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One nation, one beer: The mythology of the new South Africa in advertising

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ONE NATION, ONE BEER:
THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA IN ADVERTISING

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Sarah Britten

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination or to any other university.

_____

Sarah Britten
27 October 2005
The University of Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

Acknowledgements

Since I started on this thesis, I have worked at four jobs (one in PR, three in advertising), dated two boyfriends (one of them a professional psychic), published two novels for young adult readers, endured two car accidents (neither of them my fault), rescued two feral cats and married one husband. I have lost count of the nervous breakdowns I was convinced were immanent or the Sunday evenings I spent wracked with guilt over my failure to put in enough work on the thesis over the weekend. When I started on this project in June 1998, I was a full time student wafting about without any apparent purpose in life. Now that I am finally putting this magnum opus to bed, I find that I have turned into a corporate animal saddled with car payments and timesheets and stress over PowerPoint presentations. "Get your PhD out of the way before you get married and have kids," my elders told me. So I did, and life managed to sidetrack me anyway.

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Abstract

The New South Africa came into being on February 2, 1990, with State President F.W. de Klerk's announcement of the sweeping changes that signalled the end of white minority rule. The New South Africa immediately assumed mythical status, functioning as a structuring, legitimating narrative in the face of a history that carried with it the possibility of inter-racial conflagration. Later, another myth emerged, that of the rainbow nation, together with a latter day epic hero in the form of Nelson Mandela. Together with a third, less defined myth of the freedoms promised by the new Constitution of 1996, these constitute a mythology of the New South Africa.

Advertising played an important role in the propagation and interrogation of these myths. Campaigns for an assortment of consumer goods and services tracked momentous shifts in society, politics and culture, often with penetrating insight and incisive humour. Three campaigns, for Castle Lager (beer), Vodacom (cellular network) and Castrol (motor oil), and individual advertisements for Nando's (fast food chicken), Sales House (retail clothing) and South African Airways, are analysed. The material is approached using a hybrid methodology of a structure that draws upon Fairclough's (1989, 1995) Critical Discourse Analysis, while analysing the texts themselves using an approach most closely allied to the social semiotics of Barthes (1972). Using this approach, it can be seen, for example, how the Castle Lager 'Friendship' campaign is perhaps the most sustained articulation of the ideals embodied in the New South Africa and particularly the myth of the rainbow nation. In contrast, an analysis of the Vodacom 'Yebo Gogo' campaign reveals that even at its most dominant, the mythology of the New South Africa was being undermined by prototypical myths that would consolidate under the heading of the African renaissance.

An overview of all of the campaigns analysed in this thesis point to the existence of three types of approach to advertising the nation, namely, incantatory, novelistic and identificatory. Incantatory advertising reproduces dominant national myths without questioning them; in contrast, novelistic advertising interrogates the assumptions upon which such myths are based even if it ultimately endorses them. Identificatory advertising focuses on 'typical' examples of what constitutes South Africanness, without any attached overt ideological agenda. Incantatory advertising tends to emerge at important national anniversaries or international sporting events, while identificatory advertising became more prominent as the mythology of the New South Africa became less immediate. It is likely that advertising will continue to play a significant role in the imagining of the South African nation.

Introduction

On February 2 1990, South African State President F.W. de Klerk announced the first concrete steps toward the dismantling of apartheid. "I wish to ask all who identify yourselves with the broad aim of a New South Africa…Help us build a broad consensus about a new, realistic and democratic dispensation," he told Parliament (de Klerk, 1991: 34).

With these words, de Klerk named a new concept that would provide a structuring, legitimating narrative for the uncertain times that lay ahead. In the wake of de Klerk's announcement would arise the myth of the rainbow nation and a latter day epic hero in the form of Nelson Mandela. Together with a third, less defined myth of freedom from the Calvinist strictures that characterised official apartheid morality, and which were banished with the freedoms promised by the new Constitution of 1996, these would constitute a mythology of the New South Africa.[1]

As the history of post-apartheid South Africa unfolded, it became apparent to many observers that many of the most illuminating narratives about the new nation were being broadcast on television screens night after night, in the gaps between the news and the latest episode of *Murder She Wrote*. Campaigns for cellular networks, beer and grilled chicken amongst other advertisers tracked momentous shifts in society, politics and culture, often with penetrating insight and incisive humour.

"Advertising gave us hope, it promised us a future in which black and white could laugh at each other, and at themselves, without someone pulling out an Uzi," one journalist observed. "What these ads also suggested was that history's power-brokers were in fact willing to give over just a little of that power, that wealthy white blokes were prepared to be the butt of black jokes" (Atkinson, 1998: 1). Reflecting on the changes that South African society was undergoing in the aftermath of apartheid, the novelist Justin Cartwright wrote that advertising was, like sport, "a huge factor in the freeing of the South African mind" (1996: 87).

It was comments of this kind that led to my initial interest in the relationship between advertising and the post-apartheid nation-building project. Curiosity has evolved into an

[1] Whether or not to capitalise the "n" in "New South Africa" is a stylistic choice for which source texts offer little or no guidance (in much the same way, incidentally, as the so-called African renaissance). Given the lack of general agreement over the use of "new South Africa" vs "New South Africa", I have elected to capitalise the n throughout, in order to signify the status of the concept as the marker of a new political dispensation.

abiding fascination, which has ultimately taken the form of a strongly contextualised critical analytic history of advertising in South Africa, focusing primarily on the period between 1990 and 1998. Using the analysis of specific consumer advertising campaigns that appeared on television during this time frame, I will explore the mythology of the evolving South African nation as represented in advertising and examine how advertising has engaged with the nation-building project – with a view to gaining insight into what advertising texts can reveal about the nature of these myths themselves.

The particular fascinations of South African advertising campaigns aside, apartheid South Africa's transition to non-racial democracy is worthy of study in that it offers an exemplary instance of the radical remaking of national identity in an age when the mass media, rampant consumerism and sophisticated marketing practices dominate public discourse. One of the central assumptions of this thesis is that states require myths in order to legitimate their existence and to ensure the continued support of the citizenry, through the propagation of that sense of common identity and shared destiny that is otherwise known as nationhood.

However, the creation of a sense of an inclusive national identity in post-apartheid South Africa was rendered problematic by the fact that the racially divisive policies of the apartheid government had served to alienate South Africans of different races from each other in a profound way. Some members of these groups had spent years involved in an active campaign to overthrow the state by making the country ungovernable, and had little basis on which to feel any kind of psychological or emotional connection with those who had benefited from apartheid.

This is ultimately why the transition to democracy witnessed the emergence of what I have termed a mythology of the New South Africa: it represents an attempt to create an ideal to which everyone who lived within South Africa's borders, regardless of race, language, class or creed, could aspire. The mythology of the New South Africa, in providing a symbolic underpinning for the transition from apartheid to democracy, served a vital function: the prevention of the violent racial conflict that much of the world imagined was inevitable.

Why, however, it should be advertising of all discourses that should take upon itself the role of engaging with the nation-building project through the propagation of the mythology of the New South Africa, is a development that I will attempt to account for during the course of this study. A cursory examination of the context of South African broadcasting and cultural production in general would suggest that advertising's broad reach, high levels of exposure, accessibility and repeated exposure to audiences render it a significant cultural force in South

Africa – so much so that it would be a television campaign for a best-selling brand of beer which would come to symbolise the entire post-apartheid exercise in racial reconciliation that was at the core of the mythology of the New South Africa.

Part of the explanation for the prominence of advertising as a cultural force lies in the fact that the South African film and television industry is a small one, with relatively few local productions reaching television or cinema screens. South African television (especially comedy and drama) is dominated by foreign productions, notably those imported from the United States, with the result that, news and actuality aside, advertisements are often the only local productions to which South Africans are exposed in an evening's viewing. Lastly, the very ubiquity of advertising also inevitably impacts upon society at large.

Since advertising broadly reflects (while at the same time attempting to shape) the needs and desires of consumers, it can be argued that tracking South African advertising over the post-apartheid period will reveal deeper concerns and tendencies circulating within the society that both produced and consumed it. Of course, such an assumption leads to the question of whether advertising leads social change or reflects it, which has long been a source of debate. The position I take in this study is that advertising may achieve a combination of both, depending on circumstances. South African Breweries, for example, depicted racial interaction in its beer advertising during the 1980s partly because the company was looking to a non-racial future, and partly because the majority of the target responded positively to the new direction in communication.

In most cases, because advertisers are concerned above all with provoking a positive response from a target market, advertisements often represent the enactment or embodiment of a particular set of consumer desires. Most major advertising campaigns are the product of careful research.[2] Initial market research directs the communication strategy before a single brief is submitted to a creative team. Any creative concepts that result are often pre-tested with representatives of the target market to determine whether they will be well-received. In many cases, after the advertisement has started broadcasting on television, a random sample of consumers will be questioned as to whether they are able to recall the campaign, and how

[2] Admittedly, this is probably truer of the United States, where campaigns are researched ad nauseum, than South Africa, where the advertising industry is generally perceived to have more creative licence (and is consequently less accountable for the results it achieves). Larger South African advertisers tend to use more research than smaller advertisers, mainly because they have the budgets available to do so.

favourably they respond to it[3]. If an advertising campaign does not score well with consumers, it is likely that it will be cancelled.

It is also worth noting that because of its sensitivity to complaints from the public, advertising tends to be much more responsive to public opinion than any other form of mass cultural activity, including television, radio, cinema or theatre. In 2001, a single complaint by a member of the public was enough to have a television advertisement banned – somewhat ironically, an instance of the objections of a minority determining the ability (or lack thereof) of the majority to view an advertising campaign.[4]

Advertising and democracy

It should be clear from my introductory comments that one of the key assumptions of this thesis is that there is, in the case of South Africa, a link between advertising and the transition from a political philosophy ordered on the principle of racial segregation to a non-racial democracy. I must therefore necessarily deal with the complex issue of whether advertising can ever advance a progressive agenda. Much of twentieth century critical thought has been devoted to the mapping of ways in which the development of consumer society has entrenched capitalist hegemony, deepened inequality and reduced individual autonomy.

One of the most influential concepts is that of the "culture industry", developed by the Frankfurt School, which attempts to reproduce a passive and unquestioning public through cultural products such as films, television, popular music and other forms of entertainment. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's chapter *The culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception*, written in 1944 when mass communication, though incipient, was already making its presence felt, argues that individuals have been deceived into imagining that they are autonomous, when in fact everything has been predetermined for them. "There is nothing left for the consumer to classify. Producers have done it for him," they argue (1944, 2003: 4). In fact, they conclude, advertising has distanced individuals from themselves to the extent that the question of whether or not consumers have been duped by advertisers becomes irrelevant.

In a passage that remains relevant to a remarkable degree despite having been penned in an era when advertising was much less developed in its techniques of persuasion than it is now, they argue, "The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified

[3] In South Africa the Adtrack system is the method most commonly used to assess consumer responses to an advertising campaign. Adtrack is also used in the UK, Korean, Swedish and East African markets (www.impact.co.za)

[4] Generally, in more recent years reason appears to be prevailing more frequently in the case of Advertising Standards Authority judgments. As the (successful) respondent to many complaints, I am all too familiar with the potential for conflict in the intersection between the public and advertising.

that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odour and emotions. The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them" (1944, 2003: 4).

Such criticism has been echoed by theorists of the stature of Roland Barthes and Jürgen Habermas, as well as many contemporary critics of advertising, among them Michael Schudson, Wolfgang Haug, Robert Goldman and, latterly, Naomi Klein. Advertising has been censured for creating false needs, manipulating desires, promoting materialism at the expense of moral or spiritual values and entrenching a worldview that fails to accord with reality. The unprecedented ubiquity of branding during the 1990s and the infiltration of what advertising practitioners refer to as "commercial speech" into almost every area of life has catalysed renewed resistance to advertising, both from the political Left and Right.[5]

Based on the assessment of critical theory, then, advertising can never be a force for any kind of good. Yet one of the implications of this study is the possibility that, by engaging with contemporary political issues, advertising contributed to positive social change in post-apartheid South Africa. It is not my intention to proffer a disclaimer for advertising as a whole (and it must be noted that the majority of advertising material produced in South Africa between 1990 and 1998 did not make any particular reference to political or social change). Rather, the task here is, in part, to take note of and deconstruct those advertising campaigns which stood out in their attempts to engage with the changes – political, societal and cultural – taking place in South Africa after the demise of apartheid. Given the ever-present possibility of racial conflict and other forms of political violence during this time, it can be argued that a sense of national unity in post-apartheid South Africa was both necessary and desirable, and that consequently, the promotion of a sense of national identity must be viewed in a positive light.

Ultimately, the reasons for my relatively sympathetic approach may be traced to my relationship with the advertising industry. This study is perhaps unusual for a work that falls within the broad school of discourse analysis, in that it is written from the point of view of an insider. For much of the time that I researched and wrote this thesis, I worked in the

[5] Stuart Cunningham's (1993) study of the role of advertising in propagating an Australian national identity is one of the few examples of a relatively positive assessment of advertising's role in society.

advertising industry as a strategic planner[6] responsible for the development of communication strategies. My views on advertising are therefore tempered by my knowledge of the industry, not just as a consumer or critic on the receiving end of the finished product, but also as an individual involved in the process of producing an advertisement. Advertising campaigns are always a collaborative effort and represent, in many cases, a compromise between the determination of the client to sell more of his or her product or service, and the desire of the advertising agency to win awards for creativity. Everything from the initial creative brief to the mood of the managing director on the day of the Powerpoint presentation, will play a role in influencing the type of communication that reaches the target market (and which is subsequently analysed by academics).

Chapter outline

In this thesis, the first chapter is devoted to laying the theoretical groundwork for my analyses, exploring the links between advertising, myth and nation. By drawing on the work of Roland Barthes, George Sorel and Ernst Cassirer, I intend to demonstrate the relevance of myth and mythmaking to the maintenance of political power. Then, building on Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as imagined community, I argue that the nation is a psychological entity (as opposed to the political entity that is the state). I investigate advertising's ability to generate meaning before accounting for the ways in which myth has been appropriated, quite explicitly, by the advertising industry. It is in the phenomenon of "cult brands" that the power of material goods to produce meaning – or, more correctly, the tendency for consumers to endow the goods they use with significance - is ably demonstrated. Crucially, cult brands also demonstrate the difficulty of controlling the meaning that those goods produce, as fanatically devoted consumers wrest power from the companies that produce them.

Advertising cannot be considered in isolation from the broadcasting system that it plays such a central role in funding; indeed, Ernest Gellner has argued that centralised broadcasting communications is itself an embodiment of the nation (1983: 127). Importantly, broadcasting of national events allows the community to be "imagined". In the United States and Australia, advertising has sought, again and again, to propagate various versions of national identity; cultural intimacy, a phenomenon defined by Michael Herzfeld (1998), is one important way in which advertising invites viewers to identify with a particular understanding of what it is to be American, Australian or, indeed, South African. Finally, I then address the phenomenon of

[6] 'Strategic planner' is a term unique to South Africa; in the rest of the world, they are known as 'account planners'

the "brand state", where countries seek to market themselves to the global community. It is in the brand state that myth, nation and advertising are most entwined.

Chapter two addresses the methodological orientation of this thesis. Drawing on the levels of discourse and discourse analysis outlined by Fairclough (1989, 1991), I separate and examine each element of the analytic process. Fairclough renders his model as a series of three boxes, each nesting within a larger box, rather like Russian dolls. The outermost box is concerned with conditions of production and interpretation of a given text. Secondly, the middle box addresses processes of production and interpretation. The middle box contains the text, which is influenced by the surrounding boxes. In order to analyse the text properly, it is necessary to account for all three levels of discourse, noting and understanding the way in which conditions and processes of production and interpretation impact on the text – which in turn reflects on the surrounding levels.

Drawing on Fairclough's model as well as the work of Barthes, I then outline a broadly semiotic approach to the analysis of the advertising texts that are the subject of this study. As I noted above, however, my status as an advertising industry insider renders any claim to a truly objective, critical stance somewhat problematic. In addition, the "critical" nature of what might otherwise have been an exercise in Critical Discourse Analysis is further compromised by the broadly (relatively) progressive nature of the nation-building project itself and the technical difficulties associated with subjecting comic texts to classical CDA. Therefore, while my approach draws strongly upon a structure associated with CDA, it represents an instance of strongly contextualised discourse analysis rather than *Critical* Discourse Analysis.

Chapters three and four can be linked to the first and second boxes respectively in Fairclough's model. Chapter three is concerned with a socio-historical analysis of the period between 1990 and 1998. Here I trace the development of the mythology of the New South Africa, which was brought into being with an act of naming in F.W. de Klerk's speech of February 2 1990. Three major strands would emerge in the mythology of the New South Africa. These are the rainbow nation (the myth most frequently conflated with "the New South Africa", so that it is often difficult to separate them), Madiba magic and a third, less defined myth that I refer to as "new freedoms". Both the rainbow nation myth and Madiba magic were at the height of their power at the time of the Rugby World Cup final in Johannesburg in June 1995. The Rugby World Cup final stands out the single most significant event in the mythology of the New South Africa, even more so than the 1994 elections or Mandela's presidential inauguration.

It is important to remember that the changes taking place in South Africa were not only explicitly political in nature. Public culture in apartheid South Africa, adhering as it did for the most part to the dogma espoused by the Afrikaner Nationalist regime, was extremely conservative. South Africa had been defined as much by censorship as racial segregation, and political liberalisation saw the emergence into the public sphere of the gay and lesbian community as well as pornography, left-wing politics and other forms of expression previously viewed as subversive, or immoral, or both.

South Africans embraced previously unheard of freedoms in a rather self-conscious way during the 1990s, a development evident in the appearance of several pornography periodicals (most of which subsequently flopped as the novelty wore off). When the new Constitution was ratified in 1996, it was trumpeted as being the world's most advanced, one that gave South African citizens unprecedented rights and freedoms from oppression. An analysis of the mythology of the New South Africa would be incomplete without an acknowledgement of this important group of developments, which had a profound impact on society and culture.

While the New South Africa may have been held up as an example to the rest of the world for much of the 1990s, sober analysis reveals that the idea of a "new" South Africa was regarded with cynicism from its inception. Even at its apotheosis, there were distinct rumblings amongst the emerging black managerial class that racial reconciliation had been too easily dispensed with, too glib. Interestingly, the targets of such criticism were historically "liberal" and left-wing whites: liberals, though they had little political power, dominated the ranks of the economic and media elite. The much-publicised battles over appointments at the University of the Witwatersrand crystallised the debate and suggested to some observers that the emerging (and ever more affluent) black elite wished to cash in some kind of "race dividend" as payment for past group injustices. Later, charges of racism in the media and in the advertising industry would continue in much the same vein.

It should be acknowledged that the selection of a date for the demise of a concept as broad as a national myth will always be somewhat arbitrary. Given the association of the New South Africa (which of course was officially named by State President de Klerk) with political power, however, this study has settled on then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's "Two Nations" speech to parliament in May 1998. Mbeki had already selected the African Renaissance as his myth of choice in June 1996, and it marked a distinct change of direction from the inclusive tone of the New South Africa. The rainbow nation myth went into fairly rapid decline at this time (though it continues to rear its head in speeches at the opening of

international sports events and in magazine headlines), to be replaced by the African renaissance and later Brand South Africa.

Chapter four serves as a general overview of developments in the advertising industry from the late 1980s up until 2004, but, once again, focusing on the period between 1990 and 1998. That there is a firm belief in the link between advertising and national identity can be discerned in various comments from both government and members of the advertising industry. Here I will highlight the way in which the mythology of the New South Africa is explored in different television campaigns produced (with one exception) between 1990 and 1998.

An overview of the advertising industry during this time reveals a number of competing tendencies. Firstly, the depiction of friendly social interaction between blacks and whites predates the advent of the New South Africa. Large corporate advertisers were depicting racial interaction in a relaxed social context years before the New South Africa was officially declared. While non-racial advertising strategies of this kind were restricted to a few large corporations, the realisation that black South Africans were growing in importance as consumers began to grow.

After 1990, reflections of actual political change found their way onto television screens. In a 1993 advertisement for Nando's flame-grilled chicken, the Mandela myth makes its first appearance. The love affair between white South Africans and Mandela had yet to reach its zenith, but already the iconic status of Mandela is evident. Mandela, more than any other figure, embodies the New South Africa and after the first democratic elections he became a genuine cultural superstar. Such instant recognisability and universal admiration had enormous commercial value, and Mandela's image was exploited by the man himself (on behalf of his favourite causes) as well as others.

The change in power relations between blacks and whites is a theme that emerges again and again in South African advertising of this time. Castrol's 'New South Africa' and 'Double' both examine the response of conservative white South African men to the newly elevated status of their black compatriots. What emerges in many of the advertisements that engaged with political change is a distinct element of subversion. The rainbow nation in these narratives is fraught with tension, as whites are compelled to dispense with the superiority they have become so accustomed to assuming. Such a loss of power is unsettling, even traumatic for the characters in these campaigns.

As I have noted, the third component of the mythology of the New South Africa circulates primarily around issues of emancipation from the restrictive moral norms that during the apartheid era were quite literally legislated into everyday life. While this myth was never given a title as in the case of the rainbow nation or Madiba magic, it nonetheless had an enormous impact on society and culture and advertising is no exception. After the demise of apartheid and the loosening of censorship laws, the advertising industry began to push the boundaries of public morality. Many campaigns made reference to sex with varying degrees of explicitness.

In a closely related development, the increasing visibility of the gay and lesbian community was one of the most obvious indications that South Africa had changed in a profound way. Nando's, a local fast food chain, reflected the enormous changes experienced within a short space of time when it depicted a typical elderly white South African couple who are utterly oblivious of their dining companions' flagrant homosexuality in an advertisement tellingly titled 'Tailgunner'.

Overall, the analyses undertaken in chapter four demonstrate that the relationship between advertising and the mythology of the New South Africa was a complex one. Those advertising campaigns that did engage with the changing political situation often question the prevailing assumptions about the mythology of the New South Africa or anticipate, albeit unconsciously, the emerging mythology that would ultimately usurp it.

One campaign above all others is famous (or notorious) for taking the mythology of the New South Africa at face value and reproducing it faithfully. For several reasons, relating in part to the nature of the product category (the consumption of beer being inherently social) and also to the self-conferred status of South African Breweries as a company emblematic of the South African corporate sector, beer advertising is where the rainbow nation myth is seen to best advantage. For many observers, the Castle Lager Friendship campaign, analysed in chapter five, epitomised the myth of the New South Africa.

Analysis reveals how these advertisements – most notably 'Homecoming' of 1990 - create a non-racial social space by focusing on the shared commitment of (male) consumers to a particular brand of beer. Not coincidentally, the brand offers a vehicle for big business to proffer its bona fides as an appropriate arbiter of political change; in this way, it may be observed how a vigorous argument on behalf of individualism and capitalism runs throughout the Friendship campaign. In addition to three instalments of the Friendship campaign, I also analyse a campaign produced for the 1998 Soccer World Cup. Throughout its history, Castle

has been positioned as the exemplary South African brand and in this campaign the implications of the Friendship campaign are rendered quite explicitly. Finally, the brand is conflated with the nation itself: as the triumphal campaign jingle informs viewers, "One nation, one goal, one beer, one soul."

Another prominent campaign of the era, but one which takes a different approach to the subject of the New South Africa, is the enormously popular Vodacom "Yebo Gogo" campaign, the focus of chapter six. First flighted in November 1994, 'Windmills', the first advertisement in the series, represents an explicit examination of the implications of the transition to democracy of the balance of power between black and white South Africans.

Analysis reveals, however, that this advertisement is both less (and more) subversive than a cursory viewing might suggest. Neither the black nor white characters are emblematic of their race or class positions, allowing white viewers in particular to enjoy the comedy without feeling that their own attitudes and behaviour could be the subject of mockery. In fact, the black character does not so much represent the rural, previously disenfranchised poor than the emerging black cultural and economic elite. In this respect 'Windmills' both interrogates the assumptions of racial harmony embedded in the mythology of the New South Africa and anticipates the African renaissance.

Later executions in the campaign confirm the interpretation of the black character as an urbane, culturally flexible individual who in many ways embodies the ideal New South African - while the stereotyped white character continues to function as the source of comic relief. Cultural intimacy emerges as a distinct strategy here, both in the original advertisement and in an execution that takes an affectionate look at the violence and thuggery associated with rugby. Interestingly, subsequent advertisements in the Yebo Gogo campaign are – as analysis reveals – significantly less subversive than the original, returning instead to a strategy of relatively uncontroversial endorsements of the rainbow nation myth.

Sometimes it is easier to understand a phenomenon by studying its demise, and this is particularly true of the mythology of the New South Africa. From the unsustainable idealism of the rainbow nation, to the African nationalist leanings of the African renaissance, the dominant national narrative occasionally took a more pragmatic turn. In chapter seven I examine the ways in which South Africa attempted to brand itself at the turn of the millennium. Somewhat ironically, it was in the wake of the demise of the New South Africa as a dominant narrative that efforts to define a national identity were prioritised both by the

government (in the form of the International Marketing Council and South African Tourism) and in the private sector (the Proudly South African campaign).

The advent of democracy had also forced South Africa, which had been isolated from the international community during the apartheid years, to engage with the so-called global village. In the face of globalisation, a reassessment of national identity was required. As noted in chapter four, the advertising industry remains at the centre of efforts to entrench a greater sense of national unity, as the Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel himself has acknowledged. Indeed, it is now widely accepted that the advertising industry has a special responsibility to present an image of South Africans to themselves (rather than alluding to American or European identities).

At the time of writing, the myth of Brand South Africa has already slipped from prominence. The rise of African nationalism first seen with the emergence of the African renaissance myth appears to be returning under Thabo Mbeki's second term as president. How these forces will shape South African national identity, and the ways in which advertising responds to such developments, remain to be seen. Regardless of what the future brings, there can be little doubt that new national myths will continue to evolve and emerge, and that advertising will be leading the way in their creation, propagation and interrogation.

Chapter One

Always only an idea: Myth, Nation and Advertising

"THE NATION is always only an idea, and always a dangerous one," the South African literary critic and liberal intellectual Lionel Abrahams wrote in a 1998 letter to the editor of the *Sunday Independent.*

> The more we can get away from it the better, the closer to reality we approach. That is why I think that editorialising about "the collective pain of a nation" is not only presumptuous, but unhealthy. It continues an evil habit that has bedevilled the history of South Africa - the habit of overemphasising the importance and overexploiting the power of symbols. I thought the New South Africa was going to break it somewhat, become more realistic, more honest, among other things less nationalistic.
> But the admen and spin-doctors still run the show.
>
> (1998: 11)

Abrahams' comments offer a succinct assessment of the issues with which this thesis is concerned. Here he bemoans the role of symbols in national identity and notes the role of both political manipulation, and more importantly, the advertising industry. Abrahams sees only too clearly that national identity - particularly national identity as it is propagated in the mass media - relies to an ever-greater extent on the precepts honed to perfection by the advertising industry.

Advertising sells dreams; so do politicians. When FW de Klerk announced the New South Africa into being on February 2 1990, he was if nothing else offering a dream of peace, prosperity and an escape from pariah-hood to a country caught in a political cul-de-sac. If, eight years later, Thabo Mbeki's quest for an African renaissance had displaced the New South Africa in influential circles as the cause du jour, editorial references to "the nation" were no less elegiac. The nation remained a site of intense longing. It seemed both attainable and impossible, a construct - somewhat ironically - most real at sports matches and in beer advertisements. Yet Abrahams' longing for a sense of reality in the face of the desire to exploit the power of symbols is just as impossible. For, in so many ways, the New South Africa could only dwell in the realm of myth.

In 1996, the expatriate South African novelist Justin Cartwright recognised the importance of myth to an unfolding sense of nation when he argued, "The speed of history in the last few years has been breathtaking. The myths are lagging behind." (1996: 156). From its inception, the New South Africa was viewed in mythical terms. For many outside observers, post-apartheid South Africa offered a larger than life tale of the triumph of good over evil,

perseverance over hardship, and reconciliation over hatred. The testimonies of journalists witnessing Mandela's release or the first democratic election point to the considerable emotional investment they and the media they represented had made in these events. “Who wants to bugger up a fairytale?” reflected BBC correspondent Fergal Keane, responding to criticism of the awarding of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize to de Klerk along with Mandela (Bell, 2001: 3). "Just as the struggle to liberate South Africa touched on moral issues that transcended the embattled African nation, so too does its transformation resonate with universal themes," remarked the American journalist and anti-apartheid campaigner David Goodman of his visit to post-apartheid, post-honeymoon South Africa (1999: 17). Similarly, an American reviewer of Mandela’s biography concluded, "The death of white rule in South Africa and that nation's rebirth as a multiracial democracy is one of the greatest stories of the century just past" (Carpenter, 2000: 1).

This desire to view South Africa's history as some kind of grand moral fable resonating with universally meaningful themes is to be expected, for myth and nation are inextricably entwined. That nations should generate mythologies, or that myth should lay the foundation upon which nations are built, is widely if not always explicitly assumed in studies of nations and nationalism. But why should myth be of such central importance to nations? Offering an explanation, Ian Brennan, in his examination of myths of the nation, cites Malinowski, who argues that

> myth acts as a charter for the present-day social order; it supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order, and magical belief, the function of which is to strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events.
>
> (1991: 45)

But as the case of the New South Africa demonstrates, myths need not only conjure their power from the past, they may also look to the future. For myths serve nations, fundamentally, by placing a narrative framework as well as the intelligibility associated with causality onto the passage of time. Actions and events that would otherwise have appeared random and inexplicable are given significance, and conscripted to the cause of national destiny. As Barthes argued in an echo of Levi-Strauss’s definition of myth as a machine for the “suppression of time” (in Light, 1997: 20), myth paints over the contingent and the historical with a respectable veneer of eternity. Myth is thus a useful - indeed, essential - tool for any state wishing to persuade its subjects of its legitimacy.

The Realm of Myth

Myth is a word of many meanings. In the past, myth was generally understood, in the technical sense at least, as a sacred narrative "explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form" (Dundes, 1984: 1). Modern usage has expanded the understanding of myth beyond this traditional folkloric or anthropological sense, so that nowadays myth can also be any or all of “charter, recurring theme, character type, received idea, half-truth, tale or just plain lie” (Strenski, 1987: 1). As such a proliferation of meanings suggests, myth has come to be embraced by an audience beyond the strictly academic. Acknowledging this development, Lori Honko alludes to the concerns of many scholars of myth when he argues, "the use of the term myth in everyday language is from the scholarly point of view inexact" (1984: 49).

Nonetheless, since this study is concerned with the avowedly popular discourse of advertising, it is important to take note of the ways in which “myth” is understood in popular culture. Certainly, myth is no longer restricted to folklore, religion or anthropology: one is now as likely to find references to myth in the context of subjects such as Marilyn Monroe and Enron as ancient Greek mythology or Dante’s Inferno. A casual glance at an Internet search engine reveals such diverse web pages as "Twelve myths about world hunger", "Myth, stereotype and cross-gender identity in the DSM-IV" and "The myth of quantum consciousness".

As these examples suggest, myth has in many cases become something of a pejorative term, implying delusion and falsehood (Warner, 1994: xiii). Somewhat paradoxically, it is also to myth that many individuals look to provide access to profound truths about the human condition. In a book aimed at a popular readership, Rollo May suggests that myth is "a way of making sense in a senseless world. Myths are narrative patterns that give significance to our existence." (1991: 15). May likens myths to the beams in a house, which while hidden from view are the structure which holds the building together.

Not only do myths give the individual a sense of identity, they also strengthen community bonds. This is because myths address profound issues in both society and the individual. May regards myths as "narrations by which our society is unified" (1991: 20), and attributes many of the United States' social problems to its lack of myths, to what he refers as its "mythlessness" (1991: 46). Myth, in his view, is vital for the functioning of nations because it engenders a sense of community; it is "that which holds us all together" (Robertson in May, 1991: 46). Patriotism, as May sees it, is really a form of myth: support for town and nation is evidence of mythical thought. So is support for sports teams, which illustrates "the important

bonding of social interest and patriotism and other such deeply rooted attitudes towards one's society and nation" (1991:30).

For May, myths also define who is part of the community and who is not: "The outsider, the foreigner, the stranger is the one who does not share our myths, the one who steers by different stars" (1991: 45). Similarly, Marina Warner sees a role for myth in defining both ourselves and our relation to others, and in so doing imposing structure on apparent chaos. "Myths define enemies and aliens and in conjuring them up say who we are and what we want, they tell stories to impose structure and order," she argues. "Like fiction, they tell the truth even while they're making it up." (1994: 19). The world, explained by myth, becomes knowable, and thus manageable.

Distilled to their essence therefore, myths – in a modern context - are seen as narratives which possess, above all, the power of *meaning* on a level that satisfies basic psychological and social needs. Arthur Goldstuck, who is best known for chronicling South Africa's urban legends, has argued that myth is "a fable that contains deep truths about the nature of our existence, and that serves as an ideal towards which we can strive" (1994:97). Moreover, there are what Goldstuck describes as "grand myths", those that are "part of the fabric of culture and help to sustain that culture" (1994: 97). Goldstuck's understanding of myth echoes that of Bill Moyers, who observes in an interview with Joseph Campbell[7], "Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell our story and to understand our story" (1988: 5).

Thus myths, as they are popularly understood in the contemporary world, are what one might define in colloquial terms as the 'big' stories, the ones that we choose to define ourselves as individuals and as communities. They imbue the world and the protagonists in the events that shape it with significance. Whether they are propagated by means of advertising or via a sacred text, myths explicate, reassuring the actors of the worthiness of their cause, and they tend to presuppose a specific outcome - usually future prosperity or happiness or the defeat of an enemy (which nowadays can range from Osama Bin Laden to cellulite).

The ideas of Joseph Campbell are clearly evident in these and other contemporary popular notions of myth, as are the theories of Carl Jung. For the purposes of this study, however, I am chiefly interested in the work on myth of Roland Barthes, with additional contributions from the analyses of Ernst Cassirer (1946) and George Sorel (1907, 2000). Both of the latter

[7] JosephCampbell is probably the scholar who did more than any other individual to bring myth to the attention of popular culture.

have viewed myth as a phenomenon that is fundamentally ideological in nature, though from quite different perspectives. George Sorel strongly endorsed the use of myth to further the cause of Revolution; in contrast, Ernst Cassirer stands out as the most vociferous critic of those myths that arose when European fascists put Sorel's theories into practice. Neither was in any doubt about the power of myth to assist in the accomplishment of political goals.

While the work of Barthes, Cassirer and Sorel forms a basis for the understanding of myth as it is presented in this thesis, it is essential to acknowledge the major contribution to the structuralist analysis of myth represented by the anthropological work of Lévi-Strauss. Fundamental to Lévi-Strauss's understanding of myth is the argument that it is not the specific elements of individual myths that are revealing, but the relationships between them. Lévi-Strauss argues that similar structural relationships between motifs occur in different myths, from different societies and at different times, and it is the degree to which the narrative is structured that determines whether it is a myth or merely a folktale, for example.

Lévi-Strauss, in analysing large numbers of myths from a range of "prehistorical" or traditional societies, reached the conclusion that the relationships between different elements were all structured in similar ways: in fact, they revealed the very structure of the human mind. Such structures were not apparent on the surface; it was only once the myth had been broken down into its constituent parts that its deeper workings would be revealed. Lévi-Strauss's classic structural analysis of the Oedipal myth offers a concise demonstration of his technique. Initially Lévi-Strauss divides the narrative into short sections he defines as "mythemes", then classifies them so that they can be read both synchronically and diachronically. On the surface, the Oedipus myth is about killing (both of close relatives and monsters) and incest, but structuralist analysis reveals that the myth is actually concerned with the contradiction of the autochthonous as opposed to the chthonous origins of man.

The Oedipus myth, then, does not provide a solution to a particular problem, but seeks to present it in a way that allows the problem to be internalised and understood. In Levi-Strauss's words, the myth provides "a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem -- born from one or born from two? - to the derivative problem: born from different or born from the same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true" (1963: 216).

In this way, the Oedipus myth serves to endorse the structure of the universe as the culture and society that generated and reproduced the myth understood it. The analysis reveals that the Oedipus myth is concerned with the legitimation of a particular cosmology or understanding of the order of things. However, unlike more modern myths, this legitimation is never accomplished on the surface; it is only in delving into the innermost structure of the narrative that its true concerns may be revealed.

Broadly, then, Lévi-Strauss defines the role of myth as the resolution of contradiction within a society or culture and therefore the defusing of potential conflicts (Leymore, 1975: ix). Because of this, myths are able to offer an explanation both for why things are the way they are, and, crucially, why they should remain so. The South African journalist Antjie Krog, best known for her chronicling of the Truth Commission, draws on Lévi-Strauss's understanding of myth to examine white perceptions of black South Africans, perceptions that generated and reproduced the apartheid system. "A myth is a unit of imagination which makes it possible for a human being to accommodate two different worlds." she writes in *Country of my Skull*. "It reconciles the contradictions of [the inner and outer worlds] in a workable fashion and holds open the way between them…Myth makes it possible to live with what you cannot endure…The function of a myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction. The myth proves that things have always been like this, that things will never change" (1998: 190).

While Krog never acknowledges Lévi-Strauss explicitly, her observation points to the ways in which a structuralist understanding of myth can be used to analyse a contemporary political situation. However, Lévi-Strauss's own analyses are not concerned with the political in the conventional sense, since the myths that he analyses are not concerned with conflict between society and an external enemy or threat; they are concerned with conflicts *within* society. Therefore they do not address the concept of political power and cannot be viewed as ideological in the same way as the political myths cited by Cassirer or the bourgeois myth defined by Barthes. What is being legitimated is not an existing power structure, but intelligibility itself. By accounting for contradictions within culture, myths of this kind contribute to the maintenance of the constancy of the social fabric and therefore its resistance to change. Ultimately, then, myths are Lévi-Straussian "machines for the suppression of time" (Light, 1997: 20).

But how can myth be made to suppress time in historical societies, where the passage of time is marked by change in the form of recorded events? How is myth to generate and maintain the social fabric in the face of constant, measurable change? It is to the epic form that many

societies have turned in their quest for myths able to account for change. So it is that many of the most famous narratives that are traditionally regarded as "myths" are in fact epics. In literary terms, an epic is a long narrative poem which treats the deeds of a hero; such narratives usually arose in oral folk tradition and almost invariably – many centuries later - became the cornerstones of the literature of a particular nation. Examples of this development include the role of the sagas of the hero Siegfried in fomenting German nationalism or the primacy of the Kalevala in Finnish national identity. The epic form therefore is characterised by the presentation of confrontation between a particular group (usually represented by the hero, who functions as a metonym of the nation) and the external world.

If certain epics contain gods and magical beings, others are more rooted in the world of ordinary human beings. Epic heroes are almost always warriors blessed with great strength and courage and their progress in the world is predicated largely upon the violent vanquishing of enemies. The source of many of these epics is history itself, providing as it does a seemingly endless litany of battles, defeats, revenge, oppression or triumph. While epic heroes are usually individual men, they may in some cases be women (Joan of Arc, Boadicea) or entire peoples (the Serbs of eastern Europe, the Boer nation of South Africa).

As I have noted, common usage points to the fact that myth and epic have been collapsed, so that epics are almost always understood in mythical terms. Indeed, Lévi-Strauss himself argues that history is a likely successor to mythology, becoming in its own right a machine for the suppression of time. "I am not far from believing that, in our own societies, history has replaced mythology and fulfils the same function," he writes (1978: 43), "that for societies without writing and without archives the aim of mythology is to ensure that as closely as possible – complete closeness is obviously impossible – the future will remain faithful to the present and to the past."

There remains a gap, he argues, between history and mythology, though it can "probably be breached by studying histories which are conceived as not at all separated from but as a continuation of mythology" (1978: 43). Barbara Henry echoes this argument, that history may be a continuation of mythology, in a paper on the role of symbols in European political identity. She offers three distinct definitions of myth, all of which play a role in modern politics. Firstly, myth may be defined as imaginary or mythic stories whose protagonists are often historical heroes or heroines; secondly as narrative pattern and thirdly, as "an expressive medium of collective emotions and desires" (2002: 3). It is the first meaning, of myth as legendary stories containing historic heroes, and which are "bursting with emotional strength

and having a liberating effect" (2002: 4) that predominates in contemporary Europe. It is very likely that this is also the case outside of Europe, too.

The phenomenon of myth-as-epic brings to light a key problem posed by the folkloric or anthropological approach to myth for a study of the mythology of the New South Africa. As I have noted, the traditional scholarly approach to myth defines it as a sacred narrative "explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form" (Dundes, 1984: 1). This approach fails to acknowledge the possibility that myth is continually generated in the *present*, in societies that apparently qualify as "modern". According to this logic, if myth always refers to the past, then a mythology of the New South Africa cannot exist, for the past poses a very particular problem for a post-apartheid South African mythology. While the myth of the African renaissance could appeal to a glorious (and suitably mysterious) pre-colonial past, such a strategy could not be employed by those propounding the myth of the rainbow nation. The mythology of the New South Africa was always bound by the present, for it had no historical antecedents: "the past" was of no help to the racially inclusive New South Africa because it could only offer either the racial division, oppression and exploitation that had characterised the colonial era, or a return to a pre-colonial Africa free of white settlers.

This question, of whether or not myth is generated in modern societies, is not one that is best addressed by the theories of Lévi-Strauss, who understands myth as a phenomenon outside of the historical and explicitly ideological. In contrast to these structuralist analyses, but in some ways building on them, is the social semiotic approach of Roland Barthes. Barthes, in his seminal work *Mythologies*, first published in English in 1972, defines myth as a language which operates as an instrument of ideology in modern society. Like Lévi-Strauss, Barthes uses concepts first defined in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure on structural linguistics, understanding myth as a language built upon the Saussurian triad of signifier, signified and sign. As Barthes conceives it, myth is a second order semiological system, one that shifts the signified/sign conjunction laterally because it produces meaning from a pre-existing sign that already consists of a signifier and a signified. Therefore myth is "metalanguage", a language in which one speaks about language (1972, 2000: 115).

Despite some similarities, the work of Lévi-Strauss and Barthes differs in important ways. If Lévi-Strauss is concerned with analysing large numbers of myths in order to reveal the structure of the human mind, Barthes is interested in individual examples that reveal a specific ideological agenda. Myth in the work of Lévi-Strauss, as we have seen, does not address questions of political power, while Barthes' conception of myth is explicitly related to

notions of political, social and cultural power. Lévi-Strauss explores myth in pre-modern societies, while Barthes acknowledges the ongoing generation of myth in contemporary culture. Barthes himself acknowledges that initially he used the word myth in its more traditional, anthropological sense; later his work became an attempt to "define contemporary myth in methodical fashion" (1972, 2000: 11). As he explains in his introduction to *Mythologies*, he was inspired to write the essays that constitute it by his frustration with what he describes as the deliberate confusion of "Nature and History". This process is the dressing up of a reality shaped by history as entirely natural, so that the contingent becomes the "what-goes-without-saying" or the "falsely obvious" (1972, 2000: 11).

Barthes emphasises that it is not the content of myths that interests him – "for any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning" (1972, 2000: 110) - but the fact that myths represent a form of speech. This speech is "made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance" (1972, 2000: 110). The speech to which Barthes refers is not restricted to the spoken or written word, but to anything that qualifies as a "language-object"; "photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all of these can serve as a support to mythical speech" (1972, 2000: 110). Myth, therefore, may be found in any of the many forms of communication which have proliferated in the twentieth century. In addition, there are no restrictions on what can or cannot be mythologised, since everything is open to appropriation by myth; in the contemporary world, one was as likely to find myth in a commercial for soap powder as in an ancient mystical text. "Myth," he explains, "is not defined by the object of its message, but in the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, but no 'substantial' ones." (1972, 2000: 109)

Barthes therefore dismisses the argument that certain objects are predisposed to becoming the object of mythical attention, as a Jungian versed in the notion of archetypes might argue. There can be no eternal myths, for it is human history which, Barthes declares, "converts reality into speech". "Ancient or not, mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the 'nature' of things" (1972, 2000: 110). "Everything, then, can be a myth?" he ponders. "Yes, I believe this, for the universe is infinitely fertile in suggestions. Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things" (1972, 2000: 109).

Because myth relies for the production of meaning on the presence of an already existing

language-object or sign, Barthes views myth as 'parasitical', always an instance of "language-robbery" (1972, 2000: 131). Myth, he argues, is a corrosive, malevolent phenomenon, for it can "reach everything, corrupt everything" (1972, 2000: 132). It turns meanings into "speaking corpses" (1972, 2000: 132). Myth attaches itself to a sign and uses it as an alibi, claiming a false innocence while all the while furtively conducting its mission of circulating ideology through society.

The purpose of myth is to turn history into unchanging nature, making the contingent appear eternal, removing human agency from things; the famous Negro soldier of Paris-Match is distorted so that he is deprived of history and becomes merely a gesture (1972, 2000: 122). Barthes extends this observation to argue that myth is "depoliticized speech" (and for that reason, ideological speech); left wing myths are rare because myth, for the Left, is inessential (1972, 2000: 147). Myth does not deny things – on the contrary, it states them clearly, so that one assumes that they go without saying, and common sense dictates that one not question them.

One important point that Barthes makes about the way in which myth operates is the way in which it relies on immediate impressions. Citing a newspaper headline about a drop in vegetable prices, Barthes demonstrates how a myth of government agency in engineering this good fortune is later belied by the facts of the story (prices have dropped because of seasonal abundance, not government largesse). Nevertheless, this hardly matters, since it is the initial impression that will linger with the reader. A myth, says Barthes, "is at the same time imperfectible and unquestionable; time or knowledge will not make it better or worse" (1972, 2000: 130).

Myth can achieve its ends because the consumer of myth reads it as a representation of truth – a system of facts - when it is really a semiological system, with a relationship between signifier, signified and sign. That this is accomplished by exposing the consumer of myth to an initial impression which is not undermined by the facts points to a possible reason for the efficacy of advertising as a propagator of myth: for advertisements are all about impressions, fleeting thoughts planted in the minds of readers, viewers or listeners. Since few consumers of myth or advertisements bother to analyse them in order to locate the (unhidden) agenda, myth can be left alone to do its work.

Barthes' analysis confirms the usefulness of myth as a tool of ideology in contemporary culture. Similarly, the arguments of the French civil servant turned syndicalist Georges Sorel underscore the importance of myth as a political weapon, though Sorel's understanding of

myth differs from that of Barthes in several important ways. Sorel's most influential writings appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the ambiguity of his legacy is suggested by the fact that his influence was felt most strongly in Italian fascism on the one hand, and the work of Walter Benjamin on the other (San Juan Jr, 2002: 13). Sorel argues on behalf of myth as a tool of radical change, and the precedent he sets opens the way for this study to argue that myth is as useful to the radical end of the political spectrum as it is to the conservative one.

While Barthes views myth as an inherently conservative, bourgeois phenomenon, one associated with the political right, Sorel links myth quite explicitly with the concept of Revolution, seeing a direct link between myth and political action. As Sorel argues in his 1907 letter to Daniel Halevy:

> Men who are participating in a great social movement always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph. These constructions, knowledge of which is so important to historians, I propose to call myths.
>
> (in Kreis, 2000: 1)

Myths, then, are a mental construct in which cause, battle and triumph are bound into one readily comprehensible image. They embody an entire process that contains within itself both the present state of preparation for battle, future action against the enemy, and inevitable triumph of the cause. Such a myth is usually given the name of Revolution.

Sorel, who deplored any intellectual debate divorced from the realities of the working man's world, was especially interested in the idea of purpose. Myth, in Sorel's understanding, provides social actors with purpose: men should be inspired to achieve nobility through action, and it was myth that would inspire them to act. Myth provided the required purpose by presenting the masses with a picture of what it was they were attempting to achieve; without myths to spur the masses on, no revolution could come to fruition. "As long as there are no myths accepted by the masses, one may go on talking of revolts indefinitely, without ever provoking any revolutionary movement...myths are not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act." (Sorel in Kreis 2000: 1)

Such action, on which Sorel expands in his *Reflections on Violence* (1908), would consist of organized violence that would disrupt the apparently peaceful and just bourgeois order and purge society of all prejudice and hate. Sorel's project has a moral dimension, then: the myth must itself "be in tune with the worthier moral tendencies" or risk being reactionary (Apter, 1964: 20). Myth has a moral dimension because it builds solidarity, which binds the individual to the social. Without the myth of the general strike to build solidarity, which is the

basis for change, the revolution will fail.

Though Sorel's work is now generally associated with the philosophy of fascism, his belief that myth could be put to the service of the radical left remains relevant, especially in the context of the present anti-globalisation movement. The turn of the millennium has seen various trends – the increasing mobility of capital, the involvement by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in economic policy of developing nations, the exploitation by multinationals of Third World labour forces – gathered together under one convenient heading. By giving these phenomena a name, "globalisation" has become one of the newest and most powerful myths operating today, a myth that has already mobilised hundreds of thousands of protestors across the world. They know their enemy, for it has been defined for them by the globalisation myth. Indeed, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001), in titling these new developments "Empire", have gone even further, christening this complex phenomenon and all its implications with a name worthy of a sequel to that most popular of modern mythical narratives, *Star Wars*. In short, the various phenomena that constitute globalisation have become thoroughly mythologised.

Within four decades of Sorel's letter, history had brought his enthusiastic recommendations for the use of myth to propel great social movements to victory into sharp, terrible relief. Ernst Cassirer, who was forced into exile from Nazi Germany, could only express his revulsion at the idea of myth being put to political use. Myth had, of course, proven especially useful to the cause of fascism. "It is beyond the power of philosophy to destroy the political myths," he observes wanly in his posthumous volume, *The Myth of the State.* "A myth is in a sense invulnerable. It is impervious to rational arguments; it cannot be refuted in syllo gisms" (1946: 296). The role of the philosopher was critical, Cassirer argues, for though it was not possible to ensure that political myths would never arise again, philosophy could at least allow the "adversary" to be understood (1946: 296).

Cassirer acknowledged that myth was essential for the generation of national identity. Myth, he argues, "lays the basis for nationhood. It is behind the feeling of nationality, and gives it its force" (1946: 280). In demonstrating the use of myth as an instrument of power in times of difficulty, Cassirer cites Malinowski, who describes how "the native" relies entirely on his skill when he has to produce a practical implement; it is only when there is danger and uncertainty that he looks to magic and myth for assistance in completing a task. The role of magic and mythology in primitive society "applies equally well to the advanced stages of man's political life" (1946: 279). The implication is that myth reaches its full force only when the community has to face a difficult and dangerous situation. Therefore, the modern political

myths represent recourse "to desperate means". "If reason has failed us, there is always the ultima ratio, the power of the miraculous and the mysterious" (1946: 279).

Cassirer concludes *The Myth of the State* with a Babylonian legend, which, he suggests, describes the world of human culture. Culture could not arise

> until the darkness of myth was fought and overcome. But the mythical monsters were not entirely destroyed. They were used for the creation of a new universe, and they still survive in this universe. The powers of myth were checked and subdued by superior forces. As long as these forces, intellectual, ethical and artistic, are in full strength, myth is tamed and subdued. But once they begin to lose their strength chaos is come again. Mythical thought then starts to rise anew and to pervade the whole of man's cultural and social life.
>
> (1946: 298)

Thus, ironically, in denouncing myth, Cassirer inserts himself (as philosopher-warrior against the forces of myth) into the very mythical structures he sought to demystify and denounce.

Cassirer's views on political myth and those of Sorel both acknowledge the role of myth in assisting a group of people – who may or may not constitute "the masses" – to overcome obstacles in reaching political goals. Cassirer's "the miraculous and the mysterious" can be linked to Sorel's certain victory in battle, since both assume a triumph against the various forces assembled against the "noble" cause. Cassirer and Sorel represent opposite sides of the same coin. Like Cassirer, Sorel recognises the power of myth as a political weapon and a means to recruit large numbers of individuals to a cause, but Cassirer has witnessed, in the form of Hitler's Germany, the power of myth to reshape the world. It is a power that horrifies him and inspires Sorel, who marvels that "A myth cannot be refuted, since it is, at bottom, identical with the conviction of a group, being the expression of these convictions in the language of movement" (cited in Kreis, 2000: 2).

One obvious point, then, on which Sorel and Barthes differ is the role of myth in the Left and in the concept of Revolution. Barthes argues that myth excises politics from history, and for this reason myth as he understands it is rarely a tool of the Left. Barthes' concept of myth is ultimately a linguistic one: myth, like a fungus, requires a substrate of a world constituted in language (which may in turn be language *per se*, or photography or cinema, and other forms of semiosis) in order to settle and proliferate. Language that is not mythical is the language of "man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things" (1972, 1993: 146).

Sorel cleaves to the opposite view: for him, myth embodies the physical process of achieving

revolution, myth *is* action, "the expression of these convictions in the language of movement" (2000: 2). Without myth, there can be no revolution. Barthes, on the other hand, argues that Revolution excludes myth because it "generates speech which is fully, that is to say initially and finally, political, and not, like myth, speech which is initially political and finally natural" (1972, 1993: 146).

Nonetheless, it can be argued that Revolution with a capitalized R is indeed a myth as the concept is understood in this study: it contains elements of belief, it forms part of a structuring narrative; it occupies the nexus of an entire constellation of meanings. Importantly, Revolution as a concept has inspired hope (and action): it has functioned as an organising narrative which imposes coherence on the confusion and ambiguity of the world. The myth of Revolution tells those who hold it dear that the world as we know it will be turned upside down, the workers will triumph and the oppressors will be overthrown.

For the purposes of this study, then, an obvious drawback of Barthes' concept of myth, at least in the context of an analysis of post-apartheid South Africa, is his overwhelming emphasis on its association with a bourgeois view of the world. Such problems can be traced to the context in which Barthes was writing. Left-wing myth, Barthes argues, is always in a sense "artificial" and clumsy (1972, 2000: 48). This is because the Left defines itself in relation to the oppressed, both proletarian and colonized, and for the oppressed metalanguage is a "luxury" (1972, 2000: 48).

Yet Barthes fails to take into account that the oppressed rarely do get to speak for themselves; they must rely on politicians who – as in the case of South Africa – are often members of the Communist Party, but drive luxury cars and dress in designer suits. Such a situation calls to mind what Hardt and Negri decry as the "poisoned gift of national liberation" (2001: 134), as the overthrow of colonialism falls prey to the forces of globalisation.

Nonetheless, the liberators still draw their power from the votes of the oppressed and are quick to use the power of the myth of oppression to achieve political ends. Post-apartheid South Africa, with its myths of an African renaissance and patriotic bourgeois - along with regular retreats to the unbreachable figurative citadel of past injustice and oppression from which to fight off charges of corruption and incompetence - belies Barthes' argument that myth, for the Left, is inessential.

Moreover, a glance over the history of South Africa reveals the power of myth on the Left: the liberation struggle is as significant a myth as Afrikaner epics of the *Volk* and their God-

given right to the land. Indeed, the liberation struggle functioned very effectively as a myth according to Sorel's definition of myth as the embodiment of action. As Njabulo Ndebele recalls, "Our country and the struggle were the ultimate justification for being alive. *It was a purpose that galvanised enormous energies*" (2001: 7, my emphasis). Similarly, while conducting research in the mid-1980s, Jack Bloom detected two mythic notions that dominated thinking on the Left, namely *Apartheid as Monolith* and *Anti-imperialist Third Worldism*. "It is the emotive attractiveness of such mythic notions…that gives them the power to distort perceptions," Bloom observes (1986: 152).

What would Barthes have made of the Mandela myth, which appealed as much to the radicals of the 1980s as it did to the middle class white South Africans of the 1990s? What of the African renaissance and its attempts to recover black self-esteem? How does one rationalise the appearance of the famous image of Che Guevara on so many T shirts of so many students facing the police across the barricades of Seattle and Genoa: Guevara the revolutionary hero resurrected as revolutionary fashion statement, convenient shorthand for a set of anti-establishment beliefs?

Mythologies was written in a certain context, that of post-war, pre-1968 France, in which the bourgeois norm could be viewed as the "essential enemy" (1972, 2000: 9); this is a situation that cannot readily be translated into a South African context. Nonetheless, Barthes' views on myth are useful in freeing the concept from more traditional definitions, for demonstrating that myth operates in contemporary culture. At the same time, his understanding of myth is itself somewhat restrictive, and a purely Barthesian approach is not especially illuminating when approaching the mythology of the New South Africa, with all its attendant ambiguities and competing ideologies.

Marina Warner has argued that it is the political – specifically nationalist - dimension of myth that suggests that public interest in the myths of the day is an essential requirement for the health of any democracy. "Voltaire's justly famous epigram declares that history is "une fable convenue", an agreed fable: contemporary nationalisms press agreement to their version; this is why members of a democracy which wishes to survive have to take part in the telling of the story, examine and resist the self-serving fables of political ambitions" (1994: 83).

Certainly, this is true of South Africa where myth can serve different political masters depending on which nuances are weighted. In this context myth contains within itself elements of both the bourgeois and the radical, allowing it to respond to changes in its immediate political, social and cultural environment with Darwinian efficiency. Far from

relics of the past, then, myths remain with us; if anything, as Warner argues, "The accelerating pace of change since the Fifties has magnified the influence, the power and the dissemination of myths" (1994: 3).

Nation and myth

Nation, like myth, is a word fraught with pitfalls for the unwary, and herein lies part of the problem for South Africa-as-nation: what is it, exactly, that gets to be a "nation" in the first place? Traditionally the nation was conceived of as an identity that was fundamentally ethnic in character, assuming as it did a common ancestry (which would then explain the persistence of a common culture and language). Immigration and globalisation have placed such a concept of nation under considerable strain.

Bearing developments of this nature in mind, it is Benedict Anderson's oft cited definition of the nation as "imagined community" (1983) that seems most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. The nation is imagined because it is impossible for a citizen to meet every single one of his or her fellow citizens, yet he or she nevertheless continues to feel connected to them. The nation is not a natural state of being, it is not mandatory: if it exists, it is because somebody thinks that it *should* exist.

As Anderson argues, the nation must be imagined because it is impossible for members of even a small nation to know, meet or even hear of most of their fellow members, "yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion" (1983: 15). An American, for example, "will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000,000-odd fellow-Americans. He has no idea what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity." (Anderson, 1983: 31) Thus community in this sense must be actively constituted by mental projection.

Anderson's definition relates to the nation as an entity that exists primarily within the mind. Where then does the state, embodied in governments, armies, social services and national anthems, fit in? As Lionel Abrahams' comments, cited at the beginning of this chapter, suggest, public discourse in post-apartheid South Africa has been notable in its constant use of "nation" where "state" would have been more appropriate. Therefore, before one can proceed any further, it is necessary to delineate the boundaries between state and nation.

In simple terms, the state is the concrete fact, the political entity, with borders, a police force and army and the right to extract taxes from citizens. The nation, on the other hand, is a sense

of unity, of unique identity, that may or may not be congruent with a particular state. This understanding of the difference between state and nation concurs with T.K. Oommen's definition of the state as a legal entity, the nation as a psychological entity. "The nation," Oommen argues,

> is a territorial entity to which people have an emotional attachment and in which they invest a moral meaning: it is a homeland – ancestral or adopted. Nationality is the collective identity which the people of the nation acquire by identifying with the nation.
>
> (1997: 33)

If nationality is a collective identity, Oommen argues, citizenship, associated with the state, is an individual identity (1997: 35).

Why should individual citizens choose to align themselves with "the nation"? Stuart Hall has argued that collective political identities are "always partly the result of imaginary identifications" (1995: 66). It is precisely because such identifications are imagined - and therefore hover in the nebulous territory between reality and desire – that collectives of this kind are able to function as mobilising political forces (1995: 66). The psychological imperatives for collective identity can be powerful; as Dana Cloud, considering the American nationalist outpouring of emotion in the wake of the September 11 attacks, observes, the nation as an object of identification is powerful because it induces a sense of emotional satisfaction in those individuals who look to it to shore up their sense of self. "Identification feels good," she argues. "It is like a drug." (2003: 7).

In contrast, the state is organised around the principle of the exercise of power by the few over the many. Max Weber's definition is especially trenchant here. A state, in his view, may be defined chiefly by its monopoly on the exercise of power:

> A compulsory political organization with continuous operations will be called a 'state' insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claims to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order.
>
> (1948, 1991: 41)

Drawing on Weber's definition, Christopher Pierson in *The Modern State* outlines nine characteristics of the state. These are monopoly control on the means of violence; territoriality; sovereignty; constitutionality; impersonal power; public bureaucracy; legitimacy and taxation (1948, 1991: 42).

The state therefore has powerful external means with which to ensure the cooperation of those who live within its borders. Nonetheless, such power must be seen to be legitimate, based upon the will of the people as manifested in the democratic institutions of government (1948,

1991: 44). However, this kind of legitimacy goes beyond an acceptance of authority in a democracy; there is an emotional dimension to it, too. Even though it can call on its police and defence forces, its constitution and its public bureaucracy to enforce its authority, the state requires the concept of the nation in order to ensure the legitimacy of the former, since without some kind of emotional attachment on the part of the citizenry, the state cannot be assured of their allegiance. This is a challenge for many modern, multi-ethnic states, the territories of which are in many cases the by-products of colonial empire-building: these states must engage in what has been commonly referred to in South Africa as "nation-building" even as they attempt to accommodate different ethnic and cultural identities under the heading of "multiculturalism". Such an exercise is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the state. As William Bloom has pointed out, "Power politics create a state, but its endurance is guaranteed only if the psychological nation is built" (1990: 56).

Consequently, the state and the nation are inextricably entwined in the idea of the nation-state, in which the 'material' state and the 'psychological' nation are coterminous. The nation-state as a concept first rose to prominence in the nineteenth century and for some time enjoyed unchallenged status as the most practical and desirable of political forms. However, in recent times the form and function of the modern nation-state have come under increasing attack from several quarters. Philip Bobbitt, for example, has argued that the nation-state as commonly associated with liberal democracies has been replaced by the 'market-state', as leaders sever the link between the state and welfare (in Runciman, 2002: 3).

The market-state is concerned with maximising the opportunities for individuals to participate in the economy rather than making sure that all its citizens enjoy a basic standard of living. In the wake of the development of the market-state and the rise of the phenomenon generally referred to as globalisation, nation-states have often been derided as "political dinosaurs" (Lind, 2001: 1). As multinational corporations become more and more powerful and trade is liberalised, the autonomy of states is compromised. If the nation-state - which was originally built upon the concept of self-determination of a people - is not free to determine the fortunes of its citizens because it must compete on global markets and comply with the wishes of global investors then, the argument goes, it has lost its reason for existence in the first place.

Do globalisation and post-modernity then obviate the need for the state? David Runciman argues that the contrary is in fact true: it is the existence of the state which allows individuals to accommodate shifting multiple identities. "The modern state was created precisely in order to be that something which made it possible to live in a world of double standards, a world in which individuals were both separate persons and combined peoples, bearers of private

interests and vehicles of modern society, citizens and subject" (2002: 8). Similarly, Michael Lind suggests that nation-states have prevailed because of "psychological economies of scale" (2000: 3): echoing Anderson, he argues that the ethnic nation is the "largest community to which ordinary human beings can have an emotional attachment" (2000: 3).

The role of broader beliefs

Traditionally, the nation-state was predicated on the assumption that in a given territory, people shared a common ethnicity or ancestry, language and culture. However, in the wake of widespread immigration, which has resulted in an ethnically diverse citizenry of many states in the West, this is no longer politically acceptable. Thus the concept of nation, as it is commonly used today (and when it is not confused with the state) tends to refer to a sense of community defined above all by a broad identification with the dominant values embodied by the state and the cultures within its borders. Membership of a nation therefore becomes a function of citizenship rather than any ethnic affiliation.

Taking this idea of a nationalism based on citizenship into account, perhaps the definition that best encapsulates the concept of nation as it has generally been used and understood in post-apartheid South Africa, is that of Carl Friedrich. A nation, according to this view, is any "sizeable population or group of persons" which can be defined as independent (in the sense that it is not ruled from outside), cohesive, politically organised, autonomous (in that it allows its government to rule effectively) and internally legitimate. By "internally legitimate", Friedrich means, and Karl Deutsch explains,

> in the sense that [the population's] habits of compliance with and support of the government or, at least, toward mutual political cooperation and membership of the nation, are connected with broader beliefs about the universe and about their own nature, personalities, and culture so that their support for the nation, even in times of adversity, is likely and thus ensures its endurance.
>
> (1963: 12)

These "broader beliefs about the universe and about their own nature, personalities and culture" are key to the creation of national identity. Indeed, since these beliefs are structuring narratives that account for the status quo, they may also be may also be defined as myths, and it is here where the link between nation and myth as it is understood in this study is at its most obvious. David Miller has observed that national identities "typically contain a considerable element of myth" (1996: 35). Nations, he argues, are held together by beliefs: their existence depends on collective acts of imagining. Indeed, it may be argued that both myth and nation exist for the most part in the realm of the imagination - the nation really is "only an idea" (Abrahams, 1998: 11).

Similarly, Stuart Hall has defined nations, not just as political entities, but also as "systems of cultural representations" (in Wodak et al, 1999: 22) in which the community can be imagined. "People are not only legal citizens of a nation; they participate in the idea of the nation as represented in its national culture…National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its past with its present" (in Wodak et al, 1999: 22-23). Hall's comments serve to strengthen the argument that the nation is an "idea": national identity here is that particular version with which most of the citizens of a state happen to agree, and it does not necessarily have any grounding in objective reality.

In practice, national identity is not always so democratic, since modern national narratives (usually in the form of television and to a lesser extent theatrical productions, tourist brochures and especially in the opening ceremonies of sporting tournaments) are conceived by the few and broadcast to the many. Participation, here, implies a rather passive endorsement of a performed alleged national identity which happens to be (more often than not) a commercially inspired vision. Thus Hall's comments point to a potential role for advertising in imagining the nation, since advertising is concerned, amongst other agendas, with producing meanings with broad appeal.

