various 'surfeits' that go beyond the brand and yet sustain its existence (Nakassis 2013).

In examining the overlapping tensions between the practice of advertising and constituting political collectivities, I situate both advertising and the nation state form within the broader context of capitalist mass society. I focus on three sets of tensions in particular, that both advertising and constituting a polity must engage with: the tension between universality and difference; the concrete and the abstract; and the tensions engendered as political and commercial actors attempt to mediate various

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consumers. For example, many of those I interviewed declared that in order to find a 'distinctively South African voice', South African advertising needed to figure out how to talk to Black consumers. One Black advertising professional that I interviewed complained that the only distinctively South African advertising was that directed at low income Black consumers, which he complained was distinctive in being 'bad'. At the same time, as the campaigns I focused on were for national alcohol brands, not international brands, there was very little discussion about what made South African consumers distinctive, and far more focus on how to reconcile differences of race and class within a national market.

forms of 'social effervescence' or 'excess' in maintaining stable social formations. Tensions between

universality and difference are integral to the formation of mass society, and arose with the rise in

Western Europe of industrial capitalism, mass urbanization, and the nation state as the dominant form

of structuring collectivities, as social relations were transformed, becoming subject to rationalization,

quantification and objectification according to the requirements of economic optimization (Weber

1958). In this context, the inequalities required by capitalism (and the state, according to Marx) had to

be reconciled with the figure of the universal, equal citizen (and human) within the overarching form of

the nation state, a tension which colonialism both exacerbated and explicated (Fanon 2004, 2008;

Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). Those who create advertising must grapple with this tension in the

campaigns they create. On the one hand, advertising and marketing reifies difference as it positions a

brand, aligning it with a very specific identity, but then offers to erase difference by promising this

lifestyle to anyone via the commodity (Nuttall 2008). In the chapters that follow, I argue that creating

advertising is fundamentally about balancing a notion of universal 'human truths' on which unified

brands can be grounded, with notions of difference shaping the way these 'human truths' are adapted

for markets targeted according to various kinds of difference.

A related tension characterizing the formation of political collectivities in the context of mass society is

that between social relations based on face to face interaction, and those mediated by circulating media

forms – which inflected a much older tension between face to face and the mass disseminated forms of

communication (Peters 1999) – which scholars have investigated using the analytic of 'imagined

communities' (Anderson 1983) the 'public sphere' (Habermas 1989) and 'publics' (Warner 2002). Similarly,

advertising must engage with the tension between the concrete and the abstract, the face-to-face and the

mass mediated, as it uses mediated images in attempting to shape people's everyday choices to purchase

one brand of commodity over another. As we will see, attempts to ground the abstract promises of brands

in affective, face-to-face interaction are increasingly important in branding discourse and practice,

informed both by the increasing 'dematerialization' of brand from products (Moore in Manning 2010) and the growing imperative in branding ideology for brand custodians to generate relations of love with consumers in face-to-face interactions between consumers and brand representatives (Lenderman 2006, Lindstrom 2005, Roberts 2005).

Advertising itself is a commodity, sold to corporate clients for profit. The commodity form exemplifies this tension between difference and universality, as well as the concrete and the abstract, face to face relations of production and impersonal relations of market exchange, as the form of the commodity claims to abstract all concrete particularities of use value into a universally interchangeable form according to the rubric of exchange value. However, critiques of this totalizing vision of capitalism have shown how that difference and the particularities of the concrete can never be abstracted totally into universal exchange value. Just as with living labor power – which possesses a vitality necessary for capitalist production but also exceeds all attempts at absolute control – there is an unavoidable excess involved in all such attempts at totalization; the particularities of the concrete are both required for capitalism to operate, while also troubling its universalizing claims and its attempt appropriate all difference for the services of profit maximization (Chakrabarty 2007, Hardt and Negri 2000). In this dissertation, I draw on these insights, which show the various kinds of excess produced by different kinds of totalizing projects, and the ambiguity of these forms of excess to social life as they are mediated with at times unpredictable effects. These scholars have approached the notion of excess from various perspectives; here I focus on the excess produced by affect, desire, and difference, all of which are central to the production of advertising.

Drawing on post-structuralist analyses of the ambivalence at the heart of the fiction of a stable self, postcolonial theorists laid the foundations for studying the ambivalence of categorizing the difference of the other – the excess that both threatens these systems of classification, and from which these systems draw their power (Bhabha 1994), contributing to scholarship investigating how the construct of a

Western 'self' was founded upon various encounters with its others (Trouillot 1991, Todorov 1983). In a similar vein, Povinelli (2002) shows how in political projects celebrating difference such as Australian multiculturalism, there is a different kind of difference that threatens the underlying premise that cultural difference is compatible with liberal democracy. This excess similarly haunts marketing approaches which attempt to domesticating difference by framing it as consumers choosing different 'lifestyles' associated with different branded products (Chakrabarty in Mazzarella 2003). In this dissertation, I examine how advertisers try to categorize and make tractable difference, and how such attempts are involved in projects of self-making for those who create advertising. I also show the various forms of excess that arise from these attempts, and the ambiguities around responses to these potentialities on the part of advertisers.

If classifying difference is one kind of practice that generates an excess, the affective intensity that arises out of the interactions between the human sensorium and the aesthetic elements of advertising is another. Here I draw on scholars who have defined affect as an intensity that is prior to – but a necessary prerequisite for – social action; it is an impersonal and arises out of relationality between objects and subjects, shaped by histories of these modes of relationality (Mazzarella 2009, Massumi 2002, Gregg & Seigworth 2010). Affect may be considered a kind of excess due to its ambiguous relation to hegemonic social forms; necessary for people to become invested in such forms, but threatening their stability through the unpredictability of attempts to mediate affect. Critical theorists have pushed back against purely celebratory analyses of affect and emergence that attribute a positive valence to these phenomena and a negative valence to any form of structure or mediation that attempts to harness these forms of social effervescence in the service of sustained social projects. Such binarization that sees all structure and mediation as inherently repressive and stultifying, and all affect and vitality as necessarily liberatory ignores the ambivalence of feeling itself, which undergirds the sway hegemonic social systems have over us, rather than simply motivating opposition to such systems (Berlant 2008,

Mazzarella 2010, cf. Eagleton 1990 for a similar ambivalence in relation to aesthetic experience and ideology). Such affect, and other forms of potentiality, must be actualized into stable social formations, but the dynamics of this actualization are unpredictable, and this confers on social structures both their continued vitality, and their potential fluidity and vulnerability to being challenged by alternative social projects (Mazzarella 2017). I draw on the insights of such scholars that mediation works to actualize the inchoate potential of affect, rather than stultifying such potential. Mazzarella (2003) shows how an integral part of what advertisers do is attempt to channel the excess of affect generated in encounters between consumers and commodities images through brand narratives, to generate value for themselves and their corporate clients, as fleeting and unstable as these processes of channeling may be.

In the practice of the advertisers I spent time with, just as important as channeling affect through brand narratives in creating brand identities were attempts to sublimate commodity desire into brand love, while maintain the intensity of desire as a means to cathect the purchase of commodities. An early analysis of advertising and desire was Williamson's (1978) seminal study. She argues that advertising strives to appropriate the Lacanian lack at the heart of the fiction of the stable self, which motivates a desire for plenitude that can never be consummated, a desire that advertising can appropriate and offer to satiate. Other scholars have demonstrated how advertising attempts to train such desires, focusing them on aspirational images that confirm to dominant notions of good taste (Mazzarella 2003). In the chapters that follow, I show how the inherent unpredictability of desire created a situation in which advertisers tried to sublimate commodity desire into brand love, creating brand-consumer relationships, drawing on the marketing paradigm of brand humanization. However, these sublimations were always vulnerable to the desire which was required to keep consumers purchasing – simply having a

relationship with the brand was not enough to boost profits margins[13]. I show how in this paradigm of branding, advertising practitioners use models of love relationships in an attempt to create attachments between consumer and brand where disappointment is to be expected and is not the grounds for radical change – in other words cultivating the kind of 'cruel optimism' that maintains an attachment to the status quo (Berlant 2011). Examining how advertising tried to focus consumer desire around shared visions of aspiration, while connecting these promised shared futures to the brand elucidates the politics of branding, as hope for a better future that can be aspired to is integrally caught up with political action in the present moment (Appadurai 2007).

Methodology and context of fieldwork

My dissertation draws on 15 months of fieldwork in South Africa, plus a further 3 months of follow-up research. During this time, I conducted archival research at the National Library of South Africa – Cape Town and Pretoria branches – and the Ornico library of SA TV ads; ethnographic research at an advertising agency; and in-depth interviews with advertising professionals situated at various institutional sites throughout the industry.

In much of the dissertation, I focus on the advertising campaigns for alcohol brands. Alcohol advertising is a particularly suitable site for exploring the dynamics of racialized consumer citizenship, as regulating access to alcoholic commodities was deeply implicated in the making of racial difference during apartheid. Legal restrictions on selling western liquor to Blacks were justified by framing Blacks as incapable of containing their desire in relation both to alcohol (Mager 2010) and commodities (Rogerson 1994)[14]. Such restrictions forged a strong association between western alcoholic commodities, White

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[13] See also Nakassis 2012 on ways consumers appropriate the value of the brand in ways other than commodity purchase.
[14] The sale of Western liquor to Blacks without the permission of the Governor was prohibited from 1883 in the Cape Province, and extended to all four Provinces of the Union in 1928. This prohibition was revoked in 1960. During prohibition, in the Cape and Natal Provinces, Blacks could apply for a license to buy Western liquor if they were formally educated and owned property. They also had to display two years of 'good behavior', have

privilege, and an aspirational consumer lifestyle (Brandel-Syrier 1971, Krige 2010). As Mager puts it,

these prohibitions were founded on "the assumption that drinkers of sorghum beer and other

beverages fermented from African grains and fruits (opaque beer) would progress by degrees to the

'superior' beverages of their colonial masters. Colonial discourses implied a ladder of development and

assumed that transition to drinks of a higher alcoholic content required the discipline of 'European'

lifestyles" (2010: 4). As I started fieldwork, the advertising industry was in a furor over a draft bill

proposing an almost total ban of alcohol advertising as a response to the severe public health

consequences of alcohol abuse in South Africa[15]. The alcohol industry and as well as the advertising

industry protested strongly, claiming that such a ban would result in the loss of 12000 jobs, mostly in the

advertising industry[16]. Within this context, as I carried out the research for this project, the power of

advertising to prompt consumers to buy commodities and drink alcohol was a hotly debated issue, and

part of broader debates about the power of advertising.

My dissertation includes a detailed analysis of two campaigns for alcohol brands – one for a sherry and

one for a wine – created by the Cape Town advertising agency 99cents, where I conducted ethnographic

research for about four consecutive months, supplemented brief follow up visits throughout my time

carrying out fieldwork. These were both created for the client Distell – a distillery producing wine and

brandy[17], one of the top three spenders on alcohol advertising in South Africa[18]. Cape Town is arguably

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permanent employment, and a clean criminal record. If granted a license, they could buy 8 bottles of malt beer, four bottles of natural wine/2 of fortified wine, one bottle of spirits per month. However, in practice, very few of these licenses were granted; in 1960, 50,000 licenses had been granted out of a population of 9 million Africans.

[15] See https://www.phasa.org.za/ban-alcohol-advertising-south-africa/, "The Ban on Alcohol Advertising in South Africa", February 26, 2015, Public Health Association of South Africa.

[16] http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/business-news/2013/06/12/alcohol-advertising-ban-will-cost-12000-jobs-report, "Alcohol advertising ban will cost 12000 jobs: report" By Sapa, Jun 12, 2013.

[17] Wine producers were historically associated with Afrikaner capital, and beer with British capital, with the apartheid government subsidizing the former and giving it various advantages, evident, for example, in supermarkets being legally permitted to stock wine but not beer (Mager 2010). Distell still had a lot of white Afrikaans employees, but all agency-client meetings were conducted exclusively in English.

[18] "Alcohol Advertising in South Africa: A Trend and Comparative Analysis" Corné van Walbeek and Michael Daly, School of Economics University of Cape Town, commissioned by the World Health Organization, January 2014.

the capital of alcohol advertising in South Africa, with Ogilvy Cape Town handling almost all the accounts

for the brewing giant SABMiller, which dominates the South African alcohol market (Mager 2010). Many

of the accounts for wine brands are also handled by Cape Town agencies, due to the proximity of the

city to the winelands region, including Stellenbosch[19], where Distell was located.

Cape Town is also seen by those in the advertising industry as distinct from the Johannesburg scene,

with one top Black brand manager derisively terming it "the Republic of Cape Town" in our interview.

Many advertising professionals, especially Black ones, complained to me in interviews that it is the least

'transformed' space in the country, with the fewest Black professionals working in agencies. This

typification amongst advertising professionals occurs within a broader characterization of Cape Town as

a particularly racist space, with its demographics having fewer Blacks, higher numbers of Whites and

Coloureds, and at time of research, being the only province in the country not under the control of the

African National Congress (ANC), which is the ruling party at national government level, and the party

that led the liberation movement against apartheid. Rather it is under the control of the Democratic

Alliance (DA), which still struggles to change its perception as a 'White' party[20].

The specificities of my time at 99cents advertising agency enabled certain analytics, while foreclosing

others, as is the case with any fieldwork experience. After being granted permission to conduct research

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[19] Such producers of alcohol are themselves caught up in the history of racism in South Africa, with Cape vineyards paying their Coloured workers in alcohol rather than cash during much of the 20th century. Mager (2010) explains that Coloureds in the Cape Province were not subject to the same prohibitions on White liquor as were Blacks, as it was "believed that Coloureds were motivated by and could be controlled more effectively through a regular supply of crude wine than through higher wages" (2010: 2).

[20] For example, in December 2011, a Black model and singer Lindiwe Suttle tweeted about her experiences of racism in Cape Town, setting off responses from others about similar experiences, causing the hashtag #CapeTownIsRacist to trend on the SA Twitter website. The situation escalated when Helen Zille, then premier of the Western Cape province and leader of the DA, accused on of the Black celebrities, Simphiwe Dana, of being a 'professional black' (which she later defined as "People who base their life and purpose around their colour"), dismissing her claims that Cape Town was racist (http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2011/12/28/zille-dana-argue-on-twitter-over-racist-cape-town). For other more recent incidents involving Blacks experiencing racism in Cape Town, see http://www.iol.co.za/news/cape-towns-secret-white-club-1431433, http://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/black-in-cape-town-brace-yourself-1735771).

at the agency, I was assigned to 'job shadow' two account executives – Anne and Nancy[21] – who handled

the Distell accounts. The agency frequently had 'job shadowers' from Cape Town advertising schools

spending time at the agency as part of their training, and as a student studying advertising, this is how

those at the agency viewed me. When not liaising with clients, a lot of Anne and Nancy's work involved

answering emails and making phone calls, during which time I sat at an empty workstation in the office,

sometimes engaging in casual conversation with other employees at the agency, or keeping up with

industry blogs, but often simply witnessing the day-to-day operations of the agency. During these

moments I was able to observe the demographic makeup of the agency, noticing how the vast majority

of employees – especially at the senior level – were White, with a scattering of Black and Coloured

interns and junior execs, as well as Black cleaning ladies and tea ladies, and a Black receptionist, as well

as a few more senior Coloured professionals[22].

Being a 'job shadower' to those at the agency had pros and cons. I was expected to simply keep quiet,

watch and learn, so in meetings my presence was totally ignored and I was free to observe as those

involved engaged in fascinating debates about the implications of the race and socioeconomic position

of the consumers the brands were targeting. On the other hand, when I pushed to have access to

meetings and events that a 'job shadower' would not usually have access to – specifically, the strategy

meetings from which junior personnel were excluded, focus group research conducted by Distell's

market research agency, and the 'immersion' where senior representatives from 99cents and Distell

went to visit the Eastern Cape to observe how low-income drinkers were purchasing and consuming

Sedgwick's – I met with immediate resistance. Also, the job shadowing was seen as a short term

arrangement, and my attempts to extend it were not successful. After the four months at the agency, I

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[21] Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of participants.

[22] Other Cape Town professionals that I interviewed mentioned Coloured on Black racism as an element marking their experience of the Cape Town advertising scene, but this was not something that I witnessed while conducting ethnography at 99cents, where no Blacks worked on the brand team I was placed with.

had to find other ways to continue my ethnography of the two brands, which I did by working as a brand

ambassador for the sherry brand, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Additionally, I visited the Eastern Cape to

observe taverns and talk with tavern owners about their perceptions of the marketing efforts of 99cents

for the sherry brand, and their relationship with Distell; and I attended the Soweto Wine Show where

the wine brand had an activation, interviewing some of the brand ambassadors and observing how wine

was being marketed to Black South Africans more generally. I also returned a number of times during

fieldwork to conduct follow-up interviews with informants at 99cents, and to spend a day with the

creative team working on the two brands.

As I spent more time carrying out research, I discovered that I had been very lucky to get the job

shadowing arrangement at 99cents so quickly, as once I left that agency, I was unable to get continuous

access to another agency, although I tried repeatedly. Marketing research companies were particularly

strict in forbidding any observation of their work, although I conducted many interviews with those

working in this institutional site of the industry. I was, however, able to attend once-off presentations at

various advertising agencies as well as industry conferences and events, which proved very useful in

gaining perspective on 99cents in relation to the broader industry. Other challenges of access included

the busyness of advertising professionals, who often simply didn't have time to meet, or would promise

to meet and then disappear, never again answering my emails or calls.

Anthropologists of advertising in the US have commented on the increasing participation in the industry

of anthropologists, and the growing use of the research tools of anthropologists such as ethnography,

rendering anthropologists a 'known entity' to advertising professionals (Shankar 2015, Malefyt & Morais

2012). I found that this was generally not the case in the South African advertising industry, with a few

notable exceptions. A few boutique marketing research agencies in South Africa had positioned

themselves as using ethnography to produce deep, qualitative insights about consumers, which they

contrasted with the 'flat', superficial mass insights produced by quantitative research. However,

according to those I spoke to at these agencies, many clients continued to be suspicious of such

research, preferring quantitative research's claims to be able to offer insight into larger numbers of

people. Marketing research agencies that focused on using ethnography were familiar with the

discipline of anthropology, and were very interested in my research, with one even trying to recruit me.

But advertising agencies themselves generally did very little marketing research. This varied somewhat

based on the institutional culture of the agency, with some agencies encouraging and expecting

strategists and even creative professionals to 'spend time' with their audience, although this was not the

case at 99cents[23]. But in general, there was a strict division of labor, with marketing research companies

conducting research, commissioned by corporate clients – either by a group of corporations, or a single

one. Advertising agencies would only access marketing research via their corporate clients, who would

present it to the advertising agencies working on or pitching for their brands. As I discuss in chapter 1,

this institutional division of labor has deep historical roots, with advertising agencies designated as the

institutional site for identifying 'human truths' (through 'creativity', 'intuition', and 'empathy'), and

marketing research as the institutional location for producing knowledge about difference.

Two other features of my fieldwork shaped the foci of this dissertation. Firstly, 99cents was not an

internationally affiliated agency, but a small, independent agency, started by an ex-copywriter who left

the multinational BBDO to start his own agency[24]. For this reason, there was none of the negotiation

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[23] Interesting in this regard was the justification I was given for why I couldn't participate in the research 'immersion' that the agency and client were going on in the Eastern Cape; I was told that this would be a chance for the client team to 'bond' with its new agency, demonstrating the point that the exercise was at least as much about configuring client-agency relationships, as it was about discovering information about 'the consumer' – as is the case with many elements of the professional practice of advertising (Mazzarella 2003).

[24] Judging from the writers in the journal Advertising South Africa, the South African advertising industry started at the turn of the 20th century with British immigrants to the colony – some of them journalists and war correspondents, and others sent by British-owned companies such as Lever Brothers. The British influence in South African advertising was strong into the days of the Union, which started in 1910, and beyond into South Africa's early years as a Republic from 1961, although the influence of other national advertising industries is evident on SA advertising from the 40s onwards, with the periodicals having a regular feature consisting of articles reprinted from US and British journals, as well as from other countries such as Australia. The largest agencies, and those who ran the majority of the ads appearing in the industry periodicals, were South African branches of international

between 'local' experts and international hubs that characterized the experience reported by those working at these internationally-affiliated agencies by many of the advertising professionals I interviewed, and which other ethnographic studies of advertising have analyzed (Mazzarella 2003, Miller 1997, Moeran 1996). Secondly, the client for the two primary campaigns I followed was a local corporation, not an international one – Distell, located only an hour away from the agency, as I mentioned above[25]. This was the case for most alcohol advertising in South Africa, with the local market dominated by local alcohol producers. For this reason, in the campaigns I followed, there was no need to translate an international brand image into a local South African version. Imaginaries of race and class within the national market featured much more prominently than conceptions of a national identity in relation to an imagined global audience.

In this way, my location at a small, predominantly White advertising agency in Cape Town working on alcohol brands made certain analytical perspectives available to me: it allowed me to investigate a particularly extreme example of the hegemony of whiteness in the advertising industry; it allowed me to explore the intertwining of various types of desire and relations between people and things as these were crystalized in debates around alcoholic commodities; and it allowed me to investigate the divisions of race and class that a nationally-marketed alcohol brand attempted to transcend. At the same time, while 99cents had some particular elements that differed from other agencies in the country, it became

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firms, such as JW Thompson, PN Barrett and Grant Advertising. During South Africa's years of isolation from the international community, when trading sanctions were in place, many small independent agencies were started, most of which were bought by and merged with big international players once South Africa became a democracy and joined the international economic community (for example, Reg Lascaris's agency was bought by TBWA, and the very successful Black-owned agency Herbouys was bought out by McCann). Since the mid-90s, the industry has undergone a process of continuous monopolization, so that in 2012, the vast majority of agencies in South Africa were under the control of four foreign-owned companies: WPP (UK), Omnicom (USA), Publicis (France) and Interpublic (USA). (http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-08-16-south-africas-great-advertising-divide/#.UfHXhjusiSp).

[25] This is not to say that the structure of 'global' and 'local' were irrelevant to such South African corporations – this distinction was in fact built into the corporate structure of Distell, allowing the company to expand into other national markets in Africa, as I explain in later chapters.

clear that similar tensions and puzzles confronted the industry as whole, as I widened my research focus beyond the specific context of the agency. In-depth interviews with industry professionals throughout the country – but primarily in Johannesburg and Cape Town – allowed me to contextualize my experience at 99cents more broadly. It also allowed me to situate the work performed by the agency 99cents within the overall process of creating advertising, as I interviewed people based at other institutional sites – primarily, those working in marketing research; those working at educational institutions where future advertising and marketing professionals are trained; and those working on marketing on the corporate side, who often move back and forth between agency and client, and who could thus provide some perspective on the division of labor and different corporate cultures of the two environments. I interviewed professionals who classified themselves into each of the four apartheid-era racial categories, although Indian/Asian and Coloured professionals were in the minority, as these groups are in the minority in the country and the industry. Attempts to 'transform' the industry have focused on bringing Blacks in – rather than Asians or Coloureds. This was driven by the perception that more Blacks working in agencies would help corporate clients who hire these agencies tap the spending power of Blacks.

Further context for the ethnographic research and interviews was provided by archival research of advertising industry periodicals from the early 20th century, which elucidated historical conceptualizations of Blacks as consumers. Examining racially-targeted newspapers and magazines, and comparing the campaigns for the same brand in 'White' versus 'Black' publications, shed further light on how such debates about racially-defined consumers informed the creation of actual campaigns. Archival research of the first two decades of TV ads in South Africa – from the time of racially segregated channels to the transition into multiracial programming – also elucidated how notions of race and class were articulated, with whiteness and middle-classness conflated, as I discuss in Chapter 2.

My research focused on the production of advertising, rather than its reception. My interest was in

understanding how the creators of advertising, tasked with persuading consumers to buy commodities,

grappled with the historical complexities of the relationship between race and consumerhood in South

Africa, often explicitly debating with one another what makes racialized and socioeconomically marked

consumer segments buy brands, thus explicating latent imaginaries in broader society. However,

although I did not investigate 'reception' per se, I contextualize the production of advertising within the

broader public cultural field of circulation. This includes reactions within South African society to various

campaigns, including formal complaints lodged with the advertising watchdog ASASA (Advertising

Standards Authority of South Africa), YouTube comments, and media commentary, as well as the

feedback loop through which the producers of advertising themselves attempt to ascertain how their

campaigns are being taken up, so that they can adjust them accordingly (taking the form of focus

groups, and of increasing importance, monitoring social media commentary on ads).

Chapter outlines

The dissertation is structured around the tensions and impasses involved in the practice of creating

advertising as these overlap with and explicate tensions involved in constituting political collectivities. I

trace these tensions at multiple scales and sites of investigation, identifying them as they emerge in the

early years of the advertising industry in South Africa in the pages of industry journals and the images

and texts of ads, and following them into the contemporary moment as they manifest in the concerns

expressed by industry professionals as they attempt to create brand identities that will actualize

consumers by offering them both aspiration and recognition.

In Chapter 1, I sketch out the historical context of the contemporary South African advertising industry,

arguing that the ambivalent object of the 'Black consumer' as both fantasy and threat emerged in the

first half of the 20th century, as advertisers tried to constitute national mass markets in the context of

colonial and apartheid South Africa. In order to contain the threat of Blacks as potentially equal

consumers and shore up the superiority of whiteness, White advertisers often emphasized the status of

Blacks as developing consumers who needed Whites to become actualized. However, parallel

imaginaries of Blacks as inscrutably different – with aspirations that advertisers could not contain –

continued to haunt this fantasy of control.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are drawn from the ethnographic research I conducted at 99cents, the advertising

agency in Cape Town. In Chapters 2 and 3, I examine the campaign for Sedgwick's fortified wine (sherry).

In Chapter 2, I argue that the failure of the almost entirely-White brand team to create a unified identity

for the Sedgwick's brand that could encompass a target market made up of low-income rural Blacks and

high-income multiracial urbanites reveals how the unmarked 'self' of advertising practitioners in South

Africa – and by extension, of the default South African consumer – has shifted from being explicitly

White, to being racially unmarked (but implicitly White) and middle class. The low-income Black target

market for the brand was characterized in contradictory ways by the advertisers: either as a potential

version of this self, or as a consumer 'other' which could not be incorporated into that self, but

continued to serve as the site where the tensions of the campaign were projected. This allows me to

illustrate the continuity of the 'double bind' of advertising in relation to the 'other' consumer, which in

the case of this brand was the low-income Black (mostly male) market segment.

In Chapter 3 I show how the failure to create a unified brand identity pushed the team to create two

'faces' for the brand, one for each target market. I argue that the use of face-to-face marketing in these

efforts may be understood as an attempt to make tractable the unstable nature of brand-consumer

interactions, and to mediate the brand's two market segments in unequal ways. Here I lay out my

argument that the tensions in the marketing ideology of 'brand humanization' – where a consumer must

both desire a commodity and love a brand – get projected onto entrenching lines of social difference,

pivoting on racialized constructions of differing capacities to contain desire and sublimate this into love.

In Chapter 4 I discuss the campaign for 4th Street rosé wine, a drink targeted at young, upwardly mobile

Black women, in order to analyze the ambivalent place of gender in constructions of the figure of the

Black consumer. I argue that the all-White brand team's idealized image of the brand's target market –

the '4th Street Girl' – constituted a fantasy figure of the 'good' Black consumer. As both endlessly

aspirational on the one hand, and apolitical and non-threatening on the other, this figure served to

sustain the fantasy of Black consumers as a lucrative market, while assuaging both the worry that Black

aspiration may be dormant, or that it may be uncontainable by capitalist market structures. I show the

ambivalence of the femaleness of the '4th Street Girl', which could mark her either as 'nurturing' and

non-threatening, or as 'fickle' in her consumer desires which threatened to elude containment by

advertisers.

In Chapter 5, I scale up the field of analysis from the advertising agency of 99cents to the South African

advertising industry more broadly, exploring the pervasive discourse advocating a shift from 'aspiration

to inspiration' in advertising. I argue that this discourse responds to the sense of many advertisers that

the gap separating the current and ideal selves of the majority of Black South Africans has become too

large, rendering the aspirations of these consumers unattainable and thus dangerous. 'Inspiring'

consumers involved suturing this gap by fostering hope in the possibility of a better future, creating

'developmental brands' that could teach consumers how to get from their current position to a better

future. However, I show how advertising struggled to bridge the gap between current and ideal selves,

as advertisers failed to recognize the broader social factors feeding the disconnect between present and

future.

A note on terminology: 'race' and 'class'

Conceptualizing and categorizing social difference in order to target brand campaigns is an integral part

of what advertising practitioners do. In this dissertation, I describe local conceptualizations of social

difference while attempting to avoid reifying these. Advertising practitioners use the term 'race' and

apartheid-era racial categories in describing the markets they address (although often the racialized

nature of market segments is implicit rather than explicit, as I discuss in Chapter 2). In my analysis, I also

use the four apartheid-era categories – Black (of African descent), White (of European descent),

Coloured (of mixed descent), and Indian/Asian (of Asian descent) – to describe the various kinds of

consumers targeted by advertising. As I discuss in Chapter 1, the advertising industry has had different

attitudes to classifying Coloured and Asian consumers over its history, grouping them at times with Black

consumers, and at other times with White consumers. The reader may notice that in relation to race,

the focus of this dissertation is on imaginaries of blackness in relation to whiteness. This reflects the

dominant concerns in the advertising industry today, as mentioned above; although Asian and Coloured

consumers may be targeted at times as niche markets, the primary focus of the industry is on capturing

the Black emerging market because of its huge size relative to other racial groups, while avoiding

alienating the White market, which although stagnant in terms of growth, still holds significant

purchasing power.

In contrast to race, advertising professionals tended not to use the term 'class' to describe markets,

except in relation to the 'new' Black middle classes, as I discuss in the chapters that follow. However,

despite the absence of the term, features that might loosely be considered under the category of 'class'

are of great concern to marketers; access to consumer goods is a primary criterion for segmenting the

market – the most common of these being LSMs (Living Standards Measure, see Chapter 2) – as are

factors such as level of disposable income (whether through employment, debt, or state grants),

profession, and education. Class – in both a Marxian and Weberian sense – has been an important factor

in shaping social divisions in South Africa historically, and continues to be so in the present[26]. During the

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[26] Position within the relations of production is also used by some marketers to segment the market, although not
in a Marxist conception – for example, veteran marketer Wendy Cochrane explained to me that her company was

segregationist and colonial period, race was used to structure access to the means of production, with

racist legislation constituting Blacks as cheap labor for White capitalists[27], which created enduring

divisions of class, which have mapped onto race in ways that have shifted since the end of the apartheid

era (see above). At the same time, different access to commodities have long been a way to mark status,

both between Black and White, and between the small Black middle class and the rest of the Black

population (Kuper 1965). In contemporary South Africa, consumer goods continued to be highly valued

as a source of status, particularly amongst Black South Africans (James 2015, Krige 2010, Mda 2009).

Despite the fact that advertising professionals often used psychographic terms to describe markets

rather than calling them 'middle class', I argue that what constitutes 'middle classness' is an important

aspect of the self-making project of these professionals, and that much advertising in contemporary

South Africa serves to configure 'middle classness' as an aspirational ideal, while often struggling to

calibrate the relationship between the unmarked 'whitened' middle class self of the advertising

practitioner, and the figure of the 'new' Black middle class. In this way, advertising practice intersects

with broader debates in South African society about how the Black middle class relates to the White

middle class, as I discuss in chapters 4 and 5. In my analysis, I show how the practice of advertising

professionals both explicates these existing differences of race and class, and attempts to configure

these identities, although often without naming them as such.

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developing a segmentation model where being 'middle class' was distinguished from being 'mass market' by access to employment – to be middle class was to have some sort of steady job, rather than to be dependent on a government grant.

[27] According to Wolpe (1990), scholars analyzing the relationship between race and class within this system of racial capitalism fell into two camps: Marxists who saw the racist system of apartheid as an aid to capitalism, creating a large pool of cheap labor for white mine owners and manufacturers, and liberal scholars who saw racism as not simply determined by capitalist class relations, but rather as detrimental to the maximization of profit, as racist legislation prevented the skilling of black workers and hampering their productivity, while artificially driving up the wages of white skilled workers and thus detrimental to capitalist interests.

Chapter 1

Configuring 'the Black Consumer': Aspirational Whiteness and Racial Difference in the Early Years of the South African Advertising Industry

In this chapter, I examine dynamics around constituting the black consumer market from the early 1930s until the start of the 1960s[1], showing how the figure of the black consumer emerged as an object of both desire and fear for whites in the advertising industry. Throughout the period under discussion, significant shifts took place in the South Africa political landscape – from the consolidation of color bar legislation from the 20s to the 30s; South Africa's participation on the side of the British in the Second World War and the industrial boom that followed it; to the coming to power of the National Party in 1948 and their introduction of formal apartheid, hardening and systematizing the racial segregation already in place (Posel 1991). However, spanning these changes, there is a remarkable consistency in the discourses around the figure of the black consumer in the advertising industry. In the discussion that follows, I indicate how those in the industry responded to changes in the economic and political context, but I focus on the dynamics of how blacks were framed as consumers, and the persistent tensions involved in these dynamics.

This analysis is based on an examination of periodicals published by and for various sectors of the advertising industry; minutes from the Annual Conventions of the Society of Advertisers which began in 1958; as well as an examination of the ad campaigns directed at blacks, focusing on print ads in 'black' newspapers and magazines[2]. As I examine how blacks were framed as consumers, I show how for

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[1] I focus on this early period because from the 1960s onwards, this non-modern, unruly consumer is less evident in print advertising as images of blacks as consumers of commodities become more standardized – as identical to whites, only with black skin, maybe with one or two surface signs of 'culture' included in the image.

[2] This focus is motivated by a number of factors: during the historical period under discussion, industry publications emphasize print as the most important medium for reaching blacks, and access to print archives was more readily available to me during fieldwork). In January 1962, a commercial radio service for blacks - Radio Bantu – was launched. This radio station challenged the monopoly of the press as the primary medium targeting blacks. Traveling road shows demonstrating products and often featuring mobile cinema units were also used by companies such as the Tea Board in the 1950s, and Bertram Paver, founder of the Bantu Press, while promoting his publications in the 1930s (Manoim 1983). It is interesting to consider why the press was emphasized as the best medium for reaching the black consumer, rather than these traveling road shows or the billboards that littered

various actors associated with the advertising industry, blacks offered the fantasy of huge untapped profits due to their sheer numbers relative to whites, in the face of pressures to create national mass markets. However, in a context in which being a fully-actualized consumer was a privilege reserved for whites – seen as an index of modernity and grounding the right to political inclusion – and where the economic value of blacks was seen by most whites as lying in their cheap labor power, framing blacks as consumers potentially equal to whites constituted a threat to white supremacy.

I examine the dynamics of this tension, showing how it manifested in contradictory characterizations of black consumers, and how each of these were incorporated into projects of self-making for various groups of whites involved in producing advertising. On the one hand, there is a discourse evident of the non-racial, universal consumer, in which blacks could achieve and perform their modernity and equality with whites through consumption – although in reality, this end goal was always deferred. Whites who framed blacks in this way emphasized the status of blacks as developing consumers who needed whites to become actualized. They configured a vision of a national market unified around a shared journey towards an aspirational consumer lifestyle epitomized by whites, with difference plotted in terms of varying distances from that ideal. On the other, we see depictions of blacks as 'unruly' consumers, whose non-modernity and otherness co-existed with desiring and purchasing commodities. In certain contexts, this 'other' consumer served to affirm an idealized white consumer-self, but in other contexts, it threatened to thwart advertisers' efforts to harness black consumer aspiration. I show how in this

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South African townships and rural areas from the mid-century onwards. An obvious reason is that many of those trying to sell the black consumer were associated with the black press, as discussed below. But even those not connected to these concerns emphasized the importance of print advertising. It seems that an important element of this emphasis lay in the construction of the black consumer as 'modern' or potentially modern; the connection between constructions of being modern with being literate, and the aspiration hierarchy in which rural and lower income blacks imitated the black elite, who imitated whites. Print seemed the ideal medium for reaching this literate elite, who were believed to be closest to whites, and to have an influence on the buying habits of the entire black population. Even the literate working class engaged in migrant labor on the mines were considered important, as they spread the desire of commodities to the rural areas when they went home in between contracts.

second construction of the unruly black consumer, the indeterminacy inherent to the practice of advertising – in which the creators of advertising frame themselves as able to harness and direct the uptake of advertising messages, and yet require the spontaneity and unpredictability in consumers' engagement with advertising in order to create the affective resonance on which the efficacy of advertising depends – get projected onto the figure of the black consumer as 'other' consumer. I will show in later chapters that this image of the unruly black consumer that evades containment by advertising practice continues to haunt marketing and advertising practice in contemporary South Africa.

In this chapter, I also demonstrate the dynamics that made the recognition of blacks through advertising an important part of early efforts to constitute them as consumers – as whites were the default consumers and addressees of advertising messages, advertising had to make sure blacks knew when advertising was 'talking' to them. As we will see in later chapters, in contemporary South Africa, conferring the recognition of brands on consumers, especially black consumers, remains an essential goal for advertisers, and thus constitutes an important site where imaginaries of consumerhood and citizenship bleed into one another. We will see in this chapter the early roots of the enduring tension in South African advertising between conferring this recognition on black (potential) consumers, while showing blacks aspirational versions of themselves. In the context of segregationist and then apartheid South Africa, where the pinnacle of aspiration was framed as whiteness, and whiteness was defined in opposition to blackness, offering the 'other' consumer both aspiration and recognition through advertising was a tricky balance for advertisers to strike.

In making these arguments, I start by examining the history of attempts by the South African advertising industry to constitute blacks as consumers. During the early days of the industry and throughout the period under discussion, those who wished to convince commodity manufacturers of the potential value of the black market, as well as the importance of advertising their products to blacks, had to actively

frame blacks as consumers. I examine the capacities that blacks were depicted as having in attempts to constitute them as consumers, and the fetishistic quality of this construct, which required advertising to hold it together. I then move on to examine the emergence of the idea that as excluded consumers, Blacks required recognition in advertising, and how this existed in tension at times with offering them aspiration conflated with whiteness. Finally, I examine the fears that were the underside of the fantasy of the lucrative Black consumer market, and how White advertisers sought to protect both their racial supremacy and their professional expertise in engaging with the ambivalent figure of the Black consumer.

Challenges of constituting a South African mass market

Efforts within the advertising and marketing industry to expand the boundaries of who qualified as a potential consumer from whites only to other racial groups in South Africa should be understood in terms of the imperatives of creating national mass markets in the first half of the 20th century. Ewen (2001) shows how in the US, mass production techniques pioneered by Henry Ford necessitated the creation of an expanding pool of consumers to purchase the increased number of goods produced. This involved expanding markets horizontally (beyond isolated regions) and vertically (from a small middle and upper class group to lower income groups). This required paying workers more so that they could afford to buy more and shortening working hours to allow time for goods to be purchased and enjoyed. One definition of this "consumptionism" from 1929 articulated it as "the idea that workmen and masses be looked upon not simply as workers and producers, but as consumers" (1). We see a similar discourse concerning the context of South Africa in the following comment by HJ Choles, in an article appearing in 1923 in the journal *The South African Journal of Industries*[3]. Here, a racially defined working class is

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[3] Although this article precedes efforts in advertising journals to frame blacks as consumers by around ten years, it is prescient in anticipating the most enduring themes and arguments encountered throughout the period under discussion.

reframed as a potential source of mass consumers: "It is often said that in the natives of South Africa we

have a labour force of tremendous potential value. But the natural corollary is not so frequently

mentioned, namely, that a tremendous labour force is a big wage-earning force, which again constitutes

a big spending body" (1923: 199).

However, a number of challenges existed in the South African context to implementing policies designed

to achieve prosperity through consumerism and the creation of mass markets. One of these related to

the particular economic context of South Africa at the time. In a national economy with a large

secondary industry sector such as the US, paying factory workers more could be channeled back into the

profits of those self-same manufacturing companies if workers could be persuaded to spend their extra

money on the goods produced by these factories. However, as Feinstein (2005) explains, in an economy

heavily dependent on mining for foreign exchange and broader economic growth such as South Africa,

the dynamic was different. Paying mine workers more could not boost the profits of mining companies,

as demand for gold came from international markets, not from domestic markets. Higher wages for

workers would not boost the sales of gold, and would only add to operating costs of the mines, so there

was a strong motivation from mining interests to keep wages low, particularly those paid to blacks[4].

Downward pressures on black wages in mining impacted wage levels in manufacturing, as the argument

was that if workers could earn higher wages in manufacturing, they would leave mining in droves, and

thus South Africa's primary source of foreign currency and driver of GDP would have no workers to keep

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[4] Feinstein (2005) explains how pressures from the white working class resulted in mines paying white workers inflated wages for jobs that blacks could have done at a much lower rate. This was particularly true after the formation of the Pact government between the Labour Party and National party in 1924 which was far less sympathetic to the interests of mining than the prior Smuts administration, introducing the 'civilized labour' policy, which reserved semi-skilled and skilled jobs for whites. Thus, for mining companies to keep foreign investment pouring in through the lure of high profits, the only viable option was to curtail black wages to the barest minimum. With no recourse to political representation and with labor organization and industrial action severely restricted, black labor bore the brunt of white working class upliftment and mining industry growth. Feinstein shows how the real rate of wages paid to black mine workers actually dropped 14% between 1911 and 1961 (2005: 67).

it in operation. These debates in parliament surface in the advertising and marketing industry literature[5]

over the years – especially in the mid-1940s following the boost to industry contributed by the Second

World War as interruptions in imports provided space for local manufacturing to develop, and

techniques of mass production spread to munitions factories and metal-working more broadly. This

evinces the keen interest paid by marketers to the potential of blacks as consumers, informed in large

part by their access to income.

The second primary challenge to constituting a national mass market in South Africa was the linguistic

and racial composition of the population. Ewen argues that in the US, ideologies of mass production

required an analogue on the consumption side: a mechanism for mass-producing consumers who could

be addressed through a mass medium such as the press. Creating such a collectivity of near-identical

consumers involved drawing on theories of universal human nature to allow advertisers to address

consumers at the level of what they shared rather than what divided them[6]. In South Africa, this was a

challenge for two reasons. Firstly, the language split between (primarily rural) Afrikaans-speaking and

(primarily urban) English-speaking whites made creating a single national newspaper aimed at whites –

through which national advertising messages could be broadcast – unfeasible[7]. Further, the white

population was simply too small to constitute a mass market. To take advantage of the potential

benefits of economies of scale within South Africa, many argued that blacks – who constituted the vast

majority of the population – had to be incorporated into the national market[8]. There were various

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[5] See for example *South African Advertising and Selling*, May 1944 pg 2-5, "The Native's Wages – Problem for the Mines, Industry, and the Whole Country", in which the author summed up the dilemma as follows: ""How then are we to reconcile these apparently irreconcilables – the tendency of industry (which, within limits, may absorb increased costs due to higher costs by raising prices) to bid up the price of native labour, and the inability of the mines to work at a profit if higher wages must be paid? How, indeed – especially when it is remembered that without gold we are virtually bankrupt?" (1944: 3).

[6] This is in contrast to current marketing practice which works on the hyper-segmentation of populations into more and more tightly targeted niche markets, utilizing multiple media channels to speak directly to them.

[7] See the 1929 edition of *Advertisers' Press Guide for South Africa* for an early discussion of this challenge.

[8] An example of this position is provided by the following quote: "We cannot count on large-scale immigration; so we have to look to our native population not only to provide the labour but also to provide the market for the

practical challenges to this: for one, the lack of media penetration and low levels of literacy amongst

blacks made it difficult to get sales messages to them. The linguistic diversity present added to this

challenge, as creating an advertising campaign for each different language group ran counter to the logic

of mass market advertising, where advertisers reach the most number of people possible with a single

advertising message[9]. Beyond the practical challenges, addressing blacks as potential and actual

consumers was caught up in a broader historical tension - both ideological and economic – between

blacks as consumers of commodities and blacks as cheap labour for whites, a tension which had been

sedimented through years of colonial encounter, as outlined in the introduction. To briefly recap, blacks

were encouraged to desire commodities in order to drive them into wage labour, and to create a market

for white-manufactured commodities. However, at the same time, blacks were framed as cheap labor

for whites, and so enjoying unfettered access to consumer goods was constructed as a privilege

reserved for whites, as both reward for and evidence of their superiority. Within this historical context,

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goods produced. The two things are complementary" 19 (SAAS, Vol 11 1945-46, November 1945, The African as an Industrial Worker. Bring Him into Industry and You Make Him Into a Consumer, R. Bennun (condensed from *Race Relations* no 2, 1945).

[9] The numerical dominance of blacks explains why the black market received so much more attention in the advertising and marketing industry during this time than Coloureds or Indians, the two other official apartheid-era race groups in South Africa. Although there are far fewer articles about marketing to racial groups other than blacks, a few articles on marketing to Coloureds in the Cape do appear from the 1930s, and a few on the 'Indian market' appear later on, from the 1960s. It seems that many of the issues debated in relation to these markets were very similar to those discussed in relation to blacks. For example, we see anxiety over the extent to which Coloureds are the same as Whites, as the following quote from an article published in *South African Advertising* in 1936 makes clear: "Does the copy written for Europeans do equally well for the coloured reader? If it does not, should advertisements, at regular intervals, be written specially *at* the coloured populations?" (28) We also see similar claims being made as to the growing income and consumer desires of coloureds, as is evident in this ad for *The Sun*, described as 'The Coloured Man's National Newspaper': "The Coloured market in South Africa numbers over 750,000, and the vast majority of the men and women that compose it are wage earners. The men earn good money in all the trades, the women are steadily employed in factories, domestic service, nursing and teaching. Purchasing power is rising, standards and conditions are improving and there is an every-growing demand for branded goods."44 (SAAS, May 1945, (Vol 10). In this chapter, I limit the focus of my discussion to constructions of blacks as consumers in relation to whites, setting aside similarities and differences with the ways in which other racial groups were framed.

portraying blacks as potential and actual consumers on a par with whites was a fraught act, calling into

question established lines of racial division, and creating a potent site for imagining racial difference.

Despite this tension between blacks as poor laborers and affluent consumers – and despite the failure of

efforts to raise the wages of the vast majority of black workers over the years and their actual drop in

real terms (see above, footnote 2) – the fantasy of the lucrative black market was an enduring one

within the advertising and marketing industry. Efforts to frame blacks as consumers within advertising

industry periodicals – and ads addressing them as consumers in black-directed newspapers and

magazines – continue consistently from their appearance in the early 30s, increasingly in frequency after

the manufacturing boom which followed the Second World War, adding impetus to the search for bigger

markets. Expanding industry also brought more blacks into industrial production, collectively boosting

spending power, even if the wages paid to individuals remained low. There was the hope that even if

spending power was meager at present, that in the future it would grow, and that by stoking consumer

desire now, the conditions of possibility would be put in place for a fully actualized market to emerge.

Making the Black Market: the Black Press, the South African Advertising Industry, and Black 'Experts'

Within the advertising and marketing industry, there were three main groups of actors involved in in

championing the black market as a solution to creating a mass market in South Africa. The first of these

groups was the white-owned black press hoping to sell advertising space in their newspapers. From the

mid-1930s, ads begin to appear in South African advertising and marketing publications for these white-

owned black newspapers as the best vehicle for reaching black consumers, and attempting to convince

potential advertisers that blacks were indeed worth advertising to. The two publications which

advertised themselves most frequently within industry publications were *Umteteli wa Bantu*[10] meaning

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[10] *Umteteli* was a journal started in 1919 by the Chamber of Mines and its labor recruitment agency, with the cooperation of some of the more conservative members of the African National Congress (ANC) in response to the unrest amongst mine workers. John Dube, Saul Msane, Horatio Mbele and Rev Marshall Maxeke approached the

– 'mouthpiece of the people' – and the Bantu Press[11] group of newspapers. The largest of these was the

Bantu World, which circulated primarily within the Reef area, and was published mainly in English with

sections in appearing in black African languages. Later on, in the 40s and 50s, the mass market

publications of *Zonk!* (and its sister publication *Hi-Note*), *Drum* magazine, the tabloid newspaper *Golden*

City Post (later *The Post*), joined the Bantu Press and *Umteteli* in advertising themselves in this

publication as ideal vehicles to convey an advertising message to the black African market. As part of its

self-promotion, Bantu Press also published a booklet entitled *Black Gold: A New Market and its Media* in

1945, which was designed to serve as a how-to guide for using the Bantu Press as part of a marketing

strategy. It included a discussion of black South Africans, framing them as developing consumers, and

providing a chronicle of the successes and growth of the publishing house[12].

Chamber of Mines to discuss the establishment of a newspaper. *Umteteli* names its start date as 1919, but according to sahistory.org.za, the Chamber of Mines did not adopt this idea of publishing a newspaper until after the 1920 mineworkers' strike. After this they approached John Dube and Sol Plaatje to be editors for the paper. Both declined, although they continued to be listed as editors for the first 18 issues of the paper. The aim of the paper was to counter perceived communist elements within black politics, by competing with the ANC publication *Abantu Batho*, which was perceived to be contributing to radicalizing workers. *Umteteli* closed shop in 1956 ("A History of Umteteli wa Bantu 1920-1956", no author, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-umteteli-wabantu-1920-1956).

[11] The Bantu Press had its origins in a changing profit structure for newspapers, from profit based on the sale of the publication itself, to profit based on selling advertising space. Irwin Stanley Manoim (1983) traces how the Bantu Press originated and developed in relation to this shift, describing how its founder Bertram Paver – who started out as a salesman for advertising space in the white press – noticed the absence of advertising in earlier small black-owned journals, and spotted a business opportunity. He eventually bought out and consolidated the black-owned publications into the centrally coordinated operation of the Bantu Press, founded in 1932, which started out with one title – the *Bantu World* – and grew to include 22 publications by the end of the 1940s. An ad in 1949 boasted that the Bantu Press published 98% of the newspaper and periodical material "available to Africans resident South of the Zambesi", covering the territories of the Union of South Africa, the High Commission Territories, and the Rhodesias.

[12] The text printed on its cover gives some indication of the general tone and gist of the booklet: "This book tells the story of how, through thirteen adventurous years, a modern newspaper press has been developed to bring, through literate Africans, news and enlightenment to 13,500,000 people who, year by year, are acquiring more and more knowledge and appreciation of manufactured merchandise. It gives factual information on the use of this newspaper press to sell *your* product." *Black Gold* was followed up by *The Approach to Bantu Press Advertising* in 1948, providing more detail on the practicalities of advertising to blacks, with sections on how to write copy, guidelines for illustrations, and a discussion of the translation services offered by the Bantu Press.

The second group of actors who were involved in constituting the "black market" were professionals within the advertising and marketing industry. Some of these had a clear stake in 'selling' the black consumer, as they offered their expertise and insight into this market as a selling point to prospective corporate advertisers. This is evident in some of the ads for advertising agencies placed in industry journals over the years, the primary of which were the *South African Advertising* series[13], and the *South African Packaging and Sales Promotion* series[14], as well as the annual *Advertisers' Press Guide for South Africa* (later called *The South African Advertising Annual and Press Guide* in the 40s, and *Advertising and Press Annual of Africa* in the 50s)[15]. However, the issue of blacks as consumers seems to have been of interest to the industry more broadly, as industry publications also featured articles on marketing and advertising to blacks separately from any specific agency advertising their service. These articles – similarly to ads for the black press – multiplied exponentially after the Second World War and into the 1950s. The content ranged from vague assertions in the earlier articles that blacks were a growing market and should be advertised to as an investment for the future, to more detailed studies of earnings, spending habits, popular product categories, brand preferences, media consumption patterns,

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[13] The journal *South African Advertising* was founded in 1931. This journal was published by the South African Society of Advertisers (originally the Advertising Club of South Africa), with the first editor being the club's president, Charles R Pask. Looking at the early board members and club presidents, the British influence on South African advertising becomes clear. Both Pask, the founder of the journal, and the original founder of the club, Charles J Sibbett, emigrated to South Africa from Britain, with Sibbett working for Cecil Rhodes as assistant political secretary prior to starting The South African Advertising Agency in 1899, one of the first in the country. This publication changed names a number of times over the years (becoming *South African Advertising and Selling* in 1937; *Selling* in 1946; and *Advertising and Selling* in 1951).

[14] *South African Packaging and Sales Promotion* was launched in 1953, which became *South African Sales Promotion and Packaging* in 1955, incorporating the advertising-focused supplement *Selling Age,* in which many of the articles on the black market appeared. According to Manoim, the earlier journal series starting with *South African Advertising* was a more conservative publication, resistant to modern advertising approaches such as standardized mass market research, whereas *South African Packaging and Sales Promotion* had a more liberal agenda, edited by Ralph Horwitz, who was a leading advocate of achieving racial equality through allowing the unfettered operation of capitalist market logic to prevail in South Africa.

[15] This was a yearly publication which provided an index of all the periodicals and advertising media opportunities available to those wishing to promote their goods in South Africa and other states within British Colonial Africa, but also included articles on topics of interest to marketers and advertisers. I did consult other industry periodicals, which I quote in later chapters, but for the period under discussion, the three series listed here proved the most useful for explicating framings of blacks as consumers.

as well as case studies of brands and products that had achieved successful growth in this market. These

article were written primarily by members of the industry body publishing the journal[16], especially in the

earlier years, but would also include reprints of articles appearing in US or British advertising

publications, as well as other South African publications deemed of interest to the advertising and

marketing industry[17].

Within the pages of these journals, we see evidence of the emergence of a few black 'experts' who

served as consultants to white advertising and marketing agencies on how to market to blacks, and who

constituted the third group of actors involved in selling the black market to potential advertisers. They

were based at various institutional sites, including advertising agencies, black newspapers, and

marketing research departments focusing on the black market (either independent marketing research

companies or attached to corporations or advertising agencies). These black experts served primarily as

consultants, researchers and translators of white creative ideas, with blacks very seldom employed as

advertising creatives themselves[18]. This in itself has implications for constructions of racial difference,

with creative ideas in advertising being considered the 'universal', which must be translated according

to the particularities of the target market. In this case, the realm of the 'universal' remained the domain

of whites, and the domain of particularity that of blacks.

There is evidence of these Black consultants in the industry from as early as 1938, with the August 1938

edition of the publication *South African Advertising and Selling* running an ad claiming expertise on

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[16] For example, the journal *South African Advertising,* which was published by the South African Society of Advertisers as mentioned above, solicited its articles from its members, which included those working in marketing for corporations, as well as advertising agencies. Often no author name is mentioned, or authors are identified by initials only, or a one-word nickname or pseudonym, making it difficult to ascertain the institutional positions and identities of the perspectives expressed in these periodicals.

[17] For example, the November 1945 issue of *South African Advertising and Selling* featured a condensed version of an article titled: "The African as an Industrial Worker. Bring Him into Industry and You Make Him into a Consumer", which originally appeared in *Race Relations* (no. 2 1945).

[18] This dearth of black advertising creatives continued to characterize the South African advertising industry in the transition to democracy (Kuzwayo 2000), and many black advertising professionals that I interviewed complained that white creatives continue to dominate the industry, especially at the Executive Creative Director level.

marketing to 'the Bantu', featuring photos of 'Sam' , a "detribalized Fingo" man. Two years later, an

obituary for this man appears in the same publication, and we learn that his name was Sam Tshanyela,

and that he worked at the advertising agency PN Barrett, where he helped "in the preparation of an

advertising campaign, by discussing and clarifying points on native habits, customs and feelings. Again,

when as often happened, he was asked to pose for photographs for advertising purposes, his quick

understanding made him invaluable – almost irreplaceable" (1940: 51). These black 'experts' were

usually referenced indirectly rather than quoted directly or writing articles themselves in these

publications, with the notable exceptions of the journalist Jordan K Ngubane[19], who penned an article

which appeared in the October 1946 issue of *Selling,* and Nimrod Mkele[20], the Black marketing

researcher who addressed the annual national advertising convention in 1959 – the first Black person to

do so – and was quoted extensively thereafter in a number of industry publications.

Marketing research conducted on blacks was one area in which Black experts were particularly in

demand. From the early 1950s articles appear describing, on one hand, the importance of researching

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[19] Ngubane was described in the preface to this article as an "African journalist", and "an editor of an African newspaper", although it doesn't specify which one. In fact, Ngubane had worked at *Bantu World* in Johannesburg in the early 40s. He had gone on to be assistant editor of another Bantu Press publication, *Ilanga Lase Natal,* and then editor of *Inkundla ya Bantu* (1945-1951), the latter being the only black-owned paper at the time. Ngubane was also politically active; he co-authored the ANC Youth League Manifesto in 1944, although he left the party in the late 50s to become national vice-chairman of the Liberal Party after falling out with Albert Luthuli over the communist currents within ANC (https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/jordan-kush-ngubane). However, no reference is made to politics in his article on the 'Native market'. Rather, it advises potential advertisers on how to market to blacks, criticizing current advertising appearing in the black press as missing the mark, and assuring potential advertisers that the best course of action is to obtain advice and translation services from the editor of the black publication in which one wanted to publish, as South Africa suffers from a "dearth of good translators" (1946:139).

[20] In the minutes of the convention, Mkele's bio reads as follows: "He has an MA degree of the University of South Africa and a B.A. (Hons.) of the University of Natal in Psychology. He specialized in personnel psychology. He is a professional psychologist and has worked on the development of intelligence for Zulus in Natal with the Department of Psychology, University of Natal 1945-50; the development and standardization of aptitude tests for the classification and placement of African mineworkers on the Gold mines for the National Institute for personnel research, a division of the SA council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1950-53, and for Public Utility Transport Corporation, Johannesburg, for bus drivers and clerical personnel. He then entered the field of Market Research and joined Franklin Research in 1955. Later he was African Sales Supervisor for Sterling Drug until he joined JWT in January 1957" (1959: 116).

the black market, and on the other, the difficulties involved in doing so. A frequently mentioned concern

was that Black research respondents simply tell white researchers what they think the latter want to

hear. Also, the implementation of apartheid policies post-1948 made it more difficult for Whites to get

access to Blacks in townships[21]. For these reasons, the necessity of getting blacks to research Blacks is

asserted. For example, an article appearing in the 1951 edition of *The African Press and Advertising*

Annual, ponders the challenge of researching blacks, claiming that "The Native, like the Chinese, will

upset everything by trying to please. This means that native investigators must be trained, suitably

checked and supervised…so that the mentality of the Native can be rightly studied through the agency

of Natives" (1951: 137). This expanded the scope for the Black experts working in marketing by bringing

in Black marketing researchers, usually working under White managers at advertising agencies,

marketing research companies, and manufacturing corporations with research departments. However,

due to White ignorance of Black consumers, White managers often became reliant on the insights of

these Black field researchers, giving the latter space for significant career advancement and influence in

the production advertising, as Beatrice Khubeka – one of the first of these Black marketing researchers –

explained in our interview[22]. Through the ads placed for the Black press, the articles published on

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[21] Beatrice Khubeka, personal communication, 2014.
[22] I had the opportunity to learn more about the experience of being a black person in the marketing and advertising industry in these early years while conducting ethnography in Johannesburg. Here I met Beatrice Khubeka, the retired founder of African Response – a marketing research company focusing on black South Africans – who was a veteran in the marketing research industry. Beatrice's story was fascinating, and gives some insight into what it was like for the few black 'experts' in the industry at the time. Beatrice got into marketing research entirely by accident. It was the early 1960s in Soweto. She had some high school education, but hadn't completed matric (the final year of high school), and had been working at a garment factory, trimming threads off finished items of clothing. However, she had recently been laid off and was looking for work. Riding the train home one evening she heard a couple talking about a marketing research company recruiting black researchers. She had never heard of marketing research, but was eager for any employment. As the couple got off the train she heard the name of the street in which the company was located but not the name of the firm or the exact address. She spent the next day walking the entire street looking for the company. She finally found them – the company was called IMSA (International Marketing Research South Africa) – and was given a test assignment to assess how suitable she was for the job. It was a stack of questionnaires on the brandy-drinking habits and preferences of black men in Soweto. Although she described feeling vulnerable as a solitary woman wandering the township looking for men drinking, Beatrice spent the entire weekend looking for suitable research participants, eager to complete the entire stack by Monday and prove her competency as a researcher. She told me how the firm was

marketing to black South Africans, and the conference proceedings of advertisers discussing the topic,

we see how these three groups framed blacks as actual and potential consumers, attempting to

convince prospective advertisers – as well as those within the advertising and marketing industry – that

they could and should be addressed as a market. However, there was significant skepticism by many

whites as to the consumer potential of blacks, and so those with a stake in the existence of 'the black

market' had significant work to do in these framing efforts. I now turn to examine what was involved in

framing blacks as 'consumers'.

Selling the fantasy: the 'consumer capacities' of blacks

Throughout the period under discussion, those who tried to frame blacks as a market worth advertising

to consistently made three claims in their attempts to constitute blacks as (potential) consumers: that

blacks had sufficient income as a whole to make them appear to be worth advertising to; that they

desired commodities and would thus spend their income on purchasing these commodities; and that

they were amenable to advertising and marketing efforts so that their consumer desire and

consumption behavior could be shaped to suit the interests of white manufacturers. Examining an early

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very impressed as they had not expected her to have all the questionnaires completed so quickly. They immediately hired her as a field researcher. Beatrice recalled her first experiences as a researcher with fondness. She was quickly promoted to a qualitative researcher where she would moderate focus groups, which she spoke of as being her favourite role. She described how the first time she facilitated a group discussion she forgot to stick to the question schedule and afterwards feared being admonished by her white superiors who were watching through the one-way glass. However, to her surprise they praised her approach, as she had covered everything on the schedule as well as eliciting answers to questions they hadn't even thought to ask. At this point Beatrice told me that all the questionnaires were designed by white managers. The black personnel were merely employed to translate and administer the questionnaires. However, Beatrice described how the white managers began to draw on her insights when designing the studies. Black researchers who displayed these insights were clearly in demand from a number of institutional sites, with a number being 'poached', and Beatrice experienced this first hand, with an advertising agency offering her a job at their African marketing research division, after working with the marketing research company where she was currently employed and witnessing her research skills in action. In the early 90s in the dying days of apartheid, Beatrice was approached by another marketing research firm to go into partnership with them and start a black-owned and directed marketing research company, anticipating the growing interest in the black market in post-apartheid South Africa. This was the birth of African Response.

and particularly detailed discussion of the potential of blacks as a market provides an entry point into examining these three capacities.

This discussion appears in the same article from 1923 by HJ Choles, quoted above, which made the argument for pursuing a mass market logic in South Africa. In particular, it focuses on the black consumer market as a possible means for expanding the Union's[23] industrial sector. Choles starts the article by painting two striking portraits of the "native types" of interest to white industry. The first portrait is of a black man, naked except for a cloth covering his genitals (197)*,* who comes to visit a "kaffir truck" store in order to buy cigarettes. Choles contrasts his perception of the man's "animal beauty…unspoilt by civilization" (197) prior to entering the store, with the "imitation savage" (199) which emerged. This change in perception was precipitated by the simple difference that on exiting, the man puffed on a cigarette, purchased at the store. Choles goes on to explain how such a person would work in town for half the year, and spend the rest in "idleness in and about the kraal" (198). However, during his time away from town, "he retains his taste for tobacco; and he is not prepared now to dispense with such things as sugar, sweets, tinned meat, bread, and jam, to which he has grown accustomed in town" (199). He has acquired consumer desire; for this reason, he is of economic value to the white producers of such goods. Of even greater interest to such producers is the second type which Choles sketches; a man who inquired from the author about a job as a "houseboy", dressed elaborately in "complete imitation of a European of up-to-date sartorial tastes" (198). This second sketch represents the "dazzling heights of civilization" (199) attainable by blacks, indexed by the sartorial commodities adorning the body (cf Comaroff & Comaroff 1997). If this second man is the extreme case of imitation of

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[23] The Union of South Africa followed the end of the Boer War in which the Boers were defeated, and represented a compromise based around uniting white interests against those of the Black majority. Growing out of the Treaty of Vereeniging which ended the Boer War, it was a precursor to the Republic, launched in 1910 and lasting until 1961, and involved uniting the British Colonies of the Cape and Natal with the defeated Boer Republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/union-south-africa-1910. "The Union of South Africa 1910" (no author given).

whites and actualized commodity desire, both examples illustrate the point for Choles that "The wants of the natives, as a result of contact with Europeans, are becoming increasingly complex, and these wants they cannot supply themselves; they have to look to the Europeans to meet them" (198). We will see how enduring this binary characterization of blacks as either 'imitation savages' or 'imitation whites' has been in the South African advertising industry.

Choles' juxtaposition of the first sketch with the second also illustrates that the consumer desire of blacks is indeed malleable, and may expand from the simple desires for cigarettes and some foodstuffs to the full wardrobe of a well-dressed gentleman. Choles says little in this article about how advertising or marketing efforts may influence consumer desire; he indicates at the end of the paper that this is something that must be given further consideration on a "subsequent occasion" (203). However, he seems to conceptualize the transformation and increase of consumer desire as an inevitable aspect of the "civilizing" process, and to imagine that as blacks develop, their consumer desires will become closer to those of whites. He asserts that scholars of "natives" have come to some agreement that the latter is "amenable to civilizing influences. They have the imitative faculty well developed, and – in the towns, at any rate – they are giving full rein to it, spurred on by the sense of rivalry with each other" (198).

Having established that blacks do indeed desire western commodities and that these desires are malleable and may expand given the right conditions, Choles moves on to discuss arguably the most important requirement for constituting a viable "black market": establishing that there is sufficient spending power amongst blacks collectively within the Union to warrant marketing efforts directed at them, and production aimed specifically at satisfying black demand. He defines five areas in which

"native labour" is employed[24] (199) (he includes "coloured labour"[25] in this estimate), estimating their

income in each area, and calculating that the total is around £25,500,000 per year. He further predicts

that this amount will rise considerably in the future, as the population increases, and works for longer

periods each year to satisfy their "increasing 'needs'" (200), and as more of these workers learn skills

that will command higher wages.

Claims about blacks possessing these three consumer capacities reoccur throughout the period under

discussion in attempts to 'sell' the black consumer to potential advertisers, but the most consistent of

these concerned assertions about the size of collective black spending power, and claims that this figure

was growing exponentially. From the 1930s, almost every ad for the Bantu Press publications and

Umteteli wa Bantu features an estimate of the monetary value of the black market. A striking feature of

these estimates is how much they vary from one ad to the next. An ad for *Umteteli wa Bantu* appearing

in *South African Advertising* in 1935 estimates the purchasing power at £60 million a year. An ad for The

Bantu Press appearing in the same publication the following year estimates the value of the market at

£30 million. Frequently these estimates are simply asserted with no indication as to how they were

calculated or on what research they were based. During the 40s and 50s, estimates of the spending

power of Africans continued to vary widely, with estimates ranging from £90 to £400 million[26].

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[24] These are mining activities, factories and workshops, commercial houses, farming and residential establishments. He gives figures paid in wages for the first two categories (£7,665,000 and £ 5,823,000 respectively), and an estimate for the total annual earnings represented by categories 3, 4, and 5 (he puts this at £ 12 million, although he provides no indication of the grounds on which this estimate is based). To this he adds "a few million" paid to workers in the South-West Protectorate, Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique and the Native Territories.

[25] Whether Coloureds (and later Indians) should be viewed as extensions of the White market or Black market, or markets on their own, was a matter of varying opinion throughout this time period. However, by the 60s, discussions of the black market generally saw it as separate from Indians and Coloureds, with the Bantu Press using this as a selling advantage – they had an exclusively black readership, as opposed to publications such as Drum who at the time targeted a multi-racial, but primarily non-white, readership (Manoim 1983). The legacy of this division is evident in the standard market targeting used in the 1980s, which divided the market into two: WIC (Whites, Indians, Coloureds) and Black. (interview, Chris Moerdyk).

[26] Some of the challenges of estimating the value of this market emerge from articles appearing in the trade press over the years, and are also made explicit in the minutes of the Annual Convention of the Society of Advertisers,

If uncertainties existed with regard to the exact figure of black spending power, rhetorically playing up

the size of the black market relative to the white was an alternative strategy in the absence of reliable

income and expenditure estimates, with ads describing the market using adjectives such as "enormous",

"vast" and "teeming". If the perception amongst white South Africans was that blacks as individuals

were poor, these perceptions could be countered by emphasizing their numbers relative to whites, and

thus the size of their collective spending power. In addition to highlighting the size of the market, ads

consistently emphasized its growth potential. During the war years, ads for the black press emphasized

the effects that expanding industry would have on black wages, and the concomitant increase in

spending power. In some of these ads we see an attempt to connect blacks as laborers with blacks as

consumers through the juxtaposition of images and text, mediating the tension which arose out of

constructions of blacks as sellers of their labour rather than affluent consumers on the one hand, and

yet required blacks to consume the products produced by white industry. For example, an ad for

Umteteli appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling* in 1940 consists of a drawing of black

workers smelting gold appearing directly above an image of a black man dressed in a suit reading a

newspaper. The two sides of the ideal black laboring-consumer subject are brought into relation in this

composite picture. Over the image of the factory workers runs the text "High Pressure Production", and

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the first of which was held in 1958. One source of ambiguity prior to 1960 was that estimations of the valuation of the market sometimes include the Union of South Africa only, and sometimes include the protectorates and Rhodesia as well, with definitions of who made up "the Native market" seldom specified. A further source of confusion was to whether the estimate was for the total earnings of the market, or effective spending power, and whether estimates included or excluded Coloureds and Asians. Estimating the spending power of blacks proved a source of disagreement amongst the delegates at each of the first three Annual Conventions of the Society of Advertisers (1958-60), with delegates pointing out inconsistencies in the figures provided by different speakers. Attendees debated possible unrecorded sources of income for blacks from informal employment (especially amongst women) which could be boosting spending power, as well as the exact nature and amount of the expenses of blacks as individuals and family units, which had to be subtracted from total income to calculate disposable income. These debates painted a far less rosy picture than did the ads for the black press, estimating that black spending power could not be more the £200 million as a whole, with that considered to be a very optimistic estimate – a far cry from the claims of £400 million appearing in an article on the black middle class published in *Selling Age* in June 1959.

then between the factory image and the reader image, the sentence is completed, meditating the two

images: "means EXTRA money for the Bantu People – EXTRA sales for YOU" (see figure 1).

