

Ironies, Others, and Afrikaners: an analysis of selected print advertisements from *DEKAT* and *Insig* (1994-2009)¹

> **Theo Sonnekus**

PhD candidate, Department of Visual Arts,
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

18119026@sun.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The widespread contention is that the major social and political changes propelled by South Africa's democratisation have sensitised some white Afrikaners to perceptions of loss and marginalisation. Their feelings of anomie and dislocation have been compounded by competing discourses of Afro-nationalism, which have delegitimised Afrikaner whiteness because of its inextricable links with apartheid. As a result, reactionary discourses have emerged to temper the threat of stigmatisation, and hinge on aspirations towards hybridisation and modernisation in the process of constructing "rehabilitated" Afrikaner identities. This article focuses on the manner in which particular discursive strategies, such as irony, are conducive to these processes of identity-work and manifest in a number of print advertisements that seem to appeal to the sensibilities of liberal, white, Afrikaans, upwardly mobile consumers. The advertisements have been obtained from two elite Afrikaans lifestyle magazines, *DEKAT* and *Insig* (*Insight*), for a period of 15 years following the collapse of the apartheid regime. The analyses of these images speculate on the extent to which they propagate a particular vision of Afrikaner whiteness, which is reconcilable with the post-apartheid landscape and an ethos of multiculturalism. This exploration, however, also critiques these emphases on non-racialism and the depoliticisation of ethnic markers such as Afrikaans as guarantees for the continued mobilisation of white Afrikaner capital (in economic and symbolic guises).

Keywords: advertising; Afrikaners; discourse; hybridity; irony; magazines; whiteness.

Introduction

A number of critical studies on the present state of Afrikaner whiteness have emerged that trace the strategies employed by white Afrikaners to assuage their feelings of disenfranchisement and alienation in the post-apartheid milieu. The authors mostly draw on discursive psychology to uncover the attitudes of some white Afrikaners concerning their identities and sense of belonging in contemporary South Africa. They variously employ formal and informal interviews, as well as analyses of readers' letters submitted to particular Afrikaans print media (see De Vries 2012; Korf & Malan 2002; Lewis 2008; Steyn 2001; Steyn 2004; Verwey & Quayle 2012; Vestergaard 2001). Many reveal that post-apartheid Afrikaner whiteness is fixated on defending ethnic particularities such as Afrikaans, but simultaneously departs from the insularity and racial exclusivity that has characterised traditional Afrikaner whiteness (Blaser & Van der Westhuizen 2012:385; Steyn 2004:83).² Historically and ideologically, the trajectory of Afrikaner nationalism centred on defining Afrikaner ethnic identity along the lines of specific ascriptive categories, which included whiteness (in other words, a European ancestry), Christianity, and most significantly, the Afrikaans language (Blaser & Van der Westhuizen 2012; Giliomee 2009; Greenfeld 2001). In post-apartheid South Africa, however, Afrikanerness navigates amongst and usurps South African and African identity, as well as racial Otherness (Giliomee 2009:664). Where necessary, the term "Afrikaner" is therefore qualified by whiteness throughout this article in order to limit the critique regarding the specific race-class matrix in which it operates.

1. This article was originally presented in seminar form at the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Pretoria in July 2014, and forms part of a larger PhD-study focused on tracing a visual genealogy of the Afrikaner imaginary. I acknowledge with thanks the suggestions made by the referees of this article, which have been incorporated where possible or appropriate. I would also like to thank Professor Lize van Robbroeck from the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University for her invaluable advice.

2. With the exception of Megan Lewis' (2008) discussion, which includes the analysis of a single advertisement for the KKNK, most of these critical views do not focus explicitly on the manner in which particular discourses surrounding post-apartheid Afrikaner whiteness appear in popular visual culture.

3. Over 110 Afrikaans advertisements, unequally distributed throughout approximately 70 issues of *DEKAT* and 90 issues of *Insig* for a period of 15 years, were identified and reduced to a purposive sample of 30 advertisements, divided and limited once more according to the specific discourses they appear to propagate. By 'following the law of diminishing returns', the collection of data is therefore considered to have reached a point of saturation once specific themes emerge and categorise the corpus (Mautnet 2008:35).

With this article, my focus is on manifestations of a new imaginary fit to reinvigorate the symbolic power of white Afrikaner elites in post-apartheid visual culture via discourses of modernisation, hybridisation and irony (Blaser & Van der Westhuizen 2012:384-385). Such strategies allow for creative rearticulations of white Afrikaner identity, which, as discussed later, fulfil reparative functions via claims to political innocence and racial inclusivity. I discuss a number of print advertisements obtained from two contemporary Afrikaans lifestyle magazines (*DEKAT* and *Insig*) from 1994 to 2009: advertisements that fixate on Afrikaner ethnicity and its modalities, such as Afrikaans, have been isolated since they are arguably illustrative of the discursive strategies mentioned above.³ This exploration therefore uncovers the complex (often unconscious) actors – economic, psychological, social and political – that govern the emergence of contemporary conceptions of Afrikaner whiteness that also possess commercial appeal.

Insig was founded by Naspers in 1987 to continue the intellectual discourses propelled by the defunct Afrikaans literary magazine, *Tydskrif vir die Letterkunde* (Magazine for Literature), and although the publication garnered commercial and critical success,

its final issue appeared in June 2007 (End of era ... 2007:[sp]). *DEKAT* is a bi-monthly glossy lifestyle magazine and primarily attracts a white audience, while a third of its total print run of 30 000 copies has been dedicated to an English issue since 2006 (*DEKAT* adverteer, 2013:[sp]). Given the class status of *DEKAT* and *Insig*'s readers, as well as the high-brow bracket that these publications occupy, the advertisers responsible for the dissemination of the images discussed in this article are aware that white Afrikaner elites can draw on their material wealth and cultural capital in order to reimagine themselves as sophisticated and modern in post-apartheid South Africa (Blaser & Van der Westhuizen, 2012:384).⁴ Yet, instead of conceiving of a monolithic white Afrikaner identity (or presuming that such aspirations are representative of an entire ethnic collective), I am speculating on the degree to which existing discourses centred on "new" white Afrikaners are visualised in the publicity realms of these particular publications, which appeal to a specific demographic of white Afrikaners: working-class white Afrikaners are, for example, arguably more concerned with the immediate threats presented by black economic empowerment and affirmative action, which take precedence over the narcissistic need of financially-secure, liberal white Afrikaners to consume and internalise images of "hip" Afrikanerness.

