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SPECIAL FEATURE

The "Shop Girl" and White Nationalism: White Working-class Women and Femininity in Johannesburg Department Stores, 1930s–1970s

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Abstract

Based on media stories and union campaigns, this paper tracks the discourses from the 1930s to the 1970s around the 'shop girl' in Johannesburg. It argues that the shop girl was a figure of white femininity that complicates the now extensive literature on white women in South Africa through its reproduction of the enduring tension of class difference. Through archival research and interviews, the paper shows how the 'shop girl' contributed to an ideology of white nationalism, focused more traditionally around motherhood and domesticity. The embodied labor of white women workers in Johannesburg both relied on their femininity and ensured that the affective labor of service work was a site of contradiction and contestation with white middle class women consumers. Class difference could therefore be contained within the semiotics of white nationhood through the site of consumption and retailing.

Keywords: Service work; Shop girl; Consumption; White women; Class; South Africa

Introduction

In 1957, one of the leading daily English newspapers of Johannesburg published a piece attesting to the "ordinary pairs of feet" of several white women shop assistants in the city, "who say that standing behind counters does not ruin your feet or result in loss of glamour." Pictured were the feet of Mrs. D. Havemann, who had worked for twenty-two years in shops, Mrs. M. van Vuuren, who had worked for ten years, and Miss Irene Whitcher, twenty-eight, who had been "a shop girl since she was 15." Miss Carol Richardson, "17, a newcomer to shop life" said, "'My feet are taking it well. Why shouldn't shop life be glamorous?'"[1] These testimonials offered a defense of the feminine appearance of "shop girls" against reports (from Australia) that women found the work tiring and, more worryingly, deforming. Countering perceptions of such everyday discomfort, these shop girls defended the "glamour" of shop work.

This paper tracks the discourses around the "shop girl" from the 1930s to the 1970s, which I argue was a figure of white femininity that complicates the now

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extensive literature on white women in South Africa through an enduring tension of class difference. As discussed below, "shop girls" facilitated both nationalist symbolic closure through a romanticized femininity, and they challenged this sanitized unity by reintroducing class difference. White women worked as shop assistants from the early 1900s in downtown Johannesburg shops, becoming a core workforce in these service jobs beginning in the 1920s as department stores and other chains extended to multistoried buildings with expansive selling space. By the 1930s and 1940s, white women served as officials and shop stewards of the National Union of Distributive Workers (NUDW), the first national union of commercial workers, which formed in 1937, amalgamating regional associations. By the 1950s and 1960s, the lower middle-class and working-class white women who continued to labor in the sector were more often married, and retail jobs were changing.[2]

The efforts to claim the glamour of the occupation, as we will see, intertwined in the 1960s with a defense of these workers as mothers and wives. Indeed, white womanhood discursively tied a signifying chain (femininity, motherhood, family, volk) to a South African "nation" in the colonial, segregationist, and apartheid periods, displacing class difference and locating white women within domestic relations, as daughters, wives and mothers, and by consequence, legitimating white men as political actors, as much writing attests.[3] White women's "femininity," located in the comforting realm of domesticity with the impulse to "protect their purity," thus unified whites at key moments and helped to constitute white nationalism.

I have argued elsewhere that white women's service labor in public arenas like shops worked to "familiarize" these places for a white settler public.[4] That is, white women shop assistants' femininity generated affective terrains of racialized belonging in department stores and city shopping districts, which integrated these spaces of consumption into the national imaginary of privilege, modernity, and memetic metropolitan life. This paper examines how the tensions of class, the enduring differences which the "shop girl" marked, belied an apparent transhistorical discourse of white femininity located primarily in its domesticity. In fact, the semiotics of white femininity did not only work through affirming kinship and the boundaries of an *ethnie*, as has so powerfully been shown.[5] Shop girls presented the less than ideal reality that many white women needed to work. Especially after apartheid began in 1948, when the National Party won national elections and expanded welfare, education, and employment support for whites,[6] white women shop assistants remained an ambivalent class subject, the contradictions of which media and the union alike confronted.[7]

Black women moved into frontline service jobs from the late 1960s in Johannesburg, with these very contradictions surfacing in the National Party's (unsuccessful) efforts to institute job reservation to protect white women from working alongside Black women and, as consumers, being served by Black shop assistants.[8] The contortions of refiguring working-class women discursively by the 1970s tracked changes to urban social relations, to retail capital investment, and to work organization, in ways that came to dissociate labor ideologically from spaces of consumption even as these retailing arenas continued to be critical to shifting forms of nationalism.

This paper presents the discursive turns in the figure of the "shop girl," a designation specifically used for white women shop assistants, which trace these changing relations in Johannesburg, a vibrant shopping district for the city's white residents who came

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into town to shop and to socialize.[9] White nationalism (semiotically) contained class difference among white women through reincorporating white femininity through familiar tropes, as we will see, with the shop girl as mother but also as worker.

White Femininity, the Nation, and Class

The "nation" is an ideological-political category, reifying political subjectivity and working through expunging antagonisms of race, class, and gender and incorporating opposition, but these processes are "malleable."[10] The duality of nationalism, as meaningful and subjectively experienced, and as objectivity located in trans-scalar relations in time and place, pushes us to connect discourses with their materialization in social relations.[11]

The nation is spun out through emotive sentiment, as Lauren Berlant demonstrated; it is a "site of longing and fantasy," where heterosexuality and consanguinity intertwine to affirm boundaries.[12] The nation is, of course, an illusion of unity effected through transnational concrete processes and social relations, as Manu Goswami so elegantly explained in relation to Benedict Anderson's reception.[13] These processes require ongoing reproduction of such articulations. If "white" is a "ruling category"[14] under apartheid, which both homogenized and held difference through culturalizing that difference, this paper considers how class difference shaped those processes.[15]

Briefly, South Africa was colonized by both Dutch and British settlers, constituting British colonies and Boer Republics. With the discovery of diamonds and gold in 1867 and 1886 respectively, European immigration expanded exponentially. The South African War fought between the British and the Afrikaners between 1899 and 1902 led to the unification of the country as a British dominion in 1910, under white minority rule. In the twentieth century, these divisions defined contestations of white rule, with governments shifting positions in relation to English imperial interests and differently figured Afrikaner stakes. Between 1924 and 1939, the Pact Government, a coalition of the National Party and the Labour Party sought independence from Britain. The United Party then won elections, bringing together the National Party and the South African Party of Jan Smuts, taking South Africa into war on the side of Britain, and leading to splits within the National Party. Following the war, increasing divisions led to the emergence of the Purified National Party, which won the general election in 1948 on a platform of apartheid.[16]