Regardless of whether or not national identity is truly democratic, it is clear that, given their reliance on collective acts of imagining, nations require narrations – stories about themselves – with which to render themselves both intelligible and substantial. In this way, states are able to justify their existence and negotiate the uncertain terrain of the future. These national stories are often described as myths: as the philosopher Friedrich Schelling once declared, it is "inconceivable that nation should exist without a mythology" (quoted in Strenski, 1987: 16).

Dieter Ram goes even further, arguing that national identity and narrative are one and the same. "Nationality is a narration, a story which people tell about themselves in order to lend meaning to their social world. The fact that nationality is a story does not challenge its reality, because myths are not mystifications" (cited in Wodak et al, 1999: 23). If, as Ernest Gellner (1983) has argued, nationalism invents nations where they do not exist, then these structuring narratives (or myths which take the form of epics), which lend legitimacy to the nation-building project, are central to that process.

Nation as spiritual commodity

In light of the traditional definition of myth as a sacred narrative (Dundes, 1984: 1), it is to be

expected that myth has in many cases been associated with belief of various kinds, often explicitly religious. A close relationship between nation and myth is strongly suggested, therefore, by the fact that so many studies link nationalism with religious impulses. Cassirer argued that in totalitarian systems, the state itself becomes an object of worship (1946: 276) and Gellner likewise argues that society "can and does worship itself or its own culture directly" (1983: 142). Anderson in turn suggests that the nationalist and religious imaginings, in their concern with death and immortality, enjoy a "strong affinity" (1983: 18) with one another.

Moreover, the idea of the nation, like religious myths, can infuse daily existence with meaning and purpose. As Bruce Kapferer demonstrates in his comparative study of political culture and myth in Sri Lanka and Australia, a putative national culture can be spiritualized, and transformed into "a religious fetish, an idol, a thing which has self-contained magical properties capable of recreating and transforming the realities of experience in its image" (Kapferer, 1988: 2). This leads to a situation where a national self and a national other are defined and made to offer explanations for evil and suffering (Kapferer, 1988: 2).

Significantly, nationalism often gains its power by infusing the political with religious significance:

> Nationalism makes the political religious and places the nation above politics. The nation is created as an object of devotion and the political forces which become focused on it are intensified in their energy and passion. The religion of nationalism, wherein the political is shrouded in the symbolism of a "higher" purpose, is vital to the momentum of nationalism...Almost universally the culture that nationalists worship is those things defined as the founding myths and legends of the nation and the customs and traditions and language of the nation. These are at once constituted within the nation and constitute the nation. They are integral to national sovereignty and are made sacred in the nation as the nation is made sacred in them.
>
> (Kapferer, 1988: 1)

Culture fetishised in this way cannot be separated from nationalist impulses: "The primordialism of the cultural in nationalism is the construction of nationalism itself and is not to be regarded as independent of nationalism" (Kapferer, 1988: 1). Myth, with its associations with the sacred, is thus able to infuse the self-serving machinations that all too often characterise the business of running a country with an aura of transcendence.

The divisive powers of myth

The religious impulses often associated with nationalist myth can also be seen in the South African context, for many viewed the country's ultimately peaceful transition to democracy as

nothing short of miraculous. How was this psychological nation to be built, given that it was to be constituted of communities which had been previously divided by law, economics, culture and politics? For the New South Africa to have any hope of surviving intact, the people who lived within the country's borders, groups defined broadly as black and white, coloured and Indian, would all have to be persuaded that their loyalties should lie with the post-apartheid state. For this reason, it was vitally important that a sense of common interest and shared destiny - in other words, nationhood - be created.

Part of the challenge to nation-building post-apartheid South Africa lay (and may still lie) in the fact that its different communities held fast to such different myths - Afrikaner nationalist myths in contrast to the myths of liberation, for example. South Africa had also been exiled from the wider community of nations; it was a pariah state. In order to create a sense of community, both within its borders and with the world of nations, a new common myth had to be found. Yet how could a community be forged from people with such differing myths, who steered by completely different stars?

A number of contemporary observers felt that a South African national identity would prove elusive for this very reason. "It occurred to me...that the origins of culture can be found in the myths of landscape and the associated religious thoughts...If this is so, then South Africa hasn't a chance of a national identity," wrote Justin Cartwright (1996: 7). Rian Malan, who had become something of a celebrity in the wake of the success of his exposé of violence in apartheid South Africa, *My Traitor's Heart*, declared: "We are Africans, riddled with ethnic and tribal sentiment. We do not trust each other. We have no great vision to unite us, no shared myths to light our way. We can barely communicate because we have no languages in common" (in Adam et al, 1997: 67). Similarly, John Nauright offered his analysis in a volume on the history of sport and identity in South Africa: "A major legacy of apartheid affecting culture in general is that people of different groups were spatially separated and this led to mental and emotional separation as well" (1997: 168).

Because myths in epic form are predicated on the confrontation of heroes with the enemy and the associated sense of destiny, myths had only served to divide South Africans in the past. Afrikaner nationalism had been sustained over the years by a sense of God-given purpose as well as the myth of the *boerevolk* claiming their destiny in Africa in the face of often-violent resistance from English imperialism and local black tribes. Perhaps the best example of this type of epic myth is what is still commemorated as the Day of the Vow. Tradition has it that before the Boers faced the Zulu impi at Blood River on December 16, 1838, a pact was made with God. If the Boers defeated the enemy, they would henceforth keep that day holy. The

Boers routed the Zulu (hence the name given to the river) and December 16 became a public holiday after the Afrikaner Nationalists came to power in 1948. The Voortrekker Monument, completed in 1938, is replete with symbolism referring to this historic pact with the Lord. At noon on December 16 every year, the sun shines directly into the monument, illuminating a marble plaque on the lower level while crowds, gathered for a religious service, look on.

At the same time, black South Africans were sustained by a conviction that the Liberation Struggle was destined to succeed, and that the white oppressor would be overthrown. Such beliefs coincided with a decline in commitment to apartheid on the part of the white minority during the late 1980's. The then chief of the South African Defence Force, Constand Viljoen, warned the apartheid government that, while South Africa had the military wherewithal to maintain the status quo indefinitely, the impasse could not be maintained psychologically (Waldmeir, 1996: 42). The myths of white supremacy and Communist evil were starting to fall apart, and the metaphorical laager that had held fast against the disapproval of the outside world for so many decades, was finally breached.

Myth and nation-building: the emergence of the rainbow nation

The day before the Presidential Inauguration of 1994, Archbishop Desmond Tutu made an ebullient speech which he ended with the words, "We of many cultures, languages and races are become one nation. We are the Rainbow People of God" (1994: 261). Tutu's words encapsulate an approach to nation-building that held sway in South Africa following the 1994 elections. This was an understanding based on both multiculturalism and civic nationalism, united in Tutu's vision by a spiritual dimension.

The "Rainbow People of God" came to be better known as the "Rainbow Nation", one of the key elements that constitute the mythology of the New South Africa. Tutu had been using the phrase, "Rainbow People of God"[8] in his speeches since the 1980s, but it was only during the period immediately after the elections that the idea of the "rainbow nation" became truly popularised. The political analyst Barney Mthombothi later suggested that it was the very vagueness of the rainbow that led to its popularity as a metaphor for the new, supposedly unified nation. "You can see it but you can't touch it. And a rainbow is of no particular purpose" (2000: 39). After the elections, however, when South Africans were congratulating themselves for achieving the impossible, the rainbow nation seemed a perfectly appropriate

[8] There were various theories on the origin of the concept – some maintained that Tutu was influenced by the Rainbow Coalition of the US, or the biblical concept of the rainbow as God's promise to man, or the rainbow as allusion to South Africa's multiracial, multicultural national identity.

metaphor for a commitment to the kind of racial reconciliation that would have been unimaginable five or ten years before.

The rainbow nation myth represents a particular approach to the nation-building project. In some respects, it is an approach that is currently out of favour among political analysts, since "nation-building" now more often than not refers to the establishment of a viable state in the place of anarchy. As Marina Ottaway (2002) notes, in its modern sense, nation building does not imply a literal building of a nation. There are too many cases, she argues, where the existence of a nation in the sense of a people united by a common vision seems utterly unattainable. In some cases, a common identity has not prevented the collapse of the state, as in Haiti; in Northern Ireland, Somalia on the Balkans, divisions run so deep that the creation of any kind of consensus or a common national identity is highly unlikely. "Thus, the goal of nation building should not be to impose common identities on deeply divided peoples but to organize states that can administer their territories and allow people to live together despite differences" (Ottaway, 2002: 1). Such an approach could lead to the disintegration of existing states and the creation of new ones, if nation building could not be accommodated within the old, internationally recognised borders, many of which were imposed by colonial powers.

Nonetheless, the creation of a state without a simultaneous attempt to forge a common vision places it on shaky foundations. In this context, South Africa offers an atypical example. It was not a nation forged out of anarchy or war, (though for a time political instability threatened the entire process); nor did the elections of 1994 signal liberation from a colonial power in the traditional sense. Though facing the problem of political violence (which would quickly evolve into criminal violence), the state was already well established; all that was necessary was for the democratically elected government to assume control of its functions and to ensure that the homelands were reabsorbed into the New South Africa. The challenge, therefore, was not to wrest order from chaos as in the case of a state such as Afghanistan or Somalia, but to ensure a broad-based measure of loyalty from an ethnically, politically and economically divided population, and providing conditions in which these groupings could live together in relative harmony. Far right Afrikaners and the Zulu nationalists of Inkatha had presented a real threat to national stability prior to the elections of 1994, and as a first step it was essential that these groups be incorporated into the body politic.

In essence, nation building as it has generally been perceived in the context of post-apartheid South Africa is the transformation of what Hardt and Negri describe as the "multitude" into "the people" (2001: 103). Where the multitude is heterogeneous, the people are homogeneous; where the multitude fails to distinguish clearly between itself and that which is

outside of it, the people constitute a "synthesis that is prepared for sovereignty" (2001: 103). Significantly, the people may come into conflict with the multitude, since the latter is not distinguished by a singularity of purpose. "Every nation," Hardt and Negri conclude, "must make the multitude into a people" (2001: 103).

Achieving a balance between the reality of the multitude and the desire to shape it into a people is a delicate procedure for any modern state. In Mandela's inaugural address he offered a vision of "one nation, many cultures" (Villa-Vicencio, 2001: 24), recognising the multiple identities bore by South Africa's citizens. Mandela's vision made clear that the strategy favoured by South Africa would be one of multiculturalism, initially embodied in the notion of the Rainbow nation and essentially seeking to manage diversity within the central project of nation-building (Lubisi, 2001:1).

Multiculturalism itself is a multifaceted concept, and can be understood as fact as well as ideology, policy, practice or critical discourse (Biles, 2001: 2), taking on varying ideological nuances depending on the context in which it is used. As policy, multiculturalism generally refers to "explicit government initiatives to foster social equality, cultural diversity, and national interests" (Biles, 2001:1); as critical discourse, in contrast, multiculturalism refers to the attempts by minorities to challenge the distribution of cultural power within society. It is therefore possible for a particular society to accommodate both a policy of multiculturalism by the government of the day on the one hand and a critical discourse of multiculturalism employed by minorities on the other. It should be noted that concepts of minorities or cultures need not be understood only in the ethnic sense, but can refer to gender, sexuality or age group as well.

Sneja Gunew acknowledges this development when she divides multiculturalism into two broad types, namely state multiculturalism in which governments attempt to manage diversity, and critical multiculturalism, where minorities both argue for participation in public life and resist assimilation at the same time. "Multiculturalism," Gunew notes, "has been developed as a concept by nations and other aspirants to geo-political cohesiveness who are trying to represent themselves as homogeneous in spite of their heterogeneity" (undated: 1). Such a strategy allows the supposedly unified concept of the nation-state to accommodate an ethnically diverse populace; at the same time individuals may embrace multiple identities, so that they identify themselves in terms of both ethnicity and citizenship. An individual takes on a broader "national" identity in as far as he or she is a citizen of a state, but a closer emotional or psychological association is not necessarily demanded by the state; this model of multiculturalism is most closely associated with Canada.

Both state and critical multiculturalism have become the subject of considerable academic debate. In the scholarly sense, multiculturalism is closely linked to the concepts and debates associated with postcolonial studies (Gunew, undated: 1); in some senses multiculturalism is to the former colonial powers as postcolonialism is to the postcolonies. While there are those theorists such as Will Kymlicka (1995, 2002) who take the view that multiculturalism and liberal democracy are compatible, multiculturalism has come under criticism from both the Left and the Right. Conservative critics regard multiculturalism as a form of excessive political correctness that constitutes a threat to the Western identity of many states, while at the same time dangerously undermining a sense of national cohesion. From the point of view of the Left, multiculturalism is open to criticism for promoting an essentialist view of identity, by failing to acknowledge that individuals may occupy multiple and shifting identities.

Multiculturalism has also been linked to globalisation and multinational capitalism. Slavoj Zizek, for example, argues that multiculturalism is fundamentally racist; it is "the ideal form of global capitalism's ideology" (1997, 2002) because it allows the Eurocentric observer to maintain a respectful distance from another culture while simultaneously asserting his or her own superiority. Multiculturalism functions as a concept because it privileges a supposedly neutral, Western mode of being against which all other cultures must be measured, implicitly: it is the Western point of view that must be generous and unprejudiced enough to "respect" other cultures.

It is questionable whether the terms of these debates fit comfortably within a South African context. As Lubisi (2001) has observed, South Africa differs from the major centres of the multiculturalism debate (located predominantly in Europe and North America) in that cultures in the majority were marginalised by a dominant minority group (which itself now lives in fear of marginalisation). The apartheid regime achieved domination through the effective exclusion of black South Africans from the South African "nation", which was defined strictly on a racial basis. The national motto "Unity is strength" referred to the unity between English- and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans who had been divided by British imperialism, not to unity between different races or ethnic groups.

The challenge for the rulers of post-apartheid South Africa was therefore an unusual one, in that they had to include formerly excluded ethnic groups under the definition of South African, while at the same time de-emphasising the privileges that were formerly the exclusive domain of white South Africans. This was further complicated by the presence of two significant groups, South Africa's coloured and Indian communities respectively, who

were neither white nor black but fitted somewhere in between. In addition, the loss of political power by the once-dominant Afrikaner minority saw many of them embrace victimhood status, as they perceived their culture, language and identity to be under threat now that their privileged status was no longer assured.

The rights and freedoms of minorities are guaranteed in the Constitution ratified in 1996; nonetheless, the most obvious symbol of multiculturalism in the New South Africa remains the establishment of eleven official languages. This was widely criticised at the time as unwieldy, but the symbolic import of placing languages from the widely spoken isiZulu to Tshivenda, the language of the minority Venda ethnic group, on the same footing as English and Afrikaans could hardly be missed. The battle of certain right wing Afrikaner groups for nationalist "self-determination" is closely linked to the issue of language, where the implications of multicultural policy have been most keenly felt.

While the existence of eleven official languages remains the central symbol of South Africa's commitment to multiculturalism, it is in the form of certain key events that South Africa has looked to forge a people out of the multitude. Anthony D. Smith's definition of the nation is of particular relevance here. Apart from listing characteristics one would normally associate with a state such as an historic territory, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for citizens, Smith also includes common myths, historical memories and a mass public culture (cited in Wodak et al, 1999: 20).

The last four items on Smith's list of the characteristics of the nation provide categories into one might place many of the most important events in the history of the New South Africa. Nelson Mandela's release and inauguration were part of efforts to generate the events that would constitute the epic tale of post-apartheid South Africa and thus promote the formation of a common mythology for the new democratic nation; the Truth Commission can be viewed as a key step in the establishment of a mutually agreed historical memory.

The 1995 Rugby World Cup final (along with subsequent sporting ceremonies) was a part of an attempt to create a mass public culture, while the ratification of the Constitution of 1996 firmly established the rights and obligations of every South African citizen. Where apartheid had constructed a complicated legal framework designed to accord differing legal, political and economic status to individuals according to race, the Constitution deems all South African citizens to be equal. This kind of juxtaposition may seem inappropriate, but it points to the complexities and ambiguities that characterised post-apartheid South Africa. For many South Africans, victory in the World Cup was far more compelling and, more importantly,

significantly more tangible, than a document that supposedly guaranteed the rights of all.

Whether these various events had indeed succeeded in forging a people with, in the words of the former South African leader of the opposition Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, a sense of unity, of "common commitment that arises out of shared hope for a better future" (2002: 22), was doubted by many observers. Writing in 2001, Njabulo Ndebele argued that the South African nation-building project had a long way to go. South Africa lacked a "national consciousness", which Ndebele defined as a "unifying framework within which democracy can operate" (2001: 7). Similarly, Barney Mthombothi wondered, "If South Africa were an organisation, what would be its vision? And what would make it march in step behind, not a flag, but that vision? We need a button which, when pressed, will provoke a similar sensation in all of us" (2000: 39).

Somewhat ironically, the failure to locate such a "button" can be traced in part to Mandela, who had made racial reconciliation a key theme of his tenure as president, bestowing on it the status of a "civil religion" (Goodman, 1999; Waldmeir, 1997). Mandela, Patti Waldmeir rhapsodized of the years immediately following the 1994 elections "would create powerful symbols of a single nationhood, to unite the many peoples of South Africa in one rainbow" (1997: 268). In her view, the plea for reconciliation was helped by the fact that South Africans were less racially polarised than might be expected. The African philosophy of *ubuntu*, which is based on community feeling and forgiveness, was also seen as contributing to the reconciliation project.

Reconciliation was a strategy aimed at encouraging whites, especially Afrikaners, to feel that they could belong in a post-apartheid South Africa, and that the wholesale cultural assimilation that they had so long feared would not become a reality. Colloquially put, the former oppressors (many of whom were assailed by conflicting emotions of guilt, resentment, fear and denial) needed reassurance that they would not be driven into the sea. Mandela's policy of reconciliation gave impetus to the myth of the "rainbow nation" which, for a time, offered a compelling vision of diverse people united by their commitment to the New South Africa. Archbishop Tutu, as the spiritual father of the rainbow nation, gave this vision of South African society the moral heft it required. As we shall see, the philosophy of reconciliation under the umbrella of the rainbow nation also fostered resentments and led to a backlash by those who felt that whites had failed to atone for the sins of apartheid.

In the early 1990's, the ANC's vision for the National Democratic Revolution was the creation of "a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society…The "national character"

of the NDR is therefore the resolution of the antagonistic contradictions between the oppressed majority and their oppressors; as well as the resolution of the national grievance arising from the colonial relations" (ANC, undated: 2). Later, as the myth of the rainbow nation began to lose its power, there would be a distinct shift from the former definition of nation building to the latter, one that emphasised African pride in particular and the need for "transformation". One of the key challenges for South Africa's first democratically elected government was the redress of the societal, political and economic imbalances brought about by apartheid. The eradication of poverty and redistribution of wealth was therefore an important component of the nation-building project. "Nation building would be an impossible task without the determination to increase the participation of the poorest of the poor," argued Minister of Public Service and Administration Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi (The Star, 2001: 24).

This link between nation-building and the upliftment of the poor has also been extended to a quest for positive identity (through economic development) for the entire African continent, crystallised in Mbeki's concept of an African renaissance. Such a link naturally also has its roots in the quest for racial pride, so that for black South Africans, their continental or racial identity is often as important as a national one. The energetic marketing of Africa (and, more specifically, Sterkfontein north west of Johannesburg) as the "Cradle of Humankind" points to a desire to reclaim Africa's status in the family of continents that played a central role in the development of the human race, and, in former editor of the *Sowetan* Aggrey Klaaste's understanding, to "make nonsense" of supposed white superiority and black inferiority (2002: 58). Klaaste describes a *Sowetan* initiative, an organisation called Mahlasedi ("dawn" in SeTswana) devoted to using "as many opportunities as possible to recreate the history and values of Africa". Through such initiatives, Klaaste and others hoped to "make a contribution towards greater national pride and African self respect and to build a successful nation" (2002: 58). Thus national identity in South Africa comes to be closely entwined with continental identity.

The South African public's identification with Africa became clear in the country's campaign for the right to host the 2006 Soccer World Cup. At the time of the Fifa delegation's visit, many commentators argued that it was "Africa's turn" (Madlala, 2000: 8), and that it was time to "realise the African dream" (Rantao, 2000: 12).

> By awarding us the World Cup, Fifa will be saying to the nations of the world that Africa is no longer a dark continent, and that South Africa will continue to be the success story that it has been in the last 10 years - rebuilding from the abyss of a brutal past to a society that in the words of our president is "on the road to renaissance".

(Rantao, 2000: 12)

It was logical, therefore, that South Africa, former pariah of the world, should take its place "within the family of nations" (Rantao, 2000: 12). When South Africa ultimately lost the bid to Germany, the majority of South Africans of all races felt cheated, and the general view was that the rest of the world was not prepared to give Africa a fair chance. In defeat, South Africans were united in their outrage.

It is in instances like the World Cup bid, and occasionally at an international sporting match, that national unity - a community united behind a single vision - seems most tangible. But a sense of peoplehood is difficult to maintain despite everyone's best efforts. As Comaroff and Comaroff argue, the nature of citizenship has changed, so that, "while most human beings continue to live as citizens in nation-states, they tend to be only conditionally citizens of nation-states" (2001: 6). So, the citizens of nation-states now resemble more closely the multitude, as individuals desire simultaneously to be "global citizens in a planetary economy of desire, corporate national subjects with shares in the polity-as-corporation, and identitarian beings with their own, ascriptively warranted, genealogically mandated collective interests" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001: 7).

These competing identities can be seen as threatening, as James A. Joseph, the then US ambassador to South Africa articulated in a 1997 speech. "Before us is the vision of an interconnected world civilization, but in far too many nations there is the countervailing, often menacing reassertion of local cultures and local claims," he argued (1997: 1). "Many people in many parts of the world live in societies that are integrating and fragmenting at the same time". In South Africa, the debates over continental identities raise the stakes, so that South Africans are continually forced to revise their identities and reassess them in the light of prevailing political and cultural fashion. Black South Africans must juggle rural and urban identities as well as negotiate the daunting (for many) and exhilarating (for some) terrain of consumer culture; white South Africans must continually make choices about whether or not to identify with Africa, whether or not to allow guilt about the past to intrude into their emotional worlds, whether or not to stay or leave.

Individual South Africans are a collection of competing identities, each assuming prominence in appropriate situation: religious, cultural, language, political interests, and the sports team one supports. Even the city one calls home or the province in which one resides may represent a source of personal identity, so that Capetonians and Johannesburgers argue continuously over the relative merits of their cities, with Johannesburgers dismissed as brash

residents of an ugly city devoid of culture, and Capetonians derided as incorrigibly laid-back, dope-smoking slackers obsessed with "the mountain".

In the New South Africa, as we shall see, the solution to addressing these competing identities has often been sought either in a return to the politics of race (accusing those who disagree with government policy of racism or Eurocentrism, denouncing white South Africans who emigrate as "vultures") or sophisticated marketing campaigns that emphasise economic pragmatics rather than cultural or political identities (as in Proudly South African or the emphasis on the magical job-creation properties of tourism).

In one important respect, however, the majority of the citizens of the New South Africa have functioned as a people, in that they have seen themselves as distinct from outsiders. This has manifested itself in general either in the phenomenon of xenophobia (particularly towards citizens of other African countries) or in the enthusiastic – and frequently chauvinistic - support of national sporting teams and efforts to win the right to host major sporting events. The distance between the theoretical reclaiming of African pride and brotherhood epitomised by the African renaissance and the harsh practicalities of daily life on the wrong side of the poverty line soon became evident in the wake of violent attacks on immigrants both legal and illegal.

In contrast, the South African flag, initially released to a flood of criticism, has become a much-loved – and significantly, politically neutral – symbol of national identity. It remains the only national symbol that enjoys support across most sectors of society, with the exception of the far right. Paradoxically, the emergence of globalisation and the need for countries to compete globally has resulted in a renewed emphasis on a distinctive national identity. This time, however, its architects are strategic marketing experts and corporate identity gurus rather than politicians and poets.

Despite these developments, which seek to recast the generation of a sense of distinct national identity as a pragmatic exercise in product differentiation, nation-building continues to pose a special challenge for former colonies, or what Achille Mbembe would define as postcolonies (1994). While these are, as Comaroff and Comaroff argue, essentially no different from modernist nation-states on which they are modelled, they are in fact, "speeded up, hyper-extended transformations of those nation-states; sedimentations, if you will, of the history of Europolitics running slightly ahead of itself" (2001: 6). South Africa is an unusual case, however, since it has undergone a graduated process of liberation from imperialism. The country first achieved postcolonial independence in 1960, when South Africa became a

republic, but this was liberation for only a minority of the population. The Afrikaner nationalists succeeded to an extent in challenging the economic hegemony of Anglophone elites who with their strong links to Great Britain constituted a residual imperial presence, and South Africa even had a small colonial project of its own in the form of the then South West Africa.

In fact, the relationship between South Africa and the homelands was similar in some respects to that between the former imperial powers and their erstwhile colonies (particularly French imperialism): in both the former colonies and the Bantustans[9], a culture of patronage, militarism and corruption prevailed, most of it funded by the former occupying power. South Africa is therefore not a typical case, and in Africa, certainly, it was the only country from which the white minority did not flee en masse upon independence from imperial rule. The complexities of South Africa's history account for much of the ambiguity and uncertainty of its present.

Nation-building and cultural intimacy

National myth as part of the nation-building process in post-apartheid South Africa has largely been a top-down phenomenon, formulated by its leaders before filtering down to the population at large. But what of the response of ordinary citizens to official ideology? The work of the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1998) seeks to account for the complex relationship between citizens and the state. Herzfeld has described a social poetics of the state he calls "cultural intimacy". The latter, defined succinctly, is "national embarrassment", the kind of "rueful self-recognition" that marks the difference between insiders and outsiders in a particular state. Cultural intimacy is "the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but nonetheless provide insiders with their assurance of a common sociality" (1998: 3).

Cultural intimacy can be used both by the powerful and the disenfranchised. The state may use the language of domesticity to justify its actions or promote national unity (in the case of the latter, the use of the phrase "our boys" to refer to sports teams[10] or soldiers immediately springs to mind). On the other hand, citizens, Herzfeld argues, "engage in the ceaseless business of shaping the meaning of national identity, often in ways that contravene official ideology" (1992: 9). One of the more interesting points that Herzfeld makes is that, even when they criticize the state, citizens are in fact recognising its centrality in their lives, and –

[9] Another term for the homelands created by the apartheid regime with a view to keeping black South Africans out of what was claimed as white South Africa.
[10] South Africa's national soccer team is known as *Bafana Bafana* – literally, "the boys" in Zulu.

citing the example of Greek tax evasion – he suggests that disrespect for the state may be an important element in the strengthening of national unity. Conversely, jokes at the expense of hegemonic structures may buttress their power: cultural intimacy here is also "the familiarity with the bases of power that may at one moment assure the disenfranchised with a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation" (1998: 3).

Using examples of such putative national characteristics as American folksiness, Greek craftiness or Israeli bluntness, Herzfeld links cultural intimacy to alleged national traits that "offer citizens a sense of defiant pride in the face of more formal or official morality….These are the self-stereotypes that insiders express ostensibly at their own collective expense." (1998: 3) As the examples Herzfeld offers up suggest, "rueful self-recognition" is mixed with affection: that which we find embarrassing is, conversely, that which we love most about our collective selves. Of course, this collective self is constituted by individuals, who will have differing ideas what it is that characterises a national identity; nonetheless there is enough exchange between individuals and groups (often via the media) to reach some kind of agreement as to what constitutes the national character. Consequently, there is much potential for the fetishization and subsequent mythologising of such traits.

Herzfeld's work is useful, not only because it offers a corrective to top-down theories of the formulation of national identity in acknowledging the role of ordinary citizens in the making and remaking of the national self, but also because of the potential relevance of cultural intimacy to the analysis of advertising. As chapters four and six in particular will reveal, cultural intimacy is a key element in some of the campaigns analysed in this study, serving both as a form of gentle, even affectionate, criticism of particular modalities of behaviour associated with and a reinforcement of concepts of a national "type".

National identity, after all, does not only consist of those traits or achievements which are a source of pride, but also those distinctive qualities that are on one level a source of annoyance or embarrassment, but may at the same time be viewed with affectionate indulgence. Cultural intimacy has also allowed white South Africans to offer an argument for integration into post-apartheid South Africa, and for whiteness to be viewed as authentically South African. In this way, cultural intimacy may enhance the case for minorities – whether white, Indian or Coloured – to be included in the psychological nation, and thus make a significant contribution to nation-building.

The Myth Machine

It has long been a commonly held notion that advertising generates myth; together with Hollywood, advertising is one of the great "Myth Machines" of our age (Mark and Pearson, 2001: 44). Charles Pickstone, an Anglican priest, offers a concise argument, couched in religious terms, for advertising as generator of mythology:

> Advertisements generally work by depicting a 'fallen' state and then offering 'redemption' from it through the purchase of their product. The more universal or profound the fallen state, the better the advertisement succeeds. Thus advertisements, by definition almost, have to capture the prevailing mythology of those to whom they hope to speak, their way of seeing things, and their hopes and aspirations for themselves. The more subliminal and general the adverts' associations, the better. Thus they are extremely useful in charting the dominant mythology of their readers.
>
> (1996: 65)

Likewise, the work of Varda Langholz Leymore makes a compelling case for a strong affinity between myth and advertising. In her seminal text, *Hidden Myth* (1975), Leymore analyses advertisements using a structuralist approach based on the work of Levi-Strauss, revealing that, for all its apparent sophistication, modern advertising is constructed according to the same fundamental rules and relationships that characterise ancient myths (1975: ix). Like myth, the function of which is the resolution of potential conflicts, advertising serves to demonstrate that it is the existing state of affairs that provides the best choice of all possible alternatives. On the surface, advertisements may promote the benefits of using a particular brand of soap or baby formula, but on a deeper level, they address fundamental concerns revolving ultimately around life and death.

In this way, advertising helps to reduce anxiety, stating the conundrums that characterise the human condition and providing the solution (1975: x), usually in the form of a product or service. Advertising is concerned, then, with preserving things as they are. Leymore comes to the conclusion that, in modern societies, advertising performs “much the same” function as myth in less modern societies: advertising, therefore, is “myth in modern disguise” (1976: ix). “The more anxious, confused, uncertain and bewildered modern society gets,” Leymore notes, “the stronger will be the role played by advertising” (1975: x).

Advertising, then, is similar to myth in that it offers a means with which to make sense of the world. If myth in non-historical, culturally consistent societies assists in conflict resolution, advertising is its contemporary equivalent, rendering the modern world intelligible. Like myth, advertising is a "reflection of common symbolic culture" in the words of Michael Schudson (1992: 210). Similarly, Lawrence Sherry suggests that advertising can be used to

understand the structures of reality within a culture; advertising is a cultural document, "equipment for living" (1987: 441-442). Sherry describes advertising as a system of symbols "synthesized from the entire range of culturally determined ways of knowing that is accessible through ritual and orientated toward both secular and sacred dimensions of transcendental experience in hyperindustrial society" (1987: 443-4). Marketing is a powerful agent of social change as well as of social stability (1987: 442). In contrast to Schudson, he sides with McLuhan's perception of advertising as religion. More than creating meaning, advertising discerns or discovers meaning (1987: 445).

> Advertising...seeks to render otherwise incomprehensible social systems meaningful, so as to make it possible to act purposively within them...our apprehension of advertising can be understood as a social ritual in which shared values are dramatized.
>
> (Sherry, 1987: 448).

If, taking Dundes' definition cited earlier, a myth is a sacred narrative describing how man and the world came to be in their present form, then a case can be made for the compliance of advertising with this definition. As in myth, advertising takes situations to which audiences can relate and renders them in symbolic terms. Advertising does not depict reality as it is, but a simplified and idealised version thereof - "life and lives worth emulating", as Schudson puts it (1992: 215). In yet another parallel with myth, advertising not only uses ritual symbolism to influence purchase decisions, but can also be a form of ritual itself, as Cele Otnes and Linda Scott have argued (1996: 1). In what one must assume is an unconscious echo of Malinowski's definition of myth, a British pamphlet introducing advertising to prospective students explains advertising as "a means of contributing meanings and values that are necessary and useful to people in structuring their lives, their casual relationships, and their rituals" (cited in Sorkin, 2002: 2).

The idea that myth and advertising have something in common has penetrated the business world, too, on a conscious as well as an unconscious level. An Irish-based international consultancy, Alexander Dunlop Ltd, employs a "global myth team" that uses "archetypes, storytelling and ritual to define the differentiating core of brands". "All marketers are ultimately searching for a workable metaphor for brand character," explains the founder of the company. "Once the language of myth is learned, it is possible to apply it [to brands]" (6 minutes design news, 2001: 2).

In a similar vein, Carol S. Pearson and Margaret Mark's 2001 volume *The Hero and the Outlaw: building extraordinary brands through the power of archetypes* represents an explicit attempt to formalise the relationship between myth and brand. Products become brands

through the addition of meaning, and it is vital that this meaning be managed: Pearson and Mark define their theory as a system for the "management of meaning" (2001: 7). They promise that their theory will provide a "sound, proven methodology for establishing memorable and compelling brand identity, one that can withstand the test of time, cross lifestyles and cultural boundaries, and translate into success that endures" (2001: 18). Like successful movies, products appeal to consumers because they "embody an archetype" (2001: 5). Manufacturers have been forced to imbue their products with meaning by ever-increasing competition, where every product innovation can be replicated, and there is no substantial reason to choose one over another.

To be successful, a marketer should look for an archetype that matches well with the product on offer: the Innocent for soap, the Lover for perfume. But they temper their thesis with caution: because advertising could do harm, care should be taken with it. Hollywood and the advertising industry "spew forth a steady stream of "meaning" into the culture, without a clue or a thought as to what they are doing" (2001: 44). Advertisers and marketers, in their view, have a responsibility to ensure that the meanings they pump into culture are broadly positive, and that they do not use archetypes in a manipulative way. (Pearson and Mark remind their readers of the sorcerer's apprentice scene in Disney's *Fantasia* to point out the dangers to both consumer and marketer). Their theory, then, is also offered as a guide to marketers who wish to give their consumers deep and meaningful archetypes along with their bath soap or breakfast cereal. "We could be the first generation of marketers to address timeless and universal human needs in a way that builds timeless, universal, commercially effective – and *psychologically constructive* – brands" (2001: 45).

Advertising and belief

It seems pertinent at this point to touch on the role of belief in advertising which, like myth, has been accused of parasitism on the culture in which it operates (Bertelsen, 1998: 222). For Michael Schudson, advertising "might be said to lead people to believe in something" (1992: 224). This might take the form of belief in the small sense - belief in the claims made by advertising on behalf of the product or service. Or it may take the form of belief in a wider sense: do the assumptions and attitudes implicit in advertising, Schudson wonders, "become the assumptions and attitudes of the people surrounded by ads, whether or not they actually buy the advertised goods" (1992: 224). Schudson goes on to suggest that it is precisely because we do *not* believe in advertising in the way we would believe in an apparently objective fact that we are so vulnerable to its power. Advertising, he surmises, "may be more powerful the less people believe in it, the less it is an acknowledged creed" (1992: 225).

Are watchers of advertisers then readers of myth in the Barthesian sense, "consuming the mythical signifier as an inextricable whole made of meaning and form" (1972, 2000: 128)? Quoting Northrop Fry, Schudson suggests that because advertising implies ironic detachment from a political structure, one is lulled into a false sense of mental superiority even as one accepts the version of reality presented in advertisements. Expressed somewhat differently, advertising is generally recognised (at least in societies long since accustomed to the devious ways of marketers) as a myth in one sense - that the claims it makes may not necessarily be literally true. But it is not recognised as a myth in the sense that it determines the way in which we comprehend the world around us.

Wary of the possibility of being subjected to legislation, the advertising industry tends to downplay its influence over consumers, at least within the court of public opinion.[11] That the advertising and marketing industries do indeed recognise that advertising has the power to determine the way in which individuals understand the world in which they live is suggested by the popularity of branding techniques that seek to link archetypes with products and services. Pearson and Mark recognise that advertising plugs into the metaphorical software of the psyche - hence their concern that marketers produce advertising that helps people to become more psychological fulfilled.

Linked to these concerns is the fact that branding and advertising have contributed to the formulation of self-identity throughout the twentieth century, and that brands are often used as substitutes for more traditional markers of social difference, such as class, background and education (Pavitt, 2000: 40). The choices one makes as a consumer translate directly into the formation of personal identity, so that even a refusal to participate in consumer culture serves to define the self. An anti-globalisation activist is defined just as much by his or her opposition to McDonald's as a fashion victim by his or her devotion to Versace: there is no escape from the brand, even if it is as a concept rather than a label.

Indeed, the meaning that advertising and branding generates is seen to be so profound that for many observers, the act of consuming has come to fill the same niche within society once occupied by religion. The imbuing of the products of modern industrial society with spiritual significance is of course nothing new. The Surrealists, for example, were enchanted by the urban-industrial landscape, in which they perceived elements of the mythic: Louis Aragon

[11] At the Kid Power conference I attended in Johannesburg in March 2005, Paul Kernit, a leading American expert on marketing to children, warned delegates not to use the words "pester power" or "nag factor" when discussing the subject of marketing to children, as such terms reflected poorly on the industry and its attitude to its target markets.

saw in petrol pumps “the allure of Egyptian gods” (in Buck-Morss, 1990: 257). Walter Benjamin argued that capitalism had replaced religion; now modern critics such as James Twitchell argue that it is consumerism that has replaced religion (2000: 9). Fraim, in turn, sees brands as the new gods of a postmodern world, allowing access to the magical (2001: 9).

Michaelson argues that consumerist capitalism "defines success, provides objects of maximal concernment, offers new roads to immortality...and gives meaning, direction, purpose and shape to American lives. Put colloquially, if that's not religion, I don't know what is." (1995: 12) If consumerism is a religion, than advertising serves as its liturgy, its sacred songs and texts, its evangelists. In this sense, advertising can function as a "sacred" narrative. Many people believe in the truth, beauty and pleasure of the acquisition of goods more fervently than they do in the existence of a deity. This has led to the rise of the “cult brand”. Cult brands are worthy of special attention because they offer compelling evidence of how, on the one hand, advertising and marketing have succeeded in lending products profound meaning and, on the other, how the very devotion that these products inspire may sometimes shift the balance of power from the producer to the consumer.

Cult brands

“Branding” has long since become the seminal word in marketing. Branding, argue Al and Laura Ries in one of their best-selling books, *is* marketing. Everything involved in the process of marketing is ultimately devoted to the building of a brand, which they define as “a singular idea or concept that you own inside the mind of the prospect” (1999: 172). Brands are becoming increasingly personalised (according to an English survey, the public trust brands like Sainsbury’s more than traditional authority figures), while individuals – especially politicians and others who rely to a greater or lesser extent on a certain amount of public goodwill for their job security – are having to promote themselves as brands.

The Rieses argue that any proper noun – including those belonging to countries, corporations or individuals - is a brand (1999:5). In fact, if an individual wishes to be truly successful in life, they suggest, he or she should think of him or herself as a brand and behave accordingly (1999: 5). Viewed from this perspective, it is relatively simple to argue that Mandela’s entire life has been devoted, unconsciously, to building himself as a brand. If he owns a singular concept in the mind of the prospect, it is most likely that of “dignity”, though “freedom” and “moral greatness” come close. It could be said that brands, given that they encapsulate core values, are the myths and legends of our time. It is frequently argued by both marketing writers and critics of consumerism that those industries dedicated to “building” brands – advertising, marketing and promotion – are really in the business of manufacturing myths.

And the manufacture of myths is exactly what marketers would like to do. It is no longer enough that one uses brands; one must love them, too. Peter Cullinane, Chief Operating Officer of Saatchi & Saatchi, argues that in order for brands to be successful, customers must form deep relationships with them. Brands must not only be respected for their performance, reliability and value, but be loved; they must become what he terms "Lovemarks". Cullinane suggests that one imagine a graph with one axis representing love and the other, respect. "A Lovemark belongs in the corner formed by high respect and high love; you could call it, with respect, the Nelson Mandela quadrant. If a brand sits there, it means it has taken up residence in the heart of a culture" (2001: 6). Of course, it is up to the consumer to decide whether a brand deserves the status of Lovemark: "Lovemark status is conferred, not claimed. It's a confirmation of connection - a connection the consumer has made" (Cullinane, 2001: 6).

In some cases, brands have indeed become lovemarks, occasionally even developing religious overtones and becoming so-called “cult brands” (Wells, 2001: 198). The Nike swoosh has been compared to the crucifix in its symbolic power and the meaning it holds for disenfranchised youth, in South Africa and elsewhere. In the United States, unusually devoted drivers of the Mazda Miata, a model credited with re-igniting the public’s love affair with roadsters during the 1990’s, are able to “marry” their vehicles in a ceremony conducted by an Episcopal priest. “By the power vested in me, I pronounce that you are…car and driver,” he is reported as telling the enraptured assembly; he is on record as insisting that such mass “weddings” were not just harmless fun, but a “spiritual endeavour” (Wells, 2001: 198).

In a similar vein, the massing of Apple Computer aficionados at the annual MacWorld expo is often described, in all seriousness, as a pilgrimage. It is in cases like these that frequently overwrought comparisons of consumerism to religion seem justifiable. As James Twitchell observes, “People own these brands, just as we used to own knucklebones of saints” (in Wells, 2001: 198). Apple and Miata have become cult brands, where the devotion of customers to the product has become so fervent that it resembles the behaviour of members of religious sects. Cult brands become the focus of communities that consider themselves somehow apart from the rest of society, and allegiance to the brand becomes a principle marker of identity.

The attraction of cult brands has been linked to a desire for community, for sense of self and a feeling of belonging. In an age of shifting, multiple identities and large-scale disintegration of community and family ties, attachments to material objects and the spiritual dimension embodied in the brand have become more common. Strong identities tend to form around

brands in certain product categories, usually high-interest categories such as motor vehicles, entertainment or (for some) computer equipment. Harley Davidson is the "archetypal" cult brand: Hell's Angels is said to use the Harley owner's manual in place of the Bible at wedding ceremonies (Wells, 2001: 200).

In a similar way, many Apple owners construct their own identity in a way that is linked to a remarkable degree of intimacy with the brand of computer they use, particularly in relation to owners of DOS machines. The Apple brand and all that it stands for comes to represent their own worldview. It is worth remembering that much of the "attitude" associated with Apple stems ultimately from its famous '1984' television advertisement that was flighted during the 1984 Superbowl Final and which compared IBM to Orwell's Big Brother. This advertisement firmly established Apple as a "challenger" brand, one that rejected conformity and emphasised personal freedom. Those who identified with this philosophy tended therefore to identify with the brand. Ironically, the anti-mainstream stance of Apple's management (personified by Steve Jobs) has both ensured the cult status of the brand and limited the possibility of expansion. Because Apple is and will remain a niche computer brand,[12] users of Apple computers are able to feel distinct from (and superior to) users of mainstream machines.

Cult brands are worthy of study for another reason, for in many ways they embody the paradoxes inherent in consumerism. By taking the injunctions of advertisers to their logical conclusion, fanatical devotees of cult brands expose the unconscious messages circulating deep within a philosophy of consumption that promises redemption through the possession of material goods. They also undermine the argument (which remains common amongst the academic and policy formulation sectors) that consumers are almost always duped by advertisers into buying a particular product, or that the former are always at the mercy of marketers. "Branding is just another excuse for power's concentration at the top," argues Michael Sorkin, an American architect (2002: 4), in an echo of views frequently expressed by the anti-globalisation activist Naomi Klein and others.

In fact, sometimes the opposite is true, with fanatical consumers in constant conflict with marketers who wish to take a product in a direction of which its consumer fan base

[12] In recent years, Apple has enjoyed enormous success in product categories outside its core personal computer business, notably with the iPod, a music player that has been likened to the Sony Walkman in its ability to recast the way music is consumed. The iPod has become a cult brand in its own right, so powerful a marker of social status that young black South Africans have taken to wearing a distinctive white earpiece plugged into an ordinary (that is, non-iPod) MP3 player (Ian Calvert, 2005: 2005 Kid Power Conference presentation).

disapproves. Indeed, "A company's worst fear is that its brand will be kidnapped by a fringe group" (Wells, 2001: 201). Harley-Davidson has long tried to downplay its involuntary association with the Hell's Angels, although this rebellious image is a large part of the brand's appeal with its more desirable customers, who tend to be middle class and affluent. Mazda was forced to redesign a cupholder after Miata owners complained en masse, and now consults with customers before making any changes (Wells, 2001: 201). Companies frequently find themselves engaged in sometimes bruising battles with consumers over who really owns the brand, the manufacturer or the individual who buys it, so that, as in the case with Mazda, the end consumer begins to play an active role in the conceptualisation of the product.

Advertising tries hard to produce at least a degree of this kind of identification with most products, and in most cases does not succeed. Cult brands tend to develop spontaneously, usually when a small, devoted core of customers starts a new trend. All advertisers can hope to do is keep up with consumers, and avoid alienating them (one notable exception is Red Bull energy drink, which started an entirely new product category - one it continues to dominate despite the best efforts of a plethora of new competitors - through exceptionally shrewd marketing). Consumers who identify strongly with a certain brand may abandon it if a change in marketing strategy results in a change in brand identity; brands that start out small and exclusive, for instance, may lose their cachet after they expand – in this case, the idea that others do not use them adds to their appeal. In other cases, battles over intellectual property pit individual fans against large corporates anxious to protect their trademarks. Warner Brothers attracted a deluge of negative publicity after it attempted to close a Harry Potter website created by a fifteen year old girl. In contrast, the American education publisher Scholastic solved the problem of a maverick website based on one of its children's movie series by hiring the teenager who had developed it as a Web designer.

As brands inspire ever more devotion, so battles over them become more heated. If the phenomenon of cult brands illustrates anything, it is that the marketer-consumer relationship is not one-sided. It is perhaps the central conundrum of branding and marketing that the more valuable a brand becomes, the more vulnerable it is to shifts in public opinion. McDonald's is targeted not simply because anti-globalisation protestors object to the food it serves or decry its marketing practices, but because its status as a global brand is unrivalled. McDonald's has become mythologised; having broken free of the marketing context in which they were first envisioned, the symbolic power of the golden arches and the infamous "Mc" prefix are now available to be used as weapons against the entire late capitalist hegemonic order. Consumers do have power, and in many cases know how to use it.

Consumerism and politics

Indeed, it is now the case that many individuals in modern late-capitalist societies feel that it is as consumers that they are most able to make a difference to the world. Noreena Hertz, addressing the narrowing gap between politics and consumerism, concludes that "politics has entered commerce; consumerism has entered politics" (1999: 8). Corporations, aware of the damage a negative image can do to their bottom line, are becoming much more conscious of the kind of issues that inflame the passions of their target markets: sweatshop labour for instance, activities in Burma or genetically modified foodstuffs. Protest against a corporation generally produces quicker and more tangible results than a march to present a memorandum to the government of the day. "Social responsibility was once seen as a good PR tool by big business;" Hertz observes, "now corporations are being held hostage by their own marketing strategies" (1999: 7).

On the other side of the coin, traditional politics is now only one of many distractions competing for the attention of the citizen-consumer. Rhetoric is therefore whittled down to easily recalled slogans; policy is shaped by focus groups. Politicians have become salespeople competing for the custom of voters in a crowded marketplace of ideas. "Politics has gone on sale; consumer politics is the real new politics we are buying," argues Hertz. "Politics is dead – long live the consumer" (1999: 8). It seems worthwhile to remind ourselves at this point of Pierre Bourdieu's observation, that "The most disputed frontier of all is the one which separates the field of cultural production and the field of power" (1994: 63). In some cases – as in that of Nelson Mandela, who has been repeatedly described as South Africa's most important brand and who has appeared as often in *Hello!* as he has in *Newsweek* – that dividing line seems very blurred indeed. Politicians have become celebrities; consumption has become a political act. The frontier has indeed been breached.

What, then, of the implications for democracy? Should it worry us that Rem Koolhaas might well be right, that shopping really is the last form of public activity? (Cited in Sorkin, 2002: 2). There are those like the American journalist, Thomas Frank, who in his volume *One market under God* casts a critical eye over the love affair between 1990s America and the prospect of enormous wealth. "The brand was a democratic thing," Frank observes of contemporary attitudes to marketing and identity, "an edifice that the people had helped build themselves simply by participating in the market. The brand, in short, was us" (cited in Sorkin, 2002: 2). Frank's position, like that of Naomi Klein, is that capitalism, globalisation and branding have eroded democracy and liberty. By providing consumers with a ready-made identity and leveraging social pressure to encourage unnecessary consumption, thereby

entrenching a soullessly materialist view of the world, capitalism and branding undermine individual autonomy and weaken the social fabric.

But to be fair, such a situation is by no means a simple case of bad capitalist corporations versus simple, good citizens. In many cases, context makes all the difference, for what holds true of Middle America may not apply to much of the Third World. Charles Paul Freund (2002), a foreign policy analyst basing his examples upon repressive societies, has argued that capitalism, democracy and culture actually reinforce one another. So-called "vulgar" culture can function as an important weapon against the forces of authoritarianism, expressing as it does the desire for the expression of an individual identity. When Afghanistan was liberated after half a decade under the Taliban, the people expressed their joy through the vehicle of commercially generated popular culture, persuading barbers to cut their hair in styles that mimicked that of Leonardo diCaprio and flocking to watch Bollywood blockbusters. [13]

The spectacle prompted the American novelist, Anna Quindlen, to remark, "How depressing was it to see Afghan citizens celebrating the end of tyranny by buying consumer electronics?" (Quindlen in Freund, 2002: 4). Such a comment is typical of the views of many observers in the West, who were disturbed by the growing influence of consumer culture across the world. Hillary Clinton, addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, warned that consumer-driven culture was undermining both capitalism and democracy (in Freund, 2002: 5). Similarly, Benjamin R. Barber apportioned much of the blame for the division between Western democracies and the Islamic world on what he defined as a "McWorld", in which culture became commoditised. Societies under siege from American-influenced popular culture responded by turning to religious fundamentalism and, by implication, terrorism (in Freund, 2002: 6).

Freund argues that this kind of criticism follows in the tradition of elites who have always resisted the popularisation of certain cultural forms. Only good taste should be exported, in this view, because vulgar, commercial culture does not have meaning. Freund disputes this: commercial culture, he argues, does indeed have meaning for the people who, like the beleaguered citizens of Kabul, turn to it the moment they have the opportunity. Consumerism does not undermine democracy; on the contrary, in the repressive societies Freund cites, it has reinforced it. "The citizens of the post-subsistence world," he argues, "have an historically remarkable luxury: They can experiment with who they are. They can fashion and refashion their identities, and through much of their lives this is just what they do" (2002: 24). And

consumerism, which, despite its limitations, does offer a range of options for the individual in search of an identity, is one of the most important vehicles of self-expression in modern society.

Examining the phenomenon of the *stilyagi* in Russia and the *rai* singers of Algeria, Freund argues that when culture and the market intersect, the views and concerns of outgroups such as blacks, Jews and women, are presented to mainstream society. Thus the cause of democracy is advanced (2002: 19-20). (Certainly, a history of twentieth century American cultural forms points to the influence of outgroups; most American popular music has its roots in the music of the black slaves, and the realities of modern ghetto life have been brought into sharp focus by hip hop and rap musicians.) In fact, those individuals who embrace popular culture are not being exploited by the companies which produce it, since culture "is built around meaning, and meaning proceeds from one's self" (Freund, 2002: 26).

Freund avoids examining whether this maxim always applies, particularly in Western cultures where peer pressure plays such a central role in product – and identity – choice. But his examples offer a useful corrective to those who would condemn consumerist culture as always exploitative.[14] When citizens of the so-called Third World wish to emulate the actors they see in American soap operas instead of writing poetry or contemplating ways to save the planet from environmental destruction, they are exercising their personal freedom. Clearly, consumerist culture is liberating for some, and enslaving for others, and this has proved to be the case in post-apartheid South Africa, too.

It is this ambiguity that makes argument either against or in favour of consumerism and the advertising that accompanies it so difficult. Ironically, the idea that capitalism is undermining itself through its own excesses is a point on which the Left and the Right appear to agree. Gopal Balakrishnan, reviewing Hardt and Negri's *Empire* in the *New Left Review*, observes, "Empire is a society of the spectacle, seemingly powered by the pursuit of happiness – but in reality based on the mobilization of desires that are intimately wedded to the fear of failure, exclusion and loneliness" (2000: 5).

The free marketeers have discovered this alarming fact, too. "We have reached Utopia – and it sucks," wails an article on the triumph of individualism in the über-capitalist *Financial Times* (Tomkins, 2000: 1). Similarly, Mary Kenny, writing in the traditionally Tory-supporting British magazine *The Spectator*, rails against the bad behaviour that capitalism has

[14] The Bollywood example also points to the fact that not all popular culture emanates from America; in Asia, much of it comes from India and Japan.

bred. Indeed, from this perspective, capitalism is threatening bourgeois culture, apparently producing an "uncouth strain of people who have no idea how to behave, think only of their own gratification, shriek foul-mouthed abuse at anyone who frustrates their whims for two seconds, and have never been properly told off for their appalling conduct" (2002: 1).

At the centre of arguments around consumer culture are issues of power and control: people buy into the materialism that is at the heart of capitalism on which bourgeois culture is built, and then behave in ways which the more genteel elements of society wish they wouldn't. And it is worth noting that the segments of society that generate the most anxiety (especially on the Right) are those at the margins of bourgeois culture: the extravagant jewellery-clad poses of the black and Hispanic gangsters in the American ghetto, or the feckless British underclass. Yet there is no going back, argues Richard Tomkins, for there simply is nothing better than the "Utopia of triumphant individualism", no way to improve upon it. The only possibility open to society is a return to the past (2000: I).

The mass media and nation-building

The mass media have been blamed repeatedly for fomenting this culture of rampant materialism and selfish individualism. It is here, especially, that anxieties about the cultural colonisation of the world by America surfaces, for, as we have seen, nations depend on collective acts of imagination, and collective acts of imagining (or myth-making) can only be transmitted through the media in their various forms (Miller, 1996: 32). Logically, then, what is transmitted by the mass media will influence what exactly is imagined. Broadcasting has played an important role in what Graeme Turner calls the "nationing" of Australia, for example, by connecting its widely dispersed and often isolated population in an imagined community (1993: 8). Dayan and Katz (in Chwe, 2001: 73) have compared televised media events to the Passover seder, which "has served through the ages as a powerful means of unification, offering a ceremonial structure that takes account of geographic dispersion by translating a monumental occasion into a multiplicity of simultaneous, similarly programmed, home-bound microevents while focused, however, on a symbolic centre".

Much of the appeal of television lies in its apparently close relationship with reality. The world on television looks disarmingly like the real world around us. Reality is constantly played back to the viewer, in the form of television news and various forms of actuality programming. For Masterman, television outdoes all other forms of media in its "effortless production of cultural myths, 'realities' which go-without-saying" (1984: 4). So the formation and continued existence of modern national identities depends in a profound way on media of mass communication, especially television. The mass media are central to the spread and

reinforcement of ideology, and, since it is the financial bedrock on which the mass media rests, advertising is of central importance too.

Ernest Gellner, however, is critical of the idea that the media transmit a given idea, nationalism, which already happens to be there, to audiences who would not otherwise be aware of it. In fact, it hardly matters what ideas are fed into the mass media for regurgitation. The media are themselves an embodiment of nationalism.

> [I]t is the media themselves, the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralized, standardized, one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism...The most important and persistent message is generated by the medium itself, by the role which such media have acquired in modern life. The core message is that the language and style of the transmissions is important, that only he who can understand them, or can acquire such comprehension, is included in the moral and economic community, and that he who does not and cannot, is excluded.
>
> (1983: 127)

Gellner's arguments point to the central importance of language in the construction of the nation. Those who understand the language are included; those who do not are excluded. In addition, a comprehension of what Gellner refers to, rather ambiguously, as "style", is essential to gain or maintain membership of the moral and economic community. It must be assumed that style, as used here, refers to culture, since style is a product of culture. Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, it could be argued that states in which there are multiple languages as well as broadcasters catering for speakers of those languages, are multi-national states for that reason alone. [15]

It should not be forgotten that the media have had a profound effect, not just on identity and the understanding of what it is to be a part of a nation, but on institutionalised politics itself. Visibility is now almost always mediated by the media. As John Thompson argues: "Mediated visibility is an unavoidable condition of institutionalised politics in the modern era, but it has uncontrollable consequences for the exercise of political power" (1990: 36). The media, then, can have a powerful influence over the results of elections. It is worth noting that the media are almost always heavily restricted in undemocratic societies: just as the apartheid regime made censorship a central element of its bid to control all aspects of South African

[15] This applies in particular to the case of radio as opposed to television, where there are no visuals to aid the non-speaker in comprehension of what might be happening. Thus, according to this argument, a rural Zulu woman who understands no English is completely excluded from the moral and economic community engendered by Radio 702, just as an urban woman with little Zulu vocabulary would be almost completely excluded from the moral and economic community engendered by Ukhozi FM. One of the challenges of nation-building in a South African context then must be to accommodate such difference within a wider identity, so that one may be both Zulu and South African at the same time.

society, the Zimbabwean government of Robert Mugabe has targeted journalists and publications that refuse to toe the Zanu-PF line. The South African media (notably the traditionally "liberal" press) have been repeatedly accused of being negative, racist and Eurocentric by the ANC government and other members of the emerging black elite in a continuing battle over representation and the right to determine a discursive framework appropriate to post-apartheid South Africa. Inevitably, comparisons have been made with the controlling tendencies and intolerance of debate so evident in the conduct of the apartheid regime.

The media have also altered the nature of politics itself by enforcing the strictures of the various genres within which they communicate (typically the news broadcast or the actuality programme) on politicians, who must remain entertaining enough to feature in the news, and must reduce complex arguments to "soundbites" in order to fit into the tight timeframes imposed by the television and radio news format. It is frequently argued that the problem of information overload – where the average member of the public is bombarded with thousands of items of information daily, most of them useless - means that people now have short attention spans and are highly selective about what they pay attention to. The modern politician has to take all of this into account; both Tony Blair and Bill Clinton proved themselves to be consummate politicians of an age where image is everything.

Yet the media in a democracy can never be entirely within the control of a political leader. "However much political leaders may seek to manage their visibility, the very phenomenon of visibility may slip out of their control and undermine whatever support they may have or may seek" (Thompson, 1990: 36). One mistake made in the public eye may destroy a career, though there are of course exceptions. In the case of Tony Blair, it was the public's growing awareness of his reliance on spin-doctoring and his attempts to control his image that have eroded his popularity over the years. Bill Clinton's dalliance with Monica Lewinsky and subsequent denial could have destroyed his career; instead, it allowed him to enter the realm of myth, so that the mere mention of a cigar is enough to conjure up the narrative of the philandering-but-lovable former president.[16] Sometimes politicians, usually in highly controlled societies, overestimate their own entertainment value, as in the case of Namibia,

[16] Clinton's popularity, it should be noted, is undiminished (he is certainly much more popular outside of America than is George W. Bush). "Bill Clinton is viewed by the world as the epitome of American optimism — naïve optimism maybe, but optimism," argues Thomas Friedman in the *New York Times* (2002: 1). Clinton's popularity can be linked to the products of American culture (and Clinton has always enjoyed significant support in Hollywood): "[Our optimism] is also a huge source of U.S. strength and appeal — the soft power that comes from technologies, universities, Disney Worlds, movies and a Declaration of Independence built on the assumption that the future can bury the past." (2002: 1)

where a furore erupted in 2002 over the decision by President Sam Nujoma to replace the popular American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful* with footage of a ruling party conference on the grounds that the former was undermining the morals of the citizenry. *The Bold and the Beautiful* was soon back on air in a small victory for a civil society under increasing pressure from totalitarian impulses.

The mass media also play a central role in the generation of common knowledge, a concept critical to the functioning of nations which has until recently been largely overlooked. In one notable exception, Michael Suk-Young Chwe in his book *Rational Ritual* has sought to analyse ritual as a rational response to the problem of common knowledge and coordination. Rituals, he argues, are not simply concerned with the generation of intense emotion; their purpose is also profoundly rational. To focus on the content of cultural practices such as rituals while discounting their public nature is to fail to fully appreciate the way in which they function (2001: 76). Drawing on the notion of the imagined community, Chwe argues that common knowledge is vital if coordination problems are to be solved, and that this need - to let large numbers of people know what other people are doing - plays an important role in national ritual.

So much human activity depends on the actions of others. Most of us are more likely to buy a specific brand of computer, read a particular book or even vote for a political party if we know that others are doing the same. The legitimacy of everything from marriages to governments depends to a large extent on people knowing that other people also know, and that they know that you know of the existence of these specific institutions. "I am more likely to support an authority or social system, either existing or insurgent, the more others support it," Chwe argues (in Postrel, 2002: 1). "Public rituals, rallies and ceremonies generate the necessary common knowledge. A public ritual is not just about the transmission of meaning from a central source to each member of an audience; it is also about letting audience members know what other audience members know."

This is one of the reasons why sports matches are such significant national phenomena, and why it was that tributes to the victims of the September 11 attacks were held at the Superbowl Final: sports matches, which are televised and which feature huge crowds physically present at the event, offer an unparalleled opportunity for the imagined community to become tangible. Advertising on television is also a generator of common knowledge, not only for the product or service advertised, but also the ideology and worldview portrayed. "Since people fight over coordination, and common knowledge is helpful for coordination," notes Chwe (2001: 80), "people fight over mechanisms for generating common knowledge." This is

another way of understanding the ongoing battle over the media and freedom of speech in modern societies, where it is the media that play such a central role – both directly and indirectly - in assisting individuals to reach decisions in matters ranging from which restaurant to visit to which political party to support in the next election.

The phenomenon of common knowledge can be seen to good effect in the live televising of many significant events in the history of the New South Africa. Mandela's release was televised live, as was the 1994 Inauguration and of course the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final. Arthur Goldstuck noted the significance of the role of television in propagating the Mandela myth: "When we are able to watch, televised live, a new figure rising to join…an illustrious pantheon [including Churchill and Gandhi], we become part of a new mythology, and enter a time of myth." (1994: 197) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, which were open to the public and the subject of daily news reports, were an exercise in common knowledge generation: it is no longer possible to claim ignorance of the truth of South Africa's past, and, as I have noted, a (broadly) mutually agreed history is one of the prerequisites of nation-building.

Advertising and nation-building

Advertising has a natural affinity with the political. Like Barthes' concept of myth, it proves itself equal, again and again, to the task of co-opting and absorbing various political discourses – be they feminism or green activism – and adapting them to its own ends. Politics is entwined with everyday life, and the marketing strategists and creative personnel whose jobs it is to measure and anticipate the mood of the market and trawl endlessly for new ideas are always ready to incorporate them into a new campaign. Those marketers who can best supply the public with what it wants will deliver the most profitable results. So it is that marketers have now embraced multiculturalism: it has become common practice for major US advertisers to hire advertising agencies that specialise in communicating to minorities, and to produce campaigns designed to resonate with African-Americans or Hispanics.

Given this ability to adapt to political developments, and the fact that the mass media are central to the formation and propagation of national identity in modern states, it is to be expected that advertising is able to influence how citizens see themselves and the nations of which they are members. Such a phenomenon is not restricted to post-apartheid South Africa. Perhaps the most succinct statement yet of Canadian identity, for example, took the form of a

hugely popular advertisement for a brand of beer[17] which provoked standing ovations in movie theatres and hockey arenas. The advertisement featured an ordinary working class man who addressed the audience directly in a monologue ostensibly explaining the truth about Canadian identity to ignorant non-Canadians. "To Canadians [the advertisement] touches a national nerve by setting straight the rest of the world, especially the bigger and bossy neighbour to the south about their country and themselves" (Sapa-AP, 2000: 2).

Advertising, of course, has played an important role in the creation of a national identity both within that "bossy" neighbour to the south and outside its borders. Stuart Ewen (1976) has demonstrated how business used advertising to mould a sense of American identity in the early part of the twentieth century, especially amongst immigrant communities. He quotes Frank Presbey who, in a 1929 history of advertising, attributes to it "the growth of a national homogeneity in our people, a uniformity of ideas which, despite the mixture of races, is to be found greater here than in European countries whose population is made up of one race, and would seem easier to nationalise in all respects" (1976: 41). American advertising has helped to construct a notion of Americanness both for Americans[18] and consumers of American products in the rest of the world. Through advertising, we all become Americans: "[W]hile American representational genres might appear to have this need to nominate the nation, it often seems as if the American nation is ritually spoken of in order to universalise itself – to, as it were, normatively Americanise the world" (Turner, 1993: 8-9).

In the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks, advertising played a prominent role in the re-assertion of American pride and fortitude in the face of enemy attack. The destruction of the World Trade Center and the loss, in one disaster, of three thousand lives, represented a devastating eruption of the reality of death into the comfortable normalcy of every day American life. The impact on advertising was immediate: for four days, no American television network flighted advertisements. Several hundred million dollars in revenue was lost, but network executives and corporate presidents alike recognised that this was no time to be trumpeting the relative merits of family sedans or plaque-fighting toothpaste. Products that did advertise ran the risk of looking "tinny or superfluous - wholly inappropriate under the grave circumstances" (Raine, 2001: 3).

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[17] The similarity of the situation to South Africa, where beer advertising has also played an important role in the creation of a national identity appropriate to life after apartheid, did not escape the author of this article.

[18] It is interesting to note that American advertising tends to be much more politically correct than the society it purports to represent. Minorities are frequently represented in American advertising, and are seldom the subject of mockery, which tends to be reserved for white males.