Magazines are not only cultural artefacts, but also cultural *texts* that provide templates for particular ways of "living", which become appropriated by their target audiences (Laden 2003:194). Selected media studies therefore corroborate that the editorial and advertising spaces of glossy magazines do not operate in isolation, but reciprocally support one another regarding their ideological goals (Benwell 2003:24; Huisman 2005:295). This can be attributed to the commercial logic at the centre of mass culture, which structures consumer media in relation to audiences that are economically mobile (Wasserman & Botma 2008:3): since advertisers provide magazines with a significant part of their revenue, they are likely to place major pressure on such publications to propagate editorial content that appeals to their target market (Huisman 2005:295). This article thus creates an understanding of the conditions that guide the complex relationship between the data (the advertisements); the identity politics of upwardly mobile, white Afrikaners; the post-apartheid state; and consumerism, or the commodification of the Afrikaans culture industry.

4. Although *Huisgenoot*, for example, is the magazine with the highest circulation in South Africa, the banality of this Afrikaans weekly has been conceived of as symptomatic of the overwhelming tawdriness that defines tabloid magazines on a global scale (Media 24 – *Huisgenoot* 2013:[sp]; Viljoen & Viljoen 2005:106). *Huisgenoot* therefore ostensibly offers less than *DEKAT* or *Insig* in terms of reflexive, postmodern conceptions of Afrikaner ethnicity and Afrikaans. *Huisgenoot* is also published together with its so-called 'sister magazines': an English counterpart, *You*, and *Drum*, a consumer magazine for black readers (Media 24 – *Huisgenoot*, 2013:[sp]).

Advertising discourse in South Africa after democratisation – an overview

South African visual culture can be conceived of as often reiterating the celebratory tones associated with the establishment of a post-apartheid state, although the

critical reflexivity of such discourses have varied significantly (Coombes 2003:1). The realm of advertising, for example, is predominantly driven by commercial concerns and often offers digestible, naïve visions of inclusivity or multiculturalism (Van Robbroeck 2004:45). The late 1990s, however, signalled a renaissance for Afrikaans advertising, which had steadily garnered international recognition, rendered English copywriting comparatively stale, and necessitated the establishment of Afrikaans-centred accolades such as the *Pendoring*-awards ('Afrikaanse reklame sprankel' 2004:7; Browne 1997:50; KKNK-veldtog ... 2006:35; Slimjan 2005). The images discussed in the following section of the article are therefore indicative of the manner in which selected Afrikaans advertisements produced from the 1990s onwards are characteristically cutting-edge and self-reflexive. The critical dimension of early, post-apartheid Afrikaans publicity is therefore antithetical to 'all those highly improbable beer-advertisements that show black and white yuppies constantly drinking to one another's health, and calling each other "brother"' (Slimjan 2005:26; translated).

The emergence of such representations can be attributed to the fact that, following the downfall of Afrikaner nationalism, Afrikaans no longer occupies a hegemonic (or sanctified) position in South African media and politics, is therefore less surveyed and apparently affords industry professionals more creative freedom. In a similar vein, there is a sense that contemporary white Afrikaners have been liberated from Afrikaner patriarchy and its zealous promotion of moral, obedient Afrikanerness (Barnard 2004; Du Pisanie 2001; Heilige koeie? Watwou! 2005:28). Others conceive of this irreverence as a continuation of the appropriation and subversion of traditional signifiers of Afrikanerdom, which provide substantial materials for postmodern conceptions of Afrikaner identity (Truscott 2011:96). It is, however, important to bear in mind that such historically dissenting moments found expression in a characteristically fraught political sphere – the tentative, intermediate space between the old regime and democratisation. Previous manifestations of irony in Afrikaner culture of the 1980s and 1990s (such as the *Voëlvry* movement and *Bitterkomix*) served to oppose Afrikaner nationalism (Angove 1992; Barnard 2004).⁵ Contemporary forms of ironised Afrikanerness, however, apparently do not endeavour to dismantle a hegemonic force; in fact, such a force no longer exists. The functions of irony that characterise the advertisements selected for this article therefore engage a specific ideological project aimed at rehabilitating, redefining and defending Afrikaner whiteness, which has been delegitimised because of its complicity with apartheid.

My rationale for analysing advertisements as a means of tracing the changing status of white Afrikanerness in post-apartheid visual culture is therefore partly based on the notion that advertising discourse effaces past conflicts or injustices, while simultaneously insisting that its ambitious tones are recognised (Bertelsen 1998:235-236). This,

5. *Bitterkomix*, 'a series of satirical underground' comic books (first published in 1992) is considered a landmark in the ideological project of stripping symbols of Afrikanerdom of their power by reducing their mythical status to ironic, often pornographic, 'outmoded kitsch' (Barnard 2004:719, 725). Similarly, musicians associated with the *Voëlvry* movement parodied the nineteenth-century meeting of slain Afrikaner hero, Piet Retief, and the Zulu king, Dingane, who ordered the execution of Retief and other *voortrekker* men (Angove 1992:40). Their cabaret, *Piekniek by Dingaan* (Picnic at Dingane's), trivialised the legacy of Retief's martyred status by lending a sense of the absurd to nationalist fixations on symbolically charged personas and events (Angove 1992:40).

however, does not imply that I am overestimating *or* underplaying the discursive power of advertising. Although advertising should not be conceived of as having a hypnotic effect, it does play an important role in acclimatising consumers to shifting social and political contexts via inter-subjective exchanges between the images and the identity-positions that these individuals occupy (Bertelsen 1998:240): in terms of identity-work, advertising therefore operates by linking specific kudos to selected commodities, which, via consumption, supposedly become emblematic of consumers themselves. I focus specifically on the extent to which post-apartheid advertisements that focus on Afrikanerness possibly satisfy yearnings for belonging, community, identity and pride amongst white Afrikaners who engage with them from a personal, anxious context in which the structures that previously guaranteed their ethnic stability have been abolished.⁶ It is important to note that although some white Afrikaners have suffered major blows regarding feelings of disenfranchisement and diaspora in the “new” South Africa, the state of white Afrikaner capital (and the class status that it affords) has remained relatively stable because of the resilience of the economic advances made under the auspices of a “white-owned” nation state. In turn, this wealth has been deployed to assert white Afrikaner identity via the symbolic power that particular cultural commodities are imbued with (Van der Waal & Robins 2011:765).