Throughout the decades, Afrikaner nationalism was made possible partly by deploying discourses around white women. The intertwined and reproduced sets of meanings linking Afrikaner white womanhood to purity, motherhood, domesticity, obliging femininity, family, and respectability served across decades to bolster white nationalism. The *volksmoeder* ("mother of the nation") discourse co-constituted Afrikaner nationalism, as many have shown.[17] This was a class project, as others have argued, in which the state sought to secure support and uplift white poor and working-class voters. White women were used at various moments to vividly set boundaries and the stakes of political loyalty, as with "black peril" moral panics.[18] The control of white women's heterosexuality and reproductive roles was central to apartheid legitimation.[19] Working-class white women utilized these meanings to reclaim their own politics at specific times. Yet working-class white women were also disciplined into these meanings through welfarism and middle-class white women's actions, which relied on mobilizing

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global discourses and practices of respectability and hierarchy.[20] Overall, this rich literature emphasizes the continuity of meanings around white womanhood tied to domesticity and family.[21]

While the dominant focus has been to dissect the ways that gendered meanings have co-constituted the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism, there is some work on English middle-class gendered sentiments. For instance, in the 1910s and 1920s, white English-speaking middle- and upper middle-class women redefined the "modern woman" in South Africa.[22] While many of the meanings travelled from Britain, in magazines and novels in South Africa, the modern girl and woman in contrast were active, athletic, rode horses, motored, could shoot, and travelled on their own.[23]

The "modern girl" was indeed a global figure, more formally linking women's entry into work, urbanization, and expanding consumption regimes.[24] As Lynn Thomas writes of the modern girl around the world in the 1920s and 1930s, "these figures appeared to reject the roles of dutiful daughter, wife and mother through their engagement of international commodity cultures, mass media and political discourses."[25] These meanings were globally circulated through magazines, films, novels, advertisements, and commodities.[26] Writing specifically about the use of the modern girl for discussions of respectability of African women in the 1930s in South Africa, Thomas emphasizes how feminine beauty, consumer products, and new public cultures in magazines offered new outlets to debate and recraft respectability.

Despite the developed literature analyzing the integral semiotics of gender to nation and nationalist ideology in South Africa, there has been less work on working-class white women and how class difference worked within these histories.[27] A recent and expanding literature on white workers and the white working class in South and Southern Africa emphasizes the heterogeneous positions of working-class whites, but much of this research focuses on working-class men—for instance, mineworkers—and their trade unions.[28] Writers show how particularly working-class whites were disciplined into becoming (at least discursively) productive workers.[29]

In the following sections, I consider media discourses around the femininity of the shop girl as a representation of working-class white women. The focus shifted over the decades. The centrality of motherhood in views of women shop assistants emerges only with specific campaigns of the NUDW in the late 1930s and 1940s, for instance, as a general logic to win earlier store closing times. Instead in the 1930s and 1940s, the shop girl was marked by her sexualization and as a sign of modern urban life, with the unease of changes to class formation encompassed within these representations. Class difference became absorbed into debate about extending labor rights to white workers as citizen-consumers. By the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis on the domestic importance of these women workers became a key element in their figuration. By this period, their central role as wives and mothers was intertwined with portraits of glamour and femininity, sidestepping abiding requirements to work, as if their presentability proved their respectability. By the 1970s, portrayals of white women shop assistants shifted to their professionalization, and a new Black workforce entered the frame. Class position was re-signified through upward mobility as retailing expanded to suburban shops and malls and accorded a new inclusion for white working women even as they commented on the drudgery of the job. Class difference was resolved differently and ambivalently in each period.

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The Shop Girl as Young Worker, 1930s and 1940s

Shop girls featured as a key symbol in British and American narratives of urbanization, women's labor, and the mixed pleasures of sexualized young women and their threatening independence. They represented young working women's mobility in the city, their independent income, and modern girl flair, and they were symbols of sexual allure, available because of their visibility.[30]

The global meanings of shop girl, a subspecies of the modern girl with a decidedly working-class inflection, indeed made their way to South Africa through theatre, film, and novels. In plot after plot, shop girls were working-class or lower middle-class young white women. They had to work, but often only until they found a husband. They sometimes represented smart modern girls and sometimes young women gone astray. In these aesthetic productions, they became a symbol of the blurring of moral boundaries and the (near) cause of men's downfall. Their exit from the story often marked the restoration of patriarchal and class social order. As Ledger writes of the shop girl in Victorian fiction from which the trope extended, she was "sexually suspect and socially disruptive."[31]

The shop girl as signifier circulated widely in South African media between the early 1900s and the 1940s especially, appearing in films and theatre in Johannesburg. For instance, in 1930 the film *Within the Law* played in Johannesburg with Joan Crawford as a shop girl sentenced for a crime she did not commit. Embittered while in jail, she plots revenge against the man who sent her to prison. When released, she becomes head of an underworld syndicate, and then falls in love with the son of the man who sent her off, leading to a killing, which seals her fate as tragic heroine.[32] Her working-class start opens her up to the ill-fated outcome. The Johannesburg newspaper *Rand Daily Mail* reviewed it favorably. In the newspaper, its account of the movie sat next to a contrasting feature piece on "Two Pretty Groups of Sisters" recounting the successes of the wives and daughters of several elite families in Pretoria.[33] The difference between Crawford's shop girl and the young women serving on school committees and in the yachting club, running for Provincial Council, studying French, and playing tennis must have been clear to the reader.

Such notices and reviews of film and theatre productions with shop girls featured regularly throughout the decades. In 1930, the South African actress Miss Dorice Fordred and Miss Celia Johnson played London shop girls in the London production of *Cynara*, "the story of the seduction of a young shop-girl by a married man of superior station to her."[34] In 1932, another show featured a shop girl. *Why Be Good?* played at Maxime's Bio-Café in Germiston, a mining and industrial center to the east of Johannesburg: "It is a story of a shop-girl who repels the advances of the son of the owner of a large store where she is employed. She loses her employment and blames the son. A reconciliation follows."[35] In another news article from 1934, it was noted that Miss Aileen Marson had visited South Africa in two theatre productions, including when she played "the little shop girl in 'Nine Till Six'," another story of working women and class difference.[36] In 1934, a review of the theatre production of the same *Cynara* called it a "clever study in psychology" and a "moving tragedy of a shop girl," with the English actress Phyllis Barry playing the "little shop girl" Doris

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Lea, who seduces "the good-looking and perfectly innocent barrister," and then goes back on her promise to leave him alone when his wife returns. The shop girl cannot cope with the separation and kills herself, and the affair comes out. The man and his wife are reunited due to the forgiveness and forbearance of the wife, and it ends with the "two of them sailing for South Africa" reconciled in their marriage.[37] A film from 1939, *Hold that Kiss* featured a romance between "a clerk and a shop girl, who by accident mistake each other for society figures and who try to keep up appearances."[38]

In these transnational narratives, the shop girl represented class ambivalence, where her lower-class position explained her openness to corruption or her threatening femininity in relation especially to middle-class men. White South African audiences went to these shows, and local newspapers reviewed them as gripping entertainment. The ambiguity of gendered independence of the shop girl became a common trope across the world, then.