Advertisers also responded quickly to the dramatic upwelling of patriotism that followed in the wake of the attacks. Campaigns were postponed or revised; consumerist messages rapidly gave way to messages exhorting community spirit. Billboard advertisements were taken down, to be replaced with the American flag and messages of sympathy for the victims and support for their rescuers. In the Sunday papers, Kmart published a double page spread of the American flag, instructing readers to cut it out and stick it in their windows to advertise their support for their country. One kind of myth had been ripped away, to be replaced with another, older version.

Some observers had their doubts about the new patriotism, citing risks of jingoism. "Handled poorly, a patriotic message can be interpreted as opportunistic or worse, cheesy," opined *Advertising Age* (Sanders, 2001: 1), which cited the example of a car rental company which advertised lower "Great American Rates" a mere eight days after the attacks, with copy mimicking the national anthem and a reference to the Declaration of Independence in its claim that not all car rental companies are "created equal" (Sanders, 2001: 1). Yet advertisers also attempted to ameliorate the ethnic tensions that surfaced in the wake of the attacks. In an entirely different vein, a thirty-second public service announcement began airing across the country soon after September 11. It showed a diverse group of people making the same declaration: "I am American". Employees of the Austin, Texas-based agency that had produced the campaign in partnership with the not-for-profit Ad Council were disturbed by revenge attacks on Muslims and Arab Americans and wanted to address the problem. "At our core, we are a nation that was the birthplace of religious freedom and individual diversity and tolerance," explained the agency's CEO. "So it is altogether fitting that during this time of pain, anger and hope that we not only rally around the flag, but around the founding principles of America's foundation" (Raine, 2001: 3).

Apart from the challenges of responding to the tragedy in a sensitive way, there was speculation about the long-term effect on the use of humour in advertising. Comedy was a staple ingredient in advertisements wishing to appeal to consumers. Now, the mood of seriousness which had permeated the nation would make a flippant approach to advertising completely inappropriate. The feeling among advertising executives was that marketers would become much more wary of taking risks when it came to communication. A new emphasis on stability and security would not lend itself well to humour, noted one creative director. Advertising, which usually takes its lead from pop culture, would wait to see how the new mood would affect movies, books and television programming. In any event, it was predicted that jokes related in any way to the tragedy would be taboo in advertising for a long time (Vagnoni, 2001: 6). Advertising reflected the public mood, and as the nation changed, so it

would have to adjust.

The response of the advertising industry to the September 11 attacks points to the central role of advertising in a continuous reflection of America's sense of self. Similarly, Australian advertising has also helped to reinforce particular notions of what constitutes a national identity. Since the 1970's, Australian advertising has been noteworthy for its nationalist flavour. Graeme Turner has noted how many Australian advertisements are "incantatory", calling the nation into being (1993: 8). Comparing Australian to British advertising, Turner notes that in "Australian representational genres, Australia is explicitly figured (and interrogated) as image, myth – nation" (1993: 8).

This trend began when the "Advance Australia" campaign of the 1970's and early 1980's sought to redress what was perceived to be a general lack of lack of pride in the country and support for Australian manufacturing. The use of typically Australian imagery – what Cunningham calls an "established repertoire of Australian tropes" (1993: 130) also began to appear in purely commercial campaigns. For Fiske, Hodge and Turner, signifiers of Australia include kangaroos, the map, the flag, images of landscape and the Sydney Opera House amongst others, and note that advertisers routinely use these images in their advertising (1987: xi). Other myths of Australianness include egalitarianism, the underdog, dogged persistence and ultimate success (Fiske et al, 1987: xi), and these, too, have featured in Australian advertising campaigns.

During the 1980's, one of the more salient features of Australian advertising was what was referred to in the industry as the "humanity" advertisement. This type of advertisement appeared to be selling, above all, a kind of 'Australianism'. Many campaigns attempted to construct viewers, not as individuals, but as members of a distinct Australian national community (King and Rowse, 1990: 38). Campaigns for the private television network Channel 7, the building society Newcastle Permanent and the 'Have a Go' and 'Project Australia' campaigns all made use of this strategy. While many of these campaigns were conceptualised with spreading a public service message in mind, even commodity advertisements conformed to this pattern. "[T]he ad is calculated not to describe a good but to identify a product, a sentiment or a service with an imagined community, diverse but essentially unified" (King and Rowse, 1990: 39).

The humanity advertisements made a point of depicting ordinary, unpretentious people in ordinary, everyday settings. Working class men – the mythical "battlers" of Australian society – were often celebrated in a salient example of the use of cultural intimacy in advertising to

reinforce a particular understanding of national identity. “The consistent appeal to endorse the ordinary as authentic and shared is the theme common to the humanity ads,” note King and Rowse. “The more patriotic advertisements…avoid politics and go straight to the people as the source and addressee of their messages…. In all of them, it is the public which speaks to itself, powerfully implying a less authentic world of politics and media hype that is elsewhere, and ultimately unnecessary” (King and Rowse, 1990: 41).

Notably, all of these campaigns were developed with wide reach in mind; as King and Rowse note, such an approach would not be appropriate for a product or service defined by its exclusivity. In the early 1990’s, the importance of advertising in the ongoing formation of Australian national identity was such that continued high levels of protectionism in the advertising industry were justified on these grounds (Cunningham, 1993: 129). Australian television advertising, Cunningham argues, “has developed a strong grammar of national imagining that parallels film and television fiction, but has considerably greater penetration of mass market” (1993: 130). Cunningham notes that, while there appears to be consensus amongst critics that advertising “panders to patriarchy and consumerism”, advertising may make a positive contribution to national culture (1993: 129). [19]

Advertising’s role in shaping the nationalconsciousness has also been compared to the role once played by great novels. James Twitchell argues that while individual companies do not control the tastes of individual consumers, as a collective, business shapes culture. “Companies today largely control the pipelines through which culture flows. And their authorship makes a difference. Consider how a great novelist once was able to recast the thinking of an entire generation. Today branding plays this role." (Twitchell, 2001: 1).

Many South Africans appear to agree with this view. The idea that advertising has a role to play in the generation of national identity has taken root in South Africa, so that debates about transformation in the advertising industry inevitably turn to issues of national pride and patriotism. Chairman of the Association for Advertising and Communication Mpho Makwana defined advertisers as “craftspersons of culture”: “We declare that we are going to take the tools at our disposal and employ them for the good of this nation” (2002: 4). Jannie Ngwale, one of the most powerful black men in the South African advertising industry, felt that advertising had a key role to play in developing a sense of nationhood and belonging. “Our

[19] But because of its exclusion of the nation as a category worthy of study and its assumption that advertising is inherently negative, cultural studies is not equipped to examine the contribution of advertising to national culture. In Cunningham’s words, “cultural studies is spectacularly unsuited to this task” (1993: 129).

advertising must get us to start saying 'we are all proud to be South African'," he said, "and it must tap into the richness of our different cultures" (Seery, 2002: 10).

Even the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, has added his weight to the argument that advertising could influence the formation of a viable national identity. "We are South Africans, and our communication strategies must therefore use our collective experiences, our culture (if you wish) to develop the paradigm to effect the changes in our national psyche," he told delegates at the 2002 *AdFocus* conference (2002: 2). Buoyant economies, he suggested, were created in part by optimism on the part of the citizenry, and advertising had a role to play in generating that feel-good factor.

Evidently, advertising has come to play a central role in what Homi Bhabha describes as "the continual process by which national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process" (1991: 297). It is in advertising that the new elite wish to see the "scraps, patches and rags of daily life…turned into the signs of a national culture" (Bhabha, 1991: 297). This is why the South African advertising industry has been called on to understand the reasons why consumers make the choices they do about everything from meals to cars (Kekana in Loxton, 2002: 5), since it is through this understanding, which is transformed by advertising into a continuous multimedia narrative of national culture, that "the very act of narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects" (Bhabha, 1991: 297). As South Africans see themselves reflected in advertising, so a notion of what is 'South African' is reinforced. The very act of depiction defines what may be considered emblematic of South Africanness.

The rise of the "brand state"

That the upper echelons of government recognise the power of advertising and its associated activities in generating a national identity both inside and outside South Africa's borders points to way in which marketing discourse has seeped into geopolitics and international diplomacy. If the autonomy of nation-states is eroded by globalisation and the demands of the free market, advertising reconstructs the nation both for the purposes of selling national pride to its citizens and as investment or tourism destinations to outsiders. The state, as John and Jean Comaroff have observed, begins to bear more than a passing resemblance to a corporation, "a metamanagement enterprise in the business of attracting business" (2001: 6). So, paradoxically, as the power of the state to determine its own destiny is reduced, increased power is invested in the nation of the tourist imagination, and myths of a new kind grow in influence.

Now it is no longer just the marketing sages who pronounce on the wisdom of branding an entire country; scholars of foreign policy are also beginning to take these ideas more seriously. In an influential article in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Peter van Ham of the Netherlands Institute of International relations has defined what he calls the "brand state" – an entity which "comprises the outside world's ideas about a particular country" (2001: 1). It is in the phenomenon of the "brand state" that myth, nation and advertising come together most seamlessly. As van Ham explains, a bad reputation, or no reputation at all, can be very damaging to a country's prospects for success. Countries that fail to generate ideas around themselves – in other words, unbranded states – find it difficult to remain internationally competitive, battling to attract investment or political attention. "Image and reputation are thus becoming essential parts of the state's strategic equity…Globalization and the media revolution have made each state more aware of itself, its image, its reputation, and its attitude – in short, its brand" (2001: 2, 3).

Such self-awareness is very evident in South Africa at the turn of the millennium, manifested in the form of such campaigns as Proudly South African as well as intense interest in bids for international sporting events, tourism statistics and the performance of the national currency. International perception is something that concerns many South Africans today, from government down to ordinary citizens counting on international investment to stimulate economic growth and jobs - and South Africans, of course, are more familiar than most with the tribulations associated with citizenship of an international pariah state.

Van Ham regards the increasing importance of branding in the political arena as a positive development, a countervailing force to the problems caused by nationalism. Taking elements that have the potential to define the state's sense of self in the international community and recasting them as marketing tools, assets to encourage tourism and investment rather than symbols of unique purpose and destiny tends to drain those elements of nationalist potency. National myths, when co-opted for the purposes of attracting tourist traffic, are rendered innocuous. Marketing, for all its reliance on emotional involvement, is deeply rational and pragmatic at heart: it must win over hearts and minds to the causes on whose behalf it lobbies, it must deliver benefits to the bottom line. Since pleasing international audiences is now as important as satisfying local ones if governments are to deliver economic growth, it is now much more difficult to justify the kind of rhetoric and action that answers to sectarian interests. As van Ham suggests,

> The brand state's use of its history, geography, and ethnic motifs to construct its own distinct image is a benign campaign that lacks the deep-

> rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity that can often accompany nationalism. By marginalizing nationalist chauvinism, the brand state is contributing greatly to the further pacification of Europe.
>
> (2001: 2)

In the case of South Africa, many phenomena that arose under a previous, undemocratic order can be valued under an ANC government for their contribution to the country's international image and their ability to attract tourists – the wine farms of the Cape, for example, or the Kruger National Park. And a national myth (in the form of Nelson Mandela, for example) can serve as a lucrative tourist attraction, bringing boatloads of visitors to Robben Island.

The powers that be in South Africa have embraced the philosophies of the brand state with enthusiasm. The International Marketing Council, set up by President Thabo Mbeki, has been tasked with influencing perceptions of South Africa both locally and abroad. After two years of deliberation, the IMC has settled on a brand essence for the country: "South Africa…Alive with Possibilities". Brand South Africa, argues the IMC, "is a way to put a label on ourselves. The label says: We're distinctive, we're competitive, and we're not asking for charity. Give us a chance to prove it." (2002: 6)

In the midst of heated debate over globalisation and neo-liberalism (crystallised in South Africa by the presence of the World Summit for Sustainable Development in August 2002), South Africa is increasingly looking to link consumerism and patriotism. An advertisement for Proudly South African tells the public: "It's time not just to be Proudly South Africa; it's time to also buy Proudly South African" (Modise, 2002: 89). Statistics on tourism arrivals regularly make headline news, and foreign tourists are seen as key to increasing economic growth, creating jobs and transforming South Africa's society and economy (Carolus, 2002: 114). Tourists can visit Robben Island or sip wine at Groot Constantia, experience the Museum of Apartheid next door to Gold Reef City Casino or explore KwaZulu-Natal, now marketed as The Kingdom of the Zulu.

In this way, myth, nation and advertising come together in a seamless whole, allowing South Africa's painful and divided past to be resurrected as a means to bring in foreign currency and create jobs. Older ideas, of blood ties and vows to God and dying for your land meet newer ideas, of image and perception and focus groups, to create a new kind of nation, one in which all its citizens become shareholders committed to economic growth. "We must use the national brand to permeate our language, our messages and images, and to become a source of energy that inspires us when we feel defeated and let down," writes successful black businesswoman Wendy Luhabe in as succinct a description of a national myth as I have come across (2002: 18). "Our diversity should be a source of strength, not of weakness, enabling us

all, whatever our backgrounds, to be part of something powerful, creative and visionary."

Luhabe's comments were made twelve years after the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela. Events and developments that had occurred in the intervening period – the first democratic elections, the shift by the liberation movement towards free market ideology, the rise of a political and economic black elite – had shaped Luhabe's fortunes. That same history had also shaped the mythology of the New South Africa, as the mythology had in turn shaped history: were it not for the belief that a peaceful transition to democracy was possible, for example, it is unlikely that peace would have prevailed in 1994.

The mythology of the New South Africa therefore cannot be understood in isolation from historical events: indeed, in some cases, history produced the raw material for the mythology. Such an understanding forms the basis of my approach to the subject. Having mapped out the theoretical concerns of this study, in the next chapter I will outline my methodological orientation and approach to this, a critical analytic history of advertising in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Two

History, Context, Critique: Notes on Methodology

Broadly stated, this thesis traces the ways in which advertising changes in relation to a very specific political and social context, and such an orientation carries significant implications for any potentially appropriate methodology. As it is, the combination of elements in this study serves to make it a social history, cultural history and, in some ways, a political history as well. It falls within the broad category of cultural studies and ideology critiques, but differs from some conventional academic approaches to these subjects in important ways. My intention in this chapter is to map out the ways in which this study is structured, to account for my analytic orientation toward advertising as a genre and a social practice, and the methodological consequences of such an approach.

The basic approach to the material may be characterised as the combination of a social history of advertising in post-apartheid South Africa, discourse analysis drawing on the work of Norman Fairclough and social semiotics in the mode of the analysis of contemporary myth undertaken by Roland Barthes. Therefore, it is necessary to enumerate the ways in which this work can be an historical discourse analysis and a critical discourse analysis. Because I am embedded in the very industry that is under analysis in this chapter, one of the first tasks I must tackle in this chapter is an acknowledgement of the ways in which my ability to critique the advertising texts that are the focus of the study is potentially compromised.

My approach to the subject of advertising is guided above all by the assumption that advertising texts cannot be interpreted without acknowledging the historical, cultural and political context in which they were produced and received. I concur here with Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, who point out that the consumption of media is frequently an ambiguous process that cannot simply be dismissed as politically incorrect or exploitative without attempting to understand it in the context in which it is produced and consumed. "Rather than taking cultural products and simply thumbing them up or down, cultural critique needs to see contemporary culture in a fissured, relational context, to ask who is producing and consuming what, for what purposes, in what situation, for whom, and by what means – always with an eye on the power constellations and the emancipatory projects at stake" (1994: 341).

Similarly, Douglas Kellner argues that the inclusion of a political economy perspective can contribute to textual analysis and critique. "Inserting texts into the system of culture within

which they are produced and distributed can help elucidate features and effects of the texts that textual analysis might miss or downplay" (2001: 4). My emphasis on this system of culture, or context, relative to the text itself is one of the most noticeable features of this thesis and accounts both for my reasons for making use of Fairclough and my departure at key points from the critical discourse analysis associated with his work.

Fairclough and CDA

The methodology used in this thesis might be most accurately described as historically inflected discourse analysis, though as a point of departure I draw on the model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (1989, 1995) as the basis of the structure of my analyses. Fairclough emphasises that his own approach is concerned above all with the analysis of change, "with how discourse figures within processes of change, and with shifts in semiosis and other social elements within networks of practices" (Fairclough, 2003: 1). Since my concern in this thesis is primarily with the tracking of changes in the national imaginary over time within a very specific historical context, Fairclough's use of analysis to understand changes in social life points to a potential synergy between his understanding of CDA and my own project. However, as I have noted, my approach to the analysis of texts differs from that advocated by Fairclough in several important ways, which I will presently account for in some detail.

Fairclough's approach to (critical) discourse analysis must be understood in the first instance by understanding his definition of discourse as a type of social practice. Social practice may in turn be defined as a stabilised form of social activity, and includes a number of different elements aside from discourse, namely activities, subjects and their social relations, instruments, objects, time and place, forms of consciousness and values (2003: 1). Fairclough argues that the relationship between discourse and other social practices is dialectical. "[D]iscourse internalises and is internalised by other elements without the different elements being reducible to each other" (2003: 3). CDA is therefore the analysis of the dialectical relationship between discourse and these other elements of social practice.

Fairclough's Boxes

Fairclough's understanding of a relationship between discourse and other forms of social practice as dialectical in nature has given rise to his model of CDA (1989, 1995). This model, illustrated in Figure 1, provides a useful structure within which to map out the interconnected nature of text and context. The purpose of the model is, Fairclough explains, "to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts,

analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice" (1995: 2).

As is evident from the schema below, Fairclough's model consists of three boxes embedded within one another, each representing a particular dimension of discourse, namely the text in the middle, embedded within the process of production and interpretation, which is in turn embedded in the conditions of production and interpretation. Each dimension of discourse requires a particular mode of analysis, from description or text analysis, in the case of the inner box, to interpretation or processing analysis in the case of the middle box and explanation or social analysis, which applies to the outer box. All these forms of analysis are ultimately interwoven to reveal which interests are served by a given text, but each step is also a discrete element of the whole. Thus it is possible to begin the approach to a text from any of the boxes (Janks, 1998), and there is consequently no right or wrong order in which to conduct an analysis.

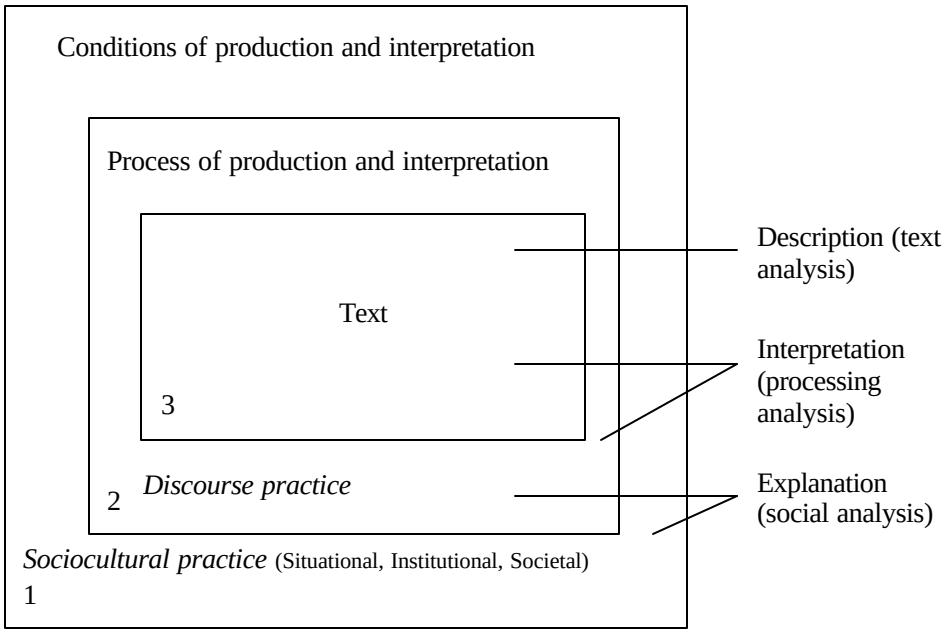


Figure 1. Fairclough's dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Janks (1998: 197))

My approach is to align my project with a form of discourse analysis that leans strongly towards the outer boxes. I will begin my approach from the outermost box, which addresses the conditions of production and interpretation. Because this thesis is in many ways a social

history focusing on change, the emphasis on a wider political and social context is much greater than would be the case with a more typical exercise in CDA.

The outer box: Conditions of production and interpretation

The wider conditions of production and interpretation or sociocultural practice of the campaigns analysed in this study are laid out in chapter three. Here, in what is effectively a schematic political history of South Africa between 1990 and 1998, I trace the emergence of key national myths, from the naming of the New South Africa, to the rainbow nation and Madiba Magic, both of which were subsequently succeeded by the myth of the African renaissance. For insight into this context, I make extensive use of contemporary commentary in the news media, quoting from a wide variety of commentators in diverse fields, from political analysis to marketing.

Chapters five, six and seven, which deal with Castle Lager, Vodacom and South African Airways respectively, also include references to the conditions of production and interpretation. In chapter five, I examine the role of the liquor industry in the industrialisation of South Africa and its association with the mining industry in particular. I refer to the ways in which control of alcohol consumption was used both to ensure control of the labour force and enforce the racialised hegemonic structures that characterised apartheid.

Similarly, in chapter six, I examine the emergence of cellular telephony as a key marker of social and economic change in South Africa. In chapter seven, I explore the symbolic meaning of national airlines and their chequered recent history in general, citing various examples from around the world, and the status of South African Airways as a marker of national status.

The middle box: Processes of production and interpretation

The processes of production and interpretation or discourse practice include both the wider context in which advertising campaigns are produced – specifically the conditions influencing the marketing strategy that ultimately generates the campaign - and the conditions within advertising agencies themselves. Thus I take the description of the factors influencing the nature of the texts under analysis one level closer to the text. In chapter three, I describe the processes within an advertising agency, from market research, to advertising brief to final edit, involved in the production of an advertising campaign. All of these processes influence the nature of the final product, since an advertising campaign is all too often a product of competing agendas and egos.

In chapter five, which addresses the advertising of Castle Lager, I look at the specific role played by South African Breweries in the South African economy and the company's self-ordained status as corporate national emblem. All of these factors must be taken into consideration if one is to understand fully the wider strategic imperatives that led ultimately to the production of the Friendship and World Cup campaigns. In chapter six, I examine the development of Vodacom as well as the plethora of cultural meanings that became attached to cellphones as their use became more widespread. These cultural meanings were used quite explicitly in the Yebo Gogo campaign and thus play an important role in both the production of the campaign (by the creative teams who develop the concept of the advertisements) and its interpretation by members of the audience.

Where source materials such as case studies are available, I use these to provide further insight into the processes of production and interpretation. Most of these case studies were entries in the Association of Advertising Agencies Apex Awards for advertising effectiveness and therefore provide an insightful background into the marketing and communication strategies behind the campaigns and the public response to them. Not only are sales figures and brand awareness scores used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign, but also, more importantly for my purposes, audience liking scores are also included. Thus it is possible to deduce whether in fact an advertisement under analysis elicited a positive response from the audience at which it was aimed.

For example, in chapter five, I use a case study of the Friendship campaign to gain insight into the proximate strategic requirements behind the production of 'Homecoming' - in this case, a need for the Castle Lager brand to regain lost market share after a logo redesign that was poorly received by the drinking public. The same case study also reveals how 'Homecoming' continued to receive high liking scores – from black male viewers in particular – years after it was first broadcast. This is unusual, as audiences tend to become bored with advertisements over time, and attests to the emotional power of the narrative. Similarly, in chapter six, I refer to a case study of the Yebo Gogo campaign which provides important information relating to the marketing strategy behind the campaign and how well it was liked by the public. Case studies such as these are exceptionally valuable to this study as they provide empirical evidence of audience response to campaigns as opposed to assumption and conjecture.

In addition to case studies as indicated above, I have also relied on contemporary commentary and news articles relating to advertising in general as well as the campaigns under analysis for further insight. Contemporary commentary is an especially useful source of anecdotal

evidence that falls outside of conventional advertising tracking research. The significance of this type of source material can be seen to best effect in Vodacom chapter, where I draw on various news articles for evidence of the cultural impact of the Yebo Gogo campaign.

The inner box: the text

Though CDA is generally associated with the written or spoken word, it can also include in its definition of discourse other forms of semiosis such as body language, utterances, symbols and visual images (Fairclough 2003:1). Television advertisements combine several forms of semiosis, including visual images, the written and spoken word and sound (which includes background noise and music). Given the potential complexity of the description of a text that makes use of so many different forms of semiosis, I have endeavoured to keep my descriptions as clear and simple as possible. My descriptions are based on vocabulary and conventions associated with film studies, with references to the type of shot (such as close up or long shot) and its angle.

The description of each advertisement is placed inside a grid divided into two columns, one on the left for the description of the visual action, the one on the right for notes on sound effects and dialogue. This, which follows standard practice by copywriters, is the most practical way to describe advertisements, which are often densely packed with visual cues contained in shots which may last no more than a fraction of a second. The extract below, taken from the description of Castrol 'New South Africa' gives an indication of the level of detail of the description used in this thesis:

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens with a wide angle shot of the Horingboom Oasis petrol station. It consists of one petrol pump and a rickety wooden shed next to a large tree, under which is parked a Toyota Landcruiser bakkie[20]. The sun is shining brightly. There is no sign of a tarred road: only the red sand of the Kalahari is visible.	SOUND FX: Background noise.
The camera zooms in towards the shack, which is still filmed in long-shot. On the stoep, Boet walks into the frame. Swaer is already seated. Boet begins to sit.	
Cut to mid-shot of Boet sitting down and looking quizzically at the empty chair to his left, in the foreground. Boet is dressed in knee-high khaki socks, velskoen, khaki hat, khaki shorts and a casual blue shirt. He gestures with his pipe.	Boet: Visitors?

[20] A colloquial term for a pick-up truck.

Cut to close up of Boet placing his pipe in is mouth. He looks concerned.	

As can be seen, I have attempted to strike a balance between description of the action as it would appear to the viewer and a more technical enumeration of cuts and types of shots used by directors. The type of shot used is a central aspect of film vocabulary, and the style of television advertising is ultimately based upon the visual language established by cinematic convention. This is why I have elected to use terminology associated with film studies (Bordwell, 1989 and Carroll, 1996).

For the analysis of these shots I will draw on semiotics and, where appropriate, certain elements of critical discourse analysis. Ideological textual analysis forms a key part of the discursive analysis. Here, where appropriate, I will follow the example of Janks (1998) in referring to the various ideological strategies outlined by Thompson in *Ideology and Mass Communication* (1989).

The most important techniques Thompson outlines include displacement and trope, both techniques of dissimulation in which existing patterns of dominance and hierarchical relations are disguised or camouflaged. Displacement, where positive or negative values are transferred between items through the use of a term associated with one concept or article to refer to another (Janks, 1998: 199) is perhaps the single most important ideological strategy used in modern advertising. The entire act of creating a brand depends on advertising's ability to appropriate terms from other discourses, and Castle relies on this process in particular in order to legitimate its claim to be an icon of South African culture. In fact, branding is effectively an exercise devoted almost entirely to displacement, as marketers seek to imbue goods with meanings that are not necessarily intrinsic to that product, but related to meanings and associations drawn from other discourses.

Trope also appears frequently in advertising as objects are lifted out of context and given new associations and meanings. Synecdoche, where a part stands for the whole (such as the captain of the national soccer team representing the entire nation in the Castle Lager World Cup campaign) is commonly used in advertising that refers to the nation. Indeed, much of the sports sponsorship industry is premised on synecdoche, as sports teams stand in for cities, regions, provinces and nations, generating tribal allegiances and new social identities as they gain followers. Metonym, where an associated element stands in for the whole, is more commonly used in advertising in general; common examples include advertising of fragrances and alcohol (which may enhance sexual desire) depicted as metonyms for sex itself.

Barthes' social semiotics

If Fairclough's model of CDA structures my approach to the analysis of the material (though not the detail of the textual analysis itself), Barthes' social semiotics both a source of both theory and practice, enabling me to draw together the theoretical overview undertaken in chapter one and the analyses themselves in chapters four to seven. To the extent that CDA draws on Barthes, his analyses of the mythic dimension, myth and ideology are very close. The analysis of myth is a form of ideology analysis; myth is therefore already instantiated as a form of analysis.

In examining the role of myth in everything from washing powder advertisements to wrestling matches, Barthes opens the way for the student of myth in contemporary culture to seek it out and deconstruct its tendency to recast historically produced events and circumstances as natural, unquestioned and unchanging. Thus myth removes human agency from events, creating the "what-goes-without-saying" or the "falsely obvious" (1972, 2000: 11). Myth, which is really a semiological system of sign, signifier and signified, therefore produces what is understood as "common sense". So, while the textual analysis itself is devoted to understanding the relationship between sign and signifier, the interpretative section focuses on the signified.

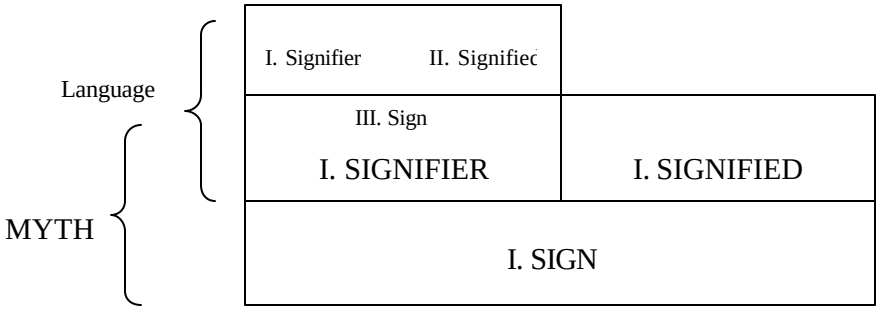


Figure 2. Adapted from Barthes (1972, 1993: 115)

Myth in Barthes' model is a second level order of signification, taking as its signifier a pre-existing sign. Describing the relationship between myth and language, Barthes explains:

> It can be seen that in myth there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which I shall call the *language-object*, because it is the language which myth gets hold of in order

> to build its own system; and myth itself, which I shall call *metalanguage*, because it is a second language, *in which* one speaks about the first.
>
> (1972, 1993: 115)

The sign or third term of the linguistic system becomes the signifier or first term of the mythic system. Barthes refers to the former as the "meaning" and the latter as "form", so that the meaning of language becomes the form of myth. While the sign prior to its appropriation by myth is rich with meaning and fully present, *within* the mythic system it becomes empty, ready to be appropriated or *used* by myth and turned into so-called common sense.

> [T]he essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal… The meaning will be for the form like an instantaneous reserve of history, a tamed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation: the form must constantly be able to be rooted again in the meaning and to get there what nature it needs for its nutriment; above all, it must be able to hide there. It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth.
>
> (1972, 1993: 118)

Myth is therefore hidden beneath the surface, even though it is at the same time obvious to the observer. This becomes evident in Barthes' now famous description of the photograph of the black soldier on the cover of Paris-Match. The image is simply that of a black soldier in a French uniform, eyes raised at what Barthes speculates is a "fold of the tricolour" (1972, 1993: 116). But Barthes sees something else in addition to the image, the myth of the might of French imperialism, which is clearly evident even if it is not on the surface.

> But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so- called oppressors.
>
> (1972, 1993: 118)

In this case, the image of the black soldier is the signifier or meaning of the linguistic system, and the might of French imperialism is the myth that takes the image as its form.

In much the same way that Barthes analyses the cover of Paris-Match, I have examined the relationship between surface meaning and myth in Castle Lager 'Homecoming' in chapter four. Here, on the surface, the advertisers present a narrative of exile and homecoming that is on the most obvious level a reference to political exile and homecoming in the wake of the dismantling of apartheid. It is also, as the advertising agency noted in a case study of the Friendship campaign, an analogy for the return of la psed Castle Lager users to the brand.

But on a deeper level, at the level of meta-language, the advertisers argue on behalf of a system based upon capitalism and individualism, suggesting that racial (and, implicitly, economic) justice will emerge under the benevolent aegis of big business rather than the interventions of a potentially socialist state. Given the freedom to do so, individuals will elect to form friendships based on common interests and tastes – in this case, a mutual appreciation of Castle Lager – without the interference of an interventionist state. The myth presents a convincing case for capitalism (and, it should be noted, not necessarily free market capitalism, given the monopolistic behaviour of South African Breweries) as the most appropriate system for a non-racial democracy.

In this way, I use the structure of Fairclough's methodology as a means to guide my approach to the text and its relation to context, but the analysis itself relies more on social semiotics than the methodology employed by Fairclough. I examine the conditions of production and interpretation by tracing the history of liquor in twentieth century South Africa, along with the history of South African Breweries. Fairclough's middle box, which address the processes of production and interpretation, is addressed partly in chapter four, where I explain the processes involved in producing an advertising campaign, and partly in chapter five, where I refer more specifically to the advertising agency's own assessment of the success of 'Homecoming' in terms of meeting its communication objectives. Finally, having examined the text using a social semiotics approach, I integrate this with both the conditions and processes of production and interpretation to reach the conclusion referred to in the previous paragraph.

Three points of departure from Critical Discourse Analysis

As my use of the Fairclough model makes clear, the methodology I employ in this thesis draws upon structures put in place by practitioners of Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA. However, there are three important points on which I depart from the precepts of conventional CDA, and which impact on the 'critical' nature of my analyses of specific advertising texts and my approach to the South African advertising industry's engagement with social and political change in general. The points which limit the critical possibilities of this study may be summarised as firstly, my own embeddedness in the focus of my study, secondly the topic of the study itself - namely nation-building in the post-apartheid state - and finally the more technical aspects of the analyses themselves, notably those dealing with comedy.

The first problem with which I am faced as a potential practitioner of CDA, then, is my lack of distance from the subject of my enquiry, and consequent lack of objectivity. In ways that

may be considered ironic in light of the importance of accounting for the process of production and interpretation of a given text in the Fairclough model, it is my very understanding and personal experience of the process of producing an advertising campaign that makes it impossible for me to be completely objective in my assessment of the advertising industry. Is it possible for a discourse analyst to be truly critical of an industry the practices of which she faithfully reproduces in order to earn her salary? My personal relationship with advertising may often be characterised by considerable cynicism, but I am too aware of the numerous steps involved in the production of a given advertising text – often characterised by conflict and compromise – to ever feel able to critique the industry and its products from a purely disinterested viewpoint.

Such an emphasis on the process of production and interpretation of an advertising campaign is in contrast with Janks's analysis of *Womanpower*, for example. Here her focus is almost entirely on the text in question, with a page devoted to exploring the historical context of the time at which this particular advertisement appeared, 1992. At no point, however, does she examine the internal processes of the advertising industry, thus virtually ignoring the process of production, which constitutes what one might describe as the middle Fairclough box. The apparent elimination of the process of production of advertising texts from their analysis and interpretation is a criticism that may be levelled, not entirely unfairly, at many critiques of advertising. Whether or not they make conscious use of a CDA model of discourse and discourse analysis, critiques of this type tend to focus on the larger social forces at play in the world in which advertising is both produced and received in parallel with a close analysis of the actual advertising texts themselves – but very little or no reference is made to the internal process of the production of advertising, from the marketing brief to script to the final approved edit.

As I have noted, it is my intention therefore to place the appropriate emphasis on Fairclough's middle box, by explaining in some detail the process of production in chapter three. I will also be making reference, where source material is available, to both the strategy behind the campaigns and public response to them. My analyses of Castle Lager 'Homecoming' and Vodacom 'Windmills' both rely on the use of additional information on the processes of production and interpretation (notably the marketing and communication strategy that led to the production of the campaign and research into public reception of the advertisement) to further illuminate my own interpretation of their use of myths of the New South Africa.

A second point as to why the extent to which my project may be defined as critical discourse analysis must be questioned, turns on the nature of the project itself. As Janks explains, CDA

is a practice "that endeavours to explain the relationship between language, ideology and power by analysing discourse in its material forms" (1998: 195). Crucially, Janks goes on to note that 'critical' in Critical Discourse Analysis refers to a focus on the role of discourse in both establishing and enforcing relations of domination. It is CDA's emphasis on the unmasking of the kind of inequality inherent in and taking for granted by established relations of domination that renders a truly critical approach to my subject somewhat problematic.

Fairclough's more recent work is closer to the approach taken in this thesis, in that it is less concerned with ideology and social policy and more with the neo-liberal global economic order associated with late consumer capital (2004). However, in noting how the imposition of a new global order "involves the reflexive process of imposing new representations of the world" (2004: 1), Fairclough's ongoing project nonetheless differs from the one undertaken here in several important ways. In the first place, my thesis is premised on the assumption that the processes of social and political transformation in post-apartheid South Africa should be considered by and large as a "progressive" project in relation to the entrenched racially defined hegemonic structures that characterised official policy prior to the dismantling of apartheid. While it would of course be perfectly feasible to analyse the campaigns under discussion here from an ideological standpoint that more closely approximates that of Fairclough's own leftist position, such an approach would constitute another project entirely. Fairclough's approach to his material is always adversarial, seeking evidence of discourse that naturalises new patterns of domination. In contrast to Fairclough, I am not actively searching for evidence of 'bad faith' in the material under analysis here.

Related to the assumption that the post-apartheid nation-building project must, in my opinion, be viewed as relatively progressive, is the supposition that advertising campaigns were not compelled to engage with the so-called New South Africa, so those instances where advertising did address social and political change are worthy of study. Moreover, I assume that the way in which these advertisements did engage with the nation-building project over the course of a decade or so is just as likely to reveal the endorsement of a positive national project (progressing from the racial segregation of apartheid to multiracial democracy), as it is to confirm the maintenance of existing relations of domination. It is the former that interests me more and as a result this is where my emphasis lies.

A third reason for questioning the extent to which the methodology employed in this thesis can be defined as *critical* discourse analysis, is related to the more technical aspects of the analyses of the texts themselves, the inner box of Fairclough's model. As I have noted, CDA seeks to uncover relations of domination endorsed and maintained by discourse, and

consequently uses particular techniques of analysis in order to reveal these often hidden strategies. Some advertising texts lend themselves more to searching for the difference between surface messages and deeper implications.

The Castle Lager campaigns lend themselves to conventional analysis using methods drawn from Thompson and demonstrated by Janks (1998), as does Sales House "1994" and South African Airways "George". Those campaigns that make use of humour, however, are less suited to conventional critical analysis devoted to the unmasking of ideological agendas, since they are, in a sense, ideology critiques in themselves. Comedy, in its playfulness and wilful use of stereotype for the purposes of subversion, resists conventional ideological analysis of the type associated with CDA. CD must either "miss" the joke by refusing to engage with the logic of the humour, or it must deconstruct the critical limits of the joke itself. Both approaches are, in my view, somewhat problematic.

It is therefore necessary to assess the degree to which each advertisement is deliberately self-reflective or deliberately subversive. Though it is undoubtedly quite possible to subject advertisements that make use of comedy to CDA, my own attempts to use CDA techniques to analyse the campaigns of Nando's, Castrol and Vodacom have proven unsatisfactory. In the case of these campaigns, I rely to a greater extent on the social semiotics of Barthes and Herzfeld's concept of cultural intimacy. The work of Castrol and Vodacom in particular relies on the recognition of embarrassing national characteristics to reinforce a sense of distinctive national identity that is the hallmark of cultural intimacy.

Conclusions: consumerist agendas, national projects

The purpose of my project is to identify shifts and track changing advertising strategies which parallel shifts in historical nation-building projects. I am therefore not looking for a classic unmasking of the agenda of the advertising campaigns; rather my aim is to locate and account for differences between the surface narrative and its deeper implications, those internal contradictions that allude to the complex dynamics of the post-apartheid nation-building project and the inevitable tension between a consumerist project and a political one.

Consequently, my intention is to recognise both the subversive and the conservative elements in the advertisements under analysis and to understand how both may exist simultaneously. 'Homecoming' is a good example of this kind of complexity: on the surface the narrative addresses the injustices of the apartheid system, which drove individuals into exile, but it also presents an argument for an individualist, capitalist system of government, where individuals

find commonality not through a shared history of oppression, but through mutual appreciation of the same branded product.

So, while I am not engaging in classical ideological unmasking, it is necessary to acknowledge that virtually all the campaigns analysed here are located around the idea of a celebratory national project, which is in turn linked to capitalist imperatives. It is what might be described as trivially true that advertising is necessarily located in a position that endorses consumerism. However, if the assumption is made that consumerism is ideologically homogenous, and that all it is necessary for the analyst to do is uncover the commitment of the advertisement to consumerism, the exercise becomes almost pointless: advertising is bad because it endorses consumerism, and the particular relationship of advertising to the post-apartheid nation-building project becomes irrelevant. Since judgment has effectively already been passed, an approach of this nature seals off any possible points of entry into understanding how advertising might potentially engage with a nation-building project.

Furthermore, it is important not to assume that the consumerism of advertising always locates itself on the Right or the Left in the traditional sense of these terms – the complexity of the South African situation and the emergence of the so-called patriotic bourgeoisie endorsed by the ANC underlines the inability of traditional political debates to account for developments in a country where advertising and consumerism have been linked quite explicitly to post-liberation politics. Therefore it is possible (though not necessarily unproblematic) for progressive ideology to be hitched to consumerism.

Having laid out a framework for this study and spelled out the particular approach adopted here, it is now necessary to turn to Fairclough's outer box, and examine the context in which the chosen advertising campaigns were produced. In the next chapter I will outline the broader history of post-apartheid South Africa, with a particular focus on the development of the myths that dominated public discourse through a time of enormous political change - paying attention to those developments that mark the emergence of a mythology of the New South Africa, as well as those tendencies that arose in resistance to it.

Chapter Three

A brief history of the New South Africa

ON FEBRUARY 2, 1990, at 11.15 on a hot summer's morning, the New South Africa came into the world. State President F. W. de Klerk was giving the customary address at the opening of Parliament. The South African government had long been under pressure to reform its racially divisive policies and it was widely hoped that this speech – unlike others before it – would announce concrete steps toward the dismantling of the hated apartheid system.

"The general election on 6 September 1989 placed our country irrevocably on the road of drastic change," de Klerk told his expectant audience.

> Underlying this is the growing realisation by an increasing number of South Africans that only a negotiated understanding amongst the represented leaders of the entire population is able to ensure lasting peace.
> The alternative is growing violence, tension and conflict…I wish to ask all who identify yourselves with the broad aim of a New South Africa, and that is the vast majority:
> - Let us put aside petty politics when we discuss the future
> - Help us build a broad consensus about a new, realistic and democratic dispensation
> - Let us work together on a plan that will rid our country of suspicion and steer it away from domination and radicalism of any kind.
>
> (de Klerk, 1991: 34)

De Klerk went on to announce, amongst other changes, the unbanning of the African National Congress and the immanent release of Nelson Mandela. The speech had marked the end of an era. Suddenly, the words "New South Africa" were on everybody's lips.

So, with an act of naming, a new national myth was born. In the past, the Afrikaner nationalists had found it necessary to bestow a title, 'apartheid,' on their philosophy of legally enforced racial segregation and in the future, Thabo Mbeki would christen his own successor to the myth of the New South Africa, the African renaissance. De Klerk would have been only too aware of the power of a name; by giving the changes that he had set in motion a title that rolled with relative ease off the tongue, the State President lent these events a sense of coherence and comprehensibility. The new storyline remained vague, but the elements of a structuring narrative were all there. The naming of the New South Africa presupposed some kind of destiny, one in which black and white lived together in peace and prosperity, and everyone forgot about the past 350 years or so. No matter the uncertainties that lay ahead, the

changes happening now were all part of a larger project, a careful distancing of the present from the past. Hence the necessity of a New (improved) South Africa.

South Africa's past had been strongly shaped by myth: the Afrikaner nationalist myths of God's chosen *volk* and their mission to free themselves from the yoke of British imperialism; myths of white superiority and black inferiority, of white South Africa as the last bastion of civilization against the barbarity of black Africa. There were myths on the other side of the racial divide, too: amongst those of a communist bent, the socialist myth of government by the proletariat, for Zulus, the legacy of Shaka and the proud, noble warrior way of life. For others, the liberation struggle that promised deliverance from white minority rule, or the manufactured memories of an untainted precolonial past and the promise of an African future. Afrikaner and to a lesser extent Zulu nationalism were especially cohesive, while the ANC regarded the liberation struggle as "an important and conscious act of nation-building" (undated: 4). Even after the announcement of the advent of a New South Africa, these competing nationalisms and their myths would collide, manifesting themselves in the words of politicians and the actions of foot soldiers.

De Klerk was not the first man to speak of a 'new' South Africa;[21] the expression had been used before, notably by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. But, in uttering these words in the same breath as the unbanning of the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations, de Klerk brought them to life. The world responded to "the collapse of Africa's equivalent of the Berlin Wall" (Bell, 2000: 2) with fulsome messages of congratulation. This "reign of racist terror" had stood out as "one of the darkest chapters of the post-war period" (Goodman, 1999: 175); as the most significant human rights issue of its time, what appeared to be the immanent demise of apartheid was viewed in mythical terms by much of the world[22]. Apartheid had, after all, been the epitome of injustice for so long. Could it be possible that at last the forces of good would triumph over the evil of racial oppression?

[21] The moment at which "a" New South Africa shifts to "the" New South Africa is not clear; in fact the expression "the New South Africa" was used prior to de Klerk's speech in a print advertisement for Shell's social investment programmes

[22] During the apartheid era, special revulsion was reserved for South Africa because it was the world's only state in which racial discrimination had been entrenched in law. The Nationalist government rationalised apartheid by explaining it away as what one might describe as a radical form of multiculturalism, in which each ethnic group would be entitled to rule itself in its own ethnically pure homeland. The philosophy of apartheid had at its core an ethnic concept of nationhood, which was grouped in the case of South Africa's black population around language. Thus Zulu speakers would find their "real" home in KwaZulu, Tswanas in Bophutatswana, Xhosas in Ciskei and Transkei, and so on – whether the individual in question had ever set foot in this part of the country or not. The coloured population was divided into all sorts of subgroupings, from Griqua to Malay to the mysterious "Other".

If the rest of the world responded warmly to de Klerk's announcements, the reaction in South Africa itself was varied. Crowds of black political activists responded to the news of the ANC's unbanning with euphoric delight, tying ANC banners to passing cars (Johnson, 1993: 58-59). In Pretoria, thousands of *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) supporters gathered to threaten a *boer* revolution, tearing up flags bearing the Star of David and threatening to assassinate Nelson Mandela should he be released (Johnson, 1993: 61-63). An Afrikaner policeman shot his entire family and then himself; in a suicide note tossed into the neighbour's garden, he explained that he saw no future for himself and his family in the New South Africa (Johnson, 1994: 34). The rest of the country hovered between these two extremes, uncertain of what to expect next. The New South Africa had apparently arrived, but there were a great many questions regarding the precise nature of this new entity.

It soon became clear that the task facing the New South Africa was enormous. New names (and, to tell the truth, hardly a new name, more a cheery prefix) do not necessarily new nations make. Suddenly, communities which had been divided by law, economics and politics, were now expected to leave behind the divisions of the past in a quest to create a new sense of shared endeavour. Yet, for the New South Africa to have any hope of surviving intact, the people who lived within the country's borders, black and white, coloured and Indian, would have to be persuaded that their loyalties should lie with the state. For this reason, it was vitally important that a sense of common interest and shared destiny – in other words, nationhood - be created. So it was that after decades of racial hierarchies that permeated every aspect of life, of homelands and plural relations and bizarre ethnic pigeonholing, the inhabitants of the land at the bottom end of the African continent were now expected to embrace a new, non-racial South African identity and consider themselves members of the world's newest ersatz nation.

For a while, the power of de Klerk's words was enough to send crowds spilling into the streets to wave formerly banned ANC flags and allow white South Africans to bask in the warm glow of positive world attention. Euphoria was in the air, focused largely around the release of Nelson Mandela a little more than a week after de Klerk's epoch-defining speech. Mandela himself would prove to be a key element of the mythology of the New South Africa. As the embodiment of the liberation struggle and the single most important proponent of racial reconciliation, Mandela dominates post-apartheid South Africa as no other figure possibly can. There is no doubt that the story of Mandela after his release cannot be separated from the history of the New South Africa.

The Mandela Myth

When Nelson Mandela stepped out of Victor Verster Prison near Paarl on February 11 1990 after 27 years of imprisonment, he was already a legend. The world's most famous political prisoner, his release made headlines around a world waiting with bated breath. What would he do, this man surely embittered by nearly three decades of imprisonment - now that he had been given his freedom? Would the mythical grandeur imposed by the nobility of suffering for one's cause crack and crumble under the pressures of living in a cynical, media-saturated world?

Mandela's relationship with the media was an unusual one, for during his imprisonment he was effectively invisible. The apartheid state, unnerved by Mandela's eloquent defence of his cause during his trial, had assumed that in banning Mandela's image and words, he would be forgotten by a world fired up by the cause of civil rights and racial equality. This was a grave miscalculation, for it was Mandela's very invisibility that propelled him into the realm of myth. Mandela soon took on the cloak of legend and became – given the strictness of the ban - barely real. Recalling an incident which took place on Robben Island in 1976, a former foreign correspondent remembered the surprise of seeing Mandela in the flesh. "Hardly any of us knew what [Mandela] looked like because by that time he'd already been inside for 12 years and nobody was allowed to see photos of him" (Jordan, 1999:7). For many years, "any snippet about Mandela had been seized upon to draw some mind-sketch of this near-mythical figure" (Johnson, 1993: 67).[23] During the 1980s the Mandela myth entered into popular culture in the West and "Free Mandela" became one of the emblematic slogans of the era. Huge rock concerts demanding his release in the latter half of the 80's and vigorous campaigning by the anti-apartheid movements, including the ANC, helped to raise his profile.

By the time he was due to be released, the Mandela figure's connection with reality was tenuous, and the stage was set for him to take on the role of saint. As André Brink observed

> Over the years, Mandela had in his absence grown into a presence that was larger than life. This defined both the possibilities and the dangers inherent in the role he could play when he emerged from Victor Verster Prison…In the minds of the long-suffering black majority, Mandela had become a messiah.
>
> (1999: 17)

The danger, of course, with being a messiah, is the burden of expectation placed upon one's shoulders; as Brink notes, "a messiah who turns out to be human can have a devastatingly counterproductive effect" (1999: 17). Mandela was evidently aware of this danger, for he was

[23] *The Economist* takes a different view, that "It is easy to forget that, from his arrest in 1962 until the mid-1980's when he was nearly 70, [Mandela] was almost…universally misunderstood, written off or ignored." (1999: 101)

careful to emphasise from his very first speech to the crowd assembled in Cape Town after his release that he was merely an ordinary man who had become a leader in extraordinary circumstances. Nevertheless, the role of saint, messiah, even magician ("Madiba Magic") was taken on, as a necessary weapon in his arsenal against the apartheid government:

> [Mandela] had to establish his own mythology as part of his challenge to a racist regime, for he was confronting powerful myths – of black inferiority, white invincibility, and incompatibility between races.
>
> (Sampson, 1999: 4)

"Myth" is a word used often when Mandela is under discussion. After his release, a strong hint of the religious was soon in constant circulation; aside from Mandela's saintly status, the international media was given to lauding the "Mandela Miracle" at regular intervals (Roberts, 1998: 16). Mandela was one of those rare politicians able to transcend the world of policy and legislation and become a genuine celebrity, with supermodels and pop stars queuing for photo opportunities with him. As Mandela's official biographer Anthony Sampson, describing the difficulty of portraying the man behind the myth, has noted, "The myth is so powerful that it blurs the realities, turning everything into show business and attracting *Hello!* magazine as much as the *New York Times*"(1999: 4).

It is significant that the image of Mandela was so frequently juxtaposed with those of leaders regarded as particularly great, as well as with leaders of countries far more powerful, in economic and military terms, than South Africa. He was the first African leader to have been included in such august company since Cleopatra. At the time of Mandela's retirement, he was credited as "universally recognised as one of the great leaders of his day" and "a hero of our time" by no less eminent a publication than *The Economist* (1999: 101). South Africa's power during much of the twentieth century was always symbolic, whether as world pariah or rainbow nation embodying an old liberal, humanist fantasy of the triumph of the human spirit. Mandela's influence as a world statesman lay not in the material might of the country he represented, but in the almost transcendent symbolic weight he carried. In the world of politics, where leaders like Bill Clinton proved themselves venal, shallow and hopelessly flawed, transcendence was a very rare quality.[24] A survey carried out by the British

[24] Mandela is unique amongst the names bandied about as man of the century, for no other leader had to stand the test of success during both conflict and peace. Great wartime sources of inspiration such as Churchill failed as peacetime leaders; John F Kennedy and Che Guevara were "saved by assassination" (1999: 16) while those such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King were martyrs to violence, "their moral greatness intact, without ever being submitted to the ultimate test: succeeding in the struggle and coping with power themselves" (1999:16). In contrast, Mandela's moral greatness was tested to the full, and occasionally found wanting. Anthony Sampson argues that it is not realistic to portray Mandela as a saint, despite the fact that many politicians – "perhaps seeing him as a secular saint who

newspaper *The Observer* in 1998 ranked Mandela a more powerful influence in Great Britain than Prince Charles, the Pope or ex-Spice Girl Gerri Halliwell (Star-SA Times International, 1998: 6).

Not only was Mandela a world statesman who enjoyed the kind of adulation only the likes of the late Princess Diana could boast, he was also, like the Princess, a commercial goldmine.

> Nelson Mandela is worth a fortune…he may not be ranked in any indexes of brand names or trademarks but his face is instantly recognisable around the world. And that's marketing gold.
>
> (Shapshak, 1998: 6).

Soon after his release, Mandela and de Klerk salt-and-pepper sets were popular in curio shops around the nation. When he was elected the country's first black president, "everybody from *Time* magazine to corner café's used Madiba images to sell themselves and promote the euphoria of the rainbow nation….no other global leader commands anywhere near the money-generating stature" (Shapshak, 1998: 6).

Mandela's value as a brand was exploited by both the man himself and others throughout his tenure as president and beyond. Not only was he widely used in ANC campaigns, his allure was widely credited with helping to attract tourism to South Africa. Two days before the 1999 elections, *The Star* carried a small item which reported the view by a Kenyan official that his country would benefit from a possible tourism boom only after Mandela vacated the presidency. In the light of South Africa's position as top tourist destination in Africa, Kenya Wildlife Services director Richard Leakey reportedly maintained that "Consistent international media focus on President Nelson Mandela has led to…countries such as Kenya losing their substantial share of tourism" (1999: 1). A company was formed to market souvenirs in time for Mandela's 80th birthday and aimed to raise more than R6 million for charity from the sale of clocks, fountain pens, painted plates, embroidered cloths, T-shirts, caps and lighters. Gala dinners where a table for ten cost R70,000 were also held. (Pons, 1998: 11). The occasion prompted a veritable frenzy of merchandising and tie-ins:

> From a keyring going for about R12 to a full-size bronze statue worth around R300.000 or a R1,5-million membership of the prestige President's Club, Nelson Mandela's name is a surefire way to rake in money for charity. And the South African president intends to do just that: use the goodwill that his name invokes to support his favourite causes.
>
> (Pons, 1998: 11)

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makes their own profession seem noble, who rises above their failings" (1999: 4) - refuse to hear anything bad about him.

> Mandela has his share of human weaknesses, of stubbornness, pride, naïveté, impetuousness. And behind his authority and moral leadership, he has always been a consummate politician.
>
> (1999: 4)

Celebrities of the likes of African-American actor Denzel Washington, supermodel Naomi Campbell and billionaire Bill Gates were among the 66 benefactors of the Presidents' Club, which provided more than half the income of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Membership accorded the privilege of a face-to-face meeting with Mandela and a photo-opportunity with the media. "When you mention his name, you get a very positive response," said presidential adviser Ahmed Kathrada (Pons, 1998: 11). Nobody could say no to Madiba.

During the weeks surrounding Mandela's retirement, many corporations took the opportunity to associate the company name with that of Mandela. Pick and Pay, the retailers, offered Mandela free groceries for life, and advertised the fact in the Sunday newspapers. State enterprises such as Telkom and the SABC also used the opportunity to bid Madiba farewell. The Post Office offered South Africans the opportunity to send a free postcard wishing the former president well (the card was inserted in the Sunday papers targeting a black readership) while Telkom advertised a free phone-in service for the same purpose.

The Mandela souvenir industry – consisting of everything from blankets to picture frames, clocks and fridge magnets – continued to thrive even as he withdrew from active politics. During June 1999, a mail-order company launched a blanket bearing Mandela's smiling face and signature and exhorted the reader to "wrap yourself in Madiba's warmth!" Here was a chance to own a "very special memento of the great man" (1999: 7). The juxtaposition of Mandela's image with the typically overheated language of the direct marketing ploy – "marvellous souvenir", "treasured family heirloom", and "collector's item" – seems incongruous. Nevertheless it further points to the vast potential for the commodification of the myth of Madiba magic.

The fact that Mandela's story had a genuinely happy ending, with marriage to Graça Machel, only leant power to the myth: "So this grand, Ulysses-like saga of a returning hero ends not with a blast of vengeance, but with forgiveness, hope, and a gentle twilight," wrote one American reviewer (Carpenter, 2000: 8). The 2000 edition of the specialist marketing scenario publication FutureFact predicted that Mandela would become the "African icon" (2000: 119), even – as one of the report's authors later suggested during live presentations - a religion. The Mandela myth, it seems, will only go from strength to strength. "Nelson Mandela's cult is likely to outlive its subject," argues Lodge. "As black South African notables – modernist and traditional – close ranks in South Africa's second bourgeois republic, Mandela's many personages as well as the myths surrounding them will remain the most powerful source of ideological legitimation at their disposal" (2002: 18).

Back to Reality

After the rapture surrounding Mandela's release, and the unexpected pleasures of basking in the glow of favourable world attention, a sense of reality returned to the recently christened New South Africa. White South Africans, who had long feared the implications of black majority rule, waited nervously to see what would happen. Many liberals, who had always campaigned – ostensibly - for the reforms that de Klerk had now set in motion, expressed private reservations about the pace of change. Even in April 1990, less than four months after de Klerk's announcements, there were widespread fears that the government had lost control (Johnson, 1994: 74). "What did the Zambians use before they had candles? Electricity" was a common joke in white middle class suburbs, alluding to the notoriously underdeveloped state of post-colonial Africa.

"If you listen carefully…you can hear the sound of bets being hedged all around this city," and "You must understand that I really hate apartheid. But I have children. And my maid is convinced that when the ANC come to power she will be given my house. Don't you think I should be considering leaving?" were comments that encapsulated the fears of wealthy white South Africans in the months following Mandela's release (Johnson, 1994: 73-74). The number of passports issued by the British embassy rose sharply, and the 1990's would be characterised by fierce debates over the issue of emigration - what came to be referred to, dismissively, as the "chicken run". Business, which had always been to the left of the government of the day, was now shifting to the right (Johnson, 1994: 76). Crime levels began to rise alarmingly. In October 1990, in an apparent realisation of white South Africa's worst nightmares, a mob wielding knives stolen from a curio shop rampaged along Durban's beachfront, where they stabbed holidaymakers. Shaun Johnson observed in his regular column in *The Star*, "People are more frightened than I can remember" (1994: 95).

Suddenly white South Africans found themselves having to come to grips with such phenomena as the toyi-toyi, car hijacking and minibus taxis. Books such as *It takes two to toyi-toyi* by the humourist Gus Silber, offered a guide to living in the New South Africa for the angst-ridden. And, mixed with fear and uncertainty was a strange new sense of pride for white South Africans. "After years of mealy-mouthed apology for their birthplace," Johnson wrote in September 1990, "whites are suddenly flushed with national pride, and outwardly boastful" (1994: 91). Long since accustomed to being the pariahs of the international community, for once white South Africans had in de Klerk a leader of whom they felt they

could be proud. Perhaps the most important sweetener for white South Africans, however, was South Africa's return to international sport.

The tangible carrot: sport and the psychology of white South Africa

Sport looms large in the history of the New South Africa. While South African rugby was only effectively isolated from international competition for six years, South Africa had been barred from participating in the Olympic Games since 1964 (the country was expelled from the Olympic movement in 1970 after more than a decade of lobbying by non-racial South African sports organisations) and an international cricket boycott had been in effect since the early 1970's. John Nauright observes in *Sport, cultures and identities in South Africa* that the loss of international sporting links was "one of the most potent psychological pressure points in international campaigns to oppose apartheid" (1997: 140) and the ANC recognised that sport offered a means to placate whites concerned about their future under a black government.

South Africa's renewed participation in international competition offered an immediate demonstration of the benefits of democratisation – a "tangible carrot" as Nauright describes it (1997: 163). For example, the participation of the South African cricket team in the 1992 Cricket World Cup is widely viewed to have had an important impact on the "yes" vote in the 1992 whites-only referendum (Nauright, 1997: 163). The National Party used images of the cricket team in their advertisements, reminding voters that a "no" vote would return South Africa to international sporting isolation. While the team prepared for their semi-final match against England, they received the news that de Klerk had indeed received a mandate to continue the negotiation process, and that they would be able to continue their participation in the tournament.

Not long afterwards, South Africa's return to the international sporting arena almost came off the rails at the rugby test against the All Blacks at Ellis Park on August 15 1992. In a political atmosphere highly charged as a result of the Boipatong massacre in June of that year, the ANC demanded that there be no official display of the national flag or playing of the national anthem. As it turned out, a capacity crowd, encouraged by the Afrikaans press and the Conservative Party, waved their *oranjeblanjeblous*[25] and bellowed *Die Stem* with great enthusiasm. "Never have I felt more intensely the schizophrenia of being a white South African," Shaun Johnson wrote of his experiences at the match, where drunk fans sang "*Fok die ANC, fok die ANC*". "It seemed like a besieged tribe had gathered to take strength in their

[25] Colloquial term for the then South African flag, with its bands of orange, white and blue.

numbers and to send, from their protected citadel, a message of defiance to their perceived persecutors" (1994: 214). The Sunday newspaper *Rapport* published a defiant assessment of the event on its front page, writing of an "iron will which said: Here is my song. Here is my flag. Here I stand and I sing it today." (Johnson, 1994: 215).

Clearly the task of building a new, non-racial nation was not going to be an easy one, not when so many white South Africans clung so arrogantly to symbols of the old racist order. For Johnson, an opportunity for reconciliation had been "tragically and selfishly wasted" (Johnson, 1994: 218). Not surprisingly, such behaviour was viewed by the ANC and its allies as evidence of unwillingness on the part of whites to make concessions to the new political order. As a result, the test against Australia the following week was nearly cancelled.

Nauright locates the behaviour of the Ellis Park crowd in the phenomenon of nostalgia, described by Lowenthal as "memory with the pain removed" (in Nauright, 1997: 166). White Afrikaners held onto their cultural totems of an already bygone era, the national anthem and the flag, in the face of a frightening and uncertain present. The Springbok rugby team's successes on the sports field – between 1900 and 1956, South Africa never lost a single test series (Nauright, 1997: 167) – symbolized, more than anything else, the worthiness of white South Africa's collective past. Few white South African rugby fans, regardless of their political stance, could escape the temptation to support the Springboks. Even a liberal like Johnson wrote of the "patriotic enthusiasm that only an international sporting showdown can unleash" (1994: 214).

For Nauright, the Ellis Park incident was a stark revelation of how "dominant cultures have to reconstitute themselves and reassert their cultural beliefs and values in the face of losing the power that made them hegemonic in the first place" (1997: 165). This was the dilemma of white South Africans throughout the 1990's as they struggled to come to terms both with losing political and, to an extent, economic power, and securing a place for themselves in the new order. As was demonstrated by events surrounding the 1995 Rugby World Cup final - which took place a little less than three years after the Ellis Park debacle - white South Africans would have to look to both the magnanimity of black South Africans and their own willingness to embrace new symbols if they were to be accepted as members of a New South African nation.

Violence and despair: 1990 - 1994

While white South Africans – willingly or unwillingly - were learning to adjust to change, black South Africans soon became disillusioned with de Klerk's "new" South Africa. As early as August 1990, the Zulu residents of Soweto's single-sex hostels had coined a new word for the New South Africa. *Ayinamasando*, they called it, it has no wheels (Johnson, 1994: 89). While the political landscape had changed, the realities of life for most South Africans, both rich and poor, remained unaltered since the days of apartheid. While the *Slegs blankes* signs were removed and the more prominent apartheid-era laws dismantled, in some respects the situation for many people worsened. There were times when it seemed the New South Africa had ushered in nothing more than a new and sinister era of bloodshed. Fourteen thousand people died in political violence under F.W. de Klerk, more than double the total number of political deaths over the previous forty years (Goodman, 1999: 14). The violence in Natal, where supporters of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party were pitted against ANC loyalists, was particularly bloody. The ongoing violence led to the launch of the Peace campaign in 1991. Supported with bumper stickers and advertising, the campaign enjoyed high awareness levels, and the Peace logo featured on South Africa's flag for the 1992 Olympic Games at Barcelona. Its impact was largely symbolic, however.

In November 1991, nineteen organisations from across the political spectrum committed themselves to a negotiated settlement. Formal constitutional negotiations began on December 21 of that year. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa[26]) would thrash out the details of the transition from apartheid to democratic rule. Within three months, rightwing resistance to change had persuaded de Klerk to take the risk of calling for a referendum amongst white South Africans. On March 17, 1992, they could vote either "Yes" or "No" to de Klerk's program of change. 68% of votes gave the mandate to continue negotiations, and the process could continue.