All of these attempts to pin down and map the spending power of blacks was a crucial part of

constituting them as consumers, as it was money that allowed consumer desire to be actualized. The

gap between potential and actualized consumerhood, with income as the mediator between the two, is

evident in the following quote from an article published in 1957 discussing the importance of the

electrification of townships for marketers: "Electric light will enormously stimulate the desire of

thousands of Natives to buy. But 'desire' is not 'demand' unless it can be backed by the money to make

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Figure 1: Some examples of ads directed at White advertisers encouraging them to buy advertising space

in 'Black' newspapers, appearing in advertising directories in the 1930s and 40s. Source: Archives of Chris

Rogerson.

Figure 1, continued.

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it effective. Yet we can think of few ways in which the incentive to earn can be so stimulated among our

Natives than by an electrical home" (1957: 15). However, potential advertisers also had to be convinced

that blacks did indeed possess this consumer desire as actualizable potential.

Black consumer desire

Especially in the earliest part of the period under discussion, it is clear that there was significant

skepticism that blacks would necessarily spend their income from wage labor on commodities. Some

speculated that as they were drawn into the cash economy, blacks may prioritize saving their income for

cultural needs such as lobola (bridewealth), before spending it on commodities produced by white

manufacturers (HJ Choles suggested that this is what the "imitation savage" type would be inclined to

do). Others worried that black consumer desire was very limited, and so if blacks were paid higher wages, they would simply work less to earn just enough to buy the small number of commodities they desired, preferring to enjoy more leisure time (this was an enduring concern, still being expressed at the 1958 and 1959 Conventions of the Society of Advertisers, which I will discuss in more detail below). Those wishing to frame the black market as a valuable investment for the future had to show that consumer desire existed amongst blacks, and that it would grow to levels similar to those seen amongst whites. Some ads for the black press engaged with this challenge by simply asserting the existence and growth of consumer desire amongst blacks; the Bantu Press's guide from 1948 for advertisers wanting to buy space in its newspapers described its readership as "Black people….People who are learning the use of everything we buy and sell: people who are yearning for an ever widening range of the commodities which we produce"[27]. Two other strategies for demonstrating the existence of this "yearning" for commodities are apparent: evidence could be shown of blacks buying and using commodities, substantiating claims that they desired them, and blacks could be framed as "modern" – or at least potentially modern – subjects, where "modern" was synonymous with being like whites, one element of which was enjoying a consumerist lifestyle.

Many of the articles on the black market appearing in industry periodicals featured household inventories of the commodities purchased and used by blacks. Often these would feature photographic evidence of these possessions, in order to convince potential advertisers that blacks desired and would purchase commodities. Similarly, ads in these periodicals for the black press would often point to newspaper sales as evidence that blacks desired and were purchasing commodities. If they could afford to purchase newspapers and had the inclination to do so, this suggested that they were likely to be interested in the commodities advertised within the pages of the newspaper. Buying and reading

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[27] *Guide to Bantu Press Advertising,* 1948, no author, no page number.

newspapers was also framed in ads for these publications as an indication of being "modern". Sometimes, being modern was explicitly conflated with being like whites; ads for *Umteteli* from 1939 claimed that the paper included all the elements found in "modern newspapers", which were the same as those contained in "European journals". Another *Umteteli* ad from 1940 appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling* asserted that its "readers are no less interested than the average European is in International Affairs". The Bantu Press framed itself as reaching the elite taste-makers within the black market, who were characterized as both modern and literate, with an ad for the Bantu Press from 1948 informing readers that "The literate and therefore progressive Bantu decide the buying habits of the market" (4).

In addition to reading newspapers, this modern black consumer figure was consistently portrayed as dressed smartly in European clothing. Dressing the black body in western clothing has a long history in the South African context of crafting and displaying a modern, "civilized", Christian mode of being (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). Except in scenes obviously depicting a rural or factory context, the images of black men in ads for the black press are always wearing a jacket and tie, often accessorized with a hat and a briefcase. This harks back to HJ Choles' "types" of black consumers, where mode of dress was the index of developing (male) consumer desire. In ads trying to sell the black market to potential advertisers, this modern black subject was almost always represented as male, until the mid-1950s[28]. This is the figure of the modern black subject that re-occurs again and again in the ads for black publications: a smartly dressed black man, either reading a newspaper or depicted engaging in the act of purchasing some commodity.

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[28] There is only one ad depicting a woman prior to this that I could find, from 1939 for *Umteteli*, appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling*. She is shown as the wife of the newspaper reader, and reads over his shoulder, as a young boy – presumably the couple's son – reads over the other.

Blacks as amenable to advertising

In addition to possessing income and consumer desire, the third consumer capacity required of blacks was amenability to advertising. In order to make the emergent black market appealing to advertisers, the case had to be made that black consumer desire was malleable, and could be made to conform to the requirements of white industry, and that demand could be created for the products that industry needed to sell. This was important, because there were those within the industry who pointed to the "immaturity" of black consumer desire in disputing claims about its potential value to white manufacturers. Not only were there doubts that blacks desired commodities to the same extent as whites did, as we have seen, but there were doubts that they desired the same sorts of commodities. One commentator published in the March 1944 edition of *South African Advertising and Selling* dismissed arguments that paying Blacks higher wages would benefit white industry, claiming that without education in proper spending, all higher wages would do would be to boost sales of bicycles and accordions (Murray, 1944: 13). Thus those who wished to sell the fantasy of the potentially lucrative black market had to convince skeptics that 'unruly' black desire could be shaped and educated by advertising.

One evident strategy to convince potential advertisers of the efficacy of advertising to blacks was to portray blacks as 'ideal' consumers of advertising. An example of this is to be found in one of the earliest ads for the black press, for *Umteteli* appearing in *South African Advertising* May 1936, which asserted that "The UMTETELI WA BANTU is the most widely read native paper in the country. Its unsophisticated readers are INTERESTED IN ADVERTISEMENTS. They read their UMTETELI thoroughly. They read the news and they read the advertisements." (1936: 16, original capitalization). Nine years later, advertising agents were still appealing to this fantasy of the ideal consumer of advertising in selling blacks to advertisers; the Bantu Press guide *Black Gold* had the following to say about the effectiveness of advertising in their publications: "results usually exceed expectations, often in almost sensational

degree, for the Bantu reads and reacts to advertising in a way that advertising executives dream about!"

(1945: 16). These appeals tended to play on racial prejudices assumed to be shared amongst white

advertisers and their agents. This is clear in the portrayal of Blacks as naïve, childlike and

unsophisticated, as for example in the following description of the effectiveness of print advertising on

Blacks, in an article from *South African Advertising and Selling* discussing the marketing of tea in South

Africa: "The power of the press is considerable, too, with the Bantu people…printed propaganda can

attain exceptional force for the simple reason that the Bantu is considerably impressed by anything he

sees in print, and, in fact, is inclined to accept literally what he sees in a newspaper" (1939: 9). This was

part of a broader strategy evident in selling the fantasy of the black market, in which blacks were

portrayed as 'ideal' consumers in other ways; not only equal to white customers, but preferable to them

in some regards, for example, by paying cash for goods rather than relying on credit[29], or by being ideal

credit customers unlikely to make impulsive purchasing decisions they won't be able to afford down the

line[30].

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[29] For example, "They pay cash for the goods they want", claimed an article from 1937 in *Advertising and Selling*. "The Bantu is a cash customer" the reader is repeatedly informed by ads for *Umteteli* from the 1940s. *Black Gold* emphasizes that the native trade is essentially a cash trade, in contrast to the European market, which relies on credit (1945: 3). (Of course, this ignored the legislative restrictions that prevented blacks from accessing official lines of credit in the first place (James 2015).

[30] One article from 1956 on selling furniture to blacks appearing in *Selling Age* tells the story of a particular furniture shop in central Johannesburg which was one of the first stores to offer credit to blacks. Blacks are described as carefully considering their purchase decisions and being incapable of 'impulse buying'. The article claims that "Natives are just as good, if not better, credit customers as Europeans. They are honest and reliable and in our business we very seldom have to resort to repossessing goods which had been sold by hire purchase agreement" (31). However, one gets an implicit sense of the financial insecurity of many of these black credit customers as the article describes how the furniture store makes a plan in the event that a customer is prevented from making a payment due to illness, losing his job, or going to jail. Eight years later in an article on 'The Bantu Market' appearing in *South African Industry and Trade*, we get a more explicit sense of the debt that black consumers were struggling with. One Prof OPF Horwood of University of Natal was quoted as having found that 55 % to 60% of Africans were living in a state of perpetual debt, and that few were able to save anything at all (1964: 47). An unnamed executive working at a company employing many blacks, who was interviewed for the article, concurred with this finding of high levels of debt amongst blacks. He elaborated that "his firm is usually ready to help a worthwhile employee meet his debts if he gets into real difficulties. It will also arrange stop-order facilities for not more than a third of a worker's standard pay. But it discourages other firms from regarding it as a debt-recoverer on their behalf" (47). Such discussion belies the idealization of the black consumer as fulfilling the capitalist fantasies of white advertisers and their agents.

By capitalizing on the desires and prejudices of manufacturers, those involved with black publications

and with the advertising and marketing industry attempted to convince potential advertisers that blacks

would read and believe ads. But did that mean they would act in response to them? It was difficult for

advertisers to assess the effectiveness of their advertising. For one thing, sales of a product could be

influenced by many different factors other than an advertising campaign (for example, the availability of

the product in the stores where consumers were shopping; pricing; or a promotion by a competitor).

Secondly, even when urban blacks did purchase products it was often unclear whether they were

purchasing it for themselves or for their white employers. One attempt to cut out this interference

obscuring the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior involved running competitions

exclusively in the black press, and analyze the responses. For example, in 1946 *South African Advertising*

and Selling ran an article titled "Your African Customers: Will They Read and Respond to

Advertisements? A Test reviewed by H. Major" (1946:33). It describes a competition run by *Umlindi we*

Nyanga (Watchman of the Month) – the "pictorial magazine for Africans" – where the readers had to

name the "tribe" of a man pictured in a photograph. The prize offered was 5 shillings, and the conditions

were printed in Xhosa, Zulu, and English. The article summarizes details of the responses received:

language, gender, urban vs rural responses entrants responded[31]. It quotes some examples of

competition entries, and then summarizes the significance for advertisers: "If the *Umlindi* competition

tells us anything about making a sales appeal to the native market, therefore, it is that both readership

and understanding can be assumed, if we talk to the African as an intelligent adult, in his own language,

and in ideas that reflect the objects and environments with which he is familiar" (1946: 35). In this way,

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[31] The article reports that 40% came from rural/semi-rural, and 60% from urban areas – the latter mainly
Johannesburg and Durban – which is significant in terms of claims made by the black press regarding penetration
of urban-bought newspapers into rural areas mentioned above. It elaborates that 70% of the replies were in a
native black language, the remainder in English. The competition didn't require the entrant to state their gender,
but some women stated that they were female. The article also provides other details, for example, the kind of
stationery that answers were printed on, whether respondents wrote in print or cursive.

competitions provided a feedback loop between advertisers and consumers which seemed more direct than mass media advertising, and which contributed to the constitution of the black market as it allowed advertisers to divine its characteristics. This relationship between advertising and competitions as intersecting media for constituting market segments, and the relationship between consumers and brands, continues today, as I will show in the following chapters.

The consumer as fetish object

While those attempting to sell the fantasy of black consumers as a potentially lucrative market tried to convince skeptics of the consumer capacities of blacks, some worried that these consumer capacities may not always align and work together in the way industry required them to: someone may have significant income, but choose to save it rather than spend it immediately on consumer goods; someone might have consumer desire, but no money to actualize it, or be immune to attempts to shape his desire, preferring to spend it all on accordions and bicycles. As all three consumer capacities were required to constitute an actualized consumer, those in the advertising world puzzled about their interrelation, and possible causal connections between them. Once source of uncertainty was the relation between blacks having money and having consumer desire. Did having money lead to the development of new desires, or was it the birth of new desires that motivated someone to work harder to earn more to afford those desires? This is what one candidate at the 1958 annual convention of the Society of Advertisers called the "chicken or the egg" problem (1958: 107). This conundrum surfaced in particular in relation to debates around whether raising black wages would be beneficial or detrimental to white economic interests. A good number of those present at these early conferences argued that black wages should be increased to facilitate the growth of the market, and facilitate the efficiency and profit-maximization of economies of scale[32]. This claim was met with objections that simply paying

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[32] The mass market argument concerning how to grow the economy and the role of blacks in this process was still being rehearsed at this point. For example, at the second convention of the Society of Advertisers in 1959, Charles

blacks more would not necessarily increase black spending on consumer goods, as they may simply work

less for the same amount of money, preferring increased leisure time over increased access to

commodities[33].

For the proponents of advertising, advertising itself could prevent this possibility from occurring, while

suturing the three required consumer capacities into a single smoothly functioning unit, naturalized as

'the consumer'. In this formulation, advertising makes you want more things (increases desire), which

makes you work harder to get them, and thus earn more (increases income). Desire is brought into

relation to income, as the former leads directly to increases in the latter. We see this position, for

example, in a discussion at the 1958 convention of the Society of Advertisers, in which one delegate put

forward the claim for discussion that "by creating desires through all the methods known to modern

publicity, one creates the realisation of the need to work harder in order to fulfil those desires" and thus

that "advertising – and by that I am referring to free enterprise advertising, not Government or policy

advertising – has been a major contributor to enhancing and raising standards of living" (108). According

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Marx, the president of the South African Federated Chamber of Industries declared that "Manufacturers are only able to reduce costs through the economies of large scale production. And this is dependent upon expanding markets. In the absence of substantial immigration and irrespective of any growth in our export trade, it is the non-European peoples, particularly, the Natives, who are going to provide this expanding market. Their ability to do so is dependent upon the increased numbers industry can absorb and the wages they are paid" (1959: 8). He continues that it is the job of the creators of advertising to make sure these wages are spent on locally manufactured products, showing the importance for those trying to sell the black market of convincing prospective advertisers that blacks were amenable to advertising.

[33] One example was cited by Mr Turton (Chief Commissioner for Bantu Affairs in Natal – first name never mentioned in the minutes of the convention). He described an example he had encountered in Natal, where native wages had been increased, and they had collectively switched from working five days a week to four; they could not be persuaded to work the extra day for the extra income. According to Turton, this situation had arisen at the end of the war, and by 1957, it had not changed. This cast doubt on the claim that paying blacks higher wages would do anything to benefit white industry, and contradicted the image of blacks as ideal consumers identical to whites, only waiting to be actualized through money. The year before, at the 1958 convention, similar doubts were expressed. David de Waal Meyer, (Secretary to the Department of Commerce and Industries), described a situation where black women started working in factories, and their husbands no longer felt the need to engage in wage labor. He compared this to the 'Eskimos' being used to build the Alaska highway, who could also not be persuaded to work for longer hours simply by the incentive of more money. Meyer concludes that it is the job of advertisers to create more consumer 'wants' that require more money to satisfy them, motivating blacks to work more for a higher wage.

to this view, advertising can stimulate desire, which can actualize itself through work, which brings in the income required to consume commodities. Some even went so far as to put their faith in desire itself, stimulated by advertising, as prompting workers themselves to lobby for higher wages, and thus bring about the medium for actualizing potential consumer desire. This claim was made in an article titled "The Bantu Market", which appeared in *South African Industry and Trade* in 1964. It laid out the argument that more demand for consumer goods leads to economic expansion, as workers apply pressure for better opportunities for promotion and for higher wages (47).

I argue that the figure of 'the consumer' be usefully conceptualized as a fetish because it bundled together capacities that had no necessary relation to one another within the boundaries of a single human individual, thus obscuring the emergence of these capacities within networks of social relations. This individual was imagined to have desires, rational choice-making capabilities, and an income to spend, integrated by means of a coherent subjectivity, grouped with other bounded individuals into markets. This construction of the consumer as a bounded individual served to obscure the fact that often, these three capacities were spread within networks of social relations, distributed between individuals, with one individual desiring commodities, another earning the wherewithal to purchase them, and a third making the actual purchase in which desire was consummated through commodity purchase[34]. Advertising itself – addressing the individual-as-consumer – was integral in maintaining the fantasy of this fetish, where advertising to blacks could constitute them as consumers valuable to whites. This faith in the power of advertising to constitute consumers and to actualize consumer

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[34] These social networks often crossed lines of race and gender, for example within the white household in which a black domestic servant was employed. In this case, it was the white woman who desired the commodities, their white husbands who earned the income enabling commodities to be purchased, and their black domestic servants who were sent to the store to purchase these goods, actualizing desire into commodities.

potential remains entrenched in the practice and discourse of advertising professionals in the present moment, as we will see in later chapters.

Advertising as recognition

As the black press, the advertising industry journals, and the black experts were all part of the advertising and marketing apparatus – whether they wanted to sell advertising space in their publications or design the ad campaigns that would appear in these publications – convincing manufacturers and corporates of the necessity of advertising to blacks was an important goal. However, some producers of commodities accepted that blacks might buy their products, but disputed the claim that advertising specially targeted at blacks was necessary. Examining these early disagreements sheds light on the historical shaping of the dual imperatives of recognition and aspiration in South African advertising.

There were two worries commonly expressed with regard to advertising directed at blacks – firstly, that advertising a brand to blacks would cause it to lose popularity in the white market, and secondly, that advertising in the black media could create the perception amongst blacks that the product was 'especially for them', creating resistance to it as they would believe it was inferior (see Burke [1996] for a discussion of this phenomenon in the Zimbabwean context). Taking such a risk by creating advertising targeting blacks seemed unnecessary to some white manufacturers, given the fact that many products had achieved success in the black market with no racially specific advertising campaign. The belief was commonly expressed that whites using a product was sufficient advertising for blacks to want to use it. This harks back to the opinions of HJ Choles, who argued that as blacks became more 'civilized', by entering the wage economy and earning more, they would inevitably imitate the consumption habits of whites, as the aspirant houseboy did. In this ideology, blacks were potentially identical versions of white consumers, just requiring spending power – and some degree of proximity to whites – to be actualized.

Counter arguments asserting the importance of advertising addressed specifically to black consumers

are intriguing because of the indication they give of the emerging notions of consumer citizenship,

where goods associated with citizenship and political participation – in this case, recognition – come to

be intertwined with functioning as a consumer. In a context in which blacks were denied the benefits of

citizenship and political participation, some discussions of the black consumer identify consumption as

potentially providing an alternative arena where such goods may be experienced. Specifically, this

involved granting blacks recognition of their consumer status, and their (potential) equality with whites

in this regard, through advertising that addressed them as consumers. Advertising as a mode of

recognition was framed by some in the industry as providing brands with a competitive advantage over

others. Even if one believed that blacks would automatically purchase similar products to whites as

income level increased, there was still some uncertainty as to which brands they would choose,

especially when a number of different brands were popular amongst whites. Some argued that by

advertising to blacks in black media, 'goodwill' would be created for that brand[35]. As blacks gained

access to higher levels of income, they would remember this acknowledgement of their status as

potential consumers, and choose the brand that spoke to them first. As a delegate at the first

Convention of the Society of Advertisers in 1958 put it – one Mike Silver of Commercial Radio Corp –

advertising directed at blacks is a way in which they can be "be made to feel important, just as

anywhere else in the world the people in the lowest income group are made to feel important and

flattered" (13). White consumers were not believed to require recognition of their consumer status, as

they were already the default consumer and addressee of advertising messages. This was especially true

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[35] This argument that earning 'goodwill' with poor consumers who cannot currently afford to purchase a company's products will pay off in the long run continues to be made by proponents for Corporate Social Investment. For example Schwittay describes how Bill Gates presented the case for 'creative capitalism' at the World Economic Forum in 2008, arguing that when marketing to the poor, companies needed "to complement the profit incentive with a "recognition" incentive that would materialize in enhanced company reputation, customer appeal, and employee attraction" (2011: S72).

of white English-speaking consumers – the degree to which Afrikaans-speaking whites required recognition of their linguistic and cultural difference was debated, with calls for more Afrikaans ads increasing during the height of apartheid, in the late 50s and 60s.

We see an early elaboration of this notion of advertising as needing to grant recognition to blacks in order to be effective in an article published in the May 1947 volume of *Selling*. After drawing the reader's attention to the appearance of ads for the Bantu Press in its pages, it comments that "In the problem of how to reach this great market effectively with advertising we tend to lag behind more highly developed U.S.A.; but the difficulties and solutions for both countries are very similar. Furthermore, our potential coloured[36] market in South Africa is relatively far more significant in the national economy, embracing as it does roughly four-fifths of the population". The article goes on to quote a recent article from the US publication *Tide* on how to market to the 'coloured' market in the US: "Arguments put up by advertising men in the States against using special Negro media are similar to those often heard in the Union. It is alleged that as a group Negroes have little buying power; that they are sold on national brands anyway by domestic service and desire to emulate white employers; that advertising a product in media aimed at coloured people will arouse prejudice against it among white consumers; and that high production costs necessitated by special copy and illustrations are not warranted by results" (Jackson: 1947: 47). The *Tide* article disputed this position, arguing that advertising directed only at whites alienates potential black consumers, claiming that if "advertising copy never talks to him in his own psychological language, the Negro is liable to be antagonised by much of the general copy to which he is exposed, believing as he does that the advertisement is ignoring him, talking right past at white people. Another obvious danger noted by *Tide* is to give the impression that

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[36] Here the article is using the term 'coloured' in the US sense to refer to blacks.

he Negro is being patronised or ridiculed" (47-49)[37]. According to this view, it was important to advertise to blacks, and it was equally important to make it clear to them that you were advertising to them, and so not to simply use an identical version of the ad for the white market.

We see a similar argument regarding the importance of recognizing blacks as consumers in the address by Nimrod Mkele – the pioneering black marketing researcher mentioned above – to the annual convention of the Society of Advertisers in 1959. However, this 'recognition' involves not only directing advertising at them, but also acknowledging their presence in a reading public by not insulting them in advertising addressed at a primarily white readership. Mkele starts his address by remarking on the "progress" advertising to blacks has made in the last 20 years, contrasting current advertising with previous offerings: "As I stand here today I am reminded of an advertisement which ran about 20 years ago. It showed the missus calling for Jim. Jim appeared, beaming, carrying a tin of [surface cleaning powder] Vim. Those were the days when Jim was coterminous with Vim. Or was it the other way round? I mention this because today such an advertising approach, whether in the European or Non-European Press, is unthinkable" (117). The ad referenced by Mkele appeared in the white press, and was clearly addressed to whites. However, as white advertisers became more aware of the black readership of white papers, ads such as this could no longer assume an exclusively white audience[38]. The existence of black readers was implicitly acknowledged by the dwindling of explicitly racist ads such as this one, in which blacks were equated with inanimate commodities – the synonymous nature of 'Jim' and 'Vim' which Mkele highlight – and represented as speaking broken English. Rather, to the extent that they

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[37] The article goes on to list the additional difficulties facing advertisers in South Africa: "the large proportion of our coloured people, the many different tongues spoken, the tribal and labour systems, and the emotional prejudices of the European" (49).

[38] Mkele himself cites evidence for this readership in relation to the ad campaign for Gilbey's Gin, which featured the copy, "Don't ask for gin, ask for Gilbey's". This campaign only appeared in the English press (because blacks were forbidden from buying European-type alcohol at this point). However, Mkele claims that after this ad campaign ran in the white press, there was a rise in requests for Gilbey's at shebeens (black illegal drinking establishments), whereas before most blacks drank brandy, not any sort of gin.

were no longer explicitly excluded from the consuming public addressed by these ads, blacks were

granted recognition as potential consumers – equal to white readers insofar as they were capable of

purchasing the advertised product. This vision allowed a national market to be imagined as unified

around a shared journey towards aspirational whiteness, with whites and blacks simply at a different

point in actualization of their consumer potential.

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Figure 2: The racist Vim ad referenced by Mkele. Source: Archives of Chris Rogerson.

However, how to grant blacks recognition through advertising while continuing to offer them this aspirational consumer lifestyle associated with whites presented a challenge for advertisers. Eliminating racist depictions in white newspapers as a tacit acknowledgment of the presence of black readers was one thing. But in ads directly addressing blacks, advertisers struggled with the dilemma of how to make it clear that it was the consumer potential of blacks that the ad was attempting to actualize, while simultaneously offering them an aspirational lifestyle constructed as the privilege of whiteness, in a context in which the very definitions of whiteness and blackness were caught up with unequal access to such a consumer lifestyle. As the lived reality of the majority of blacks was in stark contrast to the aspirational consumerism offered by advertising, some articles cautioned creators of advertising not to recognize blacks as the addressees of the advertising messages through representing their poverty. For example, one article from 1955 appearing in *South African Sales Promotion and Packaging*, (Vol 3, 1955: 35) recommends that those designing advertising for blacks should "Always dress the characters in the advertisement well. The odd patch for 'realism' will offend." Here we are reminded that advertising is not a 'realist' discourse, but one that attempts to suture together current circumstances and aspirational selves through aspirational recognition. We see how in the context of advertising directed at blacks, the white creators of advertising grappled with the challenge of calibrating aspirational recognition, which in this context involved recognizing both the racial difference of blacks, and their potential status as consumers – in other words, their potential to be like whites. We will see in later chapters how enduring this challenge is for white advertisers, as they continue to wonder in the present moment on what basis to recognize various segments of black consumers.

Recognizing difference: black languages, black bodies

Two areas in which we see with particular clarity this tension between acknowledging blacks as equal – which for white advertisers, equated to being the same as whites – while recognizing their racial difference, is in discussions of what language to use for the advertising copy when addressing blacks,

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and how to represent black bodies in advertising images. The question of what language to use when writing advertising copy directed at blacks reoccurred throughout this time period. Printing ads in English and a number of black vernacular languages seems to have been the most widely followed course of action during the 30s and 40s. In the 1950s, English-language advertising came to predominate. In an article titled "Getting a sales message to the urban African market" appearing in 1955 in *South African Sales Promotion and Packaging*, the reader is advised that English is the language in which advertising aimed at blacks should be framed. However, not everyone agreed with this position, and debates about the appropriate language for advertising directed at blacks had political implications, which manifested in different stances towards advertising taken by the industry and the South African government. This is especially evident at the annual conventions of the Society of Advertisers, which always involved a government representative addressing the industry delegates. With the swing towards promoting Black self-government within the 'homeland' areas as justification for removing them from the national space of South Africa from the early 1950s onwards[39], and the attempt to fracture black solidarity by promoting ethnic difference – with Blacks designated a 'homeland' area on the basis of their assigned ethnic group – we see these apartheid government representatives emphasizing the supposed orientation of Blacks towards their own ethnic culture and tradition, on the one hand, and the role of advertising of turning blacks into modern citizens of these homelands on the other. Arguments concerning whether to advertise to blacks in their mother-tongue, or in English, became caught up with constructions of blacks as 'modern' versus framings of them as rural, tradition-bound, and rooted in the 'homelands'.

For example, an article on "The Bantu Market" appearing in *Advertising and Press Annual of Africa* in 1956 predicted that the policy of emphasizing the vernacular introduced by the newly created

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[39] See http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/homelands

Department of Bantu Education would diminish the importance of English advertising and publications. The article connects this construction of black consumers as preferring their mother-tongues with official apartheid constructions of blackness, claiming that Africans prefer to live in rural areas, and that the town is a place to work and not much more, due to the "deep-seated desire of the Bantu men to get back to their traditional habitat" (1956: 257)[40]. This view was also expressed by Dr Max Willie Eiselen, Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, in his address to the annual convention for the Society of Advertisers in 1959. In line with his construction of blacks as bound by 'tradition' and oriented towards their 'homelands' rather than urban modernity, Eiselen suggests that blacks are starting to prefer reading-material in their mother-tongues. He explains this belief as follows: "It can justly be said that all education given to the Bantu before the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 had an English bias. The Bantu experienced a time in which they considered their own languages to be inferior to the English language. Today, however, they realise more and more the value of their own languages and after the principles of mother-tongue instruction had taken deeper root, an enormous hunger for reading was created in this sphere which at this stage is still far from satisfied and tends to grow greater every day" (103).

Nimrod Mkele, whose address directly followed Eiselen's at the convention, directly contradicts this claim about blacks preferring advertising in their mother tongues over English. He portrays a vision of the black consumer as aspiring to the lifestyle of whites, centered around a modern, urban consumerism, claiming that "The most important values that influence African buying behaviour – and this includes advertising reactions – derive from European standards, which the African has come to accept as the yardstick with which to measure his own integration into the society whose ideals he has

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[40] This is one of only a couple of explicit statements in the advertising industry periodicals that Blacks might not aspire to a life identical to Whites. The vast majority of characterizations portray Blacks as developing identical versions of Whites. The idea that Blacks may aspire to a 'traditional' rather than a 'modern' way of life is evident more often in ads that appear in Black-targeted periodicals, as discussed below.

come to accept as his own" (123). In line with this construction, he claims that blacks prefer to be

addressed in English rather than their mother tongues, claiming that the latter languages are "as yet

incapable of subsuming the concepts of a technological culture towards which he is aspiring and in fact

hinder him from making the necessary adaptations to this culture" (131). In this way, for Mkele,

advertising in English offers blacks a recognition of their potential to be like whites, and thus balances

aspiration with recognition, rather than advertising in vernacular languages which provides no

aspirational value, only recognition of racial difference, which in the context of South Africa at the time,

was equated with inequality. In this way, we can see the political implications of hailing blacks as

consumers potentially just like whites – in proving their equality as consumers, they prove their equality

as modern individuals, capable of equal citizenship.

We see a similar tension between recognizing blacks while offering them aspiration associated with

whiteness in discussions of how to represent black bodies in advertising. An article appearing in the

Advertising Press Guide for South Africa in 1939 pondering the ideals of beauty amongst black

consumers explicates these uncertainties around representation:

> Some time ago I had to advertise a toilet commodity in the native press. Did the native admire
> female beauty of the European type of did the thicker native type seem more desirable to him –
> or her? My investigations suggested that the former is preferred among the town dwelling
> natives to whom we were appealing, but how was I going to illustrate the advertisements? If I
> had a European face drawn somewhat darkened, the result would be a very swarthy white, or
> very likely an Indian. Actual photographs all seemed to accentuate the thickness of the native
> type. In the end drawings frankly of natives had to be made, but these were somewhat refined
> to meet a more conventional idea of beauty (19-20).

Here, the worry is how to represent blacks as upholding European ideals of beauty while still making

such representations identifiable as blacks, rather than "swarthy whites" or Indians. This fixation on

black lips and noses is still evident in the 50s: "Use African, not European models in the advertisements.

Avoid the types with thick lips and flat noses and Europeanise the features of the models" (*SA Sales*

Promotion and Packaging, Vol 3, 1955: 35). Here we see how using Black models that have features closer to European ideals of beauty seeks to recognize Blacks as the addressees of the ad, while offering them aspirational versions of themselves, in a context in which aspiration and whiteness were inextricably linked.

Hierarchies of aspiration

Using Black models represented as living the consumerist lifestyle associated with whites seems to have been a common approach to attempting to calibrate aspirational recognition, and has persisted in much of post-apartheid South African advertising, as we will see. For some black experts, this participated in a project of self-making, in which the Black middle class was idealized as setting the standards for Black South Africans as a whole. We see an example of this in Jordan Ngubane's article on how to advertise to Blacks from 1946. He asserts that ""Characters in advertisements should certainly be drawn from the best elements in any community" (137). For Ngubane, these 'best elements' were professional, highly educated blacks such as himself, whom he believed the black population as a whole aspired to be like: "it is from professional ranks that the leaders, teachers and mentors of the Bantu community are drawn. They set the social standards and the fashions for their people" (137). In terms of the aspirational hierarchy envisioned by apartheid advertising, these 'best elements' aspired to be like whites – like Choles' aspiring 'houseboy' – and the rest of the black population aspired to be like these 'westernised' blacks. As one article appearing in the *South African Advertisers' and Annual Press Guide* from 1949 put it, "The needs and desires of a family in Orlando and one on the banks of the Limpopo or Zambezi are very different, but they have something in common: a desire for something more than they have today. No matter where they live, they have relatives or friends in close contact with the European and wealthier sections of the population. Sooner or later goods, or the news of goods, reach the humblest home" (177). Again, we see the fantasy of the national market unified under the rubric of a shared journey towards fully actualized consumerhood, exemplified by Whites, with difference plotted in terms

of varying distances from that ideal. We will see in later chapters how the creators of advertising have struggled to unify markets in the face the evident crumbling of this aspirational hierarchy.

Many ads for Black periodicals attempted to frame these publications as participating in suturing these aspirational hierarchies and thus unifying the national market through a 'trickle down' of tastes. In ads for *Umteteli,* attempts to mediate the relationship between rural and urban spaces and the types of consumers that inhabit these spaces are particularly clear. In one entirely text-based ad, appearing in *South African Annual and Press Guide,* the claim was made that *Umteteli* links together "town and country for the African people". In another ad for *Umteteli* from 1945 appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling*, two images are juxtaposed. In the background, at the top of the page, there is a rural scene of a homestead – huts, hills, fields, with what looks like the figure of a woman wrapped in a blanket seated outside one of these huts. In the foreground at the bottom of the page underneath the text is the figure of a black man dressed in a suit and tie, with a serious expression looking out beyond the frame of the ad. Here the imagery references the divisions within this market between rural (possibly feminized) blacks and modern, middle class urbanites, and attempts to offer *Umteteli* as a means of mediating these divisions, just as we saw how ads selling the black consumer to white advertisers attempted to suture the two roles of blacks – as cheap labor and as affluent consumers – in the white dominated economy. In certain features on rural and urban blacks, an analysis is provided of how urban blacks read newspapers, and take them back to the rural areas, where they also disseminate a taste for western consumer goods. For example, an article appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling* in 1942 predicting the role of blacks in the post-war economy: "They have learned to want many more things, and each man will go back to his kraal, dorp or home town as a potential educative influence on hundreds of others" (Rubery: 41).

This conceptualization of an aspirational hierarchy in which middle-class Blacks imitate Whites, and poorer and rural Blacks imitate middle-class Blacks, is a deeply rooted and frequently recurring fantasy

throughout the period under discussion. The fantasy allowed some in the advertising industry to dismiss the importance of the introduction of apartheid policies for their efforts to constitute a mass market out of Black consumers; one article expressed confidence that, no matter what, the 'Bantu' will always seek to keep as closely as possible to European standards, so "the South African Native market will retain its lead despite any political theory" (*Advertising and Press Annual of Africa*, 1956, "the Bantu Market": 259). In response to a question from a delegate, the government representative at the second advertising convention – David de Waal Meyer, Secretary of the Department of Commerce and Industries – sought to reassure advertisers that Blacks would continue to imitate Europeans in their buying habits despite apartheid, claiming that "It is always the well-developed and the financially strong who are regarded as the example for the financially weak and, in some ways, inferior" regardless of race (First convention of advertisers (13-16 October 1958), 12). At the same time, when the government representative at the convention the following year, Dr Eiselen, encouraged advertisers to focus their advertising attempts on Blacks in the homelands as the market of the future, an article commenting on the convention expressed skepticism about this claim: "practical marketing and advertising executives know that the urban Native market is still growing steadily and is most susceptible to westernising influences and hence to being developed by advertising" (SA, October 1959, pg 15, "Second Success: the advertising convention improved on last year's achievements). According to Mkele, who gave his address directly after Eiselen, this susceptibility had to do with the proximity of the urban Black market to Whites, and their greater exposure to advertising media.

 However, despite the strength of this fantasy of the aspirational hierarchies uniting the national market, there are counter-imaginaries of Black aspiration discernable. In ads that appeared in industry periodicals trying to sell advertising space in Black-targeted periodicals, Blacks are consistently represented as 'modern' – dressed in western-style clothing, reading, purchasing and using commodities. However, in ads that appeared in Black-targeted publications during the same time

period, we see contrasting ideas about what Blacks aspire to. Many ads directed at Blacks do hold up a vision of a modern consumer lifestyle as aspirational, depicting very similar imagery as those appearing in the advertising industry periodicals discussed above. One striking example of this is presented by ad for the 'Efficiency Correspondence College', which appeared in the *Bantu World* in the 1940s, we see a drawing of two groups of black men side by side – the one working with picks, dressed in labourers' clothes, and the other dressed in suits, hats and ties, carrying walking sticks. Above the picture, the ad poses the question, 'which do YOU choose?' The text below the image frames the training offered by the college as the means to make this choice – "To-day you can choose your own future. If you desire to earn better wages, to have a good job and be a leader of your people you must have training. Make sure that you have E.C.C. training." This clearly evinces a White imaginary of Blacks aspiring to a lifestyle similar to that of whites, and not as 'naturally' inferior menial laborers. On the other hand, we see ads that address Blacks as aspiring to traditional modes of success, status and achievement. One ad for the patent medicine Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, appearing in the *Bantu World* in 1943, encourages readers to "Be fit and strong like your warrior forefathers". Below the tagline is a pen drawing of three warriors, armed with knobkerries, spears and shields, and dressed in skins. The copy of the ad reads, "Warriors of the past lived free lives in the open country. They were strong, healthy men. Today, even if you live in a big city, you can be just as strong and healthy if you know the right way." The 'right way' involved taking Dr. William's Pills, unsurprisingly.

Another alternative conceptualization of Black aspiration in ads appearing in Black periodicals focused on African-Americans as sources of aspiration, rather than Whites or South African Blacks (cf Manoim 1983, Nixon 1994). We see many references to the US in ads directed at Blacks over this time period. However, in advertising industry periodicals, we see practically no articles in which advertisers are

advised to take this approach in campaigns directed at Blacks[41] Nimrod Mkele in his address pronounces

that this trend of Blacks looking to African-American culture as aspirational is fading as South African

Blacks embrace local Black celebrities and other figures of success as their role models. He claims that

"the emergence of an African middle class has given the Negro vogue the coup de grace" (1959: 128). In

this way, Mkele affirms the vision of a national market unified around aspirational whiteness, with the

Black middle class serving as the vanguard of Black progress towards this ideal.

White advertisers as missionaries

For those who tried to sell this fantasy of the Black consumer as a developing version of the White

consumer, and thus as the solution to the need of whites for a mass market for their manufactured

goods, the difference of Blacks in relation to Whites was explained as a function of their relative lack of

income[42] or living conditions, or of differences in 'culture'[43], which was often framed as something that

blacks were 'growing out of' as they joined western modernity[44]. However, in a context in which racial

difference and inequality was so intertwined with differential access to consumer goods, portraying

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[41] One exception to this is the article from the 1956 edition of *SA Sales, Promotion & Packaging* on approaches to advertising to Blacks, discussed below.

[42] At times we see advertisers attempt to conceptualize racial difference in South Africa as comparable to class difference in other national contexts. For example, in the article "Let's go Native" from the 1940 edition of *South African Advertising and Selling*, we see implicit parallels drawn between class differences in Britain and the US, and racial difference in South Africa: "Using European themes on the native mentality is usually wasting your full-page on the desert air. It is quite as bad as advising the slum-born Cockney to take an antidote against malaria. Or to give the analogy an American twist, a picture in which a schoolboy refers to his father as 'sir' would puzzle rather than convince the Detroit factory-worker" (17).

[43] One study of the influence of 'culture' on responses to advertising was conducted by Dr Hazel Rosenthal in 1956 as part of her psychology PhD, which investigated the responses of the following groups: English, Afrikaans, Jewish, African, Indian and Coloured. The study was mentioned frequently in the advertising periodicals as the only one of its kind, and according to Mkele in his address to the convention of the Society of Advertisers, the thesis was in high demand amongst the advertising industry. One article summarizing her findings mentions cultural differences in relation to the perception of time and space, and a less individualistic conception of wealth (*Selling age* (1958), Vol 6 September 1958, pg 23).

[44] Mkele espoused this view in his 1959 address to the Society of Advertisers, in which he claimed that the influence of cultural practices such as eating 'taboos' was declining amongst Blacks, especially those in the urban areas, as they reject values that tie them to their "tribal past"; "these taboos are going because they no longer conform with the African's ego-ideals in today's context." (1959: 130).

blacks as potentially identical versions of whites in their capacity to consume threatened to prove their

equality in other ways, and challenge the racial hierarchies of apartheid. The response on the part of

Whites in the advertising industry to this threat was to frame themselves as the actualizers of Black

consumer potential, constituting blacks as a developing 'other' to fully developed white self[45]. This

strategy is most clearly evident in the frequent comparison between the role of advertisers and

missionaries in relation to Blacks.

We see an early comparison made between religious missionaries and the missionaries of commerce in

this article on the black market appearing in in 1949 ("Fourteen Million Customers", *SA Advertising*

Annual and Press Guide). It remarks on the fact that "where mission enterprise spends its millions in

advertising Christianity, commerce only spends its thousands" (177). The author comments that this is

'extraordinary', as natives are slowly but surely approaching the living standards of Europeans. A further

example of this discourse is to be found at the first convention of the Society of Advertisers which was

held in 1958, where De Wet Nel, Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences and of Health (but who spent

many years as the Chairman of the Native Affairs Commission), addressed those assembled: "As a

European and a Cabinet Minister I am fully aware of my grave responsibility to the Bantu. You, no doubt,

are just as deeply conscious of your own responsibility as Europeans and as a Society which will play an

increasingly important role in the development of the Bantu market, yes, but also of the Bantu mind."

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[45] Here I focus on those whites who were involved in selling the fantasy of the lucrative black market, but there were also whites, especially on the corporate marketing side, who rejected the claims made about the potentially modern, affluent black consumer market. The extent of skepticism regarding this construction figure of the lucrative black consumer market is hard to gauge in the 30s and 40s, as almost all of the discussion within the industry journals, and the ads for the black press, aim to constitute the black market as an object, and convince advertisers to address it. Evidence of counter-arguments to the benefits of advertising to blacks only surfaces very occasionally in articles that briefly reference the existence of these doubts only to dismiss their validity, and in occasional discussions at the annual conventions of the Society of Advertisers. We also see evidence of white skepticism to claims about blacks as a lucrative market in the response to the ads for the black press. Ultimately, attempts on the part of those associated with the Black press to convince advertisers to purchase space in their pages were a failure. Although we see advertising appearing in the pages of Black newspapers and magazines from the 1930s and increasingly in the 1950s, advertising revenue for the Black press was never sufficient to make any of these publications profitable (Manoim 1983).

(1958: 3). He continues to describe how the purchasing power of Blacks has grown substantially, and claims that duty of advertisers is to develop the 'Bantu' as consumers, teaching them how to spend this money: "Here a great task awaits you. You will have to educate the Bantu. It will be education in the true sense of the word. Here you will have to fulfil the role of the missionary who is the bearer of a message. It is for you to inspire the Bantu with a spirit of faith and confidence in your great work and in the ethical code of the European in this field. In so doing you will serve your own cause and the interests of South Africa." (1958:3)

Here, transforming Blacks into consumers becomes an exercise in performing a racialized subjectivity, in which Whites must show the way to fully actualized consumer-hood. We see parallels here with other systems promising universal formal equality, such liberal democracy, in which what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) terms the discourse of "not yet" allowed racialized roles of teacher and student, leader and follower, to remain intact. According to this logic, one day blacks would be ready to function as mature consumers, effective persons and customers equal to whites, but at the present moment, it was the duty of Whites to nurture and educate the immature Black consumer, allowing such a day to be eternally deferred.

We also see the ambiguity of how advertising was conceptualized as playing a role in this process. On the one hand, advertising was considered necessary to develop black consumer desire and to direct it towards the objects that white manufacturers required. For example, at the second annual convention of the Society of Advertisers, the president of the South African Federated Chamber of industries called on delegates to use advertising to direct the spending power of Blacks, encouraging them to buy nationally produced goods, rather than foreign ones, thus stimulating the national economy and boosting the profits of White South African manufacturers[46]. On the other hand, advertising threatened

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[46] He went on to elaborate on the racialized pedagogical role of advertising: "Educationists may differ from me, but I have the idea that advertising has been and is the most important single factor in influencing, particularly our

to evoke desires in Blacks that could not be contained, thus requiring advertising to be strictly controlled in the townships (Rogerson 1994), and TV advertising to be restricted after the introduction of the medium in 1976. This construction of the ambivalence of advertising continues to shape advertising practice and public discussion of the medium.

From identity to alterity: the specter of black inscrutability

Despite its persistence, the fantasy of a national market unified around aspirational whiteness was haunted by anxiety on the part of White advertisers – not only that Blacks may aspire to 'traditional' or international models of aspiration, but that Blacks might be utterly different from Whites at a deeper level, in ways that were unknowable to Whites. At times, we see the suspicion that consumer behavior that seems identical to Whites might be concealing a more essential personhood – Blacks may consume the same commodities as Whites, they might even aspire to the same lifestyle as Whites, but that doesn't mean they are like Whites. An early example of this imaginary of Blacks as consumers, but different, appears in the 1938 ad for PN Barrett advertising agency[47] discussing the "detribalized Fingo packer", "Sam". This was Sam Tshanyela, discussed above, who worked for the agency as a consultant on the African market. The article claims that he buys branded "tea, candles, paraffin, flour, soap and patent medicines". It includes a series of photos with captions: One photo shows him intently reading a copy of *Umteteli*; another looking into a store window; a third shows him sitting at a table, using a Dettol brand disinfectant; a fourth shows him drinking tea with a friend, using a teacup and a teapot; and a final image shows a close-up of his face. The reader can see that that he is wearing a suit, tie and hat, cigarette dangling from his lips looking up above the camera into the distance. The captions narrate this appearance of white consumerhood which conceals a deeper racial difference: "Like you and me, he

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urbanised Bantu towards the acceptance of at least the outward symbols or our Western civilisation…The Bantu is aspiring to what he believes to be our standard of living and undoubtedly advertising has been a vital influence in this" (1959: 9).

[47] Appearing in *South African Advertising and Selling*, Aug 1938, pg 24-25

reads…shops thoughtfully…buys advertised brands…but behind his European front…he's a Bantu with a Bantu mind"[48].

We see this anxiety about the difference of race, and its potential inscrutability, in a column appeared in *South African Sales, Promotion and Packaging* in 1963 on "Approaching the Bantu" in advertising. The author – a copywriter – ponders the claim that "We are told that the basic motivational drives – mother love, self-preservation, herd instinct and sex – are the same in all humans: equally we know that these are overlaid by all manner of different influences and circumstances" (23). He elaborates that these differences involve not only race, but include national and cultural differences – between the British and Americans and English and Afrikaans South Africans. However, he disagrees that specially targeted advertising is required for white Afrikaners, while arguing that racial targeting is desirable when addressing the black market. He goes on to muse on how this tension between sameness and difference plays itself out in this specific context of advertising to blacks. He describes his struggle to find the balance between the "too-sophisticated" and the "absurdly simple" when writing copy for Blacks (1963: 23), and wonders about possible differences of perception and interpretation between himself and a Black reader. He describes ads that to him seem very effective, but wonders about "non-white" reactions to the same material: could there be some element invisible to him that might repel Black readers? Here we see how an instability involved in creating any advertising – how can I know how my audience is taking up and interpreting my ad? – gets projected onto the Black consumer as 'other', with the anxiety about the inscrutability of Blacks as consumers standing in for a more general anxiety about the unpredictability of human engagement with advertising.

This final comment introduces a reoccurring theme in discussions of Black particularity – the anxiety that Blacks may be different in ways that are unknowable to Whites. If one side of the fear posed by Black

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[48] This anxiety is reminiscent of the Comaroffs (1997) discussion of missionary concerns about black Christians – they seem to be Christians on the outside, but are they really Christians on the inside?

consumers was that they might be the same as Whites and thus equal to them, the other side was this –

that they are utterly different and thus that their consumer desire is unknowable and unharnessable by

White industry. This was part of a broader tension in advertising discourse around advertising to Blacks;

shifts between attempting to define what makes Blacks different from Whites as consumers on the one

hand, and rhetorically emphasizing the existence of those differences, and their potential unknowability

on the other. As the industry developed over the years, this tension came to be mapped onto an

institutional division in the industry between advertising and marketing research, and the contrasting

approaches to domesticating difference in each context. As we saw above, mass market advertising

pushes advertisers to unify markets on the basis of universal human truths (Ewen 2001). Thus

advertising agencies were shaped as the institutional space where universal 'human truths' are

identified and translated into campaigns. When advertising practitioners encounter difference, they

approach it as assimilable to these 'human truths', requiring reframing for different audiences, but

ultimately reducible to universality.

This logic is illustrated by the July 1956 edition of *SA Sales, Promotion & Packaging*, which contained as

its central feature an analysis of trends in advertising to Blacks. The article starts by emphasizing the

diversity of approaches evident to addressing Blacks through advertising, and expresses uncertainty as

to what advertising approaches work on Blacks. The article then moves on to define five types of

advertising directed at Blacks, drawn from the author's perusal of various newspapers and magazines

targeted at Blacks (specifically, *Hi-Note*, the *Golden City Post*, *Bona*, *Drum*, and *Zonk!*). He glosses these

as the prestige type; the body beautiful type; the socially conscious type; the 'why suffer?' type; the

educational or plain statement type (1956: 19).

The author moves on to discuss each of these approaches in detail, and here we see how racial

difference is assimilated to universal humanity, which is constructed as synonymous with whiteness. For

example, in his discussion of the 'why suffer' approach to advertising, he concludes that "There is no

basic difference [between ads in the Black and White press for these brands] and the products which claim to cure or alleviate the African's discomfort are the same as those advertised in popular magazines everywhere" (22). We see this assimilation again in the analysis of the 'socially conscious' approach: "The emphasis lies directly on success – both in business and socially which seems to indicate that the African is as susceptible to this approach as his European counterpart" (21). And again in the discussion of the 'body beautiful' type: "The approach is largely the same as that for the European woman – you, too can be more beautiful!" (20)

The author takes a different approach in his analysis of the "educational or plain statement" approach. He writes that "[t]he educating of the African to understand and accept certain modern foods is, perhaps, one of the most formidable tasks that advertising can undertake. Modern processed foodstuffs, their packs and their many uses need explaining to the African and the advertising representation is simple and direct, emphasising the pack and the food value" (23). Here we see the conception of the role of advertising to educate and develop Blacks as consumers, which involves making them more like Whites. In this way, the author of this article uses advertising as a lens onto who Blacks are, and in so doing, constructs them as basically identical to whites, only in a less developed form[49].

However, assimilating difference to universal humanity through advertising could never be a totalizing process. With Sam Tshanyela – whose consumer behavior seemed identical to Whites, but which concealed a mysterious 'Bantu mind' – we saw that human subjects can be constituted through consumption, while always leaving a possible excess that is not subsumable by that which is consumed. The same may be seen for advertising; although the author reads off who Blacks are from the

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[49] The other approach discussed, the 'prestige' approach, involves associating a product with an African celebrity or with a foreign country, especially the US, and is not compared to advertising directed Whites, other than to say that an exact duplication of ads directed at Whites is inadvisable as these may not be 'comprehensible' to the African.

advertising they consume, assimilating perceived differences to a pre-existing framework for

understanding consumer motivation derived from Whites, there is always the possibility that difference

has not been entirely contained. We saw this in the case of the columnist above who pondered the

inscrutable racial differences that could be escaping his careful studies of advertising. We are again

reminded of the tension between making difference tractable in order to address it, and the

indeterminacy required for advertising to work as a medium, intersecting in the South African case with

White affirmation of the inscrutability of blackness serving to entrench racial boundaries on the one

hand, and the framing of Blacks as just like Whites, and thus worth advertising to, on the other.

Examining articles in these periodicals and discussions at the annual conventions, we see that when

advertising encounters differences that are not easily assimilable to such 'human truths', it displaces the

responsibility for making such differences knowable onto the institutional space of marketing research –

either external marketing research institutions, or marketing research departments within advertising

agencies. We see this in endlessly repeated calls in the articles and presentations about Black consumers

over the years for 'more research.'[50] Marketing research acknowledges and investigates such

differences, working simultaneously to make them tractable and to reaffirm their existence in the form

of market segments. However, this tension between knowability and unknowability – and the anxiety

that there are differences which are unassimilable through either 'human truths' or research – persists

within the institutional space of both advertising and marketing research, as we will see in later

chapters. In these early discussions of racial difference, we see the prefiguring of this tension, with

claims that Blacks must be constituted as an object of knowledge in order to be marketed to, while

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[50] In an article on the state of marketing research in South Africa, appearing in *The African Press and Advertising Annual*, 1950: 137, the black market is described as "big, black, question-mark" 137 which requires blacks researchers to research it. Ten years later, at the third annual convention of the Society of Advertisers, Miss MM Dell, Market Research Department of Lever Brothers gave a presentation in which she claims that not much is known about black South African consumers, saying most campaigns addressing them are based on 'guesswork', and she outlines some specific questions about their buying habits and motivations that require more research.

simultaneously being suspected of being ultimately unknowable and racially other, thereby stabilizing

racial boundaries between white marketers and advertisers and black consumers.

Conclusion

In this way we see that while offering the fantasy of huge profit for Whites, constituting Blacks as

consumers also raised the specter of various kinds of fears. These fears involved both the threat to

established racial boundaries accompanied the representation of Blacks as consumer potentially equal

to Whites, but also encompassed fears that Black consumer desire could not easily be known and

channeled by White advertisers. Often these two sets of fears operated in a paradoxical way – if Blacks

were potentially consumers like Whites, they could be framed as a knowable entity, capable of being

persuaded through the same advertising techniques used to persuade Whites. However, if they were

consumers like Whites, the ideological underpinnings of apartheid were threatened. On the other hand,

if they were framed as 'other' to Whites, driven by irrational, primitive impulses in their consumption

habits that were unknowable to Whites, racial boundaries remained intact – and White advertisers

could blame their failures to tap this market on the unruly consumer status of Blacks, rather than on the

White advertisers' own lack of expertise, projecting the instability of all advertising onto Blacks as the

'other' consumer. However, in this characterization of Blacks as consumers, Black consumer desire

threatened to be uncontainable by White advertisers. As I argue in this thesis, this contradictory

characterization of the 'other' consumer is so persistent, continuing into the present day, because

advertisers need this other consumer to be both things at once, allowing advertising professionals to

affirm both their expertise, and their class and race identities.

In this chapter, I have argued that the ambivalent object of the 'black consumer' as evoking both

fantasies and fears emerged in the first half of the 20th century, as some in the advertising industry tried

to constitute a national mass market in the context of segregationist and apartheid South Africa. The

dominant imaginary was of this market unified around a shared journey towards an aspirational

consumer lifestyle epitomized by Whites, with difference plotted in terms of varying distances from that

ideal. However, as advertisers attempted to sustain this fantasy within the context of racial inequality

grounded in differential access to both consumer and political goods, themes central to this dissertation

emerge: the impasses of reconciling aspirational whiteness with Black difference; the faith in the

pedagogical power of advertising to actualize consumers, and a concomitant ambivalence towards its

characteristics as a medium; and the tension between conceptualizing a consumer 'other' which is both

a developing version of a national self and utterly other to that self. In the next chapter, I consider how

these tensions have both persisted and transformed in post-apartheid South Africa, as I examine how an

advertising campaign attempted to constitute a unified market in the context of post-apartheid South

Africa.

Chapter 2

Fractured markets and the dream of the 'unified brand', or, 'how to ride two horses with one arse'

The previous chapter sketched out how early advertising directed at Blacks explicates a series of tensions between inclusion in the market and the national polity, and exclusion based on race and class. It showed how the figure of the Black consumer became a site for the projection of these tensions, thus both affirming and potentially threatening White supremacy. This provides the context for an analysis of advertising in South Africa in the second decade of the 21st century, in which this dynamic of projecting tensions onto consumer 'others' continues to participate in mediating collectivities, although the configuration of race and class in shaping these 'others' has shifted. The gap of 50 years between where the previous chapter ended – the start of the 1960s – and where the current chapter starts – late 2013 – has seen huge changes in the global and national context, as I discussed in the introduction. One of the most important of these has been the transition from apartheid to democracy, with Nelson Mandela released in 1990, and the first non-racial democratic elections taking place in 1994. Since this transition, advertising practitioners in South Africa have had to engage with the challenge of addressing a national market of formally equal citizens, but who remain sharply divided in terms of socioeconomic status.

In this context, advertising faces similar tensions to those involved in constituting a nation: it must balance difference with commonality, inequality with inclusion. In this chapter and the next, I explore how branding engages with these tensions, drawing on my time conducting participant observation at a small, majority-White advertising agency in Cape Town, during 2014. Specifically, I analyze the campaign for a brand of sherry, showing what it reveals about the difficulties of hailing equal consumer citizens in a context of vast socioeconomic inequality, and how the particular structure of the brand reintroduces the temporality of deferred equality characteristic of colonial logics of development (Bhabha 1994, Chakrabarty 2000), constituting poor Black South Africans as consumer 'others' which the brand must 'develop'. I show how constituting this consumer 'other' served to define a default consumer citizen

'self' which aligned with projects of self-making of the majority White brand team. I show how the

professional expertise of advertising practitioners – which involved identifying universal 'human truths',

and rendering these aesthetically in a way that could unify brands[1] – became inextricably linked to

producing this 'whitened middle classness'. We will see how this dynamic engaged with certain tensions

common to the practice of creating advertising – for example, between exclusivity and broad appeal,

the universal and the particular – while engaging with the specific history of South Africa, in which

making consumer 'others' had been central both to the self-making project of White advertising

professionals, and to constituting broader imaginaries of race, class and a national consumer public.

When I first arrived at the advertising agency 99cents in Cape Town to begin my research, there was

much excitement about acquisition of the Sedgwick's account. Sedgwick's Old Brown was a sherry, or

'fortified wine'[2], produced by Distell – a large producer of liquor and wine situated in the Stellenbosch

winelands, about an hour outside of Cape Town – and was one of the company's largest-selling

products. 99cents had won the pitch only a few weeks earlier, poaching it from the local branch of an

international agency[3]. I was thrilled to discover that I would be working with the brand team for

Sedgwick's as part of my 'job shadowing' at the agency, since the brand seemed like a fascinating case

study for someone intrigued by the targeting of race in advertising. According to the yearly marketing

research report investigating who was drinking Sedgwick's, the brand's core consumer base was made

up of two contrasting market segments: the 'Transformer' segment, which consisted of low-income

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[1] Some advertising professionals recognized that this was the definitive element of their expertise – balancing the universal and inclusive (whether this was conceptualized in the form of aspiration or 'human truth') with the particular and exclusive. In a conversation about 'human truths' in advertising, I asked (Black, male) creative director Tseliso Rangaka how one balances these 'human truths' with targeting different market segments, and he laughed and replied "Well, that's a tough question, because it's the whole trick of creating good advertising."
[2] Previously called 'sherry' before South African signed a trade agreement with the EU forbidding the use of this term for any product produced outside Jerez, Spain (von Ulmenstein, 2012).
[3] Given the dominance of these internationally-affiliated agencies within the South African advertising landscape this was a source of pride for the upstart 99cents.

Black consumers – mostly male[4] – living mainly in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape (one of South

Africa's poorest provinces); and the 'Sense of Knowing' (SOK) segment, made up of high-income, multi-

racial, urban consumers in places like Johannesburg and Cape Town.

In my first few weeks at the agency, I spent time attending the meetings where the new brand strategy

was being hammered out by the brand team, which consisted of representatives of 99cents as well as

the partner agencies and the client Distell[5]. Observing these meetings, it became clear that one of the

key challenges faced by those working on the brand involved how to address these contrasting

consumer segments with targeted messaging, while maintaining a consistent identity for the brand. In

fact, I learnt that one of the main reasons that the client had put the account out to pitch was that the

previous advertising agency handling Sedgwick's had developed communications for the brand focusing

on the Sense of Knowing consumer segment, without sufficiently targeting the Transformer segment.

The annual market research report conducted by Distell's marketing research agency, Synchronicity –

called the 'Brand Health Monitor' – which provided statistics on the 'vital signs' of the company's brands

had reported for the year of 2013 that sales of Sedgwick's to Transformers were dropping off[6]. No one

knew exactly why this was the case. As we will see, according to branding orthodoxy, Transformers

should have been buying the brand. However, 'Transformers' proved an unruly object, thwarting the

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[4] I discuss the conceptualizations of gender implicit in the category of 'Transformers' and the implications of these in chapter 4.

[5] 99cents was the lead agency on the account, which meant they were in charge of developing overall strategy for the brand, with other agencies contributing ideas and executions within their own field of practice. The core brand team was made up of representatives of 99cents, (usually Anne and Nancy from the accounts side and creative director Steve from the creative team), and from each of the partner agencies, which handled the digital, activational, media-buying and PR elements of the campaigns, as well as the two brand managers from the Distell side, Kelly and Tanya. Sometimes other execs from these various agencies would sit in on the meetings as well and contribute to the discussion.

[6] Out of the total number of consumers who had purchased Sedgwick's in the previous year (2012-2013), those that made up the SOK segment were numerically dominant (SOK consumers made up 33% to the Transformers' 17%). However, in terms of the volumes purchased, Transformer consumers contributed the largest share – over 50%, according to Distell brand manager Kelly. So fewer individuals classified as 'Transformers' bought Sedgwick's, but they bought far more per person than the other two market segments.

efforts of the brand team to pin them down as consumers. One way in which many at Distell explained

the drop in sales was in reference to the strategy of the previous advertising agency, which was to target

communications at SOK consumers, thus failing adequately to 'talk to'[7] the Transformer segment.

Whereas the previous agency had assumed that Transformers would respond positively to associating

the brand with 'aspirational' imagery of whitened middle classness (an assumption shared by many on

the new brand team, as we will see), the failure of that strategy had led the Distell brand managers to

conclude that Transformers must want communication that was clearly addressed to them; in other

words, 'recognition'. We will see that this was a persistent oscillation in the characterization of Black

consumers in post-apartheid advertising – either they want aspirational imagery in order to escape their

particularity, or recognition that affirmed it[8].

 99cents had been hired to correct this perceived over-emphasis on the SOK segment by developing

separate strategies for communicating a unified brand identity to each segment, hopefully boosting

sales in the process. However, this task proved challenging, and provoked disagreements within the

team as how best to accomplish it. On one occasion, after a meeting at Distell in which some of these

disagreements had been discussed, with no resolution reached, I saw Anne – the 99cents account

director – huddled in the lobby with Nancy – the account manager – engaged in an animated but hushed

discussion. After a while, Anne left the huddle and marched off to her desk, pronouncing over her

shoulder in an exasperated tone at Nancy, "As Andrew [the 99cents MD and head strategist] always

says, you can't ride two horses with one arse". She explained this intriguing comment to me later on:

she felt that the new brand strategy was in danger of forcing the brand to be two incompatible things –

an 'aspirational' brand drunk by affluent urbanites; and a 'value' brand with a low price point drunk by

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[7] I consider the implications of these frequent metaphors of dialogue and verbal address in the following chapter.
[8] We see a similar tension at a different scale in Mazzarella's (2003) analysis of Indian advertising, in which Indian advertisers both insisted on the particularity of the 'Indian consumer', and on their equality with 'global consumers'. This resulted in similar impasses, in which advertising professionals and their clients debated to what extent Indian consumers needed a particular strategy, and to what extent global imagery would appeal to them.

low-income consumers in the townships and rural areas. A year later, as I was finishing fieldwork, the

Brand Health Monitor of 2014 reported that sales amongst Transformers were still low, which continued

to be interpreted by the brand team as an indication that Transformers felt the brand "was not talking

to them"[9]. In this way, despite a year of trying to 'talk' to both market segments, while creating a

coherent identity for the brand, 99cents' strategy had achieved results almost identical to that of the

previous agency – Transformer consumers choosing not to buy the brand.

In this chapter, I examine the attempts and ultimate failure of the brand team to balance a unified brand

identity for Sedgwick's with a targeted communication strategy for the two primary market segments. I

argue that this failure elucidates structural tensions inherent to the practice of advertising in general,

inflected by the particular history of advertising in South Africa. In current branding practice, creators of

advertising are taught to identify universal 'human truths' on which to base a coherent brand identity.

For this reason, those who create advertising must always grapple with the question as to what

elements of their own experience are universally human, and which are particular to their own position

within the social landscape. In the context of South Africa, these dynamics were informed by the long

history of conflating the universal with whiteness and middle classness. Complicating this dynamic in the

case of Sedgwick's was the paradigm of brand humanization, which involves leveraging the brand's

human qualities from actual humans. In the case of Sedgwick's, the brand 'personality' was leveraged

from the Sense of Knowing consumer segment – who the team described as the brand's 'source of

image'[10], a term I discuss in more detail below – which was also the consumer segment into which the

almost all-White[11] brand team placed themselves, with many identifying strongly with its image of

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[9] By the time the 2014 Brand Health Monitor was released I was no longer at the agency. Stephan Willemse, head of digital content for Sedgwick's, explained the findings of the document in our interview, describing how Transformers felt the brand 'not talking' to them.

[10] This was a term used on all the Distell brands, developed by the marketing research company, where a 'source of image' was identified, in contrast to consumers who were classified as merely 'source of volume'.

[11] Everyone on the brand team was White, except for the brand manager on the Distell side, Kelly, who was designated as 'Coloured' within the apartheid era system of racial classifications. Clinton, the head sales rep in the

sophisticated middle-classness. In this way, the brand team imagined both the SOK segment and the brand in their own image; as they tried to unify Sedgwick's around 'universal human truths' they fashioned an aspirational 'whitened middle classness' which became implicated in their own projects of self making. In so doing, their professional expertise became intertwined with performing and constituting this identity.

In the previous chapter we saw how during colonial and apartheid South Africa, advertising was similarly involved in project of self-making for White advertisers, both through constituting a default universal consumer citizen[12] – White, English-speaking[13], and middle class – and a universal image of aspiration – also embodied by the White middle-class consumer citizen, who advertisers hoped could serve as a point of aspiration for the entire market-as-nation, as long as Blacks could be constituted as non-threatening developing consumers. In this chapter, I trace what has become of apartheid-era constructions of White middle-classness as both default consumer citizen and universal point of aspiration, as I examine how the self-making project of the Sedgwick's brand team grappled with configuring both a default consumer citizen and an image of universal aspiration. I argue that the default White consumer citizen of apartheid-era advertising has shifted from being explicitly White to being racially unmarked, but implicitly White – what I describe as 'whitened middle classness', which as we

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Eastern Cape, was also Coloured – he was not part of the brand team, but Kelly would sometimes ask him for his input as he was believed to be the most in-tune with trends in the Transformer heartland, being permanently based in Port Elizabeth, regional center of the Eastern Cape area.

[12] This was the dominant construction of the default national self, both in industry periodicals and in advertising campaigns appearing in newspapers. However, within the industry periodicals we do see disagreements from time to time about how homogenous this White middle-class self really was, and whether those in the advertising industry were representative of this self. We see that anxieties about talking only to 'the people like us' are not at all new. See for example the article in *Press Advertising and Radio Review*, Nov 1963, pp 23, "RIP Creativity in South African Advertising" by "A Copywriter", praising the sophistication of the South African White market relative to national markets elsewhere, and the response article ("This is what counts in advertising – and are we assessing our market right?" by "An Account Executive", *Press Advertising and Radio Review,* Jan 1964, pp 12) critiquing this claim, pointing to the class stratification within the White market.

[13] The construction of the English-speaking consumer as the default consumer was contested with the entrenchment of apartheid during the 1950s, with more ads appearing in periodicals calling for mother-tongue Afrikaans copywriters, and a higher standard of Afrikaans copy which eliminated all English-derived words and phrases.

will see in later chapters, is contrasted by advertising professionals with the middle classness of the 'new' Black middle classes. I show parallels between this racially unmarked middle classness and earlier constructions of whiteness, as this grew out of conceptualizations in the advertising industry of middle-classness as having the potential to transcend racial difference, as long as Blacks sought to imitate the lifestyle of middle-class Whites[14] – with the introduction of TV playing an important role in this transformation from explicit to implicit whiteness.

In the case of Sedgwick's, the puzzle for the brand team was how to reconcile this brand unified around whitened middle classness with the figure of the 'Transformers'. As long as Transformers wanted to be like Sense of Knowing consumers, the brand could be unified around this shared vision of aspiration. However, alongside this vision of a brand unified around aspirational whitened middle-classness, there was a deep skepticism that Transformers wanted to be like the Sense of Knowing. This ambiguous relation of Transformers to the 'universal human truth' of the brand was underlined by a phenomenon that I found surprising in relation to client-agency interactions: the fact that the continued failure on the part of agency professionals to accurately predict how best to advertise to the Transformer consumer did not seem to be perceived by anyone – client or agency – as a failure of the professional expertise of the advertising practitioners. In the analysis that follows, I show how when Transformers thwarted the attempts of advertisers to market to them, their difference was framed as outside the realm of universal human truth, and thus outside the realm of the professional expertise of advertisers. Figuring out the relationship of low income Black consumers to the 'self' of the whitened middle class universal

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[14] As we will see in later chapters, affluence alone was not enough to qualify one as 'middle class' in this way. Blacks who had become wealthy since the end of apartheid were often depicted as 'endlessly aspirational' – indexed by their conspicuous consumption of luxury brands. These Blacks were characterized quite differently from the restrained racially unmarked but whitened middle-classness discussed in this chapter.

consumer became a collective project of self making for the majority-White brand team, cutting across professional differences between client and agency[15].

Finally, I show how both the attempts to unify the brand around whitened middle classness and the failure of these attempts were underpinned by the Transformers as 'other' consumer, who must be both utterly different to the consumer 'self' – so that tensions inherent to advertising may be projected onto them – and potentially identical – so that advertisers could address them according to a universalized conception of the figure of 'the consumer'. Accordingly, the Transformers were classified in contradictory ways, characterized by some brand team members as aspiring to be like the whitened middle-class consumer segment, and by others on the team as having their own inscrutable aspirations and motivations. Ultimately, this double bind made it impossible for the Transformers to be incorporated into a unified identity for the brand, and the brand team had rethink its approach to unifying Sedgwick's across market segments.

Before investigating how these dynamics unfolded as the brand team tried to create a unified brand persona for Sedgwick's, I discuss why it should be considered so important in branding ideology for the brand to be 'one thing' in the first place – why should Sedgwick's have only a single rear end with which to 'ride' different strategies?