By the 1930s many retail stores had branches throughout towns around Johannesburg. This included grand department stores, such as John Orr's and Stuttafords, as well as discount multiple-stores, like OK Bazaars. Downtown shopping was a social activity reinforced by the elegance of shops and city architecture.[39] As I describe elsewhere, "modern" retailing practices operated in South African chains by the 1930s, which standardized products, emphasized their imported status or their discount cost shown on price tags, and were offered up over the counter by an obliging service workforce. Retailers were European and Russian immigrants bringing experiences from elsewhere and required coordination and capital for importing goods.[40] White women worked in these shops in service and clerical jobs, along with white men in sales and management, and Black men as distributive workers behind the scenes, loading, packing, and delivering goods.[41]

More generally, white women entered the labor market in Johannesburg in this period, for instance, as garment workers, but shop assistants were selected from a higher-class category. They had higher education levels, spoke English, and had numeracy skills unlike proletarianizing farm daughters going into factories.[42] The class difference was a defining characteristic constituting the sector, although the women were also working class, for instance, Maureen Williams went to work in Stuttafords in the early 1930s. She grew up in an orphanage and was sent to a women's lodging house and to find a job when she was sixteen. She sewed her own clothes and emphasized the importance of presentability for the job.[43] Likewise, in 1944, Ingrid du Toit went to work for OK Bazaars fulltime when she was fifteen. She had to assist her mother with expenses as her father had died.[44] The class status of actual shop girls entailed this ambivalence entwining their working-class position with an aura of respectability from the shop: "We had to look like somebody special, you know, very special at Stuttafords, because it was a beautiful shop," explained Maureen.[45]

When public commentary propounded on actual shop girls in South Africa, it took form more narrowly than the dramatic stories of film and theatre, emphasizing this class difference between the workers and white middle-class shoppers. In direct ways, comment marked the class position of shop girls. In 1932, a letter-to-the-editor queried the working conditions of shop and office girls in the approaching winter: "Is the Johannesburg shop assistant to freeze again this winter?" The "girls were handling

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apples and oranges with red fingers," it commented. The "girl with a thin coat and a 'woollen' frock that is fifty per cent cotton" would struggle in the winter.[46] The shop girl was contrasted to the manager, warm in his duly heated office.

In a gruesome story of murder, in 1936, the newspaper carried the gory details of a shop girl killed by her presumed admirer and co-worker. A butcher's blockman, Andries Francois Marais, was convicted of murdering "a young European girl, Annie Yutar," who was a shop girl at the same branch of a butchery as him. Yutar and Marais had been seen quarrelling, and then Yutar requested a transfer to a different branch because she was afraid of Marais. Her replacement, a Miss Kuritzky, arrived and witnessed the crime. She explained to the reporter that Miss Yutar told Marais she was leaving; he challenged her and then stuck a blade through her neck: "Yutar, who was writing up the books,…had hardly finished speaking when I saw blood spurting over the counter.'" The butcher's assistant had sliced into her neck with a "chopper on which was blood, still wet" leaving a cut "seven and a half inches long, three and a half deep. The spinal cord was severed, also the jugular vein and several arteries."[47] The message was clear, the young shop assistant was killed by her spurned love-interest in this tragic scene at the butcher shop with its very tools and skills plotting melodrama, a real-life narrative reminiscent of the fictional tales of shop girls in the movies. In this case, the class predicament was sobering: the working-class girl tried to move jobs, but she was nevertheless the victim of her enraged co-worker, in an illustrative example of boundaries of white civility disturbed within working-class everyday life.

In the 1930s, concerns over white working-class depravity peaked. Politicians worried about the threat of white working-class women mixing with Blacks. The Carnegie Commission specifically addressed the "poor white problem," proposing interventions to uplift poor and working-class whites, and white women specifically, and to police the boundaries of white society.[48] As Jonathan Hyslop has explained, increasing Black urbanization and the proletarianization of rural Afrikaner whites, especially white women entering factory jobs, altered social relations in the Johannesburg region in the 1920s and 1930s. These stories of deprivation and woe with shop girls signaled another figure who potentially might trouble a boundary with respectability.

In other examples, middle-class customers commented on the work of the shop girl. Shop girls feature as attentive employees, as in 1931, when a customer tried to pass off an Australian coin for South African tender: "'Excuse me' –the shop girl calls him back. His ruse has failed. She holds up the two-shilling piece. 'Sorry, I'm afraid it's Australian.'"[49] An article from 1941 chastised South African (white) women middle-class consumers for not buying their clothes wisely, one factor being they succumbed to the "persuasive shop girl."[50] In a 1943 defense of women shoppers against an opinion that they are rude and thoughtless to shop assistants, "Manners Makythman" wrote in the letters-to-the-editor: "[T]here are hundreds of women like myself who show shop assistants every courtesy, and quite naturally, I think expect some in return." Despite wartime shortages making shop assistants' work difficult, the letter writer nevertheless chastised these women for their lack of good service: "[T]his very shortage appears to have created a peculiar lack of interest on the part of the girls in their work. It has, in fact, filled many of them

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with an off-handedness which stops very little short of rudeness."[51] A national war effort emphasizing sacrifice notwithstanding, in this view, middle-class woman should be able to expect the same standard of thoughtful service, indeed, it would contribute to maintaining the morale of the nation. Such commentary on the service of shop girls offered both acknowledgment and criticism of their role as workers in relation to a middle-class shopping public.

The shop girl appeared as a worker in the stores in these accounts. Her femininity was relayed through her naivety or her youthful ill-discipline. These narratives accorded with wider debates and campaigns by the new nationally amalgamated union, the NUDW that actively organized women workers. It emphasized the sales skills of its women members as well as their good grooming.[52] Women themselves took pride in their stock knowledge and salespersonship.[53] In 1943, the NUDW mobilized a historic strike in OK Bazaars and its subsidiaries around conditions and wages. It won the strike, which resulted in the union being recognized. It gained limits to arbitrary overtime hours, wage increases and annual leave, organizing facilities, and fair procedure for grievances. This agreement was extended by arbitration award to apply to the other major retail companies, and became a watershed moment in the sector, with the union not striking again.[54]

The NUDW pursued its campaigns to equalize shop workers with other segments of white labour at the time. For instance, it campaigned to limit store trading hours, which defined working hours.[55] In the 1930s and 1940s these efforts took the shape of defending shop workers as members of the white working class, deserving of labor rights, particularly around working time, as was being won in other sectors.[56] Retail workers labored longer hours than many, and the NUDW argued for earlier store closing to limit working hours. By this period, its logic drew on the need to protect white women, its workforce. Thus, in one "14 Point" memorandum in 1937, campaigning for Friday night closing in Durban, it noted as its second point that "The majority of shop assistants are young women, the future mothers of the nation." Point 3 began with "Many of these young women live in the outer areas and have to go home in the dark."[57]

These campaigns had a context. In 1934, the Purified National Party (GNP, or Gesuiverde Nasionale Party) won seats in Parliament using a right-wing populism, stoking fears around the threat to white women from Black men at work or in slum housing. National debate focused on prohibiting "mixed marriages." Protecting white working-class women was a political discourse to sway white voters.[58] While NUDW officials did not support the Afrikaner nationalists and notably did not use "black peril" language, the union drew on sentiment that had become pervasive in this period to garner support for Friday night closing. White women and their "purity" was an easily recognizable signifier.