Despite South Africa's return to the Olympic Games after an absence of thirty years, 1992 was a year dominated by the conviction that the country was heading inexorably for anarchy. In June, a group of Inkatha Freedom Party-aligned hostel dwellers massacred forty-five residents of the Boipatong squatter camp, among them a nine-month old baby and a four-year-old child. Local residents claimed that the police were involved; at the funeral Mandela described the government as "a regime that is murdering our people and conducting war against us," (in Waldmeir, 1996: 206). The killing in Natal continued unabated, the economy

[26] Also spelled CODESA.

was in a mess, and a disastrous attempted ANC invasion of the Ciskei[27] capital, Bisho, made it quite clear to South Africans that "Yugoslavia-style civil war was not an impossibility in their country" (Johnson, 1993: 233). The abyss was glimpsed at Boipatong, observed the *Financial Times* correspondent Patti Waldmeir, but its depths were plumbed at Bisho (1996: 207). In the aftermath of the Bisho debacle, the willingness on the part of black and white South Africans to work towards a non-violent transition to democracy appeared to have faded. Nonetheless, Mandela and de Klerk reconciled once more and reined the country in from the brink of anarchy.

Negotiations continued, but peace remained elusive. The assassination of Chris Hani in April 1993 threatened to send the country spiralling into chaos once more, and it was only through energetic urging by ANC leaders that widespread violence was averted. Mandela appeared on television to appeal for calm, reminding people of the crucial role of a white, Afrikaans woman in helping to arrest Hani's assassins. "Now is the time for all South Africans to stand together against those who, from any quarter, wish to destroy what Chris Hani gave his life for – the freedom of all of us," he told the country (Waldmeir, 1997: 223). It was in the aftermath of the Hani murder, Patti Waldmeir argues, that the balance of power shifted and Mandela became the nation's de facto leader (1997: 224).

The threat of a racial war was never far below the surface: in July 1993, armed gunmen, members of the PAC's armed wing APLA, burst into St James Church in Cape Town in the middle of a service and opened fire, killing eleven worshippers. This was the type of racial terror attack that whites had always feared. Until now, there had been remarkably little overtly racial violence in the wake of the dismantling of apartheid; most violence was of the frightening but quite comprehensible criminal variety. It was no coincidence that the number of white South Africans emigrating to the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia was rising steadily year after year.

The awarding of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize to Mandela and de Klerk was a momentary distraction from what seemed like a never-ending litany of violent attacks and assorted political crises. Aside from the ongoing political violence that wracked the townships and large areas of Natal (fomented, it was strongly suspected - and subsequently confirmed by the Goldstone Commission and the TRC - by the so-called "third force"), the white right wing continued to make threats of a *boer* rebellion, or a national strike by white workers. Civil war,

[27] Ciskei was one of the homelands, reserved – along with Transkei – for members of the Xhosa language group.

they thundered, would be inevitable if de Klerk persisted in his reform efforts (Johnson, 1994: 81).

As the years passed and the dream of a New South Africa turned into a nightmare for so many, the enormity of the nation-building task began to sink in. South Africans were deeply divided, not just racially, but along ethnic and class lines as well. During the 1980's, observed an American visitor, "Whites had created an elaborate fantasy world in which blacks featured only as maids and gardeners…Separation and isolation were crucial elements in enabling whites to view blacks as subhuman at worst, childlike at best" (Goodman, 1999: 11).[28] Spatial separation had led to emotional separation (Nauright, 1997: 168) between South Africans of all backgrounds, so that there was precious little empathy between different groups. It is worth noting that in de Klerk's speech of February 1990, the primary motivation for the dismantling was not a sense of repentance for the injustice of apartheid, but a pragmatic acknowledgement of its sheer unsustainability: the system was *impractical*. Turning the fractured multitude that happened to inhabit South Africa into a people seemed almost impossible.

Entering into a time of myth: the golden years of the rainbow nation

In the light of all ongoing political violence and threats from the right wing, it was small wonder that the first democratic elections – relatively peaceful as they were - were described again and again in terms more commonly associated with the religious, the transcendent. In short, the consensus appeared to be that the elections could only be viewed as miraculous. If there was a golden era for the New South Africa, it can be sited between the 1994 elections and Mandela's inauguration and the beginning of 1996, when South Africa was still basking in the afterglow of the 1995 Rugby World Cup victory. Fears of a bloody revolution and white far-right retaliation were laid to rest, and South Africans were able to enjoy their new-found status as citizens of the world's newest, most celebrated nation, unified for the very first time by the right to vote.

So it was in the long snaking queues that formed across the country on April 27 1994 that the rainbow nation came to life. "Farmer and labourer, maid and madam, manager and unionist,

[28] Ironically, it was that very world – of comfortable suburban living – that eroded the ethnic and cultural solidarity that had made Afrikaner nationalism such a potent political force in the early years of apartheid. Along with affluence came keener awareness of the sting of international loathing, and a more pragmatic view of cultural identity. Those whites who voted for change in 1992 were by and large members of the middle classes, while the right wing was rural and working class.

greeted and shared sun-shades and chatted," recalled Denis Beckett in an elegiac memoir of the day.

> We loved, that day. We loved our compatriots in a way we had never done before, in a way we so far haven't quite managed to do again. We queued as equals and as friends. Parties and politics were secondary as we shared a common relief. All our lives we'd assumed that an apocalyptic clash lay in wait. And here we stood in the extraordinary ordinariness of long, lovely queues, seeing that clash evaporate before our very eyes. Worry was a thing for another day. For this day, we glowed.
>
> (2002: 21)

After the elections - which had determined, once and for all, that black majority rule was finally a reality - the work of nation building could begin in earnest. As the events preceding the elections suggested, such a task was easier said than done, and most significant nation building activity over the next two years was of the symbolic variety. Certainly, at a symbolic level, nation building was a success: South Africans had a flag of which they could be proud, and in Mandela's inauguration and the Rugby World Cup final of 1995, they had the stirring events which could form part of a new national narrative. Mandela proved a master of the telling gesture, and he used this ability to great effect in bringing the majority of white South Africans within the embrace of a new, non-racial national identity. It was the symbolic nature of the rainbow nation that would prove its downfall, however. As the National Democratic Revolution failed to bring significant, concrete change to most of South Africa's population, frustration and resentment would take root.

In the mean time, initial moves to create a new, non-racial South African identity were aided to a significant extent by the palpable sense of relief that a racial Armageddon had failed to materialise. Faced with threats from either end of the political spectrum, white South Africa prior to the elections had been gripped by paranoia. Fantastic stories began to circulate; Arthur Goldstuck, the noted expert on urban legends, was able devote an entire volume, entitled *Ink in the Porridge*, to urban legends of this fraught period in South Africa's history. The most notorious urban legend of the time led to an urgent need to stockpile essential supplies. Many white South Africans, convinced that the country would succumb to anarchy in the wake of the elections, bought up large supplies of canned foods, bottled water, candles and other post-apocalyptic essentials. Some spent the election period camping in Zimbabwe; others constructed underground bunkers. By the beginning of May 1994, however, the worst appeared to be over. The world had not come to an end; the right wing had not launched their *boer* revolution, black South Africans had not overrun the suburbs in a mad rush to redistribute the wealth of the white oppressor. The lights went on when you flicked a switch,

the water gushed out when you turned on the tap, and the supermarkets opened with their shelves fully stocked, as they had promised they would.

The transition to democratic rule was made official by Mandela's inauguration on May 10. This was a critical moment, the juncture of the death of an old order and the rise of the new, and the event was replete with carefully judged symbolism. Significantly, it was the emblems of the military might of the apartheid state that dominated the ceremony, a public avowal of loyalty to the new government. The generals of the South African Defence Force saluted Mandela in the most explicit acknowledgement yet of the new order and, minutes after he took the oath of office, six South Africa Airforce Impala jets roared over the Union Buildings, trailing smoke in the colours of the New South African flag. "Every spectator knew, rationally, that white rule had ended; but reason alone could not grasp the enormity of the truth," Patti Waldmeir recalled. "This simple signal of white loyalty to black rule made South Africa's unlikely revolution seem finally real. It was a transcendent moment, and I was not alone in hiding tears once it had passed" (1997: 1). As the *Sunday Times* reported, "the jets drew a deep-throated roar of approval from the crowd, the loudest of the day. To the crowd, "their" air force, the one that had bombed Namibia and Angola and hovered threateningly over the townships, had suddenly become "our" air force. The spirit of a New South Africa was born at almost the speed of sound" (in Goldstuck, 1994: 206). During his speech, Mandela told the crowd that even though apartheid had caused incalculable pain and suffering to black South Africans, he forgave those South Africans who had enforced the system and invited them to build a new country, together (in Slabbert, 1999: 134).

Writing of the ceremony, Goldstuck was struck by the larger than life character of the entire event. South Africans were witnessing the emergence of a new myth at the moment of its creation. Mandela was joining the select group of legendary statesmen, amongst them Winston Churchill and Gandhi; South Africans, he argued, were entering a "time of myth" in which deep truths about the nature of existence were apparent (1994: 197). After Mandela's inauguration, "[t]he atmosphere throughout South Africa came as close to being holy as a secular country can expect"(Goldstuck, 1994: 196). David Goodman was less rapturous but no less struck by the change in the national mood: "South Africa after apartheid feels like it has breathed a collective sigh of relief" (1999: 5).

One of the most remarkable aspects of South African national culture after the elections was the enthusiasm with which the new flag was embraced. Initial responses to the new flag were

negative, even obscene[29]. But the euphoria of the elections, and the multi-coloured smoke trails that made such an impression at the presidential inauguration appeared to precipitate a wholesale change of opinion. Flag-theme bow ties became popular, as did bumper stickers. Faces painted with the colours of the new flag became a common sight at international rugby and cricket matches. White South Africans at the Rugby World Cup final painted their faces in the colours of the New South African flag, "acknowledging, for the first time, their loyalty to the most central symbol of the nation" (Waldmeir, 1996: 270). The flag appeared in an astonishing variety of guises, from company logos to underwear. Through all of South Africa's troubles, "the flag flew, unassailed, undiluted, owned equally by us all, unique and proud as a symbol of the rainbow nation" (Beckett, 2002: 26). It remains the only politically neutral, universally acceptable symbol of national identity available to South Africans and its continued popularity appears assured.

As the new government of national unity settled down to running the country, Mandela was careful to emphasise the importance of reconciliation at every opportunity, so much so that it was elevated to the status of a "civil religion" (Goodman, 1999: 356; Waldmeir, 1997: 278). In one of his most striking gestures, the president made the long trip down to the self-styled *volkstaat* of Orania, to take tea with the widow of his nemesis, H. F. Verwoerd - the man notorious as the father of grand apartheid. Mandela helped the old woman to read out a letter, written in Afrikaans, calling on him to "dispose of the fate of the Afrikaners with wisdom" (Waldmeir, 1997: 267); later he went to look at the small statue of Verwoerd that stood out in the burning sun. Such magnanimity seemed unbelievable, but there was a serious political strategy behind the gesture, which was aimed at placating the fears of conservative – and potentially disruptive - white Afrikaners. In fact, in the wake of the effort not to leave Afrikaners feeling threatened, so little appeared to change that reconciliation appeared to become one of the clichés of the New South Africa (Waldmeir, 1997: 269).

Madiba Magic saves the day

As its appearance in so many television advertisements suggests, the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final was the high point of the history of the mythical rainbow nation. The event was significant, too, because of the prominent role played by the Mandela myth; it was in the wake of the last-gasp Springbok victory that the phrase "Madiba magic" was coined. The entire festival was replete with unexpected juxtapositions. The song selected for South Africa

[29] Some observers likened the pattern formed by the black, green and gold at the centre of the flag to a pair of Y-front underpants. Others, noting that black, green and gold are the colours of the ANC, cynically took the Y-front analogy further, interpreting this to mean that the ANC was "screwing the country".

during the World Cup was "Shosholoza", which had until then been associated with black migrant workers. Later Antjie Krog would dismiss Shosholoza as "our national anthem of fake unity" (1998: 159), but the months of May and June in 1995 were not a time for cynicism. As Mandela opened the tournament, Afrikaners in the stands chanted "Nelson, Nelson" while a local ANC branch toyi-toyied to rugby songs outside Newlands rugby stadium (Pienaar, 1996: 19). Tokyo Sexwale warned the world that South Africa was a nation to be respected. Reciting a litany of decidedly politically incorrect clichés, he told an enthusiastic crowd, "Let Samoa, Tonga and Ivory Coast know that we are not a banana republic. Let Italians realise that we don't eat pizza, but pap and wors. Regarding the French let's do to them what we do to their polony – eat them. As for the English, Carling, their captain apologised[30] – we don't. But above all, teach the New Zealanders a lesson because whilst we are a rainbow nation, they still go about calling themselves the All Blacks" (quoted in Pienaar, 1996: 19).

During the course of the competition, Mandela had said, "The Springboks are our boys. I ask every one of you to stand behind them because they are our pride, they are my pride, they are your pride" (Nauright, 1997: 5). As the South African team advanced through each stage, hopes began to rise that they might give South Africa the fairytale win the country was looking for. In the days leading up to the final, black South Africans took the cause of the Springboks to heart, christening them the "Amabokoboko". On the day of the final, President Mandela appeared on the field before a capacity crowd of white rugby fans. Wearing the number 6 jersey – significantly, the same number as the captain, François Pienaar – he greeted the crowd and wished the team well. Then a South African Airways 747 flew low over the stadium, the words "Good luck Bokke" clearly visible on the underside of its wings. For once, the New South Africa appeared to be functioning as a unified nation. "As never before [the nation] became one, with one president, one flag and even content with its two anthems," the rugby writer Paul Dobson recalled (1996: 201).

That the first president of a democratic South Africa should solidify his relationship with white South Africans at a rugby match against their archrivals, the New Zealand All Blacks, was a strikingly apt choice. For over seventy years these two teams "had been battling with rare intensity who would wear the mythical world crown as champions of the world," observed Dobson (1996: 200). "Here was their chance to win a real one." Since rugby's introduction to South Africa by British imperialists in the nineteenth century, no sport had better exemplified Afrikaner and colonial obsessions with masculinity and toughness. Rugby

[30] Carling had referred to English rugby bosses as "forty farts".

was the "high totem of Boer nationalism", a sport which had always symbolised the "arrogance of Afrikaner power, and the brutality and aggression that went with it" (Waldmeir, 1996: 269). Max du Preez (2003) is one of several Afrikaans commentators to have compared the place of rugby in Afrikaner culture to that of religion.

Just as the carrot of international sport had been used to persuade whites to vote for political change in 1992, so it was used again, this time to foster a nascent sense of national unity. Mandela's carefully orchestrated appearance at the final was the result of shrewd political strategy. As Waldmeir observes, Mandela always had a "deft feel for the politics of symbolism" (1996: 269). The World Cup gave him a golden opportunity to win the loyalty of white South Africans, so he "hijacked" the event, knowing that, "by appropriating the World Cup he could achieve more to win over whites in a few weeks than by years of debate" (Cartwright, 1996: 74). In turn, Mandela gave South African rugby, historically the preserve of the battle-ready young Afrikaner, "spiritual" qualities (Cartwright, 1996: 74).). Wearing the number 6 Springbok rugby jersey on the day of the final was a stroke of genius. Not only did it further entrench the admiration of white South Africans for a black president who had embraced a sport so close to their hearts, but it provided a neat symbol for the greatness of the Mandela presidency. The number 6 rugby jersey, which represented the captain and his leadership, remained a symbol of Mandela's achievements long after the final whistle had been blown.[31]

Not everyone was moved to tears by the emotional orgy that was the World Cup. For some, its all too transparent attempt to manufacture national myth was a little hard to stomach. J.M. Coetzee[32] was perturbed by the deeper symbolism of the opening and closing ceremonies, which suggested that the New South Africa was more similar to the old than a cursory glance would suggest. To him, the only difference was that South Africans could say they were all now part of the rainbow nation. "Since history is still a contentious subject in South Africa, and the struggle for the making of national history by no means over, the opening ceremony made an attempt to be history-less," he observed. "It presented a de-historicized vision of Tourist South Africa: contented tribesfolk and happy mineworkers, as in the old South Africa, but purified and sanctified, somehow, by the Rainbow" (1995: 2). Justin Cartwright was more

[31] A cartoon which appeared in *The Star* the day before the 1999 elections showed Mandela and Mbeki with a number 6 rugby jersey that is clearly far too big for the younger man.
[32] Along with Nadine Gordimer, JM Coetzee is one of two South Africans to win the Nobel Prize for Literature since 1990.

positive. Noting the presence of themes of family, education, wine-production and *ubuntu*[33], he argued that the ceremony was "touching, colourful, and in that South African way, unmistakably self-congratulatory" (1996: 131). But he did reflect that, in the pre-match pageant, one could see how "history and culture and differences were being subsumed into an entirely new mythology" (1996: 133).

It seemed that the past could be portrayed in a new light, where references to South Africa's awkward colonial past were carefully avoided. Coetzee for his part saw in the World Cup an attempt by what he called the "shadow-players" to construct a "piquant, easily digest[able]" version of South Africa for the benefit of tourists (1995: 3). "Today's image-makers and image-marketers have no interest in complex realities, or indeed in anything that cannot be expounded in fifteen seconds," he remarked acidly (1995: 3). Similarly, Nauright has refused that the nation-building of the sort demonstrated by the World Cup final was a little too easy. Arguing that whites were trying to create a "cultural 'security blanket'" for themselves in an attempt to preserve their privileged lifestyles, he suggested that the demonstration of loyalty to the New South Africa was performative rather than deeply felt (1997: 165-166). Nonetheless, as events at the turn of the millennium would reveal, the shadow-players would ultimately rise to unprecedented prominence, once what Coetzee described as the "intellectual muddle of the Rainbow Project" (1995: 3) had fallen out of favour.

Others were less cynical about the impact of the World Cup victory. Patti Waldmeir viewed it as the most significant political event since the release of Mandela himself, provoking what she characterized as "an orgy of national reconciliation" (1996: 270). The reminiscences of the former apartheid minister Kobie Coetzee are typical of the rose-tinted memories that surround the 1995 World Cup Final to this day. Confessing that he was reduced to tears by the sight of Mandela in a Springbok rugby jersey, Coetzee, a *verligte*[34] in the Nationalist government of the 1980's, told interviewers that the events had the match had endorsed "the miracle" of South Africa's transition to democracy. "All the pain, everything I experienced, was worth it" (Monteath, 1999: 9).

The experiences at the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final demonstrated the nation-building possibilities of sport, even in a country as divided as South Africa. After the spontaneous goodwill demonstrated by black South Africans toward the Springboks during and after the

[33] Taken from a Zulu word referring to the concept of community spirit in African culture, ubuntu became a fashionable concept in South Africa in the mid 1990s. As with all fads, interest in it subsequently declined.

[34] Enlightened, or (relatively) liberal, as opposed to a *verkrampte,* an individual holding narrow-minded views.

World Cup, white South Africans were expected to return the favour during the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations and the 1998 World Cup. Yet they failed to take to supporting local soccer with a gusto that many black observers felt was appropriate. Part of the problem with the South African soccer team in contrast to rugby and cricket, however, was that in the latter codes, South Africa could claim to be among the best in the world, if not the best. In contrast, South African soccer was some way off world standards, and the national team was unable to advance beyond the first round in the 1998 World Cup finals in France. The failure of Bafana Bafana to achieve much success undoubtedly undermined white interest in the team; as many sports writers have observed, South African fans are notoriously fickle, not to mention obsessed with winning. The many years of international isolation endured by South African sport only enhanced misplaced optimism about the relative ability of South African sportsmen and women.

Yet the status of sport as a key – if not *the* key – element in the nation-building project was viewed, for the most part, with an uncritical eye. As Nauright has observed, international sport is viewed without question as beneficial to the nation as a whole, though whether sport can generate an inclusive national identity for South Africa in the long term remains to be seen. The evidence that has appeared to date suggests that the nation-building effects of international sporting events (such as the Olympics, the soccer and rugby world cups as well as various South African bids to host international sporting events) are temporary. Much of this patriotic spirit is fomented by advertising campaigns, a point on which I will expand in chapter five.

Back to reality, once more

The giddy joy triggered by South Africa's victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup could not last forever. In 1996, widespread cynicism began to set in. The pace of change was slow; large-scale foreign investment had failed to materialise and jobs were being haemorrhaged from the formal sector. The government's steady shift from socialist ideals to orthodox free market economic policies was viewed with much unhappiness by the trade unions and the traditional left, and for all the efforts to implement affirmative action and black economic empowerment, economic power was still largely in white hands.

"The greater the party, the bigger the hangover," commented Adam, Slabbert and Moodley in *Comrades in Business* (1997: 1), observing that this seemed to be the general tone of many observations of the New South Africa at the time. "Even many effusive accounts of the

"miracle" of South Africa's transition nowadays reflect on this painful sobriety" (Adam et al, 1997: 1). It was in this vein that American journalist David Goodman, reflecting on the time he spent in the country in 1996, observed that South Africa had experienced a revolution after which nothing had changed (1999: 16). Violent crime was taking its toll on South Africans of all races, and emigration by the predominantly white middle classes to what were perceived to be safer shores continued unabated. The concept of a rainbow nation began to lose its power over the hearts and minds of South Africans, both black and white.

Instead, cellular phones, crime and, to a lesser extent, the latest passenger on the government "gravy train" became the chief interests of the day. "Half the population had mobile telephones, the other half had no running water, and all of them were afraid of being mugged," is how one British journalist put it, albeit glibly (Bell, 2000: 3). Private security companies flourished as perimeter walls grew ever higher, the razor wire sharper, and the voltage on the electric fences more deadly. Johannesburg soon gained an unenviable reputation as the crime capital of the world. The hijacking of motor vehicles became a focus of especial concern; one entrepreneur even developed a system that would engulf potential hijackers in a jet of flame. When *Style* magazine published an article on how wonderful South Africa was compared to the rest of the world, a South African now living in Melbourne responded, "You do *not* live well in a country where your chances of being robbed, hijacked, raped or killed are the highest in the world" (Jordaan, 1999: no page number).

New social identities were also emerging. The integration of former white schools (known as Model C schools) led to the phenomenon of children dismissed in the townships as "Model C's" – blacks who spoke with a "white" accent, and who seemed more comfortable in the suburbs than in Soweto. The black elite, who were benefiting from affirmative action policies and the opportunities presented by government patronage, was also becoming ever more visible, socialising in such fashionable spots as Jabulani's Bar in the Park Hyatt hotel in Rosebank. Many former politicians, including Cyril Ramaphosa and later, Tokyo Sexwale, would become enormously wealthy businessmen. As Adam et al observed, "[A] new elite of black South Africans has now embraced money-making and conspicuous consumption with a zeal that few older capitalist states have experienced, perhaps because private enrichment was denied them for so long" (1997: 1).

The so-called Buppie (as in Black Yuppie) had become a distinct social type and worthy successor to the legendary Jewish *kugels* of the 1980's. The eternal quest by South Africa's middle classes of all races to drive the right car, live in the right suburb, and send their children to the right schools continued unabated. Sales of BMWs soared, high security

residential estates mushroomed and every week there was yet another new private school hawking for prospective pupils as parents, worried about declining standards in government schools, looked for alternatives.

Humour became an important vehicle for expressing feelings and opinions about the changing nature of society (Britten, 1998). South Africa, balanced somewhat precariously between competing ideologies, provided fertile ground for a comedy renaissance. Barry Sanders, in his book *Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History* (1995), argues that humour has a long and distinguished history of political subversion that dates all the way back to the Ancient Greeks. Laughter, Sanders notes, both empowers the individual through its beneficial psychological side effects and makes reality more bearable. As Davis argues, "Humour separates the joints of the seemingly seamless social structure, making them visible" (1992: 313). In this sense, humour is always political, for it is concerned with finding the cracks in those organising structures, cultural and social, that determine how and where power is held.

South African humour took that which people of all races had taken for granted, and held it up for scrutiny, demonstrating many of the absurdities that prevailed in society both during the apartheid era and after. The comic strip *Madam & Eve*, for example, which traced the trials and tribulations of life in the New South Africa through the eyes of a white madam and her black maid, became a hit with readers, eventually spawning a popular television sitcom. Gus Silber offered his already-mentioned comic guides to survival in the New South Africa, while Pieter-Dirk Uys (as his alter-ego Evita Bezuidenhout) made an entire television series consisting of interviews with everyone from Cyril Ramaphosa to Pik Botha[35]. Sitcoms like *Going Up* and the abysmal *Suburban Bliss*, which poked fun at race relations in newly integrated suburbs, topped the television ratings. Stand-up comedy became the "new rock 'n roll", with its stars such proponents of hard-hitting satire as John Vlismas and Alyn Adams (Sudheim, 1998: 2).

The only locally-made films to make a profit were the broad slapstick adventures of Leon Schuster, a man fond of provoking known right-wingers while disguised in blackface; Schuster also produced a CD collection of comic songs devoted to such subjects as braaivleis and "die Bokke" as well as a collection of jokes entitled the *Lekker Thick South African Joke Book*, which mocked everything from affirmative action to Dr Zuma. Comedians from other

[35] Later Uys turned his attention to the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, touring schools and educating children about safe sex. His criticism of South Africa's HIV/AIDS policies saw him lose favour with the government; Evita Bezuidenhout, extolling the benefits of being able to laugh in a free country, was edited out of a stirring advertisement for Proudly South African in 2003.

race groups also began to make waves as they explored the social mores of their own communities. Black comedians such as Desmond Dube (star of a very popular television advertisement for Sasol) and David Kau gained prominence while the Cape coloured wit Mark Lottering starred in a television sitcom on e-tv, boasted his own show on SABC 3 and starred in a campaign for Nando's.

The cartoonists of *Madam and Eve* enjoyed great popularity as they subverted the traditional power relations between white madams and their black maids. Events occasionally took a surreal twist, as when the satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys was able to dress up in drag and meet with South Africa's most prominent politicians as Evita Bezuidenhout, the ex-ambassador to the apocryphal homeland of Bapetikosweti. Here was evidence that South Africa had entered a new era, where at last it was not necessary to take politicians quite so seriously – where politicians were actually able to laugh at themselves.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was a favourite target of South African cartoonists, and the anxiety she generated is all too evident in much of the humour of the period following the 1994 elections. Winnie was, for white South Africans, the shadow of Mandela himself. Where he was the epitome of good, she embodied all that was bad. Where he had promoted national reconciliation, she had encouraged thugs to beat and even kill children. Winnie inspired fear, even loathing: the avowal to leave the country should she ever become president was a common refrain of the formally white suburbs. The political cartoonist Zapiro once depicted the aftermath of a nuclear war. The only survivors were the cockroaches – and Winnie. Winnie was a woman of so many identities: mother of the nation, long-suffering wife, cold-blooded murderess, embodiment of the African struggle aristocracy, unconscientious MP. Antjie Krog wondered why Winnie always attracted so much attention, both in South Africa and abroad. Was it because she embodied the archetype "Black and Beautiful" - or the stereotype "Black and Evil"? (1998: 244). However, after the Minister of Health, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, made clear her intention to ban smoking in public places as well as tobacco advertising, she became a serious rival for the status of the most hated and despised woman in South African politics - amongst white South Africans at least. Jokes about Dr Zuma became a staple of many local stand-up comedy routines.

Winnie and, to a lesser extent, Dr Zuma, were perhaps the only politicians apart from Mandela to enter the realm of myth. Winnie, who had suffered so much during Mandela's incarceration, had long been mythologised as the mother of the nation or, in the case of African-Americans, as a sort of latter-day Queen of Sheba. Now, in the wake of the revelations of her involvement in the death of the student activist Stompie Seipei, and her

notorious boast during the 1980s that black South Africans would liberate the country with their matchboxes, she was viewed by more conservative South Africans as evil incarnate.

Dr Zuma, on the other hand, was viewed less with fear than scorn. Smokers resented her attempts to regulate their lifestyles and, in addition, her involvement with the Sarafina II scandal cast her as both corrupt and inept when it came to dealing with the growing Aids epidemic. But unlike Winnie, Zuma was not glamorous, and her frumpy appearance and halting, lisping style of speaking made her an easy target for mockery. This was hardly surprising, as more than any other politician in the newly democratic South Africa, Zuma represented how much had changed. Here was a black woman – one who, in the *sotto voce* opinions of many, looked disconcertingly like she ought to be doing your ironing – with the power to affect comfortable lifestyles, to impinge on people's personal *freedom*. The ban on smoking in public places was perhaps the instance in which the power of the new government was most keenly felt. South African citizens were familiar with the power of the state through taxes, through traffic fines, through the presence of the police. This extension of the ambit of the state into leisure space, however, was something quite new.

At least the anti-smoking issue was one that did not foster racial enmity, since smokers of all races were opposed to the legislation of their nicotine habit. One of the most divisive issues in the post-apartheid period, however, was that of emigration. The spectacle of thousands of (mainly white) South Africans leaving South Africa for the greener shores of Australia, New Zealand and Canada further entrenched the idea that this community was not truly committed to the country. While periods of political upheaval – notably the Sharpeville massacre of 1961 and the Soweto riots of 1976 – had always been characterised by emigration for what was perceived to be more politically stable and morally acceptable shores, emigration in a post-apartheid South Africa was viewed as tantamount to betrayal. As a black South African charged, "Real South Africans who love their country will remain and fight crime. Those with divided loyalties and who are non-patriotic will be sorted out in the process. South Africa does not need them anyway" (Thulare, 1998: 9).

Indeed, people who emigrated were "vultures" who should not be allowed to re-enter the country (Chipa, 1998: 9), and their leaving could be viewed as "mockery and humiliation" of President Mandela (Thulare, 1998: 9). Denis Beckett summed up the sentiments of the pro-South African lobby when he argued that those who wish to emigrate should be encouraged to leave:

> As it is, the curse of the nation is the grip ing and groaning of the ex-liberals who find every possible ground of grouch. If they're unhappy with what

> they've got here, let them leave it and take with them the cancer of complaint. They can look from abroad from, maybe, placard-free, beggar-free, hijack-free, piss-free, jealousy-free streets, and they can gloat from there, out of earshot of those of us who see heights in Africa as well as depths.
>
> (1996a: 4-5)

The Truth Commission

Undoubtedly the key element of the nation-building project at this point in the history of the New South Africa was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The purpose of the Commission was to "bring about unity and reconciliation…based on the principle that reconciliation depends on forgiveness and that forgiveness can only take place if gross violations of human rights are fully disclosed" (in Goodman, 1999: 63). Because Nuremberg-type trials were felt to be inappropriate in a country which had made the transition to democracy through negotiations rather than the barrel of a gun, a decision was made to sacrifice the short-term desire for retribution in the interests of the long-term future of South Africa. Just as the transition from apartheid to democracy had been essentially pragmatic in nature - an acknowledgement that the survival and future prosperity of South Africans both black and white depended on political change - so too was the Truth Commission. Realising that the truth about South Africa's past would never emerge unless some kind of amnesty was offered, the decision was taken to focus on restorative rather than retributive justice. There were those who objected to this approach; the Krisjan Lemmer column defined the TRC as "An exercise conducted on the southern tip of Africa in the late 20th century aimed at discovering the undiscoverable and achieving the undesirable. Resulted in the forgiveness of mass-murderers, torturers, poisoners and other public-spirited civil servants" (1997: 25). But, as Frank Chikane argued, the notion of the "greater good" underpinned the philosophy of the TRC; what was an apparent moral compromise was really an investment in the future of South Africa (undated: 2).

Whether the Commission succeeded in its goal of fostering national reconciliation is a moot point. Certainly, a great deal more of the truth was extracted than would have been the case had criminal trials been held, and the revelation of truth was effective at forestalling revenge (Goodman, 1999: 357). Jyoty Mistry concluded that the significance of the Commission lay in its contribution to a "common and shared history of oppression" upon which was founded the "uniqueness" of South Africa's national vision (2001: 1). In general, South Africa's truth and reconciliation process has been viewed as more successful than those conducted elsewhere in the world, particularly in South American countries where hearings were held behind closed doors. The TRC was nothing if not democratic.

Nonetheless, Antjie Krog expressed fears that the Truth Commission was a latter-day equivalent of the 1938 *Ossewa Trek*, "a tool to create a particular nationalism rather than a New South African identity" (1998: 113). And Goodman himself doubted that the truth that had emerged through the TRC hearings would prove a catalyst for national reconciliation. Most white South Africans, he observed, had made a point of ignoring the hearings. Nonetheless, since it was now impossible to plead ignorance about the atrocities committed in the name of apartheid, the process was helping South Africans to reach a broad consensus about the truth of their past. Goodman likened the daily TRC reports to the action of water on a stone: slowly, but surely, a history, a common version of the past, was emerging. This was vital, for without agreement on what had actually happened in the past, future reconciliation would not be possible (1999: 70).

Frank Chikane has described the TRC as one of those entities that has "so impacted on the South African population and the international community that it has assumed a meaning of its own outside the historical process which gave it life" (undated: 1). Yet it is this meaning outside the historical process – the entry into myth – that is, I would argue, exactly what did *not* happen where the Truth Commission is concerned. Unlike Mandela, the 1994 elections or the 1995 Rugby World Cup final, the TRC has not assumed a truly mythical dimension. To be sure, it occupies a place of utmost significance in the history books, particularly as many of the revelations it produced will themselves contribute to a more complete history of South Africa's past. In the sense that the TRC contributed to the writing of history, it added weight to certain myths (the suffering and nobility of those who contributed to the struggle, for instance), while deflating others (the belief among many whites that the apartheid government was essentially benign and law-abiding). But the process itself has not taken on a sufficiently mythic dimension; it remains in the history books rather than taking on a life of its own in popular culture, which is what modern myths must do in order to function properly.[36]

Perhaps part of the reason for the reduced impact of the TRC was its extended period of operation, Unlike Mandela's inauguration or the Rugby World Cup, it was not a discrete event. Its significance was not easily digested, and it was contested by certain sectors of society, notably the white right wing and Inkatha. In addition, among the ruling and business elite, an African nationalist vision was replacing the idea of the rainbow nation as the preferred myth of the day. In such a context, the Truth Commission became divisive,

[36] A television advertisement for South African Airways dating from the year 2000 stands out as one of the few instances in which the significance of the Truth Commission has been addressed in popular culture.

emphasising past injustice at a time when black intellectual leaders, including Mbeki himself, were growing increasingly impatient with white South Africa's apparent eagerness to move on from the past without acknowledging the inequalities entrenched in society.

As Krog observes, Tutu and Mbeki had two very different understandings of where in the historical process reconciliation should fit in. For Tutu, reconciliation was a condition of transformation; for Mbeki, it was just the opposite: reconciliation between black and white could take place only after society had been transformed (1998: 110). It was the tension between the need for transformation and the desire on the part of whites to put the unfortunate apartheid past behind them that was to be a key feature of public debate in the years leading up to the 1999 general election. Such tensions would have significant consequences for the mythology according to which the New South Africa was meant to navigate the treacherous straits of the future.

The African renaissance and the rise of the black elite

In 1997, the political analyst Patrick Laurence observed, "The harmonious rainbow nation remains essentially a myth or, at best, an ideal" (1997: 36). The status of the rainbow nation as the key element in the mythology of the New South Africa – the official myth of the day, as it were – was already being challenged by a broad shift towards a less inclusive, more Africanist discourse. Thabo Mbeki gave it the official title of the African renaissance, but, like de Klerk's New South Africa, it encompassed a number of broad but related ideological and philosophical shifts. Even before 1997, the wisdom of racial reconciliation at the expense of genuine transformation had been questioned. South Africa had achieved a revolution without change, remarked more than one international observer. There had been a political revolution, granted, but the economic revolution that was needed to spread the benefits of democracy to the poverty-stricken masses was not in evidence. The rainbow nation myth had represented, above, all, a placation of white fears; now there was a pressing need for substantive change.

At the same time, the ANC government - so committed to socialist ideals at the beginning of the decade - had shifted sharply to the right when it came to economic policy. Before the disapproving eyes of the Left, it was embracing the hated neoliberal principles of fiscal discipline, privatisation and the encouragement of international investment. Mark Gevisser described this trend as "the quietest and most profound revolution of our time" (in Adam et al, 1997: 3). Former communists and trade unionists were embracing free market principles as well as the perks that went with them with almost indecent enthusiasm. Black South Africans

had achieved political power; now they wanted economic power - and, along with it, the power to dictate the terms of public discourse. As the former head of SABC television news, Joe Thlohloe, remarked, "We may have won political power but economic power is still in white hands, so the struggle continues…" (1997: 1). The privileged, if now politically emasculated white minority still possessed enormous economic and cultural power accrued during three centuries of dominance (Adam et al, 1997: 59), and it was this economic and cultural power which the black elite wished to acquire.

As a result, the post-honeymoon period in the history of the New South Africa is characterised, not only by the rise to prominence of increasing numbers of black business leaders, but also acrimonious battles over racism in the media as well as in advertising. White liberals, that constituency that had historically held a great deal of economic (though not political) power, came in for special criticism. After the attempt to foster a non-racial national identity under the rubric of the rainbow nation, South Africa was rapidly becoming re-racialised. Naturally, race consciousness and the ever-present spectre of racism were to prove useful political tools. Even if the country began to bear a closer resemblance to the mythical rainbow nation as more and more black South Africans entered the middle classes, the power of the rainbow nation myth to sway large numbers of the doubtful gradually fell away.

After 1996, it became more and more obvious that the rainbow nation myth was not functioning as it should. The problems encountered, for instance, by the Johannesburg-based talk radio station Radio 702 were seen by some as evidence that "the seductive appeal of the rainbow nation may be more myth than reality" (Koenderman, 1997: 65). Between the 1994 elections and the Rugby World Cup, 702 had marketed itself as a station for all South Africans. By mid 1997, however, it had become clear that, by attempting to appeal to everybody, they were pleasing nobody, and the decision was taken to reposition the station. "When the political miracle occurred, well-meaning South Africans thought it was the birth of the rainbow nation," noted Stan Katz, CEO of 702's owner, Primedia Broadcasting. "702 played an important role at the time by stimulating direct debate between blacks and whites. But there is still a vast disparity between black and white lifestyles, and very little shared experience… The demise of apartheid may have bound people together but South Africans still don't identify strongly and see themselves as one people" (Koenderman, 1997: 65).

The results of a major opinion poll conducted in March and April 1997 suggested that this assessment was an accurate one. In June 1994, 70% of blacks thought that the government was doing a good job in creating a united nation, rising to 80% in 1997; 56% of whites shared the same view in June 1994, dropping to 25% three years later (Laurence, 1997: 36). White

South Africans, it seemed, might have responded in the past to Madiba magic, but they were not going to be lured to the ANC; if anything, the survey data pointed to "serious white dissatisfaction with, if not outright alienation from, Mandela's government" (Laurence, 1997: 36). South Africa remained a society divided along racial fault lines, and if racist ideology had faded into the background, it was more a nod to prevailing political correctness than an indication of a genuine change of heart. As Laurence put it, "[R]ace consciousness lurks beneath the surface, impeding the birth of a common patriotism and threatening, once again, to divide the nascent nation" (1997: 32). By the turn of the millennium, an insulting neologism had been coined - "rainbowism" – and those guilty of it could not expect to be taken seriously.

The African renaissance

On May 8 1996, another speech to the South African parliament marked a new direction for the political agenda. This time the speaker was deputy president Thabo Mbeki. "I am an African," he announced.

> I owe my being to the hills and valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the desert, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land….
> I owe my being to the Koi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape… I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their actions, they remain, still, part of me. In my veins course the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom…I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves … who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death in concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins…I come of those who were transported from India and China…
> Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that I am an African!
>
> (1998: 31-35)

And so the myth of the African renaissance was born. Notably, this took place at the launch of South Africa's new Constitution, and it marks a significant shift in emphasis in official public discourse. The focus was no longer national; it was continental (and, as some felt the use of the word "African" implied, racial). Though Mbeki had been careful to include all of South Africa's racial groups in the speech, there were those who suspected that the African renaissance was at its heart a philosophy that promoted an African race consciousness.

The mythic dimensions of Mbeki's speech were all too obvious. Whether or not the African renaissance did indeed imply a measure of racial exclusivity, politicians, business and the

media immediately recognised the significance of Mbeki's new idea. As the man almost certain to succeed Mandela to the presidency, his opinions carried weight. Definitions of the African renaissance began to multiply as other intellectuals weighed in with their views. The African renaissance could be seen as a philosophy of being: "The African renaissance is a consciousness; it is a question of pride, of rights and obligations," argued the poet turned politician Mongane Wally Serote (2000: 20). Or a geopolitical strategy: "The African Renaissance is more than a rebirth. It is a renewal of our determination to be partners rather than afterthoughts at the dinner tables of other nations," (Ntuli 1998: 17)[37].

In the spirit of an invited dinner guest, Mbeki told a gathering of US corporate chiefs and African officials at the May 1997 Attracting Capital to Africa conference in Washington that the African renaissance had already begun. It was here that Mbeki presented himself, to a receptive audience, as the spokesman for Africa (Barber, 1997: 12). Soon enough, the words "African renaissance" developed a power all of their own, almost a magical quality – as if, by evoking them, political correctness was guaranteed for a cause. The African renaissance had rapidly become what Ray Hartley, the political editor of the *Sunday Times* described as "one of those globally adored notions that no one dares contest" (1998: 14). The SABC changed its slogan to "The pulse of Africa's creative spirit". Lions and calabashes made appearances in advertisements for corporations declaring their support for the ANC government. Cheryl Gillwald, the deputy minister of justice, asked the International Gay and Lesbian Association conference held in Johannesburg to emphasise South Africa's leadership of the African renaissance by continuing their activism against discrimination[38] (Gevisser, 1999: 15).

The South African public appeared to view the African renaissance favourably, in theory at least. The 2000 edition of *FutureFact* reported that research indicated broad support for a leading role for South Africa in African affairs, and one of the positive aspects of the African Renaissance was that it had "powerful symbols" (2000: 119). However, the same report also observed that "Cynicism surrounding the African Renaissance is rife" (2000: 114). Perhaps inevitably, in the context of a continent apparently characterised by so much suffering, the concept of an African renaissance – and the idea that the 21st century was going to be the "African century" - generated considerable scepticism. The Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole

[37] The issue of whether the African renaissance was the African Renaissance was never resolved. For this reason I have left any instances of a capitalised *renaissance* intact.

[38] These remarks were in sharp contrast to attitudes toward homosexuals evinced by many African leaders, notably the virulently homophobic Robert Mugabe and his apprentice in the art of megalomania, Sam Nujoma.

Soyinka asked how there could be an African renaissance when the continent was torn apart by war (1999:1).

In September 1998, Mbeki himself acknowledged the difficulty of promoting the notion of an African renaissance in the midst of so much negative African news. Mbeki asked his audience to view the situation from the perspective of television viewers in small town America. From their viewpoint, the vision of a successful African continent seemed ridiculous. "Dead Man's Creek, Mississippi, is laughing at the concept of an African renaissance," Mbeki said (Kobokoane, 1998: 1). In addition, the African renaissance did not offer concrete, immediate improvement in peoples' lives. "We can't eat the renaissance," one observer pointed out (Oppelt, 1999: 2). *Engineering News* argued that

> The African renaissance needs to move from being a grand concept into myriads of operational activities which lift the continent out of war and into law, out of conflict and into commerce, and out of terror and into technology.
>
> (2000: 18)

Mbeki's renaissance, the *Sunday Times* columnist Phylicia Oppelt declared, "exists only in the realm of feel-good inspiration…I want more than magnificent visions from my President, propaganda from my peers and instructions from self-appointed renaissance preachers" (1999: 3).

As these comments suggest, many pundits viewed the increasing emphasis by the new black elite on an African as opposed to a South African identity with unease. As the new black elite grew in power and confidence, their attempts to redefine and dominate intellectual and cultural discourse began to occupy centre stage. Perhaps inevitably, race once again became an issue of burning importance, as racism in the media, questions of African identity and the failure of whites to accept change dominated public debate. In a speech made in August 2000, Mbeki, in a thinly-veiled attack on the white establishment, called for a continuing struggle against the development of a "Caliban" native petit bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, concerned only with furthering their own interests (2000: 7). He reiterated, "As Africans we are vitally interested in the age-old dream of all the peoples of our continent for an African renaissance, which would restore the dignity and pride of all Africans" (2000" 7).

Initially well received by the media, the African renaissance soon became a source of enmity between government and the fourth estate. The reluctance of some journalists to endorse the African renaissance was linked to their unhappiness with the implication that Mbeki, as its instigator, should be above criticism. South Africa's black chattering classes, Oppelt noted

with irritation, insisted that the media "should get off its collective backside and become pompom-waving cheerleaders for a president's heroic vision…But praise poetry is not my forte, and paying homage to a politician is not part of my job description" (1999: 1). The link between the African renaissance and ruling elites was one of the chief criticisms of the movement (Dlamini, 2000: 42). Themba Sono, one of few self-described liberal black academics, viewed the ANC government's officially non-racist stance as a cover for the claiming of group privileges. "With official non-racism in power," he charged,

> the racial pride of the previously oppressed increased. The cry "our time has come" became more pronounced, especially when the mellifluous melodies of the African renaissance were chimed in. Since official non-racism is as strongly rooted in group orientation as official racism, albeit for different rationales, both could not but be wary of individual rights. Neither ideology is anything but a control mechanism for use by ruling elites.
>
> (1999: 25)

Sono's comments are echoed by the warning sounded by Heribert Adam, who saw in the African renaissance the potential for division and resentment. "As long as the African Renaissance includes every citizen who identifies with the land and the new constitutional order, it can be a useful mobilising vision," he argued. "But if it is interpreted racially to benefit only a self-styled "patriotic bourgeoisie", the desirable African Renaissance repeats the divisive patronage of the past" (1998: 22). Other opinion leaders were disturbed by the fact that a powerful politician in the form of Mbeki should set the agenda for those whose function was ostensibly the pursuit of intellectual truth outside the control of governments and politics. Without a clash of ideas, the African renaissance would die, argued Hartley. If the African renaissance was to become more than a slogan, it would have to encourage the flourishing of ideas and expression. Yet this was not happening. "If anything, South Africa's intellectual life is in danger of becoming a whirlpool of repetitious thinking, driven by ideological allegiance more than clear reasoning" (1998: 1).

Moreover, the philosophy of the African renaissance appeared to hold little meaning for those South Africans at the coalface of poverty. Xenophobia became a regular feature of South African life; evidently, brotherhood and unity between Africans was easier to stomach in speeches by politicians than in practice on the streets. Nigerians rapidly became synonymous with the inner city drug trade while Malawians became sought-after employees – albeit as gardeners in predominantly white suburbs. In comments that are typical of the views of black South Africans who felt threatened by these developments, a letter writer to the *Mail and Guardian* charges that, "South Africa is encountering an influx of illegal immigrants who constantly plunge it in a state of crisis and instability" (Malaika, 1997: 22). Not only did these immigrants take jobs from South Africans, they undermined the moral rectitude of the nation,

trading in drugs and weapons and ushering in an era of "substance abuse and internecine violence". "What," asks the writer, "is going to become of South Africans when their lives are guided by hedonism?" (Malaika, 1997: 22). Violence against African immigrants increased; some died after being thrown off trains, while others were attacked in the street. Even darker skinned black South Africans complained of harassment by police who assumed that they were foreigners.

Just as economics was at the heart of the xenophobia that flourished in post-apartheid South Africa, so capitalist ideology informed the African renaissance itself. For many black intellectuals and most black businesspeople, economic empowerment was an essential aspect of any African renaissance. The fact that the African renaissance was propagated by the most powerful politician in the land would have added to its attractions for businessmen. Many embraced the idea with great enthusiasm. "Perhaps the biggest issue that faces our leadership is to find the challenging idea that can galvanise and energise all the people. The African Renaissance and the African Century are the end result of such an epoch-making idea," gushed prominent black businessman Saki Macozoma. The solution to achieving the African renaissance was economic growth (2000: 20). Similarly, the managing director of Microsoft (South Africa), Mark Hill, declared: "Microsoft is currently contributing towards making the African Renaissance a reality. We don't believe this to be a cliché, but rather a serious challenge facing South African businesses interested in the future of this country" (Penny, 1999: 1).

Some prominent members of the business community were less convinced that the notion of an African renaissance held the key to South Africa's future. The conventional argument was that South Africa "must shoulder the responsibility" for leading the African renaissance, but there were others who believed that it was unwise to link South Africa's fortunes too closely with those of Africa. Brian Bruce, CEO designate of leading construction company Murray & Roberts, argued that the government's priority should be South Africa rather than Africa. "I believe that we should put the interests of South Africa first, and I'm concerned that the government has made the African Renaissance a higher priority than South Africa…South Africanism must take precedence over Africanism, not in the sense of pretending we are not Africans, but in terms of survival" (Business Report, 2000: 4).

Perhaps the most outspoken of South Africa's bus inessmen was Johan Rupert, scion of the enormously wealthy Rupert family and chairman of the Rembrandt Group. "We can't allow the "socks and sandals" brigade to determine national policy," he told the group's AGM in 1998. "We can't allow failed left wing academics (Afrikaners as well) who are now

permeating the civil service and getting into key positions to determine national priorities…We need the leadership in this country to make bold decisions, then liberate us economically, very much the same way as President de Klerk did politically" (1998: 81). Rupert was particularly unhappy about the way criticism from white business – which he described as "loyal resistance" – was dismissed as unpatriotic or racist. Rupert supported the concept of an African renaissance; in his view, it was in the interest of every South African who wished to have a future to help the African renaissance become a reality. Nonetheless, this would only happen if the country's leaders prioritised the key issues instead of coming up with an endless "menu of wish lists". If South Africa failed to prioritise correctly, it would be punished by the international markets. "The rest of the world perceives that we are totally out of step," he argued, alluding to the government's dalliances with social engineering in spite of its apparent embrace of the free market. "We're in cloud-cuckoo-land" (1998: 81).

Rupert's frustration at the ANC's failure to make a clean break with its socialist past points to the ambivalence and complexity that characterises this transition period. Memories in post-apartheid South Africa have always been conveniently short. Only a few years earlier, business was facing the prospect of a socialist government, not one that looked to the capitalist dogmas of the former for guidance on economic policy. Nonetheless, if the ANC could not satisfy the demands of big business, they hardly pleased their critics on the left. The emphasis on the creation of a black bourgeoisie was of considerable annoyance to those who still held fast to socialist ideals. Expressing dismay at this development, a letter writer to the *Mail & Guardian* argued, "Creating a black bourgeoisie is never a panacea for the social ills in this country. The black bourgeoisie is as exploitative as its counterparts….The way to alleviate poverty lies in eradicating capitalism and socialising the means of production for all to benefit, not creating a black capitalist class that will solely benefit itself" (Ndumo, 1997: 26).

The statistics appeared to bear out this point of view: the wealth gap in South Africa was enormous, the highest in the world in 1996 (by 1998 the Gini coefficient had dropped slightly, so that South Africa was second to Brazil[39]). Notably, however, the figures suggested that it was no longer simply a case of rich whites and poor blacks, as implied by the 'two nations' view of Mbeki. The richest 10% of black households recorded incomes 60 times higher than the poorest 10%; the equivalent ratio amongst whites, coloured and Indians was 30 times (Schlemmer, 1996: 22). "[T]he greatest economic divide in South Africa is not between black

[39] 0,58 compared to Brazil at 0,6. On the other end of the scale were the UK at 0,32 and the Czech Republic at 0,27 (Roberts, 1998: 18).

and white but between the employed and the jobless," commented the South African Institute of Race Relations (1996: 1).

The ANC, always a broad church, appeared to see no conflict between their traditional working class support base and the promotion of a black middle class. An undated policy document on the "national question" argues that the creation of working class unity is key to the creation of a South African nation. Nevertheless, it also makes clear the commitment of the National Democratic Revolution to the creation of a black bourgeoisie as a means to address poverty (undated: 2). The paper takes into account the fact that, during the apartheid era, affluence was for the most part a function of race. A society in which one's status was not racially determined was desirable, and this non-racialism would be fostered by the growth of a black middle class. "The reality is that the bigger and more successful this black bourgeoisie becomes, the more diminished its race consciousness will become, for example in its attitude to workers, and dealing with unions" (undated: 3). The unnamed authors of this document appear to regard this development in a favourable light, arguing that it was incumbent on the democratic movement to influence the middle classes, both black and white, to become actively involved in the Reconstruction and Development Programme. "This would then enable them to act/ behave in a way that promotes South Africa's true interests" (undated: 3).

In this document one witnesses what Hardt and Negri have bemoaned as the "poisoned gift of national liberation" (2001: 132). So many national liberation projects have not led to true revolution: "The calendar has gone crazy," they complain. "October never comes, the revolutionaries get bogged down in "realism", and modernization ends up lost in the hierarchies of the world market" (2001: 133). Instead, the revolutionary struggle becomes what they describe as a "delegated" struggle, in which a ruling elite is tasked with carrying out the modernization project. Thus the revolution is "offered up, hands and feet bound, to the new bourgeoisie" (2001: 133). This is, of course, exactly what has happened in post-apartheid South Africa, with previously committed socialists and communists doing an ideological about-turn that astounded even their liberal critics, and former trade unionists and political prisoners becoming millionaires many times over. The black middle class is now widely viewed – by the ANC government and others - as the "saviour of the New South Africa" despite the fact the interests of this sector of society and the working class and the poor do not always converge (Hoeane, 2003: 1-2).

Africanist intellectuals vs white subliminal racists

The black managerial class, an affluent subset of the black middle class, expanded rapidly from a small base during the 1990s. As the myth of the African renaissance rose to

prominence, this new elite began to demand that South Africa's media and its civil institutions reflect a philosophy that was African rather than European. There were three incidents that were emblematic of this new struggle between the old, white Anglophone elite and its putative black successor. Two of them revolved around appointments at the University of the Witwatersrand, long a bastion of the English-speaking liberal tradition in South Africa; the third involved a prominent white left-liberal judge and the black chairman of the Human Rights Commission.

Professor William Makgoba, an eminent medical scientist, was handpicked in 1995 for the role of deputy vice-chancellor. Later, however, he was accused by a group of Wits academics – subsequently labelled with the epithet "the gang of thirteen" – of misrepresenting his past achievements in his CV. Makgoba denied the charges, accusing the academics of racism. The professor, the controversial columnist Jon Qwelane fulminated, "has not turned out to be the pliant and malleable sort of token black some expected", and this was why Wits had attempted to discredit him (1995, 1997: 146). In the wake of the CV debacle, Makgoba became an outspoken proponent of Africanisation, arguing that it was vital to shape South Africa's institutions, including its universities, to the requirements of an African context. "Let's Africanise," was Makgoba's rallying cry, "or else we shall perish as a nation" (1996: 18).

Meanwhile, as the Makgoba debate was unfolding, and polarising opinion along racial lines, a spat between the prominent judge Dennis Davis and the chairman of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), Dr Barney Pityana added fuel to the fire. Pityana branded Davis a racist after the latter criticised the performance of the HRC. The debate continued for some months without resolution, generating many letters to the press in its wake. A common theme of many of these missives was the need for white males – particularly liberal white males, who were guilty of assuming that they adhered to higher standards than anyone else – to accept that they were no longer in control. As it turned out, the transition to black majority rule was going to be much harder for many white liberals, who had always prided themselves on their anti-apartheid stance, than they had imagined. In their championing of authority, their advocacy of government involvement in all aspects of civil society, and their suspicion of the principle of freedom of expression, the Africanists appeared to have more in common with the Nationalists who had promulgated apartheid than the liberals who had opposed it.

In late 1996, Professor Sam Nolutshungu, a relatively unknown academic based in the United States, was selected as the University of the Witwatersrand's Vice-Chancellor-elect. It had been an unusually vicious process, its most salient feature being the demonisation of the white

candidate Professor June Sinclair, who was widely regarded as representative of the hated old, white, liberal order. Nolutshungu was a popular choice. Yet barely a month after the announcement, the professor withdrew his candidacy, citing health reasons. Speculation on the reasons for the withdrawal was rife, and, in private, few believed that "ill health" was anything but a convenient cover-up. The notoriously outspoken Qwelane viewed Nolutshungu's apparent change of heart as a betrayal of the entire transformation project. The critics were silenced, however, when Nolutshungu's death from a rare form of cancer was announced in August 1997.

In the same month, a group of friends of the late Nolutshungu used the news of his death to launch a blistering attack on the rather improbable-sounding "conservative white liberal media" which, they argued, was insensitive to Africans and moreover, took advantage "of [their] generosity and Ubuntu" (Makgoba et al, 1997: 17). The writers – among them Makgoba and Pityana – were damning in their assessment of the role of the media in a changing South Africa. "There is…no doubt that the media has failed to transform fundamentally in its mindset and value system, to understand that it now lives within a new mindset and paradigm…The media has become a major obstacle to transformation and the African renaissance" (Makgoba et al, 1997: 17). Somewhat disconcertingly, the writers, all prominent black South Africans with high-powered positions, complained about the media's use of the "cliché" of press freedom as a pretext to "abuse its powers" (Makgoba et al, 1997: 17).

The criticisms levelled in this article were subsequently refuted, but the specifics of Professor Nolutshungu's case were irrelevant, since they merely provided a pretext for the drawing of lines in the new battle for control of the terms of public debate. Africanist intellectuals and other members of the new elite squared off against the historically white media and other shapers of public opinion. It was a battle that was to rage on for the rest of the decade and spread to other areas of society, notably the advertising industry. In post-apartheid South Africa it was the politics of representation that was the most fiercely contested, a phenomenon that was not altogether unexpected in an era where the pre-eminence of image and perception could hardly be missed.

The words "South African" were notable by their absence from this debate. The appeal to an African identity was in line with Mbeki's African renaissance, which was at the height of intellectual fashion at the time, but the inevitable conflation between Africa-as-geography and African-as-racial identity lead to fears of an upsurge in African nationalist political philosophy. Makgoba himself had maintained that an African identity was inclusive and

therefore non-racial (1996: 18). But he continued to accuse the media of promoting white superiority through "subliminal" racism and urged the government to set up a race commission (1998: 11). The government would have to step in and force the media to change, as no institution of civil society had ever been able to transform itself from within, especially given the fact that racism had been entrenched in South African society for over 340 years (1998: 11).

Similarly, the publisher Thami Mazwai complained that the media saw the world "with white eyes" (Beresford, 1998: 24). Why did Princess Diana, for instance, get so much more attention than Jerry Rawlings of Ghana? Mazwai became notorious for his energetic advocacy of journalism that advanced the "national interest" and his campaigning for government veto over editorial decisions at the SABC. In a revealing incident, Mazwai (supporting an earlier article by Qwelane) accused the *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* in an article "which bordered on hate speech and was unquestionably racist" (Mail & Guardian, 1997: 22) of a treasonous desire to undermine the government by reporting on a deal to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Like Qwelane and the prominent academic Njabulo Ndebele, Mazwai felt that the press was being unpatriotic in its coverage of the deal. Mazwai suggested that it was up to the South African National Editors' Forum – rather than the Constitution - to decide between the national interest and the public's right to know. "We can think of no more dangerous a formula for the governance of South Africa," opined the *Mail & Guardian* (1997: 22). In this incident the slippage between race, unquestioned support for government actions and "patriotism" became clear. The conflation between state and nation – so that criticism of the state became an unpatriotic act – was obvious.

Thus Makgoba, Mazwai and Pityana (amongst others) became the intellectual flagbearers for the new Africanist order, one in which inclusiveness and consensus were valued and criticism of authority (if by that authority one meant the ANC government) muted, if not altogether silenced[40]. Yet it was these very individuals – along with the outspoken lawyer Christine Qunta – who were intellectual charlatans, charged a correspondent to the *Business Day* known for his left-wing sensibilities. These people were not really anti-racists at all, the writer argued. Instead,

> They wish to capitalise upon their race and collect a race dividend for a black intellectual elite of which they intend to be the leaders…This is no renaissance. It is a cynical dumbing down of culture to preserve the elite position of a group of mediocrities. If Qunta and company succeed with their

[40] In Professor Makgoba's defence, however, it should be noted that he was courageous and committed in his criticism of Thabo Mbeki's questioning of the link between the HIV virus and AIDS.

> cultural putsch it will be a shocking waste of the possibilities of our liberation.
>
> (Tweedie, 2000: 9)

As an expert in change management argued, "The success of our new democracy ultimately depends on [ordinary] people and not the politicians or new alliances being forged so expediently between the old and new rich, between old and new privilege" (Rice, 1996: 8). Similarly, David Goodman expressed fears that little in South Africa would change for the masses, as a darker hued elite became accustomed to privilege: "What follows will be apartheid in blackface" (1999: 347).

So it was that those who had benefited most from the new dispensation became most adept at playing the race card. This development was not entirely unexpected. The political analyst Lawrence Schlemmer had argued in 1996 that it was less likely that "successful blacks" would find common interests with whites. Rather, they would keep an "ideological distance" from the white middle class. "They will realise full well that a large part of the justification for the policies which promote their interests lies in the enduring condition of the poor which get left behind. The emerging black middle class would be foolish to dispense with the 'identity politics' of claiming to be a part of, or spokesperson for, the disadvantaged majority. What better way to extract a 'rent' based on the fact of being black" (1996: 24). The richer and more powerful the black elite became, the more convenient to associate themselves with South Africa's vast underclass and its toiling masses: as long as the poor were oppressed, so were they, despite the luxury cars and exclusive addresses. Yet the poor were the very citizens who were excluded from the debate. "Sad how the excitement of 1994 has slipped into the disillusion of 1998; the ideal of unity has turned into a whirlpool of recrimination; the new nation has become a battlefield for a contest of racial egos," Denis Beckett reflected despondently. "What's gone wrong?" (1998: 25).

By the time South Africa marked the fourth anniversary of the first democratic elections, there was widespread cynicism about the state of the young nation. "Since that momentous day, which saw the placing of the most important piece of our history's long and frustrating jigsaw puzzle," wrote Mandla Langa in *The Star*, "a lot of bloody water has flown under the democratic bridge. For many of the more fortunate of the country's citizens, the years have passed with dazzling speed; for the majority living in terror, penury and travail, they have been agonisingly slow." (1998: 10). So many commentators wrote about the "schizophrenic" nature of South African society that such views became veritable clichés. For Goodman, South Africa remained a land of "wrenching contrast" between the "make-believe manicured world" of white South Africans and the "gritty poverty of the black majority" (1999: 6).

Similarly, Langa described the country's "split personality", which he attributed to the close proximity of extreme wealth and terrible poverty. If South Africans were united in any way, it was in "the victimisation of the powerless" or the ownership of guns and ammunition (1998: 8).

Many black South Africans had seen little discernible improvement in their living conditions. Violent crime was out of control. To make matters worse, racial tensions were exacerbated in the first few months of 1998 by a number of racially motivated killings. When six-month-old Angelina Zwane, the daughter of a farm worker, was shot by a white farmer in April of that year, there was widespread fury in the black community. Many prominent politicians, among them President Nelson Mandela and his former wife Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, became involved in the issue, which had by now become a "political football" (*Saturday Star*, 1998: 14). Racial reconciliation was clearly on shaky ground. "None but the blind would pretend that all is well," observed Langa (1998:10). Mandela and Tutu were criticised for their promotion of the "nauseating", "nonsensical" and "superficial" concept of "rainbowism" (ka'Mkhize, 1998: 12). The journalist Mondli Makhanya in turn criticised Mandela's nation-building efforts for being "woolly and undefined", since the mechanics of how the nation was going to be built were never clarified (1998: 8). The feeling that Mandela had pursued reconciliation with too much zeal was widespread. Whites had failed to make the adjustment required for forgiveness by their black compatriots; despite the changes around them, they continued to live much as they had always done. In response to the Zwane outcry, Jon Qwelane wrote that "Burying their heads in the sand and arrogantly denying reality is an old trait of white South Africans" (1998: 14).

An editorial in the *Sunday Independent* acknowledged that it had become "fashionable" to denigrate the achievements of democracy in South Africa, but urged people to reflect on the many ways in which things had improved (1998: 10). The problems that South Africa was experiencing could be attributed to the confusion and uncertainty of the transition from apartheid to a non-racial society, Goodman concluded after his travels through the new "rainbow nation" that had not yet been born. "The tension between the old order that refuses to die and a new order that has not yet taken root is excruciating. It is a transitional period that is at once baffling, frightening, exhilarating and depressing" (1999: 7).

Two Nations

If one were to select a date on which to fix the comment of the terminal decline of the rainbow nation myth, a strong argument can be made the day in May 1998 on which Thabo

Mbeki made his famous "two nations" speech to Parliament. Naturally, the binding of general trends to specific dates is a process filled with pitfalls, since such changes tend to be incremental. Max du Preez, for instance, dates the demise of the non-racial ideal to 1999; by May 2001 he pronounces it "dead and buried" (2001: 14). The Two Nations speech was not the first statement from the upper echelons of government to question the ethos of the rainbow nation. Nonetheless, it marks a definitive break with the reconciliatory philosophy that dominated the first half of Mandela's term of office. Of course, idealised visions of the rainbow nation were still in evidence years afterwards, but at the time the rainbow nation myth was already beset by a great deal of cynicism. The Two Nations speech merely confirmed that this was an idea that was on its way out, so that at the time of writing (2003) it is rare to see references of any kind to the "rainbow nation". In this speech, Mbeki argued that for all of the changes that had occurred in South Africa since 1990, it was still a country divided into two nations, one white and rich, the other black and poor.

There was a torrent of responses to this speech, most of them negative. "I do not believe that South Africa consists only of two nations," said IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi. "And I do not believe that mere redistribution will solve the social imbalances" (Hadland, 1998: 7). Connie Mulder of the Freedom Front thundered that Mbeki, who had already taken away the freedom of the Afrikaner, was determined to "disempower the Afrikaner and whites in all respects" (Hadland, 1998: 7). "Are we still, and forever to be mired in politics which is nationalist at heart and racial at base?" asked the leader of the Democratic Party Tony Leon (Hadland, 1998: 7). Mbeki's views were "simplistic and dangerously populist," charged the conservative columnist Stephen Mulholland (1998: 1). The idea that South Africa's fortunes would be changed for the better by taking from (rich) whites and giving to (poor) blacks was "a sick mirage" (1998: 1).