From unifying the market to unifying the brand

The importance of having a coherent, consistent brand identity emerges out of the history of branding itself, transforming in relation to this history. The brand evolved out of the trademark, and was supposed to distinguish good quality products from poor substitutes in the face of increasing

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[15] Despite their failures in boosting sales amongst Transformer consumers through their brand strategy, 99cents were extremely good at managing relationships with Distell, for whom they managed a number of alcohol brands. The marketing execs on the Distell side that I interviewed praised 99cents for the personal attention the small agency provided, and as I came to the end of my fieldwork, I heard that the agency had acquired a few more brand portfolios that Distell had put out to pitch.

geographical distance between producers and consumers. In this way, the mark of the brand came to

serve as a prosthetic persona standing in for the physical presence of the producer, mediating relations

of trust (Nakassis 2013). Although the brand originally served as a sign of the value of the product, the

brand came to be seen as having self-standing value, due to the fact that it was the sign of the brand

appearing on products that justified their higher price relative to non-branded products. Thus it

appeared that it was the brand itself that conferred this extra value, and came to be conceptualized by

advertisers as a detachable structure of signs and values that could be cultivated and protected.

Privileging the importance of the brand as a source of value above that of the commodities it marks has

at least two advantages for corporations. Firstly, within the context of neo-liberal capitalist outsourcing

of labor across the globe, focusing on the brand as a source of value rather than the product guards

against the unpredictabilities of these global labor markets (Nakassis 2013). Of course, as we will see,

trying to maximize and protect brand value comes with its own challenges and unpredictabilities.

Secondly, focusing on the brand as a source of value allows a company to transfer that value to new

ranges of products that have nothing in common with past product ranges other than the brand they

share, a practice known as 'brand extension' (Hem and Iverson 2003). We see this for example in the

line of Ferrari watches, products which have little in common with Ferrari cars[16].

However, for the brand to confer added value in this way, it must be recognizable as 'the same thing'

across space and time. In order to do this, it has to be separable both from the products it marks, (the

brand 'Coke' vs the dark fizzy liquid in the bottle), and from other brands marking similar products (the

brand 'Coke' vs 'Pepsi') (Nakassis 2012). Constructing this coherent, distinctive brand identity which

transcends the materiality of diverse product ranges has come to involve conceptualizing the brand as a

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[16] Although, if we examine which brand extensions fail and which succeed, we see it is often extensions that have some relationship with the original product that manage to leverage the brand value, whereas if the new product is too different, it cannot be subsumed within the brand's identity (see http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/best-and-worst-brand-extensions-146966?page=4).

'person', giving it an 'identity', a 'personality' and 'values' (Lury 2004). With the rise of the relationship marketing paradigm (Fournier 1998) – in which the goal is to induce consumers to forge affective relationships with the brand to promote brand loyalty and continued purchase of products – a new dimension of the importance of brand coherence arose. Now it was important that the consumer recognize the brand as the same 'person' in various encounters across time and space so that the positive affects experienced in those encounters accrue to the brand-consumer relationship in such a way as to sediment the loyalty of the consumer to the brand. Creating this coherent brand persona often involved associating the brand with a celebrity or humanized character (Fournier [1998] discusses the example of the Pillsbury Doughboy; I discuss this in more detail in the following chapter), in order to allow the brand to be incarnated in the bounded form of a human (or humanoid) representative, although this was not the course chosen for the brand of Sedgwick's, for reasons that will become clear below.

In line with this ideology of brand-consumer relationships, a brand needs to be coherent across space and time, but must be flexible enough to forge relationships with different consumer market segments. With the rise of the market fragmentation and mass customization, these market segments have come to be conceptualized in the form of discreet 'individuals', with the 'individual' of the brand imagined as entering into relationships with each of these market segment 'individuals'. This conceptualization grew out of the market fragmentation that started in the mid-90s and persisted into the early decades of the twenty-first century, and involved segmenting groups of consumers as narrowly as possible, rather than finding a strategy that could unify mass markets (Baker 2001). Mass customization takes this process to its most extreme conclusion, where individuals are targeted through tailored products and brand communications (Kotler 1989)[17], informed by the questionable assumption that activating brand desire

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[17] In the mid-90s, Hart described the shift from mass production to mass customization in the following way: "Traditionally, executives have assumed that trade-offs – high quality or low cost, efficiency or customization – are

is best achieved by convincing the consumer that you 'know them' perfectly as a unique individual (cf

Mazzarella 2017). Mass customization has also encouraged advertisers to conceptualize target markets

in the form of a single individual, even when products and communications are not literally customized

for each individual. This is clear, for example, in an online marketing textbook published by Quirk, one of

the largest digital marketing agencies in South Africa, and a partner agency on the Distell account:

> According to Price and Price, audiences were traditionally thought of as a vast and vaguely defined crowd (Price & Price, 2002). Because the web provides a voice to individuals and niche groups, the concept of this mass audience is disintegrating. Price and Price go on to argue that the Internet has led to an audience of one (Price & Price, 2002). What does this mean? While your audience is not literally one person (and if it is, thank your mum for reading your copy, but spend some time growing your readership), it is not a vast, vaguely defined crowd either. Instead, the web has many niche audiences who are used to being addressed as individuals. When you are writing marketing material, you need to identify that 'individual', investigate what he or she wants, and write as if you are speaking directly to him or her. The individual that you have in mind when you are writing could also be called a persona (Stokes 2014: 168).

Although this draws a false dichotomy between the 'vaguely defined crowd' addressed by mass media,

and the web audience addressed as individuals – scholars have demonstrated the importance of

creating tonal intimacy with the individuals making up these mass audiences throughout the history of

mass communication media (Warner 1992, 2002; Scannell 1996, Peters 1999) – there is something

distinct in this conceptualization of market segments as personas: here, the aim is not only to address

the individuals that make up that segment 'as individuals', but to conceptualize the entire segment as a

single 'individual', comparable to the abstract 'individual' of the brand, which can thus have a 'dialogue'.

We will see below how reducing the complexity of markets to single 'individuals' – each representing a

segment – informed the market segmentation model used by Distell for Sedgwick's, which divided the

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inevitable…But the notion that such trade-offs and choices are permanent, inevitable business realities is fading as a new management paradigm – mass customization – emerges. Mass customization consists of cutting-edge management methods and tools that give companies the ability to produce customized, affordable, high-quality goods and services, but with the shorter cycle times and lower costs historically associated with mass production and standardization" (1995: 36). The increased knowledge of customer behavior enabled by new technologies such as the internet was an important part of the context which enabled mass customization (Kotler 1989) and the growth of technologies allowing for data collection has only intensified this drive to customize (Gandhi, Magar, and Roberts 2013).

market into a series of discreet 'personas', and the efforts of the brand team to create a unified brand that could 'talk' to each of the these individual consumer 'personas'.

In the case of Sedgwick's, two factors made the creation of a coherent brand identity that could transcend the differences of targeting particularly important. Firstly, Distell was planning on bringing out a new range of pre-mixed ready-to-drink (RTD) Sedgwick's beverages, containing the Old Brown fortified wine mixed with various flavors of soda. In order for this brand extension to be successful, the brand love that consumers already felt for Sedgwick's Old Brown had to be leveraged to prompt consumers to try a new product line sharing the same brand. However, it was felt that Sedgwick's had no brand identity that was distinct from the fortified wine product Sedgwick's Old Brown. Thus, it was a priority for the brand team to build such a brand identity, separable from the product.

A second factor making brand consistency particularly important for Sedgwick's concerned the identity of the brand that the team had designed. 99cents had developed a 'brand brain' for Sedgwick's – a blueprint detailing the brand's essence, personality, values, and icons, as well as the functional and emotional benefits it conveyed to consumers. One of the brand values was "authenticity", and part of its personality was being "unpretentious" and "reliable", in response to the consumer insight that "in a pretentious, materialistic world, people yearn for real connections with people who are real, authentic and true". This made it even more important for the brand to present itself as consistent to consumers, and not to appear to be pretending to be different things to different people. For these reasons, it was crucial that different marketing strategies targeting the SOK and Transformer segments be balanced with creating a unified brand identity.

Brand unity and racial difference in South Africa

The Sedgwick's team was certainly not the first in South Africa to puzzle over how to reconcile a coherent brand identity with the contrasting racial and socioeconomic profiles of different market

segments. In fact, in South African marketing history, the rise of branding as a marketing strategy was accompanied by worries about how a unified brand could speak to racially contrasting market segments. In an article in the industry publication *Clarion* from 1975 entitled "What the heck do we mean by brand personality?", Peter Hume – Director of Brand Planning, at J Walter Thomson South Africa – explained how a brand should have "A personality which [consumers] can literally come to know and love. A trusted friend and all the more so because they have brought it into being" elaborating that "[t]he creation of a many faceted but coherent brand personality also increases the size of the target group…With some liking it more for one reason and others for another. But always with the proviso that the characteristics stream together and form a living totality" (11).

Such a statement on the importance of balancing the diversity of markets with a brand that is both multi-faceted but coherent could have been written anywhere in the globe.[18] However, specific to the South African context was the worry that brand coherence was potentially threatened by marketing to both Blacks and Whites. In the same year and publication, an article appeared criticizing "brand schizophrenia"[19] defined as "presenting one face to the White consumer and another to the Black" (2). The article explains that this is particularly problematic because due to increasing media overlap and Blacks shopping in previously 'White' establishments, Blacks and Whites were both increasingly likely to see the brand's 'other face' (just as they were more likely to see the faces of people of different races shopping alongside them). The article discusses brands that have avoided this problem of 'schizophrenia', either by running an identical campaign in 'White' and 'Black' periodicals; or by advertising only to Whites or Blacks (the example given is of Old Buck gin, which was only advertised in the Black press, as it was believed to be only drunk by Blacks); or by the running campaigns with the

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[18] Today, this concern with balancing brand coherence with flexibility persists as many companies attempt to extend their brands into global markets (Douglas, Craig and Nijssen 2001).
[19] This exact term is still used in the contemporary South African advertising industry, with brand consultant Erna George explaining to me in our interview that brands who do not use consistent imagery across all channels are in danger of becoming "schizophrenic brands".

same "constructs or images with a common meaning, concept and approach even though it may be executed in a Black or White context" (3). The article does not elaborate on how this might be achieved. However, I argue in this chapter that as marketers grew more interested in Blacks as a potentially lucrative market – and increasingly as apartheid drew to a close – brands that tried to show the same 'face' to the Black and White markets tended to fall back on images of a life of middle-class consumerism – articulated to whiteness – as the overarching category that could potentially subsume racial difference.

In tracing how this imaginary of whitened middle-classness as potentially subsuming racial difference informed attempts to create a coherent brand personality in the case of Sedgwick's, we will see how problems encountered by South African advertisers in the previous century as they attempted to reconcile racial difference with constituting a unified national market have not gone away, but rather have become displaced onto struggles to create unified brands. Thus, although it may seem at first glance that the rise of market fragmentation and mass customization opens up a space for racial difference to be targeted more easily, as different market segments are embraced rather than homogenized as they were in a mass-marketing paradigm, the reality is more complicated. In this chapter, I argue that with the rise of branding – and especially with the entrenchment of the paradigm of brand humanization and personification – configuring a unified brand persona, that can 'talk to' different market segment personas in terms of a putatively universal 'human truth' has become increasingly important in the attempts of advertising to calibrate difference with universal humanity.

Whiteness, middle-classness, and racial equality-through-consumption

As we saw in the previous chapter, throughout the 20th century, two contrasting discourses in the advertising industry are evident as to Blacks as consumers – that they are potentially identical versions of Whites, or that they are utterly other and inscrutable. For those framing Blacks as potentially identical

to and thus equal to Whites as consumers, the existence of a Black 'middle class' was frequently held up

as evidence of this potential equality. As we saw in the previous chapter, in colonial and apartheid South

Africa, race was aligned with socioeconomic status, where whiteness was conflated both with affluence

and with a construction of middle-classness exemplified by the figure of the educated, property-owning

White male who could contain his desires – especially those for alcohol and commodities. In such a

context, one way for Blacks to pursue equality with Whites was to demonstrate their 'middle-classness'.

An early explicit articulation in the advertising industry of this conceptualization of 'middle classness' as

a category which could subsume racial difference is found in the address given by marketing researcher

Nimrod Mkele to the annual convention of advertisers in 1959, the first Black person to speak at this

convention. At one point, Mkele explicitly states that as consumers, Blacks imitate Whites[20]: "The most

important values that influence African buying behaviour – and this includes advertising reactions –

derive from European standards, to which the African has come to accept as the yardstick with which to

measure his own integration into the society whose ideals he has come to accept as his own" (123)[21]. He

links this adoption of 'European values' on the part of Blacks to the emergence of a Black 'middle

class'[22]. Mkele argues that the Black middle class is the vanguard of this racial equality-through-

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[20] Of course, this idea that Blacks imitate Whites in their behavior as consumers is not is evident long before
Mkele's speech; we are reminded here of Choles' "imitation European" type of Black consumer discussed in the
previous chapter.
[21] Elsewhere in the speech, Mkele qualified this claim by asserting that Blacks seek to imitate English-speaking
Whites, showing antipathy towards Afrikaner Whites.
[22] The term "middle class" in relation to Blacks starts to appear in industry publications primarily during the 50s. It
is used in two distinct ways, however. For example. In Jordan Ngubane's article on the Black market, he describes
three distinct groups: the "professional class", who were the elite, most highly-educated individuals (he mentions
doctors, nurses, lawyers, journalists, secondary school teachers, college professors, highly trained clergy); the
'middle class' (which he also calls 'urban dwellers' [137]) which includes the less educated clergy, primary school
teachers, civil servants, small traders, urbanized workers; and the lowest income group who are made of
migratory urban workers and semi-literate peasants. In this classification "middle class" is a literal term – the class
in the middle. We see a similar use in an article on furniture sales to Blacks, appearing in *Selling Age* in 1956, which
describes three types of customers: ones that buy the cheapest furniture to send home to the reserves, ones that
are working "middle class" and buy medium-priced furniture, and those who are well off and want the same goods
Europeans want. However, others use the term in a way similar to Mkele in this address – to describe the highest
income urban dwellers who are believed to set the standards for the Black market as a whole, and to imitate
whites. This seems to incorporate both the professional and 'middle' classes defined by Ngubane.

consumerism, as they are a source of aspiration for the entire Black population: "Even though they are

called 'Situations' or 'Scuse me please' by their compatriots, they are accepted as the models towards

which to aspire and exercise an influence out of all proportion to their numbers in the African body

politic" (126). As I discussed in the previous chapter, if poor Blacks aspired to be like the Black middle

class, who aspired to be like Whites, the national South African market could be unified around a vision

of whiteness as aspirational for all.

From aspirational whiteness to whitened middle-classness

The introduction of television in South Africa played a particularly important role in sedimenting this

connection between middle-classness and whiteness, while offering this lifestyle to Blacks via

consumption. TV came late to South Africa[23]; a 'White' channel was introduced in 1976 featuring

programming in English and Afrikaans (only running ads from 1978, however), and a second two

channels for Blacks were introduced in 1982 featuring programming in Zulu and Xhosa on one channel,

Tswana and Sotho on the other (Cooke 1999). The brand schizophrenia article quote above – written the

year before TV arrived in South Africa – referred to brand campaigns run in print media, the medium

with the largest adspend prior to television, as indicated by the yearly breakdown of money spent on

advertising per medium provided in the yearly industry publication *Advertising and Press Annual of*

Africa. Television was an expensive medium, with very few Blacks being able to afford their own sets,

but many watching it in public spaces, the homes of wealthier Blacks, or in the homes of their White

employers (Krabill 2010). TV allowed Blacks to watch 'White' channels and vice versa, potentially

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[23] See Krabill (2010) for an analysis of the politics around the banning of television by the apartheid government
and its eventual introduction. See Mazzarella (2012) for a comparable but distinct set of anxieties around the
introduction of TV in India.

allowing viewers to see ads intended for other market segments, intensifying the media crossover already in existence at the time the brand schizophrenia article was written (in 1975)[24].

In an interview, Reg Lascaris – legendary co-founder of Hunt-Lascaris-TBWA, the most awarded South African advertising agency in history – explained the process of creating TV commercials in the context of apartheid South Africa from the late 70s and throughout the 80s. As an ad featuring Black actors could not be run on the 'White' channels and vice versa[25], the default was to produce an ad for the White channel (unless the ad was for a product racialized as 'Black' such as maize-meal or hair-straighteners, in which only an ad for the 'Black' channel would be produced – in line with the course of action suggested by the brand schizophrenia article in the case of print campaigns). However, if a company wanted to run a second ad on the 'Black' channel, it had to shell out the extra money required for producing two ads. Consequently, sometimes the advertisers would decide to just produce a single ad for the White channel, considering an individual one for the Black channel unnecessary. In this way, advertising practitioners had to puzzle over balancing aspiration and recognition just as they had during apartheid – was it worth creating a TV ad targeted explicitly at Blacks, recognizing their consumer status, or would one on the White channel be enough to maximize the aspirational value of the product, prompting status-conscious Blacks to purchase it based on its association with Whites? For those who went the route of producing two ads, standard practice was to produce a 'Black' version of the ad that was an exact replica of the 'White' version, only featuring Black actors instead of White, and an African language voice over. The level of detail in making the 'Black' version of the ad identical in all other respects to the White ad is striking in some cases, with the music and vocal intonation identical. These

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[24] Krabill argues that the significance of TV related to its specificity as a medium – the moving images, sound, and music meant that not understanding the language spoken was not as much of a barrier to comprehension as it would have been for crossover radio listening or magazine and newspaper reading.

[25] Lascaris explained the creative ways agencies would try to get around this restrictions, describing one ad his company produced using anthropomorphized animals, which could be run on both the White and Black channels. This award-winning ad for a stationery store featured ostriches giving each other Valentine's cards.

ads would often feature modern suburban homes, nuclear families interacting within the domestic space of these homes, women pampering themselves with cosmetic commodities, men going to work at smart office jobs, with all characters dressed in modern Western clothing[26]. This practice of exactly replicating the middle-class consumer imagery of the 'White' version of the ad using Black actors served to entrench the articulation between whiteness and middle class consumerism, offering Blacks equal consumer status by offering them images of this version of middle-classness[27].

In the 90s, when TV commercials began to anticipate a post-apartheid South African market, and regulations prohibiting multiracial interactions on TV were relaxed, the whiteness of the middle-class lifestyle held out as the pinnacle of aspiration for all became implicit. In these 'rainbow' ads showing multiracial socializing, a few Blacks were incorporated into scenes of middle-class White sociality already prevalent in advertising at the time. Mager (2010) shows this in the case of beer ads in the 90s – some of the first to feature mixed race interaction on TV. Here, Blacks are incorporated into a White, middle-class construction of masculinity, in ads showing a few Black men pictured drinking and socializing with large groups of White men, often in the spaces of suburban homes, or in the context of outdoor leisure activities and sports events. In this representation, a previously explicitly White middle-classness may incorporate individuals of any race as long as they adopt the lifestyle constructed as definitive of White middle-classness[28].

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[26] This imagery exhibits a lot of continuity with images of 'modern' Black consumers evident in Black-targeted periodicals from the 1930s to 60s, discussed in the previous chapter.

[27] This approach to advertising to Blacks in the late 80s and early 90s, although ubiquitous, did not escape all criticism – we see articles in advertising periodicals from the late 70s criticizing fellow advertisers in South Africa for assuming Blacks would respond to the same ads as Whites as long as the characters were Black. For example, we see an article in the mid-90s ("The Anomaly in Keeping Cremora on Top" *Marketing Solutions,* supplement to *Marketing Mix*, Jan/Feb 1995) pp 30-31) arguing that South African advertising is simply Whites creating ads for Whites, praising the controversial choice of some brands – such as the coffee creamer Cremora – to create a targeted TV ad for Blacks that was not simply a carbon copy of the White ad.

[28] It was not only ads that participated in this construction of a racially unmarked but implicitly White 'middle classness' as a category that could subsume racial difference. In his analysis of the cultural meanings of 'The Cosby Show' in South Africa, Ron Krabill (2010) argues that the introduction of TV in South Africa played a role in assuaging White fears of Blacks, by framing them as non-threatening, as long as they were middle-class. He

This equation of middle-classness with a lifestyle identical to Whites in post-apartheid South African advertising may be seen as transcending on-screen representations, and including the experience of Blacks within various spheres of the advertising industry[29]. Many Black advertising professionals that I interviewed complained that their White colleagues assumed that because they shared a similar level of income, education, and often lived in the same suburbs, middle-class Blacks were identical to Whites. I heard them describe struggles to make Black middle class difference legible to Whites in the industry with little success. I witnessed this myself when attending a presentation by John Simpson – director of the influential Unilever Institute for Strategic Marketing that conducted the 'Black Diamond' studies, discussed in chapter 5 – at a marketing conference held at Distell at the end of 2013. The presentation was entitled "4 Million and Rising", and provided a detailed account of the particularities of the emerging Black middle class in South Africa. At the end of the presentation, the Distell executive who got up to close the proceedings and thank the speakers commented on Simpson's presentation, "What I'm hearing is that it's not about race anymore, it's about class, and that's a good thing". It seemed that the argument that racial difference could exist within a shared middle-class position had been lost on him, as on many others it seemed, from the reports of the Black advertising professionals I spoke with.

In this way, we see the historical association of a universally aspirational middle-class lifestyle with whiteness was transformed into a racially unmarked imaginary of middle-classness, to which Blacks could belong as long as they continued to accept the definition of middle-classness drawn from the particular experience of Whites. We will see that this racially unmarked imaginary of middle-classness provided a ready-to-hand category for the brand team of Sedgwick's to drawn on when creating a unified identity for the brand, in their attempt to counter the brand schizophrenia diagnosed by Anne's

suggests that Bill Cosby became the model for imagining Nelson Mandela, whose image had been banned from representation in the media by the apartheid government, and transformed White perceptions of him from a terrorist to a non-threatening Black man who was really 'just like Whites'.

[29] This dominant perception by Blacks of the 'whiteness' and invisibility of Black difference in the white collar workplace extends beyond the advertising industry into corporate South African in general (Haffajee 2015).

comment. However, such a racially unmarked middle-classness proved an uneasy mediator of racial

difference, due to the historical construction of whiteness/middle classness in opposition to blackness.

Complicating the situation was the fact that the brand of Sedgwick's was not simply addressing the

'Black' market and the 'White' market, as in the brand schizophrenia article. It was addressing the

consumer segments of 'Transformers' and 'Sense of Knowing'. Before exploring how the brand team

tried to create a single brand persona which could 'talk' to both these markets, I examine exactly what it

was that marketers were trying to reconcile when dealing with differences between 'Transformers' and

'Sense of Knowing' consumers.

From demographics to psychographics: Sedgwick's consumer segments

According to the segmentation model, the market segments of the 'Transformers' and 'Sense of

Knowing' consumers were not defined according to demographic criteria such as race and

socioeconomic status at all. They were 'psychographics', which are segments based on 'psychological'

factors rather than on any demographic variables. The psychographic segmentation model used by

Distell across its stable of alcohol brands was outlined in a document called "Consumer Group Pen

Portraits", which was designed to assist the various advertising agencies contracted by Distell in

designing targeted communications. In my first couple of weeks at the agency, Anne suggested I read

this, along with the Brand Health Monitor, to prepare me for the official handover of the Sedgwick's

account to 99cents as lead agency. The model had been developed for Distell by the marketing research

company Synchronicity[30], and was based on qualitative and quantitative research conducted on

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[30] Distell had a tightly circumscribed division of labor in its institutional structure, and this extended to marketing research. Synchronicity conducted all marketing research, and in conjunction with the market research liaison at Distell, would report back on findings to the team. On two occasions that I was aware of, 99cents and the brand manager from Distell went on what were termed 'immersions', where a few members of the team would go to the Transformer heartland of the Eastern Cape and visit taverns, observing how their brand was consumed, how it was displayed in relation to other brands, and talking to tavern proprietors and liquor store owners about trends in consumer behavior. However, most of the professionals at 99cents were very resistant to these visits, seeing them as a waste of time; they felt that it was not part of their job description to conduct research, but to process the

consumers[31]. From this, Synchronicity had developed six consumer 'types', of which the 'Transformers'

and 'Sense of Knowing' were two[32]. These market segments were based on different motivations for

drinking alcohol, which were the 'psychological' factors used by Distell's segmentation model designed

to cut across differences of race, socioeconomic status and other demographic variables[33]. I was

introduced to the concept of 'psychographics' on my first day at the agency. I met the members of the

brand team, and they asked me what my research was about. Practicing my still-fledgling 'elevator

speech', I started to explain that I wanted to understand how advertising in South Africa targets

according to race. Daniel, the head digital strategist on the account, based at the partner agency Quirk –

who turned out to be an invaluable informant – confidently predicted that I would discover that race

was no longer targeted, and had been replaced by other segmentation tools, particularly

psychographics, which allowed marketers to target in terms of 'lifestyle', which cut across differences of

race.

However, as I dug deeper into the history of market segmentation in South Africa, it became clear that

psychographics are not the first attempt by the South African advertising and marketing industry to get

away from segmenting according to demographics, and race in particular. The most widespread market

segmentation model in South Africa at the time of writing is called the 'Living Standards Measure' (LSM),

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findings of research conducted by others – along with their own 'intuitions' – and develop 'human truths'. This was
in line with the institutional division between the creators of advertising and marketing researchers outlined in the
previous chapter.

[31] As I mention below, Distell and Synchronicity were working on a new segmentation model while I was
conducting fieldwork, but the research personnel were very secretive about the methodologies used and would
not tell me more than this.

[32] I asked a number of people involved with the campaign when this research had been conducted and these
consumer types developed, and no one could tell me for sure. They all simply said that the types had been there
when they started working on Distell brands. In this way, constructs such as the 'Transformers' and the 'Sense of
Knowing' came to appear timeless and naturalized for those working on the brand.

[33] Other psychographic models that I encountered during field work utilized various other kinds of 'psychological'
factors that included variables such as 'lifestyle', 'mindset' or 'values'.

and was developed in the late 80s by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF[34]) for exactly this reason: to get away from segmenting the market based solely on race and income (http://www.saarf.co.za/LSM/lsms.asp)[35]. As marketers anticipated the end of apartheid and the rise of a multiracial middle class, they searched for a way to address markets based on shared factors that cut across racial categories. An early model was the 'market bands' that were proposed by advertising agency owner Reg Lascaris – mentioned above – together with marketing researcher Nick Green in their book *Third World Destiny* (1988), which divided the market based on factors such as education, occupation, and 'sophistication', rather than income or race. LSMs – released for the first time in SAARF's 1989/1990 research cycle – similarly rejected income and race as useful criteria for segmenting the market, instead dividing the South African population into 8 groups (later increased to 10), defined primarily in relation to the presence or absence of commodities in the home[36]. The argument made for this model of segmentation was that the presence of commodities in the home was the best predictor of the inclination to consume; simply having a high income did not mean that one would spend it on commodities – one might choose to save it, or one might have high levels of debt repayment obligations that would decrease disposable income. Conversely, a low income could be supplemented through

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[34] At the time of research, the LSM model was publicly available to any marketers in South Africa via a database that agencies could subscribe to (almost all do – the subscription fee is small as the research is funded by a levy charged on all advertising placed on TV, billboards, print and radio). This model of market research, where one agency conducts research across all media products, and all audiences, funded by the entire industry, is unique to South Africa (Cooke 1999). Also, SAARF publishes a lot of its research online where it is freely available. On the other hand, most psychographic models are commissioned by corporates such as Distell for their own in-house purposes.

[35] Prior to the development of LSMs, the White market was segmented into the A, B and C segments based on income. This model was later extended to include Indians and Coloureds, termed the 'WIC' segment, and finally was applied separately to Black consumers (Chris Moerdyk, interview 2014).

[36] These are the variables that were used in defining the first LSM model, with each being given a positive or a negative value: 1. polisher/vacuum cleaner, 2. fridge / freezer, 3. TV set, 4. water / electricity, 5. washing machine, 6. No car in household, 7. Hi-Fi / Music Centre, 8. sewing machine, 9. Non-supermarket shopper, 10. Rural dweller, 11. No domestic servant, 12. No VCR set, 13. No tumble drier (http://saarf.co.za/LSM/lsms.asp).

credit or other means to still allow for consumption of commodities[37]. In this way, LSMs were supposed

to cut across both socioeconomic status, and the racial divisions which had been closely correlated with

socioeconomic status during apartheid.

However, LSMs came under fire for various reasons. Some criticized the utility of LSMs as a marketing

tool, as they grouped together people who had very different motivations for purchasing commodities.

For example, Wendy Cochrane, founder of the marketing research company Big Mama's Famous Truth

Shop, explained that two men who buy a BMW may both fit into LSM 9. However, the newly rich Black

purchaser might be purchasing the car as a sign of his newly acquired wealth, whereas the White

purchaser may have other concerns top of mind, such as quality or safety. She argued that these two

consumers should not be targeted with the same advertising campaign. Further, many marketers felt

that a low-income person living in a township should not be in the same LSM category as a well-

educated, higher-income resident of the suburbs simply because they had the same commodities in

their houses. With the end of apartheid, many low-income Black South Africans received free housing

and services such as water and utilities, as well as better access to credit and government grants, which

allowed them to purchase commodities such as refrigerators, televisions and washing machines, making

them "asset rich but cash poor", as marketing researcher John Simpson put it in our interview. This

pushed them into higher LSM brackets occupied by other South Africans with a much higher level of

income, and also challenged the reasoning on which LSMs were based – that presence of commodities

in the home was the best predictor of future purchase of commodities. On the other hand, sometimes

consumers in very different LSMs might choose to purchase the same commodity; Tetteh Botchway, a

Black creative at an independent agency in Johannesburg, pointed out that some Black consumers living

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[37] This recalls the anxieties around the proper alignment of consumer capacities discussed in the previous chapter. As we saw in that discussion, one way of persuading potential advertisers that Blacks had both consumer desire and the income to actualize that desire was to take photos of them using commodities in their home.

in the township might have very few of the LSM-criteria commodities in their homes, and so fall into a

low LSM, but still purchase a flashy car, which would be considered a high LSM commodity. In these

interpretations, differences informed by race, socioeconomic position, and related factors such as

educational background and profession still make a difference, and cannot be subsumed by a category

defined in terms of possessing similar commodities.

On the contrary, others claimed that rather than allowing an escape from segmenting the market

according to race – and papering over differences of race in the process – LSMs were simply race by

another name, with low LSMs being Black and high LSMs being primarily White, with other racial groups

distributed primarily among the middle segments (http://saarf.co.za/LSM/lsm-article.asp). For example,

Black Johannesburg copywriter Festus Masekwameng called LSMs a kind of "racial profiling", and White

agency owner and advertising creative Rob Hill pointed out that even though race wasn't a criterion in

the LSM model, LSMs 1 to 5 were 99% Black. Judging from comments such as Daniel's[38] mentioned

above, the rise in popularity of psychographics seemed to be informed by their renewal of the promise

to segment in a way that cut across racial classifications, while going beyond an equation of what

commodities people possessed with their identity as consumers and thus how to market to them.

However, just as with LSMs, the historical intertwining of the production of racial difference and

unequal modes of consumerhood – as well as the deep racialization of habits and 'psychological traits'

that may form part of the criteria for defining these 'lifestyles' – informed a situation in which

psychographics failed to deliver market segmentation from a situation in which race – and its complex

intersection with class – remains the primary mode for thinking about difference in South Africa.

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[38] Many other advertising professionals that I interviewed beyond the confines of the Sedgwick's account echoed this opinion that psychographics allowed marketers in South Africa to target markets according to factors other than race.

Race, class and gender in the 'pen portraits'

Sedgwick's targeted three of the six psychographic types defined by the segmentation model; the "Sense of Knowing" and the "Transformers" – which we have already encountered – as well as the strategically less important segment of the "Relaxation Seekers"[39]. The Consumer Group 'Pen Portraits' document, as well as the Brand Health Monitor, detail the 'psychographic' element that distinguishes one segment from the other, as explained above – the supposed reason consumers in each of these segments drink Distell's products. The Sense of Knowing consumers are defined as drinking because of what they know about the product. They are connoisseurs, motivated by drinking the best; they "[d]rink on choice not status". On the other hand, Transformers are defined as drinking for the intoxicating effect of the alcohol, which has a "transformation effect on their images/personalities", according to the Brand Health Monitor. These motivations for drinking were supposed to distinguish these two segments, with demographic information provided as non-essential descriptors. Sense of Knowing consumers are described as affluent and well-educated, living in the suburbs, mixed gender, and consisting of both Black and White drinkers. Transformer consumers are described as the least affluent consumer group out of the six, consisting of Black[40], predominantly male consumers, who have "a strong sense of culture and tradition"[41].

However, in its mode of presentation, the Consumer Group Pen Portraits document collapses this distinction between the definitive criteria of these segments and non-essential descriptive details of

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[39] As discussion in client-agency meetings focused almost entirely on the Transformer and SOK segments, I focus my analysis on attempts to unify the brand in relation to these two segments.

[40] Although these pen portraits described the Transformers as Black, not everyone agreed on this categorization. When I interviewed Clinton, the head sales rep in the Eastern Cape, he mentioned "Coloured Transformers" and I reacted with surprise at this description, as I had never heard anyone else mention this consumer type before. Clinton insisted that the Transformer segment was made up of 40% Coloured and 60% Black consumers.

[41] The Relaxation Seekers are described as drinking to relax, and as motivated by acceptability rather than status in their drinking habits. Demographically they are described as consisting of lower income Black and Coloured consumers who tend to drink 'middle of the range', value-for-money brands.

consumers. For each consumer segment, a few 'pen portraits' are provided of individuals chosen as exemplifying the segment[42]. These portraits consist of brief descriptions of the individual, giving some biographical details as well as information about their drinking behavior, accompanied by a photo. All six segments provided portraits of male consumers, except for a pair of siblings, one of whom was female, which appeared under the 'New Gen' segment, discussed in chapter 4. I asked Michelle, the head of research at Distell, why the consumer portraits were all of men, when many of Distell's products had a mixed gender market, and she explained that because in South Africa, beer is the most widely consumed alcoholic drink, and is considered a masculine drink, consumer research around alcohol focuses on male consumers, in order to allow Distell to position its brands within a product category gendered masculine.

A different explanation was provided to me by Daniel, the head digital strategist for the brand (echoed in an interview with the White, female marketing manager for Castle Lite), that alcohol brands should always be targeted at men, because women would be happy to drink a 'man's drink', while men would be reluctant to drink a drink that was explicitly 'feminine', as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. This was interesting to me, given that the brand team for Sedgwick's was predominantly female, with the only core male members being Daniel and Steve (the creative director from 99cents)[43]. In this way, the

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[42] No one that I asked could tell me who these individuals were and how they were selected, as this document had been produced long before any of them started working on the account. It is likely that these individuals were selected from the qualitative focus groups that formed part of the research, as one of the photos shows a man wearing a name tag, pouring himself a drink, which seems to suggest such a focus group environment. However, there are other photos that seem to have been taken of the research participants drinking at home or in taverns, so it is possible that the research also involved the 'immersions' that sometimes form part of the qualitative market research popular in the South African alcohol industry, where researchers visit sites of consumption and talk informally to consumers about their motivations for using the branded product.

[43] The core female members were the two brand managers from Distell, Kelly and Tania, as well as two other female Distell marketing execs who would often join the meetings, and Anne and Nancy, the account director and manager at 99cents. The heads of the PR and media planning companies were both female, as were most of the junior members of the creative team, who would sometimes attend brand meetings. Occasionally junior male members of the digital agency and the creative team would participate in these meetings, as well as Jonathan, the head of the experiential marketing agency.

whitened middle-class self fashioned by the advertising professionals was gendered as male, when marked by gender, and was thus implicitly framed as capable of subsuming whitened middle-class femininity.

These 'pen portraits' reduce the diversity of consumers in the world into one or two individuals who stand in for each 'type', in line with the 'market of one' ideology of mass customization. In these types, motivations for drinking become bundled with the particularities of each of these 'prototypical' individuals, each marked by race, gender, and socioeconomic status. As these consumer types were taken up and reified by those on the brand team in brand strategy meetings, informal discussions and interviews with me, it became clear that this mode of bundling allowed for a reconfiguration of the relationship between motivation for drinking as the definitive criteria, and demographic data as merely incidental descriptive criteria, to one where racial difference was definitive of each segment. It was clear that these modes of uptake were in line with historical constructions of racial difference and its intersection with class. I encountered a particularly extreme and blatant example of this reversal of the essential and non-essential characteristics of the consumer types when I interviewed Leigh, the head of activations for Sedgwick's, working for Have you Heard, one of the partner agencies on the brand responsible for the experiential marketing events, discussed in the following chapter. She described the three market segments purely in racial terms – Sense of Knowing were the "White market", Relaxation Seekers were the "Coloured market", and Transformers were the "Black market". In this extreme version of this reduction of psychographics to models based on conceptions of race, socioeconomic qualification of these racially defined segments is not even considered necessary – the "White market" is obviously middle-class, the "Black market" is obviously poor, and the "Coloured market" is somewhere in between. Here we see the persistence of apartheid-era conflations of race and socioeconomic status.

This re-racialization of these psychographic types was also informed by the brand humanization paradigm which, like the mass-customization model, encourages marketers to conceptualize their market in the form of one person. This was clear, for example, in the reductionist uptake of the pen portraits provided for the Sense of Knowing segment. The pen portrait document provides three 'prototypes' for Sense of Knowing consumers, consisting of "Dave", described as "upmarket White"; "Riaan" described as "middle income Afrikaans" (also White); and "Thami" described as "upper income Black". However, Anne, the account director, commented that despite the fact that Sense of Knowing consumers were racially diverse, the team would use only one of these prototypes when imagining a default addressee for communications addressing the Sense of Knowing segment – the "upmarket White" portrait of Dave, a middle-class, middle-aged White male. Again evident here is the implicit whiteness of the supposedly racially diverse SOK segment – members of others races can be included, as long as they conform to the prototype imagined in the image of the middle-class White male.

Some on the team, such as Anne, expressed an awareness of and a dissatisfaction with the ambiguous relationship between demographic criteria and motivation for drinking in the Distell segmentation model. At one particular meeting with the client, during the lunch break someone recounted an anecdote concerning a drunken escapade they had witnessed over the weekend, involving some of the agency personnel who self-identified as White. After this meeting, I asked Anne how the segmentation model would classify such White high-income individuals who drink for intoxicative effect, she responded that this was a tricky question, and the reason that the segmentation model was being revised[44]; in terms of class position they were Sense of Knowing consumers, but in terms of motivation for drinking they should be classified as Transformers. However, despite her critical attitude towards the capacity of the segmentation model to adequately classify actual consumers, in meetings, Anne used the

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[44] Supposedly, the segmentation model was in the process of being revised at the time, but when I returned to South Africa a year after completing fieldwork, the old model was still in use.

term 'Transformer' to refer to low income Blacks and 'Sense of Knowing' to refer to a racially unmarked middle class, performing the same reduction and conflation between race, class and motivation for drinking as did the others on the brand team. In one meeting she brought up a marketing strategy that had worked on 'Transformers' in the context of the campaign for a fast food brand. As the 'Transformers' was a category used only by Distell, and this fast food brand was owned by an entirely different company, we see how this designation became a shorthand for talking about low-income Black consumers in general, bundling into that term the historically entrenched notion that such consumers are incapable of containing their desires for alcohol and other objects of sensory gratification.

In this way, we see that the manner in which psychographics were presented, with consumer segments personified in the form of an actual 'typical' consumer – allowed for a re-racialization of these types in line with historical articulations between conceptions of difference based on race and class. In accordance with mass customization and the 'market of one' approach, Sense of Knowing drinkers are conceptualized in terms of the default of a White middle-class male who drinks based on what he knows about the product. The articulation between his motivation for drinking and his race and class position is naturalized in the single persona of "Dave", entrenching the persistent conflation of whiteness and middle-class restraint – exemplified by a relationship to an alcoholic commodity mediated by the intellect. On the other hand, Transformer consumers become reframed from those consumers who drink to get drunk, and who happen to be mostly Black and poor, to a general descriptor for poor Black consumers, who inevitably drink in order to get drunk, in line with historically entrenched constructions of blackness defined by an incontinence of desire (not only for alcohol, but also for other commodities and sex [Rogerson 1996, Krabill 2010]), exemplified by drinking in order to become intoxicated, in line with their supposedly natural predisposition towards drunkenness (Mager 2010).

In this way, although attempts to unify the brand of Sedgwick's were ostensibly about reconciling those who drink based on connoisseurship – Sense of Knowing – and those who drink to get drunk –

Transformers – in the ways that the debates played out in meetings, the race and socioeconomic status

of these two consumer segments were inextricably linked to their motivations for drinking alcohol. Thus,

creating a unified brand persona that could transcend difference had to engage with the long history of

articulations between imaginaries of race, class and the capacity to restrain desire. The challenge of

unifying Sedgwick's exhibited strong continuities with the dilemmas that had faced those who wished to

avoid brand schizophrenia in relation to explicitly racialized market segments almost 40 years earlier.

Now let us turn to examine in detail how the Sedgwick's brand team, led by 99cents as the new lead

agency, grappled with this challenge.

Strategizing Sedgwick's: 'Premiumization' and 'Mixology'

The brand team was faced with a daunting task when 99cents took over the account: not only did it

have to create a unified brand identity for Sedgwick's and formulate targeted versions of this identity for

the Transformers and Sense of Knowing segments, it had to offer an advertising strategy for solving the

key business challenges facing the brand. As we saw above, one of these business challenges concerned

the dropping sales amongst Transformer consumers. However, the brand faced additional hurdles. The

largest of these was that Sedgwick's Old Brown was failing to recruit new users amongst both the

Transformer and the SOK market segments. This was a problem, because Sedgwick's small loyal target

market within both of these segments were in the 50-and-older age bracket, who needed to be replaced

by younger drinkers for the brand to achieve social reproduction. As Leigh, the manager of the

experiential/word-of-mouth marketing company in charge of doing brand activations put it, "the older

market loves us, but they are aging, and they are eventually going to die, and we don't want the brand

to die with them." Younger people were aware of Sedgwick's, but were not trying it, and those who

were trying it were not becoming regular drinkers.

99 cents creative director Steve and his creative team had come up with two strategies to address these

challenges, both of which focused on the Sense of Knowing market segment. Firstly, to address the

problem of attracting new users, the team focused on what might be preventing young SOK's from

trying or adopting the brand, which they described as the brand's 'image problem'. Two possible

reasons were mentioned by various people on the team at various for this image problem: the

association of the drink with low-income Black consumers, as well as with older people in general, which

made the brand seem 'old-fashioned'. The consumer perception of the brand as 'old fashioned' was

mentioned by Distell's head of marketing research in a presentation, but the association with low-

income drinkers did not seem to be grounded in any sort of market research. The Brand Health monitor,

the main market research document on consumer perceptions of the brand – mentioned nothing about

a particular 'image problem' with the SOK's, or possible reasons for it. And yet, in team meetings, this

'image problem' and its causes were often spoken about as if they were established fact. It seems that

this is an instance of the brand team's own identification with the SOK segment – which I discuss below

– allowing them to project their own perceptions of the brand onto this consumer segment. There was

no need to do research on why the SOK might find the brand 'down market'; as exemplifiers of the SOK

target market the brand team assumed that they knew that the associations of Sedgwick's with low-

income drinkers and an 'old-fashioned' image were the problem. In this way, experiential knowledge

drawn from their class and race position became inextricably linked with their professional expertise[45].

In response to this diagnosis of the reasons for the brand's 'image problem', the team presented a

strategy that proposed lifting the image of the brand by eliminating associations with low-income

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[45] The head digital content designer provides an example of using his own relationship with the brand as a model for thinking about communicating with the SOK market: "We want to build relationships, getting them to identify with the brand. It was the same with me. When I first joined the brand, I thought of it as going surfing on the west coast, you drink a tot to warm up, and now I've rethought it. It's become one of my pet brands, I chose to stay on it." Similarly, Anne commented about the previous campaign imagery which focused around camping: "I'm part of the target market, and I don't find going camping in chinos aspirational".

drinkers, and articulating the brand's identity to the Sense of Knowing market segment as its 'source of image'[46], and transforming 'old-fashioned' into 'retro' and 'vintage cool'[47]. The team believed if this could be done, Sedgwick's could be transformed from an 'under the table' drink, to one that was proudly displayed on the table as a badge of hipness. This was termed the 'premiumization' strategy.

Running parallel to this attempt to lift the brand image was a strategy designed to extend usage occasions in order to increase sales amongst existing Sense of Knowing consumers and those that the brand team anticipated recruiting. The Brand Health Monitor showed that across the segments, consumers were drinking Sedgwick's primarily in the winter, and usually neat in small quantities, due to its very sweet and strong taste. 99cent believed the answer to this was to change perceptions of when and how Sedgwick's was drunk – instead of a shot sipped in winter to warm one up in the cold, it should be framed as a versatile drink that could be mixed, served over ice, or drunk neat during any weather. The idea that Sedgwick's could be mixed was particularly important, because as mentioned above, Distell were planning on bringing out an 'RTD' (ready-to-drink) that was a pre-bottled version of these Sedgwick's mixes, and the consumers had to be prepared for this as a new way to enjoy the drink. 99cents called this the 'mixology' strategy.

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[46] Managing these associations was a particularly fraught task given the history of alcohol in South Africa and its ambiguous indexicality, discussed in the previous chapter, where Western liquor was caught up both with constructions of aspirational whiteness, and of Blacks as incapable of controlling their desires. This made it especially important to distance Sedgwick's from Black drunkenness, and align it with imaginaries of middle-class sobriety and self-restraint.

[47] It is revealing to consider how this strategy was framed in relation to previous brand campaigns conducted in other national contexts. While I was at 99cents, they were in the process of hiring a full time strategist. They selected Nastasia – a Coloured female – a few weeks into my time at the agency. Nastasia had to present to the client about why the premiumization/mixology strategy was a good idea, even though she had not been involved in designing the strategy. She presented two case studies from the US in substantiating the efficacy of the proposed Sedgwick's strategy – showing how Corona beer had increased drinking frequency by positioning itself as not only a summer beer (that 'the beach' was more a state of mind than a physical place), and how Old Spice had reinvented itself as cool rather than old-fashioned through the hugely popular 'I'm on a horse' series of ads. The client seemed to like the presentation, but asked if either brand had faced the challenge of fixing a 'down market' image. The response was that they hadn't, and the implicit conclusion was that this was what made the case of Sedwick's unique – it was seen (by SOK consumers) as 'old-fashioned' *and* as a drink that poor Blacks drank to become intoxicated.

The argument made for these two strategies – 'premiumization' and 'mixology' – was that dropping

sales volumes amongst Transformers could be compensated for by boosting sales amongst Sense of

Knowing consumers, if only they could come to see the brand as a 'cool' drink that could be drunk all

year round. As Steve argued, if every existing SOK user who currently bought one bottle a year could be

persuaded to mix the drink into a summer cocktail as well as drinking it in winter, they could easily be

pushed to buy two bottles a year, doubling sales. However, even though both of these strategies

focused on the SOK segment, Steve knew that the Transformers could not just be ignored. He was aware

that Distell had hired 99cents specifically to develop strategies for both market segments[48], and to avoid

falling into the pitfall of allowing the Transformers to feel that the brand wasn't 'talking' to them, as the

previous agency had done.

Most of those working on the account believed that it was unnecessary to raise the brand image for

Sedgwick's in the eyes of Transformers, because market research indicated that they already considered

it to be an 'aspirational' brand, (with some on the team arguing in addition that Transformers didn't buy

according to aspirational brand image anyway, evidenced by the failure of the strategy of the previous

agency, although this was a contentious issue, as we will see). For this reason, a 'premiumization'

strategy was not considered necessary for this market. Likewise, the 'mixology' strategy was considered

unnecessary for them because they already mixed the drink, to up the alcoholic 'kick' of beer for

example[49]. In this way, the goal of brand communications directed at Transformers was different from

those directed at SOKs.

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[48] In fact, in the original pitch, three strategies had been outlined – one for the SOKs, one for the Transformers, and one for the Relation Seekers (RS). However, as I mention above, so much time was spent in meetings debating the relationship of the SOK strategy to the Transformer strategy that the strategy for the RS consumer group – neither important in terms of volume or image – was almost never discussed.

[49] In fact, the mixology idea had originally come from some of the team witnessing this practice in the Eastern Cape on the research trip to prepare for the account pitch.

As the team had diagnosed the reasons that the brand was failing to attract new SOK users – drawing on a mixture of marketing research and their own intuitions – they similarly diagnosed the factors contributing to dropping sales amongst Transformers. Explaining this drop in sales was more of a challenge for the team, because according to branding orthodoxy, Transformers should have been buying Sedgwick's. Market research had found that Transformers loved the brand, as many had fond memories associated with it, and considered it to be high-quality. Low income Black consumers in general are typified in the South African advertising industry – and have been for a long time – as being particularly loyal consumers to products that they consider high quality, often being prepared to pay more for a trusted brand than an unknown cheaper competitor[50]. In this way, they seemed ideal consumers in terms of branding orthodoxy, which posited that brand love leads to repeat purchase of branded products. However, this relationship between brand love and brand loyalty was not playing out as predicted in the case of Transformers, and team members looked for reasons beyond theories of branding to explain the drop in sales[51]. Some proposed the explanation that sales were falling because of the rise of 'me-too' brands - cheaper brands that had the same alcohol content – which Transformers

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[50] In his address to the Annual Convention of the Society of Advertisers in 1959, Nimrod Mkele described Black consumers as generally buying on loyalty to a familiar, high-quality brand rather than on price, providing the example of brand loyalty to Vaseline Petroleum Jelly amongst Black consumers, and their reluctance to buy cheaper competitor brands, fearing they may be lower quality version directed specifically at Blacks. This characterization of Blacks as brand loyal was also expressed by White advertising professionals around this time, with one commenting that the Black consumer "is conservative in his buying habits, and he has brand loyalty. Furthermore, it is an accepted fact that he is less fickle-minded than the European consumer" (1960: 126). This characterization continues into the present day in relation to lowest income Black consumers, who are typified by advertisers as prepared to pay more for a trusted brand, usually the market leader in the product category (On the other hand, in a post-apartheid advertising imaginary, higher income Blacks are seen as less brand loyal, and more capricious in their tastes, as we will see in Chapter 4). I heard frustration expressed by advertising professionals who had worked on accounts for these market leaders that these clients had often assumed they needed to do very little to retain low income Black consumers as customers, believing brand loyalty to be strong enough to make advertising almost unnecessary. In this way, the fact that Transformers seemed to be buying on price was contrary to South African marketing orthodoxy in itself, and required explanation in terms of racialized views of relations to alcohol, where Blacks are seen as incapable of containing their desire for alcohol, and so buy whatever they can afford.

[51] Here we see how branding theory assumes a consumer capable of containing and sublimating their immediate desires for commodities. We will encounter the importance of this assumed consumer – and its parallels with apartheid-era constructions of restrained, middle-class whiteness – again in the following chapter.

were purchasing instead of Sedgwick's. As Transformers were believed to drink primarily for intoxicative effect, it made sense to the team that cheaper brands offering the same level of alcohol might constitute an irresistible temptation. Accordingly, the brand team formulated a marketing strategy that they believed would provide Transformers with an incentive at the moment of purchase to remain loyal to Sedgwick's rather than buying these cheaper brands. The means chosen to achieve this goal involved in-store competitions where consumers stood a chance to win instant prizes when they bought a bottle of Sedgwick's Old Brown, discouraging them from buying cheaper brands offering functionally similar products. Some also felt that such competitions would show Transformers that the brand was 'talking to them', granting them the recognition they were believed to desire, and thus fostering brand loyalty over and above the immediate incentive of prizes. I discuss this competition in detail in the following chapter.

"Share the warmth – any way you like it"

The strategy proposed by 99cents in their original pitch to meet the various business challenges of the brand, while reconciling targeted strategies with an overarching unified brand identity was very simple. It all stemmed from a 'Big Idea' – the one idea that can confer conceptual unity on a campaign, transcending different target markets and different media platforms[52]. This 'Big Idea' was drawn from the tagline already adorning bottles of Sedgwick's Old Brown - "Share the warmth" – extended to "Share the warmth, any way you like it" in order to emphasize the versatility of 'warmth'. Daniel, the head digital strategist on the account, explained that this Big Idea was useful both for transcending divisions between diverse market segments, and for encouraging people to drink Sedgwick's in new ways. The 'warmth' that Sedgwick's advocated sharing included that provided by its intrinsic properties as a drink, referencing its established identity as a winter beverage, imbibed during outdoor activities such as

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[52] Exactly what constitutes a 'Big Idea' was explained in different ways to me by different people in the industry, but these seemed to be the common elements – something that could confer unity and would resonate emotionally with consumers. Although David Ogilvy (1983) believed that only one in a hundred campaigns contained a Big Idea, every campaign pitch that I saw claimed to offer one.

camping and fishing to warm the body. However, 'warmth' could also be extended to reference

emotional warmth, as drinking the drink came to be associated with spending 'warm' time with loved

ones. This was where the 'Big Idea' met the 'human truth' of the brand – that all consumers long for

'warm', authentic social interaction, which the brand could enable. Not only did this allow for the brand

to be conceptualized as functionally versatile – one could still 'share the warmth' while relaxing by the

pool with a Sedgwick's cocktail in summer – it allowed for the encompassment of difference, as the form

in which this 'warmth' was experienced could vary between consumer to consumer, and – most

importantly – between Sense of Knowing and Transformer segments. Thus the focus on the

capaciousness of the 'warmth' shared by the brand – indicated by the extension 'any way you like it' –

was designed to allow the brand to maintain coherence, while accommodating diversity.

In the original pitch that 99cents made on the account, it proposed targeted ways for communicating

this Big Idea of 'share the warmth' to different market segments. Such targeted communications

designed to be seen by a circumscribed market segment are termed 'Below the Line' [BTL] elements in

industry terminology. I analyze these BTL marketing strategies in detail in the following chapter, but I

outline them briefly here. For the SOK segment, the most important targeted strategy was the use of

experiential marketing activations at festivals, especially winter festivals, where the brand could

communicate both its literal and metaphorical associations with 'warmth', work on fashioning its

'vintage cool' image, and encourage patrons to try Sedgwick's with a mixer. With regard to the

Transformer segment, the most important BTL strategy was the in-store competition mentioned above.

The prizes for this competition – branded winter gear such as blankets – affirmed the brand's

proposition of 'share the warmth' on two levels: the brand was 'sharing warmth' by giving away prizes,

and the prizes themselves facilitated physical warmth, made especially salient by its timing, as it was run during the winter months[53].

Ideally, these different instantiations of the Big Idea of 'Share the warmth, any way you like' it should have allowed Sedgwick's to achieve unity in diversity, communicating the same message in different ways to its two market segments, while achieving the separate goals for each segment: raising brand image and promoting the mixology strategy amongst the SOK, and incentivizing brand loyalty amongst the Transformers. However, there were challenges when it came to designing the 'Above the Line' (ATL) elements of the campaign – the elements intended to be seen by everyone[54]. These elements had to encompass and unify the targeted elements addressed to the distinct segments within a single brand identity.

Unifying the brand with no face

As mentioned above, within the paradigm of brand humanization and relationship marketing, a common approach to creating a unified brand persona is to associate the brand with an actual human being (such as a celebrity or brand spokesperson) or a humanized character in ATL media such as TV and print commercials (Fournier 1998, Lury 2004). However, Distell brand manager Kelly explained that she was

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[53] There were other more peripheral BTL elements for both segments. For the Transformers, these included targeted billboards, posters and other decorative elements featured in taverns in the peri-urban and rural Eastern Cape. For the SOK segment, these included the Facebook content and advertorials in niche magazines such as *Woolworths Food*.

[54] Above-the-Line media include all mass media forms such as TV, Radio, and Print, whereas Below-the-Line refers to more targetable forms of advertising, such as direct marketing and face-to-face marketing. With the rise of digital marketing, the line separating ATL and BTL has become blurred, with digital being both viewable by a mass audience, and targetable to the specific viewer. With digital has arisen the term Through-the-Line (TTL) advertising, which attempts to integrate all marketing channels in a more holistic way, often associated with digital agencies who claim to be able to produce these sorts of campaigns (whereas before, an agency would often specialize in either ATL or BTL). 99cents was officially a Through-the-Line agency, but seemed to outsource a lot of its BTL executions to other agencies, such as the activations discussed in the following chapter. For an international perspective on the relationship between ATL, BTL, and TTL, see http://theadvertisingclub.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3256:difference-between-above-the-line-and-below-the-line-advertising&Itemid=175)

against linking the brand with a celebrity because of the difficulty of finding a single person that would

appeal to both target markets. In fact, she was of the opinion that the brand needed to avoid associating

itself with people in its ATL media entirely, so as not to "alienate" either of the key market segments[55].

She described a TV commercial produced for Sedgwick's in 2007 – long before she joined the brand – as

an example of how featuring people in ATL media could go badly wrong. She described the ad as

featuring "two Coloured people on a fishing boat" and as being "very bad"[56]. "We're living with the

negative connotations for the brand now from that ad, that only Coloured fishermen and people in the

Eastern Cape drink it by the gallon," she explained. This had led to a situation in which "we know

internally what our typical user is, what they look like, and what our future needs to look like, but in

terms of communicating that to target markets, no. We've never gone the beer route, where people are

around a braai [barbeque]...We've never given the brand a face"[57].

However, not everyone agreed that the brand should have no face, or that it should eliminate images of

people from its communications. In the ATL elements that 99cents proposed in the original pitch, many

people appear in the images, but only people indexing the Sense of Knowing market segment. All the

proposed ATL elements feature images of multi-racial, affluent young people engaged in sociable

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[55] During my fieldwork, I encountered this argument repeatedly: above-the-line elements of a campaign are for creating a unified brand identity, and first and foremost should avoid alienating any segment of the market. On the other hand, below-the-line elements are for communicating with specific market segments, and should attempt to connect with the segment on the basis of deeper knowledge of its consumer motivations. However, as we will see, disagreements clearly existed as to what was 'alienating' for which market segments, and what was 'aspirational'.
[56] The ad is viewable here: http://www.tvspots.tv/video/42056/distell-sedgwicks-old-brown-sherry--tall-story .
The ad is called 'Tall Story' and features the tag line, "Never a Dull Memory". In fact, it features two White men and one Coloured man, with one of the white men as the main protagonist on the fishing boat who single-handedly catches a huge fish with his bare hands.
[57] This illustrates the point that no one was sure exactly why Sedgwick's had an 'image problem'. For Kelly as the only person of color on the team designing the Sedgwick's strategy – not Black but 'Coloured' according to apartheid-era racial designations – the 'image problem' was connected to this association of Sedwick's with poor Coloured people, obviously caught up with her own project of self making, as a highly educated professional Coloured woman. No one else ever mentioned that stereotype – others on the team all worried about the association with low-income Black Transformers. Kelly was particularly sensitive to racial stereotyping in general in ads. This illustrates how the self-making projects of those on the brand team were slightly different, although intersecting in the investment in fashioning an identity for 'PLUs' (see below) – whitened middle-classness.

(mainly outdoor[58]) leisure activities – hiking, camping, rock-climbing, going on road trips, and so on. This is identical to the imagery used in the proposed BTL elements targeting the Sense of Knowing audience – while contrasting with that used in BTL elements directed at Transformers, which focused on images of the Old Brown bottle – thus linking the overarching identity of the brand to the identity of the Sense of Knowing market segment. In fact, this linkage between the SOK and the brand's identity was made explicit in the terminology used to describe the two markets by the brand team: the SOK were described as the brand's "source of image", whereas the Transformers were termed the "source of volume". Those on the team who supported associating the brand with the Sense of Knowing segment in the ATL media argued that such a linkage could create a unified identity for Sedgwick's while making it aspirational for all. Here we see a parallel with apartheid-era advertising; at that time, advertisers hoped national markets could be unified around universally aspirational whiteness – conflated with middle-classness – which promised to subsume racial difference so long as Blacks wanted to be like Whites. Similarly, in post-apartheid South Africa, some on the Sedgwick's brand team hoped that a brand could be unified around universally aspirational whitened middle-classness, so long as Transformers wanted to be like the Sense of Knowing consumers.

The most explicit formulation of this argument was made by Daniel, the head of digital strategy. He expressed unwavering faith in the idea that the SOK segment – into which he placed himself – must be aspirational for all others. As he put it, "we are the aspiration...for the lower down guys. You would find that everyone else looks up to us...they are aspiring, and inspired by us. So by [the brand] influencing us and getting us to do certain things, our behavior trickles down. That's why we're talking to the source of image and not to the source of volume. Because if we can get the source of image, in other words, the

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[58] The focus on outdoor activities was designed to create some continuity with the previous brand identity, which had focused on images of groups of friends camping, where the drink was supposed to facilitate both physical and emotional warmth.

people who everyone aspires to be like, where the image comes from, we can get those people to do and talk Sedgwick's, and it will filter down the line." Here, we see the slippage between "us" and the "source of image", and the implied conflation between the brand's image, the advertising professionals working on the campaign, and the whitened middle-class market segment of the Sense of Knowing. I will return to this below.

Daniel believed that it was a good thing for Transformers to see some of the communication directed at Sense of Knowing consumers, especially the content on the brand's Facebook page showing high-income consumers enjoying Sedgwick's at upmarket lifestyle and music festivals. He explained, 'So [a Transformer consumer] experiences sharing, then he goes to Facebook, he sees the same thing done in aspirational terms." In this conceptualization, there is an aspirational version of 'sharing the warmth' which can unify a divided market by creating a shared point of aspiration, embodied by the SOK consumer, and coveted by the Transformers. Again, we see strong parallels here with advertising during apartheid where the White advertiser-self was imagined as embodying the ideal consumer, who needed to actualize and develop the consumer potential of Blacks. Similarly, for brand team members such as Daniel, Transformers should see the (whitened, middle class) SOK acting out 'social warmth' in aspirational terms, recognize them as embodying 'ideal' consumers, and learn to aspire to a similar lifestyle. Evident here is the persistence of the belief in the pedagogical power of advertising, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter: the faith that advertising could train Transformers to become aspirational consumers who could buy commodities based on brand love, rather than simply buying alcohol based on the cheapest way to become intoxicated.

'We are the Sense of Knowing': marketing to the 'People Like Us'.

Conceptualizing the SOK as embodying ideal consumers who all South Africans aspired to be like was clearly caught up in a project of self-making for many of those on the brand team who projected their

own identities onto the SOK segment, in such a way that professional expertise became intertwined with performing an identity marked by race and class. We saw Daniel's explicit identification of himself as falling into the Sense of Knowing market segment above, and this was evident amongst many of the advertising professionals working on the account. Ilze, a junior creative, described a Sense of Knowing consumer as "someone like me, early 20s, who can't afford a R200 bottle of wine, but knows what's good." Similarly, on one occasion when discussing using Sense of Knowing imagery in ATL media that the Transformers would potentially see, brand manager Kelly cautioned the team: "*We* find this cool, but we have to ask ourselves, would *they* [ie. the Transformers] find it cool?". Here, the implication is that as 'we' find it cool, we can assume that SOK consumers will feel similarly, but not necessarily Transformers. On another occasion, Distell marketing exec Carlyn commented that "we need to remember that we're not just talking to ourselves", again in relation to ATL billboards that would be seen by all, where "ourselves" was conflated with the Sense of Knowing market segment.

This equation of the SOK segment with the advertising professionals working on the brand had implications for constituting a unified persona for the brand. In order to 'humanize' and 'personify', the brand had to derive its human characteristics from actual humans. As there was no brand character or celebrity to provide these human qualities, humanized imaginaries of the brand drew from the persona of the Sense of Knowing segment. As many on the brand team identified with the Sense of Knowing segment, which was also the brand's 'source of image', a dynamic arose where such individuals imagined the brand's persona in their own image. This was most clear in the creation of the brand persona within Quirk, the partner digital agency working on the Sedgwick's account. For Stephan, head digital content strategist for the brand, part of communicating a unified and consistent brand identity

involved using the same 'tone of voice'[59] in all brand communications. This was particularly important

when different people were writing the social media posts on Facebook and Twitter – sometimes

himself, sometimes the social media community manager, and sometimes employees from Have You

Heard, the activation agency that would often tweet and post Facebook content from brand activations.

In order to ensure this consistent 'tone of voice' despite these different individuals, Quirk had developed

an in-house persona for Sedgwick's, which consisted of a composite photographic image representing

the brand. The photo featured the face of a White man, in his early 30s, face split into two halves, with

one half sporting a long flowing beard, and the other half cleanly shaven. Stephan explained this was

intended to express the two sides of the Sedgwick's personality – rugged adventurer, and urbane young

professional. Underneath this image was a list of websites the persona of Sedgwick's would visit, and

phrases he would or wouldn't use. Then followed some sample Facebook responses to consumer posts

and comments. It was difficult not to see this persona as at least partially a projection of the idealized

selves of the all-White, all-male team from Quirk who were working on the digital marketing side of the

Sedgwick's campaign, one of whom sported a bushy beard very similar to that of one half of the

persona.

The identification of those on the Sedgwick's account with the SOK market segment and their focus on

addressing this group of consumers affirmed what others in the industry had told me about how

advertising creatives in South African prefer to market to the "PLU's"[60] – or the "People Like Us" [61] . John

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[59] Here we see how 'humanizing' a brand entailed giving the brand more than simply a personality, but dimensions of embodiment, such a 'voice', which I explore in more detail in the following chapter. In the context of digital advertising, the necessity of having a consistent 'tone of voice' was a frequently-heard theme.

[60] This phrase is not specific to South Africa, and is used to describe educated, middle class professionals – including advertising practitioners – in other national contexts (https://shorensteincenter.org/rape-culture-india-english-language-press/, http://spoonfeedin.blogspot.com/2008/08/personality-alyque-padamsee.html), as well as the supposedly universal human tendency for people to prefer those they perceive as similar to themselves, creating a barrier to achieving diversity in the corporate world (https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-do-we-have-make-big-deal-diversity-jared-karol).

[61] This conflation of one's own subject position with the universally human was most widespread amongst the creatives working on the team, but it was also found amongst marketers on the corporate side. Similarly the

Simpson, the marketing research director who gave the presentation on the Black middle class discussed earlier in this chapter, originally introduced me to this acronym. In a conversation after the presentation, he told me about the study his research institute had done on "The Top End" – the highest-income segment of the South African market. I asked him if corporations ever requested presentations of that study, and he replied that sometimes they did, although they shouldn't need to, because "The Top End" are really just the "People like Us": the "PLU's". I asked him to elaborate on this concept, and he explained that advertisers prefer to address PLU's in their advertising, but are unsure at times as to who exactly the PLU's are, sometimes defaulting to addressing the entire South African market as PLU's. For Simpson, race was not what distinguished the "People Like Us" – the Top End sample had included more Blacks than Whites – it was a lifestyle, a level of income, and a certain educational background – what I would argue is the whitened middle classness of the Sense of Knowing market segment[62].

He elaborated on his concept of the PLUs in an address on the low-income market and informal economy given in 2015, in which he blamed the "PLU effect" for the failure of marketers to tap into this market segment: "We understand people like us, and market well to them. But we're not so good at connecting with the informal economy. Marketers don't 'get' the market, they make assumptions, they condescend, they take advantage of what they perceive to be a naïve market, and they seldom connect.[63]" This echoes the assessment of Kelly and Carlyn, who reminded the brand team that they were not just talking to 'themselves'. In this way we see how the default of marketing to 'People Like Us'

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refusal to conflate Transformer aspirations with an idealized SOK lifestyle was more evident on the side of marketers (both within 99cents and Distell) rather than the creatives, although not exclusively so.

[62] In fact, one copywriter I spoke to, Thabang Ramogase, who had worked with Simpson on the Black Diamond studies attributed the prevalence of attempts to 'premiumize' brands which had a significant low-income consumer base – just as the Sedgwick's team was attempting to do – to the preference of advertisers for talking to 'PLUs', which he saw as lazy. He was critical of this knew-jerk reaction to 'premiumize' brands. As he put it, "70% of the population love you, stick with them!"

[63] http://primeoutdoor.co.za/survivor-marketing-tapping-into-the-informal-sector/

– people whom advertisers imagine in their own image – creates a construct of an unmarked, universal

consumer, in relation to which the difference of 'other' consumers is calibrated[64].

In this way, as the brand team crafted communications for a market segment that was seen as a

reflection of their own identity, they participated in a project of self-making, which involved constituting

a whitened middle class consumer as both the default, universal consumer, and the ideal to which all

aspired. In this dynamic, professional expertise – which involved identifying 'human truths' and

rendering these aesthetically – became inextricable from a habitus of race and class, from which these

'truths' were drawn and universalized. An element of fashioning this whitened middle-class self as both

universal and 'ideal' was framing this market segment as the most sophisticated, most challenging

consumer to market to. To quote Daniel again, "We are the hardest demographic node to talk to. But if

you get it right, we have the biggest influence." This formulation explicates how the professional

expertise of White advertisers merges with the fashioning of whitened middle classness – the highest

achievement of advertising is to successfully talk to 'ourselves'[65]. In this way, as they were framed as

the most difficult consumer to market to, achieving success with the Sense of Knowing segment further

served to fashion the self as an expert marketer. Conversely, failing to crack the Transformer market –

which was supposed to be the easiest segment to market to – threatened this mode of expertise, as we

will see below[66].

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[64] It also became clear that the training of advertising professionals – especially creatives and strategists – fostered this tendency to design advertising for PLUs. I interviewed a design teacher at one of the main professional advertising schools in Cape Town, and she described to me how her students are taught to imagine themselves in the position of others as a way to 'get into the head' of target markets, rather than go out and do research with consumers from backgrounds different to their own. This encourages the tendency to project elements of experience specific to being White and middle class as being universally human.

[65] Mazzarella (2003) highlights a comparable tension in the expertise of Indian advertising professionals, who simultaneously declared that the 'aspirational' was objective, and insisted that their own expertise was necessary in determining and representing this quality.

[66] Unsurprisingly, advertisers that I interviewed (many of whom were also White and middle class) who specialized in low-income Black consumers tended to frame these as the hardest market segment to address successfully, performing their own marketing expertise.

If the brand was unified around an idealized image of the SOK which was an extension of the marketers' own identities, the question became how the Transformer market fitted into the marketing picture. In this context, we can see the appeal of the fantasy that Transformers found an idealized depiction of a 'Sense of Knowing' lifestyle aspirational. Firstly, the problem of unifying the brand could be solved; the brand could premiumize its image in the eyes of SOK consumers by inserting itself into their lifestyle and thus leveraging value from its association from them, while simultaneously appealing to Transformers by offering the opportunity to associate themselves with an aspirational image through the brand. Secondly, the brand team could continue to focus their marketing efforts on the segment they identified with – the 'PLUs' – affirming their own identities as ideal consumers and expert advertisers.