Yet I argue elsewhere that NUDW arguments were more developed in other directions in this period.[59] The union emphasized repeatedly the dual role of shop assistants. They were both workers and members of the white public. It claimed for shop workers the benefits of leisure and family life, like other (white) workers. Thus, in 1942, to the Transvaal Shop Hours Commission, the union framed Saturday afternoons, when Transvaal shop assistants were on duty, as by contrast, "the official half-holiday for the workers of South Africa," explaining with a flourish that "The result is

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that whilst practically all the other workers in different industries and occupations are off on a Saturday afternoon, their wives, friends and relatives in shops are off on a Wednesday afternoon, and can never enjoy the half holiday together."[60] It campaigned for Saturday afternoon store closing to enable the shop assistant too to spend the "week-end outing in the country" with her friends, instead "she is compelled to work." I suggest, then, that while the union made use of prevailing discourses around femininity and vulnerability of women shop assistants, in this period it mobilized a white public to support shop workers, including its women membership, as white labor deserving of leisure and family time like others. The union proclaimed:

> After all, who is the public? The mothers, fathers, brothers, friends and relatives of the shop assistants who would welcome the change so that they can spend their half-holidays together. Today the position exists where the husband, refreshed by an afternoon's outing comes home in the best of humour and is ready to enjoy a Saturday night's bioscope or any other means of entertainment. The wife, exhausted after a day's rush in some store, is too tired to enjoy such entertainment and too ill-spirited to be much of a companion to her husband. The same discord is struck on a Sunday morning, when often the wife is too tired and busy to accompany her husband to Church. If she had the Saturday afternoon in which to do her housework, she would then be free on a Sunday.[61]

The NUDW used the discourses of femininity around domesticity and white women's roles as wives, but importantly, it integrated these meanings with an understanding of them being workers, and with a claim to a respectability that offered a rounded routine to white workers in the context of wider struggles to improve working conditions and defend white workers as worthy citizens.[62]

In these first decades, media and union commentary offered warnings and rules of white belonging for working-class and lower middle-class shop girls. Their youth and sexualization figured to energize a growing urban space in which downtown Johannesburg was defined by its worldly modern shops and service encounters. Ultimately, class difference was folded into union demands for improvements in white labor conditions and gender subsumed within the race-class formation of families and communities, particularly in the immediate post-World War II period.

As we can see, shop girls were by this time often married, and certainly by the 1950s, marriage was common. In the 1950s and 1960s efforts to connect class and femininity became more narrowly focused on reassuring an audience of the respectability of the job and its compatibility with family-duties, even as these white women worked.

The Shop Girl and A Question of Glamour, the 1950s and 1960s

In 1954, an editorial bemoaned the addition of leather straps hanging from railway coaches on suburban tram lines in Johannesburg, designed for passengers who had to stand. It used the figure of the shop girl to represent the passenger: "No doubt the tired typist or shop girl is glad of the innovation," but the commentator found it "depressing," a sign of declining services, which in the past would have provided

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all (white) passengers with a seat. Now, "Who cares? We are only the public."[63] Here, the shop girl was a member of the white public, unaware of changing standards of service perhaps because of her inexperience, but firmly included in the public as commuter. By the 1950s, the white shop girl was regularized as part of the workforce but the discomfit of women needing to work extended through other commentary.

In December 1956, a columnist asked "What do you think about the temporary shopgirls who have just matriculated or are working their way through a university?" The reporter went shopping and found "people –women, of course, if you can class women as people – talking about the rush-season assistants," debating "the young ladies behind the counters." Some customers felt that they were "Very good, even when wearing blazers: Much more polite than the regulars" while others argued that they were "Not very pleasant because they were apt to say 'Don't think I'm a common shop-girl—I'm just filling in time on vac. from Wits'!"[64] The columnist suggested that the "girls who have been wearing their blazers" should rather "hang them up in the staffroom and join the others in the camaraderie of those who work all the year round."[65] The shop girl was refigured inversely as a university student, a temporary worker, standing out because of her differentiation from regular women shop assistants, proudly maintaining this distinction by wearing the university blazer. Class difference was called up, through those not needing to remain in such jobs while the shop matron appeared by shadowy implication in the background, indefinitely working out of economic necessity.

In the 1950s, women shop assistants, young and often married, continued to serve as the key workforce in downtown shops, serving white women customers. For instance, Johanna Coetzee and Becca van der Walt both worked in department stores in the 1950s. They entered the labor market initially to assist their mothers but continued working when they got married.[66] Women worked as "unqualified" assistants with gradated pay scales, and for as little as half the rate of men in the same occupation, for four years and then they earned a qualified rate of pay, still less than men's wages for the same level. The pay levels were legislated by wage determination for the sector. The union did not bargain directly with employers over pay, but presented arguments to periodic Wage Boards convened to consider changes to wages and basic conditions. Shop workers could carry their years of experience between jobs in the sector, and so sometimes moved between firms. Older women supervised younger women in this hierarchy, often meaning that on the floor younger women infrequently dealt directly with men as managers and worked mostly with other young women or young men from men's departments. Qualified women earned some seniority through their tenure of experience.[67]

The sexualization of shop girls persisted in the 1950s, as with this 1958 report of "Sabrina, top U.K. showgirl" coming to South Africa, with "her 'vital statistics'" reported: her body measurements, "42, 22, 34." She was a "shop girl in London until a 'talent scout' spotted her."[68] Shop girls' glamour and beauty centered more directly the discourse in this period, with commentary on the clothes they wore and their appearance. For instance, as retailing changed, and ready-made clothing became widely produced, in 1959, one lead asserted, "There is no longer any economic reason why the £5-a-week British shop girl can't look as chic and delectable as the Parisienne 'midinette'," the more fashionable French version of a shop girl.[69]

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The luxury spaces of some Johannesburg department stores offered an arena of privileged consumption to white women consumers where femininity was modelled. A John Orr's thumbnail advertisement in 1958 invited, "meet you at John Orr's tea lounge," and pictured a sketch of a fashionably coifed woman with a telephone to her ear, coiling its chord in her delicate finger.[70] John Orr's and other department stores had regular fashion shows for their clientele. For instance, in 1959, it advertised "Meet Miss World. Miss Penny Coelen will model the latest Sportswear in our Tea Lounge to-morrow."[71] It pictured an enchanting young woman in the most recent sporty women's wear.