Denis Beckett was saddened by the renewed emphasis on race, which reminded him of life under the apartheid regime. "Colour coding prevails, and the human being dwindles. The quest for the right person is eclipsed by the quest for the right colour. The fine words of freedom turn out to cover another crock of ethnic obsession, as certain to fail as the last" (1998: 25). After the negative response to his charge that nation-building was a failure, Mbeki attempted a more conciliatory approach, acknowledging the contribution of whites, especially Afrikaners, the business sector and NGOs. At the same time, he criticised the "abuse of freedom in the name of…entitlement" by some members of the black elite (Hadland, 1998: 7). Nevertheless, he stood by his view that, broadly, whites were far better off than blacks, and he was to reiterate it in the following years.

In 1999, Max du Preez raised the volume of the debate another notch when he staked his claim in *The Star* to be both "an African and an Afrikaner" (Rostron, 2000: 53). "Max, mind your own baas business," a black columnist in the same paper wrote back, refuting the claim of a white South African to be "African"(Rostron, 2000: 53). Why, went the argument, did whites suddenly want to claim Africanness as their own, when for decades to be "African" was to be despised, dismissed as hopelessly inferior? The sudden desire on the part of white South Africans to be "African" stirred up considerable resentment. "Europeans and their descendants have been deciding for centuries on what people of the world should be called, in the process of giving nationalities and identities," pointed out Professor Thobeka Mda, convenor of the Education and Culture Commission of the African Renaissance Working Group (Rostron, 2000: 53). Whites were, after all, not claiming an African identity out of a sudden altruistic desire to be one with their black brethren. "They are not insisting on being Africans to claim closeness or nationality with us," charged Mda. "They are saying so to claim a piece (huge pieces in fact) of land in this country, and therefore this continent." (Rostron, 2000: 57).

Du Preez was embittered by the negative response to his desire to be an African. "Five, six years into the "New South Africa" I am forced back into the little box of white Afrikaner," du Preez wrote, reflecting on his years of commitment to exposing "the falsehoods and evils of Afrikaner Christian nationalism" (2000: 14). "I've never felt so white in my life. And still I don't want to go back to the bosom of my tribe or join the DP. I think I'm screwed." Du Preez's remarks reflect much of the resentment that whites who had been active in the liberation struggle now felt; like Denis Davis in his quarrel with Barney Pityana, they were discovering that regardless of their struggle credentials, a white skin was enough to classify them as racist. Helena Dolny, who left the Land Bank under a cloud, maintained that she had been the subject of a racist campaign to sideline her; it seemed that even her status as the widow of the liberation stalwart Joe Slovo could not absolve her of the collective guilt of whiteness.

South Africa appeared to be heading down the road of racial obsession yet again. Could there be a compromise between national and racial or cultural identity in South Africa? The politician Firoz Cachalia argued that the Constitution was based on a separation between public and private identities, allowing individual South Africans to belong simultaneously to a specific group (Afrikaner, Jewish, Indian), and to the broader nation. The constitution gave individuals a choice as to which identities to embrace. Race, after all, was not necessarily an important determinant of identity for many South Africans (2001: 9). Pointing to the universalist tradition espoused by various intellectuals of the liberation movement, he

reasserted the centrality of non-racial politics of "common ground" to South Africa's democratic revolution and rejected the divisive possibilities of identity politics. Even if universalism was an echo of the European enlightenment, the values it represented were relevant to South Africa (2001: 9). Arguments about identity tended to be unproductive because they were all too often based in racial stereotyping, argued Rostron. "Decisions about identity, in a rapidly changing society, will increasingly be individual rather than racial, for both black and white" (2000: 57). In a similar vein, Denis Beckett fantasised about an "Even Newer South Africa" in which people could be embraced as equals, judged on their personal qualities rather than the colour of their skin (2000: 25).

Black intellectuals were divided on the issue of whether non-blacks could be Africans. For Mongane Wally Serote, the African renaissance represented "an inclusive Africanness" (2000: 20). Serote acknowledged that white South Africans, Indians and Coloureds would probably "feel a little uncertain and a little left out" (2000: 20). The challenge, then, would be "to create a basis for these communities to develop and claim their Africanness and so to move to centre stage the building of SA as a nation based, and contributing their experience to the African continent" (2000: 20). Kaiser Nyatsumba saw what he described as a "conspiracy of silence" on the part of whites, who appeared to want to forget the past and move on without giving up any of their privileges, or acknowledging that huge inequalities existed: "Now, of course, all this rainbow nation pretence has been exposed for what it is, and it is fast becoming obvious that South Africa is no less divided a society now than it was in the run-up to the 1994 elections," he wrote in his regular column in *The Star* (2000a: 12). Exhortations to move on and focus on the future were thoroughly insensitive in his view. "Frankly," he wrote, "it is not for whites determine how long it will take for those wounds of the past to heal. Our white compatriots should be grateful that, apart from some puny minority, the black majority has no intention of exacting revenge for the hurt and indignity of the past"" (2000c: 14).

On the other side of the coin, the human rights campaigner Rhoda Kadalie was one of the most outspoken critics of the government's reliance on the politics of race. She charged that the government's obsession with race and racism was a means to obscure its inability to deliver basic services and failure to address issues of national importance (2000: 1). It was easy to blame the "white oppressor" for the country's ills rather than address such issues as poverty, crime and HIV/Aids. She reserved particularly sharp criticism for the Human Rights Commission, which, she argued, focused on race instead of monitoring socio-economic rights. Kadalie suggested that racism had been "internalised to such an extent that the victim begins to miss it when it begins to disappear" (2000: 1). Notably, racism was not the major concern of those black South Africans canvassed in a nation-wide survey (Schlemmer, 2000).

Job creation, education and HIV/Aids had become more immediate concerns for most, and these were the areas where the government was not delivering. Rostron felt that the focus on skin colour was an attempt to cope with change: skin colour, because it was so obvious, was easy to target.

> Long-fixed categories, cultures, nations, even rigid gender definitions, are mutating at dizzying speed. Everywhere, people are having to make identity choices: urban/rural, western/tribal, modern/traditional, secular/religious. These are not simple either-or distinctions; most people will negotiate an extraordinarily complex compromise of combinations. This is freedom; it can also be a torment.
>
> (2000: 56)

No longer the New South Africa

Now, more than ten years after the advent of democracy, references to "the New South Africa" are extremely rare. The country is more commonly referred to, simply, as South Africa. The rainbow nation occasionally rears its head in a newspaper headline, and the phrase was used by the Australian head of the International Cricket Council during the opening ceremony of the Cricket World Cup, but in general it is regarded as a disagreeable truism. By the turn of the millennium, the death of the rainbow nation was old news, though it has given rise to a neologism: "rainbowism", as I have noted, is a term of opprobrium for a philosophy that embraces racial reconciliation regardless of the realities impeding it. As a survey of the tumultuous events of 1990s demonstrates, the rainbow nation as a dominant myth in the New South Africa was comparatively short-lived, enjoying barely two years of pre-eminence. Somewhat ironically, far more words were devoted to the subject of the rainbow nation once its terminal decline had been diagnosed than when it enjoyed a level of hegemony.

As predicted, the Mandela myth has proven more resilient to the vicissitudes of history but already, the African renaissance has lost much of its shine. Though it is still punted by Mbeki in the form of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD - and the charge by Zimbabwean spindoctor-in-chief Jonathan Moyo in 2003 that Mbeki was not fit to lead the African renaissance was enough to include the phrase in headlines once more – until recently there was a shift in focus back to South Africa, as the Proudly South African campaign and other initiatives indicate.

The South African government embraced the notion of national branding just as national unity promised by the idea of the rainbow nation fell from favour. It certainly appears as if Brand South Africa was conscripted to serve in place of a genuine national spirit: if we could

not have real national unity, then we would manufacture it. So the idea that marketing principles could hold the key to South Africa's future prosperity, that a brand blueprint can serve as a viable facsimile of a coherent and unified national identity, gained ground for the first half of the first decade of the new millennium, before ultimately giving way to a renewed emphasis on African nationalism. Brand South Africa, the focus of chapter seven, still maintains a presence, but like the myths before it, it has lost its singular hold on the national imagination.

Conclusions

In this chapter I traced the history of South Africa after 1990, with a focus on the way in which events and personalities gave rise to new national myths. F.W. de Klerk can be credited with naming and rendering comprehensible (and thus less threatening) the uncertain period the country was entering; Nelson Mandela came to embody the ideals that the emerging democracy would stand for. Archbishop Desmond Tutu in turn popularised the multicultural approach the new nation would embrace, at least in theory. Thus the New South Africa and its constituent myths, Madiba magic and the rainbow nation rose to prominence.

At the same time, however, there arose countervailing tendencies to the mythology of the New South Africa. In various debates, from the election of the vice-chancellor at the University of the Witwatersrand to the performance of the human rights commission, it became clear that a rift was developing between the black elite and its white counterpart. The desire to dictate the terms of public discourse is at the core of these struggles for cultural power. The emergence of the African renaissance myth, which superseded the myth of the rainbow nation, was indicative of an increasingly prominent African nationalist strand in national debate. While the African renaissance failed to capture the public imagination for a significant length of time, the current interest in a pragmatic stance towards national pride as epitomised by the Brand South Africa myth is likely to be temporary; it is probable that a shift back to African nationalism will trigger the emergence of future national myths in South Africa.

Having put forward a general history of South Africa during the 1990's, the task is now to focus more closely on the relationship between that historical context and the advertising that appeared at the time. In chapter one, I pointed to examples of the role that advertising has played in national identity formation in countries such as Australia and the United States. In the following three chapters, I will demonstrate how South African advertising attempted to contribute to an incipient national identity by engaging with the mythology of the New South

Africa. The next chapter is focused on a general overview of advertising between 1990 and 1998; here I make examples of several advertisers and analyse the different ways in which they refer to political and social developments. The developments I have covered in this chapter were in turns confusing, frightening and elating for South Africans, and, as I will demonstrate, the advertising of this time points to the ways in which some of them attempted to adjust to socio-political change.

Chapter Four

Advertising the New South Africa

In chapter one I explored the links between myth, nation and advertising, drawin g on critical theory as well as examples from Australia and the United States. I put forward the argument that nations are primarily imaginary constructs ("imagined communities") that rely heavily on myth in order to forge a sense of unity amongst the citizenry who live within the boundaries of a given state. Myths are able to generate national unity in part because they impose a narrative structure upon otherwise contingent and therefore unsettling events: as Sorel argued, myths assure social actors that their cause is certain to triumph. National identity also relies strongly on the generation of common symbols and beliefs amongst citizens. Since myths – following the arguments of Barthes - circulate ideology through society, they play a central role in the propagation of these common symbols and beliefs so important for ensuring the longevity of the state.

Advertising in turn can be linked to myth and nation in several ways. Advertising uses mythical archetypes in order to generate meaning for brands; like myth, it also assists in the negotiation of apparent contradiction in everyday life as it presents audiences with social problems and their solutions. Advertising is inextricably linked with the mass media that play such a central role in the formation of national identity and in the generation of common knowledge that is so important to the imagining of the community. It is the mass media that, in the words of Homi Bhabha, take the "scraps, patches and rags of daily life" and turn them into "the signs of a national culture" (1991: 297). That advertising can indeed play a significant role in the reinforcement of a particular idea of national identity can be seen in the example of Australia, where so-called reality advertising sought to depict an Australian identity distinct from Great Britain or the United States.

There are precedents, then, for understanding advertising's usefulness in generating and sustaining national identity. The case of post-apartheid South Africa, however, presents a particular set of problems for advertising and indeed any cultural production that attempts to forge national unity. As I explained in the previous chapter, South Africa's path to democracy was fraught with difficulty and the adjustment from a society built upon rigid racial hierarchies to one in which all citizens were ostensibly equal was a painful one. South Africa effectively became a new nation during the transitional period, as the conditions upon which national unity was built – previously encapsulated by the apartheid motto, *Unity is strength* – changed quite radically. South African advertisers could therefore not look to the past in order

to make claims about the nature of national identity without providing disclaimers: we were this way then (and some of us still hold onto the wrong ideas), but now all of this has changed. Such strategies can be witnessed in advertisements for Castrol, analysed in this chapter, as well as Castle Lager and Vodacom, analysed in the following two chapters. Any continuity between South African national identity pre- and post-February 1990 must always be couched in apologetic asides, acknowledgements that the way we were then does not accord with the way we are now.

The existence in the South African context of a link between myth, nation and advertising (though rarely articulated in these terms) has long been assumed by advertising practitioners and cultural commentators alike. "Our existence as an industry as vibrant as we are symbolises the existence of a vibrant economy," announced Mpho Makwana, the chairman of the Association for Advertising and Communication, speaking at the 2002 *Financial Mail AdFocus* conference. "It is in this spirit [of exuberant South Africa] that we accept our responsibility as craftspersons of culture and the voice of the free market economy. We declare that we are going to take the tools at our disposal and employ them for the good of this nation" (2002: 4). Makwana's argument, that the advertising industry must shoulder some kind of responsibility to the nation - more so than, as the industry itself would be more likely to argue, to the brands being advertised - was not new. The belief that advertising – aside from its cultural influence and status as symbol of free market capitalism - has a significant role to play in nation-building has been voiced repeatedly since the advent of democracy in South Africa.

For Jannie Ngwale, MD of The Agency and one of the most powerful black men in the South African advertising industry, advertising could not be viewed from a purely business perspective, since, in his view, it had a key role to play in developing a sense of nationhood and belonging. "Our advertising must get us to start saying 'we are all proud to be South African' and it must tap into the richness of our different cultures" (Ngwale in Seery, 2002: 10). The arts journalist Brenda Atkinson valued advertising for its depiction of a society in which power relations between black and white were fundamentally different from the apartheid past. Writing with Vodacom's Yebo Gogo campaign in mind, she argued that advertising "gave us hope, it promised us a future in which black and white could laugh at each other, and at themselves, without someone pulling out an Uzi. What these ads also suggested was that history's power-brokers were in fact willing to give over just a little of that power, that wealthy white blokes were prepared to be the butt of black jokes" (1998: 1). "I am sure," wrote Justin Cartwright, reflecting on the changes that South African society was undergoing in the aftermath of apartheid, "that advertising was, like sport, a huge factor in the

freeing of the South African mind" (1996: 87). More recently Brenda Wortley, a local advertising practitioner, has written of the need for the South African advertising industry to "walk society slowly down a road to maturity – where we have a national identity, where we are proud of our heritage and where we are mature enough to laugh at ourselves" (2002: 10).

This ability to depict, in succinct and powerful vignettes, a vision of South African society both present and possible, is one of the reasons why advertising was – and remains - a site of so much debate throughout the 1990's and beyond. Just as advertising has been praised for contributing to a new, non-racial national consciousness, so the industry has been lambasted for failing to transform and, in the words of Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, building an image of South Africa as a "poor cousin of America" (2002: 4). Addressing the 2002 *AdFocus* Conference in Sandton, Manuel argued

> The key in South Africa is to understand the South African paradox, to recognise that we are, with all the resulting complications, South Africans. We are not the poor relations, or a colony of some other state. We are South Africans, and our communication strategies must therefore use our collective experiences, our culture (if you wish) to develop the paradigm to effect the changes in our national psyche…for the impact of advertising to be felt in economic growth in South Africa, it simply has to engage with and define that truly South African social experience in order to effect behavioural change.
>
> (2002: 2)

Clearly the role of advertising in contributing to a New South African identity was recognised in the upper echelons of government. If South Africans have a strong sense of self, of national unity, consumer confidence would be boosted - Manuel offers the example of the buoyant state of the French economy in the wake of their 1998 soccer World Cup victory - and as a result the economy would be strengthened. "Does this industry lead or lag," he asked, "when it comes to helping South Africa create economic growth? Does it truly capture those moments of national unity on which we can build consumer confidence?" (2002: 1). The implication running throughout Manuel's speech is that it is the (patriotic) duty on the part of advertisers to present South Africans with both pointers to forming a coherent national identity as well as ways and means to feel good about themselves. Advertising's function, then, is never merely economic: it is cultural, social, and political, too.

The post-apartheid state itself has made extensive use of the expertise of local advertising agencies in such initiatives as the Masakhane campaign designed to encourage township residents to pay rates and taxes, the Department of Transport's Arrive Alive campaigns and various HIV/Aids education initiatives. The ANC hired TBWA Hunt Lascaris, long regarded as South Africa's most creative agency, for its campaigns for both the 1994 and 1999

elections, while the state-owned enterprises Telkom, Eskom, Spoornet and South African Airways have consistently maintained large advertising budgets over a number of years. Such campaigns took place within the context of an ANC government moving steadily from its socialist roots to the enthusiastic embrace of free market capitalism.

Simultaneously, South African advertisers began to explore the possibilities of appropriating political discourse in their commercial messages aimed at the emerging black middle class in particular. With some dismay, Eve Bertelsen notes the use of signifiers formerly associated with the anti-apartheid struggle in commercial advertising campaigns. The context and history of such political discourse, which is rooted in a critical analysis of economic, political, racial and gender relations, has been elided, to be replaced by an endorsement of "individual entrepreneurialism and consumerism" (1998: 235). Bertelsen goes on to charge that a "crucial project of erasure and forgetting has been enthusiastically taken up by the institutions and agents of consumer culture who are admirably equipped for the task, indeed, whose armoury is replete with weapons designed, honed, and ready for just such a contingency" (1998: 222). By co-opting concepts associated with the liberation struggle, she argues, advertisers have succeeded in obscuring their anti-capitalist origins, distorting their meaning into conveniently shallow signifiers of "optimism" and "empowerment", the sole purpose of which is to generate profits.

South African advertising, in this analysis, has adjusted a little *too* well to the new dispensation. In its constant search for relevant contexts in which to situate its messages – Bertelsen prefers to describe advertisements, in an echo of Barthes' assessment of myth, as "parasitic" (1998: 226) – advertising, always something of a magpie industry, has gathered up those elements of culture that (in the opinions of some) should best be left unsullied by the forces of commercialism. As I will demonstrate in the advertisements under analysis in this chapter, responding to shifts within society and incorporating them into its communication is something that South African advertising has done rather well. As Bertelsen herself acknowledges, advertisements have "an important function in redefining and naturalizing the co-ordinates of popular culture. If advertisements are highly effective at promoting the idea that personal worth and happiness lies through the acquisition of material goods, they also serve as a suggestive index of a broad cultural shift, as consumer capitalism energetically campaigns to produce its 'necessary subjects'" (1998: 240). It is these broad cultural shifts, and the myths that are interwoven with them, that I will be tracing in this chapter and those that follow.

The process of production: How the South African advertising industry works

"Advertising" is usually referred to in the singular, implying as it does a relatively amorphous entity with a singularity of purpose (often assumed to be the duping of consumers into purchasing goods they do not need). Yet to speak of advertising in this way is to overlook the fact that advertisements are produced by a number of individuals in a complex process that pits differing, sometimes diametrically opposed agendas against each other.

Work in a typical South African advertising agency is divided into several areas of specialisation, namely creative, client service, traffic, production, media and strategic planning. The creative department is the core of the agency and is responsible for developing ideas for advertising campaigns. The basic creative unit of an advertising agency is a "team" consisting of a copywriter and an art director. A creative team is usually supervised by a creative director who provides guidance and ensures that the quality of the ideas being produced is maintained. Client service (consisting of account executives, account managers and account directors) liaises between the client and the rest of the agency and ensures that jobs that have been briefed in are delivered on time, in budget and according to the client's requirements.

The traffic department keeps track of workflow in the creative department and allocates new briefs in the system accordingly. Production is responsible for sourcing suppliers such as printers and photographers for print advertisements; specialist television and radio producers coordinate suppliers such as performers, recording studios and directors. Media strategists select where the finished product will be placed, while media buyers purchase the media space.

Strategic planning (known as account planning elsewhere in the world) is the most recent addition to the advertising industry. The concept of account planning was first introduced in the late 1960's, when increasing competition led advertising agencies to require the services of marketing experts. Strategic planning is responsible for market research (which is usually outsourced) as well as for the drafting of communication strategy. Ultimately, strategic planners are responsible for finding the most effective way of reaching consumers and for ensuring that the advertising that is produced is appropriate for the client's brand.

There are several steps involved between the generation of an initial brief and the broadcast of an advertisement. Initially, a client may decide that an advertising campaign is required to

launch a new product, refresh the image of a brand, generate sales or maintain brand awareness. Client service (usually accompanied by strategic planning) will then take a brief from the client. At the same time, available market research will be studied or new research requirements will be briefed into a market researcher. The next step is the drafting of a creative brief, written either by strategic planning or client service. Here the key messages that the advertisement must communicate are laid out. Most creative briefs will list the target market of the campaign, the main message or proposition that must be put forward, the media types to be used, the personality of the brand and tone of the communication of the advertisement. The brief is then passed onto traffic, which will allocate an available creative team. The team then works on the brief; depending on the urgency of the job they will be allowed days or weeks for this process. Once they have come up with ideas that the creative director is happy with, they present their ideas to strategic planning and client service, who will also give their feedback. Once the idea has been refined, it is presented to the client, who will either give permission to take the idea further and produce it, or will tell the agency to start again. (In agency parlance, this latter course of events is known as "bombing the creative".)

Once the idea has been signed off in principle, it is briefed into production. In the case of a television advertisement, a director will be briefed. Taking the original script written by the creative team, the director will then produce a treatment of the script along with a quotation for the cost of filming. Only once this treatment and the costs have been approved and a pre-production meeting has been held with the client, can filming start. Creative along with client service as well as the client will be present during the filming of the advertisement to provide feedback and ensure that they are happy with the finished product. After filming is completed, the advertisement goes into post-production where it is edited both offline and online, and soundtrack, voice-overs and the client's logo are added. Once the finished product has been signed off, the tape will be delivered to the television station along with a unique flighting code (so that the television station can distinguish between advertisements and broadcast the correct one). Only after all these steps have been completed, will the public view the campaign.

In some cases, this process may be even more complicated. If the agency is uncertain of which ideas will appeal to the client, they may choose to conduct a "tissue session" during which several possible creative routes are presented. The idea that appeals most to the client is then developed further. If the client is unsure whether the creative idea will be effective in achieving sales or winning the approval of the target market, he or she may elect to test the advertising idea before it goes into production. There are market research companies that

specialise in this kind of testing, which may involve bringing an audience into a cinema, exposing them to the script along with a voice-over and examples of the kind of images they could expect to see, and asking them to assess the idea. In other cases, the finished advertisement may be tested according to a proprietary method known as AdTrack; if it does not test well, it may never be broadcast to the public. Market research tends to play a more central role in advertising in the US (where very few advertising decisions are taken without referring to research) than it does in South Africa.

What this description should have made clear is that the advertisements that are broadcast on television – including those advertisements under analysis in this thesis – are collaborative efforts. They are not the product of a single vision and in fact, in many cases, represent a compromise between the needs of the client to sell product and the desire of the agency to win creative awards. In addition, consumers themselves also have a role, both direct and indirect, in determining the type of communication that is aimed at them. Very few clients are prepared to put their logo on an advertisement they think that consumers will dislike or find offensive.[41]

In this sense, advertisers produce the type of communication that consumers themselves want. If advertisements for washing powder or cleaning liquid tend to show smiling housewives in perfect homes, it is because women still dominate the market for these products, and this is the type of communication they respond to. On the other hand, the more affluent (and therefore sophisticated) the target market for the product being advertised, the more creative licence may be allowed, since it is more likely that the audience will understand what is being communicated. Overall, however, consumers indirectly exert a tendency towards conservatism in advertising creativity.

At the same time, most of the advertisements that finally appear on the screen are strongly shaped by the experiences of the creative individuals who conceive the idea and the individual clients who must approve it. The client whose task it is to approve the advertising may well be a marketing manager who must answer to a managing director, and is therefore loathe to allow the agency to produce a commercial that is too controversial. For their part, copywriters and art directors can only exercise creativity within the constraints of the systems that surround them and the thought patterns and assumptions (the goes-without-saying) inculcated in them. Thompson writes of the "creative, constructive and socially embedded

[41] Causing offence to the public can, of course, be a good way to attract free publicity. Nando's, the fast-food chain, became notorious for this practice. Two of its advertisements will be analysed in this chapter.

character" (1995: 8) of interpreting a given text; the same is just as true of the production of that same text.

Advertising, the public and regulation

As I have indicated, the process involved in producing a television advertisement often includes market research before, during and after the production of the commercial. In this sense, the relationship between advertisers and the public is not as one-sided as at first it might seem. In many cases, consumer opinion shapes the type of advertising that is produced, both explicitly (through market research) and implicitly (whether the product or service being advertised is taken up by the public). Members of the public also have a measure of power in that, should they find an advertisement offensive or misleading, they are free to complain to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

The ASA is an independent body whose role it is to investigate complaints by the public or competitors. Broadly, advertising should not be misleading or offensive, and should not encourage irresponsible behaviour by the public, though these guidelines can of course be interpreted with many different nuances. Unlike other countries, notably the United States, openly comparative advertising is not permitted. There have been times when the ASA has been accused of being excessively cautious in its banning of advertising as a result of one or two complaints by the public. This tendency to err on the side of caution can be attributed to the fear of government interference in advertising: the feeling is that it is better for the advertising industry to police itself, and if it is perceived to be insensitive to the feelings of the public, the government may well be persuaded to step in.

The restriction of advertising is nothing new: during the apartheid era, advertising was censored according the racial ideologies of the day. In post-apartheid South Africa, a different type of government control has emerged, one based upon the idea that the advertising of certain products – and thereby encouraging demand for them - is not socially or ethically desirable. The banning of tobacco advertising in 2000 was seen by many as the first nail in the coffin of so-called "freedom of commercial speech". "If the proposed anti-tobacco legislation is passed, the rest of the Constitution could go up in smoke" warned a print advertisement by the Freedom of Commercial Speech Trust in 1998, arguing that stakeholders had not been adequately consulted. What would the government do next? "Oppose the impending anti-tobacco legislation," argued the Trust. "It's more dangerous than you think" (1998). The present government, it appeared to some, was as determined to wield as much

control over advertising as the previous one: "Seems the Nats[42] were good teachers and the current regime excellent scholars.... sorry learners," one advertising practitioner observed caustically (Storey, 2002: 1). More bans appear to be in the offing as South Africa follows the lead of European advertising legislation[43].

Television advertising and the broadcasting system in South Africa

Television advertising, like all other areas of life in apartheid South Africa, was subject to government control. Reflecting on the bad old days of Nationalist government interference, John Storey, a veteran of the industry, asked,

> Who recalls the days when all TV storyboards had to go through the SABC Clearance Committee no matter what?? Each word. Each picture. Each pronunciation. Language purity. Each hidden message. Each actor's wardrobe. Each site location.
> And at times if the commercial was not totally in line with the SABC's thinking or if they had changed their mind on a ruling it was simply not broadcast and had to be redone at Agency/Client cost.
> And all radio commercials to be broadcast in the vernacular had to be recorded by the SABC Radio Service in their studios under their direction. Absurd when you think back on it.
>
> (2002: 1)

Television advertising first made an appearance in 1978, two years after the belated launch of television in South Africa in 1976.[44] From the early 1950's, fears had been expressed in some Nationalist quarters about the potential threat of television, but, as Rob Nixon argues, it was not until the rise to power of the far-right triumvirate of Verwoerd, Hertzog (Minister of Posts and Telecommunications) and Meyer (head of the SABC) that the debate over the desirability of television rose to prominence (1994: 58). Dr J.C. Otto told Parliament in 1966, "liberals, communists and leftists all use TV to influence people", while Jaap Marais, responding to a suggestion by the *Washington Post* in 1969 that television would modernise South Africa's racial attitudes, thundered, "Do not install a TV service. South Africa is not open to Russian or American controlled propaganda. That way the people will not be abandoned to the forces of commercialisation" (Nixon, 1994: 60). The fear, in almost equal measure, of communism and the nefarious influence of liberal American commercial culture, is revealing, and – in light of later objections to globalisation and American-style commercialism from academics on the left – somewhat ironic. As it turned out, the conservatives were right to be wary of

[42] "Nats" was a mildly pejorative term for the Nationalists of the apartheid government, used by English-speaking South Africans of more liberal tendencies.
[43] The advertising of breast milk substitutes was banned in late 2003 and there is speculation that alcohol advertising will be next.
[44] South Africa was only the 23rd African country to have television, a source of considerable irritation to the "innovative" United Party, which argued that South Africa's lack of such a powerful symbol of technological progress was cause for "shame" (Nixon, 1994: 69).

television's influence, since exposure to programming and advertising that depicted multiracial casts played a significant role in the blurring of boundaries between race groups - psychologically if not physically.

In 1969 a commission to investigate the desirability of introducing television to South Africa was set up. In the same year, South Africa's exclusion from the live broadcast of Neil Armstrong's first famous steps on the moon "applied salt to white wounds" (Nixon, 1994: 73), since it emphasised South Africa's exclusion from the rest of the world. In addition, the advent of satellite technology meant that those who could afford it could receive international broadcasts, circumventing the need for a local service. The Nationalists, envisioning a Trojan Horse of foreign (especially Russian) propaganda in every living room, reversed their old objections to television, and began to punt a national service as a means to preserve the South African way of life (Nixon, 1994: 75-76). South Africa finally received its first television broadcast in January 1976, the last westernised country to do so (Roome, 1999: 309).

As was to be expected given the government's concerns about negative foreign influences, programming was devoid of any potential controversy. "Those were the days of "family value" entertainment (whose families, whose values?)" recalled *Personality* magazine, "of dull documentaries, reject American sitcoms as bland and predictable as a Sunday sermon, news bulletins that read like a Nat party manifesto…. and, of course, the persistent use of a dialogue "bleeper" device that, at its height, rendered some programmes virtually incomprehensible" (Gordon, 1997: 10). Television advertisements first appeared in 1978 and, despite their belated introduction to the public, soon became part of South African culture. "Rugby, braaivleis, sunny skies and Chevrolet", the slogan for a motor vehicle manufacturer, became something of an alternative national anthem. The phrase lives on as a supremely evocative allusion to a white South African paradise lost, long after the demise of the Chevrolet brand in the country.[45]

A gradual liberalization of programming by the SABC could be observed throughout the 1980s, when American situation comedies such as *The Cosby Show* and *Benson* appeared on South African television screens. Depicting articulate, middle class black characters, they helped to contradict some of the stereotypes associated with blacks in general[46]; the undermining of the separation between the races that the ultra-conservatives had so feared

[45] Chevrolet finally returned to South Africa in 2003. The television advertising campaign featured a multiracial cast in an oddly anachronistic rural setting. A similar version of the slogan was used for Holden, as Chevrolet is known in Australia.

[46] Although the success of *The Cosby Show* in apartheid South Africa was frequently cited as evidence that the former failed to confront white racist attitudes.

was becoming a reality. As the nature of programming by the SABC changed, so too did its relationship with advertisers. In 1986, when South Africa's first subscription-based television service, M-Net, was launched, finally breaking the monopoly of the SABC; in deference to conservative viewers, it offered a service where viewers could elect to bleep out all the "Oh my Gods" and "Christs" uttered in the American programming that dominated its schedules, or leave them intact. Partly as a result of competition, the SABC became steadily more commercial throughout the 1980's, even allowing advertising on Sundays, which had formerly been free of commercial activity.

This trend continued into the 1990's, with the corporation restructuring on "business-orientated" lines (Roome, 1999: 309) and repeatedly revamping its all-important prime-time television offering. Advertising was an important source of income for the SABC, and it was necessary to schedule programming in a way that attracted highly desirable affluent markets, as well as fulfil its public broadcast mandate. The SABC was mandated to use 15% of its total broadcast time for advertising. Since this was measured against the total annual broadcast hours, most advertising was – as to be expected - concentrated during prime time, to enable the corporation to earn more revenue from selling the largest and most lucrative audiences to advertisers. The large number of commercial breaks during prime time television shows was a source of considerable annoyance to many viewers, among them the satirist Robert Kirby. "In a recent half-hour late-evening sitcom, the show was so heavily infested with commercials, you hardly knew which was which," he fumed (1998: 158).

Such a situation developed because advertising broadcast schedules are required to reach large audiences with money to buy the product being advertised. In more technical terms, media schedules are devised in order deliver a pre-selected number of audience ratings (known as ARs) against a specific target market. Inevitably this has resulted in a disproportionate amount of advertising budgets being directed at popular shows watched by affluent (and by extension, white) audiences. This has led to charges that the industry is racist in its refusal to recognise that black audiences have disposable income and are therefore an audience worthy of being addressed as desirable consumers. The media strategists who plan the schedules argue for their part that they are required to plan according to the client's brief, and that the information they use is statistically sound.

The source of audience information on which the advertising industry relies is the All Media and Products Survey or AMPS. This is based on interviews with approximately 21,000 individuals and is used to provide the categories against which media strategists select programming, channels and time slots. AMPS is also the body of research from which the all-

important Living Standards Measures, or LSMs, are drawn. The history of LSMs can be traced back to 1988, when South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) researchers began work on a new segmentation method based on the AMPS of 1987 and 1988 (Sinclair and Barenblatt, 1993: 236). Statisticians allocated living standards weightings to the entire South African population group. This segmentation method was called the AMPS Living Standards Measure (LSM). Dividing the entire South African population into eight groups, from LSM 1 (rural and undeveloped) to LSM 8[47] (urban and affluent), LSMs became the standard method of market segmentation in South Africa during the following decade. Every advertisement analysed in this thesis will have been conceived and produced with a target market defined by age, gender, LSM bracket and, in some cases, race in mind. Advertising is therefore deeply embedded in the society that produces it.

Coming soon to a country near you: advertising and apartheid

The roots of the type of advertising that attempted to engage with ideas of a new, non-racial South Africa can be traced to the latter half of the 1980's. The depiction of social interaction between blacks and whites in advertising campaigns was not a phenomenon that suddenly appeared with the advent of the New South Africa. During the latter half of the 1980's, certain large corporations made an effort, through some of their advertising campaigns, to naturalise the portrayal of social interaction between blacks and whites (Holt, 1992: 2).

Corporate social responsibility campaigns in particular tended to use images of black and white children interacting in various company-sponsored situations. A Shell print advertisement, which appeared in *Leadership* in 1987, even made reference to "the new" South Africa. "Millions of South Africans face hardships we can barely imagine," reads the copy, positioned under an affecting picture of a young black child. "Poverty, separation, hunger, unemployment: for many communities these are a daily reality. For Shell, the issue is clear. We have a responsibility – through relief organisations, grants, and community projects – to the New South Africa" (1987). Clearly, the idea that South Africa needed to be reformed, if not reinvented, was in circulation several years before FW de Klerk's speech to parliament. The subtext of this advertisement suggests an assumption on the part of Shell that the abandonment of apartheid was inevitable, if not immanent. It is an assumption that can be discerned in much corporate social investment advertising of the time.

[47] In 2002, LSM 8 was further divided into LSM 9 and LSM 10.

No advertiser became associated more closely with multiracial advertising than South African Breweries (SAB). SAB made a conscious decision in the mid 1980's to shoot multiracial advertisements after market research suggested that consumers would view such advertising in a favourable light (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). In various commercials depicting relaxed social interaction between black and white South Africans, the marketers of SAB's brands appear to have been preparing "for a future reality that big corporations such as SAB possibly already foresaw as inevitable: the collapse of apartheid and its pillars, among them, the Group Areas Act" (Holt, 1992: 20). Alex Holt suggests that the purpose of these commercials was to reassure white middle class South Africans that a racially integrated future was not something to fear. These campaigns may even have helped to win support for political change: "While on the one hand, the commercials may be criticised for being exceedingly unrealistic, on the other hand, their overtly optimistic content balances and/or counters the deeply pessimistic myth of the *swart gevaar*…" (1992: 35).

South Africans appear to have responded to multiracial advertising with a measure of ambivalence, with black South Africans notably more in favour of the concept than their white compatriots. SAB claimed that it made the decision to shoot multiracial commercials only after research revealed that 85% of whites and almost all blacks would support such a move (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52), but there were those media watchers who dismissed the situations depicted in these campaigns as "artificial" (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). Whether such situations were artificial or not, they were powerful depictions of a possible non-racial future for South Africa: a survey published in the *Sunday Times* in 1988 revealed that 65% of black South Africans and 35% of white South Africans believed that multiracial advertising would have a positive impact on race relations in South Africa (Sinclair and Barenblatt, 1993: 64). In response to the survey, the SABC stated that it had no objection on principle to the depiction of racial mixing in advertising, which would be left to the advertisers' discretion. "The SABC tries to reflect social trends, rather than lead them" assured the then advertising manager (in Sinclair and Barenblatt, 1993: 64).

While white South Africans were clearly somewhat sceptical of multiracial advertising, the political will to put a stop to it was notably absent and, though it must be acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of advertising was not multiracial in character, it is fair to say that, through certain television campaigns, South Africans were exposed to the possibility of a society quite different from the one they were living in at the time. Not only did multiracial advertising of this kind allude to the possibility of political change, it demonstrated what a post-apartheid society might look like, and what it might be like to live in it.

Seeing only the colour of money: consumerism in the New South Africa

During the late 1980s, multiracial advertising was not the only new phenomenon in South African marketing. At the same time, another important idea began to gain currency in the South African business community: that the spending power of black South Africans was growing steadily – indeed, it was predicted to match white spending power by 1995 - and that businesses needed to take advantage of this incipient but potentially lucrative market if they were to enjoy future success.

In 1988, Reg Lascaris of the advertising agency Hunt Lascaris TBWA (as it was then known) and Nick Green of the leading market research company Markinor published a book entitled *Third World Destiny*. Subtitled *Recognising and seizing the opportunities offered by a changing South Africa*, the book put forward the argument that business needed to accept that South Africa was a predominantly third world country, and that the only solution was adapt to this reality. In the view of Green and Lascaris, marketers were more likely than any other sector to see South Africa's situation objectively, and the most likely to move on from apartheid stereotypes, because of the need to profit from real, flesh and blood customers. The marketer, they argued, "is so selfish he has to be sincere…The marketer's view of the market has to be objective if he is to derive most benefit from the unfolding situation…Dressing up what he sees happening in the market to suit some political philosophy is not only stupid, it also stops him from making money" (1988: 15).[48]

By 1992, marketers who had not yet targeted the black/township market were being warned that they would soon miss out on a lucrative opportunity. Indeed, companies were held back only by white marketers who had failed to get to grips with the reality of this market. "The black market is no myth, it is real – and thriving," announced Robin Morris in his book *Marketing to black townships: practical guidelines*. "The aura and mystique that surrounds this market segment is merely an intellectual construction formed by naïve inbred white marketers' perceptions." (1992: 9). Morris suggested that the best way to compensate for white ignorance was to hire black marketers who spoke the language of the townships, and who would be more likely to be given honest appraisals of products and marketing strategies by the people at whom they were aimed (1988: 24).

[48] The conviction that marketers were too rational to be racist would surface repeatedly in the following decade and beyond, notably in debates around whether or not the advertising industry was inherently racist. The debate culminated in the Parliamentary Hearings into racism in the advertising industry in 2001, discussed later in this chapter.

Black consumers also appealed to marketers because they were assumed to be more loyal than more affluent white consumers. Historically, brand loyalty had been especially high in the black community because of the risks associated with spending a limited income on unproven products, and the limited choice available in small stores (Koenderman, 1993: 68), but experts repeatedly warned companies not to take such goodwill for granted. "Black consumers are famously loyal, but they are now beginning to require some return of loyalty to their causes and interests," intoned the 1996 edition of *Advertising Focus* (1996: 91). "A company that is willing to put something back into the market gets top marks from the black market."

The power and influence of branded goods in the lives of black South Africans was occasionally exploited in unexpected ways, as in the example of an adult literacy program called Brand Knew. Launched in 1992, Brand Knew used well-known brand names and product logos to teach reading skills to adults; since many of them already recognised many brand names, the process was made easier and less humiliating for individuals who were beyond school-going age. The success of Brand Knew demonstrated the value of brands "in a market as fragmented as South Africa, and the way they can take on a vivid identity of their own" (*Brands and Branding*, 1993: 41).

Slaughtering sacred cows (or chickens)

Debates over how to address black consumers would grow increasingly vociferous over the decade. In the mean time, advertisers were enjoying a new-found freedom. Once the New South Africa had been given official sanction by de Klerk, advertisers were able to engage with racial reconciliation and social change in a way not possible when apartheid was still firmly in place. A gradual easing of censorship – especially television censorship – was evident. In the wake of the steady collapse of a moral order apparently based on readings of the Old Testament, a new climate of relative freedom prevailed, and advertisers felt able to poke fun at a range of topics, from sex to politics.

No advertiser took more advantage of the changes ushered in by the New South Africa than Nando's. Founded in Johannesburg in 1987, this fast-food Portuguese-style chicken chain was to build its brand on cheeky, irreverent advertising. The stated aim of its advertising agency, TBWA Hunt Lascaris, was to "make ten bucks look like a hundred". Nando's actively courted controversy in most of its campaigns, knowing full well that the added publicity would be worth hundreds of thousands of Rands. Using humour to poke fun at current South African cultural and political mores, Nando's advertising aimed to examine "human truths,

the holy cows of society, and subjects and issues that are generally taboo, and make light of them" (Feris, 2000: 3).

The list of sacred cows is an impressive one, and the Nando's showreel offers a highly entertaining and insightful overview of the concerns that animated the inhabitants of the New South Africa. Certainly, Nando's, more than any other advertiser, has used Herzfeld's concept of cultural intimacy, or "rueful self-recognition" (1995: 3), to explore South African identity while persuading consumers to purchase its particular brand of flame-grilled chicken. One of the key aspects of cultural intimacy Herzfeld cites is the appropriation of cultural characteristics that are a source of external embarrassment, but which, conversely, assure members of a culture of their insider status. Over the years, Nando's campaigns have addressed such distinctively South African sources of embarrassment and irritation as crime, politics, corruption, race relations, drunken driving, the National Lottery and begging at traffic intersections. Nando's has even employed intertextual devices, rare in South African advertising, in which direct-sale campaigns and the advertising of the large retail chain Hyperama were spoofed. Clever puns and sharp observations dominated its print advertising. Who else but Nando's could open a new outlet in the affluent northern suburbs of Johannesburg with the headline: "At last. Some real breasts in Sandton."

Nando's first ever television campaign consisted of three advertisements in which a local comedian, Billy Prince, mimics three different characters, a Texas oil baron, an American evangelist and Nelson Mandela.

Nando's 'Politician' – 1993

VISUAL	AUDIO
A man walks onto a dimly-lit stage and stands in three-quarter shot in front of a microphone. Behind him are red velvet curtains and next to him a set of drums is visible.	SFX: Applause
He begins to speak in the famous voice of Nelson Mandela; after the first two words the spotlight fixes on him and we can see that the man is a black comedian made up to resemble the famous politician. His hair is coloured grey and he wears a tuxedo and a red bow tie.	Comedian (sounding like Nelson Mandela): Allow me to address the nation, to discover the only option of satisfying all tastes. For too long we have been marinating in apartheid.
Throughout the speech he wags his finger in a gesture reminiscent of former State President PW Botha.	SFX: Murmurs of approval Comedian: But we must negotiate very carefully between the right wing and the left wing. For there is a middle ground: butterfly-cut and flamegrilled without compromise.
As he speaks, the camera slowly pans to the left and pans towards the comedian, so that eventually he is seen in mid-shot.	SFX: Murmurs Comedian: There is only one way to go. Nando's. Chicken for the New South Africa.
Cut to still frame of Nando's logo against brown paper background, together with the pay-off line: A Taste of Portugal.	SFX: Cheers, whistles Comedian: In the past, we have been known to toyi-toyi. But now we must learn to peri-peri.
Cut to mid-shot of the comedian at the microphone.	SFX: Whistles and cheers

He waves as the background lights are brought up.	

'Politician' is shot in a simple and relatively inexpensive style. Aside from a cutaway to the Nando's logo, there are no edits and what action there is takes place within one almost static shot. In this instance, the soundtrack is more important than the visuals, and 'Politician' would have been almost as effective on radio. The comedian uses the distinctive voice and intonation of Nelson Mandela (though the addition of the wagging finger, which had been associated above all with PW Botha, adds an element of ambiguity). Throughout his routine, political rhetoric is appropriated in the interests of promoting flame grilled chicken and, because such language, usually associated with lofty platitudes, is being put to such mundane use, it is effectively subverted.

In contrast to the visuals, which are simple and fairly static, drawing little attention to either the director or editor, the sound effects are complex. Designed to produce the effect of an audience present at the performance, the intermittent cheers and murmurs lend an ambiguous tone to the diegesis of the commercial. While the individual on stage is clearly not Mandela, the audience responds to him in a way that is inconsistent with a comedy audience. While the actor parodies current South African political rhetoric, at no stage does the audience actually laugh at the jokes. On the other hand, neither does the audience respond in a manner typical of a South African audience at a political rally: there are no shouts of "Amandla!", for instance, or ululation.

So, the television audience is viewing a man performing in front of another audience (an audience which is present but not seen) and which responds to him in a way which suggests that they do not interpret his words as comedy. The performer is obviously a comedian of some sort, but the setting is ambiguous: the stage, the microphone and the spotlight all evoke the conventions of stand-up comedy, but the audience response positions him as a politician. This grey area allows the advertiser to mock the rhetoric of politicians jockeying for power, but not the people themselves. Had shouts of "Amandla" and ululation been introduced into the soundtrack, then the advertisement could have been construed as mocking not just politicians, but ordinary (black) South Africans too. In this way, the advertiser avoids an interpretation in which accusations of racism could potentially have arisen.

The politician as cultural institution

In apartheid South Africa, politicians were dour, forbidding figures. Few dared to mock them openly, save for the cross-dressing satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys or newspaper caricaturists. That

they should be the subject of a stand-up comedian's routine on a television commercial flighted by the national broadcaster would have been unthinkable. Yet, while this advertisement subverts left-wing political rhetoric, it does so with affection rather than satirical viciousness. The routine constitutes a sustained effort at finding links between chicken takeaways and politics and constructing suitable puns: thus the need to satisfy "all tastes", the reference to "left wing" and "right wing" and the happy linguistic similarity between "toyi-toyi", the township dance of political protest and "peri-peri", the chilli flavouring. South Africans had been "marinating in apartheid" and therefore required a meal appropriate for the New South Africa, in the form of Nando's chicken.

By the time this advertisement was broadcast, Mandela was already viewed as a cultural institution as much as a political figure; it is this cultural power that Nando's uses to its advantage. Here we see how Mandela has transcended politics to become emblematic of a certain South African identity, and how political rhetoric itself has become a cultural artefact. Thanks to its ambiguous setting, the subversion is gentle, and it marks the integration of political activity into a broader cultural consciousness. After the demise of apartheid, it is no longer necessary to tip-toe around politicians: by indulging in gentle mockery, Nando's acknowledges the importance of Nelson Mandela in South African culture while at the same time distancing both Mandela and the brand itself from the humourless and controlling regime of the past.

The Mandela myth

'Politician' represents an interesting challenge to an analysis based on Barthes' understanding of myth. To recapitulate, Barthes argued that myth is a second order semiological system in which a sign, filled with meaning, is "stolen" by myth, emptied of meaning and then "restored". The sign is shifted laterally in order to become a signifier, which, together with the signified, becomes a new sign, the mythical concept. While the original form has been all but drained of meaning, the mythical concept brings with it a whole new set of associations and assumptions. "What is invested in the concept is less reality than a certain knowledge of reality," as Barthes puts it (1972, 2000: 118).

The form in this case is a comedian performing a routine on a stage in front of an audience; the presence of the microphone and the spotlight and the use of puns and wordplay tells us as much. The script itself suggests a reference to political rhetoric, with its play on words – left-wing, right wing, peri-peri instead of toyi-toyi. But the advertisement enters most fully into the realm of myth when the comedian speaks, and it is clear that he is mimicking the famous and distinctive intonation of Mandela. The situation, then, involves a curious sort of double

vision, where the protagonist is both Mandela and not-Mandela, both typical politician and unique statesman. If the form is a comedian on stage, the concept is that of Mandela: Nobel laureate, international statesman, figurehead of black South Africa, embodiment of nobility and magnanimity.

At the time that this advertisement was produced, Mandela had not yet become the first president of a democratic South Africa, and the term "Madiba magic" had yet to be coined. Nonetheless, the nascent Mandela myth might at first glance not appear an appropriate subject for parody. Mandela's unique status was already unquestioned; he already embodied forbearance and forgiveness. Why then has he been made fun of in this way? As the most instantly recognisable of politicians, Mandela is especially suited to representing the political establishment. Thanks to his distinctive voice and intonation, Mandela was soon a favourite with comedians, who could attempt a few words of mimicry and be guaranteed some kind of response from the audience. Mandela's voice, more than any other aspect of his persona, thus became a widely used synecdoche of the man himself almost immediately. At the time that 'Politician' was broadcast, it served as a potent symbol of post-apartheid politics in South Africa. Later, once his campaign of reconciliation had solidified the bond between himself and white South Africans, that set of associations would become much broader (including forgiveness, nobility, statesmanship and so on), and not necessarily linked with the ANC.

Because the fact that Mandela is so recognisable an individual simultaneously made him suitable for representing the political establishment, the target of the mockery should be viewed, not necessarily as Mandela himself, but the entire institution of politics for which he has been co-opted to stand. By electing to use a comedian who mimics Mandela, the advertisers have dispensed with the need to explain what it is they are trying to do. The jokes are obvious from the outset; they would have been less open to decoding by the average viewer had the advertisers elected to represent a generic left-wing politician. Mandela, everyone knows, is the quintessential politician, leader of the liberation movement and most tangible symbol of the changes that had taken place with the advent of the New South Africa. When the comedian tells the audience that Nando's is "chicken for the New South Africa", he is perfectly believable in the context of the advertisement because Mandela symbolises the New South Africa in a way that no other figure possibly can. It makes perfect sense: Nelson Mandela and the myth of the New South Africa *belong* together.

So Mandela is parodied in 'Politician' because he is already mythologised, because it is unnecessary to say anything more about him. The use of American accents in the other two commercials in the campaign supplies the necessary background information with which the

audience can make sense of the humour. But a South African accent alone is not sufficient to inform viewers that they are watching a local politician. The voice must be made more specific; it must carry with it an entire history of associations. Without this specificity, the comedy risks being misunderstood, vulnerable to charges of racism or even unfunny.

This point brings me to what is perhaps the most compelling reason for the use of Mandela rather than a generic politician: it makes the comedy funnier. Humour often relies on the incongruous for effect, and the juxtaposition of a Nobel laureate admired the world over and a speech about solving political problems through the consumption of chicken leads to incongruity so great that laughter is inevitable.

Ultimately, 'Politician' is interesting in that its intention is not necessarily to subvert the political principles Mandela stands for; instead it treats political activity as a cultural phenomenon, raiding the vocabulary of political rhetoric for material in much the same way as one might use sporting analogies or sexual innuendo. Politics is thus simultaneously disparaged, as it becomes the target of mockery and elevated by the acknowledgement that it is an essential aspect of an evolving South African culture and identity. Most significantly, by including a Mandela mimic and ending with the line "Nando's – chicken for the New South Africa", 'Politician' not only positions Nando's as a brand unafraid to engage with the issues of "real life" in South Africa; it also confirms Mandela's mythical status as the embodiment of the New South Africa.

Politics in advertising

'Politician' represents Nelson Mandela's first "appearance" in a television commercial; here is South African television advertising's first direct engagement with the Mandela myth. Perhaps surprisingly, given the adulation with which South Africans of all races viewed him, Madiba made relatively few appearances in above-the-line campaigns. Part of the reason for this was the restriction on the use of his image for commercial gain. The Mandela figure was used in a 1995 commercial for Pepsi, which at the time was trying to establish itself in South Africa. "This is advertising which is below the belt," complained one industry commentator. "Just because the President is revered by Pepsi's target market, does not mean it has the right to use him in advertising. The company should know better than to stoop to riding on his back in order to establish the brand" (Dicey, 1995: 5). In 1998, stock footage of a cheerful Mandela doing the famous "Madiba shuffle" was contrasted with footage of snoring world leaders in order to demonstrate the revitalising qualities of flying with SAA. (This advertisement, whilst certainly appealing, was also criticised on the grounds that Mandela would have flown on his own presidential jet rather than the national carrier.)

Hilton Hotels used Mandela's face in a 2000 campaign demonstrating that world leaders use their facilities; here again, his image is juxtaposed with that of Winston Churchill. An advertisement for a South African asset management company, Alliance Odyssey, juxtaposes a statement by Benjamin Disraeli with a similar statement by Mandela. In an era where politicians are all too obviously no better than the people who vote for them, Mandela seems to belong to an earlier, nobler age, one in which principles counted for more than opinion polls. The popularity of special supplements devoted to celebrating Madiba's birthday, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund or his retirement is unsurprising, given that they offered an uncontroversial forum in which business could advertise its loyalty to the South African state and the principles that Mandela embodied.

It should be acknowledged that because of the power of the myth, Mandela effectively occupies an advertising category of his own. Advertisers usually avoid politics in their communication - for good reason, since overtly political themes open them up to both consumer backlash and government interference. It is therefore not surprising that the parody of politicians and political institutions in general is relatively rare in post-apartheid advertising, particularly television advertising, though implicitly political themes are fairly common. In one notable exception, the cellular network MTN ran an advertisement in 1996 featuring the satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys as his famous alter ego, Evita Bezuidenhout. In a clear reference to Azania, the Africanist name for South Africa propounded by various groupings to the left of the ANC, she presents a map of MTN's coverage of the country she refers to as "MTNzania".

Advertising agencies were also quick to take advantage of tactical opportunities, which were useful because these advertisements – which usually appeared in the widely-read Sunday newspapers - were cheap to produce, only appeared once (reducing the risks of any long-term repercussions, since an ASA ban would be moot) and, best of all, tended to win awards. In 1996, Gauteng Member of the Executive Council for Education Mary Metcalfe announced that she would eat her hat if there were any exam paper leaks. When leaks were subsequently reported, Nando's produced an advertisement which included the relevant newspaper clipping, an image of a Nando's peri-peri sauce bottle, and the headline "Serving Suggestion". Mangosuthu Buthelezi's status as acting president in 1998 was celebrated with a poster for the BMW 7-series and the headline, "Mr Buthelezi, why settle for a mere 48 hours of absolute power?" Similarly, prominent businessman Meyer Kahn's appointment as head of the embattled South African Police Services was exploited by Aspirin, which suggested that headache pills might come in useful during his tenure.

Nando's returned to the subject of politics in a television campaign produced in time for the 1999 elections. Using a television reporter who went by the name of "Spooky Swimming-Gala" (a reference to the SABC's notoriously pro-government head of news, Snuki Zikalala), various characters in South Africa's political firmament were interviewed, ostensibly for news reports. In one execution, a union official rails about the injustice of the poverty in South African society before climbing into a chauffeured Mercedes-Benz. In another, a black man on horseback, a member of an Afrikaner separatist movement, admits that he cannot give any details of their manifesto because he hasn't been allowed into any of the meetings; in a third, a woman advocates the use of all eleven official languages and responds to Swimming-Gala's question by saying "no" in all of them. This campaign mocks the hypocrisy of politicians across the political spectrum with a degree of cynicism that is unusual in South African advertising, and it is difficult to imagine any advertiser other than Nando's producing this kind of communication.

Notably, many of these advertisements make use of parody, a favourite comic technique in the South African advertising industry and one frequently cited (often incorrectly) in defences against ASA rulings. An advertisement making use of parody, the argument commonly runs, is not attempting to depict reality (and by extension, to influence actual behaviour)[49]. Thus the use of parody should exempt an offending advertisement from censure. Genuinely satirical advertising is rare, probably because the nastiness of satire makes it too risky an undertaking for most commercial enterprises. The 1999 Nando's campaign cited above is probably the closest that any advertiser has come to using a genuinely satirical tone in its communication.

It's the New South Africa now, Boet

The 1994 elections marked a definitive change in post-apartheid South Africa's history. During the campaign period, the National Party had expressed confidence that it would win a substantial proportion of the vote; when the ANC won decisively, just missing a two-thirds majority, it became clear that South Africa was now under black rule. Two of the most interesting – and revealing – responses to the transition to democracy are analysed below. The first is for Castrol motor oil and reflects responses to the new dispensation from a white point of view. The second, for the clothing chain Sales House, celebrates the transition from a perspective designed to resonate with black South Africans. The resulting messages are very

[49] This defence was used in the case of an advertisement for Fatti's and Moni's pasta in which a grandmother is placed in a cupboard after she has done all the cooking. Members of the public complained that the commercial advocated abuse of the elderly; the ASA ban was reversed on appeal.

different in many ways, though they agree on one important point: democracy will be good for consumerism.

Castrol's "can of the best" television campaign, which had been running since 1989, featured two loveable country ruffians, Boet and Swaer, who ran a rundown petrol station in the Kalahari Desert. This campaign has enjoyed enduring popularity and received praise for its authentically South African flavour (*Financial Mail Adfocus* 2002 conference). Its success was so great that it was ultimately turned into a television sitcom, *Kalahari Oasis*, confirming once and for all the campaign's status as a genuine piece of entertainment (indeed, the general response to the new show was that the advertisements were more entertaining than the sitcom itself). When Castrol finally ended the campaign in 2003, it did so on the grounds that the characters it had created were more famous than the brand.

In the following advertisement, Boet and Swaer are forced to confront the realities of the transition to a democracy in which all races were now officially equal. The interaction between Boet, Swaer and their new black companion Moegae refers to undercurrents circulating within South African society as a whole, and is notable for the way in which it acknowledges the difficulties and discomfort of the transition to non-racial democracy. Even in the proverbial middle of nowhere, the New South Africa would make itself felt.

Castrol 'New South Africa' – August 1994

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens with a wide-angle shot of the Horingboom Oasis petrol station. It consists of one petrol pump and a rickety wooden shed next to a large tree, under which is parked a Toyota Landcruiser bakkie[50]. The sun is shining brightly. There is no sign of a tarred road: only the red sand of the Kalahari is visible.	
The camera zooms in towards the shack, which is still filmed in long shot. On the stoep, Boet walks into the frame. Swaer is already seated. Boet begins to sit.	
Cut to mid-shot of Boet sitting down and looking quizzically at the empty chair to his left, in the foreground. Boet is dressed in knee-high khaki socks, velskoen, khaki hat, khaki shorts and a casual blue shirt. He gestures with his pipe.	Boet: Visitors?
Cut to close up of Boet placing his pipe in his mouth. He looks concerned.	

[50] A colloquial term for a pick-up truck.

Close up of Swaer taking a gulp from his tin mug. We can see that he is sweaty and covered with dirt. A figure walks across the frame – we catch a glimpse of black hands.	Swaer: Out here? Naa Boet, I'm expanding the operation. Ja…business is going to boom in the New South Africa.
Cut to close up of Boet looking up in amazement at the new arrival. His eyes dart between Swaer and the new man. Wide-angle shot of old black man sitting down in the empty chair. Cut to close up of Boet looking at the new arrival. He does not look happy. He looks the man up and down.	
Cut to mid-shot of all three men sitting in a row. Boet turns to Swaer and shifts uncomfortably.	
Close up of Swaer drinking from the mug. Cut to close up of new arrival, Fats. He looks knowingly at Boet, adopting the same mannerisms as Boet and Swaer. Cut to close-up of Boet looking perturbed. Cut to mid-shot of all three men. Swaer cannot contain his laughter. Moegae joins in. Boet laughs half-heartedly along with them.	Boet: I s'ppose you're right, Swaer…even more people will want a can of the best now. Moegae: Ja Boet…
The Castrol logo fades in at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.	
Boet hits Swaer with his hat.	Boet: Jou bliksem!
Title fades in under the Castrol logo: A can of the best	

The wide angle shot at the beginning of the advertisement establishes the location of the action, the Horingboom Oasis that, thanks to its repeated exposure in previous episodes of the 'Can of the Best' campaign, is by now familiar to viewers. Various elements work in concert to establish, in a very short space of time, the isolation and sleepy, laidback atmosphere of this place. The harsh environment of the Kalahari is evoked by the use of strong natural light while the lack of music emphasises the ambient sounds in the environment: the buzzing of insects, the gulping of coffee. This is not a part of the world where much happens or things change quickly.

The isolation of Horingboom allows the Castrol campaign to hold up a mirror to urban South Africa, both from a social and cultural point of view and, more importantly, to remind motorists that if this oil is considered "a can of the best" in such a harsh environment, it will be able to handle urban motoring conditions. It is all too easy to assume that the engaging little situation comedies enacted at the Horingboom Oasis function purely to entertain viewers, but of course their purpose is ultimately to sell more cans of Castrol. The social

commentary in these commercials is there above all to provide a context in which to couch the sales message.

Perhaps appropriately in a narrative that deals with dramatic political change, the action is dominated by the representation of conflict. Typically, conflict in a narrative moves from normalcy (lack of conflict) to agitation (appearance of conflict), then advancement (intensification of conflict), resolution of conflict and normalcy once more (Screenwriting notes, undated: no page number). Normalcy in 'New South Africa' is established immediately with the opening shot and confirmed when we see the protagonists themselves in long shot. Visually, Boet and Swaer are shaped by the isolation and wide spaces of their environment. Previous instalments in the campaign have established that Boet and Swaer spend most of their time sitting on the stoep drinking coffee. This is something of a time-honoured ritual for the two characters. Thus we know, when we see Swaer with his tin mug and Boet with his pipe, that the situation in Horingboom is as we expect it to be.

The initial establishment of conflict takes place over several incremental steps. It is the presence of a third chair that alerts Boet to the possibility of something happening, asking whether visitors are expected. Swaer then explains the arrival of a third man on the stoep by referring to the "New South Africa". Since "New South Africa" means political change, and the audience knows that Boet is resistant to change, the temperature of the conflict is raised ever so slightly. Naturally, there is irony here too. The idea of Swaer expanding his business seems incongruous in light of the laziness of the character and the sleepiness of the environment (especially since, in reality rural South Africa remained, for the most part, deeply conservative and resistant to change even after the elections).

Once Swaer has finished his short speech on his plans for expanding his business, the new arrival walks across the frame and the conflict is intensified. Only a part of this figure is visible; however viewers can see enough of him (his hands) to determine that he is black. The next couple of edits cut between a shot of the black man sitting in the chair (further intensifying the conflict) and close-ups of Boet's changing facial expression. For a black man, previously excluded from Boet and Swaer's world, to sit down alongside them as though there is nothing out of the ordinary is quite radical. This simple gesture is a deeply political act, the significance of which only a viewer familiar with the fraught racial politics and tortured history of South Africa will appreciate. There is no hint of deference in this act, or for that matter, overt defiance: Moegae takes his place as if it is his right, as if sitting alongside Boet and Swaer is a habit of long standing and requires no acknowledgement.

The focus in this sequence is on the reaction of Boet to this new arrival, especially when he sits alongside him in the vacant chair. The internal battle writ large across Boet's face is a witty and trenchant representation of wider conflicts within white South Africa. Viewers are familiar with this character, and they know the type of South African he represents; they would have not believed it had Boet simply accepted the presence of a black man without a sideways glance. Boet's carefulness around Moegae can be ascribed in part (within the logic of the narrative) to Swaer's apparently unquestioning acceptance of the new situation.

Somehow Boet is aware that the stereotypical racist behaviour associated with rural Afrikaners is no longer acceptable, now that the New South Africa has officially arrived, and the fact that political correctness has managed to reach the middle of the Kalahari adds to the humour of the situation. His rationalisation of the new order of things - "even more people will want a can of the best now" - can be read as resolution of the conflict and a return to normalcy based on a new equilibrium between the three men. Boet remains uncomfortable, though, and when Swaer laughs at his discomfort, he loses his temper.

The entire situation is unstable and ambiguous: normalcy is not quite established or comfortable yet. As an analogy this advertisement is a much closer representation of the South African reality than the campaigns of Castle Lager, analysed in the following chapter, which suggest that South Africans of all races will live together happily ever after. The black man is now permitted to sit alongside the white man, but it will clearly take a long time for the white characters to get used to this new turn of events. On the surface, the presence of the former is tolerated, but the transition to democracy is clearly the cause of much discomfort.

Interpretation: Identity and race relations

In the previous instalments in the campaign, the focus was on the relationship between Boet, the Afrikaner and Swaer, the English-speaker. Interestingly, the character types that were the source of inspiration to the actors are found not in the Kalahari, but in the Eastern Cape (a region traditionally dominated by English-speaking descendants of the 1820 settlers), where most men are nicknamed either "Boet" or "Swaer". Historically, of course, there has been much enmity between English-speaking South Africans and Afrikaners, who resented British imperialism. This type of enmity is not apparent in the relationship between Boet and Swaer, however. Though they have in previous executions sparred against one another, always seeking to play a prank or have a laugh at the expense of the other, this is done in a spirit of friendship and mutual understanding.

As I have noted, the "can of the best" campaign depicted both Boet and Swaer as incorrigibly lazy. This alone established them as somewhat subversive characters, since they did not project the kind of values espoused by the establishment, be it English-speaking big business or Afrikaner nationalist government. Certainly, Boet does not fit with what du Pisani describes as hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity built around a work ethic and puritan moral values (2001: 158). In fact, he are Swaer are typical of the kind of isolated rural eccentrics that feature in the widely-read and well-loved Groot Marico stories of Herman Charles Bosman. In their devotion to coffee-drinking, pipe-smoking and sitting on the stoep doing nothing, these two represent a character type generally regarded with affectionate indulgence by (white) South Africans.

Here we witness an overlap between myth and cultural intimacy. There is rueful self-recognition of the laziness and (once Moegae appears) racist attitudes of rural white South Africans. "Yes," white South Africans might smile and nod on seeing this commercial, "this is what some South Africans are like. You'd have to be South African to appreciate that." But this is not necessarily what they know South Africans to be like from lived experience; how many of them would have actually encountered people like Boet and Swaer? Barthes noted that the concept in myth is associated less with reality than "a certain knowledge of reality" (1972, 2000: 118). Because South Africans have read the Herman Charles Bosman stories, because they believe (having seen the Castrol campaign, amongst other cultural productions) that there really are people like Boet and Swaer somewhere out there in the *platteland*,[51] they construct a notion of South African-ness for themselves. Because it is the task of Boet and Swaer to mirror urban South Africa, these characters are always less than fully themselves: they must be open to receive the projections of those at whom the campaign is targeted.