However, this idealized vision of the brand unified around whitened middle-classness as universally aspirational came into tension with the team's efforts to make the Transformers feel that the brand was 'talking' to them, and thus granting them recognition. As we have already seen, balancing a unified brand with targeted messaging directed at the Transformers was an important part of 99cents' brief. But for those on the team who bought into the fantasy of Transformers aspiring to be like Sense of Knowing consumers, the team puzzled over how to offer Transformers an aspirational lifestyle associated with the Sense of Knowing market segment, while making it clear that it was the Transformers – not only the SOK – being addressed in the communications. And if it was the Sense of Knowing segment that was the source of the brand's image, how did you address and recognize Transformers while preventing the brand from being tarnished through association? In this way, impasses arose when attempting to calibrate aspirational recognition when addressing the Transformer segment.

Balancing the capacity of a brand to attract as many consumers as possible, while associating it with an aspirational identity that by its very nature is exclusive is a universal problem of advertising, as both

anthropologists (Mazzarella 2003)[67] and branding practitioners have pointed out[68]. The specific

manifestation of this problem in South Africa involves the ambiguous relationship of race and class to

configuring the nature of 'the aspirational'. Firstly, how can advertisers acknowledge low income Blacks

as addressees of the message while creating an aspirational image of the brand associated with

whitened middle classness, when these identities were historically defined in opposition to one

another? And secondly, what happens to this dynamic of exclusive aspiration and mass consumer

inclusion when advertisers are dealing with low income Blacks as a consumer 'other' who consistently

flout the rules of branding (and in so doing, reveal the failures of these rules to be universal)? Let us first

examine how the brand team engaged with the challenge of making the brand aspirational while

"talking to" Transformers.

Aspirational recognition, language, and the aesthetics of 'rustic' wood

One of the ways proposed by some on the team for making it clear to Transformers that they were the

addressees of the communication was to use indigenous Black African languages in the copy of the ad

(what industry professionals called 'vernac'). However, some on the team believed that this course of

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[67] Mazzarella shows how the category of the 'aspirational' offered at certain moments to unify markets around a notion of middle classness, while relying on divisions based on unequal access to consumer goods at others. He shows how tensions existed in the context of advertising in India in the late 90s, as the democratizing promise of universal access to the pleasures of commodity images conflicted with the elitist nature of the premium products being advertised through such images. He argues that one way in which advertising professionals attempted to mediate this tension was through equating the generality of consumer desire with the particular preferences of an emerging middle class, which undergirded a new model of shared citizenship based on aspirational consumption. Advertising performed a pedagogical role in effecting this equation, transforming consumer desire into aspiration by directing it towards objects deemed appropriate according to hegemonic standards of 'tastefulness'. In this way, 'tasteful' images offering a refined, middle-class version of the pleasures of consumption promised both inclusion in an aesthetic community, while threatening to exclude those whose standards of taste did not meet the hegemonic standard. At the same time, he shows how making brands 'aspirational' through advertising required unequal access to these brands in order to frame them as desirable and exclusive in the first place. Indian advertisers worried that making these goods accessible to everyone would dilute their appeal, in a way comparable to the concerns of the Sedgwick's brand team.
[68] Brand guru Seth Godin points out one manifestation of this tension: "It's frustrating to watch marketers, politicians and individuals fall into the obvious trap of trying to stand for something at the same time they try to please everyone or do everything." http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/10/when-you-stand.html

action was a mistake. One such individual was Carlyn, a marketing executive on the Distell side. She believed that part of the aspirational value for Sedgwick's in the minds of Transformers was that "it had always been marketed to White people"[69], indexed by the use of English[70]. She worried that recognition – making it clear to low-income Blacks that Sedgwick's was talking to them in their own language – would erode aspiration – the status value of drinking something associated with Whites. For her, the brand was aspirational for Transformers for the very reason that it had never been explicitly advertised to them. She explained this position in relation to another campaign for a brand with a similarly divided target market that had used the slogan "be yourself" in its communication with all segments. She explained that "if you're a Transformer, yourself is not who you want to be". For Carlyn, recognizing Transformers through using 'vernac' would was akin to fixing them within an identity they wished to escape. Addressing them in this way would tarnish the aspirational value of the brand, eroding its promise to elevate them above their current circumstances. Here we see that whether to address Blacks in English or indigenous Black African languages continues to be a contentious issue in South African advertising, as it was during apartheid.

If language was one focal point for debates around how to balance aspiration with recognition in unifying the brand in the image of the Sense of Knowing segment, another was the aesthetic execution of the images of the print ads. Whereas in the case of the language of the copy, some worried that

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[69] There seemed to be no evidence for this in market research, and thus entirely a projection on the part of Carlyn, and others who were against using 'vernac' such as Daniel. Research that had been conducted into Transformer perceptions of Sedgwick's had found that the gold leaf on the packaging and its status as an old, trusted brand which had been drunk for many years in these low income communities made it seem both aspirational and high quality. Talking to tavern owners about the popularity of the brand, some commented that the 'thick' texture of the sherry itself in relation to that of the cheaper competitors had been mentioned by patrons as indicative of its higher quality, as well as its slightly higher price point. No one mentioned anything about whiteness or English.
[70] Carlyn ended up losing this battle, with many on the brand team feeling that 'vernac' advertising was a necessary part of making it clear to Transformers that the brand was 'talking to them'. In fact, the strongest proponent for 'vernac' advertising was creative director Steve from 99cents. This indicates how there was no clear cut division between creatives and marketing/account personnel when it came to these two imaginaries of the market – Transformers aspiring to be like a universally aspirational SOK, and Transformers as utterly different.

recognizing Transformers through using 'vernac' would erode the aspirational promise of the brand, in the case of the aesthetics of the communication, some were concerned that Transformers would not appreciate the same aesthetic rendering as would the SOK segment, and that rather than finding them aspirational, elements of these aesthetics would in fact make Transformers feel misrecognized. The debate started in a client-agency meeting in which the creative director, Steve, presented his new 'look and feel' for the brand – the aesthetic execution of the Big Idea of 'Share the warmth, any way you like it'. The execution had stayed with the traditional browns and golds used by the brand, but in some renderings of the Old Brown bottle, the background featured wood that was a faded, matt brown color, emphasizing its knotty, aged quality, with less of a glossy rich sheen featured in previous brand communications. This was in line with the 'old school cool' image that the team was trying to create for the SOK market, which drew on 'rustic' and 'vintage' imagery.

The Distell team were generally positive about Steve's vision, but Tanya, Kelly's co-brand manager on the Distell side, expressed one hesitation. She worried that the 'rustic' wood looked 'old', and possibly bore too strong a resemblance to the old wood of tavern tables – the drinking establishments where Transformers drank Sedgwick's. She was worried that these consumers would feel like the brand was 'talking down' to them by referencing tavern tables. As Ilze, the junior creative, explained it to me later, the problem with the 'rustic' wood was that a Transformer's reaction might be, "what are you saying, that I'm poor?" In response to the brand manager's hesitation, Steve and his team created two looks for the wood – one 'rustic', similar to the initial execution to be used only in SOK targeted communication, and the other considered in line with the aspirational requirements of Transformer-directed communication – glossy, warm and shining, "like a drawing room where you would drink whiskey", as Ilze put it[71].

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[71] This debate had a further twist to it. Using two different images of the wood had been the resolution reached at the time when I finished fieldwork. However, going back a year later and catching up with one of my informants,

The suggestion that Transformers would find aesthetic indexes of an environment "where you would drink whiskey" aspirational suggests an alternative vision of Black aspiration that we will encounter in later chapters. In the early years of post-apartheid South Africa, advertising premium spirits such as whiskey to newly rich Blacks drew heavily on images of a 'bling lifestyle', and became associated with Black affluence that was expressed through conspicuous consumption of luxury goods, a vision of Blacks as voraciously aspirational consumers that was in stark contrast to the restrained middle-classness embodied in the Sense of Knowing consumer[72]. In this way, debates around 'rustic' vs 'glossy' wood also indexed contrasting imaginaries of what low-income Blacks aspired to – a restrained whitened middle-classness, or a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption embodied by the new Black elite.

The response of Steve and his creative team to the hesitation of the client about the wood was interesting in itself, as there was no attempt to assert professional advertising expertise by objecting that the client didn't understand the consumer or the process of creating advertising or representing aspiration (complaints that I had heard before – expressed to other 99cents personnel, not to the client – in relation to changes the client wanted made to the design of the branding elements). In this case, Steve simply conceded that the client had a point, and redesigned the look and feel of the wood. I suggest that this indicates how the professional expertise of these advertising professionals focused on

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he explained to me that in the new face-to-face activation being designed for the Transformer segment, which involved a draughts league to be played in the taverns in the Eastern Cape, the team had decided to go back to the 'rustic' wood. He explained that the team had ultimately decided that using the 'aspirational' wood in Transformer-directed communication was inauthentic and thus contradictory to the brand's values. This oscillation between focusing on aspiration – equated with a whitened middle-class consumer lifestyle – and recognition – which often involved recognizing needs based on poverty – evinced the enduring tension embodied in the dual imperative of aspirational recognition within the racialized history of aspiration in South Africa.

[72] The Pen Portrait document hints at this alternative vision of newly-wealthy Black consumers. It describes the Black Sense of Knowing consumer – personified in the portrait of "Thami" – as the most status conscious and least brand loyal. Thami "is not particularly brand loyal, but will only associate with products that reflect his status…He is learning more and more about wine through business colleagues and social occasions and has started his own collection." The document goes on to describe Thami's luxury vehicles and his enjoyment of the "finer things in life". Here we see how expenditure on premium alcohol and other luxury commodities is figured as a marker of status amongst newly rich Black consumers, in contrast to the default SOK consumer, who we are told does not select brands based on their status value.

their ability to aesthetically render 'human truths' in such a way that PLUs would find them aspirational, rather than to advertise to consumer 'others' such as low income Blacks. We see this for example in how after the first presentation of the experiential agency 'Have You Heard's' presentation to the client, the professionals from 99cents discussed amongst themselves how good it had been, heaping praise on Have You Heard, because although the experiential team had not seen the new look and feel designed by 99cents at that point, the former had rendered 'vintage cool' using an extremely similar aesthetic – similar font, similar color scheme. That was where professional expertise lay – in creating an 'aspirational' aesthetic for PLU consumers. On the other hand, low-income Black consumers were not framed as requiring a high degree of expertise to market to: either these 'other' consumers were characterized as 'easy' to market to, with confident assertions made about what they would respond to (which often ended up failing in practice), or they were characterized as defective consumers, as we will see below – unpredictable, too 'literal', swayed by culture and superstition. In this way, failures to market to them did not constitute a threat to advertisers' professional expertise.

This mode of creative expertise created challenges for unifying the brand, however. Team members such as Daniel hoped to unify the brand around universally aspirational whitened middle-classness, but in the debate around the wood, we see the difficulty of rendering this aspirational quality in aesthetic terms that would appeal to both SOK consumers and Transformer consumers. Team members worried that Transformers didn't share the aesthetic sensibility of the SOK, so they were in danger of misinterpreting its resonances, mistaking 'rustic' for 'old'. This would counter the aspirational promise of the brand by 'recognizing' Transformers as 'poor', disrupting the promise of transformative consumption being offered by the brand. In these debates, we see the deep skepticism that 'aspirational aesthetics' drawn from a whitened middle class lifestyle are truly universally aspirational.

Alongside the fantasy of a unified brand around a whitened middle-class lifestyle that both SOK and Transformers found aspirational, appeared the worry that Transformers as 'other' consumer may have

entirely different and unfathomable aspirations – Transformers may have no desire to be like SOK

consumers.

The alterity of the Transformers

This parallel depiction of Transformers as utterly other to the Sense of Knowing self emerged in client-

agency meetings, where Transformers were often vilified. Sometimes they were accused of being "too

literal"[73] – not comprehending that 'warmth' referred to both physical and metaphorical social warmth,

for example. As mentioned in the introduction, this characterization of low income Blacks as "literal"

was very pervasive amongst White South Africans within and without of the advertising industry, and

key to both the hopes and fears attaching to advertising as a medium, as I discuss in later chapters.

Transformers were also often characterized by brand team members as highly susceptible to the

influence of 'culture', particularly in relation to the figure of the 'sangoma' (traditional healer). For

example, at one meeting between all the agencies and Distell, creative director Steve told a story during

the break about how a brand of gin which used to be very popular amongst Transformers had suddenly

lost a huge chunk of its market share. Marketing researchers had found the reason for this was that a

particularly influential sangoma in the area had started spreading the story that clear liquor – and this

brand of gin in particular – caused blindness[74]. Steve joked that sangomas were the ultimate 'brand

influencers'[75] in this target market, and should be hired by the brand. In Steve's comment we see that

the frustration was not simply that Transformers were 'too literal' at one moment and too easily

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[73] This was often connected with criticisms that low-income consumers refused to disconnect the intrinsics of the product from the extrinsics of the brand, and thus resisted the dematerialization of the brand discussed above.

[74] Here we see a continuity between old fears articulated by marketers in the early days of the twentieth century of the power of "rumor" about western commodities spread amongst local inhabitants that would turn potential consumers against such products (Burke 1996, 1998).

[75] A "brand influencer" involves "peer endorsement from a trusted source" (http://www.financialmail.co.za/redzone/2016/03/03/influencer-marketing-brings-authenticity-to-brand-communication)

Most brand influencers are people identified as have influence on social media and who already use and love a brand, who the brand can recruit to further endorse the brand in a seemingly 'authentic' way, rather than promoters who are paid to do so.

influenced by 'culture' at the next; it stemmed from the fact that Transformers seemed to be susceptible to systems of magic, but not to the magic of the brand. If only a sangoma could be recruited onto the side of the brand, maybe one system of magic could be appropriated by another, and marketers could harness the imaginative and spiritual investments of these consumers for the purposes of profit maximization.

As the brand team blamed the defective nature of Transformers as consumers for the marketers' inability to channel their desires, I suggest that the construction of Transformers as 'other' consumer served to render them a suitable site for the projection of instabilities inherent to all brand-consumer interactions, where advertisers can never assert absolute control, as the unpredictability and spontaneity of brand-consumer interactions underwrites the affective potency of these interactions. However, projecting these instabilities onto the 'other' consumer in this way was an ambivalent exercise. We saw a similar dynamic at play during apartheid-era advertising, examined in the previous chapter: projecting the inscrutability and unpredictability of all consumer/brand interactions onto the 'other' consumer served to shore up an idealized vision of whiteness, while always potentially threatening to confound the efforts of advertisers to channel the consumer desires of Blacks. Similarly, the Transformer-as-consumer-other was an ambivalent figure; on the one hand, it allowed marketers to affirm an idealized conception of a whitened middle-class consumer identity which was immune to the vicissitudes of consumer desire and the unpredictabilities of brand interactions. This allowed marketers to protect their claims to expertise, blaming failures marketing to the Transformers on the latter's irrational and defective qualities as consumers. However, this emphasis on the alterity of the Transformers also contained a threatening dimension – that the affect and aspirations of Transformer

consumers could not be harnessed by those working on the brand, and that the figure of the universal

aspiring consumer human was not universal at all[76].

From 'lifestyle' billboards to 'pack and 'brag'

This contradictory characterization of Transformers aspiring to be like Sense of Knowing consumers, and

Transformers as embodying consumer alterity, came to a head in debates about what were called the

'lifestyle' billboards. In 99cents' original pitch, two kinds of billboards had been proposed – billboards

that were 'Above-the-line'[77], intended to be seen by everyone, placed in urban spaces – and 'Below-the-

line', which were targeted at Transformers, and designed to be seen primary by them, to be placed in

areas they frequented such as certain townships and rural areas[78]. The ATL billboards were referred to

as 'lifestyle' billboards. They displayed imagery common to all the campaign elements targeting the

Sense of Knowing market, discussed above: images of groups of young people[79] 'sharing the warmth'

with Sedgwick's, while engaged in social activities such as hiking, camping, and other outdoor activities.

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[76] Not everyone who acknowledged that the Transformers did not necessarily aspire to be like SOK constructed them as 'other' in this disparaging way – some focused on their need for recognition, which didn't have the same tensions discussed above if they weren't being offered an aspirational whitened middle class lifestyle at the same time. I discuss this in detail in the following chapter.

[77] In fact, because of the budgetary constraints of the brand, although 99cents pitched various ATL elements including TV and national radio, billboards were one of the few ATL elements used in the campaign. Other elements which could be considered ATL included the content published on Facebook, although disagreements existed as to whether low income Black consumers used Facebook. Other media forms which initially appeared to be ATL elements turned out to be the more targeted BTL kind, as with magazine ads that appeared in publications targeted towards the SOK segment, and radio ads which were run on regional African language stations.

[78] Billboards as a media form have historically been associated with advertising to Blacks, although their indexing of race became more complex over the years. Because of the restrictions enacted by the apartheid government on advertising in townships discussed in the introduction, billboards became one of the few means open for brands to communicate their messages to Blacks. Still today, as one drives out of Johannesburg along the main highway into Soweto, one is confronted by billboard after billboard, many (if not most) for alcohol brands. Billboards thus have strong indexical associations with messages aimed at poor, Black consumers. Tseliso Rangaka commented that the default amongst advertisers when addressing low income Black consumers was to "crank out a few billboards", and he was not the only one who made this observation. Although today, billboards are used in the city to target affluent market segments, these tend to be more elaborate billboards, using digital technology.

[79] Some of these images featured people who were not only obviously middle class, but also majority White. I asked the creative team about this and was told that these images were the ones taken from international US-based stock image libraries, or borrowed from ads campaign for brands in the US as a point of reference for the envisaged design for Sedgwick's.

The taglines on these proposed billboards included puns designed to push the mixology strategy amongst SOK's. For example, there was a photographic image of young people in swimsuits scrambling over rocks on the beach. The tagline read, "share the warmth, on the rocks" – encouraging consumers to try the drink the drink over ice, thus extending usage occasions from winter alone, to the warm months of summer.

However, after 99cents won the account and presented further versions of these 'lifestyle' billboards to the client, some of those at Distell expressed opposition to these elements. Some felt that the puns on the billboards were unsuitable for Transformers as the message was not "literal" enough, and team members worried that these taglines would "confuse" them. Others, such as Anne, criticized the imagery, arguing that Transformers had no desire to go camping or attend lifestyle and rock music festivals, and would not find this imagery aspirational. Whereas Daniel believed that SOKs were a point of aspiration for all South African consumers, Anne believed that Transformers were indifferent to such a lifestyle. Opponents of the 'lifestyle' billboards suggested that ATL billboards which could be seen by all should rather consist simply of a photographic image of the Old Brown bottle, with the tagline "Share the warmth" – called the 'pack and brag' approach – which was the design suggested for the billboards targeting Transformers in the original pitch. This design was informed by conceptions of Transformer consumers as the most literal – a simple pack shot and tagline was believed to be the choice least likely to confuse them.

Kelly supported the 'pack and brag' billboards, as she believed they avoided the pitfalls of alienating market segments through featuring people in the ATL media. She explained that "the bottle...is a better icon than putting a person's face there"[80]. However, this had the undesirable effect of collapsing brand

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[80] This was not the first time I had heard that argument that the image of a bottle could come to stand in for an alcohol brand in the context of divided markets, and recalls Lascaris' strategy of unifying racially divided markets through non-human entities – such as animals – as a placeholder for people.

and product, just when the team was trying to separate the brand of Sedgwick's from product of Old

Brown, to prepare for the launch of the new product line. In fact, the reliance on the 'pack and brag'

strategy on billboards was the reason Kelly cited for the fact that the brand didn't have a 'personality' in

the minds of consumers. For those such as Kelly and Anne who believed that 'lifestyle' images would

alienate Transformers rather than be aspirational for them, the effort to build a brand separate from the

product was pushed from ATL media into Below-the-line targetable elements, as we will see in the

following chapter[81]. From the disagreements around the lifestyle billboards, we see how advertisers

struggled to come up with images that embodied social warmth and aspiration in a way they believed

would unify divisions between the Transformer and the SOK segments, and how some conflated the

universally aspirational with an idealized SOK lifestyle – drawing on a deep-rooted association in South

African advertising between whiteness, middle-classness, and aspiration – whereas others cautioned

that low income Blacks did not share the aspirations of a high-income whitened middle class.

Ultimately, despite disagreement between the client and agencies – as well as between those on either

side – the decision was made that ATL media would not draw on SOK 'lifestyle' imagery, but rather focus

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[81] Tensions between targeting and creating a unified brand identity were an important motivator in pushing this move from ATL to BTL, but there were other factors involved. Firstly, the expense of ATL media in relation to BTL options such as activations and relying on word-of-mouth made BTL more appealing to those working on the budgeting side of things. Although Sedgwick's was a high volume brand, it had a small budget relative to other high profile wines and brandies produced by Distell. Secondly, both of the key consumer groups being targeted by the brand – SOK and Transformers – were believed to respond poorly to ATL advertising campaigns. The Transformers were believed to have little access to electronic media, as many still lived in non-electrified homes, which made ATL elements such as TV commercials ineffective in reaching them. And SOK were believed to be too cynical about and desensitized to ATL advertising for it to have much effect without strong BTL elements, such as the experiential events which were chosen to target them. The third factor pushing the team away from using ATL media was the impending ban on alcohol advertising being discussed by the South African government at the time and the threat of what advertisers called 'dark marketing'. The extent of the impending ban was still unclear and was being debated, but Distell and its agencies were preparing for the worst while I was there, for example by bringing in marketers who had worked on cigarette accounts during the banning of cigarette advertising in 1999. 'Dark marketing' meant brands could not appear to be marketing their products to consumers. They could not use any mass media advertising, and could only communicate with consumers who had previously 'opted in' – via email, or via joining a Facebook community, for example. For this reason, importance was placed in creating these relationships with consumers which would be immune to any future ban on ATL advertising, and would use the word-of-mouth potential of these loyal community members to proselytize for the brand.

on the pack and brag strategy, believed to be the least likely to alienate anyone. The impasse could not

be overcome; the universal 'human truth' of social warmth could not be embodied in a universal way.

Concomitantly, there was an increasing return to the "schizophrenic brand", where the brand showed

one face to the SOK market and another to the Transformer market via BTL communications.

The impasses of aspirational recognition and the return of the schizophrenic brand

This contradictory characterization of the Transformers in the debates around the 'lifestyle' billboards –

as potential versions of the SOK, and as utterly other from the SOK – stems from the intersection

between the practice of advertising as balancing exclusion with inclusion, aspiration with recognition,

and the historically inflected self-making project of whitened middle classness in South African

advertising. This intersection informs what I term the 'double-bind' of the 'other' consumer: advertising

requires this figure to be utterly different, so that tensions inherent to advertising may be projected

onto this figure, framed as a consequence of its defective status, thus protecting the fantasy of the ideal

whitened middle-class consumer, which is also the dominant vision of the advertising practitioner's own

self, universalized as the default consumer citizen. At the same time, advertising requires all consumers

to be potentially the same, rendering them 'trainable', so that advertising can offer them the aspiration

of a better life and a better self, giving them hope in the current political and economic system,

preventing the threat of unharnessable desire.

This double-bind underpins the dynamic in which whitened middle classness seem like the only option

for unifying brands while framing them as aspirational, while also making it impossible to unify them on

this basis; Transformers could never simply be SOK in training, but were also always potential absolute

others to the SOK self. In this way, trying to make Sedgwick's 'ride two horses with one arse' proved to

be an insoluble challenge. The team wavered between focusing on one market segment as a source of

aspiration for all as a way to achieve overall coherence, and presenting two separate 'faces' to the two

contrasting market segments, attempting to remain coherent to each respective segment rather than to the market as a whole. Despite the fact that 99cents had been hired to balance a unified brand identity with targeted messaging for both key market segments, they ended up being in a very similar position to that which had faced the previous agency; a strategy that focused on the SOK at the expense of the Transformer market, ATL media that did not recognize the Transformers or contribute to brand building, and marketing research indicating that Transformers felt the brand was 'not talking to them'. In this chapter I have argued that the problem lay not with the specific agency, but the structural challenges of advertising as a general practice – where brands must be unified around 'human truths' which are often drawn from the particular social position of professional advertisers – and the specific context of South Africa, in which for a brand to be aspirational it must associate itself with a whitened middle-class lifestyle, which in the case of Sedgwick's meant disassociating itself from the Transformers, the very segment that the agency had been hired to talk to.

Chapter 3

'They're worth more than tin mugs': recognition, reciprocity, and 'brand love' as strategies of control

In the previous chapter, we saw how advertising professionals attempt to create inclusive brands that can 'talk to' a broad range of consumers, while maintaining a unified identity. In the context of South Africa, this involved attempting to subsume differences of race and class within a single national market, thus striving to mediate tensions similar to those in constituting a unified South African nation in the social and political realm. In the case of Sedgwick's, the marketing team ultimately found the Big Idea of 'share the warmth' inadequate for creating a unified brand identity that could subsume differences between communications targeting its two contrasting market segments – the low-income, mostly Black 'Transformers' and high-income, whitened 'Sense of Knowing'. Although some on the team believed embodying 'sharing the warmth' in images of whitened middle-classness could serve this unifying function, as they believed such a lifestyle was aspirational for all South Africans, others worried that low-income Transformer consumers had no desire to be like SOK consumers, and would find such imagery alienating. This impasse pushed the team to constitute the brand as 'two-faced'; because Sedgwick's could not constitute a single 'face' to show its divided target audience, the only option was to show a different 'face' to each market segment.

In this chapter, I examine how the marketing team tried to constitute the brand's two faces to the Transformer and Sense of Knowing market segments respectively through various strategies of face-to-face marketing. This provides insight into how branding approaches a second problem common to any attempt to constitute social and political collectivities – that of harnessing affective energies and the contingencies of desire to create relatively stable projects of value. Branding ideology approaches this problem through various strategies of control; in this case, by attempting to create two stable, predictable addressable consumer personas, made loyal to the brand through relations of love. One way in which White South African Advertising professionals stake their claims to expertise is by claiming the

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ability to assert control over consumer-brand engagements. In the case of the unruly figure of low income Blacks, fantasies of control perpetuate the ideal of tractable consumers who maximize profits, while minimizing the fear that these 'other' consumers have unpredictable desires that cannot be directed by advertising. However, these fantasies of control were continuously undercut by the fact that in encounters between structures of power and subjects – and in this case, brands and consumers – tapping into affect and desire works through ambiguity and indeterminacy, rather than rigid control and coercion. This indeterminacy enables brands and social and political projects more broadly to seduce and engage subjects, while simultaneously making these projects vulnerable to subversion (Mazzarella 2003, 2013, Berlant 2008). We will see how branding discourses of 'love' envisioned as a structure of predictable attachment served as a response to the ambiguities of these indeterminacies. We will also see how in the context of South Africa, these tensions between striving to channel consumer desire and the indeterminacy necessary for this desire to operate are most explicit in attempts to market to 'other' consumers, in this case, low income Black consumers addressed via the figure of the 'Transformers'.

In this chapter, I focus how these strategies of control coalesced around an approach very pervasive in practices of branding – trying to foster loyalty to the brand through cultivating relations of love (Foster 2008a, Roberts 2005). I show how notions of reciprocity and recognition become part of an attempt to foster love as a structure of attachment immune to disappointment – drawing on Lauren Berlant's work on how intimate publics work to foster 'cruel optimism' (2008, 2011). I also show how reading branding ideology's conception of reciprocity through the lens of Hegelian notions of mediation can illuminate how the consumer figures that face-to-face marketing addressed and sought to constitute in relation to the brand were unequal. This inequality was rooted in ideas about the capacity to actualize potential, shaped by histories of race and class inequality in South Africa. We will see how, as advertising professionals maintained their belief in the power of advertising to control consumers despite repeated failure to achieve this control and lack of certainty that their efforts were working, they engendered a

faith in the medium that constituted its own sort of structure of attachment immune to disappointment.

Central to these notions of love, relationships and reciprocity was the figure of the 'humanized brand'.

'Humanizing' the brand as agent

We saw in the previous chapter how for marketers, 'humanizing' a brand – conceptualizing it as a single

'person' – serves to channel value across all brand-consumer touch points, as well as allowing marketers

to imagine the brand as entering into relationships with consumer 'personas'. In marketing theorist

Susan Fournier's original article that founded the relationship marketing paradigm, she argues that in

order for a brand to enter into such relationships, it must constitute itself as an active agent[1]. As she

puts it, "For a relationship to truly exist, interdependence between partners must be evident: that is, the

partners must collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship…The premise that consumer

actions affect relationship form and dynamics is easily accepted. Comfort in thinking about the brand

not as a passive object of marketing transactions but as an active, contributing member of the

relationship dyad is a matter more deserving of note" (Fournier 1998: 344). According to her, one

strategy for constituting this agency is to associate the brand with a human persona – either of an actual

human, through something like a celebrity endorsement, or of a humanized brand character. However,

we saw in the previous chapter how that was not a viable option for Sedgwick's. In this chapter, I argue

that framing the brand as an entity that was 'giving' or 'sharing' with the consumer provided an

alternate means for it to constitute itself as an agent.

Here, I build on the work of other anthropologists who have drawn on theories of gift-exchange in

analyzing how practices of branding complicate analytical approaches to value within a capitalist

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[1] We see how the figure of the 'human' in relationship marketing is defined by having agency, which recall's Markell's argument that the quest for agency over identity is caught up with the valorization of sovereign control of the individual in discourses of political recognition, which Markell argues may have unintended negative consequences for those who demand recognition (2003).

economy which focus solely on the production of commodities and their exchange for money (Foster

2008a, Mazzarella 2003), as branding attempts to re-introduce singularity into mass-produced

commodities with identical functional benefits. This singularity comes from the emotional benefits the

brand supposedly offers consumers – over and above the functional benefits of the product – as

consumers invest themselves affectively in their branded commodities. Branding ideology

simultaneously frames these affective relations as outside the instrumental calculus of the market – as

intangible benefits given to consumers as a 'gift', rather than sold to them for a profit – while advocating

appropriating these relations of love for boosting corporate profit margins, thus keeping the value of the

brand for itself[2], creating a renewable source of surplus value[3].

However, in this chapter I argue that theories of gift exchange can help us understand not only how the

Sedgwick's brand team sought to generate value for the brand, but also how they tried to 'humanize' it.

In explicating this process, I draw specifically on Strathern's (1988) arguments concerning the role of gift

exchange in constituting persons in gift-based economies. Strathern shows how in Melanesia, persons

and objects are not seen as having pre-existing qualities, but only derive these qualities through the

effects they have on others within social relations. Gift-giving is one way in which a person may

constitute himself as a subject possessing qualities (and the gendering of gift-giving is a central part of

this constitution of subjects), demonstrating his identity as a giver of gifts in the act of giving, and thus

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[2] Drawing on Annette Weiner's work in the Trobriand Islands, Mazzarella (2003) shows how the practice of branding – which must appear to give consumers access to its intangible value, while always keeping the right to assert ownership of the brand and the profit it generates – can be encapsulated through an analytic of 'keeping while giving'.

[3] Although the Sedgwick's brand team didn't use the language of gift-giving themselves, they did use the vocabulary of 'sharing' and 'providing' for consumers in various ways, as they attempted to realize the brand slogan and Big Idea of 'share the warmth'. Fournier, on the other hand, does explicitly recognized the intersections between branding and gift-giving, channeling Mauss as she writes "Brands originally received as gifts (McGrath and Sherry 1993) are likely infused with the spirit of the giver as well, with these person associations again serving to animate the brand as a vital entity in the consumer's mind" (345). As we will see, when attempting to humanize the brand, the difficulty for brand practitioners becomes, whose human essence comes to suffuse the brand?

his identity as a participant in the male social space of gift-exchange. In a context in which brand strategists are attempting to personify and humanize the abstract entity of a brand, framing them as giving 'gifts' becomes one way to engender relational encounters with consumers in which brands may be constituted as agents possessing personal qualities. For marketers, the personality of the brand and the identity of the consumer are constituted in these relations of gift exchange, as the recognition offered by these gifts actualizes the potential of both brands and consumers. I suggest we can approach the tangible and intangible goods that the brand offered consumers – in particular, the modes of recognition it presented to each segment – as a kind of 'gift', given by the brand seeking the reciprocal gift of love and loyalty.

Brand-consumer relationships and visions of reciprocity

In Fournier's original article on relationship marketing, the concept of reciprocity is listed as one definitive element of a 'relationship' – whether this involves relationships between humans, or relationships between humans and brands: "relationships involve reciprocal exchange between active and interdependent relationship partners" (1998: 344). Exactly what constitutes 'reciprocity' is not defined, but what is important is that both 'brand' and 'consumer' are framed as active agents contributing to the relationships through a 'give and take'. In Fournier's analysis – which involves three case studies of women and their relationships to brands, where brands come to serve as various kinds of 'relationship partners' with these women – she shows how reciprocity may have varying degrees of importance, depending on the relationship. For example, when brands are part of 'best friendships', consumers have high expectations of reciprocity, whereas when consumers have 'flings' with brands, there are low reciprocity demands[4]. Analyzing one woman's 'faithfulness' to her brands over the years,

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[4] She categorizes the other kinds of possible 'relationship partners' that brands can constitute as follows: arranged marriages, casual friendships, marriages of convenience, committed partnerships, best friendships, compartmentalized friendships, kinships, rebounds, childhood friendships, courtships, dependencies, flings, enmities, secret affairs, enslavements (1998: 362).

Fournier argues that in deeply committed brand relationships, the following logic obtains: "if you try a brand and it is true to you in consistently delivering quality, you must reciprocate by being true to it through consistent purchase." (358). For the woman who had been 'true' to her brands over the years, this allowed her to perform her own identity as a loyal person, and was informed by her own value system in which faithfulness is a desirable quality.

Other branding theorists have taken this idea of long-term committed brand consumer relationships, envisioned by some branding theorists as akin to a marriage (see for example Hofmeyr & Rice 2001), and framed it as an ideal that brand practitioners need to cultivate. We can see why the ideal of 'love' would be appealing as a strategy of control for marketers: just as unpredictable sexual desire must be sublimated into socially useful and containable emotional bonds in a Freudian model of society, so the consumer must be persuaded to commit to the brand-as-person, thus channeling commodity desire into harnessable brand love. Love also transforms the temporality involved from short-term to long-term interactions, and this also makes it an appealing strategy of control, as it promises to make interactions over time predictable according to the norms of the relationship involved. Fournier writes that "Temporality distinguishes the relationship from the isolated transaction…Relationships are constituted of a series of repeated exchanges between two parties known to each other; they evolve in response to these interactions and to fluctuations in the contextual environment" (346).

However, in ideologies of branding, brand love does more than sublimate short term, unpredictable desire; it also fosters a structure of attachment immune to disappointment. Fournier describes how at first, brand-consumer relationships are rooted in "beliefs about superior product performance" (365). However, over time, growing brand love creates an increasing tolerance for disappointment, as the relationship leads to biased evaluations of the product performance, and loyalty because of how the product makes you feel, not necessarily how well it works compared to others. She draws on theories of human relationships to explain this phenomenon: "strong affective ties often diluted the negative

effects of relationship transgressions by encouraging accommodation…and biased attributions of blame

…Feelings of love also encouraged a biased, positive perception of the partner…that rendered

comparisons with alternatives difficult" (364)[5]. Following this logic, the more a consumer loves and is

committed to a brand, the more likely they will be to forgive the brand for disappointing them, and

continue to buy the product.

In her work on sentimentality in women's popular culture in the US, Lauren Berlant argues that ideals of

love are important for fostering structures of attachment immune to disappointment. She writes, "the

form of love is an intention—not a compulsion—to repeat being attached. The intention to repeat is

what gets expressed in wanting to 'have a future together'" (2008:15). Again, the temporality of the

relationship as continuing into the future is important, just as for Fournier. Thus for Berlant, the

disappointments of love become something to be complained about, but not something that can serve

as the basis for a radical break with this structure: the complaint serves "as a register not merely of a

stuckness but of the conditions of bargaining that allow people to maintain both their critical knowledge

and their attachments to what disappoints" (22).

Following from this, I argue that branding strives to cultivate relationships of love immune from

disappointment in a similar way. I suggest that the turn to relationship marketing is driven by the logic

of capitalist competition, in which sellers of commodities must continuously try to distinguish

themselves from competitors. This logic originally informed the shift from the product to the brand as

the primary source of value for producers (see previous chapter). As products became standardized, the

brand could frame itself as 'adding value', offering consumers something competitors could not. Part of

this 'added value' involved associating the brand with a 'lifestyle' and an 'identity' which the consumer

could access through buying the branded product. However, offering consumers a 'lifestyle' could not

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[5] See Robertson 2015 for a more detailed analysis of branding ideology as attempting to promote consumer forgiveness, and the political implications of this in the context of South Africa.

maintain this competitive advantage, as all brands claimed to offer a 'lifestyle'. Further, associating a

'lifestyle' with the brand could not guard against the vicissitudes of consumer desire; a consumer might

desire a Nike lifestyle today and an Adidas one the following day. Focusing rather on the importance of

the brand-consumer relationship offered to contain this unpredictability – if a consumer was motivated

to buy a brand out of commitment, rather than superior product quality or an aspirational lifestyle, then

costs could be saved on production and advertising. However, brand relationships required the

cathecting power of desire for commodities, to keep consumers buying, and to prevent consumers from

seeking excitement outside the 'marriage'. In an age of brand humanization, managing this tension is a

crucial part of the professional practice of advertisers. In the context of South Africa, the structure of

repetition and predictability of 'brand love' makes it seem particularly conducive to sublimating the

unpredictabilities of desire, especially the desire of the unruly object of low income Black consumers.

Some marketers were explicit about attempting to instigate reciprocity as a tool not only to keep

current consumers loyal, but to recruit new consumers when marketing to low-income Blacks[6]. These

consumers were viewed by White advertising professionals (and described as such by some Black

'experts') as placing high value on reciprocity. When attending marketing conferences on how to target

low income consumers, a recurrent them was how to give them 'added value' – something that went

beyond the product. The form in which this 'added value' was conceived varied widely, with some

focusing on objects of material need (like airtime for cellphones) and other focusing on intangible

'added value', including feelings of dignity, hope, and inspiration. One White woman at the conference

was presenting on how to market financial products to low income communities. Amongst South African

marketers and public discourse in general, there is a commonly expressed perception that low income

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[6] There are long-standing historical precedents for this; as we saw in Chapter 1, some White advertisers during apartheid argued that advertising to Blacks and treating them as equal consumers – even though they had very little disposable income to buy the products at present – was to generate 'goodwill' that could be turned into brand advantage in the future. We can see the underlying logic of giving an intangible benefit, and seeking reciprocity in the form of commodity purchase.

Blacks don't trust formal financial institutions, preferring to use their own informal credit and savings associations (this perception is born out by scholarly research, see James 2015). To counter this lack of trust, the presenter suggested that banks needed to go in to these poor communities and 'do good' through various CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiatives[7]. This was not the first time I had heard this strategy in relation to financial institutions; Nedbank won an international Grand Prix Cannes award in 2007 for a billboard intended to "give back to the community" according to the head creative on the account. It read, "What if a bank really did give power to the people?", and was lined with solar panels that provided power for an underprivileged school in the township of Alexandra (Skade and Khoaele 2007). She ended the presentation by commenting, "This might be how Ubuntu looks in marketing – if we expect these consumers to be our customers we have to do something for them first – give before you get."

Ubuntu is a conceptualization of human interrelatedness, and the reciprocity of how subjects are constituted (Mbembe in Blaser 2013), defined by some as a form of African humanism (eg Tschaepe 2013). This was a common approach in attempting to foster reciprocity – frame the brand as giving added value to the consumer, and hope that the consumer will reciprocate through brand loyalty. We see how this is akin to a form of 'generalized reciprocity' (Sahlins 1972) where the giver ostensibly gives expecting nothing in return, but in so doing, attempts to build up loyal followers. Although Fournier speculates that consumers reciprocate because they feel a sense of obligation and that they wish to identify themselves as 'faithful' people, amongst my informants, there was little discussion of why consumers might reciprocate the 'added value' the brand gives them through being loyal, just hope that they would. The fear in this scenario is that the brand may give added benefits, which the consumer

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[7] This association between brands 'doing good' and the notion of Ubuntu is also evident in the fact that the award for marketing for social good at the annual South African advertising awards ceremonies is called the 'Ubuntu Award'.

takes while refusing to reciprocate with loyalty – a fear embodied in the figure of the 'brand slut',

discussed in the following chapter.

However, for many of my informants, ideas about 'reciprocity' between brands and consumers had both

instrumental and ethical dimensions. The latter is illustrated by the views expressed by Themba, a Black

female copywriter from Johannesburg, who explained to me her frustration with the stereotypical

representations of Black women in advertising, and commented "It always surprises me, because, I'm

like, you want me on your side, you want me to buy your brand, just treat me with some love and treat

me with some respect." Here, we see how Berlant's description of reciprocity as a vaguely defined ideal

for romantic relationships which is aspired to but continuously disappoints becomes a way for Themba

to think about how brands should treat their consumers, herself included. We also see how what is

demanded from the brand is not product quality, but 'love' and 'respect' manifested in the way Black

women are represented in ads; what I term 'recognition' in the analysis that follows.

I suggest that it is not insignificant that all Fournier's case studies were of female consumers, with most

of her brand-partner types are drawn from models of romantic relationships. Fournier argues that brand

relationships are most important to women. Similarly, Berlant reminds us that it is women who are most

often the members of what she calls 'intimate publics'; publics foregrounding the importance of

feelings, organized by circulating popular culture objects which portray an ideal of romantic love,

extolling vaguely defined notions of reciprocity. For Berlant, hope in this ideal of reciprocity mediating

the emotional give and take of love relationships is central to creating structures of attachment that can

withstand repeated disappointment as this ideal fails to materialize. She outlines this dynamic as

follows: "the fantasy dictum that love *ought to be* the gift that keeps on *giving* is a fundamental

commitment of female complaint rhetoric. The position of the depressive realist who sees that love is

nonetheless the gift that keeps on taking is the source of complaint epistemology. In the ideology of

romantic love, the successful negotiation of these projections and flows is called "reciprocity" (2008: 15, original italics).

In the case of Sedgwick's, the low income consumer market segment of the 'Transformers' was not exclusively female; in fact, most of them were male, as discussed in the previous chapter. My focus on how feminizing brand-consumer relationships becomes a way to think about how brands relate to low income Black consumers anticipates my argument in the following chapter, where I will return to the importance of gender, showing how femininity and its intersection with race becomes a way for marketers to conceptualize brand-consumer relationships more broadly.

Also important to note is that for my informants, as with Fournier, exactly what constitutes 'reciprocity' is not defined, and there is little concern in establishing exact relations of balanced reciprocity through identifying discreet acts of giving, receiving and reciprocating as proportionate (cf Sahlins 1972). What is expressed is the ideal that instead of only taking from consumers, brands should 'give back'. However, as we will see, when implemented as a strategy, attempting to instigate relations of reciprocity involved debating details of who gives what to whom and when, which are often crucial. I now turn to suggesting a paradigm which allows us to analyze how for the Sedgwick's brand team, negotiating the 'giving' and the 'taking' between brands and consumers served to constitute unequal consumer figures marked by race and class.

The brand as agent: material and immaterial 'gifts'

In Fournier's discussion of brand-consumer reciprocity, there are both tangible and intangible elements of exchange – the brand provides reliable, quality products (at least at first), and the consumer reciprocates by being loyal to that brand, continuously purchasing its products over time. In the context of the Sedgwick's campaign – and more broadly, in campaigns that target low income Black consumers in South Africa – tangible and intangible elements of exchange were similarly involved. However, one

element was of central importance, subsuming the difference between the material and immaterial

added value with the brand was framed as providing: the 'gift' of recognition.

A short ethnographic vignette from the negotiations around the Sedgwick's campaign illustrates this

point. A recurring theme in the meetings was the merits of the 'tin mug' giveaways. This referred to

enamel-glazed tin mugs, commonly used in apartheid South Africa, where in many White households,

the set of eating objects given to the Black 'maid' or gardener would be of enamel, rather than the

ceramics used by the Whites in the household. In this way, these enamel mugs were evocative of South

Africa's racial past. The mugs were hugely popular amongst all the target markets. The team believed

that this was because the SOK considered them 'retro' and 'vintage', and because Transformers liked

free giveaways of any kind. Because they boosted sales, distributors and sales reps all lobbied Kelly, the

brand manager on the client side, to keep running the mug promotion. However, Kelly was very

resistant to this. Firstly, she felt that the expense of the mugs for Distell didn't justify the boost in sales.

Secondly, she felt that the investment did nothing to build brand image in the long term, unlike the

prizes for the winter competition discussed below, which could build the association between

Sedgwick's and 'warmth'. Here we see the importance of temporality to branding – a brand was

envisioned as a structure that could maximize value over time, rather than boost profits in the short

term. However, in relation to the Transformers, the question of mugs as prizes took on an added ethical

dimension. At one point, Kelly made the comment that Transformers shouldn't be expected to "settle"

for tin mugs. "They are worth more than tin mugs", she said, and the brand should show them that – by

giving them more than trinkets and rather 'doing good' in their communities through corporate social

responsibility (CSR) initiatives (although she faced challenges with this strategy – see footnote 23).

Although no one mentioned the association between these 'tin mugs' and hierarchical race relations in

the recent South African past, the implication was that low income Blacks shouldn't be addressed

through objects that recall their subordinate, servile status during apartheid. Exactly what Transformers

were 'worth' in terms of the prizes given to them was a matter of much debate, as we will see below.

This is an example of how branding attempts to offer consumers 'recognition', which becomes particularly important when addressing previously excluded consumers who remain marginalized from both production and consumption in post-apartheid South Africa, such as the 'Transformers'.

In analyzing how branding ideology and practice attempts to offer consumers 'recognition', constituting the entities of 'brand' and 'consumer' in the process, I draw on aspects of Hegel's notion of mediation[8]. For Hegel, mediation is the process through which 'Spirit' – the essence and driving force of the universe and history – becomes actualized and has its immanent potential for self-consciousness realized. There are various contexts in which this mediation takes place, but in each context, two seemingly opposed entities are brought into relation through recognition in such a way that the potential of Spirit inherent within them becomes actualized. I draw on two elements of Hegel's conception of mediation for understanding brand-consumer relations. Firstly, I borrow his emphasis on the importance of relationality and recognition in constituting entities as distinct but inextricably linked; in this case, the entities of 'brand' and 'consumer', both of which arise out of these relational engagements. For Hegel, recognition involves demonstrating knowledge of what something already is – a latent potential – which serves to constitute it as such, by actualizing that potential. It is a form of mutual constitution that privileges knowing as a form of relationality (Markell 2003). We will see how showing consumers that the brand 'knew' them was an important of attempting to engage consumers in relations of mutual recognition, and thus attempting to mediate the personas of brand and consumer.

Secondly, I draw on Hegel's nuanced approach to the implications of mutual recognition, which may actualize relations of equality (for example, between two free self-conscious entities as exemplified in the resolution of master-slave parable in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [1977]), but may also entrench

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[8] Hegel outlines this conception in various works, but I draw primarily on its exposition in the *Encyclopedia Logic* (1991)*,* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977)*.*

relations of dependence and inequality between the entities involved. We see this dynamic for example in Hegel's discussion of the role of humans in actualizing the potential of inanimate natural objects, discussed in the *Encyclopedia Logic* (1991). For Hegel, nature also contains the essence of Spirit, but it cannot actualize this potential itself, because it is incapable of consciousness. It requires a conscious, rational being external to it to recognize the petrified reason immanent within it. As it is "thought over" (EL s 21), this potential becomes actualized and contributes to the mediation of Spirit. We will see how in various brand-consumer relations, 'brand' and 'consumer' were not equally dependent on one other for actualization. Whereas the brand relied on the high-income consumer market of the Sense of Knowing to actualize its potential as a premium 'cool' brand, the Transformer market was constructed as dependent on the brand for the recognition that could elevate them from 'bad' consumers to 'good' consumers-in-training.

However, whereas for Hegel, mediation allows contradiction to be transcended – through the overarching progression of 'Spirit' which utilizes such processes of mediation between opposing elements to develop its own reflexive self-awareness – this sort of resolution did not take place in the relations of mediation between consumer and brand, with no overarching dynamic of progress and no increasing self-consciousness. In fact, we will see that although marketers envisioned the stable entities of 'brand' and 'consumer' when designing communications, these constructs were fragile and provisional, holding only fleetingly when they could be stabilized at all.

We will see how negotiating how this recognition was offered, and the tangible and intangible elements involved – what the brand gave and to whom – was crucial in attempts to constitute predictable consumer personas marked by race and class. The logic of branding pushed branding practitioners to offer intangible 'emotional' benefits of the brand rather than tangible material benefits. However, low income consumers were seen as more dependent on physical objects, and this made them problematic

for experts in branding, who were taught to encourage consumers to foster relationships with brands rather than focus on the product.

Face-to-face marketing and the two-faced brand: strategies of control

As the brand team tried to create two 'faces' for Sedgwick's that could engage each consumer segment in discrete relations of reciprocal recognition, they moved away from mass-media communications that could be seen by anyone who drove past a billboard or opened a magazine, to face-to-face marketing interventions which occurred in a bounded space, and so could be more tightly targeted to one segment or the other. In face-to-face marketing efforts, the brand was mediated primarily through living, breathing human representatives – and the material objects they distributed – engaging directly with living, breathing consumers[9]. In targeting face-to-face marketing to the Sense of Knowing segment, the Sedgwick's strategists drew on the cutting-edge branding practice of 'experiential marketing', which involved creating branded spaces at festivals and events attended only by high income consumers where patrons could enjoy 'experiences' provided by the brand. On the other hand, for the Transformer segment, the team designed the winter cycle[10] competition – "Win Your Warmest Winter Ever". This competition was 'face-to-face' in the sense that it offered prizes that consumers could win in-store – by means of a scratch-card – when they bought a bottle of the product, which would be given to them directly by the liquor store owner. These in-store competitions were in contrast to the national

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[9] Even the mass media advertising present at these events such as posters tended to be targeted to the specific audience. For example, at the Getaway activation, discussed below, there were posters featuring the brand colors and overall 'look and feel', but advertising a competition for a luxury vacation targeted towards the high-income market. In the taverns that I visited in the Eastern Cape there were none of these posters, and no mass media advertising material for Sedgwick's at all. Sané Mdlalose, main market channel executive for SAB explained to me that poster advertising was considered a waste of money as tavern patrons supposedly did not notice them. The only example of Sedgwick's 'advertising' that I found in this area was a tavern that the owner had chosen to paint himself, decorating it with the (old) Sedgwick's logo and colors.

[10] The winter cycle competitions were held over the winter months of June, July and August – which were the peak volume months for the brand, being a drink traditionally associated with warming up in winter – and were distinguished from the annual cycle competition, which usually had a larger prize and was run over the course of the year.

competitions that had a single big prize advertised through media such as posters and radio rather than being present in the store, and where entry to the competition was mediated via text message or the internet. These in-store competitions were held at liquor stores nation-wide, but the team had designed them specifically to "speak" to the Transformers.

However, the differences between the targeting strategies directed at Transformers and Sense of Knowing consumers respectively obscure an underlying affinity between these two attempts to render brand-consumer relations 'face-to-face', which becomes clearer in relation to the history of experiential marketing in South Africa. Although the marketing literature out of the US frames experiential marketing as most suitable for 'sophisticated' high-income consumers who have become saturated by and immune to advertising messages (Schmitt 1999), in South Africa, experiential marketers trace the history of the practice to the traveling road shows starting in the early 20th century that would go into the rural areas to demonstrate products to poor Blacks who were addressed as potential consumers[11]. The least 'sophisticated' consumers, the most peripheral to the market economy, were seen as the most in need of direct, face-to-face interactions to make sure that advertising messages were reaching them, and that they were being taken up in the way marketers desired, informed by the suspicion that Black consumers are inscrutable in their interpretive engagement with forms of mass communication (cf Larkin 2008). Here we see an early example of how the anxieties of mass communication – that its

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[11] Today in South African marketing, experiential companies tend to focus on the high-income market, in line with international marketing discourse that constructs these consumers as most in need of branded experiences that break through the 'clutter' of mass media advertising. For example, Mike Silver, director of Stretch Experiential based in Cape Town, expressed the opinion that experiential marketing is most effective when used on high-income consumers, and also more 'challenging' and thus enjoyable for marketers, as low-income consumers will be happy with any sort of attention from brands. On the other hand, GG Alcock – quoted below – founder and director of Minanawe marketing, who worked for Group Africa before it became EXP, had different ideas, claiming that low-income consumers were the most discerning and savvy, and that experiential marketing could work well on them if implemented correctly. He spoke with scorn of marketers such as Silver who believed "a big rig with live music" was all that was required to entice such consumers to spend their hard-earned cash. Clearly, there is a performance of expertise at play here with Alcock and Silver framing their own market focus as requiring the greatest level of skill to market to.

addressees may not take it up the way the sender intended – become projected onto figures of the 'other' consumer, informing current tendencies to make advertising directed at low income Blacks as 'literal' as possible.

We see this genealogy connecting road shows and experiential marketing in a marketing textbook widely used in South African classrooms published by the Unilever institute of Strategic Marketing based at the University of Cape Town (Simpson and Doré 2007). This includes a chapter that traces the history of EXP Experiential Marketing – one of the largest experiential marketing companies in South Africa in the present day – which developed as an offshoot of the company Group Africa, which had the monopoly on these traveling road shows from the 60s till the late 80s[12]. The textbook interprets both these earlier roadshows and contemporary branded events as attempts to avoid the short-comings of mass media advertising – which it dismissively terms the "spray and pray" approach. These shortcomings are identified as stemming from the inability of the mass media to control the identity of the recipients of advertising messages, as well as the context in which these messages are received; the message is 'sprayed' onto everyone indiscriminately, and the marketer 'prays' that the right people hear it and take it up in the desired way. This inability to control the identity and uptake of the collectivities that engage with circulating mass-media forms – and that these forms presuppose and call into being – is what William Mazzarella (2013) calls the "open edge" of mass publicity. As claims to expertise amongst marketers involve the putative ability to predict and channel the uptake of these messages, this "open edge" is a source of anxiety for advertising professionals. I suggest that the shift from mass media to face-to-face marketing be interpreted as an attempt by marketers to quell these anxieties, and to eliminate the element of 'prayer' from their communications with consumers. By circumscribing the

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[12] Dave Boon, the marketing director at EXP, gave me a similar genealogy of experiential marketing in South Africa in our interview.

space in which marketing efforts take place, marketers attempt to assert control over the audience and uptake of advertising messages[13].

In discussing alternatives to the 'spray and pray' approach of mass media, contemporary marketers – both in South Africa and globally – often turn to metaphors of brand-consumer 'dialogue' (see for example Lendermann 2006). We can see how face-to-face marketing interventions – which involve identifiable human representatives of the brand and individual consumers engaging directly with these representatives – are amenable to allowing marketers to conceptualize brand and consumer engaging in such a 'dialogue'. Marketers frame 'dialogue' as superior to 'spray and pray' in a number of ways. Firstly, it is believed to build intimacy between brand and consumer, in line with the broader focus in branding ideology on the importance of forging brand-consumer relationships based on love, in order to promote brand loyalty (Roberts 2005). Secondly, the model of dialogue allows marketers to conceptualize both brand and consumer as 'individuals', engaging in a two-person conversation. These 'individuals' are each imagined as having a coherent, stable identity, rather than the fluid, nebulous reality of millions of diverse humans making up the consumer market, and the disparate humans and material objects which constitute the construct of 'the brand'. However, these two 'individuals' must be produced; the brand must 'humanize' and develop a prosthetic persona in order to 'talk to' consumers (Lury 2004), and each consumer segment must be imagined as having an addressable persona. We saw in the previous chapter how part of reducing the diversity of actual consumers into one prototypical consumer for each market segment was through the consumer 'pen portraits' document. In this chapter, we will see how the dynamics of brand-consumer mediation at play in face-to-face marketing were designed to constitute discrete, coherent personas for the brand of Sedgwick's and both the SOK and Transformer consumer

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[13] See Mazzarella (2012) for a comparable analysis of how decentralization in TV production in India was motivated by a desire to 'get close' to the audience, specifically as a way to control the behavior of low income viewers as part of development initiatives. These efforts encountered similar challenges as policy makers realized that for TV to be truly transformative, the 'experts' had to surrender control and acknowledge TV as an unpredictable medium of collective self-making rather than a medium for the one way transfer of information.

segments, to allow marketers to imagine the brand as engaging in dialogue with each of its market segments. We will see the ambiguity of the marketing imaginary of this 'dialogue' – on the one hand, 'brand' and 'consumer' personas are imagined as pre-existing these dialogic encounters. On the other, there is a – sometimes implicit – acknowledgment on the part of marketers that it is only through these encounters that these constructs of 'brand' and 'consumer' persona come into being.

As the brand team tried to assert control over the dynamics of mediation through face-to-face marketing efforts, we see the flipside of the frequent claims made in the advertising industry – both globally and in South Africa – about dialogue 'empowering' the consumer to 'talk back' to brands. Such a framing masks the way in which face-to-face brand-consumer interactions may seek to increase the brand's control of the dynamics of communication[14]. As John Durham Peters (1999) shows, despite the fact that in Western philosophy going back as far as Plato the two-person face-to-face dialogue has been constructed as the most authentic and participatory form of communication, there is dark underside to dialogue relating to its potential use as a means to assert control over the communicative act, where the sender attempts to exclude those for whom the message was not intended, to regulate the designated receiver's uptake of the message, and to force reciprocation on the part of the message recipient. He suggests that attempts to make mass media communication more like face-to-face dialogue fail to appreciate this coercive potential. He argues for a re-evaluation of the liberatory dimension of the impersonal dissemination of mass media in which address is open to all and the receiver is free to engage or not[15].

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[14] For a recent example of this in the South African context, see Al Mackay's discussion of how in the 'dialogue' between brand and consumer, consumer feedback – even in the form of complaints – may be used to create greater brand loyalty and superior products, which can both be channeled to boost company profits (http://www.marklives.com/2015/06/brand-politics-the-gift-of-protest/?category=communication).
[15] His paradigmatic illustration of disseminative communication is Jesus' parable of the sower, in an interesting resonance with the religious resonances of the 'spray and pray' approach.

In what follows, I examine the face-to-face marketing efforts targeting the Transformers and Sense of

Knowing consumers respectively as sites in which the brand sought to enter into relations of reciprocity

with consumers. In these interactions, the brand offered consumers recognition – through giving

tangible and intangible 'gifts' – and sought reciprocal recognition in return, seeking to mediate itself and

each consumer segment as discrete entities. In this way, the brand team sought to sustain the fiction of

'individuals' engaged in a dialogue, while keeping the brand's 'conversations' with the Transformers and

Sense of Knowing consumers separate from one another. However, the forms of recognition offered to

each of these segments – and how this was balanced with the aspirational quality of the advertising –

served to mediate two very different kinds of consumer personas: Transformers as defective consumers-

in-training, and Sense of Knowing as embodying the ideal consumer, thus affirming the marketers' own

identities.

Talking to the Transformers

As suggested above, in South African advertising discourses on how to market to low-income

consumers, 'giving' is framed as important, whether this is 'giving back' – in which the conceptualization

is that companies are reciprocating for the value they have extracted from these low income

communities – or 'giving before you get', in which companies frame themselves as 'giving' in the hope

that this will make them appear as a generous benefactor to these communities, attracting new

customers and encouraging repeat purchase and brand loyalty. The main ways in which companies seek

to 'give' to low income consumers is through free giveaways and competitions offering prizes[16], and

through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives. As discussed above, CSR was less of an option

for Sedgwick's, as it was an alcohol brand which was strictly regulated in terms of what it could do in

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[16] I heard the opinion expressed repeatedly amongst advertisers and marketers that these competitions should give prizes that were 'good' for low-income consumers, such as education or skills training (according to GG Alcock, the most requested prize in market research amongst low-income consumers was a job).

communities. We also saw that Sedgwick's had tried the 'free giveaway' strategy with the 'tin mugs', but that this was considered an undesirable marketing strategy by Kelly, the brand manager on the client side, primarily because it was too expensive to give a mug away with every bottle purchased. Competitions were preferable to these free giveaways. Competitions only gave prizes to a few consumers, while offering the hope of winning to all who entered. In this way, competitions seemed the ideal mode of giving to low income consumers in a way that would facilitate mutual relations of recognition, fostering reciprocity and 'love', and in the process, teaching low income consumers to maintain a structure of attachment to the brand in the face of repeated disappointment.

The winter-cycle competition – "Win Your Warmest Winter Ever" – where consumers could win prizes in-store was the 'face-to-face' intervention chosen by the Sedgwick's team to market the brand to the Transformer market. The strategic marketing function of the competition was to persuade Transformer consumers at the moment of purchase to buy Sedgwick's rather than a cheaper brand. As I discussed in the previous chapter, marketing research indicated that the Transformer market were ideal consumers according to branding orthodoxy – they loved the Sedgwick's brand, associating it with fond memories, and they viewed it as a high quality product, not 'down market' as many of the Sense of Knowing consumers did. However, instead of this 'brand love' leading to purchasing loyalty, as branding orthodoxy promised, sales amongst the Transformer segment were dropping.

In explaining why this drop might be occurring, the brand team drew on South African marketing discourses characterizing low income consumers, as well as the nature of their expertise as advertising practitioners. No one on the brand team ever expressed the opinion that sales were falling amongst low-income consumers because they had very little money, and bought the cheapest bottle in the store, if they bought anything, because that was all they could afford. The marketers' perception was that if only the marketing strategy was right, Transformers could always be persuaded to buy the slightly more expensive bottle of Sedgwick's rather than the 'me too' brands. Here we see the fantasy of the low

income Black consumer as providing a potentially lucrative, untapped market. This fantasy was sustained by influential marketing research studies such as the 'Survivors' series of presentations released by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, the institute behind the 'Black Diamond' reports (see Chapter 5). One of the claims of these presentations is that there are 'missing billions' in the South African economy, and that these flow within the informal economy. If only marketers could market their brands in a 'relevant' way to low-income consumers, they could tap some of these 'missing billions' for their own profit margins. This is an instance of the 'marketization of poverty' (Schwittay 2011), where poor people must be framed as an attractive investment option to persuade brands to invest in marketing to them. It is also an instance of professionals cultivating their own faith in the power of advertising, where advertising has the self-standing ability to constitute consumers regardless of sociological variables; everyone is framed as a potential consumer, if only they can be interpellated in the right way. Often, advertising professionals had to sell this faith to corporate marketing executives. As two such professionals working for the insurance company Metropolitan Life told me at a conference on marketing to low income consumers in 2014, they faced a challenge when convincing those above them in the corporate hierarchy to invest in designing products for the low income market, as many of their bosses felt that if the poor don't have access to disposable income, they can't buy the product, no matter how good it is.

We can also interpret the brand team's analysis of dropping sales amongst Transformers in light of the importance of branding to the expertise of advertising professionals. To acknowledge that Transformers would simply buy the cheapest product would be to cut out the 'added value' that advertising professionals framed themselves as providing. As marketing guru Philip Kotler declared long ago, if you are forced to compete on price alone, you are a commodity, not a brand (in Mootee 2013). Thus an important part of their expertise was using branding to counteract any tendency for consumers to simply buy the cheapest product. Furthermore, when adding the value of brand identity, a focus on

intangible values rather than qualities of the product was seen by marketing professionals as more

challenging, interesting and thus requiring more expertise. For example, I spoke to one marketing

executive from South African Breweries about the strategy for Hansa beer (see Chapter 5). He explained

the brand team had decided to focus the brand identity more on the intrinsics of the product, rather

than the intangible value it was adding to low-income consumers' lives. He described the reaction of his

colleagues to this shift in strategy, as involving comments along the lines of, Isn't it boring to just market

on intrinsics? This focus of branding expertise on intangible rather than tangible benefits also shaped

the response of the Sedgwicks' brand team to the drop in sales.

In this way, the nature of advertising expertise and beliefs about the hidden spending power of low

income consumers informed the stance of the brand team, which did not discuss the possibility that

Transformers might not be buying Sedgwick's simply because they could not afford it. Rather, two

explanations for the drop in sales emerged. Firstly, some speculated that in the moment, the lure of a

cheaper brand promising the same alcohol content was too great a temptation for consumers

considered to be driven by the desire to become intoxicated and escape their lives. Others believed that

although Transformers loved Sedgwick's, the brand was not 'talking' to them and thus making them feel

like valued consumers. The relationship needed to be rekindled, and cathected with the desire

necessary for commodity purchase, and framing the brand as a generous 'giver' of prizes was one option

for doing this made available by branding strategy. The competition served to address both of these

possible reasons for declining sales: it provided Transformers with an alternative source of 'instant grat',

and it gave them 'recognition', of their needs, and of their status as important consumers, while adding

the excitement of speculation as a way to induce them to buy. I will start by unpacking the dynamics of

how the team conceptualized and tried to deal with the Transformers' supposed desire for 'instant grat',

and then consider how the brand team attempted to offer them recognition as a way to instigate

reciprocity.

'Instant gratification' and the pedagogy of competition

This construction of Transformers as driven by the desire for what the team called 'instant grat' explained their deviation from marketing orthodoxy with reference to an alternative long-established characterization of Blacks as unable to contain their desires for alcohol and other commodities (Rogerson 1994, Mager 2006). Being driven by the quest for instant gratification of their desire to possess objects and satiate bodily desires was a marker of a 'bad' consumer for a number of reasons. First of all, being capable of sublimating desire was necessary to establish a long-term relationship between consumer and brand; if a consumer simply gave in to what they desired in the moment there was no reason to think that they would stay loyal to a particular brand, as desire was unpredictable and fickle. At the same time, some desire was necessary to impel purchase, and these things sometimes came into tension with one another, as we will see. Secondly, being driven by the desire for instant gratification indicated a focus on the functional benefits of products (in this case, the capacity of alcohol to intoxicate) rather than the intangible benefits of the brand. As we've seen, the logic of branding values the latter over the former. Characterizing Transformers in this way was in line with the characterization of low-income Black consumers as overly 'literal' and incapable of the abstraction required for metaphor, which we have encountered before.

The in-store competition was supposed to provide Transformers with an alternative source of instantaneous reward at the moment of purchase – the possibility of winning a prize. When buying a bottle of Sedgwick's, the customer would be given a scratch card, and stand a chance to win one of the branded winter items kept and displayed in-store. If they didn't win in-store, they received a code that they could use to enter again online for a second chance to win[17]. However, the competition did more than simply address Transformers as 'bad' consumers, craving instant gratification; its structure served

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[17] This was an experiment with expanding the digital side of the brand's campaign – which had previously been focused only on the SOK market – to the Transformer market.

to 'develop' Transformers to be closer to the ideal consumer posited by branding ideology. Although at times this training of the Transformers was implicit, some on the team were quite explicit about the need for this 'development'. I asked Daniel, the head digital strategist on the account, whether Transformer consumers drink based on the brand image of Sedgwick's, and he answered, "No, but we need to make them, because it's being undercut by me-too brands". 'Me-too' brands were those that offered the same functional benefit of Sedgwick's – cheap alcohol – without the brand name of Sedgwick's. Transformers needed to be taught that the brand offered 'added value'. For Daniel, this added value should start with material benefits (such as two-for-one specials), and should progress to benefits beyond the material commodity, such as social warmth, the aspirational image offered by the brand, the recognition it offered low-income consumers, and CSR initiatives. According to this perspective, Transformers needed to be taught to appreciate and love the brand based on this 'added value' it provided, and that this love should motivate their purchase, rather than the desire for cheap alcohol. An important part of cultivating this brand love was fostering a structure of attachment immune to disappointment, where low-income consumers engaged in speculation and risk-taking even in the face of repeated failure to win. It was much cheaper for the brand to give hope rather than to give free add-ons such as tin mugs or other guaranteed material rewards.

In this way, these competitions served both to mediate Transformers as problematic consumers, and to 'correct' this defect, thus actualizing them into 'good' consumers-in-training[18]. This is an instance of the ambiguity of advertising ideology, which both addresses consumers as already having fixed identities,

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[18] Not everyone in the team agree that Transformers needed to be – or could be – 'developed' in this way. For example, Clinton believed it was perfectly fine to keep motivating the Transformers through 'instant grat' prizes. It is likely that this had a lot to do with his relative distance from branding discourse – as a sales rep, Clinton was not a devout believer in branding, preferring a hard sell approach at times, and switching between calling Sedgwick's a 'product' and a 'brand' in our interview, something which none of the other team members did. However, even Clinton agreed with the superior economic logic of the brand, acknowledging that providing 'instant grat' prizes was expensive, and that if Transformers could be taught to buy according to brand loyalty, Distell would have to shell out less on prizes. However, my argument is that despite differences of opinion on the team, the logic of the form of competition itself performed a pedagogical function, mediating the Transformers as consumers-in-training.

while at the same time capable of being transformed through the encounter with advertising. This ambiguity allowed the competitions to recognize and thus constitute the Transformers as two things at once, in line with the 'double bind' of the 'other consumer', which must be both utterly other to the whitened middle class self, and potentially identical to this self. On the one hand, Transformers had to be affirmed as driven by 'instant grat', and on the other they had to be constituted as 'consumers in training', potentially ideal consumers motivated by the long term temporality of brand love. In this double address, branding deferred the promise to actualize Transformers as equal consumers, like the developmental logic of colonialism, where actualization required a long term relationship with the brand to achieve. At the same time, this address keeps them as 'other' consumers where the tension between desire and love inherent to all brand consumer encounters could be acknowledged, as it could not be in relation to Sense of Knowing consumers.

We can see that the form of the Warmest Winter competition performed this pedagogical function on a number of levels. Firstly, it taught consumers to delay gratification – and thus to sublimate short-term, unpredictable desire for a commodity into long-term love for a brand – and to make purchasing decisions based on the latter rather than the former. The prizes displayed in-store were designed to kindle desire, and to motivate the consumer to buy Sedgwick's to earn the chance to experience the excitement of playing the scratch card game and to possibly win a prize. Already there is an element of deferral and fostering a tolerance for risk and uncertainty – instead of exchanging money for the certainty of possessing a bottle of fortified wine, the consumer is being enticed to pay a little more for a bottle of fortified wine plus a scratch-card that could result in the additional benefit of a prize. However, the possibility also existed that they could win nothing. In this eventuality, they were offered a second chance of winning in the online competition, encouraging them to delay gratification once again, this time according to a longer duration – the online prizes were not awarded immediately, but on a monthly basis. In this way, the form of the competition served to teach Transformers to defer commodity desire,

hoping for a greater reward in the future, with the brand serving as the structure articulating present to future. This also served the function of building a tolerance for disappointment, necessary for love as a structure of attachment to emerge. This extension of the duration between purchase of the commodity and the acquisition of a prize served to transform the mode of interaction from short-term commodity exchange to a long-term relationship, where consumers stood the chance to receive more than the commodity they paid for. Such a prize could thus be construed as a 'gift', the value added by the brand, which marketers hoped could build an affective relationship of reciprocity between consumer and brand in a way that instantaneous commodity exchange could not.