The glamour of these spaces accrued to women workers, and became associated with the status of the job, especially if women worked for one of the posh department stores.[72] Yet commentary also suggested some ambivalences. In the 1957 newspaper article with which we began this paper, the reporter argued "Most South African shop-girls are happy, healthy – and glamorous. They disagree emphatically with their sisters in Australia, who are seeking a 'loss of glamour' payment because they say they suffer from 'draper's feet' an occupational hazard which gives them 'Marilyn Monroe curves in the wrong places.'"[73] Interviewing shop assistants across central Johannesburg, the reporter found that instead, the shop girls argued the work maintained their feminine figure: "'We walk and stand a lot,' said one girl, 'but if you wear sensible shoes, you need have no trouble at all. I think this work is excellent for one's figure –it keeps you fit and slim and it keeps the waistline down.'" Others reckoned it depended on how well she maintained herself: "'Sore feet depend on one's weight.' said another after much thought. 'The plumper girls say their feet hurt in hot weather but that's because of their weight and they're usually near the sweet counter.'" The article insisted that the work enhanced their femininity and attractiveness. Another shop girl said, "'Our life is as glamorous as any.'" This opulence did not affect the respectability of shop assistants, as women were married: "We meet interesting people all the time and no aspect of our work prejudices our chance of marriage. In fact, most shop-girls are married and most of them met their husbands while they were in the trade.'"[74] The article almost pleaded for a view of the work as thrilling, but contained any possibility of untoward sexualization of the shop assistants in confirming their marriage status.

The variously tenured and titled (Mrs. or Miss) shop assistants, quoted at the start of the paper, then presented their feet for proof of grace and embodied femininity (Figure 1).[75]

Questions of the status of the shop girl continued with attacks on her capacities in her job, repeating class differences with middle-class customers. A 1961 columnist, Mariette Marvin, complained about the quality of service in Johannesburg shops. She disliked having to wait and being told by the inattentive shop girl that they did not have an item:

> [S]ometimes the girl at the counter is deep in the throes of differential calculus (judging by the strained expression) and if you look at her pleadingly, she just waves you aside, and goes on with her writing. So you go to an assistant straddling two counters. She is chatting away merrily to the girl at the next counter and you interrupt a conversation about last night's film show or the failings of her cooker to be told gently but firmly that what you want is not within her sphere.[76]

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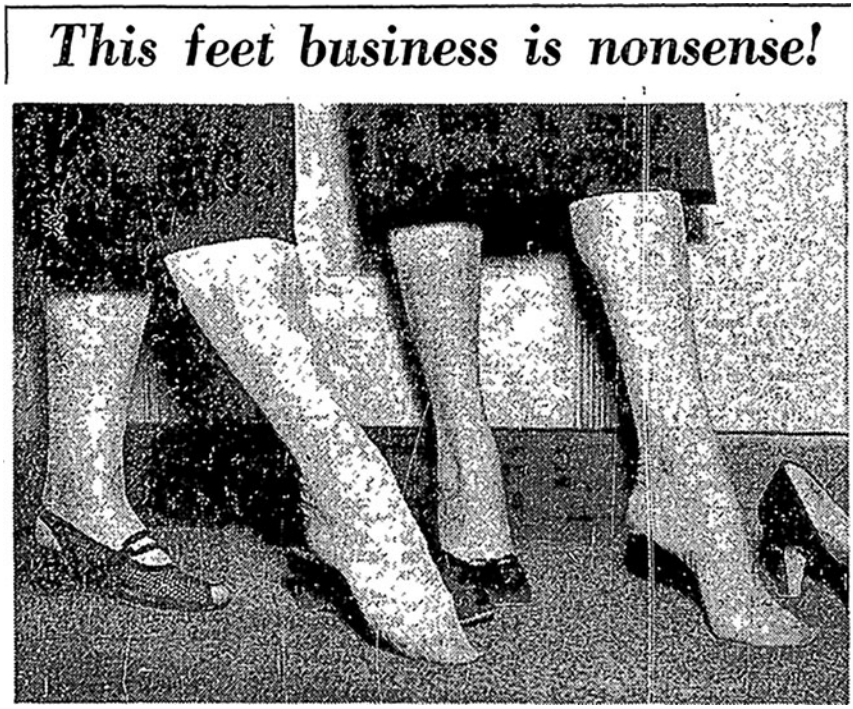


Figure 1: Shop girls' glamorous feet[77]

The columnist-as-consumer disparaged the intelligence of the shop girl, and painted her as common in her everyday pursuits.

In response to this piece, Miss L. Borkum, Assistant Secretary of the NUDW wrote in to the newspaper to contest Ms. Marvin's depiction of shop assistants: "Shop assistants may irritate some customers, but do these customers ever consider the shop assistant, who must always be courteous and smiling, although standing on her feet for eight hours a day?" Here, Miss Borkum took the middle-class Marvin to task for showing no sympathy with the plight of the shop assistant. She continued, "I think it is high time that shoppers, too, should make some effort. In our experience the customer is not always right, in fact, some are downright unreasonable, illogical and snobbish in their dealings with shop assistants. And so, before criticising these hardworking women, let the customer examine her own behaviour, and attitude to the 'girl behind the counter'."[78] Again, the tension persisted between the association of shop work with the respectability and glamour of shops—here the space defined through the consumer's expectation—and the realities of hard work.

By the early 1960s, retail restructured with capital consolidating, expanding branches, and refurbishing older branches. Self-service entered South African retailing in this period. Changes to the sector brought a reorganization of work, including deskilling of some jobs, as the skill of sales shifted to the "science" of display and design.[79] The NUDW noted unprecedented complaints by workers in the 1960s to increasing work intensity.[80]

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In 1966, an article outlined the current marketing theory to sell to women. It made clear that retailers used a desire for belonging—the very affect which middle-class consumers expended so many words to protect—instrumentally: "There are many deprived, frustrated women of all income groups who find no happiness in their marriage, no fulfilment in their home life. So they go shopping to buy friendship and flattery from the assistant. A smile soothes them. Politeness charms them. Spending money gives them power. For some women shopping is a sex compensation. So the shop must seduce the customer."[81] These spaces, which had legitimated the nation as modern and productive of privilege, became untrustworthy. Indeed, a shift in consumer psychology happened globally in the 1960s.[82] South African retailers followed these trends, aimed at women consumers. The 1966 article continued, "When a plain middle-aged woman askes a shop girl: 'Do you like me in this coat?' and the girl replies, perhaps untruthfully: 'Oh, yes, madam, you look marvellous', the customer believes her lie because she needs the flattery to give her confidence. It is not so much the service, but the personal interest, the personal friendship that so many shoppers crave."[83] The marketized affect of belonging discussed in this news article portended a disjuncture between shop assistant and customer in that shopping relationship. In the 1960s, it signaled changes to service work where the business of selling demanded the shop girl generate affective responses to longing and desire while these feelings became suspected as increasingly inauthentic.