Playing devil’s advocate; or, the machinations of irony in selected post-apartheid print advertisements

For some, in the most elementary sense, ironic expression is a means of “getting away with it”. Since irony manifests in the discursive space between the explicit and the implicit it creates the impression that one is not committed to any particular polemic, but it is a gambit – a move towards exempting oneself from scrutiny via oblique speech (Hutcheon 1995:50). Irony can be critiqued as only feigning indifference, since it is always partial to a particular political position; an affinity that is often obscured by its duplicity. Advertising discourse, already permeated by artifice, can therefore be viewed as a habitable realm for ironic expression, since it already affords a degree of creative license (the realm of publicity, for example, shows little regard for political correctness and conventional linguistic rules) (Dyer 1982:159-160).

6. The broad parameters of a post-structuralist approach, however, simultaneously assume that ‘one can always have resistant readers [who view advertisements as commodities in themselves, which] can be appreciated as art [or] a story external to [their] own subjectivity’ (Huisman 2005:298).

The advertisements for the radio station, *radiosondergrense* (Radio Without Borders, or RSG) (1997) (Figures 1 and 2), illustrate the manner in which selected representations in post-apartheid visual culture are geared towards severing Afrikaans (and white Afrikaner identity) from its perceived conservatism, which has become irreconcilable with the pluralistic ethos of contemporary South Africa. At a denotative level, the

7. The blurb for Brooklax reads: *Simp-tome: Opgeblasenheid. Prekerige styfheid. (Ver)kramperigheid. Oorsaak: Afrikaanse radiostyl uit die ark uit. Aanbevole dosis: 24-uur blootstelling aan die nuwe radiosondergrense. Nieuwe-effekte sluit in oop kop, oop grense tussen mense, 'n oop Afrikaans. Nooit weer sal Afrikaanse radio so benoude-boude klink nie. Luister radiosondergrense. Lekker los. Lekker oop. Lekker lyf. / Symptoms: bloatedness, pompous stiffness, narrow-mindedness. Cause: old-fashioned Afrikaans-radio. Recommended dosage: 24-hour exposure to the new radiosondergrense. Side-effects include an open mind, open borders between people, an open Afrikaans. Never again will Afrikaans-radio sound so stifled. Listen to radiosondergrense. We're delightfully loose, open and voluptuous.*

The blurb for McChrystal's reads: *Simp-tome: (Toe)neus-in-die-lug. Traanoë weens tonnelvisie. Toe kop a.g.v. laager-itis. Oorsaak: Afrikaanse radiostyl wat probeer rock om die ossewa. Aanbevole dosis: 24-uur blootstelling aan die nuwe radiosondergrense. Nieuwe-effekte sluit in oop (kultuur)neus, oop oë (vir ander), 'n oopkop Afrikaans. Nooit weer sal Afrikaanse radio jou aan die neus lei nie. Luister na radiosondergrense. Lekker oop. Lekker vars. Lekker wysneus. / Symptoms: snootiness, tunnel-vision, congestion as a result of laager-itis. Cause: Afrikaans-radio that attempts to rock around the oxwagon. Recommended dosage: 24-hour exposure to the new radiosondergrense. Side-effects include relief from cultural stuffiness; open eyes (for appreciating others); an open-minded Afrikaans. Never again will Afrikaans-radio lead you by the nose. Listen to radiosondergrense. We're delightfully fresh, open and smartarsed.*

advertisements show two outmoded consumer products, which were household names in Afrikaner communities: Brooklax, a laxative, and McChrystal's Snuff, which are transmogrified into portable FM-radios via the addition of antennae. A closer reading, however, reveals that in conjunction with the texts that accompany them, these images pathologise an archaic form of Afrikanerness: various traits stereotypically associated with nationalist Afrikaner ethnicity, such as provinciality and separatist politics (*tonnelvisie*; *(ver)kramperigheid*; *laager-itis*), and moral superiority (*opgeblasenheid*; *prekerige styfheid*), are ironically represented as afflictions that *white* Afrikaners must recover from in order to become assimilated by the “new” South Africa (Giliomee 2009:356; Grundlingh 2001:100).⁷ The advertisements also parody the radio station itself, which (in comparison with the liberal outlook of the magazine's readers) is historically associated with pastoral, “backward”, white Afrikanerness: in 1938, following demand for coverage of the centenary celebration and re-enactment of the Great Trek (the most significant mythological narrative of Afrikaner nationalism), the so-called B-programme (later RSG, and counterpart of the English-language A-programme) was established to broadcast exclusively in Afrikaans via a short-wave service that would reach the farmlands where many white Afrikaners lived (Wigston 2007:9).

My critique therefore posits a particular reader or consumer whose psychological, political and social interests these ironies serve. Since Afrikaans and the cultural forms that surround it developed concurrently with Afrikaner nationalism, whiteness does not occupy a secondary position in relation to Afrikaans, but is constructed as synonymous and therefore on an equal footing (Van der Waal 2008:62). I do not, however, want to suggest that black Afrikaans-speakers lack the faculties to “read” the peculiar vernacular employed by these advertisements. Rather, I am concerned with the manner in which the “said” (or, rather, “unsaid”) bestows symbolic power onto a selected group or collective. As I have stated earlier, irony is an extremely suspect discursive mode, because its functions are ambiguously positive and negative regarding their potential for subversion: what appears as oppositionality necessarily involves the possibility of slippage towards complicity (Hutcheon 1995:30; Truscott 2011:98). I therefore follow the assertion that the affective range of ironic representation (in its production and reception) hinges on a fraught negotiation between cool detachment or ruthlessness, and legitimate empathy (Hutcheon 1995:37, 40, 41). Ultimately, the “pathologies” associated with Afrikaner whiteness, together with the *desire* to part with them, are evidently not equally shared by each individual reader of these images.