The arrival of the black man, Moegae, upsets the cosy relationship hitherto enjoyed by Boet and Swaer (and the viewers of the campaign). This relationship was characterised by distinctive, ritualised behaviour: sitting on the stoep, smoking, drinking coffee, talking about nothing, looking for ways to mock the other. The black man is the Other who, thanks to the advent of the New South Africa, may no longer be treated as such. Moegae will not treat Boet or Swaer with deference, as might have been expected of black men in the past. By allowing Mogae to laugh at Boet, the narrative gives him some power in the relationship. The fact that he slips so easily into the same modes of behaviour associated with Boet and Swaer (the chair, the use of "Ja Boet", the laughter) suggests that, despite his skin colour, he is just like

[51] Afrikaans term for 'countryside'

them. Black and white South Africans, the advertisers appear to be arguing, are not so different after all, as they share elements of a common culture.

The humour of this advertisement therefore stems in part from the irony that, after so many years of separation under a political system that enforced racially defined hierarchies, it appears that black and white South Africans – or at least, black and white South African men – share similar modes of behaviour. The final shot, showing all three men sitting together on the stoep, suggests that they have established a kind of equilibrium and are unlikely to move for the time being. National identity here becomes a function of bodily expression (in the form of lethargy, if not actual laziness) and ritualistic behaviour (staring into space, smoking, and engagement in phatic speech in which no actual meaning is to be inferred).

Despite this apparently stable sociable situation, it is not clear whether Swaer is simply playing a joke on Boet, and will send Moegae back to wherever he came from once the cameras have stopped rolling. Viewers would have to wait for the next instalment in the series to see whether or not Moegae was to be a permanent resident of Horingboom Oasis.

The New South Africa in 'New South Africa'

Not unexpectedly given its title, the myth of the New South Africa appears quite explicitly in 'New South Africa'. When Swaer tells Boet "business is going to boom in the New South Africa" he is, like de Klerk more than four years before, bringing the myth to life by naming it. While the New South Africa implies various social and political changes, and brings with it a whole collection of assumptions which one may choose to endorse or dispute, it must be *named* if it is to function. Barthes argued that myth, as a parasitical metalanguage, required a language-object to survive, and the myth of the New South Africa is no different. Quite literally, it requires language, since it is only within language that the myth can exist. If it is never named, the New South Africa (like globalisation) does not exist, since it really is nothing more than a name given to a particular interpretation of history.

As a result of the advent of the New South Africa, the black man is now permitted to sit alongside the white man as an equal. The black man is no longer condemned to invisibility; indeed, he even adopts the same behaviour patterns as the white men, suggesting that he was never very different from them, after all. This depiction of black and white South Africans as fundamentally similar regardless of the colour of their skin is an obvious attempt to incorporate the myth of the rainbow nation into the campaign narrative. Because blacks and whites are not as different as we had assumed, the reasoning goes, reconciliation should not be difficult.

The black and white South Africans here are not quite equal, however. It is Moegae who joins Boet and Swaer, revealing how he is just like them, rather than the other way round. The narrative thus suggests that political change will require black South Africans to adapt to white modes of behaviour. The most obvious way in which blacks can become more like whites is by embracing capitalism and consumerism. 'New South Africa' acknowledges the presence of black South Africans (previously invisible in the series) not simply as a group newly able to claim equality with whites, but as discriminating consumers, too. "Even more people will want a can of the best now," says Boet, in an attempt to reconcile himself to the idea of a black man sitting at his side. Here the mythical power of the New South Africa is evident in the fact that its influence reaches the most isolated corners of the country, and that it has almost magical properties: it changes relationships between black and white, it has the power to improve sales. Naturally, existing economic inequalities, which will make it difficult for most black South Africans to run motor vehicles and therefore have a reason to want a can of the best, are dissimulated.

Such an attitude alludes to the idea that business and marketing are ultimately rational, and should embrace blacks as consumers to ensure future success, an assumption which as discussed was spreading rapidly in South Africa before the elections. Democracy, which brought with it the end of white political power, could therefore be justified by the benefits it brought to the economy - which was still controlled by whites – rather than any concern with basic human rights. Such pragmatism is not necessarily bad for a modern nation-state, however. In Boet's response can be discerned the rationalisations that would be associated with the brand state, and how, as Van Ham (2001) argues, emphasis on economic realities results in the amelioration of ethno-nationalist chauvinism. The realisation by marketers that it made economic sense to treat black South Africans as consumers is succinctly articulated in this scene. The New South Africa of this advertisement is not only a place where blacks and whites are equals, it is also a fundamentally capitalist construct.

As I have argued, the focus of the narrative is on the reaction of Boet to the arrival of Moegae, rather than the latter's feelings about the situation. Boet is a metonym of the conservative, Afrikaans-speaking white community, and in his discomfort can be read the uncertainty of a broader white South African community as they adjusted to life after apartheid. Boet is clearly not entirely happy about the newly elevated status of the black man, but he chooses to rationalise rather than resist it. White South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, in this narrative, have taken a pragmatic approach to political and social change -

a reasonably accurate reflection of how white South Africans actually did choose to deal with democracy.

Here again, the subtexts contained within this narrative respond with remarkable acuteness to the undercurrents circulating in South African society at the time. After the euphoria of the elections and the rugby World Cup faded away, the debate over whether white South Africans had made any effort to adapt to African ways (rather than vice versa) would undermine the reconciliation efforts that were a hallmark of Mandela's government. Overall, it can be argued that, unlike the advertisements of South African Breweries, there is a great deal of honesty within this commercial. Here there is no pretence here that political change is easy or natural for many South Africans.

The other side of the coin: Sales House and conditions of production

Castrol 'New South Africa' offers a vision of political change from the point of view of white South Africans. Its focus is on the difficulties white South Africans face in adjusting to political change. By contrast, the clothing retailer Sales House takes the same event, the transition to South Africa under black rule, and presents it from the point of view of black South Africans. This was possible because Sales House was a brand aimed exclusively at the black market. Because whites were not part of the target market, it was unnecessary to construct a message that would take their attitudes or feelings into account.

As a "black" brand, Sales House itself embodied a worldview deeply rooted in apartheid realities. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, during the 1980s, Sales House campaigns tried hard to appeal to black pride, a strategy continued into the 1990s. In these advertisements, black men were compared to African animals, particularly lions, in order to represent the strength and pride of a particular African male identity. Most of the advertisements were shot in the same style as the advertisement under analysis here, with the models dramatically lit and filmed against a dark background. As is the case here, they are static and statuesque, while the camera moves.

Sales House '1994' – April 1994

VISUAL	AUDIO
(All dramatically lit and shot against a black background) Black arms raised, fists clenched. Camera pans from left to right. The Zairian flag, shot from a low angle, appears in the frame. As the camera continues to pan, we see that the flag is held aloft by a woman elegantly dressed in red. To her left	Voice of Martin Luther King: Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, free at last. SFX: drums beating

is a man dressed in a smart business suit holding the Nigerian flag. A title appears in white at the bottom of the screen: Lagos, Kinshasa, 1960	
Mid shot of slim, handsome black man in suit looking directly at the camera, which tilts up to reveal four men standing behind him. They are also wearing suits. Each holds one corner of the Tanzanian flag. Title in white: Dar es Salaam, 1961	SFX: African singing begins. Drumming.
Cut to close up of a woman facing to the left. As the camera tilts up, she shifts her gaze to the viewer. Dissolve into long shot of the same woman standing, facing left and holding the Kenyan flag. She is smartly dressed. Title: Nairobi, 1963	
Dissolve into mid shot of man in suit. The camera pans from left to right and as it does so, a huge Zambian flag unfurls behind him. Title: Lusaka, 1964	
Mid shot of Mozambican flag. The camera pans diagonally left, revealing the face of a beautiful woman. Dissolve to mid-shot of the same woman and a man sitting in chairs facing the camera. Behind them are the flags of Angola and Mozambique. Title: Luanda, Maputo, 1975	
Dissolve to close-up of a woman's chest area. She is wearing jewellery, dramatic makeup and a glamorous black dress. As the camera tilts up, she looks up. Dissolve to a close up of the Zimbabwean flag. Dissolve again to a mid-shot of the Zimbabwean flag fluttering above her head. The camera zooms out. Title: Harare, 1980	SFX: Music growing louder
Dissolve to long shot of Speaker's chair in Parliament. In it is seated a black man dressed in a business suit. Title: Cape Town, 1994 As the camera tracks around to face the man, the Sales House logo appears above his head.	SFX: Music reaches a climax

'1994' is noteworthy for its use of so many of the conventions associated with overtly ideological discourse. Here we have what appears to be a textbook example of the reification of historical processes: history is presented, quite literally, as a fashion shoot. With its allusions to the past and its construction of a grand destiny in the form of freedom from

colonial rule, this is an advertisement that tries very hard indeed to function on a mythical level.

Probably the most obvious ideological strategy used in this advertisement is that of trope, with both the metonym of the flag (which stands for the country as a whole) and the capital cities (which stand for the government) used as repeated motifs. Curiously, the independence of Botswana or Namibia is not included; nor are many other African countries which achieved independence in the period under review. (Ghana, which appears in the logo of the Pan African Congress, is another notable exclusion). In addition, the troubled post-independence history of the countries listed – war in Angola and Mozambique, corruption in Nigeria and Kenya, tyranny in Zaire, to mention but a few – is elided. In this way the flags displayed and the cities named are drained of history, to be replaced with a mythical narrative of a new African elite assuming the power that is rightfully theirs.

The advertiser (concerned with selling fairly upmarket clothing to black South Africans) seeks to legitimate both the role of the black elite within the South African democratic process, and the place of Sales House as a brand within that process, by placing the transition of South Africa to democracy in the context of other African nations. Through this strategy of narrativization, the transition to democracy (and its embodiment by young black elites) is presented as an historical inevitability. The liberation of the countries listed from colonial rule is itself legitimated within the context of the American Civil Rights movement. The use of Martin Luther King rather than an African liberationist thinker such as Kwame Nkrumah or Patrice Lumumba is interesting: in all likelihood it is a function of the wide availability of King's speeches and his familiarity to South African audiences (and the advertising creatives who came up with the idea for the campaign in the first place). By using an actual recording of King's voice, complete with the distortions of time, a sense of historical legitimacy is conferred upon the entire advertisement, which is shot in highly controlled and artificial settings.

There can be no doubt that, in aesthetic terms, this commercial is beautifully shot (not surprisingly, it won Gold at the 1994 Loerie Awards, South African advertising's equivalent of the Oscars). The camerawork is complex, the soundtrack is moving and the stillness of the actors juxtaposed with the fluttering brilliance of the flags generates a heightened sense of emotional drama. The lighting is theatrical, designed so that the actors and the bright flags stand out against a dark background: effectively, this technique removes any sense of context.

All of the actors used in this advertisement are young, black, slim and good-looking – as would be expected of models required to show off the product offered by a clothing chain to best effect. And, as is typical of clothing models, they are oddly devoid of personality. Their expressions are fixed; they barely move. While the flags flutter at their sides or unfurl in the background, they remain statuesque, immovable. It is with the growing intensity of the accompanying music that the task of building emotion must lie. The body language adopted is characteristic of statues of leaders and war heroes; these people are not ordinary, they embody the mythical. Notably, the uniform they wear is that of the ruling class – business suits or glamorous evening dresses for the women, suit and tie for the men. They are noble and heroic monuments to the class they represent. As in the campaigns of South African Breweries, under discussion in the following chapter, a link is made between the struggle for democracy in South Africa and capitalism.

So, as has been noted, the history of the end of colonial rule in Africa is represented as a series of static moments. History, bloody, contested and replete with moral ambiguity, is recast within the controlled, artificial, glamorous environment of the fashion shoot. Only the final shot, of the black man seated in the Speaker's chair in Parliament in Cape Town, does not take place on the photographer's set; that this is the culmination of all that went before is emphasised by the drumming African music which, combined the joyful ululations of African women, reaches a climax. Finally, the advertisement breaks free of this artificial environment to offer the viewer a visual punchline: this is what this series of moments has been leading up to, this is the message the viewers have been waiting for - political power.

Interpretation: Prefiguring the end of the rainbow nation

One of Barthes' many descriptions of myth is "depoliticised speech" (1972, 2000: 142). The Sales House advertisement is an example of speech that is both political and depoliticised at the same time. It refers to political events, and in the context of its broadcast at the time of the 1994 elections, its ideological stance can hardly be misinterpreted. Yet at the same time it represents history and politics as fashion, which is associated with appearance and surface at the expense of depth, temporary fads at the expense of permanence. Here the contingent becomes static, eternal: human agency is removed from the process. Liberation simply happened because it was destined to.

Yet the narrative is ambiguous. For while the message is one which interpellates black South Africans as consumers, and is therefore on the side of capitalism, it also promotes an ideological agenda that, in the context of South Africa, is unquestionably on the Left. The average white South African watching this commercial would have been very likely to reject

the mythology it propagates out of hand - inadvertently becoming a demystifier of myths. "What they don't tell you here," this conservative viewer might say, "is that all of the countries represented here have failed. Their economies are a shambles; without the World Bank they would starve. They are riddled with corruption and war. So what does this say about the prospects for South Africa under a black government?" The myth put forward in '1994' is not a myth of the Right at all.

As a result, there are two levels of communication that can be discerned within this text. On one level, '1994' is a celebration of freedom from colonialism. However, at the same time that the narrative presents the triumphant inevitability of the achievement of freedom by Africans, references to Nigeria, Angola and Zaire (which have been associated above all with corruption, dictatorship and war) imply a certain level of pessimism about the sustainability of that freedom. On the surface, this advertisement punts a left-wing agenda, but beneath all of this it intimates – subconsciously, one assumes - the possible failure of the South African liberation project by linking it to other failed national liberation projects.

Ambiguities of this kind bring me to another question. If the narrative of this advertisement traces the end of colonialism in Africa, what is it actually *about*? What is at stake? Democracy is one possibility, though this seems unlikely given that none of the countries cited is truly democratic. Perhaps – taking the famous Martin Luther King sound clip in the opening shot of the advertisement as a clue - it is about freedom. But it should be noted that the juxtaposition of the black power salute with King's words, and the final shot of the man in the Speaker's chair – from whence control is exercised over Parliament itself – point to the fact that the freedom presented in this advertisement is the freedom that comes with power. As has already been observed, the narrative is an ode to the power wielded by the ruling elite. As for the freedom of the masses, the so-called "people" (and, it should be noted, South Africa's minorities), they remain invisible.

On the surface, then, it is difficult to read the Sales House advertisement as anything other than an anthem for the emerging black elite who were about to take their place in history, and to whom aspirant members of the emerging black middle class looked for inspiration. Ironically, of course, the clothing sold by Sales House was targeted at consumers who were not in fact members of the class eulogised in the campaigns under discussion; it should be noted that the actual black elite that emerged in post-apartheid South Africa were not likely to deign to purchase their clothing from Sales House. As a group they soon developed a reputation for expensive tastes, particularly when it came to clothing. Sales House could hardly compete with Hugo Boss.

Allusions of this kind to the new political and business leadership about to take the centre stage can be ascribed to the tendency in much South African advertising to imbue brands with aspirational qualities, where products are associated with greater levels of affluence and social capital than would typically be associated with the product as it is actually used by consumers. Since all of the individuals wearing Sales House clothing are associated with political power and the opportunities for personal advancement promised by membership of a new ruling class, the advertisement suggests that this heady mix of power and destiny will rub off on those who shop at Sales House. Purchase this clothing and you too will be successful: you will be linked in some mysterious way to the powerbrokers who have engineered political change.

In conclusion, '1994' offers the spectacle of private enterprise using the symbolic vocabulary of black liberationist politics to ingratiate itself both with consumers and the new power structures about to be put into place. As such it is does not propagate a typically New South African mythology, which is defined above all by its emphasis on racial reconciliation. The invisibility of minorities means that there is no evidence here of the rainbow nation; in any case, the history of the Sales House brand itself belies the desirability of racial integration. If anything, this commercial prefigures Thabo Mbeki's African renaissance, the ideological successor to the rainbow nation, which represented a new engagement with Africa and a move away from attempts to reconcile with white South Africans. In fact, as I have shown, the narrative contains within itself arguments both for and against the African renaissance (the importance of rehabilitating African nationalist pride versus the mounting evidence of so many failed postcolonies), anticipating all of the concerns that would animate dialogue between big business and the government from 1996 onwards. Even in 1994, as the myth of the rainbow nation dominated public discourse around national identity, the African renaissance was waiting in the wings.

National amnesia: the rise of consumerism in post-apartheid South Africa

The Sales House commercial is an excellent example of an advertisement that, in the words of Eve Bertelsen, "mobilize[s] the cultural power of the South African democratic struggle by appropriating its respected signifiers and rerouting them to a vigorously propagated discourse of consumerism and the 'free market'" (1998: 222). In this analysis, such advertisements "erase the logic, context, and history of such terms, 'forgetting' their origin in a critique of class society (its economic, political, and gender relations), and invite us to embrace them as a newly assembled currency of commodity signs" (1998: 222-223).

Bertelsen's comments are a response to a trend that emerged at the time of the 1994 elections, when it became fashionable for advertisers to refer to the struggle for democracy in South Africa. The tone of these campaigns varied considerably, depending on the advertiser. Beacon Sweets took a gently humorous approach, offering, "It takes allsorts to make a New South Africa". Sports shoe manufacturer Hi-Tec declared, "When a new nation stands on its feet, Hi-Tec take (sic) the step", while dairy co-operative Bonnita rather feebly likened four decades of apartheid to spilt milk: "The past is just that…. past" (in Bertelsen, 1998: 226). However, Bonnita did at least acknowledge that there had been a rather unfortunate past. Most other advertisers preferred to focus on the positive – and, since advertising that makes any references to the negative is widely regarded as being counter-productive, this is hardly surprising. At the time of the 1994 elections, most advertisers would have been only too eager to get on with the business of focusing on the future, since dwelling on past injustices would only have stirred up uncomfortable associations of socialist liberation, capitalist exploitation and racial inequality.

Bertelsen goes on to argue that the advertising of the 1980s and 1990s has helped to produce new subjects as it looks to the more salient discourses of contemporary culture for attitudes to incorporate into its productions, so that they endorse the free market (1998: 224). By severing the link between black empowerment and its traditional association with a socialist ideal, advertisers were able to use its signifiers – and it should not be forgotten that Sales House had been making highly effective use of black pride since the late 1980's – to promote a discourse of consumerism in line with the needs of late capitalism. This was expressed chiefly in terms of individual choice, a focus on the self, and the acquisition of material goods as the fulfilment of a democratic right. "In the process," Bertelsen argues, "the desire for a shared social good is replaced by the desire for consumer goods or commodities" (1998: 231). Echoing Bertelsen, Clifford Charles bemoans the shift from "Comrade-icon to Celebrity-icon" as a "symptom of the changing value-system in our country" (undated: 35). The emergence of consumerist attitudes heralds a decline in worthier spiritual values. "Presently, South African urban life is plastered with appropriated struggle images to sell products to young consumers, patterns of which are traceable to global Consumer Culture like Nike and Sales House campaigns" (undated: 35).

Certainly, brands – particularly international fashion brands – enjoy remarkable levels of recognition in townships and squatter camps.[52] What Bertelsen and Charles do not necessarily acknowledge is the fact that some of the most desirable brands in the townships produce very little if any traditional above the line advertising in South Africa. They are known simply either through exposure on television or from their presence in shopping malls such as Sandton City, or the township independent stores retailing designer clothing. The latter can be seen in the most unlikely surroundings near taxi ranks, surrounded by hawkers selling fresh vegetables or cheap disposable nappies. The Johannesburg CBD boasts an extraordinary number of shops selling expensive imported shoes, all with their prices prominently displayed, along with the assurance that lay-byes are indeed available. The point is that while brands such as Nike may have large advertising budgets, many other admired brands (such as DKNY or Armani) do little if any advertising locally. The desirable new identity promised by such labels is not ready-made by sly creative geniuses brainstorming in their Sandton offices; it emerges from a complex interaction between township street culture, the media (music videos, American soap operas and so on) and peer pressure (Kuzwayo, 2000: 43).

Buppies and BMWs

Though the appropriation of struggle signifiers in order to sell store credit cards and hair care products was much criticised, the use of black pride, choice and empowerment evidently struck a chord with the consumers at whom such advertising was aimed. Indeed, Nike, bastion of globalisation, has become part of the fabric of township society (Kuzwayo, 2000: 42). Advertisers have also been placed under a certain amount of pressure to depict black consumers in a positive light: in other words, as consumers with the power to purchase aspirational brands. Those black South Africans who had benefited most from the shift to a democratic order were the individuals most anxious to be interpellated as consumers.

Social status for the black newly affluent was often linked in a very direct and visceral way to branded goods, particularly clothing and cars. If many advertisements aimed at the black middle class constituted new historical subjects divorced from their tribal and struggle identities (as Bertelsen argues), it was also true that many members of the black middle class - and many who wished to become members of the black bourgeoisie - had a strong desire to be interpellated as successful, entrepreneurial individuals who expressed their identity through material acquisition. In fact, the black bourgeoisie appeared to negotiate the competing

[52] In the course of research I conducted whilst working in the advertising industry, I discovered exceptionally high awareness of international fashion brands in traditional "black" areas such as townships and squatter camps, many of them relatively obscure since they do not advertise. Motor vehicles were another category that elicited a great deal of interest.

demands of a westernised urban lifestyle and rural, traditional roots with relative ease, and practices such as *lobola*[53] continued to be honoured on a wide scale in middle class households.

It is fair to conclude that, on the whole, the newly wealthy black managerial class straddled these two very different worlds with remarkable equanimity, their main concern being economic rather than cultural. This was due to the fact that they tended to spend a great deal on projecting the right image (the right address, the right car, the right private school for their children), and, because they frequently had an extended family to support, they were required to shoulder more financial burdens than their white counterparts. The phenomenon of the so-called black yuppie or Buppie entranced marketing managers in the latter part of the 1990's, and many brands – largely alcoholic beverages – switched to using images of successful black businessmen in their campaigns. Campaigns for such brands as Hansa Pilsener, Castle Milk Stout, Martell brandy and Redds cider were all quite explicit in their targeting of the black middle classes.

The implications of power

The overriding message of Sales House '1994' is that transition to black rule is fundamentally about power. Such implications are taken further and fleshed out more literally in this Castrol advertisement, in which Boet, Swaer and Moegae encounter a representative of the new government.

Castrol 'Double' – 1997

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens with a high-angle, wide-angle shot of a large black stretch limousine drawing to a halt in the dust beside the Horingboom Oasis. Cut to long shot of Boet, Swaer and Moegae sitting on the stoep. Swaer gets up from his seat. Cut to long shot of Swaer walking into frame from right to left. A bodyguard, who looks identical to Boet, strides into shot, meets Swaer in the middle, and starts scanning him with a metal detector. Cut to close-up of Swaer looking back over his shoulder. He looks nonplussed. Dissolve to close up of Boet, who looks nervous. Cut to low-angle shot of Swaer looking into the engine of the limousine. In the foreground a small South African flag can be seen. Swaer, holding a canister of Castrol GTX, glances up. Cut to a mid-shot of the uniformed chauffeur, who is	SFX: Music

[53] The price paid to a bride's family.

Swaer's double. Cut to long shot of Swaer in front of the bonnet looking up at the chauffeur, who leans against the car. In the background, Boet can be seen to Swaer's right; he is mirrored by the bodyguard to the chauffeur's right.	Swaer: VIP eh? Chauffeur: Ja!
Cut to low-angle shot of Swaer pouring oil into the engine. Cut to long shot of Boet and Mœgae sitting on the stoep facing the camera. The bodyguard strides into the foreground, so that the metal detector in his hands is in close-up. Moegae chuckles.	Swaer: No wonder he needs protection.
Cut to mid-shot of Swaer wiping his hands and attempting to see into the back of the limousine through its tinted windows. Suddenly he is taken aback. Cut to close-up of Moegae look-alike sitting in the back of the limousine. He's wearing an expensive suit and tie. Cut to low-angle shot of Swaer from inside the limousine. He waves uncertainly and looks back towards Boet as the window winds up. Cut to close-up of car window from the outside, sky and clouds reflected in the glass. Superimposed on the shot are the words: Double your engine protection Castrol GTX	SFX: Electric window. VIP: (Laughing) Thanks chief!
Cut to mid-shot of Swaer taking his seat once more. Moegae chuckles as the camera zooms out.	Swaer: Ag, they all look the same to me. SFX: Music

Seeing Double

The action opens on a familiar scene, that of the shabby, gently decaying Horingboom Oasis. Unusually, however, a limousine draws up in front of the petrol pump. Shiny, sleek, one of the ultimate symbols of wealth and power, the limousine represents the intrusion of the outside world into this rural Kalahari idyll. The use of a high-angle, wide angle shot alludes visually to the fact that the residents of Horingboom are about to be exposed to things that come from outside, from the "wider world" out there.

Characteristically cocky, full of laid-back swagger, Swaer strolls into frame from the right - literally claiming his space - when he is stopped in the middle of the frame by a bodyguard. The latter, a large, white man exuding an air of controlled aggression, proceeds to scan Swaer with a metal detector. In response, Swaer looks back over his shoulder at Boet. The use of a close-up captures his confusion at this development: Swaer is not accustomed to being dealt with like a potential criminal in front of his own petrol station. The camera then cuts to Boet, who looks nervous; clearly he is not willing to confront any of the visitors.

In the next shot, where Swaer is shown looking into the engine of the limousine, a small South African flag can be seen fluttering in the foreground. Clearly the limousine belongs to the South African government, and the passenger is some kind of government representative. Swaer's casual query as to whether the occupant of the car is a VIP confirms this interpretation. In this case his counterpart, the chauffeur, leans against the car as if to establish his territorial connection with it. His attitude to Swaer is one of casual superiority; the fact that he is chauffeuring a VIP is enough to ensure his own importance. Swaer is offered a mirror image of his own arrogant conduct in the form of his double but fails to realise it.

When Swaer finally does get to see who exactly the VIP in the limousine is, he is surprised to discover that the occupant is the double of Moegae. The VIP tells Swaer, "Thanks chief" in an imitation of a common and somewhat patronising expression used by whites to acknowledge petrol attendants (who are almost always black). Now Swaer finds that the apartheid-era roles have been reversed, and must submit to the same kind of treatment meted out to blacks for years. In response to this humiliation, Swaer retreats to racist generalisation - "They all look the same to me" – in an attempt to hold onto his old sense of the world, but as Mogae's laughter suggests, it is a response that demonstrates Swaer's powerlessness. Whites may cling to their old attitudes, but this cannot change the fact that it is black South Africans who run the country and hold the monopoly on state violence (represented here by the bodyguard). In the final shot, the words "Double your engine protection" appear on screen and the link between the device of the doubles and the product being advertised is made clear. Like the bodyguard who protects the VIP, Castrol will protect your car's engine.

Interpretation: They all look the same to me

Swaer's dismissal of the black VIP as an anonymous representative of his race is replete with dramatic irony. On one level, Swaer is quite right: the VIP really *does* look exactly like Moegae. At the same time, of course, he has failed to acknowledge that the chauffeur is his spitting image and the bodyguard looks exactly like Boet; Moegae would be quite justified in making the same remark. "They all look the same to me" is comical because it has been interpreted literally by having the same actor portray both Moegae and the VIP; because Boet and Swaer have doubles, too (and therefore all whites also look the same); and because such a common expression of white racism in South Africa has been brought out into the open in such an explicit and embarrassing way. Boet and Swaer are so typically South African that it is difficult to avoid the point being made, that racist attitudes remain embedded in the (white, male) South African psyche. As always, South Africanness in this advertisement is treated affectionately – perhaps even indulgently - but the observations are sharp and truthful.

The use of "They all look the same to me" is especially potent because the refusal by whites to recognise black individuality and humanity was often encapsulated in this statement during the apartheid era. It is the kind of banally racist remark that lacks the viciousness of a racial epithet, perhaps, but it is pervasive nonetheless, the kind of remark that can be exposed on national prime time television without attracting condemnation or self-righteous volleys of denial. By dismissing all blacks as identical and anonymous, Swaer attempts to regain the cocky sense of self he displayed before he was deflated by the bodyguard and patronised by the VIP.

Swaer uses stereotype to return the world to the way it was, when it made sense to him. Stereotypes exist – despite the strictures of political correctness - because they serve a valuable social function, helping to enforce cohesion within groups. In addition, stereotypes function as social shorthand in a complex world, making it easier for individuals to navigate their way through it[54]. Similarly, Charles Schutz argues that ethnic jokes are a form of intragroup communication and are seldom told with the aim of humiliating their targets, who are rarely present during the telling. Ethnic humour, Schutz declares, is "democratic humour arising out of social needs and serving a social function" (1995: 2).

Such a contention makes for interesting debate within a South African context, where the stereotyping expressed by Swaer is a hangover from a previous, undemocratic age. But then again, who is the target of the joke in this particular instance? Swaer, in making a racist generalisation, himself becomes the target of ethnic humour. The subtext of the joke here is that whites – in this case, simple, rural, working class whites – are racist idiots. We have already observed how Swaer misses the fact that the doubles of both he and Boet are present and that racist stereotyping can just as easily be targeted against whites. He is unable to recognise himself or the double standards he applies to the world: white viewers of this advertisement, who are made aware of at least some of this irony, must surely cringe at such a sly demonstration of their own veiled racism. Schutz's assertion, then, that ethnic humour serves to ameliorate tension between different groups, makes sense from a different perspective. "Something that can be laughed at is less threatening and a little more familiar," he explains (1995: 3). "The humour…may lessen tension between groups and soften hostility for [sic] further progress." Because viewers are able to laugh at white racism in 'Double' and thus reposition it as a pathetic but not unexpected response to the loss of power, its potential to harm is defused.

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[54] Hanneke du Preez, in her guide to culturally appropriate behaviour in the New South Africa, *Meet the rainbow nation* (1997), likens stereotypes to symbols "which allow us to remember large amounts of information or complicated concepts with reference to just one item" (1997: 11).

Explanation: Violence and power

Violence and power associated with the state are two key themes in 'Double'. As I argued in chapter one, following Weber, one of the defining characteristics of the modern states is a monopoly on violence, and implicit and explicit references to the relationship of state and citizen to violence are present throughout this narrative. Here the presence of violence is symbolised by the bodyguard, who must be prepared to use violence in order to protect the VIP in the limousine. The assumption is made that Swaer is a potential threat to the VIP and must be scanned by a metal detector: even as the state claims a monopoly on the use of violence, it assumes that it is vulnerable to the citizenry. The citizenry in turn accept this state of affairs, assuming that the power that authority brings with it must be guarded from the public (presumably those who resent those in power). Thus Swaer agrees that the VIP "needs protection".

Such references to violence and power should be understood within the context of South African history. Violence was at the heart of apartheid South Africa. For its part, the apartheid state engaged in considerable violence, both official (in conflicts in Angola and the suppression of resistance in the townships) and unofficial (such as covert cross-border operations and the murder of anti-apartheid activists). On the other hand, black resistance to state violence was characterised as undisciplined, unlawful and dangerous. Winnie Mandela had vowed that black South African youth would liberate the country with their matchboxes – a powerful image when contrasted with the armoured vehicles and automatic rifles of the defence force and the police. It was the task of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to uncover the truth behind violence on both sides, from the murder of anti-apartheid activists to the necklacing[55] of police informers.

Indeed, the history of South Africa from the arrival of white settlers is a history of violent confrontation, an endless litany of battles and massacres. Three public holidays commemorate events marked by bloodshed: March 21, Human Rights Day, marks the Sharpeville massacre of 1960; June 16, Youth Day, commemorates the Soweto uprising of 1976, while the Day of Reconciliation on December 16 was originally known as the Day of the Vow, on which Boer settlers in Natal defeated the Zulu impi at the aptly named Blood River.

But power lies not only in the sanctioning of violence, but also in invisibility and surveillance. As I have already noted, the limousine and its occupants represent an alternative world to the

[55] A method of execution that involved placing a car tyre soaked in petrol around the victim's neck, and setting fire to it.

Horingboom Oasis, both literally and figuratively. Where Horingboom is dusty and shabby, the limousine is shiny and slick. It reflects the world around it, while those outside are, thanks to the tinted windows, unable to see inside it. This lends the occupant of the limousine an air of mystery; he is powerful and important, and is therefore not subject to scrutiny, as is the case of ordinary mortals like Boet and Swaer.

The symbolism of the black windows is especially potent when the VIP closes them once more. He can see Swaer, but Swaer can no longer see him. Swaer therefore has no way of knowing whether the VIP is looking at him or not, and so his power in the relationship is further reduced. As in Bentham's Panopticon, the purpose of which was, in the words of Michel Foucault, "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (cited in Cartome, 2001), Swaer himself becomes the bearer of power: because he never knows whether authority in the form of the VIP is watching him or not, he should submit to it at all times. (Though Swaer, of course, chooses to defy the power of the VIP/ government by making a racist generalisation as soon as the limousine drives off and the presence of authority is not immediately apparent.)

In this alternative world, then, the power relations between the three characters are very different. Here it is Moegae, the black man, who is the VIP, the embodiment of the state. The doubles of Boet and Swaer are there to serve him. Here the New South Africa, verbalised in the previous advertisement, is depicted much more literally and the implications of the transition to democracy are much clearer. The New South Africa is no longer a vague economic entity ("Now even more people will want a can of the best") where whites are required to share some of their privileges with blacks. What 'Double' depicts is the reality of state power, where blacks are in government and have the authority to control the unleashing of violence. Whites, so long accustomed to being in charge, are now viewed as a potential threat to the government: it is Boet and Swaer who represent a possible threat to the VIP, and against whom the latter must be protected.[56]

In the mean time, Moegae functions as an observer whose laughter functions as a commentary on the action. Boet and Swaer take themselves seriously throughout the narrative, and it is up to Moegae to bring them down to earth. The latter's response to racist generalisation is

[56] One notable irony lies in the casting of Ian Roberts, the actor who portrays Boet, as the bodyguard. This adds an ambiguous dimension to the narrative: not only does Roberts look like the archetypal apartheid-era Afrikaner police officer, this is a role he has actually portrayed in the past. Thus when 'Double' suggests that the new political dispensation has co-opted the power structures that maintained the authority of the apartheid government, it does so in an unexpectedly literal way.

laughter: one of the underlying messages of this advertisement is that this is the best way to respond to racism, which in the New South Africa should be viewed with a measure of compassion. Boet and Swaer really are rather pathetic, and one can only pity their wilful ignorance. Since viewers (of all races) can see that the chauffeur is identical to Swaer and the bodyguard is the double of Boet, they are drawn into Mogae's laughter; his laughter is their laughter, too. (Similarly, the Vodacom advertisements analysed in chapter five make use of the amusement of a black characte r to pass comment on the actions of an arrogant yet inept white character.)

Swaer's resort to racism is yet another good example of the use of cultural intimacy as strategy to generate humour. What is more interesting, however, is the way in which cultural intimacy can both confirm insider status and resist hegemonic power. National traits that are the cause of shame can "offer citizens a sense of defiant pride in the face of more formal or official morality" (1998: 3). Outside the diegesis of 'Double', Swaer's racism is likely to be a source of knowing embarrassment for many white viewers, but at the same time it is also a means of acknowledging, implicitly, the difficulty faced by many whites adjusting to a situation where blacks are not simply equals (as they were in 'New South Africa'), but are now in power. Even if the advertisement hardly endorses Swaer's recidivistic return to racism, by making a feature of it, it acknowledges that there are people out there who do feel this way.

Herzfeld has written of how familiarity with the ways in which the state enforces power both allows citizens to resist the state and, conversely, confirms its hegemony. Examples of this type of cultural intimacy can be found in nations across the world, usually in attitudes relating to those incarnations of state power hated by everyone, namely the tax man and the traffic cop; the latter has long been a staple both of South African comedy and humorous advertising. No matter how many jokes people tell about the tax man or traffic cops, however, they are still in awe of the power of these institutions: indeed, it is *because* the state has so much power that jokes must be told about it. So cultural intimacy may "at one moment assure the disenfranchised with a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation" (Herzfeld, 1998: 3). While parodying the state's monopoly on the use of violence, 'Double' simultaneously recognises that the power of the state cannot be challenged; the effectiveness of intimidation is therefore reinforced.

So, what about the New South Africa?

This advertisement works on several different levels. By using two versions of each character, the idea of "double your engine protection" is realised visually. The character of the

bodyguard and the need to protect the VIP emphasises the product's ability to protect motor vehicle engines. While promoting the benefits of Castrol motor oil, 'Double' mocks typical white South African attitudes to blacks, in this case, the familiar dismissive shrug that blacks "all look the same". Despite Boet and Swaer's apparent acceptance of the New South Africa in the previous instalment in the campaign, they clearly have not let go of their racist attitudes.

The scene in which Swaer gets to see the black VIP behind the tinted windows can be viewed as an allegory of the wider situation in South Africa, which was now three years into black rule: assumptions of black inferiority are no longer valid. Moegae merely laughs off the dismissive attitudes of Boet and Swaer because he can see, quite clearly, that in this alternative world, it is he who has the power, and the white men are there to serve him. The arrogance of white South Africans comes across as desperately naïve, given their much-reduced political status. The world out there – the world beyond Horingboom – has changed almost beyond recognition.

Thus it is that in 'Double' one witnesses a much more obvious acknowledgement of political change than in 'New South Africa': blacks are no longer merely the equals of whites; in fact, they run the country. It is they who are the VIPs, the politicians who ride around in air-conditioned luxury. If whites choose to cling to racist dogma in the face of political change, it is because they refuse to acknowledge reality (a reality, the advertisers assume, that viewers also see). 'Double' can also be viewed as an attempt to question the myth of the New South Africa, to uncover the reality beneath the platitudes. Moegae might be sitting alongside his white compatriots in a bodily enactment of the philosophies contained in the myth of the rainbow nation, but at the same time there can be little doubt that – politically at least – power has shifted quite dramatically. In 'New South Africa', it was the black character who joined the whites, adopting their modes of behaviour. This is not the case in 'Double': whites can no longer assume, as they did in the period leading up to and immediately after the elections, that they can have things their own way.

So democracy in this advertisement is fraught with ambiguity. Certainly, the advent of black rule has altered the relationships between the races, so that roles established during the years of colonialism and then apartheid have been reversed: now the black servant is the master, the white masters now servants of a black government. Yet the nature of power has not been altered by South Africa's transition to democracy: it still revolves around who may use violence against whom. Nor has democracy succeeded in narrowing the gap between government and ordinary South Africans. The VIP requires the services of a bodyguard in

order to protect him from the people he supposedly serves; he travels in an air-conditioned limousine, insulated from the harsh realities of the world outside. Thus, while 'Double' ostensibly offers an opportunity for South Africans to laugh at themselves, it also presents a remarkably cynical view of the new, non-racial government. Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose.

Using humour to accommodate change

One obvious feature of much of the television advertising that engaged with the New South Africa was the widespread use of humour to put forward their vision of the changing nature of South African society. Of the campaigns under analysis in this thesis, only Castle Lager and Sales House do not use laughter as a means to engage the audience. As a rule, a great deal of television advertising across the world uses humour, as it is one way to ensure the entertainment value of the commercial. If people like your advertising, so the reasoning goes, they will like your brand, and therefore be more predisposed to purchasing your product.

There is another reason for the widespread use of humour in politically flavoured South African advertising, however, and that is the fact that comedy is a very effective mechanism for dealing with social change. South African humour underwent something of a renaissance after the demise of apartheid, as people attempted to come to terms with new politics, new identities, a new society. In stressful times, laughter helps alleviate some of the anxiety that prevails, if only for a moment. Returning to Charles Schutz's defence of ethnic humour, a dual function for this type of joking can be discerned in the South African context. According to this analysis, advertisements by Castrol, Nando's and Vodacom (amongst others), which tackle assumptions of racial superiority and the realities of political change, allow both white South Africans to adjust to the sometimes frightening process of losing political power, and black South Africans to view white racism as a cultural hangover from the past rather than a distinct threat.

As Schutz explains,

> [E]thnic political humour is overtly hostile but covertly serves stability and assimilation of out-groups. Hostility couched in humour retains [its] sting but loses fear through enjoyment of it. At the same time, that which is being aggressively ridiculed becomes familiar through its pleasurable exposure. It becomes subject to rational criticism rather than prejudiced hostility…the ethnic target of the humour is more acceptable in the larger society, and the minority group comes to see itself and the objectionable features of its behaviour in the light of the standards of the larger society.
>
> (1995: 3)

In the light of this argument, South African humour in general and its incarnation in advertising can be seen to bring South Africans of different race groups together towards a more uniform standard of behaviour acceptable to South African society at large. Since much of the target of humour in television advertising was not, in fact, the foibles of black South Africans but rather the outmoded norms embraced by their white compatriots, the "minority group" and "larger society" are white and black South Africans respectively, not the other way around as is often assumed. The humour of the Castrol commercials serves as a gentle reminder that racist attitudes are no longer tolerated, at least not in the public realm.

Conditions of production: New freedoms

Advertising's use of comedy also reflected the climate of relative freedom that prevailed in the post-apartheid era. After all, the apartheid regime was not known for its sense of humour, even if, as the satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys frequently maintained, it wrote his scripts for him. Now, it appeared, sacred cows were fair game, all year round. The New South Africa signified, not only racial reconciliation and a shift in power relations between black and white, but also personal freedoms previously undreamed of under apartheid. Once black South Africans could no longer be barred from beaches, restaurants and public toilets on the grounds of their race, other pillars of apartheid control started to wobble, and occasionally crash down. Censorship was scaled back (if not dispensed with altogether) and in the early 1990's, copies of *Hustler* and *Playboy* began to appear on the shelves of news agencies and bookstores. Films of a relatively adult nature such as the notorious *Basic Instinct* appeared on South African movie screens, having survived the censorship process relatively intact.

Sex has always been used to sell, and South African advertisers wasted little time in taking advantage of the new, somewhat more laissez-faire attitude. The fast-food chain Steers was notable for its use of scenes inspired by the feminist road movie *Thelma and Louise* in its advertising; in one scene, a model smears tomato sauce all over her chest in a provocative performance for the benefit of a passing truck driver. Nando's, too, used references to sex in some campaigns. An advertisement for Nando's sauces concealed the bottle under a sheet so that it resembled an erect penis; another posed the question, "Where do Nando's chickens come from?" and responded with a shot of two chickens mating. One special was named "Basting Instinct" to coincide with the release of the aforementioned *Basic Instinct*.

Taboos against the advertising on television of feminine hygiene products were flung aside, with jokes about the absurdity of the advertising of "wings" found on New Freedom or Kotex pads becoming a staple of many a comedy routine. Jeans companies also tested boundaries:

Soviet produced a raunchy cinema campaign (Koenderman, 1994: 72), while the Sissy Boy 'Wear the pants' campaign – which featured, amongst other executions, graphic images from the Kama Sutra – was rejected by some magazines on the grounds that the images were offensive, though it certainly appealed to the target market of young, assertive women (*AdFocus* 1997: 72).

Despite the unprecedented liberalism of public discourse in South Africa during the 1990s, incidents of censorship were still common. Advertisements viewed as controversial – in particular those that referred to sex – were occasionally taken off air or even banned by the SABC. An advertisement for Grasshopper shoes featuring male streakers at the cricket was altered, so that the bare bottoms were covered by black boxes, while an advertisement for Planned Parenthood starring an animated condom performing a stand-up comedy routine was banned by the public broadcaster's Public Service Committee. The advertisement was later flighted by M-Net (Golding-Duffy, 1996: 1).

Music retailer Musica was forced to remove Valentine's Day campaign posters depicting naked couples (including, gay, mixed-race and elderly couples) in passionate embraces from its stores after objections from the public (*AdFocus* 1998: 104). An anti-rape television advertisement starring local girl turned Hollywood star Charlize Theron was banned and then unbanned by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in 1999. The following year, Nando's showed a guide dog deliberately leading a blind old lady into a streetpole so that it could steal her takeaway chicken. Not unexpectedly, the ASA received a flood of complaints, and the advertisement was later screened in a version that replaced the offending sequence with soft-focus images of puppies, flowers and young children. The debacle received a great deal of press coverage, prompting the cartoonist Zapiro to depict the errant guide dog having escaped with a chicken on which were inscribed the words "Free Publicity".

Incidents like these conjured up the spectre of renewed government control of advertising. As it was, the health minister, Dr Zuma, had made her intention to ban tobacco advertising quite clear, and there were murmurs of following the lead of countries such as Sweden in banning advertising to children. What might be next? The advertising industry, through the Association of Advertising Agencies and the Media Directors Circle rejected any suggestion that the government tighten control over advertising, arguing that it was in the interest of advertisers to maintain a respectful relationship with their consumers. "[T]he success of advertising lies in its ability to appeal to the target market," they argued. "It's only the foolish advertiser who would willingly belittle or alienate his consumers. The advertiser/consumer relationship is one that has its own inherent checks and balances" (*AdFocus*, 1998: 104). The

debates over what was acceptable or unacceptable in public culture that "offensive" advertising triggered were at least out in the open; since so many people were exposed to the advertising, and its banning gained such wide media coverage, South Africans found it difficult to distance themselves from the argument.

In this way, the censorship of advertising brought wider debates about censorship and public morality into the open in a way that the furtive rescheduling of a controversial television programme or the subtle snip here and there of a scene in a film could not. Should we be allowed to laugh at blind old ladies? Is it right to show naked bodies on television? Should such subjects as homosexuality and rape be brought out into the open? Thanks to its ubiquity - and the fact that, because advertisements tended to take one by surprise while one was waiting for the news, or *Rescue 911*, or *Generations*, they were so difficult to ignore - there were times when advertising forced South Africans to confront their own attitudes and assumptions about what constituted acceptable public discourse.

Homosexuality in public culture

One phenomenon which, perhaps more than any other, marked the growing liberalisation of South African public culture, was the increasing prominence of the gay community. Homosexuality had been regarded as a threat to the 'civilization' of white South Africa since the late 1960s, when white South Africans became aware, to their alarm, that there was a distinct homosexual subculture in the larger urban centres. In the early 1980s, the gay community became more politically assertive – so much so that a National Party candidate won the Hillbrow seat in the 1987 whites-only elections on the strength of his stated commitment to gay rights (Gevisser, 1994: 61-62).

But it is from 1990 that the visibility of gays and lesbians in broader South African society can be dated, when the Johannesburg Municipality first granted permission for a Gay Pride march. In 1992, noted Mark Gevisser, "[M]any gay men and lesbians still choose to meet in dark bars, but also have the opportunity to establish a public political identity outside of these bars and on the street" (1994: 63). While gays and lesbians faced (and still face) opprobrium from some quarters, the 1990's were in general characterised by both increasing visibility and growing acceptance for the gay community in South African society.

Nando's 'Tailgunner' was one of the first television commercials to make overt references to homosexuality, and thus offers a compelling indication of the increasing visibility of gay men within public culture in South Africa. The enormous popularity in South Africa at the time of Australian drag artist comedy *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* no doubt also had an influence

on the willingness of the South African public to accept this kind of advertising (the influence of *Priscilla* on the Nando's advertisement can certainly be discerned in the flamboyance of the gay couple). Ultimately, 'Tailgunner' represents a joke by a younger generation of South Africans at the expense of an older one. The punchline comes in the form of a pun on "tailgunner" which is the technical term for the soldier who manned the guns in the tail of a World War Two bomber as well as a slang term for homosexual.

Nando's 'Tailgunner' – 1997

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens on a mid-shot of an elderly couple, Norman and Joan, seated at a table in a Nando's outlet. Both are conservatively dressed, Norman in a shirt, waistcoat and tie, Joan in a frilly blouse and pearls. Facing the camera, they are busy reading a menu. Joan notices the camera/ audience and nudges Norman. He looks up and she smiles sweetly. Throughout the shot her expression remains blankly cheerful, while the curmudgeonly Norman looks stern.	SFX: 1930's-style music Norman: Oh. Today's special at Nando's is a Nando's Choice: full chicken, large chips and a large salad for just R50 (pronounced *ront*). Joan: Yes, just fifty ront. Norman: Joan said we just had to take up this offer. She invited our neighbour Nathan and a companion to join us.
Cut to three-quarter shot of Nathan and his companion walking through the Nando's outlet from from right to left. Both are flamboyantly dressed, wear jewellery and pose self-consciously. Nathan's companion is noticeably limp-wristed. They point off camera. Cut to mid-shot of Joan waving to her right. Three-quarter shot of Nathan and his companion, who approach the camera and walk across the frame in close-up. Nathan's bright pink clothing fills the frame. Cut to mid-shot of Norman and Joan facing the camera across the table. Nathan and his companion sit down at the table across from the old couple, so that their backs are to the camera and they are mostly out of frame. Nathan's left hand is delicately poised on the shoulder of his companion, a large ring visible on the pinkie finger. Joan smiles sweetly while Norman maintains his gruff demeanour. He looks at Nathan.	Norman: So, Nathan, my children tell me you're a tailgunner. (*Smiling slightly*) I was a military man myself.
Cut to animated frame with picture of ice-cream cone: 4 free ice creams with Nando's choice. Cut to animated frame with Nando's logo and the pay-off line: A taste of Portugal	SFX: 1930s-style music

"Tailgunner" is shot on the relatively low-cost medium of video in a deceptively simple style. Norman and Joan address the audience directly, almost as if the director is making a home movie. Use is made of dramatic irony, where the old couple are completely unaware of the truth of the situation with which they are faced – a truth that is quite obvious to the viewer. This is the same technique used in other advertisements in the same campaign. Norman and Joan bring their other set of neighbours, a group of Rastafarians, a box of Nando's because the kind-hearted Joan is convinced that the smoke billowing out of the house is an indication of failed cooking experiments. On radio they also expound the delights of chicken kebabs by describing "pierced flesh". In all of these advertisements, the joke stems from Norman and Joan's ignorance of new social meanings and subcultures, all of which were frowned upon in the apartheid era. The source of the humour is the anachronism that arises from the reliance of the old, conservative couple on an outdated understanding of the world and the realities with which they are confronted.

Norman and Joan are constructed as conservative "old school" English-speaking South Africans in a number of ways. They wear clothing somewhat inappropriate for the informal setting of a Nando's restaurant: Norman dons a tie and waistcoat – one imagines that he is never seen out in public without wearing either – while Joan wears pearls and a frilly blouse. Both of them hail from an era where casual dressing of the jeans and T-shirt variety was unknown, and they conform to sartorial stereotypes of the elderly. Their voices, which sound uncoached and raw, convey an air of authenticity: gruff, unsmiling Norman is rasping and reticent, sweet little old lady Joan is somewhat timorous even as she tries to sound earnest.

Norman's acknowledgement that he was a "military man" suggests that he fought in World War Two (he is about the right age) and this revelation brings with it a whole set of associations. South Africa during World War Two was deeply divided between the predominantly English-speaking pro-war lobby, and the Afrikaner nationalists whose sympathies lay with Nazi Germany After the war, most ex-servicemen voted for General Jan Smuts's United Party, which was ultimately defeated by the Afrikaner Nationalists. So Norman's past military history, while it offers the opportunity for a pun on "tailgunner", alludes to a past that pre-dates apartheid and that may have - in the minds of many English-speakers who were appalled by the Nationalist victory - offered a "nobler" alternative to it. Norman and Joan are old South Africans, but because they are English-speaking and linked to South Africa before the Nationalist victory of 1948, they are distanced from apartheid in a way that a character with an Afrikaans accent would not be.

The most revealing element in the characterisation of the couple is their pronunciation of the word "Rand". Most English-speaking South Africans pronounce "Rand" to rhyme with "sand". However, older English-speakers typically pronounce the word with an inflection that brings it closer to the Afrikaans pronunciation: "Rand" ends up sounding like "ront". This quirk of pronunciation is a small detail, but an important one, since it elevates the characters above more typical, less nuanced stereotypes of the elderly. To appreciate the humour of the pronunciation of Rand as "ront" - to understand how firmly it positions Norman and Joan in a certain space and time - requires an intimate familiarity with the unique inflections that characterise South African culture. Many English-speaking South Africans would have been reminded of their own parents or grandparents along with their prejudices; such familiarity would add to the humour of the advertisement. Once again, the use of "ront" is a good example of how cultural intimacy may be deployed in advertising to confirm the status of cultural insiders. In fact, this kind of subtlety would probably be missed by South Africans who have not grown up within white English-speaking culture.

Having constructed characters who are representative of an older, more conservative generation of English-speaking South Africans, the advertisement proceeds to juxtapose them and their worldview with a phenomenon of the New South Africa: the openly gay couple. Nathan and his companion are excessively camp, if anything; their flamboyant dress, wearing of feminine jewellery and self-conscious carriage of the arms and wrists all code for a certain model of gay performativity. In the final shot, Nathan's elegantly limp wrist, which rests coyly on the shoulder of his companion in the foreground of the frame, can be read as a metonym of his sexuality.

If truth be told, Nathan and his friend are so obviously homosexual that it is almost impossible for anyone in the target audience to miss the joke. The dramatic irony of the fact that Norman and Joan are oblivious to the sexual proclivities of their neighbour generates much of the humour of the situation. This especially true in the case of a couple who - if they are indeed typical of a certain generation of South Africans - are likely to be homophobic, and who would be disconcerted at the very least if they were aware of the truth. Their ignorance and naïveté point to how much society has changed since the advent of the New South Africa. After all, their children, who are more in touch with social change, are perfectly aware of Nathan's sexual orientation.

Interpretation: Old South Africans and new visibilities

The juxtaposition of Norman and Joan and Nathan and his companion allows one to compare the representation of characters which have not yet been appropriated by myth, and types that

are completely saturated with it. Myth tends either to take outstanding individuals and fetishise their uniqueness – Mandela is one example, Marilyn Monroe another – or flatten them out until they become a locus of typical characteristics. In 'Tailgunner', Norman and Joan represent the old South Africa, but are not typical enough for their individuality to be diluted. "Ront" cannot yet summon up associations with an entire collection of attitudes and modes of behaviour. The form of Norman and Joan has not yet been emptied to be replaced by a concept of old-South-Africa. (Contrast this to the stereotypes of snooty English speakers in Vodacom 'Golf', analysed in chapter five: unlike Norman and Joan they stand for an attitude, snobbery. They are not rounded; they have no rich personal history.)

In contrast, Nathan and his companion are not individuals. They are types embodying various tropes of homosexuality: the limp wrist, the posed, self-conscious gestures and flashy clothing. Homosexuality is reified, divorced from its social, cultural and historical context. Why are Norman and Joan characterized as individuals while Nathan and his anonymous companion are not? The caricature of the camp, over-the-top queen in 'Tailgunner' is obvious, even crass, but perhaps this is to be expected: this was the first television advertisement to acknowledge the existence of a gay community in South Africa in this way, and there were as yet no established advertising conventions regarding the depiction of gay men. The solution therefore was to depict a gay stereotype that nobody could possibly misunderstand (in the way that Norman and Joan misunderstand it). The obviousness of Nathan's sexual identity both generates the dramatic irony that is so important for the comedy and ensures that everyone "gets" the joke. So it is not the rich cultural associations and idiosyncrasies with which the characters of Norman and Joan are endowed that are important in the case of Nathan: what matters is not his individuality but his ability to embody various widespread assumptions about gay identity.

The stereotyping of homosexuality here can be viewed in much the same light as ethnic humour, which, as I have argued, serves as an initial step in the incorporation of out groups into the mainstream. The stereotypes Nando's uses are unsubtle and probably offensive, but they also bring into the open a community that was increasingly becoming a part of ordinary South African society. The humour of 'Tailgunner' stems not only from the fact that Norman and Joan's naïveté is patently ridiculous, it is also generated by the audacity of the advertisers in depicting homosexuality in the first place and using slang such as "tailgunner' to refer to it. Nando's are effectively breaking taboos in this advertisement, and as it turned out, the resulting controversy helped generate valuable publicity.

In fact, the humour mocks the very people who were likely to object to the depiction of homosexuality on television, that is, conservative South Africans who wished to pretend that the phenomenon did not exist. The contrast between the (quite literally) old South Africa and the tolerance and freedom of the new, improved version is quite clear, bolstering the myth of unprecedented freedom in the New South Africa. Norman and Joan are treated gently, however, and their conservatism is depicted as naïve rather than regressive. Like the laughter of Moegae in the Castrol campaign, the suggestion in this advertisement is that the best way to deal with conservatism is to laugh at it: South Africa is changing so quickly that those who cannot keep up are to be pitied rather than viewed as a threat. In this way, 'Tailgunner' offers a solution to the containment of reactionary tendencies within society at large.

Explanation: making space for new subcultures

Through the old couple and their gay acquaintances, an old South Africa is contrasted with a new society in which freedom is guaranteed for everyone regardless of sexual orientation. All the viewers of this advertisement are invited to see the joke and participate in it; through their laugher, they are involved in an act of acknowledgement that South Africa has changed. Reading between the lines, 'Tailgunner', along with other executions in the campaign, propagates a myth in which the New South Africa is a place of unprecedented freedom. Now there is space for subcultures which under the apartheid government were for the most part illegal; by laughing at the joke, consumers are invited to celebrate the emergence of these subcultures (whether they be the gay community, Rastafarians or devotees of body piercing) and view them with affectionate indulgence.

After Nando's set a precedent with 'Tailgunner', other advertisers could follow in their wake. In 1997, the cellular network MTN won several local and international awards for a campaign which likened a choice of cellphone contracts to choices in sexual orientation. The use of a Village People soundtrack and characters reminiscent of a band that was always marketed as "gay" made the link clear. A television commercial for Appletiser, flighted in 2001 and 2002, features a woman flirting with a man who is later joined at the bar by his boyfriend, and the stereotype of the camp hairdresser has been used on more than one occasion. In general, the types of gay men represented have tended to become subtler and less caricatured. Nevertheless, overtly gay themes are still rare in South African television advertising and there have been suggestions that the pendulum in South African public culture is swinging back to conservatism. Certainly, television advertisements, because they are so visible and so vulnerable to public opinion (only one complaint is enough to have an advertisement taken off air), offer a highly sensitive barometer of changing levels of public tolerance.

Eurocentric vs Safricentric: debates over advertising and nation-building

All of the advertisements analysed in this chapter are very specifically South African in flavour; cultural intimacy as a strategy is much in evidence, as in order to fully appreciate them one must be familiar with the nuances of South African culture. By their very specificity, these advertisements confirm insider status and thus strengthen mutual understandings of what constitutes South African identity. In addition, all of these advertisements capture the essence of shifts taking place in the deeply unstable South African society of the time and as such they serve as trenchant socio-historical documents.

Such strong local flavouring was not typical of most South African advertising, however, and the issue of whether or not communication should include elements of a specifically South African culture was the subject of often heated debate throughout the post-apartheid period. Perhaps ironically, part of the problem lay in the enormous success enjoyed by South African advertising on the international stage during the 1990s. In the wake of the dismantling of apartheid, South African advertising agencies were able for the first time to showcase their work at international advertising festivals such as Cannes and the Clio Awards. For a country with such a small industry compared to the multibillion dollar industries of Europe and North America, South Africa did remarkably well. As early as 1992, South Africa was the third highest rated country on the awards table in the film category.

In the years 2000 and 2001, South African agencies TBWA Hunt Lascaris (whose founders had always expressed the desire to create the "first world-class agency out of Africa") and Jupiter Drawing Room respectively were ranked by *Advertising Age* as amongst the ten best in the world. "Advertising is one of the few South African businesses which is truly world class," declared the industry commentator Tony Koenderman in 1997 (1997: 32). The advertising fraternity viewed its international achievements with much pride, and the idea that South African advertising ranked with the best in the world was seen as an important incentive in keeping creative talent in a country beset by the problems of the so-called brain drain.

At the same time that the industry was making its mark on the international stage, a distinctly nationalist flavour emerged in debates circulating around advertising in South Africa. This was symptomatic in part of the battle over South Africa's new cultural identity, which was caught "between the need for global acceptance and the desire for the redressing of domestic imbalances" (Charles, undated: 34). Industry commentators began to talk about a

"Safricentric" approach to advertising, using specifically South African situations to capture the hearts and minds of the public (de Bruin, 2002: 58). One perennially heated argument centred on so-called "Eurocentric" advertising versus "African" or "South African" advertising. Sophisticated, often visually complex and witty, the "Eurocentric" approach was the kind of advertising that creatives loved to produce because it appealed to them and won awards at international advertising festivals, which were considered far more prestigious than the Loeries, the local advertising awards. But critics charged that this kind of advertising was incomprehensible to most South Africans - especially black South Africans. "White and European humour can often be lost on blacks, whose style of humour may be different," argued Morris. "Sarcasm is a form of humour alien to blacks, and instead of seeing the 'funny' side of the joke, they may take it seriously" (1992: 30).

The fiercest critic of South African advertising was John Farquhar, editor of the industry magazine *AdVantage* and bête noir of ambitious creatives across the land. "If advertising in South Africa is a reflection of the society in which it operates, then this society is heading for a huge train smash," he wrote in 1995 (1995: 40). The advertising industry, he charged, was too interested in being "arty" and clever. In an argument that is typical of his views, he writes, "I come from a school that says that the purpose of advertising is to sell…What concerns me is that far too much advertising favours entertainment or creative expression, without doing the job it is supposed to do – sell." He supports this view with the assertion that "In Africa, with its high illiteracy, word-of-mouth is by far the most powerful communicator. Even amongst the educated, imitation has a greater brand credibility than advertising" (1999: 108). The Nando's campaigns in particular came under regular fire; as Farquhar saw it, most of the consumers who were in the market for takeaway chicken were black and relatively poor, and therefore would not relate to the advertising. (It is worth mentioning at this point that Nando's advertising is praised by Muzi Kuzwayo in his book on how to market to black South Africans).

At the 2002 *Financial Mail Adfocus* conference, the marketing director of Nike South Africa, Thebe Ikalafeng, and MD of The Jupiter Drawing Room, Graham Warsop, offered a solution to the impasse. Together they made a case for the merits of both uniquely South African advertising – advertising that could only be understood by South Africans – and what they referred to as "universal" advertising, which was not rooted in any particular culture. Both communication approaches, they argued, were appropriate in different circumstances.

It was not simply a matter of producing "Safricentric" advertising however; the advertising industry itself was regarded as too white. As with the Nolutshungu debacle at the University

of the Witwatersrand, this development was linked in part to the growing power of the black managerial class, which was in turn linked with the myth of the African renaissance. Complaints about the slow pace of transformation in the advertising industry had been rumbling for years. As early as 1996, advertising agencies were accused of being out of touch with reality (Farquhar and Golding-Duffy, 1996: 1). "I feel that there is no will on the part of agency bosses to bring blacks and women into the industry," charged Peter Vundla, often described as the "conscience of the ad industry (*AdFocus*, 1999: 50). "They still don't see that this is a new way of doing business and that it's in their interest…some people don't see this as an African country. They still see it as a European country."

By 2002, some black members of the industry were losing patience. Why was it that seven years after the first democratic elections, most advertisements featured white characters, when 88% of the population was black? Why was the advertising industry still 70% white? (Koenderman, 2002: 48) In the words of Jannie Ngwale, "The industry continues to be stuck in the redundant notion of a superior race as espoused in the Bantustan philosophy. This nation will never be freed from its past because of the way it continues to portray certain racial stereotypes" (quoted in Koenderman, 2002: 47).

But it was the issue of media spend rather than the portrayal of race stereotypes in advertising that ultimately led to the parliamentary hearings into racism in the advertising industry in November 2001. The managers of Yfm, the hugely successful radio station targeted at black youth, had complained for some time of the difficulties they faced in attracting media spend, certainly when compared to media that attracted a predominantly white audience. The cult television drama *Yizo Yizo*, also aimed at black youth, faced the same problem. The chairman of the Portfolio committee, Nat Kekana, famously derided media planners as 22-year-old white girls who lived in Sandton and watched *Ally McBeal*. "White women can't market to blacks," John Farquhar stated in a personal interview with me in 2001.

Not unexpectedly, there were those who felt that the industry was being unfairly criticised. "It's just not realistic to believe that marketers prefer to sell their products to whites than to blacks. Not even the most racist of businessmen would penalise himself with so misguided a principle," argued Tony Koenderman (2002: 48). Similarly, Chris Moerdyk maintained that marketers were not interested in the skin colour of their consumers, only in the colour of their money: "[M]arketing and advertising in South Africa are the least racist components in the wider media business….[The media] continually confuses racism with language and culture. And the colour of the skin with the colour of money." (2000: 12) If publications such as *Business Day* or channels like SABC 3 garnered a bigger slice of the adspend pie, it was

because this was where the affluent segment of the market was to be found. "It is about quality not quantity. It is about spending power and aspiration. Marketers and advertisers are far from stupid and, I might add, far from racist. They simply cannot afford to be" (Moerdyk, 2002: 12).

South African advertising's trials and tribulations were an unsurprising development in light of the reality that the industry was by and large a sophisticated one, operating according to international standards and relying on a young, highly trend-conscious workforce which was required to produce work that would appeal to a relatively unsophisticated market. Inevitably this led to conflict. But Farquhar, for one, was unsympathetic. "Marketers are not patrons of commercial art," he sneered (1999: 108). In his view, far too many adverts were "sheer personal indulgences" which did nothing to move the product off the shelves. Advertising agencies, on the other hand, campaigned hard to prove a link between creativity and sales, and thus silence their critics. In an age of media saturation and the so-called "attention economy", they argued, advertising had to be creative if it was to catch the attention of the target market. If consumers were to give your message their attention, they expected a reward in the form of entertainment, especially on an entertainment medium such as television.