Secondly, the competitions were designed to teach Transformers to be aspirational consumers, which required a number of pre-existing orientations that the form of the competitions sought to instill. These requisite orientations are made clear by marketing theorist David Aaker's explanation why Nike is an aspirational brand: "The brand [Nike] is very aspirational in the sense that wearing Nike represents what the users aspire to be like rather than their current self-image." (quoted in Mazzarella 2003, 102). Here we see that to consume an aspirational brand – and thus to be an aspirational consumer – requires that one aspire to an ideal self, different from one's current self, and that one recognize the brand as an index of that ideal self. Although branding discourse references that 'ideal self' as pre-existing the consumption of the brand, it is in fact the images and discourses provided by the brand and other circulating mass media forms that participate in crystalizing the consumer's conceptions of their 'ideal self', their 'current self' and the gap between these (cf. Warner 2002 on this logic in relation to publics); the brand's recognition actualizes inchoate potential into an 'ideal self' to aspire to[19].

However, we saw in the previous chapter how for many on the Sedgwick's marketing team, there was a deep skepticism that Transformer consumers would respond to the 'ideal selves' embodied in images of

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[19] In crystalizing imaginaries in this way, advertising may be seen to play on the difference identified by Brian Massumi (2002) between the 'potential' and the 'possible', transforming the former into the latter.

a consumerist middle-class lifestyle, and the marketers wondered what Transformers aspired to, and if they aspired at all. Having consumer aspirations that were seen as inscrutable or dormant was problematic for those trying to market to Transformers, especially in light of my argument in this thesis that in the contemporary South African advertising industry, Black consumers continue to offer both a fantasy of untold profits – as they did during apartheid – and pose the threat that their aspirations may not be harnessable by market structures, and thus may manifest in more radical, political ways. To make the aspirations of Transformers harnessable, they had to be taught to aspire, and to recognize the brand as the enabler of those aspirations. This second element is important; as we will see in chapter 5, a brand offering the opportunity to index an aspirational self was no longer seen as enough to persuade South African consumers to make a purchase – it had to offer them the means to actualize that self in a material way.

The pedagogy of the competitions involved teaching Transformers to hope for a better future and to take risks based on the belief such a future was possible (while accepting the inevitability of disappointment). This recalls Berlant's invocation of the importance of futurity in ideals of romantic love, where 'tomorrow is another day'. At the same time, these hopes and aspirations had to be connected to the market, by showing low-income consumers that the brand could help them better their lives – materially, by giving them a prize, and intangibly, by actualizing them into aspirational consumers-in-training. In this way, the competitions taught Transformers to subscribe to the speculative logic of "casino capitalism" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, Strange 1986), rejecting the option of paying a cheap price for what they knew they would get in the present (a bottle of fortified wine), in favor of paying more for what they might get in the future (a bottle of fortified wine plus a prize).

The in-store, 'face-to-face' aspect of the competitions was important in fostering hope in low-income consumers that despite repeated disappointment, one day they might really win. Clinton, the head of sales in the Eastern Cape – considered by the team to be the most 'in tune' with the Transformer market

segment – explained that simply offering a Transformer consumer the chance to win a prize was not enough. Transformer consumers assumed that if it was a national prize, shown only on a poster in the store, someone in the big urban centers of Johannesburg or Cape Town would win, never them. And so they simply wouldn't enter, and would continue to buy alcohol based on the cheapest price[20]. In response to this insight, the Sedgwick's team had developed the strategy of in-store competitions, which were intended to convince the Transformers that they really could win, even if they never did, by having the prizes visible in the store, and having regular local winners who would hopefully spread the word to their friends, thus keeping hope alive in the face of disappointment. If the competitions were successful pedagogical exercises, the brand would be recognized as the element tying together the current self, and the ideal self – the aspirational consumer who could win a prize – as it constituted both through recognition. For the Transformers, being actualized into developing aspirational consumers who believed in the possibility of a better future was the added value that went beyond the product and that marketers thus hoped would be attributed to the brand. We can see the parallel logic between the 'gift' of a possible prize over and above the commodity purchased, and the 'gift' of the intangible value of the brand, framed as having a value outside the calculus of the market[21].

I suggest that in the context of the competition, the double bind of the 'other' consumer becomes a way for advertising professionals to manage the tensions in branding ideology, which requires both desire

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[20] This was not the first time I had heard this argument. GG Alcock, a veteran in marketing to low-income consumers in South Africa who had originally worked with Group Africa, the pioneer of traveling road shows mentioned above, explained that competitions could be very effective for low-income consumers, but only if they believed 'people like them' could win the prizes. He had run campaigns that tried to convince low-income consumers of this possibility by having live radio crossings to winners during popular shows on African language radio stations, and making sure they had winners from all over the country, not just the big cities. These winners would be interviewed, and asked their name and where they lived. Once radio listeners actually heard a named, localized person talking about winning the prize, competition entries shot up. Alcock voiced the persuasiveness of the live radio crossings in the following way: "I heard a lady who sounded like she could be my neighbor, that's how I knew it was true".

and love, each with their own temporality, while protecting both their expertise as advertising professionals, and their idealized identity as embodying whitened middle classness – as we saw in the previous chapter, these two aspects of their identities were inextricably linked. Concomitantly, examining how the competition was supposed to operate allows us insight into how advertisers' conceptualized the power of advertising – to transform and to pin down – two capacities that themselves came into contradiction with each other, undoing the promise of advertising to assert control over the unruly low income Black consumer.

Forms of recognition: picking the prizes

So far, we have seen how the form of the in-store competition recognized Transformers as both defective, and 'developing' aspirational consumers, attempting to mediate the tensions between brand love and commodity desire implicit in theories of branding, and to cultivate structures of attachment based on ideals of reciprocity. However, the content of the competition – the prizes offered – was also an important aspect of mediating consumer to brand and brand to consumer. The prizes had to recognize the Transformers' desires in order to motivate them to enter, as well as to forge the bond between brand and consumer prized by branding ideology. As suggested above, recognition is a mode of relationality privileging knowledge. In terms of marketing theory, if you could show Transformer consumers that you 'knew' and 'understood' them, they would be appreciative of this gesture, and would reciprocate by remaining brand loyal – a material instantiation of the turn-taking envisioned by the model of 'dialogue'. A prize had to be personal, like the words addressed to a partner in a dialogue. In this way, it differed from a commodity, which was universally the same, and thus indifferent to the identity of the purchaser. We can see the parallel here with the impersonal 'spray' of mass media – anyone with 'ears to hear' can take up the mass media messages, anyone with money can buy the

commodity. In contrast, a prize was tailored to show a consumer segment the brand 'knew' them[22].

However, recognizing Transformers through prizes proved to be a challenge, as those on the marketing team were unsure as to what made the Transformer consumer tick, and how they wanted to be recognized. As we saw in the previous chapter, a confidence amongst some that Transformers wanted an idealized middle-class consumer lifestyle co-existed with admissions by others of total ignorance as to the aspirations of Transformers, and a deep ambivalence that 'they' wanted to be like 'us'.

When designing the Win Your Warmest Winter competition, the team had settled on prizes that were supposed to recognize Transformers based on their 'needs' – the fact that they often lacked access to electricity, warm clothing and blankets, and that winters were thus particularly harsh for them. To indicate that the brand 'understood' these needs, the competition offered branded blankets and other winter goods as prizes. Anne, the account director for Sedgwick's, explained that these prizes had been chosen in response to the team's analysis of past competitions run by the brand, designed by the previous advertising agency. The most recent of these, held the year before 99cents had taken over the account, had offered a Jeep as a prize in the national competition. Anne, as well as others on the team at 99cents, were highly critical of this prize – and the agency that had chosen it – as they believed it incorrectly assumed that Transformers would aspire to what a wealthy person living in the suburbs aspired to. She explained that a Jeep was not 'relevant' to Transformers, as most of them didn't have a driver's license, they had nowhere to keep the car, so it would probably just get stolen, and the petrol would be far too expensive. The winter-cycle competition was designed as a counter to the Jeep competition – the prizes were small, multiple, and won locally on the spot, rather than large, single, not

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[22] Picking prizes that would 'recognize' Transformer consumers while not alienating SOK consumers – remembering that these competitions were run nation-wide – was a whole other can of worms. Some on the team proposed prizes that were functional but in line with the 'vintage cool' aesthetic. However, others worried that Transformers would interpret 'vintage cool' as 'old', echoing anxieties around the hue of the wood discussed in the previous chapter. As a compromise, the chosen prizes focused on functional benefits, but were branded with the distinctive 'vintage cool' Sedgwick's font, and were displayed in-store in a beautifully lacquered and carved wooden crate – something that was considered a compromise between looking expensive and 'rustic'.

tangibly present in-store, and won a few months after entry. These prizes recognized Transformers based on their perceived needs, rather than on their aspirations – and were in fact part of kindling aspiration routed through the brand, as I argue above – and were designed to communicate that the brand 'understood' them, thus seeking to initiate relations of mutual recognition between brand and consumer.

However, the confidence of some in the team that prizes that 'recognized' Transformers on the basis of their needs would be the most successful proved misplaced. This became clear in a client-agency meeting, where Kelly, the Sedgwick's brand manager on the Distell side, presented the entry stats for various previous competitions. These stats revealed that the Jeep competition had been one of the most popular competitions amongst Transformers, much to the bemusement of the 99cents team. They had assumed that the Jeep competition would have failed to resonate with Transformer consumers as it did not recognize them in their particularity, which for many in the Sedgwick's team, was defined by their lack and poverty. However, despite the absence of cues that the Jeep was 'for them', Transformer consumers had somehow recognized the Jeep as embodying their aspirations, and so had been motivated to enter the competition. The slippery nature of the aspirations of low-income South Africans, which moved in and out of market structures in unpredictable ways and intersected surprisingly at times with the desire for recognition, continued to frustrate the Sedgwick's marketers. However, these findings about the success of the Jeep competition did not deter the team from implementing the in-store Warmest Winter competitions. They seemed puzzled as to why the Jeep competition had been a success, but at the same time, it confirmed their characterization of the Transformers as inscrutable and unpredictable. The 'experts' on the Transformer segment – the sales rep Clinton, and the tavern owners in the Eastern Cape – supported the idea of small, in-store prizes, and I never heard anyone bring up the Jeep competition again.

However, recognizing Transformers on the basis of their needs informed by their poverty was not the only form of recognition the brand could offer. This became clear in discussions about a planned future competition targeted at Transformers. The proposed competition was a local draughts (checkers) competition sponsored by the brand to be held in the Eastern Cape, the heartland of the Transformer market. This was primarily Kelly's initiative, who had come up with the idea in conjunction with Clinton, the head sales rep in the Eastern Cape[23]. Kelly believed the draughts league was one way to be 'relevant' to Transformers; to become involved with something they cared about, and so win 'share of heart' not just 'share of throat', as marketing speak put it. This offered a way to recognize them in their particularity without recognizing them on the basis of a perceived lack. Draughts was a popular pastime amongst low-income Sedgwick's drinkers in the Eastern Cape, and was generally played in taverns, and so seemed like a perfect fit for the brand. The idea was to organize a league involving popular taverns throughout the region which would each have a team of players. The competition would run for several months, and would end with a knock-out phase held in the draughts heartland of the township taverns around Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape.

Although the competition was still only an idea at the time I was at the agency, there had been some discussion about what prizes might be offered to the winners. Some on the team felt that giving monetary prizes was a bad idea. Those who held this view believed that all that the money would simply

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[23] This was part of Kelly's broader efforts to increase the 'relevance' of the brand to the Transformer market, and to make it clear that the brand was 'talking to them'. She had suggested various CSR initiatives to Distell to establish a presence in low-income communities. But government regulations on what alcohol companies could do in terms of CSI were very strict, limiting any corporate activity that might be seen by minors. Because of these limitations, Distell had provided some programs teaching business skills to tavern owners, but otherwise had not done much to build the brand in communities through CSR initiatives. In fact, some of those working on the campaign felt that Distell should not go the CSR route. In an illustration of the importance of brand personification, one of the junior members on the team explained to me that alcohol companies couldn't be sincere and engage in community development projects. They sold alcohol, so pretending they cared about communities was inauthentic, and not conducive to convincing consumers that they were an 'authentic' brand. Community development was the space of brands for product categories such as banks. According to this view, if they wanted to be perceived as genuine, alcohol brands had to focus on entertainment and fun.

be spent on the spot at the tavern on more alcohol (in line with the construction of Transformers as driven by 'instant grat'), thus leaving no broader impact on the community, and thwarting the attempt to win 'share of heart' amongst a broader group of people (remembering that part of the brand challenge was to recruit new users). Also, it was felt that the associations around money were off-brand; money was 'cold' and 'impersonal', and not indexical of the social warmth of face-to-face relations with which the team was trying to associate Sedgwick's. Those opposing monetary prizes suggested giving vouchers to grocery stores instead, which it was believed would at least force winners to delay gratification long enough to go to a different store, and create the possibility that he might take the voucher home to his wife and that she might use it to buy groceries other than alcohol. The community would see that the brand recognized their needs, and would reciprocate by becoming loyal consumers.

However, others disagreed with this strategy, arguing that it was patronizing. Winners should be given cash as recognition of their capacity to make decisions about what they wanted to buy, without attempting to make these decisions for them based on marketers' ideas about what they needed. As brand manager Kelly put it, "We can't be presumptuous and assume we know what is going to better their lives. Money gives you the freedom to decide what your priorities are." Here we are reminded of Marx's argument about money as an impersonal, universal medium of exchange allowing a disjuncture between a person's particular capacities and what they can acquire through the market. Whereas Marx condemned this characteristic – as he believed it absolves the holders of money of the need to cultivate themselves as the people capable of eliciting the things they desire from others – it is precisely this capacity to free those marginalized by the market from their particularity and the constraints of that identity that makes money such a desirable prize.

Here we see how the approach of the draughts competition to offering recognition balanced with aspiration differs from that offered by the Win Your Warmest Winter competition. The Warmest Winter competition recognized Transformers through their needs defined by their poverty, and offered

aspiration through the possibility of winning a prize, but a prize still recognizing their particularity defined by lack. On another level, it recognized Transformers as defective consumers driven by instant gratification, but offered to train them to become aspirational consumers, as I argued above. As we saw in the previous chapter, the team struggled to calibrate what I have called 'aspirational recognition' when addressing low income Black consumers – the imperative in advertising to recognize both actual and ideal selves; to make consumers feel that the brand is 'talking to them' while simultaneously recognizing their aspirations to be something different and better. Splitting these two selves and projecting them onto different points in time was one response to this challenge, with one recognized as the flawed self of the present, and the other recognized as ideal self of the future. In contrast, the draughts competition calibrated aspirational recognition without this deferral; it recognized the particularity of Transformer consumers not through lack or need, but through a valued social practice, and money offered them access to self-transformation and transcendence from their particularity in the present, actualizing them as consumers capable of self-determination.

In this way, we can see how face-to-face competitions attempted to recognize Transformer consumers, soliciting their reciprocation for this recognition, and thus seeking to mediate the personas of both consumer segment and brand, while fostering brand love as a structure of attachment over time. However, the form that this recognition should take and how it should be balanced with aspiration was a challenge for the marketing team. I turn now to examine how the Sedgwick's team attempted to engage in relations of mutual recognition with the Sense of Knowing segment, constituting them as ideal consumers and itself as a 'cool brand' in the process.

As the form of the competition mediated Transformers as consumers-in-training, it was designed to further mediate the brand's own 'face' to the Transformer market – as the giver of 'gifts' over and above the commodities it sold, in the form of material prizes and an aspirational consumer self – which would allow the brand to achieve the personhood required for forging relationships with consumers. In the

process of mutual recognition structured by the form of the competition, we can see the specificity of branding within the paradigm of brand humanization. Although many scholars of advertising (see for example Williamson 1978) have shown how advertising images work by offering the consumer an idealized version of themselves – tapping into hopes, fears and aspirations as it plays a role in generating these – we see how the brand as a giver of 'gifts' differs from these dynamics. In the latter, it is not only the ideal self of the consumer depicted in the images that must be recognized and accepted by the receiver of advertising messages; the recipient must go one step further and recognize – and thus constitute – the persona of the brand as the agent offering this ideal self, as well as material 'gifts' such as prizes. Just as in Strathern's (1988) analysis of gift-giving in Melanesia, the giving of gifts could serve to constitute a subject with agency – a brand that 'shared the warmth' by giving away prizes, and by offering an ideal aspirational consumer self.

However, although both the figures of the 'brand' and 'Transformers' were constituted through recognition – at least if the dynamics of the competitions played out as marketers hoped they would – these relations were not entirely symmetrical; although both brand and consumer required the recognition of the other, it was the Transformers that were framed as dependent on the brand to transform them from unruly consumers to tractable consumers-in-training. Here we see how relations of recognition can mediate unequal entities. Just as in Hegel's theorization of mediation – where all elements of the universe have the potential of Spirit within them, but only conscious, rational subjects can actualize this potential through recognition – not all actors involved were equally capable of actualizing potential through recognition: Transformers were dependent for the brand for this actualization, but not vice versa. As we saw in the previous chapter, the brand persona was caught up in various ways with the brand team's own identities, as they – as representatives of the Sense of Knowing consumers – were its 'source of image'. Thus relations of recognition between the brand and Transformers served indirectly to constitute the brand team as actualizers of consumer potential,

consistent with the dynamics of racialization at play during apartheid, where whiteness was framed as necessary to actualize the consumer potential of Blacks. We will see how in the process of mediation between brand and the Sense of Knowing market, the form of recognition sought was very different, and the relations of dependence between brand and consumer segment were reversed.

'Sharing the warmth' at the Getaway Show

As we saw in the previous chapter, part of the Sedgwick's marketing strategy was to premiumize the brand in the eyes of the Sense of Knowing market by associating it with an idealized version of their lifestyle, and disassociating it with low-income drinkers who drank it just to get drunk, which was believed to be a prime cause of the brand's 'down market' image. Face-to-face marketing targeted at SOK consumers was a key element of the strategy of constituting the SOK segment as the brand's 'source of image'. By providing 'experiences' at branded events, the Sedgwick's team would be able to "show the Sense of Knowing that this is a cool brand, not just tell them", in the words of Steve, the creative director on the account. Through these experiences, SOK would be persuaded to recognize Sedgwick's as a cool brand, and thus constitute it as such. In this way, whereas in the case of the competitions, it was the Transformers who depended on the brand to shift them from defective consumers to developing consumers, in the case of the SOK market, it was the brand that depended on consumers for their recognition in order to be transformed from an 'under the table' brand, to a 'cool' brand.

These experiential marketing events were called 'brand activations', and were held at lifestyle and music festivals, attended by high-income consumers, where the poor were kept out by high entrance fees. The boundedness of these face-to-face encounters promised to provide the marketers more control over how the brand was perceived by its affluent segment, fostering brand love and loyalty, and again, framing the brand as a giver of gifts was an important element of this. Whereas Transformers had been

given the 'gift' of material prizes and actualization into aspirational consumers-in-training, Sense of

Knowing consumers were given the 'gift' of experience which recognized their status as 'ideal'

consumers. In both cases, Sedgwick's was framed as the agent providing these 'gifts', in an effort to

'humanize' the brand. The experiences at these activations were facilitated by the brand ambassadors,

who served as the brand's intermediaries, and were drawn from a similar social milieu to both the

patrons and the marketing professionals, reinforcing the recognition provided by the brand of these

consumers' status as ideal, cool and sophisticated.

As mentioned above, these activations drew on the principles of experiential marketing, a marketing

practice critical of mass media approaches. Experiential marketers argue that mass media advertising

treats consumers as merely 'eyeballs' on which TV communications can make an imprint. They argue

further that brand communications have to engage the senses, and involve immersive embodied

experience in order to create lasting memories and emotional connections between brand and

consumers (Lindstrom 2005). But also crucial is the involvement of live human beings as representatives

of the brand and facilitators of this 'experience'. For marketing guru Max Lendermann, this use of

humans addresses a further shortcoming of mass media, which he insists are not sufficient to create

bonds of love between brands and consumers. 'Living media' are necessary. As he puts it, "humans

connect with humans. They don't hug TV screens or radios" (2006: 11)[24]. Here we see how 'humanizing'

involves more than just developing a brand personality, but involves developing the capacity to sense

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[24] One particularly striking example of the use of 'living media' discussed by Lendermann – which illustrates how brands attempt to 'humanize' by appropriating the sensory capacities of human representatives – involved an activation for a hand cream. Women were hired to go out into the street during winter and find other women waiting at bus stops. They would offer them free hand massages using the product. The author describes each taking off their gloves and the sensual pleasure of feeling another warm pair of hands massaging in the cream. This experience of physical warmth was translated into emotional warmth as the women chatted with one another, with those hired by the brand making sure to ask those they were massaging about their feelings about hand-cream and other products sold by the company. This information would be relayed to the company after the massage was over. Here, the properties of particular human bodies and their sensory capacities are leveraged to create lasting relationships between the massage recipients and the brand.

and forge affective bonds, capacities appropriated from real living humans. For Sedgwick's, brand ambassadors served as these 'living media'[25].

In order to understand better the dynamics of mediation at play in the relations between Sedgwick's and the Sense of Knowing market segment, I spent some time working as a brand ambassador at activations for Sedgwick's. One of these activations was held at an outdoor lifestyle expo sponsored by Getaway magazine, called the Getaway Show. Like many of the festivals where Sedgwick's held activations, this festival took place in winter – over three days in a very chilly Johannesburg – and so provided an excellent opportunity for the brand to communicate both its literal warming properties, and its identity as a facilitator of social warmth, in line with the brand's Big Idea of 'share the warmth', discussed in the last chapter. The expo was held at the Coca Cola 'Dome', a popular venue for a variety of events including expos and rock concerts. Although, as we have seen, the typification of a Sense of Knowing consumer was a White, middle-aged, high-income man, the patrons at the Getaway Show were quite racially diverse (although majority White), and consisted mainly of family groups and older couples.

There were eight brand ambassadors working at the expo, including myself. They were mostly university students (one was a recent graduate) in their early to mid-20s, split equally between male and female, and all White except for one Black male. Sedgwick's had two branded spaces at the Getaway show, and the ambassadors rotated shifts between these two spaces. The first branded space was inside the dome. The dome was where the majority of the expo was housed, and contained many different stands representing stores selling gear for camping, hiking and other outdoor activities, as well as adventure

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[25] The term 'living media' is a trademarked term for brand ambassadors owned by South African experiential marketing company Phat. It is part of a broader turn in marketing to using humans as media. Daniel, the head digital strategist for Sedgwick's, explained that in addition to brand ambassadors, the Sedgwick's team sought to recruit 'brand advocates' – loyal consumers who loved the brand and spread the word to their friends and family of their own accord – as a way to avoid the expense of buying traditional media. Using 'living media' was the cheaper option.

sports tour companies. The Sedgwick's stand in the dome consisted of the aesthetic elements designed by the creative team at 99cents, brand manager Kelly from Distell, and Have You Heard, the agency running the activations. These elements were designed to communicate 'warmth' and 'retro cool', and included carved wooden crates, stenciled with the brand logo and lacquered in rich warm tones, filled with straw and dried proteas (the South African national flower); branded winter gear such as blankets, sleeping bags and hats; a guitar and a bicycle, as well as other branded merchandise such as enamel kettles and mugs. In front of the decorative elements were tables on which a few of these branded enamel kettles were placed, filled with Sedgwick's mixed with ginger ale or lemonade. Brand ambassadors were stationed behind the tables to pour the samples for expo visitors, and 'educate' the customers in line with the 'mixology' strategy discussed in the previous chapter, explaining how Sedgwick's could be enjoyed in summer with a mixer, as well as drunk neat in winter.

The second branded space was outdoors, just outside the dome, under a large tent-like structure. This was the bigger activation area, and the focal point for enabling brand-consumer interactions. If the space inside the dome was the space of 'knowing', where ambassadors 'educated' consumers, the outdoor activation space was one of 'sense', where a sensory experience was cultivated in order to communicate the properties of the brand to the consumer – a 'warm' brand which facilitated social warmth. The space was filled with large gas heaters which provided a welcome respite from the icy outdoor air. It included a stage with live music, filling the air with 'warm' folksy sounds, mainly of acoustic guitar and vocals. As with the ambassadors, these young musicians were all White, except for one keyboardist, who was 'Coloured', in terms of the apartheid-era system of racial classification. The space included large comfortable beanbags in front of the stage where patrons could relax and enjoy the music with a shot of Sedgwick's, as well as wooden tables and benches where they could socialize with friends and family, placed a bit further away from the stage to facilitate conversation. There was also a bar where patrons could buy Sedgwick's drinks. The space included a more numerous array of the

'vintage cool' elements present at the indoor stand including an old Crossley record player; more crates

filled with proteas, knotted rope and sacks; and an old clock. All these objects shared the same warm,

rich hues, designed to communicate the rustic but refined image of the brand.

Whereas inside the dome, ambassadors stood behind the tables waiting for patrons to approach them,

in the outdoor space, ambassadors were required to approach patrons, offering them free samples, but

also enticing them to play the branded games and enter the competitions. Leigh, the strategist at Have

You Heard, and also the manager of the ambassadors at the Getaway show, instructed ambassadors to

persuade patrons to "interact" and "engage" with the brand in this outdoor space. Active relationality

was considered necessary to form lasting memories in which the brand was a central feature. The

elements designed to facilitate this active relationality included a set of giant jenga, branded with the

Sedgwick's logo and the 'share the warmth' slogan. There was also a large wooden 'kissing frame', also

branded, in which patrons could pose for photos and upload them to social media. Patrons who won the

games or engaged with the brand in the desired way received prizes.

From the 'defective' Transformers to the 'ideal' Sense of Knowing

Examining face-to-face marketing at the Getaway Show to Sense of Knowing consumers reveals how

relations of mutual recognition between consumer and brand sought by marketers can serve to

constitute unequal consumer personas, affirming historically entrenched ideas about differences of race

and class. In attempting to recognize SOK consumers as 'ideal', the marketers designed experiences for

them that assumed a particular way of relating to material objects, which differed from how

Transformers were imagined to relate to material objects. We see this for example in the different way

that the role of prizes was conceptualized for the SOK and Transformer segment respectively. In the case

of the Transformers, prizes for competitions were described by those on the team as 'rewards' for

purchasing Sedgwick's. As we have seen, these prizes were designed to serve as incentives to persuade

them to buy Sedgwick's at the moment of purchase. However, in the case of the Sense of Knowing market, prizes were never described as incentives; they were simply part of the overall 'fun' of the Sedgwick's experience. To describe them as incentives would be to portray the SOK consumer as driven by the desire to possess material objects, which was the typification of a Transformer. Rather, SOK were interpellated as appreciating 'experiences', which referred to an enjoyment and appreciation of sensory environment for its own sake, without needing to possess and consume the objects within that environment. In addressing them in this way, the brand offered the SOK patrons recognition of their status as 'ideal' consumers, capable of restraining their consumer desire for the possession of objects in order to appreciate aesthetic experiences provided by the brand. By showing them that it 'knew' them in this way, it was hoped that SOK consumers would reciprocate by recognizing the brand as the 'cool' provider of these experiences, thus mediating the personas of 'Sedgwick's' and the 'Sense of Knowing' consumer in the way the brand team desired.

Here we are reminded of the ways in which aesthetic experience both promises inclusion through a shared 'common sense' that bypasses divisive interest, but at the same time threatens to exclude those who diverge from hegemonic notions of 'good taste' (Haug 1986). The different relation to objects imagined for SOK and Transformers respectively was evaluated hierarchically, and thus served to constitute unequal consumers figures. The way the SOK consumers were imagined to appreciate sensory experiences recalls Kant's notion of aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful, outlined in his *Critique of Judgment* (1987)*, which involves pleasing the capacities of the mind for understanding and imagination, rather than merely the sensory capacities of the body. Thus aesthetic judgment of the beautiful is free from all desire and interest in the object. On the other hand, the way Transformers were imagined to engage with objects recalls Kant's notion of appreciating objects for their 'agreeableness' which refers to the pleasurable sensations a thing can provide us, which prompts us to desire more of the thing and become invested in it. Just as Transformers were mediated as developing

consumers, they were addressed as not yet capable of appreciating an object for its aesthetic value, only

for its agreeableness, both because they were seen as determined by their need for material objects

which they lacked, and because they were conceptualized as being driven by their desire for immediate

gratification of physical impulses and to possess and consume objects. In this way, instead of offering

inclusivity, marketing interventions that focused on providing consumers with sensory engagement with

commodities entrenched hierarchies of race informed by a long history of constructing Blacks as

incapable of containing their desire for sensory pleasure[26].

A further way in which the recognition offered the two consumer segments served to mediate unequal

consumer personas relates to its temporality. In the face-to-face competitions, Transformers were

addressed as problematic consumers in the process of being transformed into aspirational consumers-

in-training. In this way, their current and ideal selves were split in time, with one recognized as existing

in the present and the other in the future. We see the very different temporality of the manner in which

SOK consumers were recognized – they were addressed as already epitomizing the ideal consumer – as

if they already were who they wanted to become rather than requiring training – although as we will see

below, in the messy world of embodied brand-consumer interactions, SOK consumers often did require

training on how to inhabit the ideal consumer identity they were already supposed to possess. SOK were

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[26] The intertwining of ideas about the 'right' way to engage in experience and imaginaries of race and class within the South African context of is illustrated by a discussion I had with marketers working at another experiential marketing company. They were conducting activations for a soft drink at various tertiary education campuses around the country. Part of the activation involved free giveaways of the drink, and prizes of branded merchandise for liking the brand on Facebook, not unlike the dynamics at the Getaway show. However, the free giveaways were only one part of the activation, which also included music, and a performance by extreme skaters. The marketers that I spoke to who were tasked with designing and implementing these events described the activation at CPUT, the Cape Province University of Technology – attended primarily by lower income Black and Coloured students – as unpleasant and frightening. As opposed to the restrained behavior of the students at high income institutions such as UCT and University of Stellenbosch, the students at CPUT stormed the stand where the drinks and t-shirts were being given away, grabbing them from the drums rather than waiting to be served. They weren't interested in the broader 'experience' of the environment, only in possessing and consuming the free commodities. This is the 'wrong' way to appreciate the experiences of an experiential marketing event, and was the antithesis of the kind of sociality with which Sedgwick's was trying to associate itself. However, as we will see below, the unpredictability of human interactions complicated attempts to perform this restrained sociality.

offered a form of recognition which articulated their current actual selves to their ideal potential selves, allowing both to be experienced in the present.

As it offered SOK consumers recognition of this 'ideal' status, the reciprocal recognition that the brand team sought in return for the brand was public: festival patrons were encouraged to like the brand on Facebook and follow it on Twitter, and also to buy branded merchandise. By buying an enamel mug or kettle branded with the Sedgwick's logo and taking it into his or her domestic space, the SOK consumer demonstrated that Sedgwick's was a brand that was 'cool' and should be displayed, not just hidden under the table as a guilty pleasure[27]. We can see how this desired recognition from the SOK differed from that sought from the Transformers, in line with the different kind of value the brand hoped to extract from each, with the Transformers serving as the brand's 'source of volume', and the Sense of Knowing the 'source of image', as outlined in the previous chapter. There was no effort made to try to get the Transformers to recognize the brand by liking it on Facebook or publically acknowledging it[28]. The only recognition the brand required from Transformers was in the form of brand loyalty and repeat purchase, required to boost volumes.

Here we are reminded of Hegel's demonstration that relations of recognition may serve to constitute relations of inequality, as well as equality. For Hegel, a human consciousness was required to actualize the potential of non-human objects in nature. Similarly, in the case of Sedgwick's, a whitened middle-class consumer was required to actualize the potential of a brand, just as the brand was required to

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[27] In fact, at one brand team meeting, the head of the experiential company commented that he'd seen patrons at one of the activations stealing pieces of the set – some of the jenga blocks branded with the Sedgwick's logo – and had commented that this was actually a good thing, as it was free advertising amongst other high-income consumers. This behavior totally contradicted the idea of SOK's as restrained appreciators of sensory experiences for their own sake, although this was never commented on by any of the marketers.

[28] In fact, a common dilemma faced by the marketers was how to handle a situation in which the 'wrong' kind of consumer showed public love for a brand, thereby tarnishing its image. For example, there was a competition proposed for 4th Street – the wine brand I was following – that offered a photoshoot in a fashion magazine. This idea was vetoed because it was feared that the 'wrong' kind of person might win and then become associated with the brand in the mind of its market, as had happened with a previous competition where the winners had been poor Whites covered in tattoos, hailing from the 'down market' Johannesburg suburb of Benoni.

actualize the potential of Transformers. For Hegel, this differing capacity to actualize informed a

conceptualization of the world in which all elements participated in the unifying principle of Spirit, but

not all could act as its agents in attaining self-consciousness. In the case of Sedgwick's, having certain

consumer segments that could actualize the brand into a 'cool' brand – whereas other segments relied

on the brand to actualize them – participated in the project of self-making for those on the brand team,

discussed in the previous chapter. As the brand strategists projected their own identities onto both the

brand and the Sense of Knowing segment, having the latter actualize the potential of the former served

as a kind of fantasy of self-actualization. By aligning themselves with the only consumer segment that

could actualize the brand, they affirmed their own identity as 'ideal' consumers, and as epitomizing the

'cool' lifestyle that they wished to associate Sedgwick's with. On the other hand, the brand offered to

actualize Transformers into aspirational consumers-in-training, something which the Transformers were

constructed as being incapable of reciprocating, as they could not actualize anything, only contribute to

profits.

The 'living media' of Sedgwick's

As with the face-to-face nature of the competitions, the face-to-face dimension of the activations was

an important element of how the brand team attempted to assert control over the dynamics of

mediation between brand and SOK consumers, with the 'living media' of the brand playing a pivotal

role. In their interactions with patrons at the branded events, brand ambassadors were required to

mediate Sedgwick's to Sense of Knowing consumers, so that the latter could grant the former the

recognition required to constitute it as a 'cool brand'. This attempted mediation took a number of

different forms. Firstly, the brand ambassadors had to embody in their physical being the abstract

identity the brand was trying to create, allowing consumers to experience this identity through their

engagement with the ambassadors, who were drawn from a middle-class strata similar to the patrons,

thus recognizing them as middle-class urbanites. As discussed above, ambassadors had to approach

patrons in the outdoor branded space at the Getaway Show, persuading them to play the branded

games and participate in the activities, which always had to be framed as non-instrumental social

interaction, thus demonstrating how the brand enabled social warmth[29]. Ambassadors also distributed

free samples of the Sedgwick's mix, and handed out prizes for engaging with the brand, demonstrating

the brand's generosity and warm personality.

However, while the brand was distributing prizes and the 'gift' of experience, there were also monetized

transactions taking place between patrons and the brand; patrons could by drinks from the bar and

branded goods inside. These monetized transactions mediated by the abstract, impersonal medium of

money threatened to counteract the warm, personal relationship the brand team was trying to establish

between the brand and SOK consumers, and so had to be carefully regulated. The brand had to find a

way to reconcile its two roles as engaged both in relations mediated by money (after all, it ultimately

wanted to increase sales of its product amongst SOK consumers) and relations based on affect and

sensory experience. One way this was achieved was through the use of bartenders stationed behind the

bar in the outdoor space to handle all monetized transactions with patrons who wished to purchase

drinks. As I discuss in more detail below, these bartenders were not marked as representatives of the

brand, and were simply there to serve customers drinks, take their money, and give them change.

Although ambassadors did handle the sale of the branded mugs and kettles, this only happened in the

space inside the tent, which was also the space of 'knowing', where the ambassadors were supposed to

educate consumers. In this way, the indoor space was one of more impersonal interactions mediated by

money and abstract knowledge about the drink, whereas the outdoor space involved personal relations

where the brand provided 'warm' experiences involving sensory stimulation and positive affective

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[29] Cf Manning (2008) for a discussion of how talk at work (such as between service workers and customers) tends
to be contrasted with non-instrumental conversation, and how the latter is held up as the ideal of sociability.
Pursuing the appearance of non-instrumental sociability through brand ambassadors, and delegating instrumental
talk to the bar tenders, was part of how the marketers attempted to appropriate the value of this ideal while still
selling commodities.

engagement. By bounding relations of commodity exchange between ambassadors and patrons to the indoor space, and restricting them to interactions involving bartenders in the outdoor space, allowing ambassadors to focus on their role as facilitators of social warmth, these two brand roles could be kept separate and mutually commensurable.

The second way in which ambassadors were required to mediate the brand to consumers was through performing the kind of restrained middle-class sociality that constituted the 'social warmth' Sedgwick's claimed to enable, and which was framed as the kind of sociality SOK consumers preferred and appreciated. This mode of sociality consisted of a restrained relationship to objects, and especially alcohol. By framing itself as a provider of refined social warmth, it attempted to constitute itself as a brand that belonged in a middle-class leisure environment, changing past associations of itself as a drink drunk by the poor and thus 'premiumizing' its image. We see this imaginary of restrained middle-class sociality in the regulation of the relationship between the ambassadors and alcohol. The ambassador contract clearly stipulated that ambassadors had to abstain from drinking the product, both before and during the shift. Not everything in the contract was strictly enforced, but one of the other ambassadors told me how at a previous event, one of the girls had started drinking out of her holster nips with the patrons, and she had been fired on the spot. The type of sociality Sedgwick's wished to associate itself with took place alongside the consumption of alcohol, but was not based on the intoxicative effects of alcohol. In line with this, the team tried to avoid personifying Sedgwick's as the kind of 'person' who requires alcohol to have a good time[30].

This was the ideal envisioned by the Sedgwick's marketers: brand ambassadors mediating the brand to consumers by constituting its agency – as they served as intermediaries for the brand, providing the

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[30] This was a fine balance to strike, and was evident in other parts of the campaign as well, for example, in the attempts by the digital agency Quirk to create a branded Sedgwick's board game, discussed in the previous chapter. Content strategist Stephan was very adamant that although it had to be a game that incorporated Sedgwick's as a brand, it could not be a 'drinking game', as that was associated with irresponsible binge drinking.

'gift' of experience to SOK consumers – embodying its brand persona, and performing the kind of restrained sociality with which the brand team wanted to associate Sedgwick's. However, using individual human beings each with their own particularities to mediate the brand had inherent tensions that threatened to destabilize this project. As with in-store competitions, face-to-face marketing introduced its own elements of instability into processes of brand-consumer mediation, undercutting its promise as a strategy of control.

The first of these tensions involved harmonizing the particularities of the individual ambassadors with the overarching unity of the brand, which may be understood as a manifestation of dynamics intrinsic to branding practice. Nakassis shows how "there is a productive, structural indeterminacy fundamental to the brand" (2012: 631), which stems from the fact that there are a number of 'gaps' between its constitutive semiotic layers. One of the 'gaps' that Nakassis identifies is that between brand token and type. Every token of a brand – such as a branded product, or a brand ambassador – must point back to the brand type, from which it draws its value, through being associated with the identity of the brand. In turn, value accrues to the brand through the affective engagement of consumers with concrete products, ambassadors and other brand tokens. Thus, the token must always be distinct from the type, to allow each to draw value from the other – Nakassis shows how citationality sutures the gap between token and type, while reflexively pointing to it, which maintains this productive structural indeterminacy, and makes the brand a value-generating semiotic form. However, this indeterminacy leaves open the possibility that a token of a brand may be taken up as something else – a Nike-branded shoe may be interpreted as just a shoe. A brand ambassador may be taken up as just a person, or as a token of another brand[31]. Further, the meanings of brand tokens must remain open enough so that

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[31] For example, Meghan Biro, a contributor to *Forbes Magazine Online*, who has written extensively on brand humanization, published an article in 2012 titled "Who Owns the Brand You?" (Biro, M. 2012. "Who Owns the Brand You?" Forbes Magazine Online. http://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2012/08/29/who-owns-the-brand-you/). In this article, she offers advice on how companies can use individuals to be their brand ambassadors, while keeping the company brand separate from the personal brands of these ambassadors. If this is not done

individual consumers can incorporate these tokens into their lives, generating affective value. However, this openness means that consumer engagement may generate meanings that potentially exceed or contradict the meanings prescribed by the brand identity.

As they grappled with this structural indeterminacy, the Sedgwick's brand team attempted to regulate brand ambassadors so that they would be recognizable as tokens of the brand[32]. However, the irreducible individual particularities of each ambassador were nevertheless necessary to enable consumers to engage affectively with the brand's identity through its human embodiments. As we saw in the previous chapter, associating the brand with a single spokesperson such as a celebrity was considered a bad strategy, as it could potentially alienate sections of the market that didn't identify with that individual person, either in terms of their race, gender or some particular feature about them. Having a variety of individual incarnations of the brand gave consumers options for the kind of embodiment through which they could access the social warmth of the brand, and also meant that a single consumer could have different kinds of relationships with the same brand. At the same time, as we will see, these particularities represented a potential threat to the coherence and stability of the brand.

Embodying the brand in various individual human bodies enabled different kinds of brand-consumer relations, as became clear in the interactions between the brand ambassadors and one White middle-aged female visitor to the Sedgwick's branded spaces at the expo. This woman had won her ticket to the show by entering a competition run on the Sedgwick's Facebook page. At one point in the afternoon, she came up to the ambassadors stationed at the stand inside the dome – myself and another White girl – and spontaneously started telling us this story about how she had won the tickets, and how none of

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effectively, and the brand ambassador leaves the company, the relationships the ambassador has cultivated with consumers over time would benefit his or her personal brand, rather than the brand of the company.
[32] See Cameron (2000) for an analysis of a comparable situation in which brands attempt to generate value by creating uniformity of style amongst call center workers.

her friends had wanted to go with her to the expo, and so she had just come alone. She visited the stand

a few times during the afternoon, telling us about her book club, her craft projects, how she had won

branded Sedgwick's goods in previous competitions, and had offered them to her children as gifts, but

they had been uninterested in them. At one point she commented on how "cute" the male ambassadors

looked in their uniforms, and how she was going to go and find some of them to talk to. I never

managed to witness any of her interactions with the male ambassadors, but one of them told me later

how she had been flirting with all of them, finding it amusing because she was so much older.

For this woman, the female ambassadors provided her with the opportunity to talk about activities

drawn from her own experience of female sociality – craft project groups, book clubs, and her

relationship with her children. The male ambassadors provided her with objects of flirtation, a form of

sociality distinct from the kind she sought from the female ambassadors. The brand of Sedgwick's had

given her tickets to the expo, and invited her to 'share the warmth', and she did so, in various ways,

through the living media of the brand ambassadors. According to experiential marketing ideology, as she

engaged with these different embodiments of the brand, she would forge memories of social warmth

that would build an affective connection between her and the brand. Of course, the possibility existed

that she might not draw the connection between her social interactions with these individuals and the

brand of Sedgwick's at all, demonstrating that face-to-face marketing could not eliminate the structural

indeterminacy inherent to branding itself, or provide marketers with the control they craved.

Although having diverse embodiments created the openness necessary for a range of individual Sense of

Knowing consumers to engage with the brand through its ambassadors, there was a limit to the diversity

of the ambassadors. They were all very clearly drawn from a middle-class social stratum. This was

assured in the modes of recruitment, which involved recruiting friends of current ambassadors,

attendees of one of the festivals who expressed interest in becoming ambassadors, or individuals

selected by one of the agencies which recruited ambassadors for various brands from university

campuses. In order to achieve the recognition it sought from the Sense of Knowing patrons and to

become actualized as a 'top of the table' brand that belonged in their social spaces, Sedgwick's needed

middle-class embodiments at its Sense of Knowing events. As mentioned above, the ambassadors were

also all White, except for one. However, this was not the case at all Sedgwick's events, with others

employing a more racially mixed selection. As I argued in the previous chapter, the Sense of Knowing

consumer was aligned with a whitened middle-classness, where middle-classness was imagined as

coterminous with White experience, but was inclusive of Blacks as long as they conformed to this

construction. Similarly, the brand of Sedgwick's could be embodied in Black ambassadors, as long as

they performed the form of restrained social warmth definitive of this imaginary middle-classness[33].

Despite the fact that having some diversity amongst ambassadors was a necessary part of mediating the

brand to Sense of Knowing consumers, the singularities of different embodiments of the brand had to

be regimented in some way so that each served as an index of the brand. To control this disruptive

potential, the brand had to find ways to clearly mark ambassadors as its own living media. In the case of

Sedgwick's, this took a number of forms. Firstly, there had to be some degree of visual uniformity shared

by the ambassadors, with elements clearly marking each as a "Sedgwick's guy/girl", as the ambassador

contract put it. In the contract, part of the job description was to wear all the elements of the uniform at

all times during one's shift, which consisted of a hat – cowboy or felt hat for females, or flat cap for

males – jeans, and a red checked button down shirt, as well as leather holsters containing Sedgwick's

nips for females, and an apron decorated with various 'vintage', 'craft' elements for males. Uniforms

served to mark ambassadors as indexes of the brand, and to distinguish them from those who were not

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[33] There were patrons who rejected these embodiments, however. This dynamic was not evident at the Getaway
show, but the one black ambassador, Kopano, described how he had experienced the racism of some of the older
White Sedgwick's drinkers at another activation at the Dullstroom winter festival. He told me how while working as
an ambassador in Dullstroom, certain older white patrons had refused to be served the free samples he offered
them. He told me that when one of the White ambassadors offered them samples a few minutes later, they
accepted them. Kopano had interpreted this as evidence of their racism.

the face of the brand. As discussed above, in the outdoor space there was a bar where visitors could

purchase various Sedgwick's drinks, which was staffed by bartenders. These bartenders were clearly not

the face that the brand wished to present to the SOK market. They were all lower-income Black males,

and so belonged to a very different demographic from the middle-class brand ambassadors. They were

not there to provide an embodiment of the brand to patrons, they were simply there to serve them

drinks, take their money, and give them change. They were dressed in plain black shirts and pants, with

none of the branded gear worn by the ambassadors[34].

In addition to being marked visually as individuals representing a brand at the festival, ambassadors

were required to accept restrictions designed to prevent possible associations being made between

their individual identities and other competing brands. The contracts prohibited ambassadors from

being representatives for other alcohol brands for a period of 6 months after the festival. This served to

strengthen the association between ambassadors and the brand, and to create an impression of genuine

investment in the brand, where ambassadors wanted to represent the brand to customers out of love

for the brand, not simply because they were being paid.

While the brand tried to regiment the brand ambassadors to maintain each as an index of the brand,

these singularities could not be entirely scripted away, as the brand relied upon them for its production

of value. In this way, the ambassadors differed from the liquor store owners who were simply required

to hand over prizes to Transformers, discussed above. Ambassadors were not just a neutral conduit for

material objects; they were living media whose bodies and individual particularities were irreducible,

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[34] This division of roles between ambassadors and bartenders was a source of tension at times. Talking to the bartenders, some of them remarked at this disparity between ambassadors and themselves. One commented that they too should have branded gear as they were also working for Sedgwick's. In one incident, an ambassador left his branded hat on one of the tables. Two of the bartenders were joking around trying it on. After a few minutes they put it back on the table, and the ambassador returned to retrieve his hat. The bartenders laughed at this, because they believed he was unhappy with them for appropriating a piece of branded gear, which was reserved for the ambassadors. I didn't notice any animosity on the part of the ambassador myself, but the bartenders seemed sure that he was affronted by their behavior.

and central to the production of brand value, as they embodied and performed the social warmth

promised by the brand. Here we see the paradox of the brand embodied in human elements – its

embodiments have to be scripted to represent the brand, and yet always have to go beyond this

scripting, through their spontaneity and vitality as living beings, to actualize the brand's 'humanity'. This

excess is then reincorporated into the brand, and so in going beyond the brand, the ambassadors in fact

bring the brand into being[35]. For this reason, the brand always remained vulnerable to the possibility

that ambassadors could divert the flow of affective value away from the brand, by forging relations with

patrons as individuals, not as individuals representing the brand, or by embodying the brand in a way

contradictory to the goals of the marketers. In this way, the face-to-face nature of marketing efforts

targeting the Sense of Knowing segment proved as resistant to the control of the brand team as the

competitions had in relation to the Transformer segment.

From control to contingency

This vulnerability of the brand was evident at the Getaway fest, as ambassadors exercised their

discretion in performing the values of the brand in interactions with patrons[36]. This became clear in

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[35] In turn, we may view this as one instance of the broader double-bind of unpredictability in interactions between mass media and humans in mass society, where a value-generating project – in this case, the brand – both relies on the spontaneity and vitality of consumer engagement with its sounds, images and texts to generate the kinds of affect that make advertising and brands meaningful and allow people to become invested in them, and is threatened by this unpredictability, that always threatens to exceed attempts to harness it for projects of social value (Mazzarella 2003 and 2009, Berlant 2008).

[36] This discretion was made necessary by the fact that very little training was provided to the ambassadors. They were given a contract in which they were informed that they were "representing" the brand to patrons and should not bring it into disrepute (and also, that they were representing the activations company, Have you Heard, which adds another dimension of complexity to the semiotic valences of brand ambassadors), and a brief in which they were informed of the "key points" they needed to convey to consumers, and that they should be "great role model[s]" for the brand and should come ready to "make friends, work hard & Share The Warmth" (sic). What being such a 'role model' entailed or how this warmth should be shared was never specified. Beyond these documents, there was an orientation at the beginning of the festival which mainly consisted of the ambassador manager, Leigh, telling ambassadors how to mix the concoction we were supposed to be sampling, getting a veteran ambassador to demonstrate this to us. Other than that, new ambassadors were expected to learn the ropes from more experienced ambassadors, leaving much room for interpreting how to enact 'sharing the warmth'.

relation to one of the ambassador-patron engagement elements – the Sedgwick's 'Kissing Frame'. This was a giant wooden photo frame mentioned above, varnished in the same warm brown tones as all the branded elements, with 'Sedgwick's Share the Warmth' printed at the base, in which patrons could pose for photos. In line with the goal of having SOK consumers show public love for the brand, ambassadors had to approach tables of patrons in the outdoor space and ask them if they would like to pose in the frame, have the ambassador take a photo of them on their phone, and then have one of the patrons upload it to Facebook and/or Twitter. If they did this and tagged it appropriately, they would win a prize.

At one point during my shift, I was assigned the task of going around with this frame and getting people to pose in it. The ambassadors were given no direction as to how to do this, and it was left up to our own initiative. I found myself very reluctant to perform this task, imagining how I would react to having my conversation interrupted and being asked if I would like to pose in a branded frame. So to minimize my own personal discomfort, I couched my interventions into the patrons' social interactions by focusing on the prospect of winning a prize: "Would you like to win a free bottle of Sedgwick's? If you do, pose in the photo frame and upload it to Facebook"[37]. For a while I was doing this task by myself, and then I had another ambassador assigned to join me – a second-year student at the University of Johannesburg called Beth. Beth had been working as an ambassador for the brand for a few months, and it was clear that she had internalized many of the elements of the brand persona that the marketers were trying to mediate to patrons, as well the mode of sociality it was trying to facilitate. She heard me conversing with a table of patrons and attempting to persuade them to pose in the frame, was very disapproving of my strategy. She told me that patrons shouldn't be posing in the frame to win prizes, they should be posing because it was 'fun' and social and part of 'sharing the warmth'. For her – as for

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[37] I was not the only ambassador who felt this awkwardness at interrupting patrons. Another ambassador commented to me that he preferred working at the inside stall, because there visitors were free to approach the stand to ask about the samples and the display, rather than the ambassadors being expected to approach patrons and solicit their engagement.

the brand strategists of Sedgwick's – the relationship between the consumer and the brand should be about emotional warmth that builds loyalty in the long term, not about a short-term quid pro quo transaction where patrons perform a service to win a prize.

Spending time with Beth on the Kissing Frame activity, it became apparent that individual ambassadors enjoyed a lot of discretion in rewarding patrons for the 'correct' sort of engagement with the brand, and conversely, disciplining them for inappropriate engagement. This was clear in Beth's reaction to one very eager patron; a Black woman in her mid-20s who flagged us down, and enthusiastically asked to pose in the frame. It was clear that she was already rather tipsy. Not only did she want to pose in the frame, she wanted to wear all of the branded gear that the ambassadors were wearing. After she had taken a few photos, posted them to various social media sites, and given us back our gear, I asked Beth if we should give her a prize. Beth responded, "maybe not, it looks like she's already had quite a lot. I think we should only give prizes if people do crazy things in the frame." It hardly seemed convincing that the girl hadn't been 'crazy' enough in her poses in the frame to warrant a prize, as nobody all afternoon had been as keen in their participation in the Kissing Frame activity. It seems more likely that Beth, having internalized the brand values, recognized the incongruence between the kind of drunken 'fun'[38] that this girl was having posing with the gear in the frame, and the type of restrained sociality with which the brand wanted to associate itself[39].

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[38] See Mazzarella (2003) for the culturally particular and contested nature of concept of 'fun' in an advertising campaign in the context of India.

[39] The spontaneous ventriloquation of brand values was also evident in the ways in which brand ambassadors explained to patrons why they couldn't buy the branded objects that were part of the stand, which I discuss in more detail below. During the first day of the expo, no official guidance was given as to what ambassadors should tell patrons who wanted to buy the displayed items. Some patrons were very insistent and tried to persuade the ambassadors to sell them the items. Ambassadors had to come up with some explanation as to why they were not for sale, and sometimes these explanations voiced the brand values. For example, I heard one of the ambassadors, Donovan, tell a customer that "if we sold you our merchandise we would be inauthentic. That's why we only give them away as prizes".

In this way, the dynamics of brand-consumer mediation remained vulnerable to the variability in the

degree to which individual ambassadors had internalized the values of the brand. Similarly, the brand

remained vulnerable to the Sense of Knowing consumers in the process of mediation, as some refused

to engage in relations of mutual recognition desired by the marketers, rejecting the form of recognition

offered them by the brand. This rejection took place in various ways. Firstly – and unsurprisingly for an

event giving away free alcohol – there were patrons who imbibed a large quantity of the product and

then wanted to have 'fun' and engage with the brand in ways deemed incompatible with restrained

social warmth, as we saw in the case of the young woman posing in the Kissing Frame. This was again

evident when a young White man who had spent the day enjoying the brand's generosity as well as its

product, tried to 'assist' the ambassadors at the end of the evening, as they packed away the branded

elements of the space. At one point he took it on himself to carry one very expensive element of the

branded space – the Crossley radio/record player – from the tent area to the truck, and almost dropped

it on the ground. He then tried to pose in the official ambassador photo, much to Leigh's irritation. This

sort of drunken engagement with the brand was not the kind of recognition the brand required.

A second way in which patrons rejected the form of recognition offered them by the brand was in

demanding a more direct relationship to objects, involving possession, rather than the indirect aesthetic

appreciation which was supposed to be definitive of their consumer identity. This was most apparent in

the persistent demands on the part of patrons to buy the branded elements that were not for sale,

specifically, the items that were the constituent elements of the branded space that were supposed to

enable the 'experience'. Many patrons rejected this demarcation of certain objects as non-fungible: they

wanted to buy the branded coffee kettles which were being used to mix the drink; they wanted to buy

pieces of the ambassadors' uniforms (the leather holsters with nips were a particular favorite); they

wanted to buy the branded crates holding the proteas, which were used to pack up the activation

elements. This demand presented a number of distinct but connected challenges to the dynamics of

brand-consumer mediation that the brand strategists were trying to achieve. Firstly, by demanding to buy objects that were not for sale, but that were intended to facilitate the 'gift' of experience provided by the brand for SOK consumers, patrons threatened to refigure relations of gift exchange as relations of commodity exchange. Commodity exchange involves a momentary interaction between consumer and brand, mediated by the impersonal medium of money. The logic of branding, on the other hand, requires long term a long term relationship, sustained by mutual obligation and affective bonds, which the exchange of 'gifts' deferred over time was designed to entrench. In providing the Getaway show patrons with the gift of experience – and the recognition of their status as ideal consumers – the brand strategists attempted to engender these long term affective bonds, and in turn sought out the reciprocal gift of recognition for the brand. By demanding to buy the elements of the experience, rather than accepting it as the brand's 'gift', these dynamics were disrupted.

Secondly, by demanding to possess elements that embodied the brand's essence, patrons threatened to blur the line between brand and commodity. For the logic of branding to work, it must be clear that the brand can never be bought; access to its 'aura' can be bought through the commodities it marks, but these commodities must be kept clearly distinguishable from the brand. We are reminded of the 'keeping while giving' dilemma discussed above; the brand had to keep separate the elements that it kept – its own inalienable aura – from those that it gave – access to the benefits of this aura through the commodities bearing its mark, and through 'gifts' such as prizes and the provision of experience.

The improvised response by the brand team to this unexpected demand on the part of patrons to buy items that were not for sale provides an example of how marketers responded to the challenges of SOK consumers who refused the brand's recognition of them as 'ideal' consumers, and demonstrates how at times, SOK consumers were just as in need of 'training' as were Transformers. On the first day of the expo, ambassadors were given no instructions as to what to tell patrons when they asked to buy the branded objects, only that they were not for sale. However, on the second day, seeing how many

patrons were trying to persuade ambassadors to sell them coffee kettles in particular, Leigh instructed

the ambassadors that we should tell patrons who wanted the kettles to 'like' the brand on Facebook. By

liking the brand, they would be eligible to enter the online competitions, and would stand a chance to

win a branded kettle, which were often offered as prizes. In this way, consumers were taught to delay

gratification and sublimate desire, by embracing the long term possibility of receiving a branded item

through the brand's generosity, rather than the short term certainty of possessing the item through

monetary exchange.

At the same time, by liking the brand on Facebook and entering the competitions, Sense of Knowing

consumers were encouraged to publicly demonstrate their love for the brand. These competitions were

themselves attempts to generate brand-love, where contestants were required to show evidence of

themselves engaging with the brand – for example, through sharing recipes that used the product as an

ingredient, or fond memories involving Sedgwick's, or just photos of social interactions where

Sedgwick's was present. In this way, SOK consumers were induced to grant the brand the recognition it

required to become actualized as a brand that belonged in a middle-class lifestyle.

However, in their 'inappropriate' engagement with the brand and in their demands for immediate

possession of objects, Sense of Knowing consumers failed to recognize the brand's recognition of them

as 'ideal' consumers, and constitute the brand and consumer as discrete personas in the process[40]. They

rejected 'brand love' as a strategy of control and the long-term time frame of this structure of

attachment that marketers desired. Just as in the case of the Transformers, the brand had to engage in a

process of pedagogy with the SOK consumers, teaching them how to defer gratification and sublimate

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[40] The structures of the brand team and the division of labor between ambassadors, brand strategists, and marketing researchers meant that challenges to these characterizations of Transformers as defective and SOK as ideal never reached the brand team or the marketing researchers who designed the consumer portraits, and so these consumer personas remained resilient and immune to the vicissitudes of actual consumer engagement with the brand.

commodity desire into brand love. However, this pedagogy was never acknowledged, and the SOK

segment continued to be characterized by the brand team as 'ideal', sophisticated consumers, just like

the advertising professionals themselves, and addressed as such in the marketing efforts designed for

this segment.

Conclusion

The challenges of cultivating the brand's two faces through face-to-face marketing illustrate how

tensions in branding intersect with local histories of race and class difference to shape hierarchies of

consumers and citizens. Much of what advertisers do is to try to convince themselves and their clients

that advertising 'works', often in the face of a lack of conclusive evidence in this regard (cf Mazzarella,

2017). For the Sedgwick's brand team, a faith amongst advertising professionals in the efficacy of

branding as a strategy of control was as important in substantiating their claims to professional

expertise as it was to shoring up a race and class-based identity. In terms of their professional expertise,

the brand team performed a faith that branding practice could balance the tension between commodity

desire and brand love (which is sublimated desire) – two forces which must be calibrated by those

drawing on practices of branding to maximize profits. In an era of brand humanization, the dynamics of

desire/love are distinctive. When a brand was merely offering a lifestyle, branding operated according to

the logic of desire – it offered you your ideal self through association with the brand and the intangible

identity it had cultivated (as Aaker explained in relation to Nike, quoted above). This promised self could

never be delivered and so desire was constantly deferred, motivating continued purchase in search of

the elusive ideal self. However, pursuing a desired self through branded products was unpredictable – a

consumer might desire a Nike self today and an Adidas one tomorrow. Within the ideology of brand

humanization, the unpredictability of desire can be subsumed by brand love; consumers are urged to

buy branded commodities not only for the ideal self the brand promises, but for the value of the brand-

consumer relationship itself. However, as brand and product become increasingly detached from one

another (see previous chapter), consumers can express love for a brand, or enjoy the brand's 'love' for

them, without actually buying any of its products (such as consumers that decorate unbranded products

with the sign of a loved brand, or consumers who attend brand activations for one beer brand while

bring a cooler box full of a different brand of beer). In this way, while desire for commodities must be

sublimated into love for the brand, this desire can never be eliminated, which makes brand love as a

strategy of subsuming and channeling desire inherently unstable.

Although this tension is inherent to all brand-consumer relations – and the SOK consumers often

contradicted the marketers' idealized image of them as consistently restraining their desire to possess

objects – the Sedgwick's brand team only acknowledged it in relation to the Transformer consumer

segment. They frame this as a consequence of Transformers' defective consumer status – the supposed

incapacity to contain the demand for the instant gratification of commodity desire, in line with historical

constructions of Blacks, and especially low-income Blacks, as incapable of containing their desire,

whether this desire be for sex, alcohol, or commodities. We can see the parallels between this defective

consumer figure and broader fears expressed in South African public discourse that those excluded from

the benefits of democracy (primarily low income Blacks) will take what they want by force or through

radical politics. In this way, by projecting a tension inherent to branding onto a consumer 'other' marked

by race and class, the Sedgwick's brand team entrenched their professional expertise as well as their

idealized identities as whitened middle-class consumers and citizens, capable of balancing desire and

love.

In this chapter, I have argued that the brand strategists attempted to mediate two distinct 'faces' of the

Sedgwick's brand persona to the market segments of the Sense of Knowing and Transformer

respectively, and mediate each segment as coherent, bounded consumer personas in turn. This process

of mediation involved attempting to enable relations of mutual recognition through offering each

segment 'gifts' in order to constitute the brand as an agent, and to entice consumers to reciprocate and

enter into a relationship with the brand. However, the relations of recognition sought served to mediate

unequal consumer segments, framing Transformers as defective consumers-in-training, and Sense of

Knowing as the epitome of 'ideal' whitened middle-class consumers. I have shown how face-to-face

marketing was intended to assert control over brand-consumer 'dialogue', enabling the brand to

mediate the two sets of brand-consumer relations it required. However, face-to-face marketing was

unable to stabilize the indeterminacies and uncertainties inherent to the structure of branding and

necessary for its mode of producing value, with the presence of face-to-face human interactions only

transforming rather than eliminating the dynamics of instability.

Chapter 4

The '4th Street Girl', Julius Malema, and the 'Happy Black Mama': Gender and the Fantasy of the 'Good' Black Consumer

In the previous chapter, we saw how advertising professionals attempted to perform their expertise and stabilize their idealized notions of whitened middle classness by drawing on practices of branding, specifically by attempting to create brand love as a structure of attachment immune to disappointment. Conceptions of difference based on race and class were reinforced in the specific ways in which marketers attempted to foster this love in relation to different market segments. An important part of this process involved marketers imagining one of the target markets in their own image – refined, sophisticated consumers who belonged to the whitened middle class. However, a competing imaginary of middle classness was widespread in the South African advertising industry and in South African public discourse more broadly – that of the 'new' Black middle classes. As I outline in the introduction, the growth of the Black middle class has been an important characteristic of the post-apartheid social landscape, although there are politically charged debates about how to define it or if in fact it actually exists (see the following chapter). Because of the historical ideological articulation in South Africa between middle classness and whiteness, debates about the relationship between race and class often came to the fore in debates about how to market to the Black middle class. When the target market consisted of middle class consumers who were both White and Black (as well identifying with other racial groups), as was the case with Sedgwick's, the tendency was to market to Blacks as versions of the White middle class, fashioning conceptions of a 'whitened middle class' which involved a projection of the marketers' own idealized identities. However, when the target market was primarily or exclusively made up of Black middle class consumers, the dynamics shifted.

In this chapter and the one that follows, I examine how advertisers used advertising and branding practice to perform their expertise and shore up notions of whiteness and middle classness when advertising specifically to these 'new' Black middle classes. I show how the figure of the 'new' Black

middle class was a potential 'other' to White middle class advertising professionals, and as with all of these 'others', served as a site for the projection of fantasies and fears. On the other hand, Black advertising professionals had a more ambivalent attitude towards this figure of the new Black middle class, sometimes embracing its aspirational orientation and identifying themselves as belonging to this market segment, while at others rejecting its supposed lack of restraint and crass materialism. In this chapter, I focus on how a constructing a feminized figure of this new Black middle class served as a way for marketers to conceptualize the group as a whole and to make its consumer desires seem knowable and thus harnessable. However, I show that the ambivalent relationship between race and gender and the slipperiness of the category of femininity itself ultimately made it impossible to use gender to pin down the identity and desires of this market segment.

In so doing, I continue to explore how branding and advertising approach challenges of constituting collectives, and the ways in which these marketing practices promise to provide strategies of control, while ultimately failing to provide this control due to the structural tensions inherent to these practices. I bring together themes from previous chapters, showing how branding as a means of offering both aspiration and recognition strives to mediate the tension between unpredictable affect and relatively stable cultural and social structures, and to reconciling difference with inclusion within the nation-as-market. In this chapter, I examine recognition in relation to race and gender as strategy for making the consumer desires of the new Black middle class tractable through advertising. I focus on the marketing campaign for a brand of wine – called '4th Street' – targeted to young Black women who were either considered members of the new Black middle class, or believed to aspire to belong to this category.

In making sense of how recognition through advertising constituted an attempt to fix the identity of consumers, serving as a strategy of making tractable their consumer desire, I draw on the work of Patchen Markell (2003, cf Brown 1995). Markell argues that the drive for recognition in the political realm is implicitly motivated by a desire for sovereignty in the realm of identity – control over who one

is through getting a state and other citizens within that state to recognize that identity. He shows how this relies on a fixed concept of identity that serves as the yardstick for whether or not recognition has taken place, a conception that ignores the fluidity of identities as they emerge through social interaction. Markell extends this analysis to show how in liberal defenses of multiculturalism, recognizing cultural difference on the basis of this fixed conception of identity serves to frame cultural others as non-threatening through attempting to pin down their difference. In order to maintain control over these cultural others, their difference from the cultural majority must remain so that the state may continue to 'recognize' it, preventing such 'others' from ever becoming unmarked, universal citizens. In this way, cultural minorities become prisoners of these constructions of their difference, 'bound' by recognition, as Markell puts it.

In this chapter, I show the parallels between these dynamics and the ways in which advertising professionals attempted to recognize differences of race and gender in relation to the new Black middle class. Blackness and femininity were two kinds of particularity that within marketing ideology, could separate one from the category of unmarked consumers, as others have shown in relation to the category of unmarked humanity (Fanon 2004, 2008; Butler 1999; de Beauvoir 1989). According to the logic of this strategy, if these particularities could be recognized, the identities stemming from them could be pinned down, as could their consumer desires and aspirations. If the strategy worked, these consumer figures could realize marketers' fantasy of profits, as well as affirming their professional expertise. These attempts at recognition involved attempts to frame 'good' versions of this aspirational Black consumer, separable from its 'bad' incarnations. In this chapter, I argue that the '4th Street Girl' was one such fantasy figure of the 'good' Black consumer: endlessly aspirational for a consumerist vision of the good life, but whose aspiration is containable within market structures, and can be channeled by the brand. I trace these strategies of control and the fears and fantasies around race, class and gender they explicate by reading the '4th Street Girl' in relation to Julius Malema – who embodies the

threatening but disavowed potential that highly aspirational Black consumers may resort to criminality or radical politics to achieve access to commodities – and in relation to the other recurring image of Black femininity found in ads – the 'Happy Black Mama' character, who was 'good' in that she was non-threatening to the status of White advertising professionals as social elites, but not aspirational enough to be profitable.

However, recognition as a strategy of control proved futile; when the particularities of blackness and femininity were brought together, marketers were uncertain as to how they related, and whether race or gender was more encompassing. Sometimes femininity seemed to offer a way to imagine a blackness as tractable. However, femininity itself proved ambivalent, informed both by the complex relationship between femininity and the category of the universal consumer in global branding ideology – in which the terrain of consumption is gendered as feminine[1], and yet the figure of 'the consumer' is unmarked[2] – and by the particular history in South Africa in which femininity in advertising has at times been associated with nurturing and at others with conspicuous, 'selfish' consumption. This gave rise to a situation in which marketing imaginaries of out-of-control Black consumer desire were also incarnated in the feminized figure of the 'brand slut'. The promise of control through recognition was also undone by the structural tensions of the address of advertising; unlike a politics of recognition, a politics of aspirational recognition must always promise consumers the prospect of transformation through consumption, and thus must acknowledge the fluid nature of identity and the constitutive nature of encounters between brands and consumers.

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[1] For a discussion of the historical development of this gendering of consumption as feminine in opposition to the world of production which was gendered as masculine, in the context of the US and Western Europe, see de Grazie & Furlough (1996).

[2] Adding to the complexity in South Africa, where the domain of consumption has historically been racialized as White, with Blacks characterized as laborers within the sphere of production.

Julia/Julius and the ambivalence of the 'new' Black middle class

An ethnographic vignette captures the ambivalence of the figure of the 'good' aspirational Black female consumer. While conducting fieldwork at 99cents in Cape Town in 2014, I attended the opening of a gallery exhibition at the University of Cape Town. As I strolled around the gallery, waiting for the opening to begin, I saw a tall Black woman standing in a corner. She was dressed from head to toe in bright pink, with a pink blouse and skirt, and a pink beret perched on top of her long blonde weave. The only non-pink clothing items were her long white gloves, which gave her a queenly air as she gave a little wave to passersby. This was performer and comedian Masello Motana, who unbeknownst to me was about to give a performance as part of the opening of the gallery exhibition. However, what struck me about her appearance was that she looked exactly like the '4th Street Girl' – the idealized target market for 4th Street wine which was one of the Distell brands handled by 99 cents. The '4th Street Girl' was always represented as a young Black woman who was glamourous, upwardly mobile, dressed to the nines in the latest fashion, hair weaves and make-up, and favored the brand's signature pink color scheme.