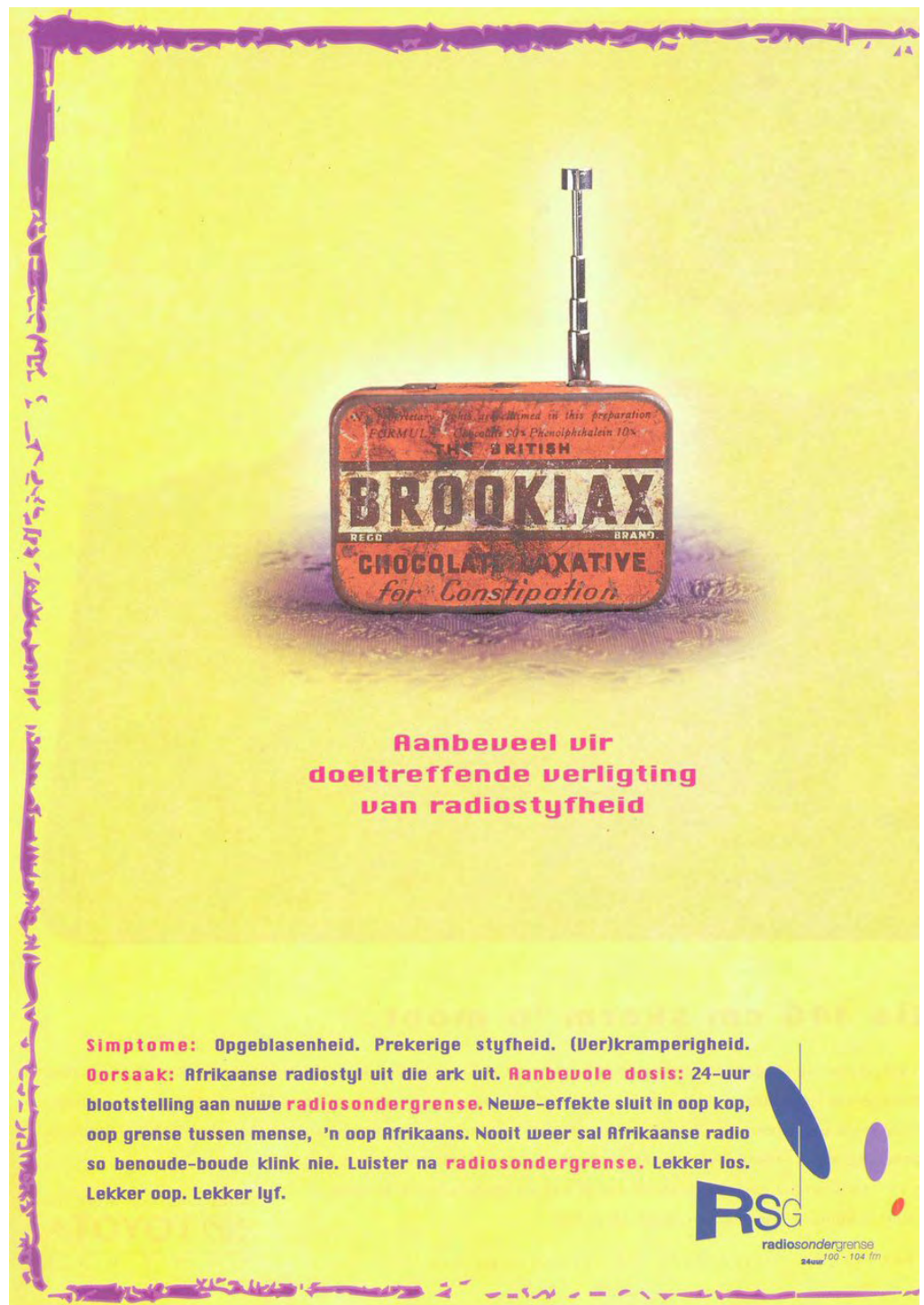


FIGURE **Nº 1**



RSG, *Aanbeveel vir doeltreffende verligting van radiostyfheid* (Recommended for the relief of radio-discomfort). Colour magazine advertisement.

(DEKAT, March 1997:93; *Insig*, September 1997:4).