While there were some refusals to accept a link between advertising and society, many advertising practitioners began to accept that they did bear some responsibility for the direction South African society was taking. "When selling a campaign to clients we, and that means all of us, do not doubt the power of advertising to generate sales and create wealth for our clients," argues Brenda Wortley. "…But why don't we stop to think of the role we play in society as a whole: those same powers to influence will shape the way society thinks and the social framework in terms of establishing what is acceptable and unacceptable in everyday life" (2002: 10).

Already in 1999, Tony Granger, a creative director at TBWA Hunt Lascaris who subsequently emigrated to New York, felt that there was cause for optimism. Declaring himself "*gatvol* with the time it has taken South African advertising to move out of the shadow of the UK and US" (1999: 22), Granger noted growing evidence of "authentically South African" advertising. "This new advertising speaks with a South African accent and establishes a street-credibility by depicting situations that South Africans - black and white – can relate to…We can now give thanks [that] our industry's overall input…is becoming more South African. As well as high creativity, some maturity and a sense of our own self must come through. At last, it's starting to happen – not as an occasional glimmer, but as a regular occurrence" (1999: 22). Advertisers such as Coca-Cola had already seen results with

advertising that explored authentic township situations (*Brands and Branding*, 2000: 5), and even that most American of brands, McDonalds, was using distinctively South African patois in its communication.

Suddenly, it seems, being South African is a selling point, and a South African identity is something worth celebrating. Recognisably "South African" advertising is now favoured, and several awards have been created to recognise advertising with a South African flavour.[57] The end result, many influential individuals appear to believe, is a greater sense of national identity. As Trevor Manuel told his audience at the 2002 AdFocus Conference, "Cultures are forged, and they're forged by focusing on particular sets of experiences. Advertising has a distinct role to play in raising the temperature of the forge" (2002: 3). For all the criticism of advertising and its putative role in nation-building, there are campaigns – analysed in this chapter and those that follow – that, through their evocation and interrogation of the myths that have shaped the incipient nation, have indeed contributed to raising the temperature of that forge.

Some advertising campaigns have been credited with more significant contributions to South African identity than others. In the following chapter I focus on the television advertising that appeared on behalf of Castle Lager between 1990 and June 1998. Castle Lager is noteworthy because, more than any other brand, it has sought to epitomise South African identity. Few brands would dare to court charges of hubris in the light of such explicit identification with the nation, but Castle Lager has succeeded with barely a word of criticism. Of all the advertisers that engaged with national myth during the 1990's, Castle Lager is the brand that most faithfully and unquestioningly reproduces the central myth of the mythology of the New South Africa, the rainbow nation. As one noteworthy Castle Lager advertisement suggested, South Africa was indeed unified as a nation, and one of the catalysts of that unity was a shared appreciation of a very particular brand of beer.

[57] The pressure on agencies to produce more recognisably South African advertising appears to have born fruit - of a sort. South Africa's poor performance at the 2002 Cannes Festival was attributed to the culturally specific nature of South African advertisements; few outside the country could comprehend them (Koenderman, 2002: 78).

Chapter Five

One Nation, One Soul, One Beer

"Must we rely on Castle Lager adverts to enshrine our plurality?" asked an arts journalist in 1999 (Dodd, 1999: 12). It was a plea familiar to many media watchers. If any cultural institution dedicated itself to portraying national unity within South African diversity, it was beer advertising. And the beer brand that tried harder than any other to depict a sense of South Africanness was Castle Lager, routinely described by its marketers as "the beer of the people" (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 75). Through campaigns that explored heart-warming situations involving beer-drinking and male bonding, Castle Lager advertisements had become a byword for an idealised vision of racial harmony.

As Joseph Talotta, acknowledging the broadness of Castle's approach, observed, "Castle and its "ambassador" Charles Glass speak every South African language except perhaps Kugelese. It's white. It's soccer. It's black. It's rugby. It's rainbow" (2000: 8). Of all South African advertisers, it was Castle Lager that made the most concerted attempt to depict the rainbow nation in its communication, and no analysis of the mythology of the New South Africa (even one not focused specifically on advertising) would be complete without an examination of the Castle campaigns of the 1990's.

That Castle Lager was indeed the quintessential South African brand was acknowledged when its familiar iconography was used on the cover of the *Millennium Edition of the Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa*. As the publishers explained, such an honour was "befitting of a brand that is truly an icon of South African culture" (1999: back cover); Castle cans include the claim "Great South African beer" and in many consumers' minds, this is the exemplary South African brand. Castle had achieved this rarefied status through sponsorship of the three most popular team sports in South Africa, soccer, cricket and rugby as well as advertising that sought to capture the essence of what it was to be South African. Throughout the 1990's, the company behind Castle Lager, South African Breweries (SAB), dominated South African advertising and promotion. SAB was the biggest advertising spender in South Africa, with Castle the brand with the biggest advertising budget[58]. In 1998, for instance, Castle Lager was far and away the best-known alcoholic beverage brand in South Africa (Markinor, 1998: 39). This investment appears to have paid off: SAB has also

[58] Individually, SAB brands rank behind other big spenders such as the retailer Pick 'n Pay; however, when grouped, SAB brands outspend all other advertisers. In 1999, SAB spent more than R144 million on above-the-line advertising alone (Talotta, 2000: 8)

consistently ranked in the top ten most admired South African companies according to the annual Markinor survey, a remarkable achievement for a purveyor of alcoholic beverages.

In addition to its many other business interests – as a 1986 corporate print advertisement reminded readers, SAB was "involved in satisfying the needs of our country in many different ways" - SAB enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the South African beer market. All of South Africa's biggest beer brands – Castle Lager, Hansa Pilsener, Carling Black Label, Lion Lager and Amstel Lager – are owned by SAB. As one journalist observed, SAB could be regarded as "South Africa's unofficial Ministry of Beer" (Talotta, 2000: 8). During the period under review, each brand employed a different advertising strategy in line with an overall market vision. Castle, a beer with a dry taste, was positioned as the patriotic beer of the people. Hansa and Amstel were targeted at upmarket, socially ambitious individuals while Carling was positioned as a beer suitable for consumption by men engaged in hard physical labour (in other words, the working class). Lion's strong association with rugby was supplanted during the 1990's by Castle, which had been designated SAB's flagship brand.

In early 1994, SAB launched Castle Lite. In the early part of its marketing campaign, this brand extension appeared to be targeted at the black mass market in what industry commentators believed to be an attempt to make less feasible the introduction of a clear beer by National Sorghum Breweries (Makhanya, 1994: no page number). But for small niche markets exploited by imported beers and microbreweries, SAB's brands historically have covered the entire South African malt beer market. Yet despite SAB's overwhelming dominance, the company spent millions on marketing their brands in apparent competition with each other. At the beginning of the 1990's, the reasoning behind this strategy was that the best way to expand the beer market was to provide more choice (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). Throughout the decade, however, the beer market found itself under attack from new forms of competition, such as cider and so-called "alcopops" targeted at younger drinkers. Consequently, the vigorous marketing of SAB's brands became necessary for beer to maintain its share of the alcoholic beverage market.

If the marketing of alcoholic beverages of all kinds in South Africa has become increasingly aggressive in recent years, the greater importance of branding, correct market positioning and appropriately slick promotional activities belie the long, complex and highly racialised history of alcohol in South African society. When SAB celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the brewing of Castle Lager in 1995, it had only been possible for black South Africans to purchase a Castle during the last thirty-three years. To properly understand how Castle Lager television advertisements relate to historical developments in post-apartheid South Africa, it

is necessary to examine the ways in which the history of both SAB and the consumption of alcohol are implicated in the development of a South African urban-industrial socio-economic order.

5.1 Conditions of production

SAB in apartheid South Africa

In 1990, 79% of Castle Lager drinkers were black (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77). Yet no black South African could legally purchase a Castle before 1962. The conditions of production and interpretation referred to in the outermost box of the Fairclough model must take cognisance of the history of alcohol production and use in South Africa. As with every aspect of life in South Africa, the consumption of liquor was subjected to a regime of racialised control. As Crush and Ambler explain, "Those in power saw alcohol as a source of revenue and profit and as an effective tool of social engineering and control, but they often viewed drink also as a dangerous source of disorder, indiscipline, social deterioration and human degradation" (1992: 2). Throughout South Africa's colonial history, liquor was the site of a battleground between oppressor and oppressed. As early as 1658, Jan van Riebeeck recommended the dispensing of a daily ration of liquor and tobacco to young black slaves in order to "animate their lessons and make them really hear the Christian prayers" (Crush and Ambler, 1992: 12). Yet at the same time, the taverns of Cape Town were viewed by the colonial authorities as dens of iniquity, where men might escape the purview of authority (Crush and Ambler, 1992: 13) – a very different situation from the affable conformity in the pubs depicted in modern Castle Lager advertisements.

Meanwhile, sorghum beer played a central role in the cultural rituals and ceremonies of tribal life in the southern Africa region, and the periodic drunkenness that resulted was a source of considerable anxiety for colonial authorities, employers, missionaries and the burgeoning temperance movement alike. In the 1890's, just as South African Breweries was in the process of being established, the mines persuaded the Transvaal government to ban the sale of liquor to black people. This ban was extended after the Anglo-Boer war, and until 1962 it was illegal for black South Africans to produce, purchase or sell liquor except within circumstances rigidly prescribed by the state. On the other hand, many South African industries used liquor as a means to control their workers, in some cases distributing alcohol as a part of wages[59] or, as with the token system on the Natal collieries, ensuring the

[59] In the Western Cape, the notorious tot or "dop" system, so much a part of the history of the South African wine industry, is still in use on many farms today.

continued indebtedness of their labour force (Edgecombe, 1992: 187). The Witwatersrand gold mines, which had lobbied for the liquor ban in the first place, complained that it was virtually impossible to recruit labour without the attraction of beer. They thus retained the right to brew sorghum beer for mineworkers on the premises. Because – in theory at least – beer was available only on mine property, it would be easier to control the movement of mineworkers, prevent desertion and reduce absenteeism (Baker, 1992: 140). However, complete prohibition was never achieved on the gold mines, and an illicit liquor trade continued to thrive (Baker, 1992: 141).

Municipalities, starting with Durban in 1911, were also soon to see the benefits of controlling access to liquor. Municipal beerhalls selling sorghum beer (referred to more commonly as "kaffir beer" in the racist terminology of the time) were established in the townships to generate funds to build facilities for black residents (Crush and Ambler, 1992: 26). This system had the added benefit of giving authorities the means to control black leisure activities, and with each overpriced beer they bought, black men financed their own oppression. On the other hand, black women, traditionally responsible for the brewing of beer, saw the state and the mines intrude on one of the few means of support open to them. As a result, violent protests by women against municipal beerhalls and mine concession stores swept Natal in 1929 (Bradford, 1992: 208).

Many women – the fabled "shebeen queens" of township culture - responded to alcohol restrictions in urban areas by running illegal taverns from their homes; these venues were popular because they represented an escape from the control and surveillance of the beerhalls (Crush and Ambler, 1992: 31). Meanwhile, in Johannesburg, objections by white residents to the presence of municipal beerhalls in the city forced their closure in 1959 (Rogerson, 1992: 306). By 1962, the city was well on the way to "drinking apartheid", with black workers shifting their consumption of alcohol to the townships (Rogerson, 1992: 331).

However, at the same time that urban segregation was being further entrenched, black South Africans were finally permitted to purchase alcohol from outlets intended for the white market. This marked change in policy was as a result of energetic lobbying by the South African alcohol industry (Crush and Ambler, 1992: 26). As SAB saw it, such a move paved the way for the consumption by black South Africans of more "responsible" alternatives (www.sab.co.za, accessed 2002) to illicit brews that were often adulterated with anything from methylated spirits to battery acid. Market data suggests that the legalisation of sales of "European" alcohol to blacks was of tremendous benefit to SAB. Between 1970 and 1997, malt beer saw the greatest market growth of any type of liquor (Parry, 1999) as black South

Africans began to shift from sorghum beer to the lagers produced by SAB. In 1962, beer held 13% of the entire South African liquor market; by 1990, this share had risen to 55% (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). By this date, only 10% of Castle Lager drinkers were white (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77). Clearly, despite centuries of attempts to control alcohol consumption by black South Africans, economic realities made it impossible for such restrictions to continue. The black market was simply too important for large liquor producers to ignore since without it, there could be no significant growth in sales and profits.

SAB and the industrialisation of South Africa

South African Breweries has always been intimately associated with the industrialisation of the country from which it takes its name: its history is virtually a mirror of South African industrial development. SAB was founded on the Reef in 1895, when Charles Glass first brewed Castle Lager. The white miners of Johannesburg provided a booming market for beer and SAB was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1897, becoming South Africa's first industrial share. By 1902, the company could boast more capital invested than any non-mining company in South Africa. In 1956, after several decades of steady growth, SAB bought out its major rival Ohlsson's, thus – in the words of the SAB website – "enabling extensive rationalisation of production and distribution facilities and eliminating much wasteful competition" (www.sab.co.za, accessed 2002).

The 1970's saw seven years of so-called "beer wars" where SAB successfully eliminated several new competitors; presumably these were contributing, again, to "wasteful competition". With its established brands as well as its existing licences to brew the international brands Amstel and Carling Black Label, SAB arrived at the beginning of the 1990's with an unassailable position in the beer market. This was challenged only by urban legends of dubious brewing practices which surfaced in 1996, and saw drinkers at the upper end of the market switch to imported beers such as Windhoek Lager (Keenan, 1996: 16). However the company continued to deny, quite vigorously, that it held what was effectively a monopoly, citing punitive government excise duties *(Financial Mail*, 1990: 52).

Meanwhile, SAB, one of the most powerful and influential organisations in the English-speaking South African business community, had been expanding its interests in other sectors of the economy. In 1986, the company informed readers through a corporate print campaign that it was involved in everything from mattresses through to fruit juice, supermarkets and hotels. "So," suggested the advertising copy, "next time you open a beer, drink to your shareholding in one of the most rewarding and responsible organisations in South Africa" (in *Leadership*, number 1, 1986).

During the 1990s, SAB's fortunes reflected both South Africa's return to the world community and the business opportunities presented by globalisation. SAB concentrated its efforts on overseas expansion, buying up brewing interests from Hungary to the People's Republic of China, and becoming the fourth largest brewer in the world in the process. The falling value of the Rand and the impact of AIDS on South African beer drinkers were cited as contributing factors to the necessity of such a move. In 1999, SAB set a precedent when it moved its primary listing to the London Stock Exchange and in 2002, the company made world business headlines when it bought the American brewing concern Miller for $5 billion, becoming the world's second largest brewer after Anheuser-Busch. South African Breweries is now known as SABMiller, in what is clearly a dilution of its South African identity.

5.2 Processes of production

Castle Lager campaigns of the 1980s

The Castle Lager campaigns of the 1990s are part of a relatively long tradition of Castle television advertising[60], and certain elements which characterised Castle television advertisements in the 1980s are evident in the campaigns to be analysed in this chapter. Until 1984, Castle Lager campaigns reflected the reality of the segregated drinking policies of apartheid South Africa. Blacks did not appear in advertisements aimed at the white market (Holt, 1992: 11) and SAB appears to have followed the policy of shooting different advertisements for different sectors of the population. This practice was also a response to the SABC's policy of maintaining separate television channels for black and white audiences.

The Castle campaigns of the 1980s focused on the heritage of the brand and its close association with South African history. Charles Glass, the man who first brewed Castle in gold rush Johannesburg, was resurrected as a hero of mythic proportions. Reference was made in each execution to the taste of the beer, "somewhat dry, somewhat bitter, never sweet" and the place of Castle in the history of South Africa was claimed with the slogan, "the taste that's stood the test of time". The South Africa portrayed in these advertisements was resolutely white and English speaking.

In contrast, from 1984 onwards, black characters became more prominent in Castle Lager advertisements. Alex Holt, in his study of Castle Lager advertising, speculates that the inclusion of blacks – even though they were in supporting rather than central roles – in

[60] Given that advertising appeared on South African television screens for the first time in 1978, tradition is in this context is necessarily somewhat condensed.

advertisements targeted primarily at a white audience after 1984 formed part of a broader policy change on the part of SAB marketers. Such racial integration went far beyond the accommodation of changing market conditions. As Holt observes, "The new Castle Lager advertisements went out of their way to portray an integrated society that was well ahead of its time" (1992: 13). SAB claimed that the decision to embark on the multiracial route for all of its brands was made after a survey showed the almost all black viewers and 85% of whites approved of such advertising (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52).

SAB did come under attack for its depiction of multiracial situations, which some media watchers dismissed as "artificial" (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52), and Partnership, the advertising agency responsible for the Castle campaigns, acknowledged that they were criticised for the mixed-race approach (Blitz quoted in *AdFocus*, 1996: 92). Nonetheless, the results of a survey, published in the *Sunday Times* in 1988, revealed that 65% of black South Africans and 35% of whites believed that "multiracial TV commercials will help improve race relations and accelerate social integration" (in Sinclair and Barenblatt, 1993: 64). Black South Africans generally assumed that advertisers hoped to promote better race relations through this type of advertising, while many whites (as well as advertising agencies and the SABC itself) believed that multiracial advertising was designed to reach all consumers. Interestingly, less educated black South Africans were more in favour of multiracial advertising than more educated black viewers, and to a lesser extent the same was true of white audiences (in Sinclair and Barenblatt, 1993: 64).

SAB's best-liked advertisement of 1989 was one for Lion Lager, which showed a black executive being promoted (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). For Holt this is evidence that the alliance between English-speaking capital and Afrikaner political power was coming under strain, and that white middle class South Africa was increasingly subject to influence by world opinion, the left and the ANC (1992: 16). SAB commercials of the late 80's and early 90's were "symptomatic of the growing schism between English-dominated capital and the Afrikaner Nationalist Party dominated administration of the state" (1992: 4). Holt goes so far as to suggest that a Castle Lager theme song, introduced in 1987, represented a kind of alternative national anthem (1992: 18):

> When we drink Castle,
> we fill with admiration
> for Charles's
> brewing class
> (which) won fame across the nation.

When we drink Castle,
we draw our inspiration
from Charles's brew
and how it grew
a mile high reputation.

The Charles Glass Society and its Fellows had become a white, middle class organisation to which black South Africans could belong without raising eyebrows. Holt suggests that the figure of Charles Glass in the advertisements of the 80's may have personified Capital and its role in bringing down apartheid (1992: 30). The tune from the Castle song cited above and the drinking of toasts to "Charles!" survived into the campaigns of the 1990's, providing a sense of continuity in the communication of the brand's identity.

Castle campaigns 1990 – 1998

In August 1989, a label change precipitated a calamitous drop in sales, with Castle declining to a third of its former market share[61]. The marketers had attempted to retain customer loyalty with the "Change the Label, Not the Beer" campaign which failed partly because it coincided with a very popular Lion Lager campaign (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). The task of the first Castle campaign of the 1990s was therefore to help the brand recover its lost market share. The objectives of this campaign included an increase in consumption, in affinity (or "closeness") to the brand, positive intrinsic and extrinsic associations with the brand as well as advertising awareness and advertising liking (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77). Black male consumers between the ages of 18 and 49 were the primary target market of this campaign – as SAB were well aware, 57% of the beer market consisted of black males, 24% were black females and only 10% were white males (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77).

Nevertheless, an important task of the campaign was to maintain Castle's sales in the white market, so the advertising had to be inclusive. Based on market research, the advertisers had concluded that both black and white Castle drinkers were more likely to see themselves as "loyal, warm, fun to be with and experienced drinkers" than drinkers of other alcoholic beverages. These people were "gregarious, enjoyed socialising and their beer was seen as an extension and integral part of their lives" (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77). Having taken all these factors into account, the advertisers took a new strategic direction. The decision was made to

[61] Most of the insights on the marketing strategy behind the Castle Lager campaigns between 1991 and 1995 are drawn from the Gold-winning Castle case study entered in the Apex Advertising Effectiveness Awards, published in 2001.

entrench the association of heritage and friendship with the brand, but taking friendship to a new level by associating it with "true" friendship that, like the beer, "stands the test of time". Castle would be "the beer of the people". (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 77)

The result of all this research was "Homecoming", an advertisement first flighted in 1990 and which continued to be broadcast in various forms until 1995. "Homecoming" likens the scenario of black exiles returning from Europe and other parts of Africa to the return of lapsed Castle drinkers to their favourite tipple (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 79); it follows the typical Castle format of a mini drama enacted within a 60-second time frame (Holt, 1992: 31).

Homecoming – 1990

VISUAL	AUDIO
A long shot of two casually dressed men in their late twenties standing next to a bar. Mike is white and George is black. They appear to be paying a black waiter for their drinks. Three men, one coloured, one black and one white, are positioned in the frame between Mike and George. On the bar a guitar and Castle Lager bottles and glasses are visible.	SFX: Crowd talking MV1: Hey, my (unclear) Mike: Come on guys, we're going to be late.
Still in long shot, Mike, George and their three friends (one coloured, two black), move to pick up their things. In the background, white men can be seen playing pool. Cut to mid shot of the group leaving the bar. As they move through the door, the name of the establishment is visible in reverse on the glass door: Satchmo's.	
2. High angle extreme long shot of the group of friends running onto the station platform. They pile George's kit bag through the open window of the train. Cut to close up of Mike smiling through the window at George, who is already inside the train compartment. Close up of George smiling and waving. Mid shot of Mike and his friends running after the train, smiling and waving. They stop running as the train gathers speed and are left behind.	Song: (Blues-style voice and guitar) It's been five years since I hit the road…. Mike: Take care, George Song ctd: Five years since I've had friends
Cut to close up of George looking pensive. He is seen through a train window. The lighting is much darker than in the previous shot. At the bottom of the frame appears the title: Five years later	to help carry the load…
Cut to wide-angle shot of the same platform, this time at night. In the middle of the frame stands a figure in a long, heavy coat.	Yeah, comin' home ain't easy
Cut to mid shot of George looking around pensively in the gloomy, blue-tinged light. In the background people can be seen embracing. Cut to high angle shot of George in the shadows, moving through the station exit. As he moves towards the	When no one you know is around And you're feelin' like a stranger

camera, he pulls at his coat as if to protect himself from the cold.	
Cut to mid shot of George walking through the entrance of Satchmo's. He looks worried. Cut to mid shot of Mike turning around to look behind him. Cut to mid shot of George's face lighting up. Cut to mid shot of Mike frowning before his face lights up in recognition. Mid shot of coloured man looking up from playing pool and smiling.	in your own hometown.
In mid shot, George moves through the crowded bar, from right to left of the frame. This time, most of the patrons are black men in suits and ties. Mike moves in mid shot from left to right. They meet one another beside the bar, still in three quarter shot. A bottle of Castle Lager is clearly visible between them. They shake hands and Mike places his hand on George's shoulder.	George: Mike! Mike: Hey George! SFX: Castle Lager theme music
Close up of bottle of Castle being opened. The camera focuses on George in close up. In the same shot, George turns his head to look over his shoulder and as he does so, the focus shifts to the image of Charles Glass on the wall. He looks back smilingly to his friends, holds up his glass of beer and drinks a toast to "Charles". Mike, in close up, looks up thoughtfully from his glass.	MVO: Just as great friendships will always stand the test of time, so will a great beer. Somewhat bitter, somewhat dry, never sweet. Castle Lager.
In the closing shot, Mike, George and their friends are behind the bar enjoying their beer. Superimposed on the shot appears the Castle Lager logo, along with the payoff line: The taste that's stood the test of time.	Since 1895, the taste that's stood the test of time.

As a narrative, 'Homecoming' functions on two levels. The advertisers themselves have acknowledged that it presents the story of a man who goes into exile for five years, and in this way is an analogy for lapsed Castle drinkers returning to the brand (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 88). The issue of exile is never made explicit (George leaves for five years, but his reasons for doing so are never stated), but the fact that many veterans of the struggle were returning to South Africa at the time that this advertisement was flighted would have made this reading of the story somewhat more likely. As in the case of 'Foreigner' and 'Kariba', the two executions to follow this one, the narrative accords with the traditional dramatic structure of normalcy, agitation and advancement followed by resolution and a return to normalcy.

Stylistically, 'Homecoming' is fairly conventional, using many of the codes viewers would be familiar with through their use in classic Hollywood realism. As a rule the camerawork does not draw attention to itself; shot on location as opposed to a studio, the diegesis of Homecoming looks like the "real" world. A large number of edits is used to build up detail and a sense of place, communicating a great deal of information in a short space of time. As

in most Castle Lager advertisements, the use of music in 'Homecoming' is particularly important, and works in tandem with lighting to evoke the changing moods in the narrative.

The creation of non-racial social space

The filmic codes in 'Homecoming' are used to establish both the enduring friendship between Mike and George and the significance of Castle Lager (consumed within an appropriate environment, the pub) as a symbol and catalyst of that friendship. The opening shot of the advertisement establishes the main characters in their natural environment, the pub. Mike and George are positioned slightly to the front, while their friends are obscured, literally, by the two main characters. The waiter collecting money for the beer helps to focus the activity of the friends, and strengthen the link to the product being advertised. Castle Lager bottles are placed to the right of the scene; visually, Castle is as much of an actor in the action as are the human characters.

Deep focus is used, giving an aura of realism to the scene and avoiding emphasising one plane over another. For instance, a group of white men are clearly visible playing pool or snooker in the background. The presence of these anonymous characters as well as the sounds of talking helps to reinforce the realism of the scene; while the drama between Mike and George is being enacted, life goes on. The use of white characters is also a subtle allusion to the segregated nature of life in apartheid South Africa, where there were few establishments in which black and white men were permitted to drink together. Interestingly, given the primacy of the friendship between Mike and George, the characters are only shown in long shot or three-quarter shot in this sequence: close ups, which would have established a sense of emotional intimacy, are not used. The avoidance of close ups in this sequence serves to emphasise environment over character, and alludes visually to the fact that, during the apartheid years, the autonomy of individuals was highly circumscribed by the state. So, while there is no discernible political commentary in the dialogue, the voice over or the mise-en-scène, the restrained use of close up shots suggests an acknowledgement of the role of external rather than personal factors in the separation of George from his friends and his home.

It is only at the point at which Mike and George are to be separated in the train station that they are shown in close up and the viewer is able to build an emotional rapport with them. It is at this point that the relationship between Mike and George, previously one of camaraderie, assumes a greater emotional depth. In most respects, the farewell is remarkably restrained:

there is no embracing, no physical contact at all. Indeed, the characters are all shown smiling and waving, as if none of them has any idea of the hardships that lie ahead. It seems that the pain of separation can only be alluded to. Mike's parting words to his friend, "Take care George", which are said with a slight smile, can only hint at the depth of friendship. Mike's gesture in running alongside the train as it pulls away suggests a reluctance to be parted from George, or an attempt to keep up with him. Unlike the opening scene, where Mike was the catalyst for action, urging the others to hurry up, George is the now the character who moves on. Now his friends are unable to keep pace with him. But, ironically, it is their stability - their commitment to one physical space (the pub) - that will stand George in good stead later.

In this way, masculinity is constructed as a state of being in which emotional display in the form of close physical contact is not considered appropriate. Even when Mike and George meet up again after five years of separation, they do nothing more demonstrative than shaking hands, while Mike places a friendly hand on George's shoulder. (Perhaps the makers of the advertisement, in their endeavour to construct a wholesome vision of male friendship, were wary of homosexual overtones, though this seems farfetched. More likely is the possibility that exuberant physical contact between black and white men was still regarded as too controversial in the early days of the New South Africa.) Regardless of the somewhat unrealistic physical restraint displayed by George and Mike, Homecoming continues the practice of associating Castle Lager with friendship.

In all of its advertisements, the Castle brand functions as a catalyst for friendship and marker of membership to a particular circle of friends. The consumption of Castle enables new friendships to be formed, existing friendships to be strengthened, and old friendships to be renewed. This is not just any kind of friendship, of course: many of the Castle campaigns of the 1990s are focused on warm, relaxed camaraderie between middle class heterosexual, thirty-something men who have been friends for some time and know each other well. This focus on lasting friendship was an active strategy on the part of the marketers, who felt that it was time to move away from the "friendship and fun" campaigns of the 1980's, towards a deeper, more authentic kind of friendship (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 88). The friendship between Mike and George, therefore, represents authenticity: because it survives five years of separation, it is the real thing. The authenticity of this friendship reflects the authenticity of the beer, or at least what the beer stands for (few Castle drinkers could have been under the illusion that Castle was not mass-produced under rather clinical and artificial conditions).

The use of a train to take George into exile is noteworthy, as the train functions more as a metaphor than as a literal means of transport (an airport might have made more sense, since

later on in 'Homecoming' it is suggested that George returns from Europe). Trains are metonyms of journeys and train stations are associated with transition and flux[62]. The centrality of the train and the station in 'Homecoming' can therefore be viewed as a metaphor of the political instability and uncertainty in South Africa in the years before the final dismantling of apartheid represented by de Klerk's New South Africa speech. The constant movement of the train is juxtaposed with the stability of the pub, which serves as a visual and narrative bookend for the station scenes. Metaphorically, then, the pub - and by extension Castle Lager - is a site, not only of unchanging qualities, but also of an unchanging commitment to racial equality. (This commitment to racial equality is also communicated by its name, Satchmo's, a tribute to the great black musician Louis Armstrong.) In this way South African Breweries makes a subtle claim for its enlightened political stance during the apartheid years. There is no need for the advertisers to be too obvious, since the multiracial character of the SAB campaigns of the latter half of the 1980s would have made SAB's views on the desired nature of a future South African society quite clear.

For purely practical reasons, the device of the train also offers an opportunity for the advertisers to establish the strength of the bond between Mike and George and involve the audience emotionally with the characters; the enduring friendship must be believable, after all. The friends can be filmed in close proximity to George as he is physically transported away from them, and the height of the platform allows Mike and George to maintain eye level contact during the all-important farewell. This would have been more awkward had George climbed up into a bus or down into a taxi. Thanks to this choice of location, Mike, who is standing on the secure ground of the platform, is able to look directly at George as he stands inside a train that is about to start moving, strengthening the dualism of Mike's relative stability and George's restlessness. George's departure is thus more emotionally involving than it would have been had another means of transport been used.

We are never told where it is that the train is heading to; the site of George's exile remains anonymous. That George has been elsewhere is only alluded to with the title: Five years later. The words growled by the Blues singer make clear that George has for some reason had to leave home and has not had contact with his friends for five years. Instead, the narrative cuts to a shot of a pensive-looking George in the window of the train. Visually, George is a man in a perpetual state of journeying – always, in the words of the song, on the road - never able to stop and make a home for himself, for home will always be the place that he left behind. Exile

[62] In South Africa of the early 1990s, trains absorbed other connotations: between de Klerk's historic speech and the first democratic elections, trains became all too often associated with death; many black commuters lost their lives in vicious attacks designed to produce political instability.

in 'Homecoming' is a state of alienation and emotional anguish – anguish made more painful by the fact that, not only was George not at home in exile, he is now in exile at home. In the words of the song, George is a stranger in his own hometown.

Here, in the visual allusions to George's state of being, lighting plays an important role. The pub, while not brightly lit, is filled with muted earth tones that allude to the golden colour of Castle Lager and the brown glass of the bottles it comes in. There is an intimacy, a warmth to the space that is absent in the wide-open, cold space of the station. When George returns from exile, the station is dominated by cold blue light, an outward manifestation of his sense of isolation and alienation. When George disembarks from the train, he is shown in extreme long shot, an isolated figure with no connection to the other human figures on the platform who have family there to greet them. In one three-quarter shot of George, slightly out-of-focus figures are visible behind him: a white man embracing a young woman, and a black man embracing a little girl. His powerlessness in the face of what has become a strange and forbidding environment is emphasised by the use of high angle shots and strong shadows. We see him in shadow leaving the station under a sign that reads "Exit": metaphorically, he is leaving one kind of life, and entering the unknown. George's fear and uncertainty are suggested by the way in which he tugs at his coat, as if to shield himself from the cold reality of the strange and unfamiliar world in which he finds himself. This gesture coincides with the words "Stranger in your own hometown"; emotionally, this is the low point of the narrative.

The coat itself is an interesting choice of garment, since South African weather is generally not cold enough to warrant such clothing; unlike the leather jacket worn by Mike, coats are certainly not an integral part of a South African dress culture. Coats of this length are more commonly associated with European winters, so George's garment can be seen as a metonym of exile in Europe. While the advertisers did suggest in the *Apex Awards* entry that George's exile could have taken place in either Europe or Africa (2001: 89), it seems unlikely that a character returning from a hot climate would have purchased a coat while he was there. That the weather when George arrives is cold adds an element of ambiguity, since South Africa experiences summer when Europe is in the grip of winter. Nevertheless, the cold against which George needs to protect himself should probably read as figurative rather than literal, an outward manifestation of his inner sense of alienation. Notably, long coats are stereotypically associated with the figure of the detective in American film noir, providing a further link with American culture already established by the reference to Louis Armstrong. The sense of alienation is therefore underscored, as the film noir detective is always alienated from a world in which the distinctions between good and evil are often threateningly ambiguous.

In addition to the judicious use of lighting, music plays an important role in establishing mood in 'Homecoming'. In addition, as we have seen, the lyrics of the accompanying song ensure that George's story and emotional state is made explicit. The use of Blues music is an interesting choice. There is the link to the pub, Satchmo's, with its reference to Louis Armstrong, and in which there are visual cues to indicate that homage to American music is a major theme of this venue. George carries a guitar, so he too is a musician of some sort (whether professional or amateur is not made clear). And the Blues, which has always focused on the pain of the black American experience, magnifies the misfortune and emotional anguish of the character. The lyrics bring home the point with some force: George finds those five years of exile hard to bear because he is without the support of his friends (and, it is implied, without the consolations of Castle Lager). In the final sequence, there are a couple of seconds of silence in which the ambient sound of the men in the bar dominates the soundtrack, before the familiar cheery notes of the Castle theme tune begin, signifying a happy ending and a return to the natural order of things.

In the final sequence, close up shots play a greater role, and an interchange of looks becomes significant. Having reached his nadir, George goes to the one place where he hopes he might feel at home, the pub where he and Mike used to enjoy a Castle. (Where there is Castle, of course, there is warmth and friendship.) George enters the doors of the pub and looks around the noisy venue. For a fraction of a second – the edits in 'Homecoming' are very quick – his face registers confusion and uncertainty. The camera then cuts to Mike who happens at the moment to look around. George spots him and instantly his face lights up in recognition. He calls out and Mike, who frowns in apparent confusion, then breaks into a smile as he recognises his friend. The camera then cuts to a mid shot of the coloured man from the first pub sequence; he also smiles in recognition.

As George makes his way through the crowds, the Castle theme music begins. The shots of George in the pub indicate that the racial makeup of the clientele has changed, since most of the patrons now appear to be black men with office jobs (indicated by their attire of suits and ties). He pays no attention to them, however, as he is focused only on Mike and the rest of the gang. He and Mike encounter one another beside the bar shown in the first pub sequence, and shake hands. (It should be noted that, while the changes that George has undergone are figured by his wearing of the coat, Mike wears almost exactly the same clothing as he did in the first sequence. George has changed, while Mike has not.) A bottle of Castle is strategically placed on the bar between the two characters in this shot: visually, Castle mediates the friendship. The camera then cuts to a close up of George; a poster of Charles

Glass is clearly visible behind him. George's expression is one of contentment and satisfaction: finally, he is home, where he belongs.

More importantly, he is also free – while apartheid is never explicitly depicted (the only obvious difference is the number of black patrons in the pub), South African viewers would have readily understood the implication of those five years of absence. With his glass raised, he looks over his shoulder to the benevolent paternal figure of SAB in the form of Charles Glass. The drinking of a toast to "Charles" is a bodily re-enactment of a South African ritual and confirms that he has indeed returned home. The final close up is that of Mike, looking up thoughtfully from his glass. The expression on his face is somewhat ambiguous: satisfaction at the return of his friend perhaps and a return to the natural order of things, or concern as to what the future might hold. The final shot depicts the multiracial group of friends together once more, united in their love of Castle. With the appearance of the pay-off line, "The taste that's stood the test of time", the narrative is closed and the men are left to get on with their lives in the one place they feel most comfortable, the pub.

The politics of Homecoming

'Homecoming' is resolutely egalitarian in its depiction of relationships between men of different races and for that reason alone offers a vision of a society based on racial equality. Previous Castle television campaigns which showed black and white men socialising together had seemed unrealistic in the light of apartheid repression, and the reference to a contemporary political phenomenon – exile – led Holt to argue that 'Homecoming' was Castle's most political commercial yet (1992: 32). In many respects, however, the advertisement appears to be apolitical, in line with SAB's determination not to produce advertising that could conceivably offend anyone (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). The makers of 'Homecoming' have not equipped the character, George, with any external clues as to his political affiliation or the reason for his exile from South Africa. In dress and manner he is, like his friend Mike, apparently middle class; they are certainly not factory workers. George's guitar suggests that they could be professional musicians, but these are merely vague hints. Both Mike and George come across as the kind of nice, ordinary, clean-shaven guys to whom anyone could relate. Their natural habitat is the pub, not the political stage.

But, while 'Homecoming' is not obviously political, it is saturated with implicit political themes. The multiracial campaigns of the 1980s can be seen as visions of a possible non-racial future; now that the future had arrived, the interpretation of black and white friendship had to change. Holt (1992) maintains that 'Homecoming' was made with a white middle class audience in mind, and while this is true to an extent, a stronger argument can be made for a

predominantly black audience. The advertisers themselves acknowledged that the primary target market for 'Homecoming' was black males (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 89); the fact that the main character is a black man suggests that it is to blacks (and their economic power) that the advertisement is trying to appeal, with whites a secondary consideration. There is a subtle shift, therefore, from the earlier multiracial Castle campaigns. In the earlier advertisements, blacks were guests in a white world; in this narrative, there is a distinct awareness that to a large extent, whites are guests in a situation that - while it is recognisable and unthreatening for the middle classes - has become a black world. Mike and George are visually constructed as equals and the camera is careful not to favour one over the other, but the narrative makes clear that George is the main character. If Mike is the more active character in the opening sequence, the rest of the story focuses firmly on George.

As the action shifts to the train station, the racial composition of the group becomes clear: three black men, one coloured man, and one white man. This in itself of worthy of comment because, in advertising, as in so many other aspects of life both in the old and the New South Africa, racial composition is more often than not a numbers game. Throughout the apartheid years, whites were aware of the dangers inherent in their status as a minority. 'Homecoming' appears to acknowledge the minority status of whites in the group of friends, which viewed in this light can be seen as representative of South Africa's population as a whole: 20% white, 80% non-white is a reasonable approximation of South Africa's demographics. The use of a Coloured actor is also interesting – a rare of acknowledgement of South Africa's Coloured population in SAB advertisements, which tend to feature black and white men only. This particular actor is also light-skinned enough to be mistaken for a white man, so there is a degree of ambiguity in the casting. Overall, there can be little doubt that the focus of the action and the emotional core of the narrative is George, and the demographics of the pub patrons show a remarkable shift, from predominantly white, to overwhelmingly black. Quite clearly, South Africa has changed irrevocably.

Mike's enduring friendship with George is political to an extent. The depiction of black and white South Africans socialising in relaxed situations is itself an expression of a certain ideology based on nonracialism – if no longer a radical statement in the era of the rainbow nation - in the context of a history of separation. More importantly, this friendship highlights the triumph of individuals over a political system that sought to regulate every aspect of their lives. The primacy of the individual and freedom of choice unencumbered by excessive state intervention is a tenet of free market capitalism. At the time that 'Homecoming' was produced, the ANC was still firmly committed to a socialist system of government and talk of nationalisation was very much in the air. Big business in South Africa, while it had put

pressure on the government for reform in the 1980s, was also nervous of the strongly Marxist tradition of black liberation politics. The enduring friendship of Mike and George, then, can be read not only as an indictment of the apartheid system, but a criticism of any political system that uses social engineering as a means to shape society according to the strictures of a utopian vision. According to 'Homecoming', it is individuals who matter, not political systems.

Mike's non-racist attitude to George is significant for another reason, as it demonstrates to black viewers of the advertisement that not all whites were racist during the apartheid years. Therefore, in the most simplistic of terms, not all whites are bad. If friendship between black and white individuals such as George and Mike is possible, so too is racial reconciliation on a larger scale. However, it should be noted that what is depicted in 'Homecoming' is not so much the racial reconciliation as envisioned by the rainbow nation myth but the endurance of friendship across the colour line despite the external forces ranged against it. In 'Homecoming', the black and white characters have always been friends, an important difference. The demise of apartheid allows them to resume their friendship in a new spirit of freedom; their warm relationship is part of the natural order of things rather than a forced contrivance in response to a changing political climate.

Another detail that merits comment is the presence of a large number of black men in suits and ties in the pub in the reunion sequence. This alludes to the changing nature of South African society, where there were, theoretically at least, no more laws barring black patrons from certain establishments (though in practice racial discrimination was by no means abolished). The fact that the men are wearing the uniform of middle management indicates a change in economic power, too; produced before the official era of black economic empowerment, this scene can be interpreted as a subtle argument for the inclusion of black South Africans in the capitalist system. It is noteworthy that George ignores these men completely as he weaves his way through the crowds to meet his friends; they are no more interesting to him than if they had been white. George is clearly more interested in re-establishing ties with his old friends, black, white and coloured, than in any kind of racial solidarity.

So it is that community for these characters is based, not on shared political goals, but on a mutual love of Castle Lager. Such details point to the advertisers' use of strategies of unification and fragmentation with the aim of constructing unity between black and white men rather than solidarity based on past race-based oppression. On a deeper, metaphorical level, the themes of friendship, separation and reconciliation allude to the sweep of South

African history: in this version of events, blacks and whites were separated by forces beyond their control rather than their own volition. Underneath all of the so-called differences enforced and maintained by apartheid, black and white South African men were really just the same.

Absences

The type of society envisioned in 'Homecoming' is, of course, filled with gaps or absences. As already noted, there is no background context to the story of Mike and George. The narrative or the mise-en-scène gives no hint as to why they are friends, or why George is leaving the country. Issues of class are also carefully avoided. There are no obvious visual cues as to the class positioning of Mike, George and their friends. They may or may not be professional musicians, vocations that would separate them both from the proletariat and white-collar workers. The "home" of 'Homecoming' is classless, or, more correctly, it is world in which everyone is middle class.

It is also an entirely male world, from which women are excluded. SAB was quite open at the time about its policy of not showing women drinking in its advertisements. The explanation for this was that there were "too many taboos" about women drinking in public. "In some communities, men only drink when the women are away," explained SAB's beer division marketing manager, who noted that women responded favourably to the advertisements anyway (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52)[63]. Notably, this reluctance to feature women in beer advertisements appears to be an accommodation of conservative black social attitudes, since there are no taboos regarding men drinking in the presence of women in white South African society. In addition, the consumption of alcohol, whether by men or women, is the cause of many societal problems. Yet in 'Homecoming' (as in all the advertisements under analysis in this chapter), the destructive consequences of excessive alcohol consumption are tactfully ignored. That men should choose to relax in a pub over a glass of beer is presented as universal, unquestioned behaviour. The pub is depicted as a warm, friendly and positive place, and the consumption of alcohol is portrayed in a wholly positive light.

As in almost all brand advertising, there is also, inevitably, an absence of the full range of human agency, as the beer brand (and by extension, SAB) inserts itself into human relationships. It is here that displacement takes place, as the brand takes on human qualities of

[63] Similarly, an advertising executive working on the Castle Lite launch campaign in 1994, explained: "Although black women already drink a lot of beer, there is still the perception that women who drink beer are 'loose'. So you cannot run an ad campaign targeting them specifically. You have to somehow include them in the generic ads" (Makhanya, 1994: no page number).

reliability and trust, and catalyses human friendships – as though men require the beer to form friendships in the first place and subsequently maintain them. (The advertisers are, however, careful to compare the beer to the enduring friendship and not the other way around.) There is an implicit suggestion that it is as consumers – not as political activists, for instance - that reconciliation between the different races of South Africa can be achieved. South Africans need to be shown the way to a new society by big business; without this enlightened influence, a new society based on racial equality cannot be envisioned. Mike and George are, after all, a special case. Not many South Africans could boast of warm and enduring friendships with people of other races during the apartheid years. SAB can show consumers a friendship of this nature, but it cannot pretend that it was a widespread phenomenon - and neither can viewers of the commercial, much as they would have liked to.

It is up to SAB, then, not only to open the eyes of South Africans to the possibility of a non-racial and fully integrated society, but also to present it in so realistic a manner that it becomes possible to believe that 'Homecoming' depicts History itself. Watching the advertisement, it becomes easy to believe that enduring and mutually respectful interracial friendships really existed – that George and Mike are somehow *real* - and that these kinds of human relationships will determine the future of the New South Africa.

The problematic presence of the past

Despite the fact that the latter part of 'Homecoming' is set in a present day, post-apartheid South Africa, the past looms large in the narrative, in the form of references to Charles Glass and Castle's enduring popularity over time – since 1895. Many brands use an appeal to "heritage" as a means to establish credibility and Castle Lager is no different. Its long-term positioning has rested on its many decades of association with South Africa and Johannesburg and is embodied in the slogan "the taste that's stood the test of time". From a Eurocentric perspective, South Africa, as a colony, does not a have a long history of so-called civilization, and heritage is a tenuous proposition to link to a city like Johannesburg. In this former mining camp, which mushroomed into a burgeoning metropolis in the space of a few decades, and is famous, above all, for its vulgar materialism (Malan, 2002: iii), a sense of history of the kind one would associate with the great cities of Europe – or even Cape Town – is almost entirely lacking. So, a local brand that could celebrate its centenary in 1995 was exceptional in a country where everything was relatively "new". Castle was truly one of the great brands of South Africa partly because it had been around longer than most other consumer products. Indeed, in 'Homecoming', Castle uses its heritage as a marker against which one subordinates the beer to the human friendship: "Just as great friendships will always stand the test of time, so will a great beer".

But allusions to the past are problematic. In viewing the past from post-apartheid South African perspective – where, as the saying went, nobody supported apartheid the day after it was abolished - one must necessarily acknowledge the racial injustice embedded in society. This is a task accomplished with relative ease by those who wish to view South African history from the Left. However, the past becomes something of a stumbling block for anyone who wishes to tell South African stories set in the past (especially between the years 1948 and 1990) without an overtly political slant or focus. South African creative artists in all media face this problem, since how is one to present the past without presenting a political polemic? This is especially difficult when one wishes to present sympathetic white characters who, by virtue of their skin colour, were oppressors of the black majority.

On the other hand, constructing white characters that reject racial discrimination ensures that a political element enters the narrative, and with it the dangers of alienating a section of the audience. The makers of *Paljas*, one of the few Afrikaans-language period feature films of the decade (and which was intended in part for consumption on the international art circuit), circumvented this problem to an extent by depicting white South Africans in isolation in the Karoo, thus avoiding any interaction between different races. The issue of how South African creative artists – be they playwrights, novelists or filmmakers – were to address audiences in a society moving on from anti-apartheid political action was a source of considerable debate in the early 1990s. (The fact that Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer, for example, never enjoyed widespread popularity amongst the South African reading public, was frequently attributed to the political flavour of her novels.)

South African advertising is not excluded from such dilemmas. Can one ever use nostalgia to sell a product to South Africans, when such nostalgia implies a soft-focus view of apartheid, injustice and racism? Even the fondness for 70s retro themes that swept the world in the latter half of the 1990s presented South African creative minds with all sorts of problems. Disco and flares might have served as symbols of the decade in the rest of the world, but in South Africa the 1970s were dominated by the Soweto riots, Black Consciousness and white self-involvement. By the time 'Homecoming' was flighted, however, SAB had already sidestepped the issue. The past had long since been mythologised in the SAB campaigns of the early 1980s, where the historical figure of Charles Glass was shown brewing Castle in a series of charming vignettes depicting early Johannesburg life. In the latter half of the decade, the Charles Glass figure was transformed into the modern, non-racial Charles Glass Society. By the time that the doctrine of apartheid was officially declared dead, the problem of glorifying a past in which black South Africans had either not been visible (since they were

not permitted to sample any of Charles's brew) or had been treated as third class citizens was resolved: slowly but surely, the Castle campaigns of the 1980s had drained that past of history.

Since the legacy of Charles Glass lives on in every bottle and every can of Castle Lager – not so much in a philosophy of production or the encapsulation of the spirit of a bygone era, as in the *taste* of a favourite social lubricant - drinking a toast to the man should not present a black South African beer aficionado with any problems of political conscience. In these advertisements, Charles Glass is important insofar as he was the man whose genius first concocted the brew, not as a representative of a less enlightened time. In this way, George, who went into exile for unspecified opposition to system that entrenched racial inequality, is able to drink a toast, with sincerity, to "Charles", and more substance is added to the Castle Lager mythology. So, in 'Homecoming', the Castle brand is involved in a complex process of both depoliticising the past and repoliticising the present: both processes aim to promote racial reconciliation and an individualist worldview based on brand loyalty. Individual identity is determined not by allegiance to race or political ideology, but by the brands with which one chooses to identify oneself.

Myth-making in 'Homecoming'

'Homecoming' works in many ways to construct a safe and welcoming social space for black and white South African men to meet one another as equals – the "home" of the title.[64] 'Home' refers not just to South Africa but also to the pub and Castle Lager itself, the metaphorical 'home' of the beer drinker. The advertisers avoid making explicit political statements: for example, South Africa is never mentioned by name. Instead they make a strong argument for the location of racial reconciliation in a setting characterised by relaxation and leisure, not the political arena. In the pub, South African men, both black and white, are able to discover their similarities over a glass of Castle. In Castle Lager advertisements, that which binds the community (of men) together is a shared appreciation for the "somewhat dry, somewhat bitter, never sweet" taste of Charles Glass's brew. Indeed, this mutual love of Castle suggests that black and white South Africans were never very different after all – they were simply kept apart by forces beyond their control, in the form of the apartheid system.

[64] Television commercial titles are routinely unimaginative and generally unenlightening. There is no need for interesting titles, as the viewing public is very seldom aware of them and they can have no possible influence on their interpretation of the message. 'Homecoming' is a notable exception, though it should be remembered that at no stage during its flighting would the public have been made aware of this title either.

While the marketers of Castle Lager busily continue their decades-long mythmaking project on behalf of the brand, a myth is simultaneously constructed for South African society. This myth reads along the lines of: *while the apartheid system did its best to divide black and white South Africans, it did not entirely succeed, for the power of friendship was greater than the power of the state. Therefore, the power of individuals can transcend the power of the state (or of repressive ideologies) in the future.* Ultimately, the strategies of unification and fragmentation in this advertisement help construct a persuasive argument for the power of individual friendship in the face of social engineering. Group solidarity as a force for social change is not acknowledged. In Lévi-Straussian terms, the myth is able to resolve fundamental contradictions of political action within a capitalist worldview, explaining social change as a function of individual action rather than movements based on group identification.

Ultimately, the underlying message is that it is as friends unified in part by a shared appreciation of the products of capitalist modes of production that South Africans will discover one another's humanity, not as political groupings lobbying for power. The rejection of group consciousness and collectivist ideologies is implicit, as is the positing of a capitalist worldview as an appropriate response to the new society taking shape at the time. If the New South Africa was going to succeed, it would be thanks to the efforts of individuals who sought to build relationships with individuals of different races outside the ambit of the state, but under the benevolent aegis of big business.

Building on the success of 'Homecoming'

After 'Homecoming' depicted the return of exiles to the motherland, the advertisers settled on a less overtly political theme for the next instalment in the Castle campaign. In this advertisement, the multiracial fellows of the Charles Glass Society club together to collect money for a black friend who cannot afford a plane ticket to England, where he plans to follow his dream of playing for a soccer club. 'Homecoming' continued to enjoy popularity, however, and was flighted up to and including 1995; even then, a remarkably high proportion of viewers expressed the desire to see it again (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 90). Such longevity is rare in the world of advertising. Nonetheless, a new image advertisement was required to replace 'Homecoming' and its successor, and Castle looked for other current events that might offer an opportunity for the construction of a story in which Castle could be central to friendship and male bonding.

At the time that the following advertisement was developed and subsequently flighted, South Africa had emerged from decades of increasing international isolation. In the wake of the dismantling of apartheid, the country began to shrug off its pariah status. South Africans were now welcome to travel abroad, while increasing numbers of overseas visitors began to arrive at its airports. South African sports teams could participate in international events. African-Americans in particular were arriving in the country in significant numbers to take up prestigious positions in business and exploit the new opportunities that were presenting themselves.

Foreigner - 1996

VISUAL	AUDIO
Wide angle shot of a passenger jet landing at sunset. Cut to close up of watch on black man's hand. Cut to close up of a black man in his late twenties/ early thirties smiling. Wide-angle shot of a black man wearing a baseball cap and pushing a luggage trolley greeting a group of three men (two black, one white). The first man reaches out to shake his hand. Cut to mid shot of Tom and the first man embracing. Low angle shot of highway flyover at sunset. Cut to mid-shot of Tom and the fellows riding in a big 1960's American convertible. Long shot of convertible slowing down to allow three women in traditional Shangaan dress to cross the road. In the background the Johannesburg skyline is visible. Low angle shot of African curios on sale on the pavement. Mid shot of neon Castle Lager sign seen from behind in the dark. As the camera zooms out it becomes clear that we are in a tavern. Cut to close up of chorus line of black women singing traditional South African jazz into microphones Mid-shot of Tom and his friend, with the white man in the background, approaching two other black men. He clasps the hands of his new friends. Cut to mid-shot of one of the new friends speaking to an unseen barman. In the background, Tom is socialising with the group. Dissolve from mid-shot of Tom and friend to a close up of the fizzing, golden beer. Cut to mid-shot of Tom with the fellows. The white friend helps him with his pronunciation. Cut to mid-shot of laughing barman. A portrait of Charles Glass is visible to his left.	Voice over: When a friend from overseas was introduced to the fellows… First man: Tom! Over here! SFX: Pennywhistle Voice over:…he was to get quite a taste of South African customs. Tom: (muffled) Where're the huts, man? Second man: Let's go grab a beer. Tom: Now you're talkin! Tom: Hi guys. Voice over: Wherever great friendships are to be made… Third man: Ncaba! Tom: Oh man, you gotta teach me some of that stuff man. Voice over (ctd): There's always Castle

Rapid montage of Castle Lager bottles being opened. Cut to mid-shot of Tom with the fellows. They continue their banter.	White friend: …tongue, you've got to click it. Third man: Ncaba! Tom: N…aaba Laughter. Tom: Now how does that sound? First man: You've just bought the whole pub a round of Castles. Tom: Aaah…okay, you got me! Cheers.
Cut to mid-shot of neon Castle Lager sign, this time from the front, slightly obscured by a shadowy figure who walks across the frame. Dissolve to black screen with white writing: Since 1895. The taste that's stood the test of time.	Voice over: Here's to making new friends with the rest of the world. Second man: Charles! Tom: Who's Charles?

As the train station and the train play a central role in 'Homecoming', so an airliner and an airport locate 'Foreigner' in a rapidly globalising world. The establishing shot is of an airliner landing at sunset. This shot – so widely used as to constitute a cliché - codes for a number of different possibilities: the arrival of a visitor, the return of a local, the beginning of an adventure, perhaps modernity. Modern passenger aircraft are also, naturally, a symbol of the power of modern technology; in the case of a rela tively isolated country like South Africa, they are also a more tangible link to foreign lands. (This is in contrast to the relatively old-fashioned train in 'Homecoming', the use of which constitutes an instance of poetic licence, since it is not possible to reach Europe or America – the mythical 'West' - by rail.)

The accompanying voice-over, which states, "When a friend arrived from overseas", confirms that the plane is bringing a visitor to South Africa. The use of the word 'overseas' is euphemistic, for as soon as the visitor speaks, it is clear that he is American. Would referring to 'America' have made any difference to the narrative? 'Overseas' is certainly more vague; it serves to emphasise the centrality of South Africa in a way that referring to an individual country would not have done. Everywhere that is not South Africa is 'overseas'. There is a subtle undercutting of presumed American superiority, too, in the use of 'overseas' – the United States simply becomes one of a number of countries that constitute the rest of the world, rather than a superpower (both economically and, more importantly, culturally) that merits special mention.

The American visitor is soon named as 'Tom'. This is in contrast to the South Africans, the "fellows", who remain anonymous throughout 'Foreigner' - as though it is their group identity as drinkers of Castle Lager that is of the only relevance. It is somewhat ironic that, for all the apparent South African pride in 'Foreigner', it is the American character that should be the focus of the action, who should be constructed as an individual in a way that the South Africans are not; these competing strands in the narrative suggest an ambivalence towards foreigners - particularly Americans – whose presumed superiority South Africans resent but whose approval we nonetheless desire. Moreover, the use of high angle long shots in the airport scene, contrasting with close-ups of Tom and his friend, distances the viewer from these characters; we will get to know them only superficially.

We next see the 'fellows' driving along under a highway flyover towards the Johannesburg CBD. The lighting is dominated by the orange glow of sunset, which allows the filmmakers to imbue the shots of the local scenery with visual warmth and atmosphere - the somewhat clichéd African sunset - as well as lead into an appropriately nocturnal drinking scene. The use of an old American convertible may be a nod to the influence of American jazz culture in black South African history, particularly the Sophiatown era[65], which is evoked in the jazzy African music that is being performed in the pub. Certainly, the marketers of Castle would have been only too aware of the importance of American culture to younger black South Africans. As the MD of a small South African advertising agency observed, "African-Americans have had a major influence on this country…The US is seen as a modern nation and [young black South Africans] want to be identified with it" (*Advertising Focus*, 1996: 93). The use of such cultural markers can also therefore be seen as a means to make the brand more appealing to younger black drinkers. However, the use of an authoritative (white) male voice with a polished upper class (and, it should be noted, distinctly English) accent as the narrator implies a certain class positioning, reinforcing the subtly aspirational nature of the brand and its long association with big business in South African, where advancement at a managerial level depended on the embracing of an English colonial identity.

During the airport scene, the narrator has already established that the visitor is to get a taste of South African 'customs'. Tom's first exposure to so-called 'customs' coincides with the shot of the traditionally dressed women crossing the road in front of the car. At this point in the soundtrack we can just make out Tom's words: "Where are the huts, man?" Immediately,

[65] Nixon notes that while there were other influences in Sophiatown apart from those emanating from America, "the idea of America had a distinctly populist prestige and an impact that was diffuse and multiform" (1994: 12). "As the apartheid regime refined its scheme for racial labelling, American clothes and records spoke with the fine arrogance of other styles of being. Giant finned cars became voguish, as did movie slang, Florsheim shoes and clothes labelled Palm Beach…" (1994: 12).

Tom is confirmed as an ignorant American whose head is filled with stereotypes of a backward, traditional Africa. By presenting viewers with an individual who is ignorant about the realities of the country, the advertisers encourage them to side with their version of what the 'real' South Africa is. While the expressions 'First World' and 'Third World' are never used, the assumptions associated with these concepts are always implicit. The American expects a Third World Africa, and encounters a country that is appreciably First World.

The use of the word 'customs', then, represents another instance of euphemism. Most South African men would doubtless not view their enjoyment of a beer in the same light as what is usually referred to as a 'custom'. The use of a word more commonly associated with anthropology textbooks or tourist guides becomes an in-joke with a South African audience, since it is supposedly exotic and possibly primitive African 'customs' - represented here by the glimpse of the wooden carvings for sale on the pavement - that the American is expecting to encounter. The fact that the use of this word forms part of an understanding between the makers of the advertisement and the audience is emphasised by the narrator's amused tone of voice. An interesting equivalence is made between the drinking Castle and other more 'traditional' cultural practices, so much so that the heritage of Castle and the figure of Charles Glass are given as much cultural heft as activities boasting much longer traditions. One of the underlying messages of this advertisement is therefore that in a modern, urban age where traditional social structures based on rural lifestyles have broken down, it is products and brands that enjoy a position of cultural supremacy.

As the shot of the carvings appears, we hear a voice saying, "Let's go grab a beer" and Tom's response, "Now you're talkin'!" The consumption of Castle Lager is the real South African custom, not the tourist knick-knacks for sale on the side of the road. To confirm this, the next shot is of a neon sign displaying the Castle Lager logo. The pennywhistle segues into the voices of the women singing in the pub (who, in their urban sexiness, contrast with the rural women seen earlier) and we are now in immersed in the world of Castle: good music, relaxation, and camaraderie. Tom makes more friends as he is introduced to other members of the Charles Glass Society. It is at this point that the narrator states "Wherever great friendships are to be made, there's always Castle". This grammatical construction – an instance of passivization - works to undermine the agency of the individuals involved in making friends, replacing it by implication with the Castle brand. Because Castle is always present when there is the potential to make friends, it follows that Castle must be responsible in some way for these friendships.

Strategies of unification and fragmentation

Meanwhile, one of Tom's new friends orders beer for everyone by telling the barman, "Ncaba". Tom is evidently intrigued by this word, which the distinctive click of the Zulu *c*, and says, with characteristic American intonation, "Oh man, you gotta teach me some of that stuff man." Tom struggles with the word, and it is the white man who gives him a tip on how to get it right. Language therefore defines the black men and their white friend as members of the same nation. In this way, the advertisement detaches race from language and "African-ness". Tom might refer to himself as an African-American, but the white man is more familiar with the ways of Africa than he is. In the same way, Tom's inability to pronounce the word "ncaba" properly, and his accidentally generous offer to buy the entire pub a round of beer, separates him from the other black men. Clearly the colour of his skin does not make him automatically an African; he is more American than he is African.

Once Tom has realised - with good humour - that he has bought the entire pub a round of Castles, the narrator declares, "Here's to making friends with the rest of the world." The link with Castle and the campaigns of the 1980s is reinforced with the toast to "Charles". Tom's innocent question, "Who's Charles"? confirms his foreignness once and for all, since a South African would of course be only too familiar with Charles Glass and his status as the first brewer of Castle. This scene constitutes yet another in-joke between the makers of the advertisement and South African viewers: of course *we* know who Charles is. Mere familiarity with the Castle mythology constitutes the viewer as a member of a community.

As the narrator makes clear when stating, "Here's to making friends with the rest of the world", Tom's arrival is a metaphor for South Africa's return to the international fold. Tom is therefore a synecdoche of the rest of the world, the world that falls under the rubric of "overseas". The reasons behind South Africa's exclusion from the rest of the world are not alluded to, though it is highly likely that most South Africans would be familiar with this history. In the mid-1990s, South Africa was still emerging from an era of sanctions and disinvestment, in which many prominent American companies withdrew from the country. The fact that Tom is black is also significant, alluding as it does to South Africa's now liberal views towards racial integration.

Overall, the strategies of unification and fragmentation in 'Foreigner' work to unite South Africans of different races by defining them in relation to other nationalities. 'Foreigner' can be seen as an attempt to define South Africa's place in the world in a cultural, if not a political, sense. South Africans are making friends with the rest of the world, but at the same time we see that we are not the same as everybody else: that we are unique in important ways,

ways that define us as South African. Importantly, Castle Lager is one of the elements that define our South Africanness. At the same time, however, Castle Lager is also a catalyst in the formation of friendships with non-South Africans. Through the brand, South Africans are able to demonstrate that they are as capable of having a good time as any other nation. In this way the narrative uses a dual strategy of defining both the uniqueness of a South African identity and exploring the ways in which South Africans might find common ground with foreigners.

Performing national identity

The idea that South African identity must be performed for the elucidation of outsiders runs throughout 'Foreigner'. There is an interesting sense of self-awareness here, with carries with it the implication that certain activities and modes of behaviour should be put forward as 'typically' South African rather than others.[66] In this particular advertisement, in the opening ceremony for the Rugby World Cup and in later campaigns for South African Tourism and South African Airways, it is evident that South Africans find it easier to imagine themselves as a nation through the eyes of others. Here the narrator talks knowingly about "South African customs", with the implication that Tom, the African-American, will be exposed to unexpected experiences. As the friends drive into Johannesburg, Tom asks where the huts are, displaying his ignorant assumption that an African country should be undeveloped. The consumption of beer in a pub or tavern setting is cast as a typical South African activity, more typical of South African 'custom' than wild animals or people living in huts.

In this positioning of the drinking of Castle as an authentically South African activity, there is also an element of displacement. As before, Castle is intimately associated with friendship. It also represents South Africa since its consumption is a South African 'custom' and, in this way, comes not only to stand in for friendship, but for South African culture and tradition as well. The slippage between South Africa-the-nation and Castle Lager-the-brand is reinforced (and will reach its apotheosis in the World Cup campaign: "one nation, one beer"). According to the mise-en-scène of 'Foreigner', South African identity can be drawn from different customs in the 'traditional' sense, such as dress (the rural women); an urban environment (Johannesburg); the juxtaposition of the Third World and First World; art and culture (curios, the music in the pub); the weather (spectacular highveld sunset); language ("Ncaba") and last, but certainly not least, local beer and friendship (the consumption of Castle in a tavern). Drinking Castle becomes an act that reaffirms South African identity, an identity performed for the enlightenment of outsiders.

[66] This concept of South Africanness as an identity that is performed for visitors or outsiders would emerge strongly under the ambit of the Brand South Africa myth, analysed in chapter seven.

First World, Third World: Myth in 'Foreigner'

Myth appears in 'Foreigner' on several different levels, some of which I have already drawn out in the course of textual analysis. There are references to the mythology of the New South Africa in the assumption that racial reconciliation has taken place; at the same time, many aspects of the mise-en-scène are heavily invested with symbolism (jetliners, airports, highways, American convertibles, skyscrapers, rural women, curios and so on). 'Foreigner' is saturated with myth, for it is not simply an exercise in the demonstration of national identity to South Africans using the presence of an outsider as a foil, it is also an attempt to account for South Africa's relationship with both Africa and the outside world, as well as an argument for accommodating both First and Third World elements in South Africans' perception of themselves.