As I watched the performance, I became increasingly fascinated by the implications of Motana's character. Motana addressed the audience in the guise of the persona of 'Julia Malema', the female alter ego of the politician Julius Malema. Malema is current Commander in Chief of the Economic Freedom Fighters party. After serving as the president of the ANC's Youth League, and proving an extremely loyal ally to Jacob Zuma, who he pledged both to 'kill' and 'die' for, Malema fell out with Zuma and the ANC, and was expelled from the party in 2012. In the following year, he founded his Economic Freedom Fighters party, which ran in the 2014 elections on the platform of championing the interests of the excluded Black poor, and he has voiced controversial demands to nationalize the mines and expropriate White-owned land. However, he is equally famous for his love of designer brands, supposedly having a penchant for Hennessy and Johnnie Walker. He is also a master of branding, praised

by marketers for his skill in this regard[3]. These complexities of his character informed his ambiguity in the imaginaries of marketers.

Throughout the performance, 'Julia Malema' addressed the audience as if at a political rally. She described the success of her new party the 'BFF' – the 'Babes' Freedom Front' – in the recent national elections. This was obviously a reference to success of Julius Malema's party the EFF – Economic Freedom Fighters – in the 2014 national elections, which had taken place a few months earlier, in which the party had won 6% of the vote even though it had only been in existence for less than a year. After discussing how part of her election manifesto included the right to shop, and how she planned to nationalize the weave (a reference to Julius Malema's stated ambition of nationalizing the mines), she playing with the poetics of slogans at political rallies, rousing the audience in chants such as "Viva Diva, Viva. Long Weave Julia Malema, Long Weave."

The performance also contained some subtle, and other less subtle, references to race. In addition to the flaxen weave, which she referenced many times in the performance – weaves and hair straightening, along with skin lightening, have long been practices associated with Black women 'wanting to be White', as I discuss below – there was the exaggerated 'Sandton Kugel' accent that she adopted – a 'kugel' is a white Jewish woman, and is a stereotypical South African character associated with excessive wealth, intensified by the reference to Sandton, one of the wealthiest suburbs in Johannesburg. In another performance described in an online article, she had a bucket of cake flour at the door, which the audience was required to use to 'whiten' their skin in order to attend her 'rally'[4].

Motana's performance was a biting, clever satire of the South African political landscape, which deserves analysis in its own right, although it seems little has been written about her character thus far.

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[3] See Robertson (2015) for a discussion Malema's use of branding and of the praise he has received from marketers.
[4] http://groundup.org.za/article/masello-motana-and-politics-personality_1528

One online op-ed described Julia Malema an "imaginative critique of crass materialism, gender, populism and its relation to politics" and a commentary on the "a return to the politics of the hyper-masculine 'warrior revolutionary'"[5]. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the correspondence drawn by Motana between Malema and a certain consumerist depiction of young Black women raises the question of the significance of the affinities between Julius Malema and the '4th Street Girl' – affinities which advertising professionals often disavow, as we will see. How does a specifically gendered figure of aspiration elucidate the structural cleavages of contemporary South Africa, and what strategies of control does branding offer advertising professionals in managing these tensions? Before examining how the campaign for 4th Street Wine sheds light on this question, I discuss the fears and fantasies surrounding the figure of the 'new' Black middle class in South Africa in more detail.

Malema, the 'weave girl', and the 'new' Black middle classes

If low income Black consumers – embodied in the market segment of the Transformers – provide one example of a consumer 'other' to the whitened middle class self, the 'new' Black middle class may be conceptualized as a further instantiation of an 'other'. What made the new Black middle classes 'other' was their supposedly 'excessive' consumer aspiration; White and whitened middle class consumers were framed as being less driven by upward mobility and the desire for status. For example, John Simpson, head of the Unilever Institute which conducted the Black Diamond study which arguably did the most to frame the Black middle class as the most desirable market segment in South Africa (see Chapter 5), explained to me that one of the differences between newly middle class Blacks and established middle class Whites was that the former desired continuous progress. Whites, on the other hand, aspired towards a destination. Marketers believed that poorer Black consumers who were currently excluded from the new Black middle class, but who wished to join their ranks, also exhibited

[5] http://groundup.org.za/article/masello-motana-and-politics-personality_1528

this extreme aspiration for material goods. Unlike low income consumers such as the Transformers whose exclusion marketers believed had led to despondency, these excluded consumers were seen as angry and continuing to aspire to acquire access to luxury consumer goods. Whereas Transformers were conceptualized as rural, and often older, these angry excluded consumers who continued to aspire to affluence were usually urban and younger.

Despite the differences between the marketing figures of the Transformer, and the excessively aspirational Black consumer – both the new Black middle class and those who aspired to join it – these instantiations of consumer 'others' have elements in common, informed by historically entrenched notions of blackness. Whereas whitened middle-classness was framed by advertising professionals as capable of restraining desire, engaging in long term relationships with brands, and exhibiting 'tasteful' consumer expenditure rather than conspicuous consumption, both low income Black consumers such as Transformers and new Black middle class consumers were represented as incapable of withstanding the desire for instant gratification. For despondent Transformers, this was the desire for cheap alcohol; for middle class consumers and those who wished to join them, this was the desire for status and conspicuous display of luxury brands.

Within the advertising industry, the figure of Malema and his followers encapsulates the fear of uncontainable Black aspiration and consumer desire. We see this for example in an ebook from 2012, written by Dion Chang – designer turned corporate trends analyst – which identifies the 12 "urban tribes" of the new South Africa, which are "bite-sized characters packaged and wrapped for the retail market", as one reviewer of the book put it[6]. "Malema" is a keyword tagged to one of Chang's urban tribes which he labels the "Lost Generation", which includes both the "Lost Elders" and the "Lost Millennials": "The Lost Generation is the coffee in South Africa's cappuccino – undereducated,

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[6] http://mg.co.za/article/2012-06-07-the-rainbow-nation-from-black-pinks-to-diamond-chips.

unemployed and very angry – they are the 90% Black that sits below the 10% white at the top. There are really two Lost Generations: the Lost Elders – the men and women who stood up and rallied for the struggle – and the Lost Millennials, bred by the anti-apartheid elders who trusted that their fight would be awarded with a better future for their children. Twenty years on, they are left with an abhorrent education system, a lack of job opportunities and a continuous inflow of foreigners who they feel "steal" the jobs of young South Africans. Their only hope is to resort to crime or be consumed by a growing fantasy of being rich and famous, a dream that has begun to breed a generation that is a toxic, ticking time bomb.[7]"

In this characterization, what makes these "Lost Millennials" dangerous is their anger at being excluded from the consumer lifestyle promised by the end of apartheid, a resentment which may lead them to appropriate commodities through means prohibited by legally sanctioned economic structures. Their connection to Malema is that he embodies the life of access to luxury brands, and promises them a means to achieve this lifestyle that potentially challenges current legal and political structures, advocating nationalization of the mines and expropriation of White owned land rather than the 'willing buyer willing seller' approach to land reform which the ANC has adopted since apartheid. Fueling this connection between Malema and the subversion of legality are accusations directed at Malema for enriching himself through corrupt business deals and tax evasion, discussed in more detail in the following chapter. This perception is evident beyond the world of advertising, with some political commentators characterizing Malema and his EFF party's success as involving their capacity to channel the anger of "enraged urban youth" in order to attack the ruling party (Poplak 2014: 1577). These 'enraged' followers of Malema are usually gendered as masculine – recall how the media commentator

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[7] "The rainbow nation: From black pinks to diamond chips", Mail & Guardian Online reporter 08 Jun 2012, http://mg.co.za/article/2012-06-07-the-rainbow-nation-from-black-pinks-to-diamond-chips

on 'Julia Malema' read her performance as a critique of Julius Malema's embracing of a hyper-masculine 'warrior revolutionary' identity.

At the same time, others in South Africa have criticized Malema for enjoying his lavish lifestyle at the expense of the poor; following the success of his EFF party in the 2014 elections, a meme appeared on Facebook featuring the image of a victorious Malema with the text superimposed: "You don't have running water. You live in a shack. You ride in a taxi. I buy expensive cars. I buy expensive houses. I only drink Johnnie Walker. You still like me. Thank you for being a fucking idiot." Here, Malema is portrayed as taking advantage of the stupidity of the poor to continue to enjoy his political success and affluent lifestyle. This criticism of the consumption of newly rich Black South Africans and their supposed indifference to the poverty of the Black majority who remain impoverished without access to basic services is frequently heard in South African public discourse, with Zwelenzima Vavi – the former Secretary General of the Congress of South African Trade Unions – calling lavish consumption "spitting in the faces of the poor", and President Jacob Zuma labeling it "a moral challenge that the ANC needed to tackle"[8].

The feminine version of this dark side of consumption is embodied in the figure of the 'weave girl' – young Black women who spend a lot of money on looking good, exemplified by expensive hair weaves. The 'weave girl' is the target of various lines of criticism in post-apartheid South African public discourse. Some of these focus on her 'excessive' spending on looking good, due to the hefty price tags of good quality weaves. For, example, a South African entertainment news blog criticized socialite Khanyi Mbau, who goes by the self-coined nickname of 'the Queen of Bling' for spending R50 000 on a weave in 2012. This was compared to the behavior of Kenny Kunene, as another celebrity who 'spend[s] money recklessly', and who is infamous in South Africa for having sushi parties where raw fish is eaten off the

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[8] http://thoughtleader.co.za/sentletsediakanyo/2010/12/03/in-defence-of-conspicuous-consumption/

bodies of naked models. He owns a club in Cape Town unsubtly called ZAR – the abbreviation for South

African Rand, the national currency[9]. Another article appearing in the online edition of the Sowetan, also

from 2012 punned that "Bonus-bashing on a good quality weave is becoming a hair-raising festive

trend", describing how many women will ask their boyfriends to pay for their hair or take loans from

friends rather than be seen sporting a plastic, cheap weave or their natural hair[10]. Secondly, she is

criticized by some as wanting to be White[11] – just as blonde weave-wearing 'Julia Malema' hinted at

with her bowl of flour outside the entrance to her performance venue, allowing attendees at her 'rally'

to whiten their skin.

All of these criticisms of the 'weave girl' quoted above come from Black commentators, but White South

Africans may also be heard criticizing the purchasing of expensive weaves as excessive consumer

behavior. For example, at a marketing conference I attended which focused on marketing to low income

consumers, one presenter showed a video clip of an elderly White man who was angry that low-income

Black women were chopping wood on his property. When the interviewer pointed out that these

women were just trying to make a living, he responded that they weren't really so poor, as they all had

cellphones and hair weaves. Again, we see subtle correspondences with criticisms of Malema – the

desire for conspicuous consumption of luxury goods such as weaves and cellphones may fuel behavior

that subverts legal and political structures such as norms of private property.

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[9] The blogger writes: "Now what kind of messages was she sending to young females out there? That it's alright to date a man who is old enough to be your father and spend money and flash it in the faces of those who are poor???" (http://kearams.blogspot.com/2012_04_01_archive.html). Here we see how the figure of the 'weave girl' expresses more general fears about social disorder – in the condemnation of her choice to date a much older man – as well as specific criticisms about callous spending without regard for the plight of the poor.

[10] http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/goodlife/2012/12/28/going-crazy-for-weaves.

[11] See, for example, a debate around weaves prompted by legendary jazz musician Hugh Masakela, who told his bodyguards to keep women wearing weaves away from him. Some agreed with the musician's condemnation of weaves, with one Black female celebrity commenting "It's clear we are paying a lot of money to look like white people, which does not make sense" (http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/entertainment/2015/09/19/hair-today-fake-it-all-tomorrow-celebrities-have-their-say). Along similar lines, President Zuma made a comment in 2012 linking women straightening their hair to the desire to be white (http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2012/12/27/even-if-you-straighten-your-hair-you-will-never-be-white---zuma).

This public discourse on the 'selfish' Black female consumer as exemplifying broader anxieties about the conspicuous consumption of upwardly mobile Black consumers in general provides the broader context in which attempts to 'recognize' the Black female consumer serve as a strategy for advertisers to pin down her aspiration, and thus make it harnessable for advertisers and their clients looking to boost profits and sell more merchandise. The advertising industry displayed an ambivalent attitude towards this figure of the new middle class Black consumer, and to 'excessively' aspirational Black consumers in general. On the one hand, this highly aspirational figure was very appealing to advertisers, as extreme consumer aspiration could be milked for profits if channeled correctly. However, the threatening side of this 'other' was the possibility that this extreme aspiration could not be contained by the practice of advertising professionals, or market structures in general, and that it could lead those excluded from this life of consumption to acquire the commodities they desired through criminality or radical politics. In this way, it represented a threat both to the professional expertise of advertisers – that they may fail to channel consumer aspiration – and to their position of members of the middle class, beneficiaries of the economic and political status quo.

Adding to the potential threat of this figure was the shifting nature of the category; exactly who belonged to this category of the 'new' middle class was murky. In marketing imaginaries, it was characterized by constant mobility and becoming, captured by the frequently used term 'emerging' middle class, which could refer to anyone from poor Black South Africans who had hopes of upward mobility, to Black university students with prospects of having a standard of living much higher than their parents. A market segment that was in constant flux was more difficult to pin down through recognition, adding to the challenge of channeling this extreme consumer aspiration toward profit maximization rather than criminality or radical politics. These social dynamics and complex imaginaries

of the Black middle class formed the context in which Distell launched a new product – 4th Street wine –

which also had 99cents as the lead advertising agency[12].

4th Street Wine, the 'New Gens', and the '4th Street Girl'

4th Street Wine was a sweet rosé wine launched in 2009 by Distell in response to the success of the

sweet rosé wine of a competitor distiller. Like all Distell brands, it used the psychographic segmentation

model developed by Synchronicity in conceptualizing its market (see Chapter 2). However, 4th Street

Wine had a very different target market from Sedgwick's, with neither the 'Sense of Knowing' nor the

'Transformer' segments being a focus for the brand. Rather, the brand's primary target segment was the

'New Gen' segment, focusing on Black women 18-35 within that segment. The different demographic

composition of 4th Street's target market in relation to Sedgwick's resulted in very different dynamics

for the two campaigns. The all-White brand team did not project their own identities onto the target

market, as the 'Sense of Knowing' was not a focus for brand communications as it had been in the case

of Sedgwick's. Thus, attempting to subsume differences of race and socioeconomic status within the

category of whitened middle classness was not an option for the campaign strategy. Rather, strategies

of control focused on creating a feminized fantasy figure of the 'good' aspirational Black consumer.

If we examine the segmentation model, we see that the 'New Gens' were conceptualized in ways that

exhibit commonalities with marketing imaginaries of the 'new' Black middle class and the 'aspirational'

Black consumer discussed above. The 'New Gens' are depicted as up-and-coming, with all believed to

aspire to a life of conspicuous consumption and display of luxury brands, but with some having more

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[12] There was significant overlap of personnel between Sedgwick's and 4th Street. 99cents was the lead agency, as it had been for Sedgwick's, and Anne and Nicky worked on the account side, with Steve serving as the creative director for both brands. However, the digital marketing personnel were all different – with the agency Hello Computer rather than Quirk working on the account – as were the activations company (Sisters' Act, rather than Have You Heard?); the PR company, and the media planners. The Distell personnel were also different, with Esme serving as brand manager rather than Kelly. Due to internal restructuring, 4th Street started out having two brand managers – Esme as 'regional' and Jackie as 'global' – but transitioned to having Esme as sole brand manager.

access to that lifestyle than others. There are three types of 'New Gen' consumers described in the pen

portraits document: "cutting edge", "older more upmarket", and "mainstream". All three portrait

photos are of Black consumers, although they are not explicitly defined as only being Black. Both

"cutting edge" and "older more upmarket" feature male consumers, with the "mainstream" portrait

featuring a brother and sister pair, with the sister being the only female drinker discussed in the entire

pen portrait document (see Chapter 2 for further discussion of this).

The three types of New Gen are distinguished from one another by their relative access to luxury brands

and the disposable income to buy them, their relationship to the township versus the suburb, and

whether they were educated at a Model C school or not[13]. The "cutting edge" New Gen portrait is of 22-

year old Kabelo, who went to a Model C school, and lives in the wealthy suburb of Sandton. He is still a

student, but gets a substantial allowance from his parents, which he spends "on being seen in the right

places, with the right people in the right clothes." Branded clothing is very important to him: "he only

wears 'label' clothing" and he "wants to be one of the first to take up a new trend or fashion". "Looking

good gets him the prettiest girls, which further builds his 'cool factor' amongst his peers". He is

"extremely image-conscious and his social status is of utmost importance to him…What he drinks is an

extension of his image" and he likes sweet drinks like expensive RTDs (ready-to-drinks), but he also

drinks some premium spirit "image brands" like Johnnie Walker black, Jack Daniels and J&B.

The "older more upmarket" portrait is of Wetsi, who seems like an older version of Kabelo, only having a

stronger connection to the township, as he socializes there as well as in the suburbs. Finally, the

"mainstream" portrait features Bongani and his sister Thembi. They are described as having been

schooled in the township, not Model C schools. They are currently studying or working in order to save

up to pay for studies. We are told that "[t]ownship taverns are their main hangout and they rarely go

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[13] 'Model C' schools are the previously all-White schools of apartheid that were the first to allow some Blacks
admittance in the early 90s (Southall 2016), and are still a marker of elite status amongst Blacks.

clubbing in town, because it is just too expensive," and "[t]hey would both love to be able to buy the

latest designer clothes and labels but financial reality limits them to one or two special outfits that they

wear on the weekends when they need to impress." Bongani will drink "brown beer" when he's not

trying to impress anyone (see below for a discussion of the status associations of 'brown' vs 'green'

bottle beer), and Thembi will sometimes drink wine with her girlfriends. Finally, the portrait mentions

that "Girls prefer guys who look like something, so when Bongani and his friends want to pull girls, they

have to pull out all the stops with clothes and trendy drinks. Thembi knows that she can have most of

her drinks paid for by the guys when she is out and therefore spends a lot of time making sure she looks

good." As with the 'weave girl', these women are characterized as dependent on men for their luxury

commodities[14], a dependence which exists in tension with their interpellation as autonomous,

unmarked consumers, as we will see below.

The division within the segment – with many New Gens believed to aspire to a lifestyle of luxury brands

without yet having access to it – was evident from the brand's Facebook page[15]. Here, the idealized

version of the female New Gen featured repeatedly in the brand content posted on the page by the

digital agency for the brand – a company called 'Hello Computer' – which depicted glamourous young

Black women who dressed in stylish expensive clothes, wore expensive hair weaves, had perfectly

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[14] A further example of this image of upwardly mobile Black women as dependent on men for luxury brands is provided by another of Dion Chang's 'urban tribes'. This is the "Single Parent, Double Life" tribe, although the term 'parent' obscures the fact that this 'tribe' is made up only of women: "These are young ladies affected by the scourge of teenage pregnancies in South Africa and although many come from underprivileged rural areas, a growing number can be found in suburban homes. Parents often take over child-rearing, leaving the new mum free to go back to where she left off. But the babies remain a priority for many even when they head for the glamorous life of the city. Aspiring to be famous actresses, models, singers or businesswomen, some may take on wealthy boyfriends who shower them with gifts and help to support their lifestyles. Single moms hang out in bars and clubs in search of single men. They spend much effort on their appearance, often funded by the men they snag." The definition also provides some 'key words' for this tribe, which includes "City lifestyle" "aspirational" "sugar daddy" "Louis Vuitton", and "Cartier", as well as "Khanyi Mbau", the socialite accused of extravagant conspicuous spending in the quote above.

[15] The Facebook page was an important part of the marketing strategy for 4th Street as it was a small budget brand, and so like Sedgwick's, did not use ATL media.

manicured nails and made up face, and had the leisure time to drink wine with their 'besties', and engage in a party lifestyle.

In fact, I discovered that these images referenced the imagined human incarnation of the brand – used to render brand communications consistent by providing a common reference point for the agencies working on the account (see Chapter 2). Andrew, the MD of 99cents, explained to me in an interview that if 4th Street were a person, she would be US pop singer Beyoncé. This point of reference was clear in the Facebook content, with the models generally resembled Beyoncé and other pop music divas, both from the US and South Africa. These glamorous images contrasted with the socioeconomic status of many of those who had 'liked' the brand on Facebook and who frequently commented on brand posts, judging from their Facebook profiles, and the user-generated content, which featured young women drinking the brand in much more modest circumstances[16]. The idealized image of the female New Gen consumer segment exemplified by these Facebook posts to which all New Gen's were believed to aspire is what I call the '4th Street Girl': the feminized version of the 'good' new Black middle class consumer.

In this chapter, I argue that the 4th Street Girl embodied the consumer aspiration of Malema rendered harnessable by advertising and market structures; whereas Malema represents the threat that those excluded from this lifestyle may use radical politics or criminality to achieve their aims, the figure of the 4th Street Girl represents the fantasy that Blacks will rely on the brand – conceptualized by marketers as an independent, personified agent – as the best means for transforming them and delivering to them the lifestyle they want. In what follows I will examine how the 4th Street Girl constituted a fantasy for

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[16] This difference between the SOK and the New Gen was also clear in the brand team's attitude to user generated content – whereas with Sedgwick's, the digital team was increasingly relying on user-generated content to create its 'aspirational' look and feel, the 4th Street Facebook page focused on glamourous glossy photos created by those working on the brand.

the brand team, and how like all other fantasies, she betrayed a threatening side in her instability, which the team tried and ultimately failed to pin down by offering her 'recognition'.

Women and Alcohol in South African Advertising

4th Street's focus on women was unusual for an alcohol brand in South Africa. As discussed in Chapter 2, there was a common perception amongst the advertisers and marketers that I interviewed that women would drink a 'man's drink' but not vice versa, and thus that marketing an alcohol brand specifically towards women was dangerous, as it limited its potential market[17]. Additionally, the brand's focus on Black women was particularly unusual. Historically in South Africa, Black women have been associated with the production rather than consumption of alcohol, with the illegal brewing and sale of traditional sorghum beer at 'shebeens' (illegal taverns, now used as a term for informal drinking establishments in the township more generally) being a common way for women to make money in the urban townships during apartheid (Mager 2010, Dlamini 2009). Mager discusses how the Black male journalists for Drum magazine[18] – who wrote extensively about shebeen culture and its associations with a 'modern', cosmopolitan, Black masculinity – would praise these female shebeen owners, as working hard to support their families[19]. These 'shebeen queens' were depicted in opposition to the 'molls', the female patrons at these establishments, who were portrayed as leeches, luring men with their sexuality to buy them drinks and spend money on them. Here we see the tension between 'good' versions of Black femininity, where women labor to nurture their families, and 'bad' versions, where they indulge their desires for alcohol, sex, and 'selfish' consumption. We will return to this tension below.

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[17] Themba Msibi, Black female copywriter from Johannesburg, mentioned this as a broader perception amongst advertisers in the luxury car category as well, explaining that advertisers tended to avoid showing a woman driving the car in ads, because "if a woman is driving the car it makes the car less great. Only women would buy it."
[18] For a discussion of the importance of Drum magazine to Black politics and identity during the 1950s, see Nixon (1994), Manoim (1983), Modisane (2012).
[19] At the same time, these female beer brewers had ambivalent associations, with Thomas (2008) describing how the male members of the Black middle class in the 1930s frowned on these women as figures of femininity outside of male control, and thus in opposition to a patriarchal vision of 'respectability'.

Sané Mdlalose, who worked for a number of years as the Main Market Channel Executive at South

African Breweries (SAB), explained to me in our interview that Black women continue to participate in

the production and sale side of the alcohol industry, owning and operating many of the small informal

drinking establishments in the townships. She similarly described these female tavern owners very

positively, as working hard and putting up with drunken customers to feed and educate their children. In

fact, she explained that when thinking about the ethics of working in the alcohol industry, she focused

on the positive role she believed such women were playing in their communities as a counter to the

obvious ill effects of alcoholism, drunk driving and so on. She expressed the opinion that Black women

drinking alcohol was only slowly starting to find social acceptance, with certain kinds of liquor especially

associated with men, such as beer, and spirits such as whiskey and brandy (this gendering of dark spirits

and beer as particularly masculine was something I heard repeatedly in interviews). 'FAB's (fruity

alcoholic beverages) or 'RTD's (ready-to-drinks) as well as wine were starting to make appeals to

females as consumers of alcohol, but very few images of women drinking appear in ads for these

beverages, unless as part of a big group of people (and in those shots, the women are usually just

holding the alcohol, not drinking it)[20].

Here, we see the parallels with imaginaries of restrained, 'whitened' middle classness discussed in

Chapter 3 – where people have fun alongside alcohol, not because of its intoxicative effects. In these

depictions of 'new' middle class Black females, women display alcoholic commodities as a sign of their

attainment of middle classness, marked by mixed gender, middle-class leisure activities. But, as with

imaginaries of low income Black consumers in relation to alcohol, attempting to maintain the 'safe',

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[20] The first beer produced by SAB targeted specifically at women – according to executive Marketing Manager at SAB, Leanne Martin (interview, 2014) – is a flavored beer called 'Flying Fish', released in 2013, which has a sweeter palate than the other lager offerings of the brewery. Targeting women in such a masculine produce category is unusual, but the TV ad for the beer does not focus on women drinking, rather showing large party scenes depicting women and men socializing together. Women are shown in active roles in the party scene – for example, the DJ is female – but we only see one shot of a Black woman taking a swig of the beer. The ad may be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-LbwxshvxA).

restrained relationship to alcohol while interpellating young Black female members of the 'new' Black middle class as consumers – conceptualized by marketers as defined by their unrestrained desire for conspicuous consumption – was a fraught exercise for advertising professionals.

In this broader context, 4th Street was unusual in its explicit 'girliness', with its ubiquitous pink color palate, and female-focused content on its Facebook page and in other marketing communications. Esme, the White Afrikaans female brand manager on the Distell side, did not seem to see this feminine brand image as problematic in any way, as she pointed out that although its focus was young Black women, the wine was starting to widen its target profile to all race groups and genders, while retaining the young glamourous Black woman as the wine's 'source of image'[21]. She used a logic of heterosexual desire in imagining the unity of the brand, explaining that a sexually desirable young female would appeal to both men and women; she described the 'sweet spot' of the brand as a "young, sexy, 23 year old female - girls will like to be that girl, guys will look at her, and say, 'hot chick'. That girl suits everyone's taste… With the 4th street bottle, everyone can see what I'm drinking, and people will associate me with that girl. If I'm a girl, I might look like that girl, if I'm a guy, I might get that girl."[22] This recalls the argument of the previous chapter, that in addition to exhibiting love and loyalty for the brand, marketing practice requires consumers to desire the brand and the self it offers them.

However, for others in the team, balancing this feminine source of image with a consumer profile that included a variety of genders, races and ages was a tricky balance to strike[23]. Robyn, the head digital

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[21] However, as I monitored the posts on the brand's Facebook page, I did see one comment that seemed to confirm the reluctance of men to drink a 'woman's drink', with one male poster asking, "Is 4th Street for women?" The social media manager posting on behalf of 4th Street reassured him that "4th Street is for everyone!"

[22] This was not the first time I had encountered this logic. In the case of Sedgwick's, which had the masculine brand persona developed by the digital agency Quirk, the digital content manager Stephan explained that the Facebook content tried to show sexy young guys that young men could identify with, and older female consumers would find sexually attractive, thus avoiding alienating anyone.

[23] Towards the end of my time at 99cents, as Distell was trying to broaden the target market to multiple races and genders, they introduced the single-serve product which included a red and a white wine offering, which was seen as less 'girly' than the pink rosé option, and as such, less off-putting to men.

strategist explained that the purpose of communication directed at men and women was different – for women, you wanted them to identify with the image of the drink, whereas with men, you just wanted to create a an awareness of the drink's existence, so that if their girlfriends asked them to buy it, they would have some familiarity with it. This was in line with the portrayal of the target market discussed above, where women are dependent on men to buy them alcohol and other commodities. This informed the placement of online banner ads, with some ads featuring only a product shot and the tagline (the "pack and brag" approach) deliberately placed on websites with a male audience skew. We will see below that Esme's confidence that heterosexual desire could unify the identity of brand was complicated in the messy practice of advertisers attempting to disentangle the particular from the universal elements of young Black female aspiration.

The 'safe' aspiration of the 4th Street Girl

As suggested above, the challenge for the 4th Street brand team – and for all advertising professionals targeting the 'new' Black middle classes – was how to encourage consumer aspiration for brands while rendering that aspiration harnessable by advertising. In the case of 4th Street, this challenge was informed by the brand's focus on Black women, influenced by broader South African marketing imaginaries of femininity and race in relation to alcoholic commodities. In the 4th Street brand strategy document produced by 99cents, the New Gens were described as "Aspiring to the "sweet life", wanting to achieve career advancement and social status". Drinking wine was understood by the marketing team as part of the 'sweet life' that these young women coveted, with marketing research indicating that young Black women saw wine drinking as part of a sophisticated, aspirational lifestyle. Michelle, the head of marketing research at Distell, explained to me that there was a 'wine revolution' currently taking place amongst Black consumers, following on from the 'whiskey revolution' that had taken place a few years earlier. However, whereas whiskey had achieved popularity primarily amongst Black males, wine was popular with Black women too, as it was seen as a more 'feminine' drink.

Whereas Michelle compared the aspirational image of wine amongst women with whiskey amongst

men, Steve compared it with 'green bottle beer' amongst low-income Black male drinkers. The

aspirational quality of 'green bottle beer' was a claim I had heard expressed many times before in

interviews with advertising and marketing professionals. The perception that 'green bottle beer' was

aspirational stemmed from the fact that during apartheid, all the local South African Brewery (SAB)

beers had been produced in brown bottles. The more expensive imported beers on the other hand had

been packaged in green bottles, and so green bottle beers had come to be seen as a status symbol. SAB

had attempted to tap into these associations by introducing beers aimed at the young upwardly mobile

Black male market, such as Castle Lite, in green bottles[24]. However, whether it was compared with

whiskey or beer, wine was described as expressing a feminine version of Black consumerist aspiration in

post-apartheid South Africa.

As the 4th Street brand team attempted to harness Black female aspiration, they tried to encapsulate the

lifestyle these young women were believed to covet, with the 'brand values' of 4th Street identified in

the official brand strategy document as "sophisticated", "stylish" and "aspirational". However,

marketing research also indicated that young Black women were intimidated by the perceived

snobbishness and elitism around wine drinking, what the brand manager Esme called the "sip and spit"

image. Also, research suggested that many young Black women were drawn to the image of wine-

drinking, but did not enjoy the taste of dry wines. 4th Street was supposed to make wine drinking seem

more accessible, both through its sweet taste profile, and through its unpretentious, fun, party image,

while retaining the general aspirational associations of wine. Drinking 4th Street was supposed to be the

first step in developing a palate for wine, which could be extended to the drier taste profiles. While I was

at the agency, Distell was extending this insight by launching a lightly sparkled version of 4th Street Wine

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[24] See Krige 2010 for an analysis of the aspirational associations of drinking Castle Lite for young Black men living in
the Johannesburg township of Soweto.

in a single-serve bottle reminiscent of FAB's (fruity alcoholic beverages, which already had a more feminine image than other alcohol product categories, as discussed above), which was supposed to allow young women to drink wine while dancing at a club, dispensing with the fussiness of the bottle, glass, and corkscrew usually associated with drinking wine.

In creating an 'aspirational' look and feel for 4th Street, 99 cents creative director Steve explained that he had decided to take the pink color of the rosé wine and use that as the basis for the overall aesthetic. He had combined this with the Big Idea of 'big city, bright lights' as a general embodiment of a glamourous, urban lifestyle to which New Gens where believed to aspire, and had chosen the design of an unidentified city skyline at night as the artwork for the new single-serve product. The current goal of the 4th Street campaign was identified in the strategy document as follows: "To establish 4th Street as the sweetest way of gaining entry to the sophisticated allure of the Big City Life as personified in the line 'see you there'". We can see here parallels with the Sedgwick's campaign, where the brand was framed as the catalyst for transforming low-income drinkers into upwardly mobile, aspirational consumers. Similarly, 4th Street is framed as the means for "gaining entry" into the life young Black women supposedly aspire to.

We can see further how in the rendering of Black female aspiration in the 4th Street strategy, the stated goal of New Gen consumers – to achieve career advancement and social status – is limited to images of a glamourous city lifestyle filled with parties, manicures and celebrities. This narrowly circumscribed representation of Black female aspiration was a theme mentioned by a number of advertising professionals I interviewed. For example, Tsephiso, an account executive working at a small agency in Johannesburg, praised the representations of Black aspiration in alcohol advertising, but when pressed, admitted that this aspiration focused on men, with women's career aspirations being embodied primarily in celebrities, actors, and singers, areas in which they are not represented as competing with men.

Sarvesh Seetaram, marketing manager of Hansa beer at SAB, explained to me the difficulty of representing female aspirations in alcohol advertising. In a campaign for Hansa beer – discussed in detail in the following chapter – various stories of entrepreneurial success amongst 'ordinary' South Africans identified by the brand team as 'inspirational' were turned into individual TV commercials. One of these told the story of a female shebeen owner who had prevailed in a masculine world. Sarvesh told me that despite the prevalence of female shebeen owners in townships[25], the ad had received negative response in focus groups amongst the core male consumer profile, objecting to a woman being depicted as a 'hero' in a beer commercial. Sarvesh had interpreted this as stemming from the conventions of gender representation in alcohol advertising in South Africa where women are represented primarily as passive by-standers as men function as active agents[26]. In response to the negative consumer feedback, SAB had pulled the ad. Here, we are reminded of Esme's conception of the '4th Street Girl', who displays the alcoholic commodity, as both are framed as objects of desire – she becomes the girl other girls want to be, and the girl that guys want to 'get'. In this framing, women may enter the aspirational spaces of middle class leisure, but only as passive objects to be desired and consumed. Her aspiration is rendered 'safe' not only for established members of the middle class, but for men who might feel threatened by her encroachment onto spaces currently gendered as male.

In this way, we can see that there were a number of factors at play shaping the representation of Black female aspiration in the advertising industry in general – particularly in the category of alcohol advertising – pushing such representations towards images of a glamourous consumer lifestyle, directed at consuming commodities rather than focusing on career success in the world of business, which was gendered as masculine. In the following section, I examine in more detail how the team tried to create

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[25] Mager (2010) explains that in post-apartheid South Africa, women own more of the small scale establishments and men owning the larger drinking venues which required more capital investment.

[26] See Milani and Shaikjee (2013) for an analysis of these active/passive gender representations in post-apartheid South African beer advertising.

an aspirational image for the brand that they believed would appeal to young Black women, showing how these attempts elucidate the tension within the concept of 'aspirational' between the universal and the particular.

Making 4th Street 'aspirational'

The dynamics of creating an aspirational image for the 4th Street brand differed from those at play in the case of Sedgwick's. For Sedgwick's, the marketing team tried to build aspiration by associating the brand with one of its market segments – the whitened middle-class 'Sense of Knowing' segment – and distancing it from the other – the low-income mainly Black 'Transformers'. This fed off of the perception of many in the marketing team that they and 'their' consumer segment were the embodiment of ideal consumers, and as such, a universal source of aspiration. On the other hand, the primary target market of 4th Street, the 'New Gen' consumers, were divided: while some were believed to have disposable income and enjoyed a life of partying, self-pampering and few responsibilities, most New Gens lived in much more modest circumstances, aspiring to rather than living the life of the '4th Street Girl'. For this reason, much of the 4th Street strategy focused on framing the brand as assisting an aspirational market segment in getting closer to their aspirations – allowing them to 'gain entry' to the 'sweet life'. This was a common strategy when advertising to 'aspirational' Black consumers, in which the brand was framed as assisting consumers in achieving their aspirations, and an important element of the 'developmental brand', which I discuss in the next chapter.

4th Street faced a number of challenges in creating this aspirational image for the brand. One of these concerned its low price point. It was not a high margin product, but made money through selling large volumes at a low price. It promised access to a premium lifestyle on an entry level budget. This was a central challenge facing the team – how to make a cheap product appear aspirational. Again, it is informative to compare the strategy for Sedgwick's with that for 4th Street. Sedgwick's was also a low

cost product, but this was not considered a problem in making it 'aspirational' for a whitened middle-class market segment such as the Sense of Knowing, as a low cost product was congruent with the authentic, 'rustic', unpretentious, no-nonsense image that the brand team was trying to create.

In the history of the South African advertising industry, we see repeated discussion over the years of the supposed perception on the part of Blacks that a cheap product was synonymous with a low-quality one. For example, in Nimrod Mkele's speech addressing the annual convention of the Society of Advertisers in 1959, the audience was informed that "the African equates price with value and therefore with quality. Many of you can, I am sure, quote instances where Africans insist on buying expensive quality goods, when cheaper substitutes would do just as well" (1959: 128). Also, we encounter frequent mention of the belief that the 'new' Black middle classes in South Africa want to demonstrate their newfound wealth through lavish expenditure on expensive brands[27]. In fact, when I asked the account director Anne how one went about making an alcohol brand aspirational, the first thing she mentioned was the option of making it more expensive. As 4th Street's primary target market was Black female 'New Gens', this made its cheap price point a problem for creating a 'high end' aspirational image.

One approach taken by the brand team was to carefully separate the two aspects of the brand's identity – its aspirational image from its cheap price tag. This was evident for example in the debates over the images to appear in the glossy fashion magazine that 4th Street had partnered with. Esme explained to me how she had clashed with the global brand manager[28] on whether or not to include images of the 5

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[27] SA's new Black middle classes engaging in conspicuous consumption is a very widespread perception, and the object of criticism in the media – often with reference to SA's new Black political elite. See James (2014) for a discussion of perceptions of the profligacy of the new Black middle classes – as well as critiques of this characterization – in relation to the phenomenon of increasing indebtedness in post-apartheid South Africa.
[28] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Distell was undergoing restructuring at the time, which involved changing this regional/global brand manager split. However, for many years, this split had been in place, with the global brand manager in charge of brand image, and the regional manager in charge of maximizing volumes in his or her region. This structure was particularly vexing for Esme because 4th Street was only sold in South Africa, so it had no

liter box wine in the print ads for the brand. She elaborated that as the regional manager, she was under

pressure to make certain volume targets, and that selling boxes aided her in reaching this goal.

However, the global manager – who was in charge of brand building rather than volumes – felt that

including images of the box wine in the ads would damage the premium image the wine was trying to

create, as box wine was seen as 'cheap'. They had eventually reached a compromise in agreeing that the

glossy magazine would only feature images of the bottle. In below-the-line communications and on-the-

ground activations on the other hand, the 5 liter box size would appear in promotional material. Esme

explained, "When you do print specifically, you want to create an aspirational feel. In a nice glossy

magazine, the box just looks like another box wine. If you don't show them the pretty bottles they won't

know that we can do that as well. We also mention, also available in [5 liter box size] to show them that

if they have a big party they can buy the boxes."

Trying to create an aspirational image through managing the associations of the product was also

evident in debates over the language that the advertising copy for the new single serve should use.

Legally, the product was classified as a 'perlé', which referred to the pressure of the liquid in the bottle

based on its gas content. However, the team did not want to use this word in the advertising copy, as

Paarl Perlé – another product offered by Distell – was one of the cheapest wines available. Research had

found that the term 'lightly sparkled' was received far more positively than 'perlé' by consumers, with

young Black women in particular associating the latter term with "that dodgy wine that her old uncle

used to get drunk on", as one brand team member described Paarl Perlé.

'global' market. For this reason, she felt that she should be in charge of both sides of the marketing strategy. She and others at Distell explained how this global/regional structure had led to a lot of conflict between brand managers, as the respective goals of maximizing volumes and building brand image were frequently at odds with one another. Here we see how the tension between desire as driving short-term purchasing decisions and love as driving long term brand commitment also informed this corporate division of labor, and fueled a tension parallel to that evident in contrasting constructions of 'instant grat' consumers, and 'sophisticated', restrained consumers.

Another approach that the team had taken in creating an aspirational image for 4th Street, drawing on marketing ideologies of brand personification and humanization, was to "act like a big brand", as the strategy document put it, specifically in sponsoring international music acts, which creative director Steve explained is what car brands and brands like Coke do. This was a strategic choice – as with Sedgwick's, 4th Street did not have a big advertising budget, so it had decided that it could make more of an impact by using the bulk of its budget to sponsor one concert a year, rather than spending a lot on ATL mass media advertising where it couldn't compete with big budget brands. This had primarily been Esme's vision. She explained how when the brand had started to gain popularity, she had approached Big Concerts, the main company bringing in international music acts to South Africa, and told them that 4th Street wanted to be involved in sponsoring a big name artist. This had led to the brand sponsoring first Lady Gaga, and then Rihanna the following year, who were both considered 'on brand' as solo female performers with a large fan base amongst youth across demographic lines. They had even attempted to secure a tour by Beyoncé but had been disappointed to find that the brand's human embodiment only allowed white as the color of the décor at the performance venue, rather than the brand's signature pink.

In 'acting like a big brand' by sponsoring a glamourous international act, which is what 'big brands' with big advertising budgets do, 4th Street attempted to perform itself as an aspirational brand – a brand that could allow those who drank it to 'gain entry' to the life they aspired to. In this way, we see how trying to make the brand 'aspirational' involved both universal conceptions of aspiration – acting like a big brand in such a way that the brand seemed aspirational to all – and managing the particularities of the target market – anticipating the particular associations of young Black women with perlé wine for example, or taking into account the belief that Blacks in particular believe a low price point implies a low quality, low status product. In the following chapter, we will examine in more detail how recognizing consumers based on the particularities of their aspirations, while trying to create an image for the brand

as universally aspirational for all, often came into tension with one another. Complicating the team's

efforts in the case of 4th Street, however, were uncertainties about the particularities of young, Black

women, and how these were informed by gender, race and age.

Aspirational recognition and the impasses of the 'other' consumer

Attempting to recognize young Black women as the consumers of 4th Street displayed a tension between

the figure of a consumer determined by the particularities of age, race, and gender; and the figure of a

universal, unmarked consumer who self-actualizes their unique 'individuality' through consumption.

Here we see a similarity to the tension between low income Black consumers addressed by marketers as

determined by their 'needs' stemming from their poverty on the one hand, and as empowered to create

their own identity through their consumer choices on the other, as discussed in Chapter 3. However, in

the case of the 4th Street girl, there was an added complexity, as the particularities of race, gender, and

age intersected in unstable ways. These tensions were thrown into relief in a debate that took place in

relation to the launch campaign for the single-serve version of 4th Street (which had been given the

unfortunate code name of 'Project Manhattan'). Part of the launch involved an online competition

promoting the new product. At one particular agency-client meeting, the digital agency Hello Computer

presented an idea for this competition in which consumers had to post their 'sparkliest' selfie, to stand

the chance to win their 'sparkliest' dress[29]. Diane, one of the Distell execs, expressed hesitations about

this concept, for two reasons. First of all, she felt it was too 'girly', and mentioned a presentation at an

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[29] This was an elaboration of an idea by 99cents, which was similar to the approach used in other elements of the campaign – taking an intrinsic property of the product, and using its metaphorical counterpart in creating the extrinsic image. This had been done in grounding the 'sweet life' promised by 4th Street in the sweet taste profile of the wine. The idea for the single serve was to use the 'lightly sparkled' intrinsic of drink as a base for the metaphor of the 'sparkly', glitzy, glamourous life indexed by the brand. We saw this as well in using the physical characteristics of the fortified wine as 'warming' as a basis for the 'social warmth' facilitated by the brand. One could also see this as stemming from anxieties around the 'literalness' of Black consumers, which some in the 4th Street team also remarked on, criticizing some consumers in a focus group for rejecting the tagline 'live the sweet life' because it made them think the drink would be too sweet.

industry conference she had been to recently that recounted the finding that women don't just want to be addressed as women. Secondly, and seemingly in contradiction with her first objection, she felt that the competition was too focused on the consumer as an individual, and that this was inappropriate for the female market, and asked if they couldn't bring in another angle that isn't "me, me, me". She pointed out that women often shop for others first, and suggested that the competition extend the idea of 'sparkling' from looking glamourous to doing good for others. As she put it, such a competition could ask women, "how does your heart sparkle?". In this way, Diane felt the proposed competition would be ineffective both because it recognized the supposed particularity of the female consumer too much by being 'too girly', while not recognizing it enough by ignoring her particularly female approach to nurturing-through-shopping. Here we see the imperative for advertising to recognize consumers both as particular and as unmarked, a tension I will return to below.

As the debate around the competition for the 4th Street single-serve unfolded, it became clear that at issue was not just the question of the particularity of gender, but also of race and age. A number of those on the team defended Hello Computer's competition idea against the Distell exec's objection. If for the latter, the New Gen consumer should be addressed as a female who nurtured through shopping, a trait she shared with women of other racial designations, for others on the team, young, Black femininity was its own kind of particularity. Whereas the Distell brand manager had worried that addressing the New Gen's as 'selfish' consumers didn't sufficiently recognize their particularity as women, for the supporters of Hello Computer's idea, it was in this 'selfishness' that the particularity of the New Gen consumer lay. First of all, Robyn, the head digital strategist, argued that because the New Gen target market are still young, they still have a "me me me" attitude, and they want to stand out, and be noticed and admired. Here, age is a more important particularity than gender in informing the New Gen. Robyn didn't mention the race of the New Gen market specifically, but Carey, the head of the PR agency working on the account, also defended the competition idea, arguing that in Africa, young

Black women aspire to a glamourous lifestyle of being photographed and being seen. As evidence, she

cited the snaking lines of young women trying out to be contestants on the TV show 'Africa's Next Top

Model'. Anne, the 99cents account director, backed Carey up on this claim, mentioning the Black

strategy interns at the advertising agency that according to her, would dress up in fashionable outfits

every day for work, and would take photos of one another and post them on Facebook[30].

Again, we are reminded of the insularity of the ad world, where professionals base their view of the

world on TV shows, advertising conferences, and what they see fellow advertising professionals do. In

this interpretation, supported by the very circumscribed evidence presented by the members of the

brand team, the 'selfishness' of the New Gen consumer and her focus on self-display and self-fashioning

through consumption, informed by her race and age, makes her particular. Ultimately, these debates

around the 'Sparkliest Selfie' competition were a moot point, as Esme vetoed the idea because it didn't

focus enough on the fact that 4th Street single serve was wine in a single-serve bottle, which was what

set the product apart from other current offerings on the market. The competition ended up involving

consumers submitting photos of where they liked to drink the single-serve product, to play up the

contextual versatility of the drink.

These debates around how to market 4th Street to young Black women reveal three tensions inherent to

marketing to aspirational Black female consumers in general: the tension between femininity and other

sorts of particularity such as race and age; the ambivalence of the figure of the aspirational consumer

who was conceptualized as potentially profitable but unpredictable; and the ambivalence of femininity

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[30] Other elements of the 4th Street marketing campaign had been designed around this supposed desire for self-display on social media. One of these involved taking photos of visitors to activations at the 'Pink Wall', which would be posted to the brand's Facebook page. They would ask for the visitor's email address so that 4th Street could send them a link to tag themselves on Facebook. Giving one's email address was considered an 'opt-in' for direct email advertising, which was considered very important in light of the fears over impending ban on alcohol advertising, discussed in the introduction. It was a strategy adopted by many wine brands aimed at young Black drinkers, which I encountered when visiting the Soweto Wine Festival in September 2014, a yearly festival designed to popularize wine amongst Black South Africans, which was introduced in 2004.

itself, which could be conceptualized either as nurturing or as focused on self-display and pursuing fickle desires. These tensions undid the promise of recognition to render an 'other' consumer knowable and thus predictable, or to make their consumer desires harnessable by advertising.

Tensions of the Black female consumer 1: Negotiating particularities of race and gender

The uncertainty of advertisers about the particularity of gender in relation to other sorts of particularities was evident both in the context of the 4th Street campaign and in South African advertising industry discourse more broadly. For example, when I asked Steve, the 99 cents creative director on the account, about whether he used his experiences with women in his own life when designing the campaign for 4th Street, as a brand targeting women, he answered in the negative, saying that the 4th Street target market was mainly "lower end" and "rural". The implication was that experiences with sophisticated middle-class women in his own life would not be relevant to appealing to these sort of "lower end", "rural" women. Here, the category of gender cannot encompass the particularities of socioeconomic status and the urban/rural divide.

On the other hand, in other contexts, gender was conceptualized as a universal criterion of difference, transcending particularities of race. For example, Erna George, a Coloured female executive working at the brand consultancy Added Value explained her perception to me in our interview that the race of characters in TV ads had become a less divisive factor in research with viewers. She provided the specific examples of ads for washing powder and margarine, explaining that viewers were less concerned with whether the woman and child were Black or White, and more with whether they were being "good moms". Here, the figure of the female nurturer can transcend the particularities of race[31]. Similarly, in

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[31] Similarly, we see an advertising imaginary that middle-class masculinity centered around male bonding can transcend racial difference in beer ads from the 90s onwards (Mager 2010). Mokoena's blog piece also mentions male bonding around beer as a universal experience: "A depiction of camaraderie looks the same in any language. Think of the famous Budweiser "what's up" TV ad with a bunch of guys chilling and not saying much. That's a deep masculine connection in any language." http://www.marklives.com/2013/09/at-a-coffee-shop-drinking-tea/

the figure of the female consumer as motivated by self-display and pampering through commodities, gender is often conceptualized by marketers as transcending other differences. Alistain Mokoena, MD of ad agency Draft FCB at the time, writes in his advertising blog on how to find universal themes that can transcend differences including those of race and class, "What women do in front of the mirror is the same in any bathroom or bedroom around the world"[32].

We can see how this ambiguous relationship between gender and race in marketing discourse – where at times, gender is envisioned as subsuming differences of race, and at others, race is considered a difference dividing groups defined by gender – troubles fostering brand relationships as a strategy of control analyzed in Chapter 3. We saw how in that paradigm, brand-consumer relationships are conceptualized in a gendered way – where the consumer is imagined as female, either having 'flings' or 'marriages' with their brands – and how marketers attempt to shift 'flings' to 'marriages', fostering purchasing loyalty to the brand. However, if race potentially disrupts gender as a universal category of difference, these feminized relationship models fail to predict behavior, and cannot offer marketers the desired control over consumers.

Tensions of the Black female consumer 2: the ambivalence of the aspirational 'other' consumer

Secondly, the debates around the 4th Street campaign show the impasses of attempting to market to 'other' consumers believed to be defined by their 'aspirational' orientation, such as the New Gen consumer. If recognition serves to pin down consumer desire and make it seem tractable by advertisers, recognizing the particularity of young Black women as supposedly lying in their aspirational orientation and focus on the self comes too close to the figure of the universal consumer to make their consumer desire predictable (in fact, for Diane, addressing the New Gen as 'selfish' was in danger of not recognizing them as women at all). Although unpredictable feminine (and Black) desire was threatening

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[32] http://www.marklives.com/2013/09/at-a-coffee-shop-drinking-tea/

to advertising professionals, the figure of the highly aspirational consumer whose desires for

commodities were never sated was also appealing to advertisers as a potential source of profit.

This tension between predictable and unpredictable consumer figures takes us back to the tension

between unpredictable desire on the one hand, and love/loyalty as a structure of attachment on the

other, a tension inherent to all brand-consumer relations as argued in the previous chapter. However,

this tension was only acknowledged by marketers in relation to 'other' consumers, and came to the fore

both in relation to the Black female consumer and the 'new' Black middle classes. One of the things that

made the 'New Gen' consumers appealing to the brand team was that they were believed to buy brands

on status, and they acknowledged this in focus groups, as opposed to young White consumers, who

denied caring about status in their purchasing choices. This made them attractive to marketers, because

as long as the brand team could keep up with whatever was the latest trendy 'cool' status symbol

amongst this market, 4th Street could remain popular, and form part of the image that drinkers of the

brand were trying to cultivate. As brand manager Esme explained, "Especially in the up and coming

young Black market image is everything. What I drink, what I wear. But people must see me. So if it's

Moet, it has to be in the Moet glass, otherwise it could be anything in there[33]…Our [brand] is all about

image, and being at the right place at the right time, and being seen, with everything that is in the now".

However, trends are unpredictable, and so 4th Street was constantly in danger of falling behind and

having some other brand associate itself with the latest trend: "Our consumers are not very loyal,

because they are very young. Samsung S5 is the hot thing, in two weeks it might be the new iPhone, that

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[33] I heard this opinion about the importance of brand display while drinking alcohol from a number of those I interviewed. For example, Tetteh, a freelance copywriter in Johannesburg – who was born in Ghana but grew up in South Africa – commented that one reason vodka and other clear spirits had been difficult to market to the new Black middle class was that it looked too much like you were drinking water. To indicate that one was drinking a premium liquor rather than water, Tetteh recounted his experience that some young Black men at clubs would purchase giant bottles of vodka that required a few people to carry them to the table, adding to the conspicuous quality of their consumption.

will be their new best friend… You have to stay at the top of the wanted list." Not only is the consumer

desire of this disloyal consumer unpredictable, it is focused around self-display and conspicuous

consumption of luxury brands. Again, we see how the embodiment of 'good' Black consumer aspiration

in figure of the 4th Street girl was not so unambiguously 'good' or 'safe' after all, as she comes

dangerously close to the figure of Malema and the 'weave girl'.

Those working on the 4th Street brand never discussed their target market in relation to Malema or the

'weave girl', only praising them for the aspirational nature and status driven consumption, which they

credited as contributing to the huge success and growth of the brand. In this way, the fantasy figure of

the '4th Street Girl' completely disavowed any connection to this 'dark side' of consumption. However,

others outside the insular space of the advertising world recognized the obscured affinities between the

'4th Street Girl' and Julius Malema, as well as older anxieties around the Black 'modern girl' who

consumes 'selfishly' rather than to nurture others, all of which are crystalized in the figure of the 'weave

girl'. Showing the Facebook page of 4th Street to a few young Black 20s-something females while visiting

Wits University campus in Johannesburg, one of them dismissively commented, "Oh, that looks like

something a weave girl would drink". The 4th Street Girl betrayed her implicit affinities to dark sides of

imaginaries of the aspirational 'other' consumer.

Just as the 'good' aspirational Black consumer was often imagined in feminized form, so was the 'bad'

version: the aspirational consumer who is driven by unpredictable consumer desire that brand cannot

sublimate into loyalty and love was epitomized in the figure of the 'brand slut' – a consumer who is not

loyal to brands, but allows their desire free play and buys any brand that takes their fancy in the

moment. Although Esme attributes this disloyalty to their youth, the term 'brand slut' was frequently

used to describe those falling within the 'new' Black middle classes. This was particularly true in the case

of the youngest members of this group, but was also evident in descriptions of older, more established

members – recall, for example, that the 'pen portrait' of the Black male 'Sense of Knowing' consumer,

discussed in Chapter 2 was described as the least brand loyal within that segment. In Chapter 2, we saw how for the Sedgwick's brand team, the prototypical whitened middle class consumer was middle aged and male. On the other hand, the 'new' Black middle classes were associated with femininity and youth, in line with long-standing conceptualization of Black consumers as 'developing' and dependent on Whites for their actualization. Just as young Black female consumers were portrayed as dependent on men for commodities, Black consumer in general were depicted as dependent on the brand for their development into 'mature' consumers, entering into patron-client relations with the brand during this 'developing' stage, as Black citizens were often described as doing in relation to the state, often framed by the media as basing their vote on patronage of material goods.

We see this articulation of femininity, Blackness and youth in certain market segmentation models in contemporary South Africa. For example, a further 'tribe' identified by Dion Chang, the trend analyst discussed above, is the "Diamond Chips", a name which obviously references the common term for referring to the new Black elite, the 'Black Diamonds', discussed in the following chapter. This market segment is tagged with the keyword of "brand slut", and is defined as consisting of "tech-savvy, stylish, affluent, urban twentysomethings" who "may be too young to remember what it was like to live in apartheid South Africa, but they are not too young to have benefited from the new South Africa". They are "Famous for splurging on clothes and cars, they are sometimes known to have more flash than cash, maintaining their lifestyles through highly financed credit-card debt. Diamond Chips often feel extreme pressure to succeed as the first generation in their families to have benefited from expensive private schooling and university education. They live in fear of falling back into the old African poverty trap their parents escaped from in the 1990s."[34]

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[34] http://mg.co.za/article/2012-06-07-the-rainbow-nation-from-black-pinks-to-diamond-chips.

Although this figure was described using the feminized term of the brand slut, young Black males were described as the least loyal to brands and thus the biggest 'sluts', as they got the most brand attention, believed to have greater access to spending power, with young Black women characterized as dependent on men for access to commodities, as we have seen. For example, Paul, a young White male researcher and strategist at brand consultancy Instant Grass in Cape Town, explained in our interview that young Black males are receiving a flood of attention from brands since the end of apartheid "Brands are still going for 18-24 year olds, Black guys, generally in Joburg. They want to catch them now, while they're upwardly mobile. Tell them about premium stuff like Bells [whiskey]". Sarah, a White female account manager at Instant Grass who was sitting in on the interview connected this brand attention to the 'slutty' behavior of this segment, explaining that these consumers are characterized by "disloyalty…especially with the alcohol category. They'll go to a club, and every brand is screaming at them, there's so much choice. They'll go to every brand sponsored event, they don't care about what brand it is". Festus, a Black copywriter from Johannesburg, echoed this opinion, describing how Black consumers would go to the Castle Lager beer activations and bring their own cooler bags, and drink their Heineken, thwarting the efforts of branding practitioners to connect a branded experience to purchasing a similarly-branded product. If branding ideology tries to play a game of 'keeping while giving' – trying to maintain the value and identity of the brand as propriety to the corporation, while framing itself as giving 'added value', a dynamic analyzed in Chapter 3 – the subversion of this branding ideal by consumers may conceptualized as a game of 'taking while keeping' – taking what the brand gives – free 'experiences', prizes, and giveaways – while refusing to reciprocate this 'gift', as consumers keep their loyalty, refraining from bestowing it on any particular brand.

Tensions of the Black female consumer 3: The ambivalence of femininity

This brings us to the third tension, identified above in relation to the debate amongst the 4th Street branding team. As we saw in that debate, marketers were unsure whether to appeal to Black women as

'selfish' consumers, focused around self-display and conspicuous consumption, or as caring for others, nurturing through consumption. I suggest that this dilemma is informed by a broader tension in marketing discourse and South African social imaginaries between ideas of the female consumer as selfish on the one hand and nurturing on the other. Both of these constructions of femininity invited projections of fantasy as well as fears, a complexity which was only heightened when coupled with Blackness. We have examined the ambivalence of femininity conceptualized as focused on 'selfish' consumption of luxury goods for status above. The ambivalence of femininity conceptualized as nurturing similarly invited projections of marketers' fantasies and fears, both as professionals and as people marked by race and class. The fantasy constructed around a notion of femininity as nurturing was that it made aspiration appear controllable and thus safe, non-threatening to the marketers both in terms of their professional expertise – if they knew her desires, they could direct these for profit – and in terms of their status as White and middle class – if her desires were directed towards caring for her family, they were less likely to be diverted by figures such as Malema calling for radical politics or criminality. This characterization of Black female consumers as focused on the family was evident beyond the context of the 4th street campaign. For example, in addition to the 'Diamond Chips', Dion Chang identifies a further tribe – the 'Empowerment Kugel' – made up by the wives of beneficiaries of the government's policies of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), who are avidly aspirational, but "with family being the only thing that tops their need for status". In this figure, the Black female consumer is characterized as aspirational and desiring status (recall the definition of a 'kugel' above – a White Jewish woman from Sandton associated with excessive wealth), but ultimately driven by the desire to nurture her family. Thus femininity as nurturing makes her desires seem knowable, and thus harnessable through advertising, as it can be channeled into buying commodities to care for her family.

We can see parallels in this logic of channeling Black female consumer desire, and marketing imaginaries of how to channel the consumer desires of the Black middle classes as a whole. Mager (2010: 62)

describes how in the years of transition from apartheid to a democratic South Africa, White advertisers feared the unleashed consumer desire of Blacks brought on by the end of apartheid, expressing the anxiety that "newcomers to wealth and power were out of control, overcome by their eagerness to 'indulge a taste for extravagant as well as conspicuous consumption'". Commentators within the advertising industry argued that the advertising professional needed to harness nationalism to engage these big spenders (see for example Green and Lascaris 1990). For the consuming energies of newly rich Blacks, the sublimating structure is 'the nation', whereas for Black women it is 'the family'. Recognizing Black women as nurturing and Blacks in general as collectivist rather than individualistic constituted an attempt to constitute these figures as such, rendering them 'safe' and their consumer aspiration harnessable through advertising.

Utilizing the particularity of femininity to conceptualize blackness is informed by the status of blackness and femininity as 'others' to the figure of the universal, self-actualizing consumer. But the particularities of these consumer figures are in tension with the construct of the universal, self-actualizing consumer. We see this tension in relation to femininity in an article titled "Top 5 Ways to Talk to Women In 2015", in which marketers are informed that for women, "After centuries of self-sacrifice and focusing on others, the time has come for personal focus, reward and self-fulfillment". Here, women's emergence as consumers equal to men is linked to them becoming 'selfish', liberated from the particularities of their nurturing femininity. The converse of this is that to be bound to care for others is to be prevented from functioning as a fully developed, equal consumer.

This characterization is evident in some commentary in South Africa which characterizes the new Black middle class as less valuable to advertisers than the established White middle class because of the "Black tax" they have to pay, a term used to describe the financial support they give to family members who are less affluent than themselves. This 'tax' means they have less disposable income to spend on brands, especially luxury brands, than their White counterparts who have a similar income. For example,

at a presentation given by John Simpson of the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing on the new Black middle class in 2014, he reminded marketers that when advertising to this marketing segment, they are not just competing with other brands, but with family members for a share of the Black middle-class consumer's disposable income. In this way, they continue to be bound to 'self-sacrifice and focusing on others' in their consumption, as female consumers have been historically, according to the article mentioned above, and from which all consumers marked by their particularity must emerge in order to be fully actualized, unmarked and universal.

In this way, just as Black female consumers and female consumers in general are characterized as not fully liberated unless they are 'selfish', so the Black middle classes are characterized as not fully equal to the White middle classes as long as they cannot spend their disposable income on themselves. This is the double-bind facing both the figure of the Black female consumer, and the figure of the aspirational Black consumer more broadly – part of the fantasy they present to advertisers is that they are constantly desiring more commodities with which to display their newly acquired wealth. Their fickle tastes mean they are never satisfied and always looking to acquire more high status goods. This figure is also compatible with the professional expertise of advertisers, who are taught to premiumize brands to increase sales, rather than using hard sell tactics to market to lower income consumers (see chapter 2). However, the figure of liberated Black aspiration in which Blacks are free to self-actualize through consumption threatened to avoid containment by the advertising industry, posing a threat to advertising professionals both as members of the White middle class, and to their professional expertise as they continuously failed to predict the aspirations of these consumers.

This constantly prompted advertisers to look for ways to pin down the identities and desires of these consumers through recognizing difference and sublimating desire. Although the '4th Street girl' was 'good' in that her aspiration focused on brands not criminality or politics, her characterization as unpredictable made it difficult for marketers to pin down her identity and consumer desires. However,

recognizing the Black female consumer as a nurturer who cared for her family as a version of the 'good'

aspirational consumer seemed to offer predictability, and also made her desire seem capable of being

sublimated by love and loyalty, necessary for branding logic to operate, as we saw in the previous

chapter. Below, we will examine the extreme version of a Black woman recognized as nurturing in a way

that attempts to pin her down and make her 'safe' in the figure of the 'Happy Mama'. The relation

between the particularities of gender and race, and the twin figures of women as "selfish" and women

as "nurturing" in their consumption, and the instabilities of both, have been shaped by histories of

constituting racial difference in South Africa, which I examine in the following section.

Histories of ambivalence: early constructions of the Black female consumer

In historical processes entrenching White supremacy in South Africa, White constructions of Blackness

had an ambivalent relation to femininity. On the one hand, Black men were often feminized – imagined

as consuming fashion commodities for the purposes of self-display, akin to construction of White female

consumers (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997). On the other hand, Black men were often constructed as

hyper-masculine, for example in panics around the 'Black peril' where it was feared Black men could not

control their sexual desire for White women (McCulloch 2000). This ambivalence – where blackness and

femininity shift in and out of alignment – is key to the unstable interaction between different kinds of

particularity when constructing figures of consumer 'others' in contemporary South African advertising,

vexing the efforts of marketers to control these consumers figures through offering recognition.

A further complicating factor with deep historical roots is the uncertainty of whether or not gender can

encompass differences of race. We saw above how for some marketers in contemporary South Africa

femininity seemed to be a category that could transcend racial difference. We see a similar hope

amongst advertisers operating in the context of the nascent advertising industry in South Africa in the

first decades of the 20th century. Examining some of the earliest print advertising targeting Blacks, we

see a conception of all women united by the aspiration to be good wives and mothers, although what

this entails varies by race. In many ads targeting Black women for health and beauty products, as well as

cleaning products and baby care products, we see imaginaries of Black female aspiration as focused on

being good wives and mothers, often showing her using commodities to care for her husband and

children, whether this is depicted in a rural context, or a modern urban home. That this marketing vision

of femininity transcended differences of race is evident if we compare the campaigns for the same

product and brand as they appeared in newspapers targeting Blacks and Whites respectively.

Exemplary in this regard are the ads for the 'Feluna' brand of feminine pills, marketed as 'for females

only', which ran ads in both Black- and White-targeted newspapers. A number of ads for Feluna

appeared in the 1940s in Black-targeted newspapers addressing women who are imagined to aspire to

be desirable as prospective wives.[35] One, appearing in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1943, features a cartoon

strip of a conversation between two Black women, standing outdoors in a country setting. One woman

remarks to the other, "We have noticed how you attract the young men". "Yes, I had two offers of

marriage recently", the other replies, and continues in a long winded conversation to credit her

popularity with men to her use of Feluna, which keeps her healthy. Both women wear a blouse, long

skirt and headscarf, referencing the peasant dress of the countryside, rather than an urban modernity

(Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). Above the cartoon strip is a long advertorial with the headline "How can

women be attractive?" which presents the claim that attractiveness comes from health, and that the

"purpose of this advertisement is to tell all women the secret of how inward Health is obtainable". Here

all women want to be healthy and attractive which will allow them to find husbands.

A second Feluna ad, appearing in the same publication also in the 1940s, similarly plays on the imagined

desire of Black women to be good wives, and of Black men to find good wives. This ad also features a

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[35] This targeting seems in line with *Umteteli's* framing of itself as reaching the rural areas, where presumably the 'traditional' women who serve as the target market for such an ad would have been imagined to reside.

cartoon strip, this time depicting an interaction between a man and his wife in the fields. The wife holds

a hoe and tills the ground, and her husband stands next to her. The cartoon depicts their conversation,

in which they discuss how the wife is not doing as much work as another women pictured working in the

fields, who also carries her child with her. They approach the second women to ask her secret to her

productive and reproductive success, which she reveals as being Feluna.

The aspiration of women to be good wives is also the theme of the Feluna ad appearing in the White-

targeted Cape Times around the same time, with the tagline of the ad reading "What a man expects of a

wife".

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Figure 3: Feluna ads appearing in Umteteli, 1940s: Source: Archives of the William Cullen Library,

University of the Witwatersrand.

Figure 3, continued.

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However, the imaginary of what constitutes a 'good wife' is very different than in the *Umteteli* ads

discussed above. In the *Cape Times* version, the ad shows a drawing of a man sitting in an armchair, with

his wife perched beside him on the armrest, with her arm around his shoulder, holding his hand. He

holds a book in his lap. They seem to be in relaxed conversation with each other. He wears a suit and tie,

she wears a dress. In contrast to the Black-targeted Feluna ad, this imaginary of ideal domesticity takes

place indoors rather than outside, in the space of the home. The copy of the ad appears under the

image, describing what a White man supposedly desires from his wife: "He wants a home, and

companionship. He may have outside friends, but most of his time is spent with his wife. His comfort, his

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pleasure, his personal interests, his children are all intimately bound up with her. And given health, she

should be the greatest contributor to his happiness.

Figure 4: Feluna ads appearing in the Cape Times, 1940s: Source: Archives of the William Cullen Library,

University of the Witwatersrand.

Without health, she cannot be the wife and mother she hopes to be. She cannot be the companion she ought to be." The copy continues to describe how Feluna promotes female health within the body, similarly to the description in the Umteteli ad, and concludes, "A Feluna wife is a happy woman. She has Feluna health. If she knows how to be a successful wife, Feluna will make her one." In these two campaigns, all women want to be good wives, but what that means varies according to race. In early ads such as these, we see the ambivalence of the relationship between femininity and race, but we also see the ambivalence of femininity itself. Scholars have shown how the figure of the female consumer is often a focal point around which anxieties coalesce at moments of social change, with female consumption characterized in contradictory ways. In 19th century France, women as consuming for the domestic space of the home played an important role in fashioning a class identity separate from both that of the bourgeois and the working class (Auslander 1996). Opposed to this construction of 'respectable' female consumption, we encounter an enduring imaginary of female consumers as fickle in their desires, and where sexual desire blurred into commodity desire, with both requiring male control. This figure of the unpredictable female consumer became a model for thinking about consumer 'others' in general, with working class men in 19th century France imagined as akin to female consumers in their fickle tastes (Auslander 1996), recalling how the figure of aspirational Black female consumer becomes a way to think about the new Black middle classes in general in the contemporary South African advertising industry.

At the same time – again recalling the ambivalence of the aspirational Black female consumer discussed above – the constantly changing tastes of the female consumer have at times been framed as good for economic growth, as their fickle desires created demand that stimulated the production (de Grazie & Furlough 1996). Scholars have shown how this image of the fickle, 'selfish' female consumer was embodied in advertising images in newspapers around the world from the 1930s onwards, in the figure of the 'modern girl' (Weinbaum et al 2008). Just like the '4th Street Girl', the 'modern girl' is at an earlier

stage of life prior to marriage and children, and is the flipside of the nurturing female consumer who

puts her family above herself. She is represented as a 'selfish' consumer, transgressing into the world of

men, and being in charge of her own sexuality. Just as her sexual desire was unpredictable, so was her

consumer desire.