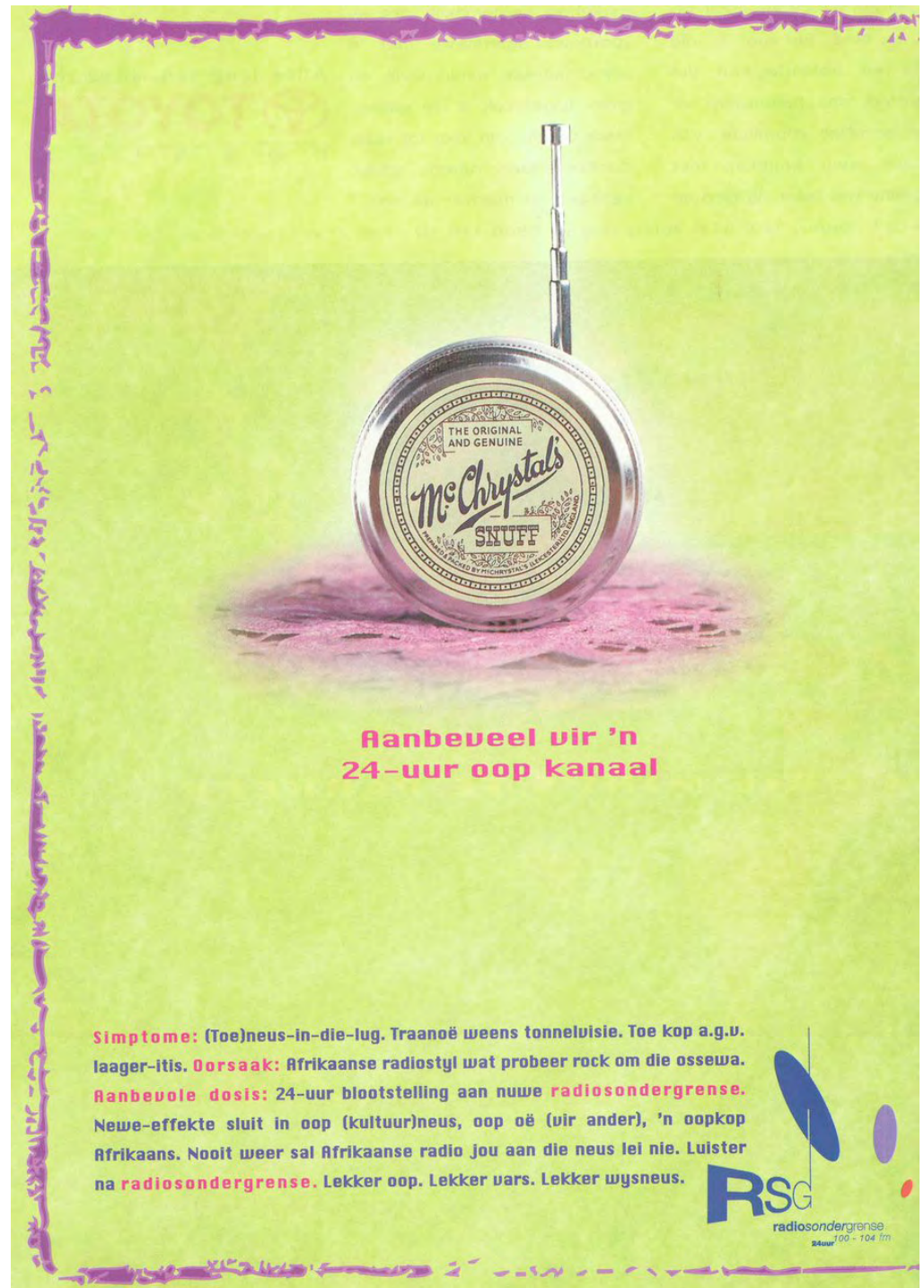


FIGURE **N^o 2**



RSG, *Aanbeveel vir 'n 24-uur oop kanaal* (Recommended for a 24-hour open channel).
Colour magazine advertisement.

(DEKAT, June 1997:113; *Insig*, August 1997:4).

By illustrating the various strategies (such as irony) by which white Afrikanerness is discursively revived in order to acclimatise to the post-apartheid landscape, I agree that instead of sustaining ‘the idea of a single break suddenly, at a given moment, dividing all discursive formations’, one must

questions [discursive tropes] as to their mode of existence, what it means to them to have come into existence, to have left traces, and perhaps to remain there, awaiting the moment when they might be of use once more; what it means to them to have appeared where and when they did – they and no others (Foucault 2002:123, 193).

Haas Das se Nuuskas (Haas Das’ Newscast), the first programme broadcast on public television in South Africa in 1976, is considered a mainstay of Afrikaner popular culture, and its beloved main characters, *Haas Das* and *Piet Muis*, are nothing less than iconic (Van der Walt & Sevenhuysen 2005). The reappearance of these personas in the 2002 advertisement for the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* (KKNK) (Figure 3) engages ironic discourse not only at the level of anachronism (the last episode of *Haas Das* aired in 1980, and the advertisement presumably appeals to middle-aged readers who share an affinity with the programme established in their youth), but also regarding the characters’ apparent modernisation: originally marked by a playful, even dandy, sophistication, their authority has been substituted with an urban aesthetic associated with hip-hop – a contemporary (now globalised, but originally African-American) youth culture predominantly centred on rap-music (Ralph 2009:142).

I am deliberately employing this advertisement to illustrate that a discursive construct, which in this case is iconographic, always forms part of a particular genealogy and therefore accesses ‘antecedent elements in relation to which it is structured [and] which it is able to reorganize and redistribute according to new relations’ (Foucault 2002:139, 140). Discursive forms therefore assume the power to “return” via material culture, such as the media, and particular institutions or stakeholders – all of which are likely to change along with, for example, political shifts. It is essential for *Haas Das* to appear “like never before” (as stated by the advertisement’s main copy), since the liberal, post-apartheid climate in which this advertisement is produced and viewed is not particularly tolerant of what could be interpreted as nostalgia for the halcyon days of Afrikaner nationalism. Contemporary discourses that fixate on Afrikanerness are therefore contingent on the particular historical, socio-political moment at which they appear, but it is not my objective to define these manifestations as *discursively* disparate. Instead, I align this article with the notion that a discursive formation emerges from a unique, regenerative body of knowledge that is asymmetrically acquired and appropriated by particular individuals (Foucault 2002:174).