Still, in the 1960s, the economy grew at unprecedent rates, and retailing expanded. Credit extended to whites in new forms and shopping became a central leisure activity of Johannesburg residents, so much so that National Party politicians worried that consumerism might distract its voting constituency.[84] In 1961, the commentator noted critically this increasing inclination to offer credit for any small item: "I thoroughly dislike the encouragement of what I call 'derisory' credit. Like the offer to put it down on your account when you've bought a yard of tape or a packet of pins. It's happened to me more than once in Johannesburg."[85] Ana Sousa worked in the credit department of John Orr's from the late 1960s. Her job was to run credit checks on applicants for new accounts and to investigate queries on credit statements. She said that "Most of the queries were in the clothing departments because people bought there on credit."[86] The credit accounts offered monthly payment plans.[87]

In the 1960s, retailing was changing and with it shop work was becoming less glamorous. By the late 1960s, white women had better options for employment in the public service, particularly, and Johannesburg retailers and the union complained of a white labor shortage. Retailers began to hire Black women, first colored and Indian women, and later African women.[88]

Nevertheless, the abiding tensions in the job remained in place for a new generation. Thus, Ana began working for John Orr's in the late 1960s. She left school when she was seventeen after Standard 8 (Grade 10) to work. She assisted her mother with paying rent. Her family had immigrated from Portugal when she was six. By the 1960s, immigration policy shifted away from a more restrictive version in the 1950s to encourage a range of new European immigrants who entered the new Republic of South Africa.[89] Her mother was a "housewife," taking on boarders for whom she cooked, and her father was a carpenter. She got a job as a clerical worker

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in the typing pool at John Orr's. She liked her job a lot. The status of working for the finest department store carried meaning for her. She was supervised by a credit "manageress" who was very kind to her, and a credit manager, a Mr. Sloan, who oversaw the accounts department. Even though she was young, her supervisor quickly singled her out to type her letters. In the typing pool she worked exclusively with other young women: "we were all young girls." She quit her job when her supervisor retired and she applied for her job, but the company gave it to an older woman, whom she felt was not as experienced as she was. They explained to her that she was too young to be promoted above the other young women. The hierarchies of age and gender maintained.

As a young person the rules of decorum were strict, but if observed, the young women had some freedom and fun. Ana described two close friends, Lynn, who was from Australia and a "young girl named Lesley, who used to buy these blonde wigs. She'd come in with these blonde wigs, and Lynn was very entertaining." They would spend lunch breaks together, sometimes eating something quickly in the canteen and sitting outside in the sun, and at other times, doing some shopping across the street in OK Bazaars, which was more affordable for them. Her co-workers would take boyfriends, often meeting men at the store. She already had a boyfriend and married him while she was still working there, but she said "we used to chat to the guys." These young working- and lower middle-class women had access to a space where they had some independence.

As noted, she quit the job and found another clerical job elsewhere readily. But even after she left, she would return to John Orr's to window shop. She said that while she worked there she received a ten percent discount on purchases: "I couldn't really afford any of the stuff. I would pay it off, but even so, I couldn't really afford it." When she got married, she bought her trousseau there on credit.

The very sense of belonging that produced the bifurcated role of shop girls, as workers and as customers, endured after she left employment: "I used to go there just as a visitor, to get that feeling. That nice feeling. Staff used to treat you so nicely." She elaborated,

> The service was the way they treated you. The way they treated you as a special guest, as a special person. They tried to please all your fancies…. And I was working there! Even though I was staff [they treated me that way]. The staff was treated the same….It is difficult to explain, but it made you feel you were a special person when you went to John Orr's. That's the feeling that I got.[90]

While this young immigrant woman found the job satisfying, the union nevertheless recorded changes to working time and treatment that registered as a decline in conditions. In 1968, the NUDW wrote to the department store Greaterman's complaining that women workers were "kept busy in the store, for example, attending to late customers so that they arrive home very much later than expected." It argued against these encroaching practices through explaining the effects of women workers' absence on their families: They were

> too late to attend properly to their children, who in the care of the younger ones, become overtired and irritable if they go to bed again without seeing their

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> mother, or are put to bed later than should be the case. In the case of older children, most of them receive attention from their mother whether it be assistance with homework or even a discussion of the day's events. Either the children must go to bed dissatisfied or, again, they must go to bed later than they should. One need hardly mention the dissatisfaction and consequent irritability of the husbands.[91]

This defense of shop workers as mothers, specifically, heightened in the 1960s, as conditions of work changed. The issues around working time returned as a terrain of struggle for the union, which contested retailer efforts to extend trading time again.[92] Direct appeals to the public to support the union pitted an understanding of white women workers' conditions against the needs of the consumer public. A "Mrs. I. Erasmus, shop assistant" was quoted in 1962: "Our married ladies are definitely not opening our way to work late hours. Our commitments are at home."[93] White women's allegiances as represented in the media defined them squarely within their domestic spaces in these debates.

Class differences continued to resonate, however. In a response to an editorial in the March 27, 1969, issue of the magazine *Personality*, Dulcie Hartwell, the secretary of the Wits branch of the NUDW, wrote a scathing rebuttal of editor Aida Parker's critique of her experience with a shop assistant in a "finer shop." Once again, the middle-class magazine editor detailed receiving rude service from a shop assistant when she went to buy a bra. She asked for an unusual size (34AA) and was told to go to the teenage department, to which she took offense. Hartwell defended shop workers in general, saying that one bad service encounter does not an industry make. She wrote with sarcasm joking with feminine tropes, "To emulate Aida Parker's uncontrolled outbursts directed at shop assistants in general I would be tempted to say that her mind and maturity are in keeping with her figure (34AA), but, difficult as it is to restrain myself I really do not want to reduce myself to her level of debate (much as I might wish to reduce my figure a size or two nearer hers!)." Hartwell clarified for this public that shop assistants earned the same rates of pay across stores, regardless of their grandness. She stipulated the current rates of pay, R82 a month in 1969, for a qualified shop assistant, saying they are "grossly underpaid for the service they render, especially having regard to some of the types with whom they must deal."[94] The union official countered the critique of service with chastising the commentator around the working conditions born by the shop assistant. This was an effort to appeal to an idea of white workers as belonging to the white community, which the middle-class woman had challenged.

By the 1960s, the shop girl's class status became more apparent as married women stayed longer in the job and as a new workforce of immigrant women filled the posts. Changes to the job itself marked by hard work and long hours surfaced in public comment on the character of service to middle-class white women. In these decades, white working women's respectability was upheld by maintaining the perception of feminine glamour even as the work became more taxing. The shop girl again contained the suggestion of class difference among whites even as she reproduced this tension.

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White Women Professionals, Black Women Service Workers, the 1970s

In 1973, Luella Conn was profiled as an example of women who had made it in business. She was thirty-one, and she "started out as a R70 a month shop girl dusting drawers." Now she earned "almost eight times that amount" as a buyer for the sportswear department in a "top South Africa chain store." The profile began with the plucky Ms. Conn describing how she got into retailing: "I decided to walk to town from my home in Kensington, walk into the first shop I saw and apply for a job." The story emphasized how she worked hard and endured "long hours of standing" to be made a supervisor of her department. She then worked her way up in the store from department to department to become a buyer in "gent's ties" and eventually to apply for a job as sportswear buyer in another shop. The article concluded, "This slim, lovely girl, who was Miss Durban July 1962, wears all her own merchandise. She is a top woman with a top salary and loves it."[95] The discourse of shop girl undergirded the rising professional status of white women, with her femininity returned reassuringly at the end of the piece.