Ads in Black-targeted South African periodicals that address young Black women as 'modern girls' are

usually for cosmetics, clothing or hygiene products[36]. These 'modern' women are dressed in western

clothing and jewelry, and are either being wooed by young men in suits, or as part of a romantic couple

engaged in 'modern' activities (such as dancing, eating dinner at restaurants, looking at photo albums,

or in one particularly over-the-top ad for Sunlight Soap from the 1950s in *Umteteli*, watching a polo

match). We can see parallels between this figure and the characterization by some on the 4th Street

brand team of young Black women as focused on "me me me"; the 'modern girl' is represented in ads as

individualistic and self-indulgent, consuming commodities – particularly fashion and cosmetics – for

their own enjoyment rather than to assist them in nurturing others.

In this way, the debate around the significance of the 4th Street Girl's femininity – should she be

addressed as a 'nurturer' or as a 'selfish' consumer – resonates with historically entrenched contrasting

imaginaries amongst advertisers of femininity in general. However, the implications of Black women as

nurturers/Black women as individualistic had broader implications for racial imaginaries in South Africa,

both at an earlier historical moment, and in the present. Thomas (2008) shows how in the context of

1930s South Africa, the Black modern girl was ambiguous in that being 'modern' was held up as a sign of

racial progress, and connected to using commodities, but being 'modern' had to be done in a way that

ensured 'respectability', a notion which emerges in the pages of *Bantu World* in columns written

primarily by members of the Black male elite. Being 'respectable' excluded using cosmetic commodities

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[36] Cf Burke (1996) for an analysis of the role of hygiene products in constructing notions of race and gender in the context of Zimbabwe.

for lightening the skin that were seen by some as indicating a desire to be White. In fact, the use of cosmetics in general was frowned upon, as a practice associated with women outside of patriarchal control such as prostitutes.

We see here how Black feminine consumer aspiration was ambivalent in relation not only to Whites but to Black middle class males. This middle class Black male fantasy of 'safe' feminine consumer aspiration within the space of the domestic sphere, as well as the dual imaginary of Black women – as nurturing wives and mothers vs as independent 'modern girls' – in a conversation that appears in the minutes from the 1959 annual convention of the Society of Advertisers. A White delegate asked Nimrod Mkele – the Black marketing researcher featured as an 'expert' on the Black consumer, discussed in Chapter 1 – whether "the married Bantu woman want[s] to be regarded as a housewife or the modern, slicker and smarter types in the social educated class" (1959: 135). Mkele – himself a highly educated individual who would have constituted a member of the small Black middle class at the time – answered that in his opinion, "most married Bantu women want to be housewives, while, at the same time, they want to look acceptable, presentable and able to move about in society" (ibid).

Elsewhere in his address, we see that for Mkele, women were at the vanguard of Black consumerism by virtue of the fact that they were rooted in the domestic space, and as such, directed household spending "You will have noticed the highly significant role that women are playing in these changing values [the turn away from values that tie Blacks to what Mkele calls their "tribal past"]. They are bringing in new tastes into African homes. After all it is they who determine what shall or shall not be bought. The role of hubby is to fork up and smile…women are therefore the vanguard of progressive ideas in today's emergent African Society in so far as the home is concerned" (1959:129). Here we see again the imaginary of the Black female consumer as 'modern', but as non-threatening to patriarchal control in her status as a housewife. Mkele portrays the fantasy of the Black woman as an aspirational consumer, but within the 'safe' space of the domestic sphere were she uses that consumer aspiration to care for

her family, reminiscent of the 'Empowerment Kugel' whose desire for luxury consumption was overshadowed by her concern for her family, which she nurtures through consumption.

Although not mentioned by Mkele, a further element complicating Black women as nurturing through consumption in the domestic space was the importance of Black women's paid domestic labor within White households in contributing to stratified class reproduction and relations of racial inequality. In early marketing industry publications, this labor is framed as essential in spreading the consumer tastes of Whites to Black homes. In this sense, the Black domestic worker may be seen as the female counterpart to the Black male migrant laborer, discussed in Chapter 1. This is illustrated in an ad for *Bantu World* from the 1940s, directed at White advertisers. Appearing without images, it reads:

"When the day dawns, who delivers your morning paper and the milk; who makes that pleasant morning pot of FIVE ROSES or MAZAWATTEE TEA? Who opens the cartons of POST TOASTIES, KELLOG'S CORNFLAKES and prepares BOONY BOY, TIGER or QUAKER OATS, for the children going to school? Who uses SIMONIZ to polish the car, NUGGET, MELTONIAN or SHU-WHITE for footwear, BOK, X66 or SUNBEAM to polish the floors, and DANDY for the range? Later in the day, who uses VIM and LUX, LIFEBUOY, BON-AMI, SUNLIGHT and RECKITT'S BLUE?...PEOPLE we see as vaguely as if they were shadows. Black people: 5/7ths of our population, about whom we know so little, yet who know so much about us – our daily needs, our likes and dislikes, our preference for this and that. People who are learning the use of everything we buy and sell: people who are yearning for an ever widening range of the commodities which we produce. People who are earning more and more each year. HERE IS A FIELD FOR ADVERTISING" (caps in original, quoted in Rogerson 1994: 29). Here we see how Black labor within and in relation to the White domestic space was framed as both crucial to spreading a taste for consumer goods and as a potential source of profit, while perceived as vaguely threatening, with Blacks possessing knowledge of Whites, while Whites remain ignorant of Blacks.

In contemporary South Africa, the figure of the Black female domestic worker as depicted in advertising remains controversial, often characterized by middle class Whites as a figure of humor and nostalgia, and Black advertising professionals and middle class Blacks more broadly as 'undignified'. The Black domestic worker is intimately caught up with the figure of the 'Happy Black Mama' – portrayed as content and nurturing, satisfied with her station in life, no matter how lowly. In the final part of this chapter, I examine this figure in advertising, showing how it is involved in different kinds of self-making projects for White and Black advertising professionals respectively, and how it illustrates the other side of the paradox of attempting to offer consumers both aspiration and recognition: a consumer figure that is determined by her particularity in such a way that is not sufficiently tempered with the promise of transformation through consumption.

From the endlessly aspirational Black woman to the 'Happy Black Mama'

Themba Msibi, one of the few Black female copywriters working in South African advertising today, first drew my attention to the 'Happy Black Mama' figure as the counterpoint to the aspirational Black female consumer. In our interview she complained of "The recurring theme of this unsatisfied Black family that is always trying to do more, get to the suburbs, a better car, a better house. Whereas the White consumer has satisfaction with their life. Sometimes I walk into a meeting and think, if someone says aspirational, I'm going to lose my mind….Where is the content Black woman, is there no place for her in South Africa? Who has her shit together, nice car, nice life, is happy with their life, their children are happy?" On the other hand, she mentioned her observation that "When it's time to speak to Black women, you're like, who is this Black lady dancing all day long? I've never met her. Always happy, being helpful, always big. Out to fix the world, and cuddle everyone. It's lazy thinking. it shows that the people who are creating work have no idea of who the Black woman is, it's a stereotype…Didn't you just say she's trying to strive for better, constantly reaching for the stars, why is she so happy? That is where it gets into that mama, fixing the world."

The Black mama figure was mentioned repeatedly by Black advertising professionals as a reviled but reoccurring representation of Black women in ads, with her most common features being that she was overweight, dancing, singing, happy, often speaking with a heavy accent, and often associated with food. This representation of Black femininity occurred in ads for different kinds of product categories than the image of the aspirational Black woman such as the 4th Street Girl. The Black mama figure was not used in ads for status goods like alcohol or cars but rather for products marketed across cleavages of race and class, such as tea, margarine, and cell phones.

The figure of the Black mama was involved in different self-making projects for Black and White advertising professionals respectively. Themba interpreted the fondness of White advertisers for images of the happy Black mama figure in relation to the prevalence of Black women as domestic workers in White homes: "Most South Africans grew up with a Black maid, so that is his [the corporate representative or creative from the ad agency working on the account's] reference to Black women…Or, the mama who helped clean him up after school, got him ready for school. When the White creative male thinks of a Black woman that's who he thinks of. Then the White male from corporate and the ad agency would have a conversation about this, and they have the same reference, so they think, we're perfectly right"[37].

In this way, for White advertising professionals, the happy mama figure was an embodiment of 'good' Black femininity drawing on racialized experiences of domestic care[38]. However, although she appears a 'safe' counterpoint to the figure of the endlessly aspirational Black consumer, this figure has her own

[37] In this association, we see parallels between the 'happy Black mama' figure and the 'Mammy' in US brand imagery (see Berlant 2008), with both indexing White nostalgia and historical amnesia.
[38] One could argue that there are resonances between the figure of the 'happy mama' and that of the Transformers. Whereas the mama is framed as non-threatening because of a certain construction of her femininity, the Transformers are non-threatening because they are described as 'cultural' and 'traditional' and mostly rural, rather than voraciously aspirational figure of the 'dangerous' Black male consumer embodied in Malema.

ambiguities. As she is paid to perform domestic labor, she invites suspicion that she nurtures out of self-interest rather than altruism. Also, as we saw above, she was framed historically as pivotal in spreading consumer desire to Black households, as she developed a taste for commodities through exposure to them in White households. In this way, she blurs the boundaries between figures of Blacks as selling labor and consuming commodities. Further, although she is appealing in that she is non-threatening to the position of White middle class advertisers, she is not aspirational enough to be profitable, and so fails to be a suitable space for the projection of fantasies of the endlessly profitable Black consumer akin to the figure of the 4th Street girl. Here, in contrast to the self-making project in relation to Sedgwick's, the fantasies of advertising professionals as professionals and as members of the White middle class diverge, with the happy mama being appealing to the latter but less so to the former.

On the other hand, for Black advertising professionals the figure of the happy mama exhibited a distinct set of ambivalences. For many, she was not a figure of positive nurturing, but rather constituted an 'undignified' portrayal of Black femininity and of Blacks more generally. For example, Johannesburg copywriter Melusi Tshabalala felt strongly about the different ways White and Black women are portrayed in ads. "White women are shown as classy and Black women always look like these stupid dancing singing idiots. They sing for food, they dance in a banking ad. Why the fuck is she doing that? My mom and wife don't do that…. The White team presents it to their White client, and then someone says, it reminds me of my maid. Even if she has seen one Black person do that, it doesn't mean….I would rather portray them in a different light, in a dignified manner. They're always fucking singing."

I suggest that the criticisms on the part of Black advertising professionals of this figure of the Black mama may be understood as participating in their own projects of self-making, in which dignified blackness is articulated to the middle class position of these advertising professionals. Further, for Black advertising professionals who criticize the Black mama figure there is an ethical dimension to pinning this figure in place – she is not being offered the transformative power of advertising. A criticism made

by Themba of the way advertising addresses low-income Black women in general provides an example of this line of critique. Themba explained that she disliked how advertisers attempt to inject aspiration into the communication aimed at poor Black female consumers: "I'm just going to make your shack pretty. I'm not going to fix it or allow you to leave it, or that world. It's 'shack chic'. There is this need to find some glamour in the poverty or the struggle. This Black woman who is in a Merc in a nice house, that's not it. It's the Black woman in her two room house. How do we make that shiny and bright? Because she's happy and dancing, her kids are all happy."

In this approach to advertising, the Black woman is offered recognition that the ad is addressing her by showing her shack, but a bright and shiny version of it. However, for those such as Themba, a bright and shiny shack does not offer poor women sufficient aspiration. We are reminded of the discourse evident in South African advertising and in society more generally that advertising has a duty to offer addressees – and especially Black addressees – the promise of transformation through advertising. The continuing preponderance of Black women in positions of menial domestic labor may be read as evidence of the failure of democracy to transform the lives of most poor Black South Africans, and with women bearing the brunt of this failure. In this context, in the views of Black advertising professionals in particular, advertising owed low income Black women such as domestic workers more than an affirmation of their servile status. Rather, it had a duty to offer them 'better' versions of themselves, and to serve as catalyst for achieving these selves.

In the comments of Black advertising professionals, these 'better' versions were usually incarnations of their own middle-class selves. Similarly to the Black 'experts' quoted in the advertising periodicals during the 20th century, Black middle-classness was represented as conferring the kind of 'dignity' on Blacks that the figure of the 'happy mama' supposedly failed to confer. Exactly what constituted this middle-classness was a matter of disagreement. Attitudes towards this 'aspirational' 'new' Black middle class varied amongst the Black advertising professionals I spoke to. Many, such as Themba quoted above,

were critical of it, seeing it as exaggerating its voracious appetite for consumer goods in a way that lacked the 'dignity' many were trying to confer. Others embraced the designation of 'aspirational', equating it with upwardly mobile, and 'progressive'. What all of these Black advertising professionals agreed about was that the figure of the 'Happy Mama' failed to offer the kind of middle-class aspiration that all Black South Africans deserved. In this way, for Black advertisers, the 'dignity' of the Black female consumer served as a metonym for the dignity of all Black South African consumers, just as for White advertisers, imaginaries of Black female consumer desire and aspiration served as a means to imagine the figure of the Black consumer more broadly.

Contesting the 'Happy Black mama': the case of the Joko tea ad

The tensions around recognition, aspiration and figure of the 'Happy Mama' and her connections to Black female cleaners and domestic workers were crystalized in the contestations around an ad for Joko tea[39]. The ad, which was released in 2005, shows a middle-aged, large Black woman mopping the floor of a huge airplane hangar. She seems somewhat daunted by the task and pauses for a break, but after drinking a cup of Joko tea she is re-energized and continues the task, dancing to the soundtrack of 'Ain't No Mountain High Enough', gyrating her hips and wiggling her rear end. Here, we can see the different relation of the Black Mama to consumption vis a vis the 4th Street girl; rather than consuming to display status, the Black Mama consumes to help her get through the labor she must perform just to survive.

Some White South Africans praised this ad, with one "Hillary" commenting on an article about it: "It's a brilliant ad! - Can the agency get send me a copy for my sister in New Zealand, it'll make her so homesick. This ad has everything authenticity, affection and absolute resonance with the reality of life in SA.[40]" Here we see parallels between the "Mammy" figure in the US, which through commodification

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[39] The ad can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfOaZBb_w-I
[40] http://www.bizcommunity.com/Forum/196/15/1153.html

becomes a figure of collective (White) national identification, obliterating the realities of the history of

slavery and racism which produced this figure (Berlant 2008). Here "Hillary" ignores the racist realities of

South African history which informed the current context in which domestic cleaners are almost

exclusively Black or Coloured women, rather framing the woman in the ad as a symbol of her sister's

"homesickness" for the "reality of life in SA." However, the ad became the target of criticism by Blacks in

particular, with an official complaint lodged against the ad with ASASA (Advertising Standards Authority

of South Africa). One article critical of the ad appeared on the bizcommunity website, a forum for

advertising and marketing industry discussions, titled "Media messages must be sensitive to the realities

of life". This article complained that the ad is demeaning because it trivializes the struggles of poor Black

South African women, suggesting all they need to overcome these is a cup of tea[41]. In another article, an

MP on the Home Affairs Portfolio Committee was quoted as complaining that ""The way the advert

captures the woman's excitement as she dances and mops at the same time feeds into the stereotype

that Black women are content with menial jobs such as being cleaners"[42].

We see this contradictory imperative to both recognize the reality of low income Black South Africans in

advertising, and to offer them the aspiration of escaping this reality. On the one hand, the ad is criticized

for not 'recognizing' the struggles of poor Black women who have to go through a daily slog just to put

food on the table, by making light of the realities of domestic workers. On the other hand, it is criticized

for recognizing them without offering them the aspiration of escaping this menial labor, depicting them

as 'content with menial jobs'. In this sense, it romanticizes reality without offering aspiration that can

elevate them above that reality, just as the representations Themba criticized show happy Black

mothers in pretty shacks.

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[41] http://www.bizcommunity.com/Forum/196/15/1153.html
[42] http://www.fin24.com/Business/MPs-stir-Joko-tea-TV-ad-20051116.

Those who defended the ad pointed out that it is 'realistic' – that the majority of working Black women are cleaners, and there is nothing shameful in this. One writer extended the theme of recognition beyond relations between target consumers and brands to the relation between South Africans and South African society – to understand the 'message' of the ad, viewers must 'recognize' the reality it references: "this is an ad that would not have made sense if the woman was rather a White male in a business suit cleaning the hangar. The viewer would not have immediately understood, because the reality in South Africa is that most cleaners are Black or Coloured women. Using a White male would have been confusing and the message of the ad would have been lost. This may be a symptom of a socio-economic problem, but I don't think an advertiser is doing anything wrong in reflecting this reality.[43]" The ASASA agreed with this interpretation, and dismissed the complaint, claiming that "the woman is not portrayed negatively, and that viewed objectively the advertisement is not offensive.[44]"

We see here a tension between ads as representing (or 'recognizing') reality, and depicting an aspirational version of that reality, as part of an ideology of ethics in which advertising has a duty to transform and uplift[45]. I suggest here that the defenders of this ad misrecognize the particular genre of advertising, which does not simply 'reflect' reality, but must reconcile present reality with a better future. If the 'aspiration' of the ad is simply the Black woman feeling happy and dancing after a cup of tea, sufficiently refreshed to return to performing labor necessary to reproduce unequal social structures, this aspiration is deemed unsatisfactory by many. What this controversy illustrates for the purposes of this chapter is both the appeal and the failings of Black femininity conceptualized as 'nurturing' from the perspective of White advertisers (embodied in the figure of the 'Happy Mama') –

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[43] "Women in advertising: to stereotype or not to stereotype?" By Gail Shimmel, 17 May 2008, http://www.leader.co.za/printarticle.aspx?s=1&f=1&a=665
[44] http://www.leader.co.za/printarticle.aspx?s=1&f=1&a=665
[45] Advertising professionals themselves oscillate between these two conceptions of advertising, at one moment claiming that it only represents what is already in society, at the next claiming that it has the power to instigate transformation (see concluding chapter).

her nurturing, content nature makes her safe and non-threatening (and could serve as an object of national White nostalgia for some), but her lack of consumer aspiration for conspicuous consumption makes her less appealing as a source of endless profit. The ambivalence of her appeal and shortcomings informs the continuing duality between the 4th Street Girl/the Happy Black Mama as different kinds of fantasy figures of Black femininity in South African advertising.

The contestations around the Joko ad shed light on the difference between a politics of recognition and a politics of aspirational recognition. As Markell shows us, a politics of recognition serves to entrench as fixed notion of identity, as this serves as the yardstick against which assessments are made of whether or not recognition has taken place. Because of this, demands for recognition tend to criticize depictions of a cultural group on the grounds that 'this is not what we're really like'. Recognizing what a group is 'really' like is seen as a prerequisite for conferring agency and dignity. From the above discussion, we see the difference in a politics of aspirational recognition. Here, the objection is made on the ground that, 'it doesn't matter if that's what we're really like, our potential is to be more than that'. Recognizing people is not enough to confer dignity or agency; they must both be recognized and offered the aspiration that will allow them to transcend their current social positions and achieve actualization. In this way, we see the importance of examining how recognition is offered consumers, and the way it is reconciled with aspiration, in understanding the politics of advertising.

Between aspiration and recognition: blackness, femininity, and the double-bind of the 'other' consumer

Underlying the complexities facing marketers who try to make sense of the relationship between femininity, race and age, as well as between the Black female consumer as aspirational and as nurturing is the basic contradiction highlighted above in relation to Diane's original criticism of the competition idea – Black women must be recognized as women, but also recognized as not defined by their

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femininity. I suggest that this tension reveals something about the nature of all advertising, as well as

the specificity of advertising addressing consumers conceptualized as 'other'. As I've argued, all

advertising is driven by the need to calibrate aspirational recognition, offering consumers both who they

are and who they want to be. This involves a tension in the promise of advertising, to both give the

consumer 'who they already are' (disavowing the constitutive power of encounters between brand and

people), and to allow the consumer to transcend their particularities in the promise of transformation

through consumption (embracing the constitutive power of these encounters). Further, all advertising

must balance the need to recognize consumers as 'individuals', distinct from one another, and united by

their common purchase of the branded product (Williamson 1978). Similarly, Black female consumers

must be addressed as sharing something based on their race and gender, as well as different from one

another, a difference which marketing ideology posits can be expressed and constructed through

consumption. However, as with so many tensions in advertising, the impasses are only acknowledged

and addressed in relation to 'other' consumers.

This tension comes to the fore because part of the particularity of the Black female consumer is that she

is defined in opposition to the figure of the universal consumer (just as Blackness and femininity

separate her from the category of universal humanity) – unlike these universal consumers, she

addressed as determined by her membership in a group, rather than her status as an 'individual', and as

dependent rather than self-actualizing. Just as Markell shows in the context of recognition in the

political realm, in the world of marketing, offering recognition of these differences appears to pin down

these identities, making them 'safe' for marketers who can then address this figure through advertising,

attempting to channel her consumer desire and aspirations, and thus generate profit. However, when a

consumer is marked by particularities that separate them from constructions of the universal consumer

(such as blackness and femininity), it becomes more difficult for advertisers to recognize these

particularities while still offering the promise of an unmarked consumer self that can self-create through consumption.

Because of the imperative of aspirational recognition, advertising must recognize all consumers as at least potential versions of these unmarked, self-actualizing consumers. However, addressing 'other' consumers as self-actualizing through consumption undoes the promise of recognition to pin down and make these consumers knowable, predictable and 'safe' – the endless aspiration of the self-actualizing consumer is defined by its constantly changing, unpredictable nature. Addressing 'other' consumers as self-actualizing embraces the constitutive nature of encounters with advertising and branding, which are inherently unpredictable, thus threatening advertising expertise based on claims to control unpredictability. Also, this figure of the self-actualizing consumer is dangerous because it undoes the developmental logic of the brand – the 'other' consumer must be developing, but not fully developed, or the safety of dependence on the brand falls away. Hence, we have another instantiation of the double bind of the 'other' consumer, who must both be recognized in terms of her particularity and her (potential) freedom from that particularity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined two figures of 'good' Black femininity fashioned by South African advertising professionals that attempt to use recognition of particularity as a strategy to make the consumer aspirations of Black consumers knowable and thus harnessable through advertising. However, we have also seen that these figures are shot through with ambivalences that undo this promise. The '4th Street Girl' was interpellated as having aspiration that focused on a life of consumerism enabled by brands rather than radical politics or criminality. But her associations with the dark side of consumerism (via Julius Malema and the 'weave girl') and the ambiguous relationship between her race, gender and age made it impossible for advertisers to pin her down through recognition. On the other hand, the

figure of the 'Happy Mama' seemed safe in her nurturing qualities. However, as a paid domestic laborer she nurtured out of self-interest and was thus marked by a separate set of ambivalences. While serving as an object of nostalgia for White advertising professionals and viewers, she represented an 'undignified' vision of blackness and Black femininity for Black middle class advertising professionals. In this way, although femininity seemed like a way for marketers to render the particularity of blackness knowable, femininity exhibited its own ambivalence and inscrutability that made it unsuitable for asserting control in the way desired by marketers.

Because of the nature of advertising, which draws its power from its openness and unpredictability in encounters with consumers, no consumer figure can ever be entirely 'safe'. As we have seen repeatedly, an instability inherent to advertising gets projected onto the figure of the 'other' consumer. In this chapter, frictions between recognition and aspiration emerged in debates around advertising directed at female members of the 'new' Black middle class, and other aspirational Black female consumers who wished to join this group. In the following chapter we will see how advertising addressing Black males struggled with similar tensions between recognition and aspiration. However, in the case of Black male consumers advertisers did not have imaginaries of nurturing femininity or dependence on men to fall back on, making the goal of harnessing the desire of this masculine consumer figure – particularly those excluded from the consumerism of the new Black middle class – especially challenging.

Chapter 5

'From Aspiration to Inspiration': the Utility of Hope, and the Politics of the 'Developmental Brand'

In the previous chapter, we saw how some in the advertising industry and in broader South African society worried that the consumer aspiration of the 'new' Black middle class and those excluded from its ranks may be unharnessable and thus threatening, and how attempting to 'recognize' the femininity of the Black female consumer served as part of advertisers' attempts to contain this aspiration. In this chapter, I examine a further manifestation of the advertising industry's attempts to channel Black consumer desire in relation to the rise of the discourse within the industry encouraging advertisers to move "from aspiration to inspiration" when targeting Black South Africans. Simply put, this calls for a shift from advertising showing 'aspirational' images of luxury consumption, to advertising that can 'inspire' consumers to achieve success – defined in various ways – usually focusing on narratives in which the brand is framed as enabling transformation. I show how these calls were fueled by developments in international branding ideology, structural tensions within advertising as a practice, historically entrenched fantasies of the South African advertising industry, and the transforming sociopolitical context of post-apartheid South Africa. In analyzing the discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration', I move beyond the specific context of the small, predominantly White agency of 99 cents in Cape Town that has been the entry point into South African advertising in the preceding chapters, to take a broader view of the advertising landscape, although still from the vantage point of a campaign for an alcohol brand – the beer brand of Hansa Pilsener, one of the offerings of the brewing giant South African Breweries.

The product category of beer has a long historical linkage to constructions of masculinity, in South Africa and elsewhere (Mager 2010, Krige 2010). For this reason, advertising the brand of Hansa Pilsener had to engage with predominantly masculine rather than feminine depictions of the Black consumer. Further, these depictions had to resonate with low-income Black males, who made up a sizable chunk of their

target market, as was the case with most South African beer brands. In addressing these consumers, the Hansa campaign drew on the discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration' in attempting to both kindle the consumer desire of this target market, and make this desire tractable. In this chapter I explore how the fortunes of the Hansa campaign provide an entry point into investigating the broader impasses of harnessing consumer desire, configuring racial difference, and mediating tensions definitive of the practice of advertising. I argue that the discourse encouraging a turn to 'inspirational' advertising invokes a politics of hope in which attempting to inspire hope through branding seemed to offer advertising agencies and their corporate clients some control over the newly unleashed consumer desire of Black South Africans, akin to strategies of control we have examined in previous chapters. However, the uncertainty inherent to hope consistently undid the promise that inspiring hope through branding could provide advertising professionals with the control they desired. Despite these failures, advertising professionals continued to believe that inspirational advertising could inspire hope, cultivating their own forms of hope in the capabilities of their professional practice[1].

We see the potential political utility of hope in early discussions of marketing to Blacks in industry periodicals. From the earliest days of constituting the Black consumer, desire for a consumer lifestyle had to be kindled while remaining harnessable by Whites. Part of keeping Black consumer desire non-threatening was convincing Blacks that the consumer lifestyle they coveted could be achieved within the political and economic status quo. A quote from the advertising periodical The African Press and Advertising Annual from 1952 makes this explicit. In an article on 'the Native market', the author writes, "As long as…[the Native] has the hope of sharing to an increasing degree in a higher standard of living, the incentive will be there for co-operation with the European through whose skill and knowledge alone he can achieve his purpose" (no author, 1952: 162). The implication is that hope in the possibility of

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[1] Cf Miyazaki (2004) on the replicative nature of social scientists' attempts to produce knowledge about the hope of those they study, in which they replicate these moments of hope in their own inquiry.

achieving this 'higher standard of living' under the existing political system would promote what the author terms 'cooperation' with Whites – but which really indicates the desire for the continued dependence of Blacks on Whites – preventing the 'Native' from demanding equal political rights. In this imaginary we see how the category of the political subject is completely subsumed by that of the consumer, with hope of achieving equal consumerhood being held out as an alternative for citizenship. Given this historical conception of the political utility of hope, I am using the term 'hope' to refer to having desire for a better future, coupled with the faith that this better future is attainable within the status quo[2]. Thus constituting a 'hopeful' Black consumer participates in cultivating the structure of attachment immune to disappointment we examined in the previous chapters, where Blacks remain attached to the dream of a better future which is eternally deferred.

In a context in which the promises of democracy had failed to deliver the "better life for all" promised by the ANC's election slogan running up to the first democratic election, with the majority of Black South Africans battling poverty and debt made worse by the financial crisis, and the country as a whole plagued by extreme inequality and corruption scandals dogging the ruling party, many advertisers believed that the majority of Black South Africans had lost hope in the possibility of social mobility, never mind a life of conspicuous consumption, even though many were believed to crave this life. In this context, marketers advocating the move towards inspirational advertising felt that whereas 'bling' images of a lavish lifestyle centered around consumption of luxury goods might ignite desire, these images were insufficient to foster hope, which implied that people believed that achieving the depicted lifestyle was possible. Once again, we see how branding and constituting a nation face similar challenges; just as the political imagination struggled to articulate new visions of what this 'better life for

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[2] Although this shares much with Lauren Berlant's category of 'optimism' as a structure of attachment (2011), 'hope' differs in that it is oriented towards the present's relationship with the future, whereas in Berlant's usage, optimism focuses on the present.

all' might look like and how to get there, the marketing imagination engaged in a similar exercise. Branding practitioners were challenged to ask where social transformation comes from, and what the role of the brand in this is, questioning the historically entrenched faith in the power of advertising to constitute consumers.

For some, such as the 'Transformers', advertisers believed that desire without hope had resulted in the loss of consumer aspiration, and for others, such as the 'Lost Generation' consumer type discussed in the previous chapter, they believed that this had led to anger that a life of conspicuous consumption of luxury goods was being denied them. Either way, the 'aspiration to inspiration' discourse sought to suture this gap between actual and potential selves, presents and futures, fostering hope in the possibility of attaining a better life. Importantly, the 'aspiration to inspiration' approach to advertising sought to frame the brand as the preferable enabler of this better life, rather than criminality or radical politics. As Miyazaki (2004) and Appadurai (2007) remind us, moments of hope imply questions of agency – from where does the agency come that transforms you from where you are to where you want to be? Hope can undergird faith in an agency outside of people or within them. Advertisers hoped for a combination of both. In an era of brand humanization, where the brand is cultivated as an entity entirely separable from commodities, advertising practitioners could envisage a situation in which the brand itself – accessed through advertising images and sometimes also through community interventions – 'inspired' consumers to transform and create wealth, thus providing them with the disposable income to purchase the additional transformative power of the commodity itself, and building faith in the brand. This is what I term the 'developmental brand' – a fetishistic vision of a brand that could enable a better life by teaching you how to do things for yourself, while never letting you forget that it was the brand that facilitated your transformation. In this way we see that although the broad uptake of branding may be a symptom of the penetration of marketing logics many have characterized by as definitive of neoliberalism (see Ganti 2014), the uptake of branding in South Africa draws on long-standing political

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logics and ideologies of racial difference, which constitute inequality through separating the 'developing'

from the 'developed'.

In examining these dynamics, we will see how the shift from 'bling' advertising to 'inspirational'

advertising speaks to a tension at the heart of all advertising. 'Inspirational' advertising tries to hold

advertising up as offering not only universal access to aspiration – whatever form that aspiration takes –

but universal access to the means to actualize those aspirations if only consumers will allow themselves

to be 'inspired'. However, as William Mazzarella (2003) points out, whereas advertising offers the

transformative power of a commodity, advertising itself can only grant universal access to the aspiration

to owning these commodities, and the sensory pleasures of commodity images, not the wherewithal to

purchase them. This leaves open the possibility that poor consumers might appropriate the depicted

commodities and their transformative power through means other than the 'help' of the brand – such as

criminality or political action – and advertising must always guard against this threat. In the history of

South African advertising, as we have seen, this threat was highly racialized, evident in the various

instantiations of the figure of the 'other' consumer who is always Black.

In making this argument, I join other anthropologists who have pointed out that the ways discourses of

branding are taken up in particular contexts are informed by local histories of branding, and their

intersection with broader political and economic currents. For example, Manning and Uplisashvili (2007)

show how socialist brands were conceptualized by the state as having a similar developmental role to

play, forming part of a broader effort to create 'culturedness' and direct the desires of citizenry, rather

than approaching these desires as universal. In the South African context, we will see frictions emerge as

an international branding discourse is taken up locally, manifesting in a dual imperative to create

independent consumer-entrepreneurs, and grateful clients of the brand's patronage. I also draw on

anthropological investigations of hope, as both object of analysis and method (Appadurai 2007;

Miyakazi 2004, 2006; Hage 2003; Crapanzano 2003; Kirksey and LeFevre 2015). In particular, I engage

with Miyazaki's argument that due to its prospective temporal orientation, moments of hope can only be known through further moments of hope. Thus, as advertising professionals tried to instigate hope, they performed their own hope in the methods of branding to instill hope in consumers and create social transformation, despite repeated failure in this regard.

In attempting to inspire consumers, advertisers grappled with the notion of transformation and the power of images to effect change, and elaborated a racialized politics of mimesis regarding the 'literalness' of low income Black consumers – and sometimes of Black consumers in general. The idea amongst White advertising professionals that Black consumers took ads literally has a long history, as discussed in chapter 1. However, this figure's quality of 'literalness' in relation to ads was both a fantasy and a threat – a fantasy of control, where Blacks would simply reproduce what they saw in ads, and a threat due to the resistance of this 'literalness' to abstraction, integral to capitalist value appropriation. To create value, advertising had to resonate with a wide variety of consumers, prompting them to engage imaginatively with the images of the ads, allowing desires and aspirations to be kindled. Also, to be 'inspired', consumers had to recognize correspondences between their own lives and the narrative of transformation depicted in the ad. In this way, the mimesis of advertising had to actualize potential through the play of fantasy and imagination, in a way not entirely predictable in advance. But the literal mimesis-as-reproduction model projected onto 'other' consumers did not allow for this kind of value creation. In this way, what seemed like a strategy of control – only showing 'literal' images so as not to 'confuse' them – undid its own promises for the advertising professionals. These dynamics informed the contradictory characterization of the campaign for Hansa Pilsener, as a shining example of successful 'inspirational' advertising by some, and a failed attempt to resonate with low income Black male South Africans on the other.

Vuyo the inspirational boerewors entrepreneur

I first heard about the campaign for Hansa Pilsener from an unexpected source. On an early spring day in

2014 I walked into Vuyo's restaurant in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. I was there to interview Beatrice

Kubheka, the mother of Miles Kubheka, the proprietor of the establishment. As I mentioned in chapter

1, Beatrice Kubheka had been one of the first Black female marketing researchers in South Africa, who

was now retired and in her early 70s. She had achieved remarkable success in the advertising industry,

going from a survey administrator in the early 60s to the CEO of her own company in the early 2000's.

Wrapping up at the end of our interview, I asked Beatrice how she spends her time now that she is

retired, and she told me that she keeps busy helping her son, Miles, run Vuyo's restaurant. "Do you

know anything about this restaurant?" She asked me. "It's very interesting in relation to advertising". I

didn't know anything about the restaurant other than that it was a cheap fast food venue frequented by

many Wits students from across the road who liked to get a boerewors roll [a kind of South African

sausage on a hotdog bun] in between lectures. I asked Beatrice to tell me about it, but she smiled and

told me to Google it. Google it I did, and a fascinating story emerged, recounted on the restaurant's

website, as well as in a number of entrepreneurship blogs and on various news websites.

Here is Miles Kukheka's version of the story, as quoted in an article appearing on one journalist's blog

site: "It started with the Hansa advert about Vuyo…Along with the rest of South Africa I watched it many

times and thought: nice advert. However, the more I watched it, the more I realised that, while it was

advertising Hansa, the unintended consequence was that it was building the Vuyo brand.[3]" Khubeka

goes on to describe how he set out to discover whether this character of 'Vuyo' was based on a real

person, and quickly discovered he was the figment of an advertising creative's imagination. Khubeka

decided to bring Vuyo and his boerewors entrepreneurship to life, trademarking the name 'Vuyo's', and

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[3] Dugmore, Heather. nd. "The Real Vuyo", http://heatherdugmore.co.za/?p=1057

opening the flagship branch of the restaurant in Braamfontein. Here we see how one consequence of

the dematerialization of the brand is that a brand can exist in the absence of any material, branded

commodities. Khubeka sought to fill this gap in creating the Vuyo's restaurant, selling boerewors rolls as

tokens of the already-existing Vuyo brand. Although Kubheka expressed the fear that SAB would be

unhappy with him capitalizing on the Vuyo brand, Hansa and SAB have expressed support of his

initiative. Refilwe Maluleke, Hansa's marketing manager, had the following to say: "Hansa is a brand

built on the premise of inspiring people to create their own success and, as such, we are encouraged

that it is having the desired effect among fellow South Africans who are doing it for themselves"

(Quoted in Dugmore, nd. np).

The Hansa ad that inspired Kubheka, which the journalist interviewing him describes on the blog as "a

modern fairy tale for entrepreneurs", shows the story of 'Vuyo'[4]. In the 60 seconds of the ad, the viewer

is shown Vuyo's transformation from humble boerewors vendor to global mogul. The ad starts with

Vuyo, standing behind his small boerewors stand, catching a glimpse of a Black man driving by in a fancy

black car, talking on a cell phone. Then the ad cuts to a scene showing an elderly Black woman who

seems to be Vuyo's grandmother, sitting in front of the camera talking to an unseen interviewer, as if for

a documentary, who tells us that Vuyo is a "big, big dreamer". Somehow, witnessing a wealthy Black

man, and having dreams, allows Vuyo mimetically to create wealth of his own. I will return to exploring

the dynamics of this imaginary of mimesis below. We see Vuyo franchising out boerewors stands to

others – both Black and White, including one Black woman (Vuyo is now dressed in a suit, rather than in

cooking overalls), cut with another shot of the grandmother as well as a sister character, who explains

that he started with one boerewors and stand and that now he's "flourished". We are shown shots of

news anchors from global news agencies informing us of the "overnight sensation" of Vuyo's boerewors,

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[4]The ad can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuxdAJwBzBk

and we see Vuyo featuring in various national media contexts – including what looks like a Japanese game show, and his (Black, male) friends report that he is "on TV all the time". The ad then switches to various images evincing Vuyo's newfound wealth and globetrotter status, including buying a football team (Wors FC), a jet (Air Wors 1), and a yacht. We finally see Vuyo in a rocket in outer space, being watched by his (Black) friends and family on TV, gathered together in the living room of a modest, but distinctly middle class looking home, with family photos on the wall, books on a bookshelf, and ornaments in a display cabinet – he greets the audience with "Hola, people of Mzansi" – a phrase addressing all South Africans ('Mzansi' means 'South' in Xhosa), but using Black South African slang, which mixes English and Black African languages – and are told by the sister character that he never forgets his roots. The ad ends with a shot of the beer with rapidly changing backgrounds, and the voiceover, "Nobody dreams ordinary. So why drink ordinary beer? Step out of the ordinary. Hansa. Refreshingly different."

The class references of the characters and scenes in the ad are worth considering. All the Black friends and family characters are dressed in smart stylish looking clothing, but not suits and ties – the latter is characteristic of the 'bling' advertising aimed at 'Black Diamonds', which is the epithet for the conspicuously consuming new Black elite, discussed in more detail below. The grandmother character is dressed in less cosmopolitan clothing, with a covered head and printed 'moshoeshoe' fabric popular amongst older Black South African women (not dissimilar from the 'peasant dress' of women featured in the ads from the first half of the 20th century, discussed in the previous chapter). Although she speaks in English, her accent is pronounced, unlike the 'Model C' accents of Vuyo and his friends – characteristic of Blacks who have attended previously all-White schools (see Chapter 4). Here we see that Vuyo's journey from his 'roots', to which he nonetheless remains connected, is also a journey of generational upward class mobility, which is a feature common to a number of 'aspiration to inspiration' ads.

In light of the discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration' – which I had heard espoused by a number of

advertising professionals by this point in my fieldwork – the Miles Kubheka story was fascinating, as it

appeared to constitute an instance of this strategy actually working, with Kubheka being inspired to

emulate advertising's vision of transformation through entrepreneurship – embodied by the character

of Vuyo – in exactly the way dreamed of by advertising professionals. Of course, having grown up in a

household in which the marketing and advertising industry had allowed his mother to leave poverty

behind and become, in her own description, one of the only women in the township to drive a

Mercedes, Miles Kubheka seemed like a prime candidate to believe that the fairy tales of advertising

could come true.

However, this was not the end of the story. Just before finishing fieldwork in South Africa at the end of

2014, I interviewed Sané Mdlalose, who had been the Main Market Channel Executive at SAB (the

brewing company which produces Hansa), although she had left the company to work for Aperio, a

consultancy focusing on FMCG brands in Africa. In passing, she mentioned to me that the Hansa brand

was in trouble, and was looking for a new advertising agency. Puzzled, I asked her why this was this case,

as I was under the impression that the Vuyo campaign had been such a success, praised by many of the

advertising professionals I had spoken to during my fieldwork. Sané had a very different take. She

explained that everyone at SAB and at the advertising agency working on the account had loved the ad

and the character of Vuyo. However, in focus group research conducted in the wake of the campaign,

the target market – which was primarily lower-income Black males[5] – had expressed dislike of the ad.

Sales for Hansa had dropped, with many at SAB blaming the advertising campaign which they believed

was failing to resonate with the target market. Here we see how the world of advertising practice

maintains its own insularity; the Vuyo campaign seemed to check all the boxes for inspirational

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[5] Although the beer brands discussed in this chapter were all positioned slightly differently, all of them had to
address low income Black males who made up a significant proportion of beer drinkers in South Africa.

advertising, and so was held up as a successful example of this approach. The fact that it had failed to

increase sales was not something widely publicized by the client or the agency, and so its failure was

unable to trouble the discourse of 'inspirational' advertising in the broader context of the South African

advertising industry. This is intrinsic to the nature of the advertising profession, in which claiming that an

ad has 'worked' is very difficult to prove, and is an assertion that advertising professionals must sell to

the client (see introduction).

As I dug deeper into the Hansa 'Vuyo' campaign, I discovered that it had in fact been the object of a

complaint lodged with the ASASA (Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa) in 2011, with the

complainant objecting that the ad led viewers to believe that drinking Hansa beer would bring them

success, thus encouraging alcoholism. Here we see the flipside of the fantasy of low income Blacks

taking advertising 'literally'; such a literal consumer would be unable to make the abstractive leap from

the product to the brand as an enabler of transformation, thus thwarting the attempts of advertisers to

create the abstract entity of a brand that consumers can love and be loyal to. Such 'literal' consumers

could be manipulated into false beliefs about the relationship between commodities and

transformation, hindering the efforts of the brand to frame itself as doing good in the lives of low

income consumers.

Further, in the comments below an online newspaper report of this complaint, it was evident that the

Hansa ad team's attempt to instill hope in consumers through the ad that they can achieve wealth with

the help of the brand had not been taken up by all viewers as desired. In the comments, readers joked

that Vuyo should be investigated for corruption instead of Julius Malema (at the time, Malema was

under investigation for various counts of fraud[6]), as being a boerewors entrepreneur was unlikely to

bring one a life of luxury on a yacht.

One reader commented:

"Why are they only investigating Malema, when Vuyo is not even mentioned in [public protector] Thuli Madonsela's report, were does he get all the property - Yatch, Aeroplane and nice girls?" [sic] (matla - September 16, 2011 at 02:32)

And another:

"THIS IS LIES! VUYO'S SUCCESS CAME FROM STEALING TENDERS [the South African term for government contracts] FOR THE SUPPLY OF SAUSAGES, EVERYONE KNOWS THIS!" [sic] (JasunX - September 15, 2011 at 17:50)

Here we have the irony of an advertising approach designed to inspire Black South Africans to believe

they can achieve success with the 'inspiration' of the brand rather than radical politics or criminality,

taken up by South Africans as referencing the very embodiment of both of these 'wrong' ways to get to

wealth – Julius Malema.

In order to understand these contradictory interpretations of the Hansa/Vuyo ad and how they

elucidate the impasses of 'inspiring' through advertising, it is necessary to take a closer look at the

discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration' in South African advertising on which it draws.

Imaginaries of Black aspiration: the 'Black Diamonds'

Daniel Neville, head digital strategist for the Sedgwick's brand, was a strong proponent of advertising

needing to shift from showing aspiration to offering inspiration. He explained this need in the following

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[6] According to an online news report, "After receiving three complaints in July last year [2011], [Public Protector Thuli] Madonsela investigated allegations that the Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport awarded the On-Point tender through corrupt means and that axed ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema used his political position to influence the awarding of the tenders by the department and the Limpopo government in general." (Rampedi, 2012)

way:

> South Africa for a long time worked on the idea of the Black upper middle class, the Black Diamonds…it was all about achieving bling. We're moving away from that idea in South Africa.... Everyone knows what they aspire to, now it's about how do I get there. The extreme lust for aspiration is over, the extreme, like – 'I need the BMW, I need the bling'. It's been replaced by, 'how do I get there? Inspire me to get there'.

Here we see two elements central to the advertising industry's vision of shifts in post-apartheid South African society, to which the discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration' was a response. Firstly, the framing of inspirational advertising as being a reaction to the 'Black Diamond' moment, and secondly, the conceptualization of inspirational advertising as showing consumers 'how to get there'.

The Black Diamond marketing research reports were a series of studies released by the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, based at UCT, which ran from 2005 to 2008, and attempted to plot the characteristics of what it described loosely as 'South Africa's new Black middle class'. Although if one consults these reports, only a small segment of the Black Diamonds are described as engaging in conspicuous consumption and a 'bling' lifestyle, the media and broader South African society latched onto the label of 'Black Diamonds' to describe that segment of the new Black elite who engaged in conspicuous consumption centered around luxury brands[7]. The term 'Black Diamond' has entered mainstream South African discourse, thus constituting an example of how the marketing industry has shaped broader conceptualizations of the existence of this 'new' Black middle class.

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[7] A few of those I interviewed commented on this selective way in which the category of 'Black Diamond' had been taken up to describe this very small segment of a much larger and more diverse group of upwardly mobile Black consumers that it had first been developed to describe. Wendy Cochrane, founder of Big Mama's Famous Truth Shop marketing research and insights agency, expressed this opinion in our interview, and blamed it partially on a movie that the UCT Institute had released to increase understanding of the new Black middle class called *Forerunners*: "When people in the industry think of the Black Diamonds they think of the guy driving the Porsche…when the real Black Diamond is the township mama laboring in the kitchen. She's in the numbers of the growing middle class that [the Black Diamond study] shows, but she's not portrayed in the movie".

Some of the 'new' Black middle classes who constituted the target for this label objected to the term 'diamonds' and the images of 'bling' and luxury consumption it evoked, pointing to the precarity of this class, exacerbated by demands from extended family (the 'Black tax' discussed in the previous chapter), high levels of debt (often taken out to fund consumption, rather than to start businesses or other productive activity), and no savings or assets to secure their middle class status, and were constantly in danger of 'falling back' into poverty (James 2015). For these critics, the existence of a new affluent, stable Black middle class is a chimera (see also Southall 2016). If one consults the Unilever Reports on the new Black middle class over the years, one sees that this precarious status has not been denied, although this is always presented as an opportunity for brands to frame themselves as helping consumers with these challenges, and thus as a way to insert themselves into the lives of the Black middle class as 'heroes'. However, the Institute reacted to the negative sentiment around the term 'Black Diamond', with subsequent reports after 2008 dropping the label in favor of the descriptor 'the Black middle class'.

What has not changed over the years in these reports, however, is the framing of the new Black middle classes as 'optimistic'. This was evident in a remark made by Prof John Simpson, director of the Unilever marketing institute, at a presentation on the Black middle class I attended at the end of 2013 called 'Four Million and Rising'[8]. At a presentation of the latest research report on the new Black middle class he mentioned that clients often ask him whom the Black middle class will vote for. He said that he simply answers that he doubts it will be for the EFF [Julius Malema's party, the Economic Freedom Fighters] as only angry people vote for them, whereas the Black middle class is defined by its optimism. Here, the 'optimism' – what I am terming 'hope' – of the Black middle classes is exactly what differentiates them from the followers of Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Fighters party.

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[8] The continuities between this and earlier twentieth century framings of the black market are striking, with both emphasizing the size and growth potential of black consumers in attempting to sell them as a lucrative market.

Whereas in public discourse, both are characterized as highly aspirational and desiring of a luxury lifestyle, in this presentation, Simpson frames the Black middle classes as hopeful they could achieve these aspirations within the status quo. In this way, hope renders them non-threatening, as their consumer desire seems capable of being channeled through advertising for the purposes of boosting corporate profit.

In the build-up to the 2014 election, debates around this question intensified and were taken up in broader South African society – who exactly was hopeful and who was angry amongst Black South Africans? This was an important question leading up to the election, with the assumption being that those who were hopeful were happy with the status quo set by the ruling ANC party since the end of apartheid, and would be more likely to continue to vote for the ANC. On the other hand, those who were 'angry' were believed to have lost hope in the possibility for change under the ANC's leadership, and were thus considered to be more amenable to the overtures of the opposition – both the Democratic Alliance, and Julius Malema's EFF. Some suggested that Simpson's characterization was inaccurate – political commentator and author Richard Poplak (2014) described the politically dangerous anger of the middle classes at things like potholes in the road and traffic lights that don't work. For Poplak, such anger could prompt the Black middle classes to abandon the ANC 'brand' and embrace that of the EFF. Similarly, political analyst Steven Friedman attributed the success of the EFF in Gauteng province to the anger of the Black middle classes, which he calls "a ticking time bomb", in an article written a month after the national election in 2014[9]. He attributed their anger to the fact that they are the most exposed to White racist attitudes in the workplace, concluding that "This anger upsets two common beliefs. First, that entry into the middle class is likely to make black people happier with the market economy and that racial contact in the workplace is sure to make people get on better with each

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[9] The article may be read online here: http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/2024

other. The other reality is that many black professionals experience racial mixing as a process not of affirmation but of constant belittling. And so the result is not more tolerance and the happy racial mixing featured in beer ads but anger at what is seen as the persistence of the white attitudes which underpinned apartheid" (2014: np)[10]. In this way, the preoccupation with who was "angry" and who wasn't was shared by those in the advertising world and politicians, with both being informed by the perception that many Black South Africans had lost hope in the possibility of 'a better life for all', first promised by the ANC in their 1994 election campaign, and echoed in subsequent election cycles.

When the 'Black Diamond' research reports were first released in the mid-2000s, the advertising industry had not yet grown worried that many Black South Africans had lost hope, and so had embraced this figure of a rapidly growing Black middle class who were hopeful of achieving social advancement and a better future for themselves and their children. These reports had a strong influence within corporations and advertising agencies as well in fueling perceptions of the new Black middle class as a lucrative market segment that must be captured, cultivating hope amongst corporate South Africa and the advertising industry that this segment could boost profits. A number of the marketing research professionals I spoke to praised Unilever for its success in 'selling' this demographic to the advertising industry. Although many working in marketing research had believed there was significant spending power in this demographic for years, they had often not been able to convince corporate clients of this. However, the Institute had been more successful, due to its status as a respected institution associated with Unilever, and through presenting it in flashy Power Point Presentations – the preferred medium of much of corporate South Africa – rather than drab text-based reports, as had been the practice of the

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[10] A further manifestation of the anger of the (potential) middle classes was evident in the student movements organized around the hashtag FeesMustFall, discussed in the introduction. In fact, the first Black Diamond studies classified Black university students from low-income households as part of the Black Diamonds due to their earning potential and likelihood of joining the professions. However, the inability of this university education to grant students access to a middle class position equal to that of Whites, due in part to high levels of indebtedness, contributed to the anger fueling the student protests.

Unisa (University of South Africa) Bureau for Marketing Research, a government-funded institution

which had been researching Black consumers since at least as early as the 70s. As veteran market

researcher, Wendy Cochrane, put it: "They used marketing skills to put it across…They played marketing

at its own game."

Much of the advertising directed at this target market focused on images of lavish consumption, with

the advertising of premium liquor brands often described by those I interviewed as epitomizing this

approach. This idiom is still very much in evidence in alcohol advertising in South Africa, with a recent TV

ad for Skyye Vodka a prime example of this[11]. This ad features the very familiar repertoire of images of a

Black man in an expensive suit at a party on a high-rise rooftop, draped with beautiful women clad in

glamourous cocktails dresses. It starts to rain, seemingly putting an end to the outdoor revelry at which

point the man claps, and the rooftop miraculously rises up above the clouds, too high for the rain to

interfere with the Skyye lifestyle. It ends with the tagline, 'Skyye Vodka, life in the Skyye'.

However, despite the continuing prevalence of this approach to advertising premium liquor directed at

Black South Africans, many advertising professionals explained to me that as time had worn on,

marketing research had started to indicate a growing backlash amongst Black consumers against such

imagery. This backlash was interpreted by these advertising professionals as being the result of a

context in which the promises of democracy had not materialized for the majority, with only a small

group of politically-well connected elite Blacks benefitting from liberation, accompanied by high levels

of unemployment and inequality exacerbated by the 2008 financial crisis[12]. For example, marketing

researcher Darrell Wratten – co-founder of the marketing research company the CIA (Consumer Insights

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[11] The ad can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F9GA64ll4Y

[12] We see this perception in Zakes Mda's novel *Black Diamond* (2009), in which we are told the tale of how an ex-freedom fighter struggles to join the ranks of the 'Black Diamonds' as he failed to generate political connections with ANC leaders during his time as a guerilla fighter.

Agency)[13] – described his changing experience of doing research for alcohol brands in Black townships

over the years: "When we first started [research in the early 2000s], we asked, how come you drink

this? [The reply would be], 'Because I want to be a fucking millionaire, and if I drink this it says I'm a

fucking millionaire'....so you wind up the bling of [advertising images] to connect with that sentiment."

However, like many others I spoke to, Darrell explained that as time went by, this 'bling' imagery –

particularly in alcohol ads – had come to be regarded with dislike and suspicion amongst Black

consumers. He described how some in focus groups had called premium whiskey brands like Johnnie

Walker Black Label "BEE [Black Economic Empowerment – see introduction] in a bottle….[the perception

was that] these guys who didn't work for it are drinking it just because they can hold up an ATM

machine at the corner of the road". This comment indexes a broader conception in South Africa that

policies of Black economic empowerment have resulted in a small politically well-connected elite, who

are seen as having acquired their wealth through corruption and nepotism, and who spend

conspicuously on luxury brands, than with the mass redistribution of wealth promised by the early

policies of the ANC-led government (see Southall 2016)[14]. This is part of a widespread disillusionment

with many of the leaders of the ANC who are accused of being more interested in their own enrichment

than the plight of the impoverished masses, accusations made not only by the media and the political

opposition, but even by fellow party members and previous allies[15]. We also see the association of

conspicuous consumption with criminality – in a context where 'empowerment' is equated with high

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[13] The CIA had been researching Black consumers for over ten years, being the first marketing research company in South Africa to use video cameras and ethnography in researching township consumers.

[14] Cf J & J.L. Comaroff (2002) on the related suspicion that those who have acquired sudden wealth have done so though nefarious supernatural means.

[15] See for example https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-times/20170108/281479276096853; http://www.biznews.com/thought-leaders/2016/10/17/self-national-interest-anc-must-choose/; http://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2017/03/05/SASSA-debacle-proof-that-ANC-hates-the-poor%E2%80%9A-says-NUMSA

levels of disposable income, holding up an ATM brings instant empowerment to those excluded from the benefits of BEE.

This feedback from consumers prompted Darrell and his company to encourage clients to temper their images of aspiration. He expressed the view that depictions of more modest success in advertising could both tap into and direct Black desires towards visions of a better life that were more attainable. He expressed the opinion that this was important for the profits of his clients, but also for the good of the country, as having 'excessive' aspiration was not sustainable. In this way, shifting aspiration to more modest goals was seen by Darrell and those sharing his perspective as a socially positive thing advertising could do, displaying the faith in the pedagogical power of advertising that we have encountered many times before, and shaped by the broader global effort of advertising to rebrand itself as socially responsible (Kolster 2012). However, we also see the anxiety commonly expressed by advertisers and belying this faith – could advertising really shape and channel Black aspiration, or did it simply 'connect' with a pre-existing sentiment? Could advertising transform, or did it merely reflect? This was an anxiety that continued to plague the new 'inspirational' advertising approach.

The rise of the inspirational ad: showing consumers 'how to get there'

As well as associating images of 'bling' advertising with criminality and corruption, Darrel explained that Black consumers he had researched had grown tired of 'bling' advertising for other reasons. As Darrel put it, many consumers had expressed the sentiment of: "Don't just show me the flashy boat, the Mainstay lifestyle[16]. Dude, I want to know how you get there". This takes us back to the second element common to the discourse proclaiming the need for a shift from aspiration to inspiration in advertising, suggested above by Daniel: that the ads need to go beyond showing a lifestyle that consumers were

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[16] Mainstay is a brand of cane spirit which was known in the 80s and 90s for its ads showing a playboy lifestyle on yachts.

believed to aspire to, and to show them how to attain that lifestyle, or 'how to get there'. In this

interpretation, we see consumers identify the didacticism running through advertising directed at Blacks

from the earliest days of racially-targeted advertising – discussed in Chapter 1 – and embrace this

didacticism while demanding that the advertising teach them something they could actually use to

improve their position in the world[17]. We will see that there was a curious mixture in the way advertisers

responded to this perceived claim-making on the 'developmental brand' between the brand as patron,

and the brand actualizing self-transforming entrepreneurs.

Some advertisers framed the need for advertising that showed consumers 'how to get there' as

stemming from the failures of democracy to deliver improved standards of living for the majority of

Black South Africans. Again, Daniel Neville provides a good example of this interpretation:

> You have a portion of our country that is still battling extreme poverty....and I think there is this
> tweak in the South African psyche that is, for the last twenty years, a lot of South Africans
> expected the dawn of democracy to bring them a whole bunch of stuff. It's now dawning on
> South Africans both someone in my demographic as well as someone in a lower demographic
> that actually the government is going to do fuck all for us. And if we're going to solve anything
> we have to do it for ourselves....that's why I'm talking about there is this very big trend in South
> Africa that moves from aspiration to inspiration. We know what we want but how do we get
> there? The government isn't going to give it to us..... South Africans are starting to realize that
> they need to do things for themselves.

Although one might object that this characterization is something of an understatement – this 'portion'

was estimated by Stats SA in 2011 to consist of 45% of the population who are poor, and 20% living in

extreme poverty – it does reflect a sentiment found beyond the advertising industry – that the ANC-led

government is hampered by incompetence and corruption, which is preventing it from transforming

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[17] We see a number of comments from those in the industry that Black consumers had identified this didacticism
and embraced it as means for social advancement. In our interview, the co-founder of legendary ad agency Hunt
Lascaris (now TBWA/Hunt Lascaris) Reg Lascaris explained how in the early 90s, consumer research found that
Blacks would cut ads for tea out of newspapers and use them as 'how to' guides for having a tea party. Of course,
it's hard to tell whether this is just a projection on the part of advertisers or evidence of uptake of the
transformative power of advertising on the part of consumers.

South African society. This loss of faith has been exacerbated by recent scandals around state-capture, with the sense that politicians are selling democracy for self-enrichment.

However, despite Daniel's insistence that South Africans had to 'do things for themselves', we see that his vision of social progress in South Africa envisioned a transferal of dependence from state to brand, rather than a vision of independent individuals pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Daniel mentioned a number of examples of the brand showing consumers how to 'do things for themselves', including the paint brand Dulux donating the paint and organizing to have local residents of the working class Cape Town suburb of Woodstock paint their community, and of PPC cement providing cement for local communities in the Black township of Khayelitsha to pave their own roads instead of waiting for the government to do it for them. Here, corporate sponsorship, which is a very old strategy for brands attempting to build 'good will' with Black consumers in South Africa, is incorporated into the specific ideology of brands 'developing' low-income consumers through teaching them to 'do things for themselves'. Although Daniel portrays the realization that South Africans have to 'do things for themselves' as something shared across demographics, it is only low-income consumers that are discussed as having to be taught to do this and thus 'developed' by the brand.

However, in other advertising industry discussion, we see that the developmental brand is conceptualized as relevant to communicating with upwardly mobile Black consumers as well. We see this for example in an article appearing on the website for Yellowwood, a Cape Town brand strategy consultancy. The article is about how brands can generate value by 'helping' the 'rising' and 'emerging' middle classes – alternative glosses in South African marketing discourse for the 'new' Black middle classes and those aspiring to join their ranks – to achieve their goals. The author writes:

Recently, I've noticed a lot of brand communication that plays in the aspirational space…This got me thinking about the 'rising', 'emerging' middle class we're always talking about, and how much more brands could do to help them reach their goals. Brands that become a part of their journey to success will generate huge amounts of loyalty and love. These aspirational consumers are looking for more than

just functional products and services. They attach emotional value to the brands that support their aspirations and enrich their life experiences...Connecting with a new generation of aspirational South African consumers means being a part of their journey to success, supporting them in reaching their goals, making them feel successful for choosing your brand, offering them what they value above all else, and making sure you have something even better to offer them once they've made it. This nation of big dreamers loves the brands that help them turn those dreams into reality.[18]

Again, we see the South African advertising profession's vision of brand's as agents of social change,

with the power to 'help' consumers realize their dreams. Exactly how brands could achieve this agency

was the puzzle inspirational advertising had to grapple with.

Interesting here is that although the conception of brands and consumers doing things for themselves

rather than relying on the government exhibits elements diagnosed by many scholars as characteristic of

neoliberalism, where state functions are outsourced to the private sector and the citizenry (see Ganti

2014), not all instantiations of brands inspiring transformation featured the reified 'individual' as the

agent of social change. Although in other manifestations of the 'aspiration to inspiration' discourse –

such as the Hansa campaign and others discussed below – the focus is on the individual (who in alcohol

advertising, is almost always male) achieving self-transformation and social mobility through his own

effort, Daniel's vision taps into an alternative conception of brands organizing communities and social

groups to achieve social upliftment. In fact, with reference to how he understood the Sedgwick's

campaign utilizing an inspirational approach, he explained "[Sedgwick's is] tapping into the idea that to

get somewhere, you need to start sharing...It's not me alone, it's the collective that can help."

In this vision, by tapping into the general loss of faith in the ability of the government to provide a better

life and the idea of sharing as a social good and, Sedgwick's could instill values that could lead to social

and individual betterment, while entrenching the brand as the embodiment of those values. In so doing,

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[18] Velleman, Nicole. 29 September 2014 "Aspirational brands for the South African consumer" http://www.ywood.co.za/thinking/articles/aspirational-brands-for-the-south-african-consumer.aspx.

the brand could be framed as the catalyst for hope that individually and collectively, South Africans could create a better society. Discussing Bloch's work on hope, Miyazaki shows how for Bloch, hope produces non-human agents such as God, rather than God producing hope. We can see a similar logic at play in advertisers' attempts to counter a loss of faith in the government as an agent for change, as hope becomes the precursor for believing in the brand as an agent of change. If consumers could be persuaded to accept the brand as a catalyst for transformation and of hope in a better life, bonds of loyalty could be generated (as was the hope the case of the Transformers, as we saw in chapter 3) and low income consumers with 'excessive' aspiration could be persuaded to have hope in the brand, not in someone like Julius Malema. In this vision, the brand enables collective action to achieve social good, thus defusing the danger of the brand becoming the target of collective political action, for example through protests against the structural political and economic status quo underpinning the existence of brands and the advertising industry more generally.

For Daniel, entrenching the connection between Sedgwick's and sharing happened alongside trying to teach the logic of the brand to low income consumers, where purchasing choices should be based on the brand's emotional benefit rather than a functions and benefits analysis of the product, a pedagogical exercise we encountered in chapter 2. "For the guys down in the Eastern Cape...instead of just giving you the ability to buy two-for-one bottles, we are going to share some warm clothes with you because we understand that's what you guys need right now. They've gained the benefit, they've understood that sharing means this other thing other than just product... Once we've entrenched the idea of sharing we can start doing things like, sharing some business knowledge with you. But we need to have that benefit there first." In this logic, the brand asserts 'ownership' of a social value – in this case, sharing – and once this association is established, the brand uses this as a platform to 'inspire' its consumers both to strive for material success and social uplift, and to keep purchasing the brand. Thus, branding

ideology attempts to route the capacity to change the world through the construct of the brand, constituting it as an active agent of transformation.

Daniel believed this was part of the social role of advertising, focusing – like Darrell – on its perceived pedagogical powers. He acknowledged that although creating campaigns around the concept of 'sharing' manifested in holding dinner parties (which was the content theme on the brand's Facebook page at the time of our interview – a platform which was targeted primarily at the whitened middle-class 'Sense of Knowing' market segment) might seem "insignificant" and "frivolous", as he put it, this was laying the groundwork for the connection between Sedgwick's and sharing that would allow the brand to achieve real social good further down the line, by inspiring consumers to share in other more socially meaningful ways. As he explained it in passionate tones, ""if you buy into this brand....if you as a human being go, 'yes, I am here to share my skills'...to inspire and build South Africa, you see how strong and powerful it becomes. It becomes, 'I like that brand because it shares the same ideals as me. It wants to do the same things that I want to do, it wants to contribute, it wants to share, it wants to inspire'." Here, a corporation deriving profit from selling alcohol to the poor is reimagined as a model of selfless service to the community.

Interpellating client-entrepreneurs, appropriating hope: the emergence of the 'developmental brand'

In this vision of the consumer being inspired by what the brand 'wants' to do in order to improve society, we are reminded of the fetishism of the brand at play within the ideology of the humanized brand, where the brand is framed as having its own agency to enter into relationships with humans (as we saw in Chapter 3). In understanding the particularities of the South African context in which this brand-fetish is framed as having the agency to develop consumers, it is informative to compare this instantiation of the 'aspiration to inspiration' discourse with one in a different national context. In fact – although none of the advertising professionals I spoke to referenced it as a US-based discourse – the call

to move from aspiration to inspiration in advertising was first made, as far as I can tell, by American Alan

Snitow of DDB Chicago on the advertising, marketing, branding and design blog 'co.create' in 2013[19].

This article suggested that US consumers had lost hope in a future, and so brands had to inspire them to

believe in themselves and their own power to change the world. However, there were subtle differences

between the US instantiation of this discourse, and the South African one. In the US one, brands merely

inspire consumers to do things for themselves with virtually no involvement from the brand. In his

article, Snitow writes "After a long stretch of economic malaise, political instability, and a 'new normal'

characterized by uncertainty, the shift toward a different model, a different kind of motivation, is now

well underway. Great brands, those most in touch in with consumer sentiment, have evolved their

message from one of Aspiration to one of Inspiration. They are focused less on what they can give, and

more on what consumers themselves can achieve. In those very same aspiration-prone categories,

quintessentially American companies like Chrysler and Levi's have been calling on Americans to make a

better world for themselves, by themselves. These brands have realized their role is not to be the

solution, but to be the motivation for one" (ibid, 2013: np).

In the South African version, there is a far greater role for the 'developmental brand', where brands are

framed as helping and educating consumers to become these self-actualizing agents. However, branding

had to balance the tension between constituting individual consumer-entrepreneurs – as well as

communities – that could 'do things for themselves', and creating bonds of loyalty and gratitude

between the brand and these individuals and communities for the brand's help in showing the how to

'do things for themselves'. In South Africa, this tension is not only present in the way corporate brands

relate to consumers, but to the way parties relate to their electorate. Political commentator Richard

Poplak describes the elements of the ruling ANC party's 2014 election campaign that targeted the

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[19] The article can be read at http://www.fastcocreate.com/1682087/a-brand-shift-for-2013-from-aspiration-to-inspiration.

beneficiaries of the party's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies as being designed to "remind

democracy's bling-encrusted winners of just who put them in Prada in the first place" (1097)[20]. However,

at one of these events that Poplak attended – held at the Johannesburg barbeque restaurant 'Mash

Braai House', a popular hangout of the new Black elite – there was a push back against this attempt to

interpellate newly wealthy Blacks as clients of the party's patronage. Although Poplak recounts being

told by one of the ANC representatives at the event, "Look around you! You can see the ANC has

created entrepreneurs", he denied that this meant he owed his success to the ANC: "You think I go to an

ANC meeting and they pass around a bucket of opportunities? And I take an opportunity and win. This is

a false perception. An absolutely false perception" (1132). Another patron of the restaurant not part of

the campaign event similarly rejected the notion that he should be grateful to the ANC for his wealth: "I

work hard. I studied fucking hard. No one has done anything for me, except maybe my parents" (1139).

Here we see the parallel logic and the tensions between claiming that the ANC created entrepreneurs,

and that these entrepreneurs need to be reminded of the obligation of loyalty implied by this

relationship, and the notion of the entrepreneur as independently creating wealth and pulling himself

up by his bootstraps – "no one has done anything for me".

In understanding the tensions between independence and dependence in relations between brand and

consumer within the ideological paradigm of 'aspiration to inspiration', it is useful here to consider

Appadurai's thinking on the politics of hope and democracy, and how these intersect with what he calls

"the capacity to aspire." Appadurai (2007) argues that hope has become central to democracy in the

current moment, as hope allows for participation in collective political action, which builds capacity,

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[20] This is not the only example of relations of loyalty between the ANC and newly rich Black South Africans being framed in ways similar to that of relations of loyalty between brand and consumer. Deborah Posel (2010) reminds us that when Julius Malema was still head of the ANC Youth League, before his falling out with the party and his establishment of the EFF, he reminded ANC supporters that the ANC had taught them to use a fork and knife, taste red wine, wear expensive suits. We see common elements here with the campaigning at Mash, in that the ANC is framed as the enabler of a life of consumerism through pedagogy (according to a logic very similar to that of the developmental brand), and that this should be the basis of loyalty to the party.

especially that of the poor. In particular, participation builds the capacity to aspire (2004), which involves connecting short term actions to long term visions of the good life, and strengthening connections between various means and ends through experience, which is something he suggests the poor lack in relation to the better off members of society.

We can see the parallels between this and what advertisers attempt to do when fostering hope; they similarly strive to foster a belief in consumers that they are capable of achieving a better life as they show narratives of transformation, attempting to connect means and ends. However, there is a key difference; whereas for Appadurai, collective action of the poor strengthens their sense of their own agency to affect change in the world, in attempts by brands to instigate collective action, it is the brand that must be framed as enabling the agency of consumers, appropriating the power to transform the world, as we have seen. The aim is to boost brand equity by engendering bonds of love and loyalty between the brand and consumers, and creating dependence rather than independence. Advertisers during apartheid believed that as long as Blacks aspired to the lifestyle of Whites – and had hope in achieving it – they would remain dependent on Whites, thus preventing radical political action; recall the claim from 1952, quoted above, that as long as Blacks have hope, the "the incentive will be there for co-operation with the European through whose skill and knowledge alone he can achieve his purpose." In the current moment, advertisers strive to create dependence on the 'developmental brand' which inspires through a mystical process of mimesis, in order to harness the consuming energies of politically free Blacks and prevent these from being diverted by figures such as Malema.