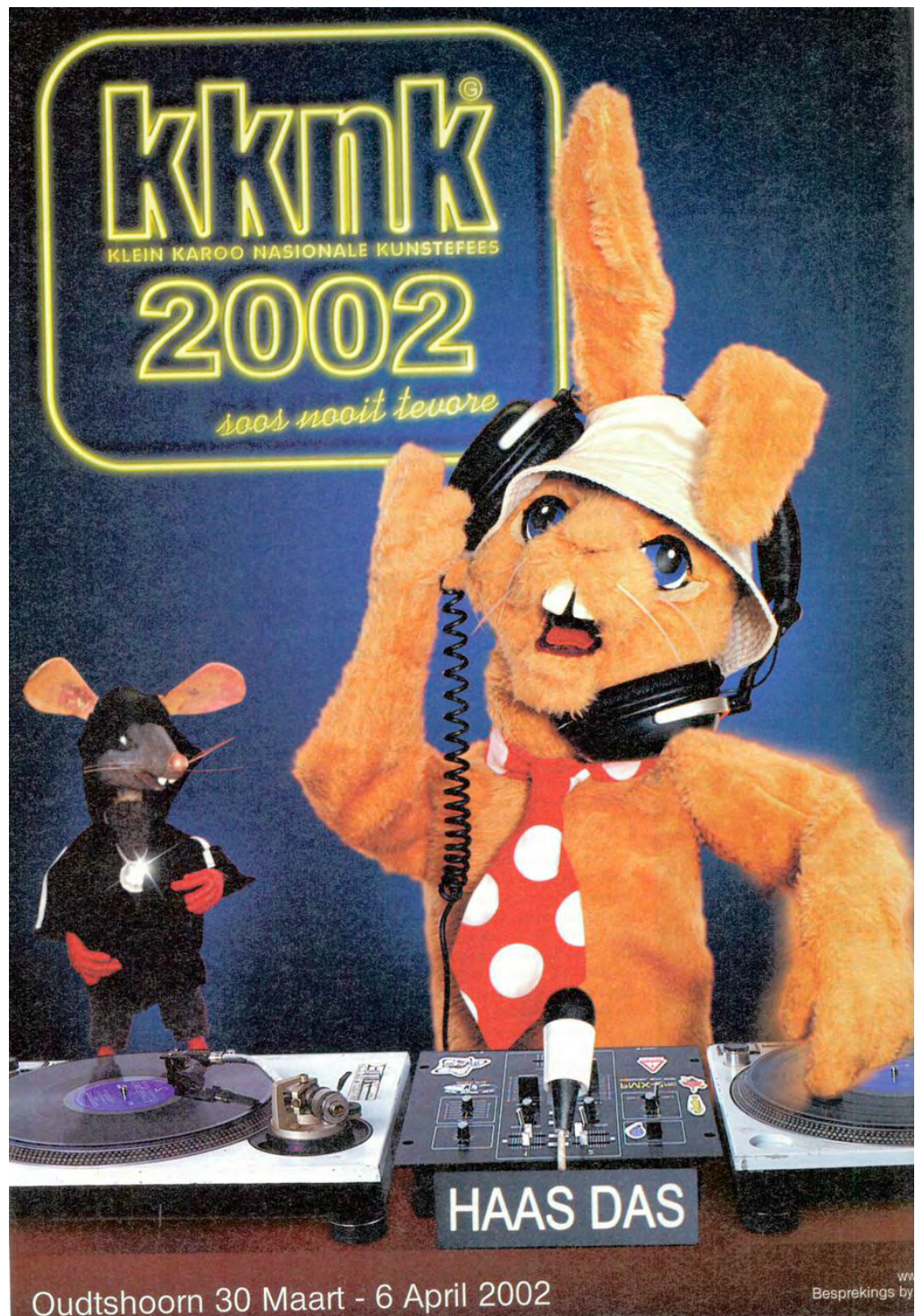


FIGURE **Nº 3**

KKNK, *Soos nooit tevore* (Like never before). Colour magazine advertisement.

(DEKAT, March/April 2002:53; *Insig*, March 2002:16).).

Viewing these advertisements as part of a reparative process that defines post-apartheid Afrikaner whiteness therefore involves acknowledging that the ironist and interpreter presumably share an “intimacy” with that which is being ironised (Hutcheon 1995:30, 40). Although discursive formations are inflected by non-discursive practices or events, regarding the ways in which they appear, they do not irrevocably change the *object* of discourse: ‘one can, on the basis of these new rules [precipitated by South Africa’s democratisation] describe and analyse phenomena of continuity, return and repetition [or] elements that reappear after [or during] a period of desuetude, oblivion, or even invalidation’ (Foucault 2002:179, 191-192). While the “alternative Afrikaners” of the 1980s, for example, fought to destabilise Afrikaner nationalism via satire, certain post-apartheid forms of discursive negotiation arguably attempt to assuage the stigmatisation of *white* Afrikanerness.

One could argue that the return of recognisable markers of Afrikaans popular culture illustrates that ‘while it is clear enough that apartheid as an ideal is dead, what, precisely, it is about this ideal and the life that it enabled that was loved and has been lost is unavowable’ (Truscott 2011:93). My critique thus finds accord with the notion that such fixations on ethnic identity (via incessant re-representation) are emblematic of a particular brand of nostalgic nationalism underscored by Afrikaner whiteness. The contemporary presence of the image of the “new” *Haas Das* exemplifies the manner in which nationalism, as a discursive force, aspires toward modernity, but never completely severs itself from the primordial. As a strategy to retain not only a sense of community, but also the collective power located in the ethnic fold, the significance of

such retroaction lies in its ability to reinscribe the past, reactivate it, relocate it [and] resignify it [while] it commits our understanding of the past, and our reinterpretation of the future, to an ethics of ‘survival’ that allows us to work through the present (Bhabha 1998:35).

The rise of Afro-nationalism has been met by some white Afrikaners with major emphases on culture and language, but this strategy is often negated as having any relation to nationalist sentiment – at the centre of this denial, is the notion that nationalist incentives are exclusively characteristic of the black majority in control of the state (Davies 2009:133; De Vries 2012:162, 172; Giliomee 2009:662; Hauptfleisch 2006:186; Kitshoff 2004; Kriel 2006:47). By equating nationalism with governance, white Afrikaners strategically employ their minority status to render their cultural aspirations apolitical, but neglect the fact that claims to power via national identity are not necessarily contingent on the state, but also manifest symbolically (Kriel 2006:53-54). The fervent promotion of Afrikaans can therefore be attributed to the



ouie Pendoring R6 000 | Studiebeurs vir Studentewenner R10 000 | Prestige-toekenning R25 000 Oorsese Studiereis | Sluitingsdatum 17 Julie 2009 | www.pendoring.co.za

FIGURE N^o 4



Pendoring, *Moenie die taal afskeep nie* (Don't neglect the language). Colour magazine advertisement.

(DEKAT, July/August 2009:45).

fact that the demoted status of the language simultaneously disempowers its speakers, because economic, cultural and political capital are not only interchangeable, but also inflected by one another (Bourdieu 2010:170, 199, 225).