Media showed white women as frontline service workers when they affirmed professional competencies in specialty stores, for instance. In 1974, as part of an advertising insert to market Hyde Park Corner, a shopping mall in an elite neighborhood of Johannesburg, on the occasion of its fifth birthday, an article interviewed shop assistants from the mall. Mrs. Rita Fitzpatrick, who immigrated to South Africa five years before was working in a "new, stylish furniture and interior design shop"; Isobel Hutchinson, from Glasgow, worked in a fashion boutique; Mrs. Marguerite Nicolatos worked in a children's dress shop; and, Mrs. Jenny Robinson, managed a trendy Perspex furniture and accessories shop. These women stressed the professionalism of their work and how much they enjoyed being friendly with the customers. Mrs. Robinson, who had previously worked in a pharmacy, made the comparison, "behind the counter in a chemist shop we are often treated as sub-human, particularly in the more wealthy areas where people are often impervious and supercilious." The ongoing tension of the job in the class difference between shop assistant and customer was mediated by these women's specialized work.

The reporter also interviewed "smiling Miss Sharon Johnson," a "coloured" woman working as a cashier in a supermarket, who said that "most customers are friendly" and she asked them to "call again," becoming friends with the regulars (Figure 2).[96]

Black women increasingly worked as shop assistants and cashiers in retail shops in Johannesburg in the 1970s.[97] This two-page spread was positioned alongside a game, "Find the best one!" which asked customers to vote for the "most courteous assistant" in its Hyde Park competition, run by the Merchants' Association of the mall. The entry form listed qualities to rank: "promptness of service, product knowledge, neat appearance, pleasant and helpful manner, and knowledge of both official languages."[98] The glamour of the shop girl was no longer a factor to ease the respectability of the posts. Instead, the basics of the job conveyed through service work marked the shop assistant. Like their counterparts in previous generations, Black women entered the labor market with higher education levels than factory workers and their parents, and they worked to help families. The job defined the work increasingly for Black women, represented by a friendly Sharon Johnson in her uniform, demurely

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● Mrs Jenny Robinson finds she is treated like a human being in her new job as store manager.

● Sharon Johnson enjoys coaxing a smile out of difficult customers.

Figure 2: A new generation of shop assistants[99]

waiting at the till. White women moved into higher status occupations, like store manager, as the article affirmed. The class difference of shop girls generating ambiguities of white womanhood could now be resolved once and for all, as Black working-class women soon dominated the workforce. Class difference of workers serving stores was re-signified and Black women's union mobilization claimed a militant class politics by the late 1970s and 1980s.

Conclusion

This paper temporalizes discourses of the shop girl as a working-class white feminine figure in South Africa from the 1930s to the 1970s. By examining media representations over these decades within changing conjunctures of retailing, city space, work organization, and union politics, the paper tracks how the class differences of working-class white women were absorbed into prevailing ideologies constituting the nation, in part because of how the uneasy tension was simultaneously maintained. The gap between shop girls as workers and middle-class white women customers was reproduced over the decades, until Black workers ruptured this coupling.

I suggest first that unlike with other representations of white women, the figure of the shop girl reproduces class difference across the decades. Second, through these popular representations we see the shifting modalities of containing the significance of this stratification: in the 1930s and 1940s, the shop girl was part of white labor contesting its inclusion; in the 1950s and 1960s, the shop girl's embodied attractiveness entangled with her status as wife and mother to hold together a respectable occupation; in the 1970s, the shop girl was promoted to manager and specialist, and working-class Black women took over as shop assistants. The tensions of gender

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and class were thus resolved in each period, yet in ways that also show the ambivalences of white nationalism to class difference, particularly in the contestations between media portraits and union public relations. The femininity of service labor was bound into notions of nationhood at critical conjunctures of South African history, particularly as shopping represented an arena of white belonging. Through the dual role of service worker and white consumer, working-class white women as shop girls encapsulated the tensions of white Johannesburg. They were required as service workers to generate affective legitimacy to apartheid city space, and yet also always embodied the labor of this service, in proximity and relation to middle-class white women, an abiding yet uncomfortable kinship of sorts.

The tropes of white femininity, framed with youth, the blush of beauty, the innocence of dependence, the glamour of appearance, the warmth of smiles, and the persistence of hard work, shifted over the decades. The expansion of consumption in the 1950s and 1960s brought cosmopolitan culture to urban South Africans, and retail labor mediated relations with the changing political public. Yet as service itself was deskilled with self-service and mass retailing, Black women's entry into retail jobs ruptured the relationship of the shop girl to nationalism. The tropes of femininity in the figure of the (white) shop girl contributed to white nationalism as ideology in South Africa precisely by holding class difference within the emotive space of consumption.

White womanhood worked symbolically because it was overdetermined in South Africa, then, where motherhood, marriage, heterosexuality, and coy feminine beauty imbricated with a global semiotics of femininity circulating widely in these decades and including the apparent dissonance of female service labor. Through their troublesome labor, the shop girl offered service to white middle-class consumers in ways that constituted arenas of consumption in downtown shops and shopping districts as spaces of white belonging. Class difference could therefore be contained within the semiotics of white nationhood.

Notes

1. "This feet business is nonsense!" *Rand Daily Mail*, June 29, 1957, p. 3.
2. Bridget Kenny, *Retail Worker Politics, Race and Consumption in South Africa: Shelved in the Service Economy* (Basingstoke, 2018), 27–59.
3. Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44 (1993): 61–80; Christi van der Westhuizen, *Sitting Pretty – White Afrikaans Women in Postapartheid South Africa* (Scottsville, South Africa, 2017); Louise Vincent, "Bread and Honour: White Working-Class Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 1 (2000): 61–78; Jonathan Hyslop, "White Working-class Women and the Invention of Apartheid: Purified Afrikaner Nationalist Agitation for Legislation Again Mixed Marriages, 1934–1939," *Journal of African History* 36 (1995): 57–81; Timothy Keegan, "Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa ca. 1912," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, 3 (2001): 459–77; Elsabe Brink, "Man-Made Women: Gender, Class and the Ideology of the Volksmoeder," in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Cherryl Walker (Cape Town, South Africa, 1990), 273–92. Marijke Du Toit, "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904–1929," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, 1 (2003): 155–76; Lou Marie Kruger, "Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the Volksmoeder Discourse of Die Boerevrou (1919–1931)," Masters dissertation, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, March 1991); Linzi Manicom, "Ruling Relations: Rethinking State and Gender in South African History," *Journal of African History* 33 (1992):

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441–65; Louise Vincent, "The Power behind the Scenes: The Afrikaner Nationalist Women's Parties, 1915 to 1931," *South African Historical Journal* 40, 1 (1999): 51–73; Isabel Hofmeyr, "'Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902–1924,'" in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, eds. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London, 1987); Irma du Plessis, "Nation, family, intimacy: The domain of the domestic in the social imaginary," *South African Review of Sociology* 42, 2 (2011): 45–65.