In this way, the discourse of aspiration to inspiration in South African advertising sheds new light on a politics of hope. Appadurai draws a contrast between this "politics of hope" with a free-market orientation to politics: "Insofar as the market is seen as one road to freedom (and thus to some version of equality), it is not especially reliant on the politics of hope, substituting for hope such virtues as risk taking, institution building, enterprise, and calculation, all prime virtues in the early lexicon of industrial

capitalism. Insofar as social development (including a deeper consciousness of rights, broader access to knowledge, and fuller participation in the public sphere) is taken to be the best road to equality (seen as the reduction or elimination of poverty), the politics of hope has become essential to democratic theory and practice on the ground" (2007: 31). However, we see that rather than denigrating the political value of hope, advertisers' attempt to appropriate its value for the ends of maximizing profit[21].

However, as advertising professionals attempt to appropriate hope, they run up against the impasse between wanting to use hope as a strategy of control for how low-income consumers might move from where they are to where they want to be, and the open-endedness inherent to hope itself. This becomes clear if we contrast the temporality of developmentalism inherent to efforts to create dependence on the brand, and the temporality of hope. At first glance, there is a commonality between hope and developmentalism; both share a temporality of 'not yet' (cf Chakrabarty 2000, Bloch 1986). However, whereas developmentalism posits an end point to the process of development (for South African advertisers, the idealized, whitened middle class consumer), the end point of hope is emergent. As Bloch puts it, the 'not yet' temporality of hope involves, "a relatively still Unconscious disposed towards its other side, forwards rather than backwards. Towards the side of something new that is dawning up that has never been conscious before, not, for example, something forgotten, something rememberable that has been, something that has sunk into the subconscious in repressed or archaic fashion" (Bloch quoted in Miyazaki 2004, 14). In this way, attempting to instill hope could never deliver the control that advertising professionals desired, and was a process fraught with anxiety.

Let us turn to examine how the Hansa ad approached teaching consumers 'how to get there' with the help of the brand, attempting to rekindle hope; how it tried to offer an alternative to the 'bling'

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[21] Cf Zournazi (2002) for an alternative view on hope and politics, in which the language of hope has been hijacked by the right.

advertising associated with the Black Diamonds; and how its contrasting interpretations as a success and a failure reveal some of the impasses of 'inspirational' advertising, and to some extent, of all advertising.

"Everyone knows a Vuyo": Finding the 'relatable' South African

In many ways, the images in the Hansa ad showing Vuyo's success are as over-the-top as many of the 'bling' ads associated with the Black Diamond moment, as it shows Vuyo living a life of luxury on yachts and private jets. However, the obvious difference is the focus on his transformation from boerewors stand owner to global tycoon, after being 'inspired' by seeing the rich Black man in the fancy car – the mystical moment of mimesis, which I will unpack in more detail below. The ad sutures these two selves into a single narrative; telling us how Vuyo never forgets his roots, a claim reinforced by the grandmother figure who tells us about his big, big dreams. However, the ad demonstrates the difficulties of advertising showing consumers 'how to get there' and of making it clear that the brand is central to this process of transformation. The ad itself does little to explain what the brand of Hansa has to do with entrepreneurship or self-transformation, only connecting Vuyo's 'extraordinary' dreams with the 'extraordinary' nature of Hansa beer[22]. Although the ad references entrepreneurship in a vague way, the Hansa marketing team had attempted to sediment associations between the brand and entrepreneurship in various other ways in its below-the-line marketing efforts, through sponsoring conferences for youth on the theme of creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as running competitions giving prizes for the best entrepreneurial idea. We also saw above how in their reaction to Miles Khubeka's success, the brand spokesperson framed the brand as attempting to inspire entrepreneurs. Just as Daniel believed Sedgwick's should be articulated to the social value of 'warmth' so that whatever social benefits flowed from 'warmth' and 'sharing' could be leveraged to build the value of the brand, so

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[22] This has some continuity with the beer's positioning throughout the 80s and 90s as 'different' and 'beyond the ordinary' in light of it being a pilsener in a lager-dominated domestic market.

Hansa tried to associate itself with the value of entrepreneurship as the key to transformation of self and society.

As I suggested above, ads that attempted to inspire rather than merely depicting aspiration may be understood as attempting to close the gap between actual and potential selves, presents and futures, which had grown too wide in the case of 'bling' ads in a context in which democracy had only allowed very few access this lifestyle. Advertising professionals believed that ads needed to show disillusioned and excluded Black South Africans how to achieve the success they craved, often in a very literal way, in line with historical notions of advertising providing a template for Blacks who wanted to enact aspirational White middle-classness through consumption. The turn to depicting narratives of transformation also speaks to a longer disjuncture between aspiration and recognition. Advertisers during the 20th century and in the post-apartheid period wondered how to recognize Blacks while showing them an aspirational lifestyle disconnected from their current reality. The temporality of the narrative of transformation allows both to be represented, with the current actualized self recognized as the starting point, and the desired self represented as the end point of transformation.

In order for such narratives to kindle hope in viewers, they had to recognize potential versions of themselves in that process of transformation. The specifics of what was achieved – the yacht, the trip to space, etc – would matter less than the fact of self-transformation through the brand and the values it was attempting to appropriate – in this case, entrepreneurship. This view was held by those who argued for an inspirational approach as well as those who felt that 'aspirational' advertising could still appeal to all Black South Africans. For example, Tshepiso, a Black female account director at a Johannesburg advertising agency, defended the 'bling' approach to advertising, as she explained how embodying aspiration in images of wealth or luxury consumption did not have to be alienating for those who didn't share those aspirations: "[Ads like that] are not saying that, ok, being a Black man means now you're going to be a CEO of this company... It's basically saying, *you*, and it's putting you in that picture, and it's

saying what are *my* dreams, what do *I* want to achieve..... So it's not specific. It's not career specific or like monetary specific."

At issue here is a racialized politics of mimesis. For some advertisers, advertising to Blacks involved a conceptualization of mimesis in its literally duplicative form, something also evident in the cruder formulations of contemporary neuromarketing, in which advertisers simply 'model' the desired behavior in their ads, which it is believed consumers will unconsciously imitate (Mazzarella 2017). However, for others, such as Tshepiso, mimesis involved a more nuanced relationality between viewer and image, where implicit resonances could be actualized, rather than behaviors merely copied in a literal way. Often, advertising directed at Blacks in South Africa seems to be informed by a conception of mimesis as duplication – related to the conception of Blacks as 'literal' and unable to appreciate the abstraction and metaphor at play in advertising – rather than as actualizing potential, in continuity with a long history of depicting Blacks as 'naturally' imitating or 'aping' Whites (cf Coombes 1996).

Part of attempting to instigate this mimesis through narratives of transformation in inspirational advertising involved finding a character that a wide audience could 'relate' to. For some who praised the Hansa campaign, the character of 'Vuyo' had achieved exactly that goal. For example, Kelly Johnson, brand manager for Sedgwick's, held the campaign up as a possible model that Sedgwick's could emulate. She believed that Vuyo embodied "sober" aspiration rather than "bling" aspiration, which made viewers able to "relate" to him, especially young 'Transformer' consumers. In her words, "everyone knows a Vuyo, so it works." However, according to Sané Mdladlose, the SAB exec quoted above, the target audience for the Hansa ad disagreed with Kelly, and did not relate to Vuyo's story of transformation. Sané explained that the ad had resonated with individuals such as Miles Kubekha – those who were already members of the new Black middle class, rather than aspiring to membership in this group – who *had* seen potential versions of themselves in Vuyo the boerewors entrepreneur. Sané believed that depicting Vuyo's success as entailing a life of luxury on a boat had been a mistake. She commented that

"People who drink Castle Lite[23]…could see, yeah, Vuyo, the boat, that's us, but they were drinking Castle Lite. So it was just too far [for the majority of the target market], it was like, yeah, that was dream world, I won't be on a boat. I'm just trying to get out of my little shop into a bigger shop." As Sané put it, consumers had interpreted Vuyo as a so-called 'Model C' kid – a privileged Black person who had attended a previously all White school in the suburbs – who had gotten a trust fund, rather than as a hardworking boerewors entrepreneur who had transformed himself.

What Sané describes is a failure to calibrate aspirational recognition – even though consumers might find a lifestyle on a boat desirable, they don't recognize a potential version of themselves in that life – and thus a failure to spark hope – the desire for a future coupled with the belief that it was attainable. The narrative of magical transformation in itself proved a barrier to recognition as consumers did not identify with those possibilities of mobility. As the ad fails to show consumers 'how to get there', those described by Sané came to their own conclusions about how Vuyo achieved his success, making assumptions about his middle class status, and connections to wealth through hidden means (the 'trust fund'). We will see below how the impossibility of showing consumers 'how to get there' continually undid the promise of advertising to suture the gap between an aspirational future and current reality, and thus to control and channel the consuming energies of Blacks.

The failure of the ad had further implications for an ideology of racialized mimesis. In the ad, a Black man in humble circumstances witnessing a rich Black man seems to provide a catalyst for the transformation of the former into the latter. However, in the failure of this campaign, and its rejection by lower income Blacks, we see a crumbling of the certainties regarding the neat hierarchy of imitation that informed advertising to Blacks throughout the 20th century – high income Blacks were thought to

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[23] Castle Lite was a beer associated with the new Black middle class (see Krige 2010), and of the first 'green bottle beers' released by SAB in an attempt to tap into the 'aspirational' qualities of this product category, as discussed in Chapter 4. The very concept of a 'lite' beer – lower on alcohol and calories – implies the kind of self-restraint projected onto 'good' imaginaries of the middle class, as we saw in Chapter 3.

covet a consumer lifestyle like that of Whites, and high income Blacks were seen as the tastemakers for the entire Black population – so by showing images of high income Blacks living a life identical to Whites, advertisers believed they could hit the balance between aspiration and recognition. In the earlier 'bling' advertising directed at Black Diamonds, a similar logic of imitation is evident – show the new Black elite living a life of luxury, and you will tap into the aspirations of all Black people.

This belief about an affinity between poor and wealthy Blacks simply on the basis of a shared race – an attitude amongst many White advertisers, according to the Black professionals I interviewed – evoked a contradictory response amongst Black advertising professionals. On the one hand, these professionals sometimes staked their claims to expertise on the ignorance of their White clients and colleagues about Blacks in general, embracing the role of creating 'positive' representations of Blacks – usually imagined in their own image as members of the middle classes, as we saw in the previous chapter. On the other, many objected to the assumption that they were somehow representative of all Black South Africans simply because they shared a racial designation. They complained of always being given 'Black' briefs, rather than the racially unmarked briefs or luxury brands implicitly associated with Whites, with the apparent assumption of White creative directors being that, even if poor Blacks didn't want to imitate rich ones, Black advertising professionals would have some mystical insights into the aspirations of their poorer fellow Blacks. However, the failure of the Hansa campaign constituted a major challenge to this racialized imaginary of aspiration. Amongst those who deemed the Hansa campaign a failure, the realization had started to dawn that low income Blacks did not necessarily identify with the success of the new Black middle class, or recognize potential versions of themselves in such images.

From 'Vuyo' to 'Dreamers', and from brand to product

The brand team for Hansa agreed with Sané that the Vuyo campaign had failed to resonate with the target market because the images of his success had been pitched too high. In our interview, Sarvesh

Seetaram, General Manager of Marketing for the Hansa brand from the start of 2015 (he was appointed

to clean up the "mess" in the aftermath of the 'Vuyo' campaign and its successor, 'Dreamers', and

hadn't worked on these campaigns himself), explained the failure of the campaign in relation to the

changing political conditions in South Africa, echoing the sentiments of many other advertising

professionals:

> Simply, when Vuyo was conceptualized, the state of the nation was very different from now. Vuyo embodied the ambitions and hopes that many South Africans had in their hearts and minds. A few years after democracy, a feeling of opportunity that Vuyo could have brought to life, at that point in time it was very relevant. Two things that happened - the level at which we pitched Vuyo was disconnected from the realities of ordinary South Africans - him having a jet, yacht, going to space, was too far out of reach of the normal man. The thought was right – positioning ambition, aspiration as something that everyone should aim for, but the level was too high. People resonated with the idea at a small level, but their ability to achieve that was not there. The second thing - the world around us changed. The political environment. There was dissatisfaction with the way things were being done, 'tenderpreneurs' [a derogative descriptor of Blacks who had gotten wealthy by unfairly procuring 'tenders' or government contracts through political relationships], guys that relied on connections. We saw a lot of negative consumer sentiment towards these. Between those two, Vuyo pitched too high and became irrelevant to the changing South African context.

The follow-up campaign to Vuyo was called 'Dreamers', which attempted to address the perception that

the target audience didn't relate to Vuyo's extreme transformation from boerewors seller to global

tycoon. Sarvesh explained the campaign strategy as follows:

> The fact that it didn't resonate with the masses was taken into account when they designed 'Dreamers'. We shouldn't objectify one individual, or focus on a fictional individual that doesn't seem relatable to the masses, we need to find real people who have achieved success in their chosen careers, profile them, to make it more tangible aspiration for our consumer market. That was the learning from Vuyo…in that campaign we profiled five or six entrepreneurs showing how they took the business from a concept to a fully-fledged business concept. We made ads about them, profiled them on the website, on billboards, we gave them resources to support their businesses. We helped them a lot. We wanted to grow entrepreneurs in the country…we wanted to instill more sense of potential in the ordinary South African. So the brand could reconnect with the mass market.

Here, the response to the failure of the 'Vuyo' character's transformation to resonate with low income

South Africans is to shift from a single fictional character to many real-life stories of transformation

through entrepreneurship, in an attempt to convince viewers that it really is possible to achieve social

mobility through the help of the brand, and to show various examples of specific transformations to

maximize the chances that viewers would identify with one of these individuals. However, whereas

Hansa gave these selected individuals practical assistance with their businesses, it was less clear how the

brand of Hansa was going to help the majority of its target audience achieve transformation, informed

by the difficulties of constituting the brand as an active agent that could have relationships with

consumers and 'develop' them.

In 'Dreamers', the brand team's quest to find 'ordinary', 'relatable' South Africans continued to prove

elusive. The stories of 'real' entrepreneurs had also failed to resonate and inspire[24]. Sarvesh explained

further that consumers had failed to make the link between what Hansa was doing in supporting in

entrepreneurship, and choosing the brand as "the brand for me" when they bought beer. Again, we see

the fraught relationship between commodity and brand, and how the marketing ideology that brand

love leads to loyalty and repeat purchase is complicated in practice, with brand love potentially entirely

disconnected from purchasing decision.

In identifying the specificity of the brand/product tension in relation to current branding ideology, it is

instructive to contrast these 'before and after' type ads such as the Vuyo ad with British ads for soap

from the early 20th century discussed by McClintock (1995), which depicted the soap literally whitening

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[24] This was the same campaign that tried to feature a woman as an example of entrepreneurial success, discussed in the previous chapter. Focus groups consisting of male drinkers had not responded positively to female as a 'hero' in a male dominated category, again demonstrating the difficulty of finding the 'ordinary' character with which a widely diverse target market could identify.

Blacks who used it[25]. In the Hansa ad, it is not the commodity that effects transformation, but a value (entrepreneurship) with which the brand tries to articulate itself. This demonstrates the increasing shift from product to brand as the source of value for commodity producers (Manning 2010, Nakassis 2013). However, as we saw above in relation to the complaint about the Vuyo ad lodged with the ASASA, viewers did not always appreciate this distinction, with the complainant objecting that the ad suggests that it is drinking beer that is framed as the catalyst that will improve consumers' lives, rather than a more abstract association with the brand, as the marketing ideology of brand loyalty directed.

In Sarvesh's analysis of the failed Vuyo and Dreamers campaigns, we see two difficulties of the 'aspiration to inspiration' approach that I will suggest are in fact are difficulties inherent to all advertising to some degree. The first of these concerned the difficulty of finding a narrative of transformation that a broad range of people could relate to, which involved both finding an 'ordinary', 'relatable' character, and depicting that character achieving a particular set of aspirations, without those depictions alienating anyone in the audience. The second difficulty concerns the challenge of showing consumers through advertising 'how to get there'; how to transform from who they are into who they want to be, and configuring the place of advertising, mimesis and the brand in that process. As we have seen, for many advertising professionals external to the agency working on Hansa who were unaware of the lack of sales success associated with the campaign, the Vuyo character was someone everyone could relate to, and saw nothing wrong with his story of transformation from rags to riches. However, for others – most notably, the brand's target audience – both the point of aspiration and the means to achieve it failed to resonate.

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[25] Again illustrating the structural tension between brand and product, these sorts of ads depicting products changing the race of characters continue to be produced in the 21st century, see Graham-Harrison (2016), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/28/china-racist-detergent-advert-outrage.

In response to the failure of its campaigns to convince its low-income target market that the brand of Hansa could transform their lives, Hansa had turned away from the inspirational approach altogether, according to the dialectical logic of the dematerialization and rematerialization of the brand (see chapter 3). The brand had become too far removed from the materialities of the product, and needed to be reconnected. As Sarvesh put it, "through 'Vuyo' and 'Dreamers', we didn't speak about the beer, we spoke about people, lifestyles, aspirations, it was more like a PSA. We focused on image, but didn't say anything about beer, taste, the fact that it's a pilsener". Focusing on the product advantages was the key strategy of the post-Dreamers campaign that the brand team was developing at the time of my interview with Sarvesh.

Dynamics arising from this shift in brand strategy further explicate the tensions between product and brand, desire and love, instant gratification and long term loyalty, all of which we have encountered through the previous chapters. Firstly, we see how Sarvesh's explanation of the new strategy of focusing on the product involves a shift in the scale of temporality in the interaction between consumer and brand/product: "At the end of a long day, or the middle of a tough day, out in the sun, the role of beer is refreshment, and a pilsener offers superior refreshment…I put my consumer hat on. If I tell you, you pay R10 and you're going to get a refreshing drink from start to finish, and I make the promise and deliver on it every time, I think that's quite compelling. The other stuff will follow." Here, instead of a relationship with a brand that lasts over the course of years, transcending individual moments of consuming the product, we have an interaction between a consumer and a product that lasts as long as the time it takes to consume a beer. Achille Mbembe, who has characterized post-apartheid South Africa a "society of consumption" (2014), reminds us that "the time of consumption is really a time of the instant" (np. in Blaser 2013). This is a 'reward yourself, you deserve it', kind of logic, frequently seen in ads for food and alcohol and luxury purchases in various national advertising contexts. Sarvesh implies that repeated

moments of rewarding yourself and having the product meet your expectations will build a relationship between consumer and brand: 'the other stuff will follow'.

As we saw in chapter 3, in branding ideology, the 'other stuff' of a relationship with a brand is the necessary counterpoint to moments of consumer desire immediately gratified through consumption of the product. The marketing theorist who founded the paradigm of relationship marketing, Susan Fournier, argued that a brand relationship starts with a superior product performance, which leads to brand loyalty and thus a relationship, which then allows the product performance to be deprioritized as the relationship becomes more important (see chapter 3), providing a number of advantages to product producers (specifically, forgiveness for product failure, less money spent on advertising to consumers who are already loyal). For this reason, campaigns that focused on the product always had to envision a progression to fostering a relationship between brand and consumer.

In this way, advertising professionals cultivated their own form of hope that these short term moments of interaction would lead to long term brand-consumer relationships. But the danger for marketers was always that it wouldn't. The anxiety that they would fail to control and channel consumer desire beyond moments of short term interaction was particularly clear around advertising campaigns directed at Blacks, onto which advertising professionals' fear of lack of control was continuously projected, as we have seen. Advertising encourages all consumers to indulge their desires, to treat themselves, which is in tension with the continence and restraint over time required for a brand relationship. In South African advertising, this indulgence of desire for commodities – the need for 'instant grat' – is projected onto Black consumer segments, with Whites and whitened middle class consumers framed as rational, refined and continent.

Adding to the anxiety of channeling Black consumer desire into long term brand loyalty was the particularity of the figure of the low income Black consumer. We have seen how this consumer was

characterized by marketers as particularly literal and bound to the material world, determined by their

needs, and incapable of self-abstraction. In line with this characterization, Sarvesh echoed a number of

other professionals I spoke to in his framing of low income consumers as particularly focused on the

product: "consumers who have little income and a lot to lose, they are looking for a guarantee that your

product will give what it promises. That the beer is going to refresh and have a good taste."[26] Because of

the structures pushing advertising professionals to focus on the brand outlined above, campaigns aimed

at low income consumers oscillated between focusing on product quality, and trying to 'teach' low

income consumers the logic of the brand, to teach them abstraction (to recognize the abstract

personhood of the brand) and delayed gratification so they can develop loyalty beyond this short term

time frame of consuming the product. The frustration that low income consumers could not be diverted

from a focus on the product was really a projection of the anxiety stemming from the fact that all

consumer-brand/product interactions had to involve short-term, desire-based encounters with material

products, encounters that were inherently unpredictable, creating affective energies and meanings that

advertisers could not control and harness for the brand.

We also see an additional element pushing marketers away from focusing on the product rather than

the brand, relating to their professional expertise, which focuses on branding, not the 'hard sell'

approach of extolling the 'features and benefits' of a product, which is seen by advertising professionals

as an approach drawn from a previous marketing era, and requiring less skill than creating a compelling

brand. Sarvesh described the reaction of his fellow professionals to the shift in focusing on the product

rather than the brand as follows: "our colleagues say, isn't that boring? Maybe to marketers…but not to

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[26] At times, this marketing orthodoxy led to moments of surprise amongst advertising professionals. For example, in my interview with veteran marketing researcher and strategist Wendy Cochrane, she described her surprise when interviewing low-income women about their choice in washing powder; whereas she expected functionality to be most important with consumers with little disposable income, values of dignity and self-worth acquired through using a quality brand proved more important than merely purchasing a washing powder that effectively cleaned clothes.

consumers. Maybe it's not as exciting as some of the other alcohol brands but it's what's right for the brand right now."

Between 'aspirations' and 'the aspirational'

In the difficulties faced by the Vuyo and Dreamers campaigns of finding a narrative of transformation that could resonate broadly and not alienate anyone, we are reminded of the dilemma facing the Sedgwick's brand team – what if images drawn from an idealized, whitened middle-class lifestyle could not kindle aspirations across a broad target market characterized by racial and socio-economic diversity? How could one make a brand aspirational to all in the face of divergent aspirations? However, the case of 'inspirational' advertising shows us how there was a worry amongst marketers that concretizing aspiration in images featuring specific people achieving specific things could not only prove divisive between different groups within the present, but also for single groups and individuals over time.

Erna George, a research analyst and respected industry blogger, working at the influential local chapter of the international branding consultancy Added Value, provided particularly helpful insight into this dynamic. When I asked her what she thought of the idea, commonly articulated by South African advertising professionals, that brands needed to create aspirational value through advertising, she answered:

I think there's two elements that are linked. There is brand having aspirational value, and there's talking to people's aspirations. The one thing about talking to aspirations is creating a trigger that says, 'you know me, you're relevant to me'. However...if a brand talks to me in a relevant way that reflects my life but shows me something better or shows me some way of progress, that's more likely to be appealing to me...So there should be a level of progression. A brand should have a current positioning but it should also have a vision positioning, and all its communication should be moving towards the vision because that's what keeps a brand progressing. And that's what keeps it relevant in people's lives over time...And that for me is about talking to people's aspirations, *and* giving the brand an aspirational value, which in our context, I think is quite critical. South Africans are a people who are seeking progression, in fact the continent Africa, are people who generally seek progression.

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In this way, depicting the specific aspirations of a group of consumers was one way to show them that you 'knew' them – in other words, to offer them recognition. However, marketing discourse also held that the specific aspirations of a person or group were likely to change over time. For this reason, if a brand wanted to retain these people as a market in the long term, while incorporating others at different points in the spectrum of social 'progression', a brand needed to reference the quality of being aspirational in more general terms, and not pin it down too specifically. In Erna's comments, we see how this general state of being 'aspirational' can be performed by the fetish of the humanized brand, who models being an idealized aspirational consumer, always progressing, constantly moving from a present to future self, by having both a 'current positioning' and a 'vison positioning'.

At this point, we see how the impasses of trying to inspire through advertising explicate a tension inherent to all advertising communication. All advertising strives to 'recognize' who consumers are. On the one hand, this assumes that consumers have pre-existing, fixed identities that can be researched and encapsulated in consumer personas, which often stay constant for years (as we saw in the case of Sedgwick's). On the other hand, recognizing consumers attempts to stabilize identities which according to advertising's own ideology are in constant motion, and must be in order for the gap between who one is and who one wants to be to continue to drive commodity purchase. We saw one dimension of this impasse in the ambivalence of the figure of the '4th Street Girl' who was believed to buy whatever was 'trendy', which made her appealing on the one hand – because the brand could articulate itself to these trends – and unruly on the other as these trends were constantly changing[27].

Thus, 'aspiration to inspiration' advertising struggled to mediate the tension between referencing a general state of progressing over time, while needing to embody aspiration in a concrete form in the

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[27] Mazzarella points out the parallel between this logic and a puppy chasing its own tail, as advertising attempts to pin down and enclose constantly changing meanings of public culture, a process of change which branding and advertising itself participates in and drives (2003: 134).

images of its ads. One response to this dilemma evident amongst some brands who tried to 'inspire' through advertising was to shift the focus of the ad from the endpoint of aspiration – thus eliminating the images of extravagant success featured in the Vuyo ad, criticized by Sané – to the steps of the journey of 'getting there'. An example of this is provided by Amstel beer, marketed in South Africa by Heineken, which launched a series of ads focusing on the slog and hard work that success requires, showing the stories of people who had worked themselves up from the bottom to reach the top of their profession. For example, a TV commercial called 'The Chef' shows the rise of a (Black, male) character from a dishwasher to a top chef with his own restaurant, focusing on the early morning starts, the moments of failure and setback, which include having to deal with a (White) Gordon Ramsey-like character throwing the aspiring chef's culinary efforts onto the ground[28]. The voiceover is in Zulu, which is very unusual for an alcohol ad, with an English voice-over directly following each Zulu phrase, translating the first-person narrative of how the Chef character learn that it takes hard work and time to achieve success, and that there are "no shortcuts" or "quick fixes". The final shot of the ad features a picture of the Amstel bottle and the tagline "Take your time: Slow Brewed. Extra Matured."

Whereas the Hansa/Vuyo ad shows the moment of inspiration being Vuyo staring at the man in the luxury vehicle, which magically transforms him into an entrepreneur, the Amstel ads focus on the work and time it takes to make progress in the world, thus cautioning against dreams of 'instant gratification' believed by advertisers to characterize both low-income Black consumers, and members of the 'new' Black middle classes. It links its depiction of the hard work and time it takes to achieve success with the time and effort that goes into producing the Amstel brand beer. We see how such an approach encourages consumers to keep hoping for a better future, in spite of the reality that twenty years of democracy had not brought noticeable improvement to their lives, directing the focus away from hopes

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[28] The ad can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwG7p_8zmlI

of instant wealth which were bound to disappoint, to hopes of self-improvement through hard work

sustained over time, always connected to the brand as the source of 'inspiration'. Appadurai (2007)

reminds us that a 'politics of hope' are intertwined with a 'politics of patience', where the poor learn

that social change through collective action takes place over time. As these ads try to teach Black

consumers in particular to be patient for the social advancement they are believed to crave, we see how

advertising professionals attempt to appropriate both the values of hope and patience to increase the

value of the brand.

Other brands using the 'inspirational' approach had dispensed altogether with trying to show consumers

'how to get there' through depicting narratives of transformation. Rather, such brands had turned to

alternative approaches to encompassing difference within an imagined temporal continuum of material

advancement, while inspiring hope in consumers that they could achieve such social mobility. South

Africa's best selling beer, Carling Black Label, provides an example of this. Charity Ntabisengei – the

Business Unit Director of the advertising team working on the brand at Ogilvy, Cape Town – explained

that the brand had moved away from attempting to depict the aspirations of the target market in ads, to

focusing on 'values' around masculinity as a way to encompass difference. She described the history of

the brand's strategy to me – and its attempt to unify through images of masculinity – as follows:

To start off [from when the brand was introduced into South Africa in 1966 until the 80s], the 'Marlboro man' was what a 'real man' was defined as. So the Marlboro Man was who our archetype was. Then it moved on and…South African consumers started changing. And the guys who started drinking the beer were the miner, worker guys. And who their heroes were, were the unions. So heroes were groups of men, so we started talking to groups of men who fought for their rights, and that was who 'real men' were...This was 90s, so just before the first national elections and just past that. And the brand was doing really well, it was phenomenally successful. Then the whole 'Black Diamond' issue hit, and we went aspirational. And we started showing what aspiration was, and the brand started tanking. Carling Black Label has always been the mark of what a man is…But we've gotten to a point where we've realized, ok, the more you show acts of masculinity as being what defines a man, the more you're likely to lose out, because different men find different acts aspirational.

Here we see how the turn to representing aspiration and the Black Diamond bling advertising came at a moment when South Africa had achieved its goal of democracy. Now advertisers had to find a new future vision to unite the nation, to which brands could connect their own future positioning. Some advertisers who latched on to the figure of the rampantly aspirational 'Black Diamond' believed the dream of massive self-enrichment could replace that national dream. However, others saw this focus as dangerous – we saw this in the in the previous chapter, where some called on advertisers to encourage newly free Black South Africans to engage in nation-building, rather than allowing their consuming energies to range free and unpredictably. Without the channeling structure of the nation, these unleashed energies were dangerous, potentially shifting into the territory of Julius Malema, where massive self-enrichment is pursued through any means possible, not just through the 'help' of the brand.

I asked Charity if the failure of 'aspirational' images for Carling meant that she thought that advertising should avoid aspirational images, and she answered: "I don't think that [advertising] *shouldn't* be about aspiration, I mean, there is a place for it. But what I do think is that if brands want to be successful and have successful relationships with consumers for a long period and not just be a fad, they need to move from a point of talking to aspiration only and talk to inspiration…There are always going to be fad brands as long as they are talking to aspiration [only], because aspiration looks different to different people, and at different points in your life."

Again we see the tension between the vicissitudes of consumer aspiration, and retaining a connection to people over time. Creating a relationship between brand and consumer – in the case of 'inspirational' advertising, by 'inspiring' them – which focused on loyalty to the relationship for the relationship's sake presented advertisers with the hope that the unpredictabilities of aspiration could be sublimated by brand love. And yet, loyalty and love always had to be cathected with commodity desire, to keep

consumers buying the branded commodities, making this tension an inherent part of advertising that tried to inspire, as well as advertising as a practice more broadly.

For Charity, shifting away from images of aspiration that were divisive and with which the target market could not relate were caught up with trying to find a new inclusive masculinity in line with the brand's long term positing as a 'champion beer for champion men': "We're now at the point where we're rethinking the brand strategy. And we've decided that we're going to talk to values - What are the good old values that define what a man is, whether you're Black, White, Coloured or Indian". Charity explained how the brand team had looked to other times and places in history for these 'good old values' of masculinity that it was hoped could transcend race, including old US military honor codes and Samurai warrior practices. She linked this search for positive masculine values to what she termed the 'demonization' of men in South African society due to high crime rates, and the association of men with criminality. And yet, if we consider more carefully which men are associated with criminality, we see that it is primarily Black men – both in the figure of the corrupt BEE beneficiary, or the excluded but aspirational Black male consumer who 'holds up an ATM' to afford premium liquor. Here we see that pinning down the particularity of masculinity and how this particularity related to race constituted a challenge similar to that of femininity discussed in the previous chapter – can 'masculinity' unify a brand or is masculinity divided by differences of race?

However, it was clear that although masculinity expressed through 'values' might be imagined as transcending particularity, and as an alternative to aspiration for subsuming difference, for Charity, focusing on 'values' was also a way of granting recognition to the particular experience of Black consumers in post-apartheid South Africa:

> If you look at the cycle of Black South Africans in particular, at some point they were completely ignored. Because they had no money…And then at one point, all of a sudden, people decided there was this beautiful mass market. That was the emerging middle class, the Black Diamond, and they had access to credit, they were your best friend. These guys had opportunities that

they'd never had beforehand and were getting credit left right and center, were spending conspicuously, were badging, so that they could be seen by their peers to be are getting somewhere in life. Then recession hits [in 2008 in response to the international financial crisis], everyone kind of backs off with these guys, because they've lost a whole bunch of money. And the honest truth is these guys are looking for [brands] who are authentic, that will be with them in the hard times, the good times…And not a lot of brands understand that authenticity is what consumers are looking for: 'Get to know me, don't show me what success is, because I've been there and I've burnt my hand'. And yet you still see a lot of brands saying, 'success, success, success'. Instead of saying, 'values are important, your family is important, we understand what triggers you'.

Here, the Carling brand team attempted to offer consumers recognition of their current identities through their 'values', rather than trying to depict their aspirations, again reminding us of the tension between these two positions within the address of aspirational recognition.

"One beer, one vote": the developmental brand and the 'capacity to aspire'

One highly successful marketing initiative designed by the Carling brand team – both in terms of boosting sales and achieving praise from others in the industry[29] – was an initiative called the Carling Cup 'Be the Coach'. Although this marketing intervention did not focus on 'inspiring' consumers to achieve material success and social advancement as the Hansa and Amstel campaigns did, it did attempt to 'inspire' in a broader sense, striving to instill a sense in consumers of their own agency to affect change, a crucial element of Appadurai's 'capacity to aspire', and a necessary foundation of the politics of hope. For the 'Be the Coach' initiative, Carling Black Label sponsored a derby between South Africa's two most popular soccer teams – Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs. Local soccer has historically been popular amongst Black South Africans, with cricket and rugby racialized as White, and sponsoring soccer has long been used by brands – especially alcohol brands – in attempting to achieve popularity with

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[29] According to one online article, "One of the most talked about and awarded integrated campaigns in South African advertising history to date is Ogilvy's Carling Black Label 'Be the Coach' campaign, which brought home three Cannes Lions: gold, silver and bronze in 2012, as well as a Grand Prix for the 360 degree campaign at the 2012 Loerie Awards" http://trendafrica.co.za/2012/10/30/socialising-enterprise/. Despite the praise heaped on this campaign by almost everyone I spoke to, one Black advertising professional I interviewed – Johannesburg copywriter Xoli Radebe – criticized this campaign, saying "You needed 1 million votes to get a player to play, so 1 million people had to open beers, who are poor. That does a lot of damage in the Black community".

Blacks (See Mager 2010 for a detailed discussion of the politics of sports sponsorship and race in South Africa). However, the innovation of the 'Be the coach' initiative was to allow fans to have an influence over the selection of the teams, as well as on choices about substitutions during the final. With every bottle of Carling Black Label bought, consumers would receive a code under the bottle top that they could text using their cellphones to a number provided, along with their choice for the starting line-up for whichever team they supported. The more codes you had, the more votes you could cast, driving sales of Carling through the roof in the run up to the final of the tournament. A similar procedure was in operation during the course of the final, with text messages determining who would be substituted in the second half.

'Be the coach' was designed to give fans a sense of agency over something that was important to them. As Charity explained it: "South Africans believe that foreign coaches don't know the players, conditions, cultures, hardships, like the local people do. They wanted to give the consumer the chance to be the coach for a day…The true human insight was that people were frustrated, I want to get involved, these guys [the foreign coaches] don't know what they're talking about". Here we see how the competition attempts to offer the experience of collective will and agency, marked as national by being opposed to the choices of the foreign coaches who supposedly didn't know the local South African context. It appropriates the key procedure of formal democracy – voting – and connects it to purchase of alcoholic commodities, again framing the brand as the enabler of agency. Once again, the brand interpellates consumers who are at once independent and dependent on the brand for their agency. However, in the context of this imaginary of consumer citizenship, there are none of the snaking lines depicted in the iconic images of Black South Africans lining up to vote for the first time; voting is instantaneous via one's cellphone, and one can cast as many votes as one can afford to buy beers. We see here how the 'developmental brand' mediates the tensions between the temporalities of consumption – in which the consumer is promised instantaneous gratification of their desires and self-actualization of their desired

identity – and the temporality of branding, in which desire must be sublimated into long term love, commitment and loyalty.

Conclusion

Some commentators on South African advertising have criticized the Vuyo campaign for its narrative of Black South Africans simply needing to pull themselves up by their bootstraps in order to escape poverty[30]. However, in this chapter, we have seen in terms of the ideology of the 'developmental brand', this self-actualizing figure is only one half of the fantasy Black consumer of advertising, and the Black citizen targeted by the ANC's re-election campaign. The other half is the figure of the brand-loyal consumer citizen, grateful to the brand (or party) for teaching it how to be independent, and thus guarding against the threat of the Black consumer figure that self-actualizes through consumption in a way not controllable by advertising or the fetish of the brand.

Here we see the return of the longstanding dream, discussed in chapter 1, that advertising alone could actualize consumers. In the economic context of mid-20th century South Africa, anchored in mining and – to a lesser extent – manufacturing, this fantasy revolved around consumer desire stimulating harder work amongst laborers, and the lobbying of bosses for higher wages, which would increase the spending power of mass markets and lead to consumer-driven economic growth. In the current moment, the dream revolves around a process of mystical mimesis between advertising images and the consumer kindling the entrepreneurial spirit, and where the fetish of the brand 'inspires' consumers to generate value out of nothing and thus attain the spending power needed to purchase more of the brands that inspired them. So the brand strives to suture the gap between aspiring to consume, and the consummation of commodity desire.

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[30] http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/a-reflection-from-being-on-the-inside-of-the-south-african-badvertising-industry/

Besides a fantasy about advertising generating value, the discourse of 'aspiration to inspiration' in South African advertising speaks to a fear of Black consumer desire, and a process through which advertising professionals cultivating their own forms of hope that inspirational advertising could contain and channel the desires of Black consumers. In this chapter, I have argued that the turn to 'inspirational' advertising was an attempt on the part of advertisers to foster hope, especially in low income Black male consumers, whose consumer aspiration seemed particularly elusive to channeling, either in its dormancy or its excess. 'Inspiring' these consumers was about connecting presents to futures, current action to desired ends, which, as Appadurai reminds us, is central to any politics of hope. In South Africa, the category of 'the future' has become particularly fraught as the years of democracy wore on and the future fought for in the struggle against apartheid failed to arrive. In the run-up to the 2014 election, Julius Malema made a speech in which he repeated the familiar claim that the majority of Black South Africans have "not received the fruits of freedom. Because your future, they have postponed it permanently" (quoted in Poplak 2014, 686). Advertisers hoped that inspirational advertising could revoke this postponement, removing the blockage in mobility and temporality through the power of branding. They hoped to persuade Black consumers to route their hope for a better future through the brand, creating long term structures of attachment. At the same time, advertisers needed these consumers to keep purchasing branded commodities, motivated by short term commodity desire. In this way, advertising professionals sought to have it both ways, encouraging consumers to put their trust in the brand to inspire them to achieve a better lifestyle, and while they were waiting to achieve that lifestyle, to have a beer.

However, as advertisers tried to constitute 'developmental brands' that could teach consumers 'how to get there' and thus achieve social mobility, they ran up against structural tensions inherent to advertising, as advertising as a medium could only offer universal access to aspiration, and not the means to 'get there'. 'Inspirational' advertising raised questions about what it took to 'transform': was it

achieved through faith in the mimetic power of advertising narratives of transformation? Collective

action or individual hard work facilitated by the brand? Or was the only option for transformation open

to those excluded from the fruits of democracy the transformation of inebriation through alcohol?

Trying to demystify what it took to achieve social mobility only served to heighten the mystery at the

heart of 'transformation' in all its senses; attempting to 'inspire' Black male consumers only made the

fantasy of advertisers – in which the brand channels desire, kindles hope, and boosts profit – more

elusive.

Conclusion

South African Advertising and the Politics of the Future

In August 2016, as I was nearing the end of the process of writing this dissertation, I received an email from the Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing mailing list, announcing the findings of its new marketing study: "As our economy teeters on the brink of recession, South African consumers are facing what might be described as a crisis of aspirations…We as marketers face a tricky conundrum. Aspiration is arguably the very fabric of marketing. But a high degree of income immobility coupled with low satisfaction levels are taxing consumers' aspirations like never before. How do we connect?" Elaborating on the findings of the study in an interview with a news channel, Prof John Simpson, head of the institute, explained that this 'crisis of aspirations' entailed the majority of South Africans feeling that the paths to achieving their dreams were blocked, by a lack of jobs, access to quality education, and the so-called 'Black tax' – the financial assistance that Blacks with access to income were expected to provide to their extended families. He also elaborated that the dreams of South Africans were not what many marketers may believe; only 5% of those involved in the study named becoming rich as their first priority. But the email assured marketers that "the South African marketplace still has hope, and many desires waiting to be fulfilled", which the institute promised to help marketers understand – for a fee, of course.

However, in light of the preceding chapters, we can see that the 'crisis of aspirations' diagnosed by the Unilever report is about more than consumers feeling they cannot achieve their dreams in the current economic, political and social climate. It is about a structural tension at the heart of advertising, which offers the promise of transformation through the brand. However, advertising can offer universal access to aspiration, but not to the means to achieve these aspirations. The fantasy of the transformative power of advertising often does not acknowledge this friction, but attempts to frame aspiration as leading to a transformation in material circumstances – for example, by imagining that these new

aspirations will prompt workers to work harder, mobilize for higher wages, create value through entrepreneurship, or become optimistic and thus purchase more consumer goods, investing in a future in which they have hope. The figure of the 'developmental brand' is the latest instantiation of this attempt, which frames the brand as enabling consumers – particularly Black consumers – to achieve their aspirations in tangible ways. The 'crisis of aspirations' transpires when consumers no longer believe the promise that brands will help them turn their dreams into reality, informed by a broader disillusionment in the possibility of transformation itself.

The Unilever email responds to this 'crisis' by implying that if advertisers can understand the aspirations of South Africans better – for example, by not assuming that they simply desire to be rich – brands can frame themselves more convincingly as the agent enabling transformation and helping South Africans to achieve their aspirations. This is not a new response on the part of the advertising industry – we have seen in the previous chapters how when particular visions of aspiration depicted in advertising have failed to resonate with Black consumers, the standard response has been a call to offer consumers more accurate modes of recognition, to 'understand' them better. However, simply recognizing consumers through advertising is not enough, as the ideology implicit in the promise of transformation through branding requires calibrating aspirational recognition. We have seen how, as advertising professionals have tried to unlock this transformative power and channel it through the brand, they have puzzled both over how to recognize difference, and how to configure a vision of aspiration that can resonate with a wide range of South African consumers, subsuming these differences. The particular racialized history of consumer citizenship in South Africa has led to a situation in which separating aspiration from whiteness, and offering aspiration while recognizing differences based on race and class – when such differences were enforced by claims about unequal levels of aspiration – have been in tension with one another.

We have also seen how part of the performance of faith in the transformative power of advertising on the part of industry professionals has centered on claims about this power in relation to Blacks. On the one hand, since the earliest days of the industry, the missionaries of advertising have proclaimed their faith in the ability of the medium to constitute Blacks as consumers, and to direct their desires for the benefit of White capitalists marketing their products. On the other, imaginaries of Blacks as fundamentally different from the White consumer-citizen self have prompted doubts that advertising can truly achieve the dual goal of kindling Black consumer desire, and rendering it harnessable. These anxieties continue to manifest in contemporary South African advertising practice, and drawing on the discourse of a politics of recognition – in which recognizing the cultural difference of citizens promises to make these citizens predictable and thus controllable – has been an important strategy for advertisers trying to control and direct the desires of Black consumers. However, offering this recognition of difference, while offering aspirational visions of transformation, have generated frictions which advertisers struggle to mediate.

In this conclusion, I suggest that the complex relationship between advertising and transformation indicates that the politics of advertising in South Africa is inextricably caught up with a politics of the future. I argue further that the politics of aspirational recognition must be understood in light of the temporality of advertising and branding, and how this intersects with the temporality of the nation, as politicians increasingly appropriate the ideology and techniques of branding to address challenges of governance.

Temporality and aspirational recognition

In understanding the temporality of a politics of aspirational recognition, it is useful to compare and contrast this with the temporality underpinning a politics of recognition. Markell (2003) argues that the politics of recognition misrecognizes the nature of social identities and their relationship to temporality,

and in so doing, often unwittingly serves to reinforce the conditions that give rise to the injustices the politics is opposing. He suggests that this paradox stems from a contradiction at the heart of the discourse of recognition itself; on the one hand, this discourse argues for the relationality of social identity, which is why misrecognizing the identity of minority groups on the part of the state or majority society is considered psychologically damaging to the victims of such misrecognition. On the other hand, the discourse uses the yardstick of a fixed identity to determine whether or not recognition of the identity of marginalized groups has taken place. This fixed identity is seen as rooted in the past, and necessary for authentic action in the present to bring about change in the future, and thus assumes a particular relationship between temporality, identity and authentic agency. This conception is what makes recognition seem empowering for minority groups – recognizing a group's true identity allows them to act authentically in the present, thus achieving self-determination and equality with majority groups in society.

However, Markell critiques this conception of the relationship between identity, temporality and agency. Drawing on Arendt, he argues that identity is the result of social action, rather than preceding it. Thus he interprets attempts to root identity in the past – rather than accepting the contingencies of identities that arise through social action – as part of an attempt to assert control over such identities. This is part of his broader critique of the politics of recognition as a manifestation of the pursuit of sovereignty, even as it critiques other political models grounded on the pursuit of sovereignty, particularly social contract theories that assume freely choosing individuals as the building blocks of political society. Markell's argument is that although a politics of recognition doesn't focus on sovereignty through choice, it pursues sovereignty through seeking to control knowledge; particularly, what others know about one's identity.

A politics of aspirational recognition has its own relation to temporality and this pursuit of sovereignty that has both continuities and divergences from the dynamics outlined by Markell. Aspirational

recognition attempts to recognize who the addressee could be, and actualizes this potential, by recognizing one's present self as sutured to a desired future self – although, as we have seen, the exact calibration of the relationship between present and future selves serves to entrench historical notions of race and class division. In this way, it does not rely on an essential, fixed notion of identity rooted in the past as does a politics of recognition. Rather, the dynamics of aspirational recognition are grounded on a conception of identity as fluid, and a relational concept that only exists as it is recognized by others. This assumption of relational identity is embedded in branding ideology, which posits the brand as an actualizer and stabilizer of potential – although as we saw in Chapter 3, the dynamics of actualization between consumers and brand are implicated in the constitution of unequal, racialized figures of consumer citizens. These assumptions of branding ideology – as well as the control it promises over identities and transformation – are also illustrated in the way politicians have mobilized branding for their own purposes, and I suggest this promise of control has contributed to the increasing appropriation of branding discourse in the political realm.

The mobilization of these assumptions is very clear, for example, in the keynote speech at the 2011 Brand Africa Forum held in Johannesburg, given by Dr Arthur Mutambara, head of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party in Zimbabwe[1]. He was speaking on the topic of "The Role of the Nation Brand in Economic Development", and gave Zimbabwe as the example of the power of a brand to transform and actualize potential. He explained that although Zimbabwe is very low down in the rankings of countries in a variety of metrics relevant to nation branding, such as efficiency and resource management, it has huge potential. He provides the specific example of its potential to be a top diamond producer, rivalling other African nations, as the diamonds Zimbabwe produces are of the highest quality in the world, and it has the capacity to produce far more than it does currently.

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[1] Viewable at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mqhQIO0yag.

Mutambara explained that "we just need to find a way of converting potential into substance…we must close the gap between potential and actual. And the gap is because of the brand. The brand is not so great. We're working on it. If you don't fix the brand there will be a gap between your potential and your actual...Perception becomes reality." Here we see both the faith in the transformative power of branding, and the conceptualization in branding ideology that identity is not fixed in the past, but actualized through the current perception of others, which is facilitated by branding. Zimbabwe is not a resource-rich country, producing the highest quality diamonds in the world, until it is recognized as such by its citizens and international investors.

A second example of the appropriation of branding in politics illustrates how branding ideology promises to actualize the potential of the present into the reality of the future, and to manage the uncertainties and vulnerabilities of that future. This example involves Thabo Mbeki – second president of democratic South Africa from 1999 to 2008 –   turning to branding to conceptualize the nation and its relationship to the future. In a fascinating letter by Mbeki addressing the nation and the ANC, published on the ruling-party ANC website in 2006, we gain some insight into the parallel tensions between crafting a nation, and managing a brand, and why the techniques of branding might seem useful to politicians engaged in the former. The letter is entitled, "The new South Africa: a Season of Hope!" and reports on the finding of a recent Gallup poll that South Africa is an optimistic nation – 60% of the population expressed the belief that 2006 would be better than 2005, which is twice as many that expressed a similar optimism in 2002. He concludes from this poll – and from the findings of an international tourism company that South African is in the top ten adventure and experiential tourist destinations for the first time – that South Africa has achieved a positive 'brand image', both in relation to a domestic audience and an international one.

He spends the rest of the letter explaining how practices of branding and marketing can shed light on

what the government and the ANC must do to drive progress in South Africa, quoting extensively from a

book written by two South African branding consultants. Mbeki writes:

> An interesting book written by Dr Nikolaus Eberl and Herman Schoonbee, 'Internal Branding:
> The IziCwe Code', says that 'a brand is an expectation of an emotional experience, created by a
> certain brand promise'. It quotes Hannah Arendt saying that promises constitute 'islands of
> certainty in the sea of uncertainty that the future is'. The authors say: 'Through promises we
> manage and control the uncertainty, whilst trust is the attitude required by authentic promise-
> making'... In our January 8th Statement and our Local Government Election Manifesto, we make
> various promises to the people, consistent with the brand image of the new South Africa. The
> people will accept these promises and the brand they represent only because they have the
> necessary trust and confidence in us that we will do the necessary things to meet the
> expectations created by our promises[2].

Mbeki presents the argument that South Africans are optimistic because the ANC has met their prior

expectations engendered by the nation's 'brand promise'. For Mbeki, the brand promise allows the

ANC-led government to manage uncertainty about the future, but if it creates expectations that are not

fulfilled, it will backfire:

> We will, and must, continue 'advertising' democratic South Africa as a country Alive with
> Possibility [Brand South Africa's slogan at the time], which is basking in a Season of Hope that
> communicates an optimistic message to all humanity. However, we must take the greatest care
> that we do not conduct an attractive advertisement campaign, only to find that ours is 'a poor
> product'. We must therefore ensure that we create the situation such that our 'market' at home
> and abroad identifies with 'the people in the company and the degree to which they can be
> trusted to deliver the Brand promise' [he is still quoting here from Eberl and Schoonbee] of
> accelerated progress towards the achievement of the better life for all, to which we are
> committed and which we have promised.

Mbeki has faith that this brand image and brand promise itself has the capacity to inspire those tasked

with delivering on the ANC's election promises, and claims that the ANC must continue to ask, "Are

those who constitute our machinery of government sufficiently inspired by our Brand Image to

discharge their responsibility to generate the kind of energy, commitment and actions that will ensure

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[2] http://www.anc.org.za/docs/anctoday/2006/at01.htm

that the people, at home and abroad, sustain their confidence that our government at all levels and in all its spheres, including the local, can be trusted to honour the Brand Promise!"[sic]

In Mbeki's vision, we see a trust in branding to actualize potential similar to that expressed by Mutambara, and by many of the advertising professionals discussed in the preceding chapters. We also see how the actualization of potential concerns relations between the present and the future, with Mbeki hoping the 'brand promise' can stabilize the uncertainty of that future, converting current hope into future reality. Markell critiques a politics of recognition for pursuing exactly this goal – control over the contingencies of the future – arguing that these contingencies are inherent to sociality itself and as such, can never be controlled, only unevenly distributed between different groups of citizens. The brand consultants quoted by Mbeki ironically draw on Arendt to theorize the exact pursuit of sovereignty over identity that Markell uses her writings to critique.

In both of these political appropriations of branding ideology, recognition of your nation's 'brand' – whether by citizens, members of the state, or the international community – has taken place when the nation's potential for agency is actualized. It is clear that those who pursue this actualization through branding strive for sovereignty over identity in a way similar to those who pursue a politics of recognition, although the dynamics of asserting control over that identity differ, with a politics of recognition focusing on the past, and a politics of aspirational recognition focusing on the relationship between present and future.

As we saw in the introduction, the power attributed to advertising – and later, more explicitly to branding – in the history of the industry in South Africa – to transform, control identity, and constitute selves and others – has informed a situation in which the identity of those who create advertising is highly politicized. These politics are informed by the historical articulation in South Africa between advertising and projects of White self-making. As shown in Chapter 1, during the colonial and apartheid

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period, Whites often framed themselves as actualizing the potential of Blacks to be consumers. This allowed Whites to reinforce racial boundaries while promising Blacks equal access to the status of consumer – but only through the help of Whites. Now, with the rise of discourses within the advertising industry that personify the brand and confer agency on it, the brand itself is frequently framed as the actualizer of Black potential – in the form of what I term the 'developmental brand'.

In this dissertation, I have traced various ways in which this personified brand may participate in mediating lines of inequality based on race, class and gender. In cases where this brand is a projection of a racially unmarked, middle-class self, calqued from earlier constructions of Whiteness – defined by the capacity to restrain desire and consume in the 'right' way – inequalities are shaped between this figure of the middle class and a series of consumer others – both the 'new' Black middle class and low income Blacks. In other cases, the brand is a projection of White advertising professionals' fantasy of an 'ideal' Black consumer. Advertising professionals create this idealized image, and hope that this will actualize a Black target market made up of 'good' Black consumers – those whose aspirations focus on a consumer lifestyle rather than structural societal change, pursued through free market channels rather than radical politics, and rely on the brand to assist them achieving these aspirations. As we saw in Chapter 4, this figure of the 'good' Black consumer is constituted in opposition to its threatening other – particularly the figure of low-income Blacks who are characterized as potentially following populist politician Julius Malema and take the consumer goods they want by force. The belief in the transformative power of the brand informs these attempts on the part of advertisers to use branding and advertising to constitute these idealized consumers, and to harness Black consumer desire for the benefit of their own profit margins and those of their corporate clients.

The power attributed to branding to transform relies on the temporality of aspirational recognition, which focuses on the relationship between the present and the future, rather than attempting to ground authentic identity in the past. This temporality arises out of the relationship between the

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temporality of consumption and the temporality of branding, which as we have seen in Chapter 5, articulates the present to the future, both the through the deferral of gratification required to keep consumers purchasing more commodities, and through the notion of loyalty, that binds the consumer to the brand over time. Although the temporality underpinning the value of the brand does involve a conception of the past, this past focuses on previous experiences between brand and consumer, which the brand must store within itself as a means to accrue value, reminding the consumer of those past experiences and the bond of mutual obligation they imply between brand and consumer.

Some scholars of advertising have pointed to advertising's appropriation of the past in its attempt to sell commodities. Bertelson criticizes the 'amnesia' of ads at the transition to democracy in South Africa for divorcing symbols of struggle from their historical context, and articulating them to advertised commodities (1998). Mazzarella (2003) also shows how advertising in India took Orientalist constructions shaped through racist historical encounters between India and Europe, and revalorized these as positive characteristics defining India, which Indians could affirm through consumption, a process which he calls 'auto-orientalism'. In both these cases, although the past is of concern to the brand, it is a past where the structure of branding actualizes certain elements of that history, while eliding others. A recognition of a past considered as fixed and immutable is not considered necessary for self-actualization through branding to occur.

Thus in terms of the aspirational recognition of branding ideology, a successful recognition of identity is one that enables transformation, by bringing the future in reach of the present. In contrast to Markell's analysis, such a successful recognition does not require the yardstick of a fixed notion of identity, based in the past – and often serving to tie people to that past – to determine whether recognition or misrecognition has occurred. This is why the politics of aspirational recognition are inextricably bound to the politics of the future. It is also why advertising professionals strive so hard to find aspirational visions

of the future that they believe will resonate with their target markets, subsume differences between them, and prompt commodity consumption.

Aspiring to the future

Many advertising professionals I spoke with believed that the aspirational visions of the future offered by advertising are central to the social role of the medium and to the ethics of their practice as professionals. This view was also evident in the publicly expressed opinions of many advertising professionals. For example, Muzi Kuzwayo, a Black copywriter who was influential in early post-apartheid advertising in directing debates on advertising to Blacks – particularly through his often-quoted book, *Marketing through Mud and Dust: Marketing to Black South Africans* (2000) – wrote the following about why, in his view, advertising should never be censored: "Advertising by its very nature sells dreams, and that is what pushes society forward. Great advertising doesn't sell reality; that would be selling the human spirit too short. Instead it sells what humanity can achieve" (2012: 99).

At different points in the history of South African advertising, such dreams have been connected in diverse ways to visions of a national future. During apartheid, as we have seen, some advertising offered Black consumers the consumerist lifestyle associated with Whites, while never depicting multiracial interaction amongst equals within a shared national space. At the transition to democracy, advertisers turned to promising a future of a racially inclusive nation and market, and articulated this to the brands and products they wished to sell. In our interview, Reg Lascaris – a veteran in the advertising industry and founder of TBWA/Hunt/Lascaris, the most awarded South Africa agency in history – recounted his memories of the early 90s when his agency created its first TV ad depicting multiracial interaction: "A lot of people said that's not realistic. But we were selling aspiration, the dream of equality. We were selling the future."

However, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, the multiracial interaction depicted in these

visions of the future depicted a consumerist middle-classness, drawn from White advertisers'

conceptualizations of middle-classness, and erasing Black difference that did not fit in with this

normative vision. Even in ad campaigns that directly addressed race and explicated the racial

stereotypes that continue to be prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa, middle class consumption was

presented as the means to overcome such negative stereotypes (see Narunsky-Laden 2008, Saks 2010).

As the 90s optimism of the 'rainbow nation' waned and growing numbers of people lost hope in the

possibility for democracy to bring substantive change, advertisers struggled to connect the promise of a

future to the brands and products they were tasked with making 'aspirational'. In Chapter 5, we saw

how advertisers struggled to find a vision of aspiration that could unite consumers, with many turning to

other means to unify a divided market. Some in the advertising industry have explicitly lamented the

loss of this shared vision of the future, and called on advertising to play a role in shaping a new vision, a

new set of 'dreams' that can 'push society forward', as Kuzwayo put it. In his column 'Brand Politics'

which appears on the industry blog marklives.com, Al Mackay – prior social media manager for the

Democratic Alliance (the official opposition party in South Africa) and current brand consultant at

Yellowwood brand, marketing and design consultancy – wrote a piece considering some of the

multiracial middle-class 'rainbow' alcohol ads from the 1990s (discussed in Chapter 2), and their bearing

on current advertising practice in South Africa, which I quote at length:

> The Castle Lager ads of the 1990s put forward a vision of South Africa that was far removed
> from the lived reality of most citizens then. That kind of footage seems cheesy and clichéd now,
> but seeing a genuinely and happily multiracial society back then must have seemed like looking
> into some dreamlike utopia. It was a vision to unite and inspire SA in a time of trepidation,
> polarisation and mistrust. I think those ads did more than give us all warm fuzzies: they
> contributed, in their small way, to shaping how SA society thought about itself. They made the
> promise of the rainbow nation seem attainable, and provided an easy guide for everyday nation-
> builders…That is a kind of political leadership, and it uses a technique common to luxury
> branding…luxury brands tend to create the "brand dream". This entails creating a distance
> between the lived reality of consumers and the brand; a world which is somehow more
> impressive, more beautiful than what their consumers currently know. It is the key to triggering

aspiration. If the prices that luxury brands are capable of charging tells us anything, it's that this technique works…I think partially it works just because we're a daydreaming species. We have imaginations and like to use them…A brand dream is a powerful motivator. I just wish that, in this time of social crises and poor political leadership, marketers were using it to motivate people to do more than just buy a flashier car. Every now and then I become overwhelmed by the opulence in our shopping centres. Queues of people waiting to pay thousands of rands for clothing that they will no longer want next year. Rows of sweets and toys on the way to the supermarket checkout to encourage people to buy things they don't really want or need. In a country with as much poverty, homelessness and desperation as ours, it's grotesque. Wouldn't it be amazing if brands used the power of aspiration to encourage positive social change? Wouldn't it be great if more marketers went the route of Castle in the '90s — showing consumers a dream of a better society, not just a better personal standard of living? (Mackay 2015: np)[3]

In this piece, Mackay longs for advertising that can suture individual to national aspiration, and offer the nation a future that can resonate and thus play a role in transforming the present. He imagines advertising as channeling consumer desire into socially beneficial projects, rather than encouraging the conspicuous expenditure which is criticized as characterizing the post-apartheid South African elite. The title of the article – "To lead or mimic? That is the brand question" – highlights the tension that all advertising must attempt to mediate as it attempts to offer aspirational recognition – how can advertising balance recognizing the actualities of the present while serving as a catalyst for bringing the potentialities of the future into being? Advertising that leans more towards offering recognition is seen as reinforcing the status quo – through 'mimicry' – and advertising that leans more towards aspirational visions is seen as 'leading'. But in providing this 'leadership' in configuring dreams of a national future, advertising may become entangled in contestations around the shape that the contours of that future will take.

One of the most controversial ad campaigns in the second decade of South African democracy – and also one of the most highly awarded by local industry bodies – pivots around its ambivalent relation to

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[3] http://www.marklives.com/2015/07/brand-politics-to-lead-or-mimic-that-is-the-brand-question/

the present and the future, with some interpreting the ad as offering a very different vision of future

race relations in South Africa. The ad was for SABC 1, a public television channel, and told the story of a

day in the life of an ordinary South African young man[4]. The ad follows his day as he wakes up in his

township shack, commutes to work, and witnesses scenes of racial inequality characterizing South Africa

– for example, he sees a nanny running after the children of a wealthy family reminding them to take

their packed school lunches. We also see the young man experience some acts of everyday racism

directed against him – for example, a woman locking her car door as he walks past, assuming him to be

a criminal, and a shopkeeper calling the police to report the young man as a suspect in a crime, after

seeing a wanted poster with an image of someone who looks nothing like him other than sharing his

racial designation. The shopkeeper defends his mistake to the police, saying 'they all look the same'.

Finally we are shown the young man returning home to watch SABC 1 before going to bed. However, the

ad had one crucial twist: instead of the young man being Black, as the vast majority of township

residents are, we are shown a young White man waking up and living the life experienced by a vast

number of Black South Africans. Similarly, the racial identities of the all characters shown in the ad are

switched (from Black to White or White to Black, with no other racial groups represented in the ad),

depicting a reversal of the racialized historical inequalities in South Africa: the poor engaged in menial

jobs and the targets of racism are White, and the privileged are all Black.

Festus Masekwameng was the copywriter for this ad, and the only Black person on the creative team

designing the ad. In our interview, he explained that the idea to reverse the racial identities of the

characters in the ad had been a last minute, spur-of-the-moment decision:

> I was the copywriter, the artistic director was a young Portuguese [South African] guy…The
> original idea was a day in the life of a young Black boy. The idea to switch it around was a last
> minute thing. We always teased each other, and the Portuguese guy was teasing me, "what if
> you had to go through what I had to go through, and vice versa?" We cast it that way, and
> everyone loved it, and hated it. The idea was, take another look at Mzansi [South Africa], it's not

[4] The ad is viewable here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcWsTwvtyOI

always what you see. At the time, we were struggling with a national identity - before the slogan for SABC 1 was 'Simunye, we are one', which was sugar-coating the reality. Now the channel was being relaunched, it wasn't romanticized, it was very gritty, so that was what the campaign was reflecting.

Festus went on to explain how the ad was designed to make South Africans look differently at the current reality of life in South Africa – denaturalizing the habituated inequalities of daily life by reversing the racial positions of those involved in these relations of inequality, and thus critiquing the 'sugar coating' of a national identity based on celebrations of unity, such as that of the 'rainbow nation' characterization of South Africa. As he put it, "It exposed the paranoia [of Whites], and it also got them to reflect on how offensive it can be sometimes. You treat them all the same".

However, according to Festus, complaints about the ad – coming mainly from Whites – interpreted the ad as an aspirational vision of South Africa's future, where Whites would be subjugated to domination by Blacks, as retribution for their treatment under apartheid. We see here that the controversy around the ad comes from the ambivalence of advertising's relation to the present and the future, which must both recognize the present and suture it to a promised future. Whereas Festus and the creative team saw the ad as a critique of the present, some viewers saw it as holding up an ideal for the future. The latter group interpreted the ad as offering the image of a racially-reversed South Africa as an alternative future, rather than the ideal of multiracial equality embodied by the image of the 'rainbow nation'. As Festus explained it, "At the time, it unleashed some of the worst fears of Whites about where the country was going. New democracy stuff happening next door in Zimbabwe. It wasn't meant to be a futuristic ad, it was talking about the present. It was saying, do you know how it feels to be the other half. But we weren't too worried about that, the channel was mainly aimed at Black youth, and still is."

Although this ad came out in 2006, these issues continue to vex those in South Africa who attempt to conceptualize the place of race in South Africa's future. Ex-advertising creative and current free-lance

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writer, essayist and art critic Lwandile Fikeni wrote about this ad campaign and its relationship to the

'Vuyo' campaign discussed in the previous chapter in a blog post appearing in 2015 on the website

'Africa is a County'. He starts by critiquing the 'Vuyo' campaign and its vision of transformation. Talking

about his time working in the advertising industry in Cape Town he writes:

> I had been thinking about Vuyo a lot and the how in that single advert black aspirations were bottled into the single, simplistic, superhuman rags to riches narrative of ' magical blacks' . I worried that the ad threatened to engulf every sphere of black social life – everyone was a Vuyo in the making, pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps and sneering at those who seemed trapped in the doldrums of poverty…This singular narrative, this social engineering project, which we churned out with unfettered abandon, slowly unspooled, at least for me, what the post-South African state would be hinged on. It made it clear that the entire premise of our democracy, like all democracies I suppose, was self-interest. And as we all know, self-interest is always at the expense of someone else. Unfortunately, in South Africa, we know very well whom that 'someone else' is right down to his most minute demographic detail, and instead of speaking of ways to dismantle the oppressive structural organisation of power and privilege that would set him free to enjoy his country's democracy, we insist that he becomes a Vuyo and pulls himself out of his bad situation without his country and state doing the work of undoing the terms that produce and reproduce his particular situation, namely, without dismantling the socio-economic structure that maintains white privilege. If we were honest with ourselves, we would surely accept Vuyo as a lie meant to bamboozle instead of empower South African blacks (Fikeni, 2015: np)[5].

He goes on to contrast the 'Vuyo' image of race and transformation with that suggested by the SABC 1

'racial reversal' ad:

> I think [this ad], more than Vuyo, articulates popular sentiment (and as a propaganda piece it works brilliantly for it appeals to a shared sense of empowerment rather than democratic individualism), and begins to hint at something felt deep down by most black people since our moment of democracy in 1994. It is a moment of reversal, of the slave becoming master, of what liberation looks like in the mind of the previously oppressed subject in a post-colony. This it does, without sneering at the present material condition of most black people. It merely complicates the aspiration and the present lived experience in equal measure (ibid).

Fikeni's analysis illustrates how the politics of advertising in South Africa is inextricably caught up with

imaginaries of the future, its relationship to the present, and how to get from one to the other. The

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[5] http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/a-reflection-from-being-on-the-inside-of-the-south-african-badvertising-industry/

juxtaposition of the two ads presents two models of social transformation – one in which individual

Blacks 'pulling themselves up by their bootstraps', and another in which transformation comes from

structural change in the political and economic organization of society. I suggest that advertising is

particularly amenable to becoming implicated in these debates because of the aspirational recognition it

attempts to offer consumers, striving to calibrate a temporal relation in which purchasing a branded

commodity participates in working to bring the future in reach of the present, thus framing the brand

and branded product as a catalyst for transformation.

In this dissertation, I have focused on examining the faith in the transformative power of advertising

within the industry itself, and the implications of this faith on processes of racialization and shaping the

imaginaries of social difference informing advertising. I have also shown how this faith co-exists with a

deep anxiety that advertising cannot deliver on its promises, and cannot control and channel the

aspiration of Black consumers in the ways it claims, examining moments at which these anxieties

become evident. However, I have also shown how there are moments in which the faith in advertising to

transform is evident amongst other sectors of society – government, the media and ordinary citizens –

and how this perceived power has led to the attribution of a high level of social responsibility to the

advertising industry. A final – and particularly effective – illustration of how this faith in the techniques

of advertising to transform moves between the advertising industry and broader society and is shaped

by this interrelationship is presented by a group of amateur photographers working in Soweto, which I

first became aware of in 2014. In his column 'Ad of the Week', appearing on the advertising industry

blogsite Marklives, ad industry veteran Oresti Patricios discusses three young men from Soweto, the

sprawling township outside of Johannesburg – Vuyo Mpanthsa, Justice Mukheli and his twin brother

Innocent. This trio started a photographic project, first on tumblr and then later on Instagram and

Facebook, which aimed to change negative perceptions of the Soweto township, and Africa more

broadly[6]. Patricios writes that the project "isn't, strictly speaking, an advertising campaign, but it has so much to teach marketers that it is worth looking at", and discusses their photographic take on Soweto as an example of changing the image of a brand, this case that of "Brand Soweto". The project involved the three young men "using themselves as models, with a quirky juxtaposition of fashion and Sowetan streets". The photos were beautifully composed and shot, and quickly developed a local and international following on social media. Recognizing the marketing potential of this project, the clothing brand Markhams quickly approached the trio to work on photographic images for the brand, hoping to appeal to the hip up-and-coming township market. What was most suggestive to me about this project of brand transformation was its title: "I see a different you". Through photographic images and the structure of the brand, the trio attempted to bring out a potential that was present but dormant, and thus to actualize a 'you' that was still 'you', but different. This seemed to perfectly capture the dynamics of the goal of aspirational recognition in advertising, and thus to suggest that examining how advertising attempts to balance these two dimensions provides insight into broader dynamics in South African society.

However, as the brand promises to transform, to actualize potential, and to bring the present into relation with the future, it hides the tensions inherent to the practices of branding, tensions that we have encountered in this dissertation. As it sells the techniques of branding as agents of transformation to broader society, some embrace this promise, while rejecting the attempts of advertising professionals to use these techniques for the purpose of profit maximization for the brands they manage. However, both those who embrace this promise and those who sell it as a fantasy must confront the instabilities that the structure of the brand elides, and the ultimate impossibility of the agency and sovereignty that the ideology of branding promises.

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[6] http://www.marklives.com/2014/02/ad-of-the-week-see-different-brand-soweto/#.UygEY5D8LbU

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