In the advertisement for the *Pendoring*-awards (2009) (Figure 4), the pre-eminent Afrikaans newscaster, Riaan Cruywagen (who also provided the voice for *Haas Das*), is represented as a mere waiter, indignant and humiliated. His downfall is anchored by the main copy, *Moenie die taal afskeep nie* (Don't neglect the language), as well as the remainder of the text, *Ondersteun goeie Afrikaanse reklame en keer dat ons mooiste taal sy glans verloor* (Support outstanding Afrikaans publicity and help us preserve our most beautiful language). The irony, therefore, is not limited to Cruywagen's dislocation, but also hinges on a process of symbolisation and projection by which his effigy becomes the signifier of a socio-cultural dystopia precipitated by a moribund Afrikaans. Evidently, this resonates with the manner in which public discourses surrounding the diminished status of Afrikaans in post-apartheid South Africa (especially those propagated by traditionally Afrikaans-medium universities) often allude to the threat of the language's extinction (Van der Waal 2011:69).

Simultaneously, one can infer that the advertisement's plight extends to the *commercial* value of Afrikaans, because the potential loss of the language's vitality threatens the economic capital of white Afrikaners, which the culture industry secures via a myriad consumer media and experiences that hone in on Afrikaans as their definitive marker. In fact, the majority of the *Pendoring* advertisements sampled from *DEKAT* and *Insig* explicitly encourage advertising in Afrikaans as a means to obtain direct access to an economically powerful demographic; in other words, wealthy, white Afrikaners. The following advertisement (1999) (Figure 5) employs the symbolic currency of *boerewors*⁸ to envisage a collective Afrikaner psyche, or "brain". The advertisement also calls for a mode of material and discursive production (*Dink 'n bietjie / Think a little; or, perhaps, Think like an Afrikaner*)⁹ that will maximise the appeal of commodities by engaging particular psychological and social desires, which, evidently, is characteristic of advertising discourse in general. By presupposing an Afrikaans-centred economic mobility, the vernacular of the advertisement therefore aligns itself with the often reiterated notion that white Afrikaners increasingly assert their identities, sense of belonging and ethnic pride through acts of (cultural) consumption in an "alien" post-apartheid world (Blaser 2012:16; Giliomee 2009:662; Van der Waal & Robins 2011; Wasserman 2009:63).

Yet, the advertisement strategically effaces the racially-inflected economic discrepancies of its supposed audience via an essentialist conception of "Afrikaans-speakers": it not only appears in publications with a predominant white readership,

8. *Boerewors* is a spicy sausage that, like *biltong*, is considered an integral part of the 'archaic Afrikaner culture' that this advertisement apparently recognises for its kitsch appeal and subsequently ironises (Kitshoff 2004:79).

9. The blurb reads: *Die Afrikaanssprekende lot is die groep met die grootste besteebare inkomste in Suid-Afrika. As jy in hulle oorvloed wil deel moet jy slim speel. Nou toe. Praat mooi. Op die manier wat hulle beste verstaan. In oorspronklike Afrikaans./ Afrikaans-speakers have the most expendable income in South Africa. If you want to cash in on their wealth, you have to be clever. Come on, talk to them in the way they understand best – in authentic Afrikaans.*

Dink 'n bietjie.

Die Afrikaanssprekende lot is die groep met die grootste besteebare inkomste in Suid-Afrika.

As jy graag in hul oorfloed wil deel, moet jy slim speel.

Nou toe. Praat mooi. Op die manier wat hul beste verstaan. In oorspronklike Afrikaans.

Vir meer inligting oor Pendoring en die bevordering van Afrikaanse reklame,
gaan na www.pendoring.org.za, of skakel Emmie (011) 678 6266 of Giep (011) 726 4345.

Oopkop in Afrikaans.

lede van Pendoring: ATKV, De Kat, Kopieskrywersforum, M-Net, Nasionale Koerante, Nasionale Tydskrifte, Perskor, Radiosondergrense, Rapport

FIGURE **N^o 5**



Pendoring, *Dink 'n bietjie* (Think a little). Colour magazine advertisement.

(DEKAT, July 1999:13; *Insig*, June 1999:63).

but the economic mobility it alludes to is also primarily the forte of white Afrikaner capital, while the psychological aspirations toward a consumer-driven neo-ethnicity is a reactionary force mobilised by white Afrikaners reeling from the loss of political power (Marlin-Curiel 2001:162; Van der Waal 2008:64-65). The advertisement is indicative of the manner in which the tenacity of modern capitalism extends to the constant modification of its discourses of consumerism, since a

transformation of the conditions of existence and of the corresponding dispositions will tend to induce, directly or indirectly, a transformation of the field of production [and therefore representation], by favouring the success, within the struggle constituting the field, of the producers best able to produce the needs corresponding to the new dispositions (Bourdieu 2010:228).

These advertisements are significant for theorising that, in some instances, Afrikaner whiteness is still contingent on the promotion of a unified, economically and symbolically powerful ethnic collective: the anxiety elicited by notions of annihilation and diaspora in post-apartheid South Africa is therefore tempered by accessing an entire repository of potential symbols (such as *Haas Das* and *Cruywagen*) that can be excavated, recycled and politicised for the enduring affective and aesthetic responses they elicit from particular discursive and ethnic communities (Bennett & Bhabha 1998:38-39; Mookerjee 2011:5; Pinney 2011:193-194). At one level, as I have suggested, this is achieved through the self-protective machinations of irony, which construct varying levels of coolness that belie the presence of invested affection. For the purposes of this article, the complex functions of irony can also be viewed as embracing the tendency towards hybridisation in contemporary South African cultural politics (which vehemently promote multiculturalism).

Hybridity and assimilating Others (with ironic inflections)

10. The ATKV 'was formed in ... 1930 in response to railway workers' request for a special organization. By 1936, the organization had more than eleven thousand members and forty-six branches. With enthusiasm it embarked on a campaign for Afrikaans as a medium of communication on the railways. It was the ATKV that would organize the highly successful ox wagon trek as part of the 1938 centenary celebrations of the Great Trek' (Gilliomee 2009:402). The ATKV is still a major cultural force that endeavours to guarantee the continuing legitimacy of Afrikaans in South Africa.