4. Kenny, *Retail Worker Politics*.

5. See van der Westhuizen, *Sitting Pretty* for a recent summary of this literature.

6. Dan O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948–1994* (Johannesburg, 1996); Jeremy Seekings, "'Not a single white person should be allowed to go under': Swartgevaar and the origins of South Africa's welfare state, 1924-1929," *Journal of African History* 48 (2007): 375–94; Deborah Posel, "Whiteness and power in the South African civil service: Paradoxes of the apartheid state," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 1 (1999): 99–119; Jeremy Seekings, "The National Party and the Ideology of Welfare in South Africa under Apartheid," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 46, 6 (2020): 1145–62; Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule* (Cambridge, 2020); Bridget Kenny, "To protect white men: job reservation in elevators in South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s," *Social History* 45, 4 (2020): 500–21.

7. See also Jonathan Hyslop, "Workers called white and classes called poor: The 'White Working Class' and 'Poor Whites' in Southern Africa, 1910–1994," in *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s to 1990s*, eds. Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (London and New York, 2020), 23–41.

8. Kenny, *Retail Worker Politics*, 48–50. Job reservation was a national legal provision of the 1956 Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, in which the Minister of Labour could restrict any job, occupation, or sector to employment by whites.

9. The paper uses stories in *The Rand Daily Mail*, a daily known as the "most liberal" newspaper in these decades, with a white readership particularly around Johannesburg, see Fred St. Leger, "The World Newspaper 1968–1976," *Critical Arts* 2, 2 (1981): 27–37. St. Leger (p. 28) reports that in 1976, the RDM had a circulation of 145,000 copies, mostly on the Reef, (the area extending from the west to the east of Johannesburg following the gold seam, or "reef"). The paper also relies on interviews conducted over many years with women who worked in the sector between the 1930s and the 1970s; see Kenny, *Retail Worker Politics*, and archival research.

10. Himani Bannerji *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto, 2000), 7–10.

11. Manu Goswami, "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, 4 (2002): 770–99.

12. Marita Sturken, "Feeling the Nation, Mining the Archive: Reflections on Lauren Berlant's Queen of America," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 9, 4 (2012): 353–64, 358; Lauren Berlant, *Queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on sex and citizenship* (Durham, NC, and London, 1997).

13. Goswami, "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form"; see also Gillian Hart's work of relational comparison between the United States, India, and South Africa to explain the interlinked and yet located relationships of right-wing populism and their differences in these places; Gillian Hart, "Resurgent nationalisms and populist politics in the neoliberal age," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 102, 3 (2020): 233–38.

14. Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 11.

15. Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 9; and see van der Westhuizen, *Sitting Pretty* for the culturalization of white identity in South Africa.

16. Hyslop, "White Working-class Women"; Dan O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*.

17. McClintock, "Family Feuds"; Brink, "Man-made women"; Du Toit, "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism"; Kruger, "Gender, Community and Identity"; Charl Blignaut, "Untold History with a Historiography: A Review of Scholarship on Afrikaner Women in South African History," *South African Historical Journal* 65, 4 (2013): 596–617; For an overview on the meaning of motherhood more broadly in South Africa, see Cherryl Walker, "Conceptualising motherhood in twentieth century South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 3 (1995): 417–37.

18. Hyslop, "White Working-class Women"; Lucy Valerie Graham, *State of Peril: Race and Rape in South African Literature* (Oxford, 2012).

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19. Susanne M. Klausen, *Abortion Under Apartheid: Nationalism, Sexuality, and Women's Reproductive Rights in South Africa* (Oxford and New York, 2015).
20. Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the racial logic of white vulnerability* (Berkeley, CA, 2015).
21. See van der Westhuizen, *Sitting Pretty*, for post-apartheid meanings. As van der Westhuizen argues these discourses have been reconstituted in a post-apartheid context along the axes of *ordentlikheid* and *volksmoeder* as Afrikaner middle-class white women rehabilitate their belonging on a national and global stage.
22. Isabella J. Venter, "The Modern Girl and the Lady: Negotiating Modern Womanhood in a South African Magazine, 1910–1920," *South African Historical Journal* 71, 2 (2019): 170–96; Stella Viljoen, ADAM: The First South African Men's Magazine and the Sex Appeal of the Flapper!, *South African Historical Journal* 71, 2 (2019): 197–220.
23. Venter, "The Modern Girl and the Lady," 184–87.
24. Alys Eve Weinbaum, Lynn M. Thomas, Priti Ramamurthy, Uta G. Poiger, Madeleine Yue Dong, Tani E. Barlow, eds. *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham, NC, 2008); Lynn M. Thomas, "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 461–90.
25. Thomas, "The Modern Girl," 462.
26. Thomas, "The Modern Girl," 463.
27. But see Iris Berger, *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African industry, 1900-1980* (South Bend, IN, 1992); Brink, "Man made woman"; Vincent, "Bread and Honour"; E. Brink, "'Maar 'n klomp 'factory' meide': The role of the female garment workers in the clothing industry, Afrikaner family and community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920s," in *Class, Community and Conflict: South African perspectives,* ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg, 1987).
28. Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, "Revisiting White Labourism: New Debates on Working-Class Whiteness in Twentieth-Century Southern Africa," *International Review of Social History* 66 (2021): 469–91; Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, eds., *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s to 1990s* (London and New York, 2020); Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule* (Cambridge, 2020).
29. Neil Roos, "Education, sex and leisure: Ideology, discipline and the construction of race among South African servicemen during the Second World War," *Journal of Social History* 44, 3 (Spring 2011): 811–35; Neil Roos, "Alcohol panic, social engineering and some reflections on the management of whites in early apartheid society, 1948-1960," *The Historical Journal* 58, 4 (2015): 1167–89; Bill Freund, "White people fit for a new South Africa? State planning, policy and social response in the parastatal cities of the Vaal, 1940–1990," in *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s to 1990s*, eds. Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (London and New York, 2020), 78–96.
30. Lise Shapiro Sanders, *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Columbus, OH, 2006); Catherine Driscoll, "The Life of a Shopgirl: Art and the Everyday," in *Modernist Cultural Studies* (Gainesville, FL, 2010); Pamela Cox and Annabel Hobley, *Shopgirls: The True Story of Life Behind the Counter* (London, 2014); Sally Ledger, "Gissing, the Shopgirl and the new woman," *Women: A Cultural Review* 6, 3 (1995): 263–74; Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores 1890–1940* (Urbana, IL, 1986); and see more broadly Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, 1995); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London, 1992).
31. Ledger, "Gissing, the Shopgirl and the new woman," 270.
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