The advertisement for the *Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging* (ATKV)¹⁰ (2001) (Figure 6) represents the marriage between irony and a second discursive form, which departs from the existential crisis discussed earlier and is articulated by claims to multiculturalism and inclusivity. This paradigmatic shift has been propelled by two related strands of thought surrounding Afrikaans in the post-apartheid milieu: the realisation that Afrikaans is predominantly spoken by blacks, and the supposition that selected Afrikaans-speakers, across the racial divide, are likely to be apathetic regarding the status of Afrikaans as an institutionalised, politically viable language



FIGURE N^o 6



ATKV, *Ons bedien nie slegs blanc de blanc nie* (We don't only serve blanc de blanc). Colour magazine advertisement. (*Insig*, March 2001:63).

(Van der Waal 2011:69). Since irony teeters on the edge between the stated and the unstated, claiming that the ATKV no longer exclusively serves *blanc de blanc* (a white wine, and therefore a palpable signifier of Afrikaner whiteness) ultimately confers the liberal ideals of egalitarianism onto the advertiser and the reader, but simultaneously circumvents dealing critically with the institution's racially divided past.¹¹

This advertisement is therefore an attempt at reparation: by the 1940s, white Afrikaans-speakers had positioned their variant of the language as formal and legitimate (while black variants were considered merely colloquial) – a process mobilised by Afrikaner nationalism and its agents, which included broadcasting services, the education system and cultural institutions such as the ATKV (Webb 2010:109). One must consider that the advertisement nonetheless serves the interests of white Afrikaans-speakers and their cultural institutions, since its discursive form centres on the perceived aspirations towards hybridity as a means of accessing citizenship in the liberal, pluralistic atmosphere of the post-apartheid state.

11. The blurb reads: *Die ATKV is lankal nie meer oop vir slegs vir dié of dááí nie. Dis die plek vir almal wat Afrikaans smáák!* / The ATKV no longer only welcomes some. It's the place for everyone who loves Afrikaans!

My critique is therefore concerned with the manner in which blackness is conditionally incorporated by Afrikaner whiteness, not necessarily as a move toward reconciliation, but as a guarantee for its own adequacy via tokenism. In other words,

the redefinitions of claims to race and ethnicity [are subject to] a deeper unease, a fear that the engine of social transformation is no longer the aspiration to a democratic common culture. We have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialise lost time and to reclaim lost territories creates a culture of disparate “interest groups” or social movements. Here affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be *only situational and strategic*: commonality is often negotiated through the ‘contingency’ of social interests and political claims (Bhabha 1998:35; emphasis added).

The liberalism at the centre of post-apartheid ideology places increasing pressure on white Afrikanerness to define itself in ways that allow for the inclusion of Otherness (Kauffmann 2000:1096). Such aspirations towards inclusivity often involve the negotiation of ethnic identity (and related forms of cultural expression and participation) via representations that collapse the differences between individuals who occupy various class- and race-based dispositions (Illouz 2007:7). The next ATKV-advertisement (2007) (Figure 7) therefore illustrates the manner in which selected representations of Afrikanerness aim to repeal the ‘symbolic inequality between those who possess many ethnic traits and those who possess (or *subscribe* to) fewer’, which has been precipitated by the ‘ethnic drive towards differentiation’ (Kauffmann 2000:1095; emphasis added).

The folktale of Racheltjie de Beer, an heroic young girl who supposedly died protecting her brother from freezing to death and whose martyred status has occupied a central place in Afrikaner nationalist mythology, is discursively employed by this advertisement to suggest its contemporary “accessibility”. The affective response that this legend elicits, together with the capacity to identify with its heroine, is therefore propagated as being universal in appeal, and not the exclusive symbolic property of white Afrikaners (as evidenced by the advertisement’s black persona, Sophie Rapolai). Since the subjects of cultural or discursive “communities” also access feelings of unity from their shared appreciation of particular cultural artefacts (Mookherjee 2011:4), the acquisition of such knowledges is therefore *constructed* in the advertisement as an act of self-preservation. By moderating selected, originally policed, ethnic boundaries, these images are symptomatic of the manner in which discourses surrounding post-apartheid Afrikaner ethnicity position ‘symbolic appropriation ... as a kind of mystical participation in a common good of which each person has a share ... unlike material appropriation’, which involves legitimate exclusion



FIGURE **Nº 7**



ATKV, “*Racheltjie de Beer is my held ook*”. Sophie Rapolai, kinderoppasser (“*Racheltjie de Beer is my hero too*”. Sophie Rapolai, child-minder).

Colour magazine advertisement. (*Insig*, June/July 2007:17).

(Bourdieu 2010:224-225). Yet, the discursive inclusion of black Others in Afrikaner “culture” is contradictory to the racial segregation and class-based inequalities at Afrikaans arts festivals such as the KKNK: here, black subjects are likely to appear as performers and staff, rather than participants (except at selected, peripheral events beyond the festival’s main circuit) (Haupt 2006:25; Hauptfleisch 2006:187, 195; Kitshoff 2004; Lewis 2008; Van der Waal 2011:67).

Conclusion

My critique aligns itself with the contention that a genuinely democratised cultural sphere is possible only when discourses surrounding Afrikanerness acknowledge the various class- and race-based dispositions that either impede or facilitate the consumption of and, therefore, participation in mainstream Afrikaans culture (Marlin-Curiel 2001:164). In other words,

“[s]incerity” (which is one of the preconditions of symbolic efficacy) is only possible – and real – in the case of perfect immediate harmony between the expectations inscribed in the position occupied ... and the dispositions of the occupant; it is the privilege of those who, guided by their ‘sense of place’, have found their natural site in the field of [cultural consumption and] production (Bourdieu 2010:237).

As I have illustrated, such discrepancies are variables in the drive toward establishing a post-apartheid Afrikaner identity via selected accoutrements of “modern Afrikaans culture”, which are consumed less for material value than for the affective and psychological sentiments with which they are imbued. Such kudos (which hinge on multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism or sophistication) are not uniformly desirable, but depend on one’s position in relation to South Africa’s socio-political climate and associated feelings of marginalisation, alienation and, even, nationalist nostalgia. The connections that these discursive structures attempt to foster with the post-apartheid realm are therefore narcissistic rather than benevolent (Ballantine 2004:112), given that they operate in the service of Afrikaner *whiteness* and therefore attempt to salvage (at least some) of the power and ethnic stability compromised by South Africa’s democratisation.

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