It is in the form of the American character, Tom, that Barthes' argument about myth as second order signification can be seen to most obvious effect. Why choose an American, moreover a black American, to represent foreign-ness? The makers of the advertisement could have chosen a representative of another country – a Briton, for example, or a German. Because of the way in which myth operates, the form of the character, Tom, is emptied in order to replace it with the concept of Tom-the-American. Tom is not simply a citizen of the United States; he must carry with him the entire burden of myth that has accumulated around Americans and American identity. Simultaneously, he is an emissary of the world's only remaining superpower and a bastion of cultural imperialism, a repository of intermingling resentment and admiration.

All of these associations can be discerned in the narrative: Tom's uninformed view of Africa and his inability to speak other languages confirms South African stereotypes of arrogant, ignorant Americans. Yet we need Tom to approve of us, to admire our culture and our infrastructure, to acknowledge that our world is similar to his world in important ways. America is also the source of most consumer culture; as the centre pivot of so many cultural references it is inevitably to America that we turn for approval. But perhaps the most compelling reason for casting an American in the role of the symbolic Foreigner is that America, more than any other nation, embodies the First World. If South Africa wins the approval of an American in the narrative of 'Foreigner', then its pretensions to First World status is somehow bolstered.

Barthes likens myth to a turnstile "which presents alternately the meaning of the signifier and its form, a language-object and a metalanguage, a purely signifying and a purely imagining

consciousness" (1972, 2000: 123). In this way, Tom is always simultaneously a character who happens to be an American visitor and a representative of an entire collection of associations with the "rest of the world" (cultural influence, technological superiority and also, importantly, ignorance). Similarly, Castle Lager is both a brand of beer (one choice among several) and an arbiter of what constitutes South African identity (and South African authenticity).

Thus when Tom says, "Where're the huts man?" he sums up the subconscious central concern of this narrative, South Africa's attempts to accommodate both its First World and Third World identities. If America-as-myth (or the myth of the First World) is present explicitly in the figure of Tom, then Africa-as-myth (also known as the Third World) is present implicitly. Africa looms large over this narrative. While overt reference is never made to it, the narrative is suffused with awareness that, for all its impressive infrastructure and repudiation of stereotypes of backwardness, South Africa is part of Africa. Here, Africa is present most obviously in the presence of the rural women in their traditional dress and the curios on the side of the road, as well as in Tom's question about huts – an acknowledgement that, in the eyes of the world, Africa cannot shake off its alias of the Dark Continent. Either it is – as in countless advertisements for safaris and lodges - the land of dangerous wild animals and exotic, primitive rituals performed for the benefit of tourists, or, viewed through the prism of the evening news, a morass of failed governments, savage wars and deadly diseases.

It is relevant at this point to reflect on Barthes' argument that myth is a type of speech defined, not by its literal sense, but by its intention; yet the latter, Barthes argues, is "somehow frozen, purified, eternalised, *made absent* by this literal sense" (1972, 2000: 124). The resulting ambiguity of myth means that the signification appears "both like a notification and a statement of fact" (1972, 2000: 124). So, 'Foreigner' is filled with myths which disguise themselves as facts, merely incidental props to the advancement of the story. The visitor just happens to be African-American; the friends happen to drive an American convertible through town past a group of rural women and, of course, they just happen to end up in a tavern drinking Castle. Such developments are positioned as casual, almost accidental (since viewers know the advertisement to be a work of fiction, the assumption, were they to give it any thought, is that these choices were but one among many); in fact, they are all quite necessary to the argument that 'Foreigner' puts forward about the nature of South African identity.

So analysis reveals the myths and exposes their intention. The myths in 'Foreigner' – America and its cultural and technological power, Africa and its backwardness - are always

present: they must be, for it is against them that the text positions itself. Such a strategy is made obvious by the fact that the advertisers attempt to undermine assumptions about African backwardness by reproducing some of those same stereotypes. In order to demonstrate that South Africa (which is part of Africa), is not backward, the advertisers must show how South Africa can boast the infrastructure that is associated with the First World: Africa, here, is not entirely 'African'. South Africa's urban culture – both township and big city - is celebrated; the country's status as an urban rather than a rural society is promoted. The assumption in 'Foreigner' is that urban is modern and sophisticated, rural is backward and vaguely contemptible; in this case the First World from which Tom originates corresponds with the urban, the Third World of his imagination corresponds with the rural. The juxtapositions depicted here tend to confirm the widespread assumption that South Africa was a beacon of the modern world in the midst of backwardness – echoing the words of the Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah who observed, "Africa is a guest in the twentieth century" (Rostron, 2000: 56). [67]

Yet despite the desire in this commercial to emphasise South Africa's First World credentials, there is a subtle undercurrent throughout the narrative in which a strong relationship with Africa is assumed. Here it is not possible for South Africa to pretend that it is not part of the African continent (and throughout the apartheid era, many white South Africans tried to maintain an illusion that they were living in an outpost of Europe). In contrast, the South Africa in this advertisement is distinctively African, its African identity enforced specifically through music, language and dress, and more generally, through an integration of rural and urban, African and Western idiom. It is a South Africa growing more comfortable in its African identity, one that does not conform to tourist stereotypes of rural backwardness.

So a subtle shift has taken place. The rainbow nation is very much part of the mythology of the New South Africa as portrayed in Castle Lager advertisements (to the point of becoming an advertising convention), but there are hints of the African renaissance emerging, too. South Africa is much more defined here than in 'Homecoming' and its identity rests primarily on the co-existence of elements of First and Third Worlds. The New South Africa feels comfortable with both these aspects of its national identity; indeed, to be a New South African is to negotiate these different "customs" without feeling threatened[68]. The possibility of racial reconciliation is still predicated on the notion of friendship, of bonds which are

[67] South Africa for its part had always tried very hard to be a part of the twentieth century; if the apartheid laws were finally revoked, it was in part a response to the realisation that apartheid was an ideology that could no longer be justified or sustained in the modern world.

[68] In many ways the character of Gogo in the Yebo Gogo campaign also represents this idea of a New South African identity, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

formed and strengthened in spaces and at times where leisure is prioritised, but South Africans are now looking beyond their borders for a confirmation of their growing national sense of self.

The individual versus the group

In 'Homecoming', myth resolves the contradiction of individual actions under the aegis of big business within a political situation predicated upon group identity and mass action. The argument presented here is both liberal in its endorsement of individualism and consumerist in its depiction of friendship cemented by allegiance to the same brand of beer. Again, Castle puts forward an argument that progress in South Africa can be linked to social action on an individual level, through the formation of friendships. National identity is not a function of race, but of the practice of a particular set of behaviours. Yet this contradicts a long history of political action based almost entirely on race, where race determined identity in every aspect of life.

In 'Foreigner', myth is less concerned with resolving the contradiction between individual autonomy in a context where the condition of possibility of action is based on group identities, than on the formation of friendships between different nationalities. It is through the formation of friendships with outsiders, or foreigners, that national unity may be achieved as South Africans realise what they have in common. Thus problems of intra-national integration may be overlooked because the primary political concern is integration into the family of nations.[69] The myth overcomes the contradiction between the assumption that racial reconciliation has taken place and the reality that this development has yet to take widespread hold in society by focusing instead on the Other, the Foreigner. Unity is possible because South Africans of different races share common knowledge and are familiar with certain modes of behaviour, knowledge that foreigners cannot possibly share.

Friendship and class

In 'Homecoming' and 'Foreigner', the Castle brand provides a catalyst for friendship between individuals. The consumption of Castle enables new friendships to be formed, existing friendships to be strengthened, and old friendships to be renewed. This is not just any kind of friendship, of course: many of the Castle campaigns of the 1990s are focused on warm, relaxed camaraderie between middle class, heterosexual men who have been friends for some time and know each other well. This focus on lasting friendship was an active strategy on the

[69] See Peter van Ham's arguments concerning the brand state and its impact on intranational conflict in chapter seven.

part of the marketers, who felt that it was time to move away from the "friendship and fun" campaigns of the 1980's, towards a deeper, more authentic kind of friendship (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 80).

But why should beer, as opposed to other forms of beverage, be so representative of a particular kind of male friendship? As I have noted earlier, (sorghum) beer has long played an important role in traditional black South African society, while in white South Africa, beer is deeply entrenched in male culture – South Africans are familiar with the concept of the male "beer belly" or "beer *boep*". Men drink beer while cooking boerewors and steaks on the braai. Men drink beer while watching sport; men drink beer with other men while socialising at bars and pubs. Unlike whisky, for example, the consumption of beer is a social activity, and beer advertisements almost never depict solitary characters.

Such sociability in beer advertising is to be expected in the light of the history of the role of alcohol consumption in human society. For millennia, alcohol has served as an important social lubricant and accompaniment to social ritual. Beverage choice serves as an important social marker, and even in Western societies which regard themselves as having moved beyond strict rituals and regulations, strictures continue to apply to alcoholic beverages. Champagne signifies celebration and is used at weddings; wine is drunk with meals and in restaurants while beer is considered appropriate for more informal occasions. In South Africa, beverage choice is often an indication of class distinctions: brandy and Coke is routinely stereotyped as a drink favoured by working class Afrikaners, while expensive whisky became the beverage of choice for the new black elite in the late 1990s. Wine tasting is an activity associated with affluence, and wine-tasting functions and festivals are an important element of the mix in the marketing plans of many companies catering to the upper end of the market.

Beer is considered the supremely masculine beverage in many societies, and has been linked with stereotypes of masculinity in the United States, United Kingdom (with its so-called 'lager louts'), Australia and New Zealand. In Australia and New Zealand in particular, societies in which a certain kind of toughness and 'mateship' are valued, beer is positioned as central to constructions of heterosexual masculinity. In America, beer is also associated with a certain kind of masculinity, one which, as Max Rudin argues, is linked to notions of authenticity:

> If wine was about class aspiration, and cocktails were connected with the compulsive striving for success, beer, in this deepest layer, was about accepting who you are and trying to get by. It was about effacing, for a time, the bruising society outside the bar with the joy and dignity, the original

> democracy, of the community inside. And it was about holding on, in a harsh world, to your sanity and your sense of humour.
>
> (2002: 1)

Rudin describes how, in America, beer was the drink of the working man, and of democracy. Beer was not a beverage with class aspirations, and in many beer advertisements, working class men are depicted. In the late 60's, the Miller brand experienced enormous growth after changing its payoff line from "the champagne of bottled beers" and the association with class aspirations, to "It's Miller time" (Rudin, 2002: 1). Beer was not meant to be pretentious; its consumption implied a certain level of authenticity.

The consumption of beer, then, in American society, constitutes a rejection of hierarchy and upwardly mobile pretension. Beer occupies a similar position in South African culture, though its positioning tends to be more middle class and "aspirational" than in either the US or Australasia. Indeed, the by now famous description of the taste of Castle Lager - "Somewhat dry, somewhat bitter, never sweet" – can be viewed as an analogy of male qualities. Castle itself is devoid of any feminine characteristics, and its advertising enforces this. Women were from time to time visible in Castle Lager advertisements, but they were never shown actually consuming it.[70] Ironically, the marketers of Castle knew only too well that many more black women than white men drank Castle (24% as opposed to 10% of Castle's consumer profile, according to the *Apex Awards* entry). But, as already mentioned, they deliberately avoided making any connection between the brand and its female drinkers, citing taboos about the depiction of women drinking in public.

If culture made the depiction of women in beer advertising problematic, then history made references to the working class in the context of the rainbow nation almost impossible. South Africa's apartheid history had ensured that any depiction of working class black and white men socialising together would be fraught with complication, in part because this would be a scenario too unrealistic for even SAB's idealistic brand managers.[71] After all, black and white working class South Africans have never had any reason to make common cause; the

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[70] During the 1990's Castle introduced Castle Lite, which was targeted at women; for the first time its television campaign showed women drinking beer (albeit a beer deemed suitable for female consumption). The 1990's also saw the launch of several cider brands onto the market, and cider soon became the equivalent of beer for women. The bitterness of beer was considered appropriate for male tastes, the sweetness of cider suitable for females.

[71] Carling Black Label, another SAB brand, was notable for its depiction of black and white working men engaged in hard physical labour and then enjoying a beer together on site afterwards, but the characters were never shown in the purely social settings that were the domain of Castle. Even if these men were depicted as miners or construction workers, they were still models of chiselled masculine beauty; the harsh reality of physical labour is always dissimulated in the interests of making the product more desirable.

industrialisation associated in particular with the mining industry relied to a large extent on the exploitation of cheap black labour, while higher-paying jobs were reserved for the white working class, the so-called 'colour bar'. Thus white blue-collar workers tended to view the black working class as a threat, and the white working class has generally been associated with conservative political views. In addition, the commodity-based economic growth that had such a profound influence on the development of companies like South African Breweries, combined with the entrenchment of racial privilege, ensured the enrichment of a white middle class minority alongside the expansion of the black working class. By the time that 'Homecoming' was produced, the structure of South African society could be characterised, broadly, as a black working class majority juxtaposed with a white middle class minority (a situation that Thabo Mbeki would describe as "two nations" in 1998). More affluent white South Africans were associated with more liberal views in part because they tended to feel less threatened by the prospect of racial integration, so non-racial socialisation was much more likely to take place in middle class settings.

SAB's use of middle class characters to promote Castle can also be linked to the company's desire to make beer more socially acceptable in a wider variety of situations, taking it "out of the kitchen and into the living room" (Savory quoted in *Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). As SAB's beer division marketing manager noted in 1990, South Africa had historically been a country of spirit and fortified wine drinkers, at least in social situations: "Beer wasn't a drink you felt comfortable offering to people" (Savory quoted in *Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). An overriding aim of SAB's campaigns, therefore, was to subtly change the social status of beer. Depicting its consumption in middle class settings was an important part of this strategy.

In the mid 1990s, the pressure to position Castle as an appropriate beverage for the middle classes became even more marked. During this time, Castle began to lose sales to Windhoek Lager and premium beers, largely as a result of a rapidly spreading urban legend about SAB's dubious brewing methods. SAB, went the rumour – which had gathered momentum throughout 1996 - were trying to speed up the brewing process through the addition of chemicals. SAB was messing with nature. In fact, Castle Lager wasn't even real beer! A Bloemfontein-based distributor of Namibian Breweries (the brewer of Windhoek Lager) had put out a pamphlet stating that *their* beer did not give hangovers, was not brewed quickly, and contained no chemicals – implying that other beers did (Keenan, 1996: 16).

Less brand-loyal consumers switched to other beers, and even the traditionally loyal black market was affected in certain regions (Keenan, 1996: 16). An industry expert predicted that a shift in the beer-drinking habits of upper-income groups would hurt SAB, as this group of

consumers set the trend, which would filter down into the black market (Keenan, 1996: 16). SAB products still accounted for more than 95% of the South African beer market, but for a time it seemed that the hegemony of SAB was under distinct threat, at least in certain consumer segments.

'Kariba', which was first flighted in 1997, can be viewed in part as an effort to address this trend. Notably, it features characters which, while they are "regular guys", are much more obviously middle class (and relatively affluent) than in other campaigns of the 1990s. Given the emerging theme of an African identity detected in 'Foreigner', it is interesting that most of the action in 'Kariba' should take place north of the Limpopo. However, in some respects, 'Kariba' is more conservative than either 'Homecoming' or 'New Friend', since its focus is very much on white middle class men, with black characters taking supporting roles. Consequently, it is significantly less political in tone than either of the two previous commercials under analysis here; the source of the humour lies in conflict and tension which is centred on the middle class home. The references to current historical developments so evident in 'Homecoming' and 'Foreigner' are not present in 'Kariba'.

Kariba - 1997

VISUAL	AUDIO
Two thirty-something white men walk in mid shot past a facebrick house towards the camera. They are caught mid-conversation. The first man tucks his shirt into his pants, as if he has only just got dressed.	First white man: Where're we going? First black man (off-screen): Come on, we're late.
Cut to mid-shot of black man leaning into the back of a vehicle, as if packing luggage, and looking over his shoulder.	
Cut to mid-shot of first two men. The second man hands his friend a Castle Lager kit bag and pats him on the shoulder.	Second white man: Fishing? The lake? First white man: (Understanding) Aaah.
Dissolve to wide-angle shot of the 4x4 vehicle heading along a tarred road at sunrise.	Third white man (off-screen): I can't believe he's still sleeping.
Dissolve to mid-shot of the first man asleep on the back seat. Next to him is a black man.	Second white man: Wakey, wakey…
He wakes up.	First white man: Hey guys, what lake are we going to?
Cut to mid-shot of the second white man, who is driving.	Second white man: Kariba.
Mid-shot of all four men (the fifth is behind the driver and not visible)	Chorus (smiling): Kariba!
Cut to mid-shot of signpost which reads: Beit Bridge Border Post 20 km	First white man (panicking): Now hang on, I can't just leave everything…
Cut to mid-shot of the first man at the wheel. He glances back to his friend, tongue in cheek.	
Cut to low angle shot of car speeding along and reaching a dirt road.	

Dissolve to wide-angle shot of the lakeshore. The car is parked beside a bush and is being unpacked. In the distance a houseboat is visible. Cut to mid-shot of the first man, looking happy and relaxed. For the first time the second man looks worried. Rapid edit- exchange of looks between the men Mid-shot of blonde man we have not seen before holding one hand behind his head. Mid-shot of first man shaking his head. Cut to long-shot of him sitting down in a chair. He looks up to the sky. Cut to close-up of rain dripping into a puddle. Close up of the first man covering his eyes in despair. Cut to low-angle close-up of a fourth white man, wearing a Castle Lager hat. He is leaning out of a door. Cut to long shot of the gang running in the rain towards the houseboat. Cut to low-angle mid-shot of the fourth man on the boat. Low-angle shot of the first man grabbing his Castle bag and running for the boat. Mid-shot of gang being welcomed aboard. Mid-shot of gang facing an open cooler box. The second black man's eyes are wide with excitement. Close-up of Castle Lager bottles being opened and glasses filled. Black Screen Title dissolves in: Two days later Fade in wide-angle shot of the houseboat at sunset, elephants strolling past. Cut to mid-shot of first man sitting on a chair talking on a CB radio. Cut to mid-shot of his friend squatting next to him, trying to whisper to him. The first man gestures at his friends to keep quiet. Long shot of the group of friends relaxing on the deck with their Castles. The weather is sunny and beautiful. One of the black men raises his glass to the first man. Title appears in white: The taste that's stood the test of time.	First white man: Okay guys, where're the Castles? Second black man: I thought you packed them! First white man: You knucklehead! First white man: Well, it can't get any worse. SFX: thunder Fourth white man: Hey guys, come on board! First black man: Nice to meet you. Second black man: Yebo! First white man: Hi, it's me… Yeah, oh the weather's terrible. The road's completely washed away. Second white man (softly): Tell her about the car… First black man: The car. Second black man: The car. First white man: I'll only be back Tuesday… Group (disagreeing): Mm-mm. First white man: Wednesday. (Quickly) Okay, bye. First black man: Yebo. Third white man: Yeah, nice one. SFX: Castle leitmotif.

If the narrative focuses on friendship and the role that Castle can play in both the strengthening of existing friendships and the formation of new ones, it is the task of the mise-en-scène to communicate the class positioning of the characters. In the opening scene, for example, a house is visible in the background. While it is largely obscured, what we can see of it suggests that it is an ordinary suburban bungalow: the type of house the "average" middle class South African would call home. The presence of the house deserves comment, for it is the first time in the Friendship campaign that the setting is not focused on a pub or tavern. The house is shown only in the background rather than being foregrounded, but all that it represents – home, wife, responsibility - looms large over the narrative. The suburban house in this scene is in distinct contrast to the houseboat shown later on in the action, and the binary oppositions the narrative sets up are fairly obvious: earth/water, urban/wilderness, stability/ instability, responsibility/ freedom.

'Kariba' is similar to 'Homecoming' and 'Foreigner' in that a journey of some sort plays an important narrative role. In 'Homecoming', the journey both took one of the friends away and ensured his return; in 'Foreigner', it brings a new friend. In this case, the journey takes all the friends away - together - from a suburban environment to a natural one; travel facilitates escape rather than exile or an encounter with the rest of the world. The journey sequence also allows the advertisers to expand on the relationship between the two main characters and to give the audience an opportunity to empathise with them. When the main protagonist reacts with panic on being told that he is on his way to Kariba, fretting about leaving "everything" behind, his friend casts a knowing look in his direction, tongue in cheek. In this small gesture is implied a whole history: clearly, the main character has had to be tricked into coming on this trip, as he is too attached to the responsibilities of home.

It is only once the fellows reach Kariba that the main character looks happy, as he sits in the sun and looks forward to the prospect of a cold Castle. It is then established, in a montage of looks between the different characters, that the third white character has forgotten the beer. The friends are appalled (the implication is that without beer to provide a catalyst for relaxation, it will not be a proper holiday); just then, to make matters worse, the sound of thunder and a shot of raindrops falling into a puddle signify that it has started to rain. Not only are the friends without essential alcoholic sustenance, they are also about to be drenched. The main character has reached his lowest point, and he covers his face in despair.

Then a friendly face – wearing a hat emblazoned with the Castle logo - appears in the doorway of the houseboat and invites everyone aboard: the wet, Castle-less friends are to be rescued! The group is shown rushing toward their metaphorical Noah's ark. As they arrive,

they are greeted in friendly terms. There is shaking of hands and making of small talk; one of the black characters can be heard saying, "Nice to meet you." Race is clearly not an issue, as they are all members of the brotherhood of Castle Lager. In the following shot, a cooler box filled to the brim with Castle Lager bottles – strongly reminiscent of a treasure chest filled with gold - is revealed to the delight and amazement of the thirsty (and presumably far too sober) friends. The other black character shouts, "Yebo!", voicing the joy of all the men around him. The use of a Zulu word is interesting, since it allows this character to express a specifically 'black' identity; English is not the only language in which he chooses to express himself.

The camera then cuts to the obligatory sequence of Castle bottles being opened and the frothy golden liquid being poured into glasses[72]: the friends have been rescued by Castle, figuratively speaking, and have been returned to a world of (metaphorical) warmth, friendship and relaxation. The beer, while never literally presented as an actor in 'Kariba', is clearly a catalyst for the reinforcing of existing friendships and the making of new ones. Its absence is nothing short of a catastrophe for the group of friends; its presence on the houseboat confirms that the group's new friends are the same as they are, because they appreciate the same beer. The underlying message is that no matter where you go – even if you leave South Africa – you will find a community of Castle drinkers, guys just like you.

The action then cuts to a black screen and the words "Two days later" to denote the passage of time. The houseboat is shown in a wide-angle shot, while elephants stroll past in the foreground, underlining the untamed nature of the surroundings. The houseboat clearly enables escape from the wider world – the men are literally cut off from land by the waters of Lake Kariba, and moreover, they are surrounded by raw, wild, elemental Africa. On the boat a man can retreat into a safe, men-only haven. He can be himself, without worrying about complying with social conventions enforced by the presence of women.

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[72] While Castle is more commonly sold in cans than in bottles, Castle in cans is never shown. Instead, an emphasis is placed on actually seeing the liquid that is being drunk, on its aesthetic appeal. Lager first emerged in the 1840's, when brewers in the present-day Czech Republic discovered the secret of making clear beer, and it is lager's clear golden colour that sets it apart from more traditional cloudy beers. Perhaps the insistence on showing the beer in glasses is a nod to the appeal of the clear liquid. This is by no means restricted to the advertisers of Castle, however: Coca-Cola, for instance, is always advertised in clear bottles as opposed to cans, and Guinness is always shown in a glass. The practice of showing what the product looks like, even though most consumers will be familiar with it, seems to be a convention of a great deal of beverage advertising, and may be a way of reinforcing consumer choice by reminding people of the visual appeal of the product.

As the final sequence begins the main character can be heard, in voice-over, saying, "Hi, it's me". Surrounded by his friends, he is evidently making excuses for his failure to return home. They prompt him with various stories; he cuts "her" (presumably his wife or girlfriend) off and settles back to enjoy his beer. The final shot is of the friends relaxing on the deck of the boat at sunset, raising their beers as the Castle leitmotif fades in, in an echo of the ode to Charles Glass of the campaigns of the 1980s. This time, however, there is no toast to "Charles" – instead, one of the black men says "Yebo" while one of the white characters responds with "Nice one". A hint of African identity is creeping into depictions of middle class South Africa; like 'Foreigner', the South African identity proposed in 'Kariba' is one that is able to accommodate different influences. The final shot offers an image of earthly nirvana for "regular guys": beer, friends, fishing and freedom.

The world of regular guys

One of the most interesting aspects of 'Kariba' is the distinctly middle class identity of the characters. There are various clues to the class positioning of these men: dress (casual and appropriate for a fishing trip), the vehicle (a Nissan Sani, a less upmarket 4x4 than a Mitsubishi Pajero, for example), and, perhaps most importantly, accent. The white men speak with the fairly neutral South African accent – the first man sounds vaguely British – that serves as a marker of membership of the middle classes. None of the men are especially good-looking or "macho" in the stereotypical sense; all in all they all appear to be fairly ordinary. This is a world in which every man, theoretically at least, is equal, as long as he drinks Castle and behaves within certain culturally prescribed norms.

Women are noticeably absent from proceedings in what is constructed as an exclusively male world: the houseboat is a safe little island of men. 'Kariba' certainly does exclude women, to the point of setting them up as an Other from whom men need their freedom from time to time. They threaten the cosy male world of beer and bonding, and their disapproval must be fought off with lies. Thus the narrative standardizes men as beings who drink beer and indulge in certain activities, like fishing, with their friends, and then symbolizes their unity by depicting them all in the act of drinking Castle. The brand is the membership badge for this particular club or tribe.

The main protagonist is distressed at the prospect of leaving "everything". What is the "everything" he is leaving? The advertisement is not explicit about this, so we can only assume that the "everything" refers to the standard accoutrements of a middle class white male life – home, job, wife. The conspiratorial air of the second man suggests that the hero has had to be forcefully kidnapped from his life, that freedom is not something to which he is

accustomed. He is too strongly attached to "everything", and it takes a concerted effort by his friends to show him the pleasures of throwing caution to the wind.

At the end of the advertisement, his enjoyment of his freedom is evident in the lie he repeats about the rains washing away the roads. Each member of the group of friends helps the hero with suggestions for a believable story for why he will be home later than expected: the group must close ranks to protect the individual. Moreover, the attitude of this character to what we assume is his wife or girlfriend deserves comment. He does not address her with any affection. (There are no verbal cues such as "Honey" or "Darling" to help us in our assumptions.) The fact that he is reluctant to prolong the conversation lest the lie be discovered also suggests that he is somewhat afraid of the other person. This accords with cultural stereotypes of wives surveying their husbands' behaviour and restricting access to their friends (the "ball-and-chain" stereotype familiar from many jokes).

Overall, the techniques of unification and fragmentation evident in 'Kariba' serve chiefly to separate the world of "regular guys" from a world of control by others. Men achieve brotherhood provided they are with their equals and their world is not penetrated by women. The man who does not wish to leave everything is unnatural, and he is soon brought back into the realm of acceptable male behaviour by being persuaded to lie about the reasons for his failure to return home. The advertisement portrays ordinary South African men as those who are middle class, enjoy the friendship of other men, like to drink beer, and are not above duplicitous conduct in order to escape censure and prolong pleasure.

So, 'Kariba' makes some interesting arguments about the nature of freedom and what it might mean for men. The suggestion is made that, to be free, men need the company of other men, they need beer, and they must necessarily escape from the feminine domain of the home. In the South African context, freedom has been explicitly associated with political freedom for the oppressed black majority (or, in the wake of the end of apartheid, to right wing Afrikaner nationalist self-determination). The depoliticisation of freedom in 'Kariba' extends SAB's argument begun in 'Homecoming', where the friendship between George and Mike was in a sense a rejection of the political exigencies of the day. It also takes the notion of individualism to its logical conclusion, so that political action in the sense of engaging with the outside world is no longer necessary: indeed, the narrative is premised on withdrawal from the world.

The New South Africa in 'Kariba'

Of all the advertisements analysed in this thesis, it is probably 'Kariba' in which the myth of the rainbow nation is endorsed most vigorously. Here is a narrative that propagates a myth of a middle class South Africa where all men are rendered equal by their shared appreciation of Castle Lager. It is a version of racial reconciliation with which white South Africans can reconcile themselves: blacks adapt to "white" modes of behaviour, blacks and whites socialise happily together and everyone is comfortably off. Simply put, whites do not have to adjust to anything more radical than the presence of blacks within their social circle - which means, essentially, that whites do not have to change.

Barthes argues in *Mythologies* that myth is an essentially bourgeois phenomenon (1972, 2000) and it is worth keeping this in mind when analysing myth in 'Kariba', which is so strongly rooted in a middle class view of the world. What is noteworthy about the bourgeoisie, Barthes argues, is that it never actually acknowledges itself as such. "As an ideological fact, it completely disappears: the bourgeoisie has obliterated its name in passing from reality to representation, from economic man to mental man" (1972, 2000: 138). Barthes is examining the situation in France, but his observations apply to the South Africa represented in 'Kariba', too: bourgeois norms, he notes,

> are experienced as the evident laws of a natural order – the further the bourgeois class propagates its representations, the more naturalised they become. The fact of the bourgeoisie becomes absorbed into an amorphous universe, whose sole inhabitant is Eternal Man, who is neither proletarian nor bourgeois.
>
> (1972, 2000: 138)

This tendency of myth (as Barthes understands the concept) to endorse and naturalise a bourgeois concept of the world – indeed, to remain closed to the possibility of any other understanding of the nature of the world – is particularly evident in 'Kariba'.

On the surface of the mise-en-scene, the advertisers endorse the principle of racial equality in their scrupulous endorsement of political correctness. They are very careful to avoid stereotypes: in contrast to stereotypes of 'African time', it is a black character who urges the two main characters to hurry up, while the "knucklehead" who forgets to bring the beer is white. The black characters are permitted to speak their own languages (albeit to a limited extent) when expressing joy or excitement, rather than English, in this way acknowledging that one may speak a non-western language and still be regarded as a member of the middle class. In a particularly revealing shot of the interior of the vehicle, we see that the group consists of three white men (one of whom is not visible) and two black men, carefully arranged so that there can be no possible inference of racial superiority or inferiority. A white

man drives while a black man occupies the passenger seat next to him; in the back seat a black man is seated between two white men. Visually, the different races are suitably integrated and since the character obscured from view is white, carefully balanced.

However, in narrative terms, the relationship between black and white is less balanced. The two main protagonists are both white, and their friendship is the focus of the storyline. While the black actors in this scenario do have speaking roles, they are not major players, as was the case in 'Homecoming' or 'Foreigner'; because of this, they seem more like props to ensure the political correctness of the advertisement than genuinely believable participants. In many ways, then, 'Kariba' is the reverse of 'Foreigner' with its token white character, and the depiction of friendship between black and white South Africans is less successful in these two advertisements than in 'Homecoming', where the nature of that friendship was explored in more depth.

As one would expect in an advertisement that chooses for its subject the plight of the ordinary middle class man, certain tenets of bourgeois life are faithfully reproduced in the course of the narrative: the home in the suburbs, the necessary weekend escape to the wilderness for the purposes of dedicated leisure, the division of gender roles. Individualism as a means of cementing social relations is promoted at the expense of group politics; when groups do exist, they are united by brand affinity, in this case a shared love of Castle rather than any ethnic or cultural affiliations. Thus the brand becomes a substitute for family, community and history. Because, as Barthes argued, myth removes history from things (1972, 2000: 151), all of these assumptions, which are shaped by historical forces, appear perfectly natural to most viewers. What is interesting about this type of myth is not that it reproduces gender stereotypes or universalises middle class lifestyles or kowtows to capitalist divisions between work and leisure, it is that such myths are so *conventional*. There is nothing obviously political about myth in 'Kariba': there is none of the acknowledgement of wider historical forces we see in 'Homecoming' or 'Foreigner'.

This is the power of myth as a bourgeois instrument of ideology. Barthes notes that in refusing to acknowledge itself as 'bourgeois', the bourgeoisie turns History into Nature, and turns everything upside down (1972, 2000: 141). "The status of the bourgeois is particular, historical," Barthes argues: "man as represented by it is universal, eternal" (1972, 2000: 141). In this way, myth in 'Kariba' works to propagate a notion of what it is to be an ordinary, average South African man (who, accent and geography aside, turns out to be much like any other ordinary, average western man). This is of course problematic because most South Africans are not like the characters in the commercial; this is a lifestyle they could only dream

of. The vast bulk of Castle is sold in taverns and shebeens and consumed in settings quite different from this one. Here we see how myth works best through immediate impressions (Barthes, 1972, 2000: 130). We know the situation depicted in 'Kariba' to be idealised and improbable, yet the thought has been planted: this is what South Africa is like. The myth requires that this is the standard to which we hold reality, and we are oddly disappointed when reality fails to match up.

In fact, myth in 'Kariba' - based as it is on an "indefinite repetition" of the apparently unchanging nature of (bourgeois) humanity (Barthes, 1972, 2000: 142) - works to produce a narrative of irredeemable blandness. Though it has long been associated with the depiction of racial integration, SAB's advertising has always been careful to avoid controversy. As an analyst of television advertising performance notes, SAB "tend to go for advertisements that will offend the least number of people. Few of their advertisements are among the best-liked, though, because they take this line of least resistance" (Foster in *Financial Mail*, 1990: 52). The characters in 'Kariba' are ordinary, but also perfect in their ordinariness. There is nothing that is unique to them, none of the quirks that distinguish the characters in the Castrol campaign or 'Tailgunner', for instance.

This dullness may have something to do with the fact that Castle Lager never makes use of cultural intimacy in its advertisements. Since cultural intimacy involves the depiction of that which South Africans find most embarrassing about their collective selves, and embarrassment implies shame and criticism, this is not a strategy open to a brand that takes itself so seriously. Thus there can no rueful self-recognition, or attempts to mock hegemony. Such a strategy results in characters and settings that are recognisably South African, but who are missing the idiosyncrasies and ambiguities that would make them interesting to viewers, and at the same time acknowledges the idiosyncrasies and ambiguities that characterised life in the so-called New South Africa. 'Kariba' could have been set in America, or Australia, or England – in fact almost anywhere – and it would have made absolutely no difference to either the story or the characters.

Indeed, 'Kariba's' problems can be traced to the fact that the advertisers make the mistake of depicting a society in which race relations have become sufficiently normalised to focus on issues associated with class and leisure. That this shift was out of sync with the direction public discourse was taking at the time is suggested by later Castle campaigns which returned to current events, addressing the phenomenon of South Africans working and living overseas. The rainbow nation myth was already coming under attack at the time that 'Kariba' was

broadcast, and there was a noted shift (especially within the emerging black middle class) away from a discourse of racial reconciliation.

The rainbow paradox

'Homecoming', 'Foreigner' and 'Kariba' progress the notion of social change within a context of that falls outside political activity based on ethnic or class affiliation. Of the three, 'Homecoming' acknowledges the wider political context of the situation it purports to represent most explicitly; here the tension between the political and the private is most apparent. 'Foreigner' uses an encounter between a group of South African friends and an American to depict a South African society coming to terms with its identity in a globalising world. 'Kariba' in turn shifts the focus completely to the middle class home; wider political concerns or tendencies are replaced by concerns revolving around freedom and friendship. With each instalment in the campaign, the distance between the situation portrayed and the wider political and social context is increased, so that the friends end up happily isolated from the outside world, literally and figuratively.

Compared to 'Homecoming' and 'Foreigner', 'Kariba' is less successful in terms of its attempts to define South African identity because it places too much emphasis on an unproblematic endorsement of the rainbow nation myth within a bland, cosily middle class setting that fails to portray any unique sense of what it is to be South African. In 'Homecoming' the characters must battle the larger forces of history; in 'Foreigner' it is their task to get to know the rest of the world after years of isolation and in 'World Cup', the campaign following 'Kariba', it will be the task of the entire nation to ensure victory in a great battle against the rest of the world.

Because these larger forces of history are absent in 'Kariba', there is too little at stake for its characters. Thus 'Kariba' falls short in its attempts to depict a certain kind of South African identity, which is premised, ultimately, on acknowledging the ambiguity and paradox that characterise South African society. 'Homecoming' and 'Foreigner' both allude to ambiguity; because Kariba is so focused on the middle class experience, it lacks the depth of the other commercials in the campaign. Paradoxically, as racial reconciliation has become a possibility in the wide context in which this advertisement was produced, its depiction has become a source of irritation for viewers. If the Castle advertisements of the 1980s that depicted different races socialising together were disliked by certain audiences because such depictions were felt to be unrealistic, the type of advertising exemplified by 'Kariba' was viewed as contrived. Indeed, this kind of advertising came to be resented because society had failed to live up to the ideal portrayed in these campaigns. Thus advertising for Castle in particular

came to symbolise a certain disingenuousness in South African society: the dream of genuine racial reconciliation was a lie.

National unity through sport

No study of Castle Lager campaigns would be complete without acknowledging the central role of sports sponsorship in its marketing plans. SAB, predominantly through Castle Lager, is a major sponsor of sport in South Africa. The Castle brand is prominently represented in all three of South Africa's most popular sports, namely soccer, cricket and rugby, the national teams for which all feature Castle branding on their uniforms. The enormous popularity of sport in South Africa makes it an obvious target for sponsors, and sports sponsorship experienced impressive growth relative to other forms of marketing and advertising in the 1990s even as rising costs made it difficult for sponsors to budget for more popular sporting events. In addition, alcohol is frequently consumed while spectators are in the act of watching sports matches (most pubs, bars and taverns in South Africa have televisions enabling spectators to cheer on their team with a drink in their hand). 90% of beer drinkers were believed to participate in or watch sport (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52), so the association between a brand like Castle Lager and popular team sports was always a logical one.[73]

SAB explained the reasoning behind their sponsorship of sport in a 1986 print advertisement which formed part of the "We're not only here for the beer" corporate image campaign. They argued that their aim was to improve the quality of all aspects of sport, from administration to venues and facilities, "to the benefit of the game and millions of sports loving, beer-drinking South Africans". Sponsorship provided the company "with a viable extension of our conventional advertising and promotional activities. As such we're determined we'll be wherever sport-loving beer drinkers come together to watch the game." And sponsorship was also a way of acknowledging the importance of their consumers, "the very people who keep us in business" (1986).

By supporting rugby, cricket and soccer, Castle has ensured that it is highly visible to all of their consumers of all races, and the brand is not seen to support a "white" sport at the expense of a "black" sport and vice versa: in a sense, Castle has hedged its bets. This was an important strategy for a brand dominant across all sectors of the South African population. The moment Castle was seen as specifically black, or specifically white, it would risk losing

[73] It was, however, SAB's policy never to sponsor motor sport. "Some brewers do sponsor it but I don't think a crashed car with 'drink Castle Lager' on the side would do our sales any good," explained the beer division marketing manager (*Financial Mail*, 1990: 52)

some of its market share. South African soccer has traditionally had the support of black South Africans, whilst rugby and cricket have been "white" sports. The fact that many black South Africans supported the national rugby team in the 1995 World Cup was seen as a critical step towards racial reconciliation. As a result, an important subtext in the following advertisement is the history of soccer support in South Africa: in 1998, it was the turn of white South Africans to demonstrate their goodwill by supporting a traditionally "black" sport.[74] Interestingly, sports sponsorship is viewed in a more positive light by black South Africans, who see it as evidence of investment in the black community, whereas whites tend to view sponsorship more cynically as a marketing exercise (*AdFocus*, 1996: 91). Sponsorship of sports which enjoy a high level of support by black South Africans is therefore a means of ensuring continued loyalty from this particular segment of the market.

Other corporations followed in the footsteps of SAB, and sports sponsorship began to take a bigger share of South African marketing budgets during the 1990's. As advertisers sought to reach consumers in a way that endeared the latter to the brands of the former, sport offered an obvious solution. "In this field of highly competitive and creative requirements, the current darling of the alternative marketing plan is sports sponsorship," observed one South African marketing journalist in 1998. "As modern man's focus is beamed ever more acutely into recreational pursuits by the advent of satellite television, specialist sports shows and professional, global, year-round sporting activities, the smart money seems to dictate that, if you want to get noticed, you have to be into sport" (Chislett, 1998: 53). As commercial interest in sport grew, so prices for sponsorship and broadcast rose, and thus a greater share of marketing budgets was diverted into sponsorship and away from traditional above-the-line advertising.

The ever-increasing commercial presence at sports matches inevitably drew criticism. "Watching sport these days is like what being under enemy fire must have been, an unremitting bombardment, in this case, of the mind," complained the South African satirist Robert Kirby (2001: 1). He observed with considerable annoyance that in rugby matches, "fields are surrounded by literally dozens of billboards, players' gear is covered in logos, even the ball carries its maker's name. Today our rugby heroes advertise beer on their chests, the field itself is adorned with slogans, the billboards crank around so as to carry yet more advertising." (2001:1) The sponsorship of sports by alcohol producers also came under fire by

[74] Soccer support patterns in South Africa are unusual in that, while local teams have a predominantly black fan base, many white South Africans maintain an active interest in European soccer, and actively support European soccer teams. Thus the distinction between traditionally "black" sports and "white" sports is not entirely accurate.

critics concerned about the implications for society as a whole, as in their minds young South Africans associated alcohol with sporting achievement and heroism (Parry, 1999).

One Nation, One Beer

Castle, as sponsor of the national soccer team (which had by now been christened Bafana Bafana, the boys, in response to the name given to the Springboks, Amabokoboko), invested a considerable amount of money in communicating its involvement with the team's attempts to qualify for the 1998 Soccer World Cup. A World Cup theme song was developed and exposed to soccer fans for a year before, and played along with shots of the team in action on occasions when forthcoming games were publicised. By the time the following advertisement was flighted for the first time, in May 1998, soccer lovers would have been familiar with the theme song and its emphasis on "one nation". Naturally, Castle's association with the soccer team, a synecdoche of the entire nation, opened the rhetorical door to slippage between the nation and Castle Lager itself.

The resulting advertisement was atypical of Castle's approach. Castle advertisements had, over the decade, focused on personal stories in which the viewer was invited to get to know the characters which functioned as representatives of larger forces operating within society. 'World Cup' represents a departure from the standard formula of depicting a multiracial group of friends who cement their bond over a Castle. For the first time, Castle attempts to depict the entire nation, united, as it happens, in a shared goal to see the South African soccer team do well at the World Cup. Such attempts to visualise the nation by showing a range of South Africans engaged in some kind of shared project are relatively rare in South African advertising, which tends to depict individuals rather than groups. As we have seen from the analyses of Castle Lager and other campaigns, an engagement with South African culture and politics has usually been attempted via the depiction of individuals who represent their communities, race or class position.

World Cup - 1998

VISUAL	AUDIO
Mid-shot of a middle-aged white bartender cleaning glasses as he stands behind the bar. Close-up: The glasses hanging from the bar start shaking. The bartender looks up quizzically.	Drumbeat; hint of crowd cheering
Low-angle shot of a large black woman sitting behind a wooden crate piled with oranges. The oranges fall.	Drumbeat
Swallows leave their perches on a stretch of telephone	Drumbeat

wire.	
Low-angle shot of Bafana Bafana players running in slow motion towards the camera. The sky is dramatic, filled with clouds, a hint of sun shining through.	Bass guitar
Fade to wide-angle shot of huge crowd of people in stadium.	Crowd cheering
Low-angle shot of Bafana Bafana running in slow motion towards the camera.	Bass guitar plays
Mid-shot of multiracial crowd waving the South African flag, pumping fists and cheering.	
Low-angle shot of Bafana Bafana running in slow motion towards the camera. The lead player reaches with his foot as if to kick a ball. Cut to close-up of a foot connecting with a soccer ball. Cut back to low angle shot of the players.	
Mid-shot of largely white crowd in bar apparently watching TV. Low-angle shot of black man and woman looking up in amazement at something. A soccer ball flies through the blue sky. Cut back to the crowd in the bar. Cut to long-shot of an old black man sitting under a tree and holding a bottle of Castle Lager. Cut to low-angle shot of soccer ball flying into the net.	Heartbeats and soft, distant sound of chanting
The old man gets up to cheer. Montage of various crowds in bars – mainly white, then all-black – shot from high and low angles, leaping up and cheering.	Ululation
Mid-shot of feet landing.	Drumbeat
Close up a bottle of Castle Lager sliding into the hand of a white man. Montage of patriotic crowd, Castle Lager bottle shots, Bafana Bafana players cheering.	Men sing: "One nation, one goal, one beer, one soul." This is repeated with more urgency.
Wide-angle shot of group of men silhouetted against the dramatic, cloud-filled sky raising the South African flag.	Song ends.
Castle Lager logo appears over this end shot, with the title: One Nation vs The World	

At first glance it appears that this advertisement is making some very ambitious claims about the nature of the South African nation and the type of behaviour expected of truly patriotic South Africans. Indeed, in its grandiose imagery, its construction of the soccer stars as larger than life heroes, and its hypnotic exhortation of "One Nation, One Goal, One Beer, One Soul", it is almost totalitarian in look and feel. There is, after all, nothing subtle about the

message. Castle Lager is not only the beer for all the people; it embodies the South African nation. Castle Lager *is* South Africa. The vision of the beer of the people, first articulated in 1990, has achieved its ultimate ambition, as the brand and the nation become one and the same.

As to be expected from an advertisement so avowedly patriotic in intent, 'World Cup' makes use of certain techniques of what Thompson (1990) defines as legitimation. While there is little evidence of rationalization (the advertisement instead operates on an almost purely emotional level), there is considerable use of universalization. Every South African, for instance, is assumed to have an abiding interest in soccer, and to care deeply about the fate of the national team in the upcoming World Cup tournament. Being a supporter of Bafana Bafana is a condition of being a patriotic South African. While not every individual in the advertisement is shown drinking Castle Lager, those who are in the act of consumption are shown drinking the brand: the consumption of Castle is therefore an act of patriotism.

There are also elements of narrativization, in that South Africa's participation in the World Cup is cast in terms of battle (with the inference, however unlikely, that ultimate victory is assured). The final shot of the advertisement is an obvious reference to the famous image of American soldiers raising the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima during World War Two. The end title, "One Nation vs The World" confirms this interpretation. Such juxtaposition is hardly surprising, since sport has frequently been compared to war; as George Orwell once wrote, "Serious sport is…war minus the shooting" (in Nixon, 1994: 131).

Overall, this advertisement legitimates the consumption of Castle Lager by casting it as an act of patriotism. In addition, the assumption is made that all South Africans are soccer fans, and that support for one's nation is demonstrated through particular acts: waving the national flag, for instance, and cheering on one's team. To be patriotic is to care about the success or failure of the team in the World Cup; one's very spiritual being is bound up in whether Bafana Bafana win or lose (one soul/ one goal). Individuality is entirely subordinated to the team, which represents the nation, and the group, which supports the team.

Here, less imagination is required to conjure up Anderson's imagined community, because Castle shows it to us, both in the literal sense (in the form of the large crowds of one's fellow South Africans) and as symbolized by the members of the national soccer team. This advertisement offers an interesting example of common knowledge generation, where large numbers of people are all engaged in the same activity – implying that those who are not participating should be, in order not to stand out from their compatriots. Seen in this light,

Castle offers an exemplary demonstration of the solving of coordination problems (Chwe, 2001), since the commercial makes explicit the idea that support of Bafana Bafana in the World Cup is desirable, if not compulsory.

South Africans are constructed as a unified nation with one purpose and one vision of the future, success in the World Cup. Their attention is completely focused on the team and the scoring of the goal, and it is Castle Lager that serves as a catalyst to unite them in their enjoyment of the game and their support of the team. South Africans are thus unified in the face of an external enemy, and the rest of the world is in fact the Other which is expurgated here. They – that is, the rest of the world - are never shown in the action, so we do not know who "they" are or what "they" look like; it is only necessary to know that they are not like us, they are not South African.

What is implied by the imagery of soccer heroes and golden beer is confirmed by the theme song: one nation, one goal, one beer, one soul. Here, Castle Lager, the national soccer team, and the nation itself are equated. The success or failure of Bafana Bafana in the tournament will somehow be translated into a verdict on South Africa's success or failure on the world stage. In addition, equivalence is established between the drinking of Castle and patriotism, so that drinking a Castle becomes in and of itself a patriotic act. The Castle Lager brand itself therefore becomes a metonym of the nation, and the bottle encapsulates, quite literally, an essence of South African identity. (This idea would be expanded in later Castle campaigns.) Indeed, Castle's link to the nation is now so intense, so natural and deeply felt, that it has assumed a spiritual dimension ("one soul"). Curiously, no conventional shots of a crowd surrounding a soccer pitch are used. Every element in the mise-en-scène is somehow decontextualised, to be linked by the Bafana Bafana players and the consumption of Castle Lager. Castle's unifying function, both as a beverage and as a sponsor of the team, is thus reinforced.

The theme song, with its hypnotic use of chorus and repetition, deserves special attention. All of the conflicting and ambiguous forces in operation in South African society are resolved and encapsulated in this refrain. The complex historical processes at play are rendered as "One Nation, One Goal, One Beer, One Soul". Not only is a grammatical unity created, but also the essence of what it is to be South African is frozen into this mantra. (It should be noted that this advertisement only appeared in English, so at the same time it also implies, One Nation, One Soul, One Language.) According to this logic, the nation is unified – it is One – because it possesses a unified spiritual and cultural quality which marks it apart from all other nations; because all South African citizens have one purpose, which is to win the

World Cup; and lastly, because "we" can boast a brand of beer that encapsulates our aspirations and evokes the essence of our national identity.

The print advertisement forming part of the World Cup campaign made the message in the television execution quite explicit, and it is worth quoting for the way in which it helps to illuminate the intent of the advertisers. Against a background image of the South African flag being raised - the final shot of the television advertisement - appears an image of a glass of Castle Lager and the headline "One Nation vs The World. In the bottom left hand corner appear the words

> What takes most nations 30 years, we have done in just five. And as Bafana Bafana take on the world in the 1998 Soccer World Cup, let us show them that they have the support of one nation. And the support of one beer. A beer that knows what it is to stand the test of time. And firmly believes its team can do the same.
>
> One Nation, One Soul, One Beer, One Goal.

Here the Castle brand is personified quite explicitly. It is given human qualities: here it becomes an active supporter of Bafana Bafana; it *believes* that "its" team can also stand the test of time (a reference to the Castle slogan "the taste that's stood the test of time"). It has special knowledge of what is required to flourish over more than a century. (And it should be noted that here was a slogan that had itself stood the test of time in an age where brands were looking continually to reinvent themselves to suit changing market conditions.) Linked to this personification of the Castle brand is the slippage, once again, between the beer and the nation. Who are the "we" and the "us" referred to in the first two lines of the copy? The reader is exhorted to show the world that Bafana Bafana has the support of "one nation" *and* the support of "one beer". With the use of "and", the ad stops short of explicitly equating the nation with the beer. But the line is a fine one.

Propaganda for beer

As I noted previously, this advertisement marks a distinct departure from the social realist tone of the Friendship campaign. In the other Castle Lager advertisements in this chapter, nationality is assumed rather than explicitly named. It calls forth the nation and interpellates its viewers as South Africans conscious of their nationality. Of all the advertisements under analysis in this thesis, 'World Cup' is closest in spirit to the understanding of myth propagated by Georges Sorel. "Men who are participating in a great social movement," Sorel argued, "always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph" (Kreis, 2000: 1). Sorel's words can be viewed as a remarkably accurate description of events in this particular advertisement, which is premised upon the conviction that glory

awaited South Africa in the 1998 World Cup. Sorel argued that myth embodied action, that above all it should inspire the masses to act. Here the idea of action is embodied by the soccer players who rush toward the camera, while South Africans are portrayed in the act of supporting their team (through cheering in the stands and drinking beer). Such unified action will lead to victory against the enemy, which in this case happens to be the rest of the world.

Enhancing this stirring narrative of inevitable triumph is the presence of distinctly religious undertones. The rolling clouds, the larger than life heroes and the reference to "one soul" in the theme song are all drawn from myth or religious discourse, even if the advertisement does not actually refer to organised religion. Given the way in which alcohol consumption and cheering for the team are recast as a noble endeavour in which the individual is subordinated to the greater good, Bruce Kapferer's comments on the link between nationalism and religious impulses are worth repeating here. "The nation," he observes, "is created as an object of devotion and the political forces which become focused on it are intensified in their energy and passion. The religion of nationalism, wherein the political is shrouded in the symbolism of a "higher" purpose, is vital to the momentum of nationalism." (1988: 1). In the case of 'World Cup' the "higher" purpose is the desire to compete successfully in the World Cup; as the soccer team are represented as great heroes worthy of being idolised, so the nation is venerated. Because the stakes are so high, the passions surrounding the event are especially intense.

The power of competing in the World Cup stemmed from the opportunity it offered to the new nation to prove itself in an arena, against other nations. I have argued that 'World Cup' constructs national unity by juxtaposing it against an Other[75] in the form of the rest of the world, but the national unity/ enemy other dualism can be viewed from a different point of view, one that argues that as the nation is unified, so its people begin to see other nations as rivals, even adversaries. Cassirer, for instance, argues that myth is able to unify the nation "by

[75] The theme of the rest of the world taking on the mantle of the Other is expanded in Castle campaigns between late 1998 and 2001, when multiracial casts of Castle-drinking South African men are shown enjoying their favourite beverage outside of their homeland, in New York or the United Kingdom. A bottle of Castle, which embodies South Africa, allows them to alleviate their homesickness. Internal differences could be rendered irrelevant by their shared state of exile. South Africans it seemed, could best reconcile outside of the country of their birth: it was easier to be patriotic in New York or London than in Johannesburg or Durban. This new tactic appeared to have struck a chord with viewers, and the New York execution was perhaps the most successful Castle Lager advertisement to date. Mike Want, a local advertising practitioner, having admitted that he had "always disliked our local beer ads" went on to praise SAB for having at last "cracked a credible yet entertaining storyline that gives the characters a justifiable reason for celebrating the joys of their local brew. I, for one, can definitely relate to what it must be like to score a couple of crates of Castle on the other side of the globe" (1998: 29).

grounding it in the wholeness of nature; in doing so it legitimizes international rivalries and divisions" (1946: 8). The World Cup campaign legitimizes rivalry with other countries by emphasising the uniqueness of South Africa, visualising the imagined community and explaining why it is special; on the other side of the coin, it is necessary to combat the rest of the world in order to confirm South Africa's special status.

As a philosopher of myth, Cassirer is associated with the rise of fascism, and it is worth commenting at this point on the similarity between the way in which the soccer players are constructed visually and the techniques used by Leni Riefenstahl in *Olympia*, her documentary on the 1936 Munich Olympics. Riefenstahl pioneered the use of low angles and slow motion to heighten the drama of athletes in action, and the legacy of her aestheticization of the human body can be seen to good effect in 'World Cup'. In the beauty and strength of the soccer players is mirrored the strength and vigour of the young nation: it is not surprising, therefore, that it is to athletes that nations (whether fascist, democratic or communist) have looked to ensure international prestige over the course of the twentieth century.

Though arguments linking worship of a religious nature and the idolising of sports stars are often too glibly made, the campaign clearly implies that transcendence of the self may be achieved through support of the national team while participating in a ritual of drinking beer and watching the match along with one's fellow citizens. Kapferer links such religious impulses to the "founding myths" or origins of the nation. While the founding myths of the New South Africa are not spelled out in the television advertisement, the accompanying print advertisement refers to the New South Africa's relatively recent origins in the opening sentence, "What takes most nations 30 years, we have done in just five." The higher purpose is clear: to battle the world, at least metaphorically, while demonstrating the kind of national unity that was never thought possible in such a young nation. The drinking of Castle becomes an act of communion with one's fellow South Africans - communion in the sense of a shared, deeply felt ritual that helps to strengthen social bonds and confirm membership of a community.

Such a strong focus on the community or group identity is interesting in light of the fact that, while previous advertisements focused on individuals, Castle's long-term positioning during the 1990's was that of the "beer of the people". In fact, the obvious claims made by the lyrics "One nation, one soul, one beer, one goal" comes dangerously close to parodying the message the advertiser is trying to convey, and, since it does so much to invite cynicism, one can only conclude that this commercial is evidence of supreme self-confidence on the part of SAB. The latter, as sponsor of the team and manufacturer of Castle the social lubricant, is firmly

convinced of its ability to foster goodwill and unity amongst South Africans. In fact, in describing itself as the "beer of the people", Castle uses vocabulary that is almost identical to that of the liberation movement.

'World Cup' puts forward an argument that patriotism may be defined by support for the national soccer team and, in addition to this, consumption of Castle Lager. Racial reconciliation is not the major concern here, though the rainbow nation is of course a given, and apparent in the careful balance maintained between the depictions of black and white characters. Symbolically, the most powerful character is a black soccer player; given the predominantly black following of soccer in South Africa, this is hardly surprising. It is worth reflecting on the fact that this advertisement was flighted at almost the same time that Mbeki made his Two Nations speech. The rainbow nation myth was in decline, and the African renaissance appeared to have replaced it as the preferred national myth of the day. A catalyst for national unity was sorely needed, so the timing of the Soccer World Cup could not have been better. International sport offers the best means for at least a facsimile of national unity to be created, especially as it provides a panoply of convenient, ready-made external enemies[76]. As the print advertisement suggested, the 1998 World Cup was seen as an opportunity for a democratic South Africa to prove its worth on the most international of stages. Despite all the internal strife that marked public discourse within South Africa, it was still possible to put on a unified face for the benefit of the rest of the world.

One beer, one soul: assessing Castle's contribution to South African identity

In mid 2002, the editors of the *Saturday Star*'s long-running Media and Marketing section invited members of the reading public to put forward their views on whether advertising could play a nation-building role. Almost all of the responses mentioned multiracial beer advertising (though, curiously, none of the respondents seemed to recall that such advertising was not restricted to post-apartheid South Africa, and had been running since the mid 1980s) and the role it played in normalising race relations. A Castle Lager advertisement, argues Joseph Talotta in an assessment of South Africa in the twentieth century, is one prism through which the concerns prevailing within a broader context can be viewed, and the evolution of Castle Lager's advertising "serves as a cosmic crystal ball for South African society" (2000: 8). In contrast, Vasantha Angamuthu linked beer advertising to the hypocrisy at the heart of society: "If we're white we present in public the rainbow face as learned from all those SAB ads" whereas "in the comfort of our white circles we give vent to the true horror of the New

[76] There was considerable anecdotal evidence at the time, however, of white South Africans who refused to support Bafana Bafana, instead cheering on their opponents.

South African reality" (2000: 14). To return to the comment cited at the beginning of this chapter, was it true that South Africans would have to rely on Castle Lager adverts to "enshrine [their] plurality?" (Dodd, 1999: 12).

So it is that beer advertising and the New South Africa (especially the concept of the rainbow nation) are synonymous in the minds of many. As the comment cited at the beginning of this chapter indicates, Castle Lager advertisements have developed a reputation for advertising which showed a multiracial South Africa free of ambiguity or conflict; indeed, it often seemed that a Castle Lager television advertisement was the only place where one might find evidence of such a society. During the 1980's, as Holt has argued, such advertising may have been a way of demonstrating to a sceptical white audience that *swartgevaar* was a myth. Holt observes of Castle ads of the latter half of the 1980's that the social order as depicted may have been unrealistic and "idealised", "in terms of the actuality of the time it perhaps also constituted a degree of reform that was somewhat revolutionary" (1992: 4). Holt argues that it is possible that these ads made a positive contribution to the "struggle" (1992: 4). And it should be noted that the 'Friendship' campaign of the 1990s was very successful indeed in terms of winning back consumers to the Castle brand; black consumers rewarded SAB's multiracial advertising approach with strong brand loyalty (*AdFocus*, 1996: 92).

As the apartheid laws were dismantled, the gulf between Castle campaigns and reality narrowed somewhat. Consequently, the Castle advertisements seemed less radical. But the credibility of the situations (rather than the possibility of blacks and whites mingling, as was the case in the previous decade) came to be questioned. Reflecting on the racial divisions that remained ten years into democracy, Jonathan Jansen, dean of education at the University of Pretoria (and a man who, as a so-called Coloured, had been at the receiving end of the iniquities of apartheid), declared:

> I hate those beer commercials showing black and white South Africans hanging out together – smiling, well-integrated faces enjoying the same sport and, of course, the same beer. I hate them because they are dishonest.
>
> (In Dean, 2003: 16)

In many ways, the beer advertising of SAB has come to symbolise the failings of the New South Africa. The gap between the myths - the function of which was to provide an ideal towards which society could work - and the reality as it actually transpired led to a pervasive sense of disillusionment, even, as Jansen's comments suggest, of having been lied to. Now that it was possible for blacks and whites to mingle, why did society *not* look like a Castle ad? The fact that beer advertising, especially that of Castle Lager, has come to stand – in both a positive and a negative sense – as shorthand for the myth of racial reconciliation in post-

apartheid South Africa, is perhaps the most persuasive evidence to hand of the central role of advertising in the generation of national myth in South Africa.

The one question that none of these commentators asks is: why? Any analysis of Castle Lager campaigns during the 1990s (and, indeed, campaigns since then) should surely prompt the question: why does Castle of all brands get to represent the nation? And why was it that Castle Lager was able to achieve this distinction with nary a word of protest, even a comment noting the startling ambition of its marketing department? Such hubris can be explained by several converging factors. Firstly, the status of South African Breweries in the South African business community predisposed it to an identification with the nation: it is, after all, known as *South African* Breweries[77]. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, SAB was born on the goldfields of the Witwatersrand and has played a central role in the industrialisation of South Africa ever since; likewise, Castle Lager was first brewed for the miners of Johannesburg. As one of the oldest South African brands, it can boast the kind of credibility and heritage lacking in most other locally produced brands.

SAB, as a prominent member of the big business community, had taken upon itself the task of depicting a non-racial South African society even during the 1980s. This led, as I have demonstrated, to the avowedly political subtext of 'Homecoming'. At the same time, the natural link between watching sport and consuming alcohol had long since led SAB into sports sponsorship, which, during the years of international isolation, was focused on provincial competitions. In sporting terms, the rest of the world might as well have not existed, and – rugby aside – national teams were an irrelevance. It was only during the 1990s, once South Africa had resumed international sporting ties, that national sporting teams could be formed, and the nation as a category of sporting competition became meaningful.

In the mean time, live television broadcasts made the imagined community seem real even as South Africa was struggling to come to terms with its post-apartheid identity. Castle Lager took on sponsorship of the national rugby, soccer and cricket teams, and its logo began to appear on their uniforms. If the team was a synecdoche of the nation, and the brand supported the team, then the slippage between the brand and the nation was easy to accomplish, a sleight of hand that not even the most critical of observers saw fit to comment on. Castle, in achieving an unchallenged equivalence between itself and the entire nation, was superbly successful in turning history into nature. Barthes himself would surely have been impressed.

[77] After the merger with Miller, South African Breweries was officially shortened to SAB.

Yet successful as Castle was at establishing its bona fides as a synecdoche of the nation, it failed to quell the doubts of those who questioned the reality of the situations it depicted. The central problem of Castle Lager advertising, which in look and feel clearly purports to represent reality, is the problem of any text that focuses on the positive in the midst of enormous social problems[78]. Angamuthu points out the ambiguities of a country where "all are embracing the New South African reality without any acknowledgement of the ugliness that really exists in our society" (2000: 14). When disillusionment with the New South Africa surfaced, so too did irritation with the Castle campaigns.

Inevitably, a major reason for this confusion between the myth and the advertising is the fact that Castle attempted, so explicitly, to conflate itself with the nation. In the television commercials under analysis here, themes of separation and reconciliation, engagement with the wider world, the embracing of middle class lifestyles and the use of sport as a catalyst to create at least a fleeting sense of national unity have all been explored. All of these were important themes circulating in South African public (and private) discourse to varying degrees and at varying times throughout the first decade after the official demise of apartheid.

The Friendship campaign is exemplary above all because it offers the most visible instance of the unquestioning endorsement of the myth of the rainbow nation (though the African renaissance is anticipated to an extent in 'Foreigner'). The New South Africa, in these narratives of beer and male bonding, is an unproblematic construct, one in which racial reconciliation has been achieved, and divides along class lines are irrelevant. Where the advertising of Castrol, for example, used the opportunity to question the assumptions contained within the mythology of the New South Africa, to suggest that there were gaps between reality and desire (and so at the same time confirming the existence of these myths), Castle steadfastly avoided even a hint of cynicism.

Eventually, reality caught up with the Castle campaigns as well as society as a whole: the transformation from apartheid state to nonracial nirvana was not as easy as the narrative of the New South Africa had suggested it might be. By failing to acknowledge more fully the ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the South African situation, Castle succeeded in alienating more critical viewers, who now regarded the brand's advertising as shorthand for excessive "rainbowism".

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[78] In the wake of the turn of the millennium, most patriotic South African advertising campaigns have turned to the recent past as a means to bolster the national self-esteem: dealing with the present is simply too awkward.

But the marketers of the brand were unexpectedly on the mark when they suggested in 'Foreigner' that the drinking of Castle was just as much a part of South African "culture" and "customs" as more traditional activities. These campaigns are indeed cultural artefacts of the New South Africa in much the same way as the art and music, or drama of the time, and the passage of time has only emphasised the significance of the Friendship campaign as a text that best articulates the mythology of the New South Africa.

Here, people do not remember soap operas or situation comedies: they remember the advertising. Slowly, history and advertisement are becoming commingled in the memories of South Africans, so that the dividing line between them is now lost in the mists of time. To return to the concept of the nation as imagined community, it can be argued that the New South Africa without Castle Lager advertisements showing black and white men drinking beer together and having a good time would, quite simply, have been unimaginable.

SAB's vision of South African reality is tied to its long history and status as one of the pillars of the South African capitalist establishment. It represents the old guard and the brands it purveys are ultimately the products of an old, established economy. But South Africa during the 1990s was in a state of immense flux, not just politically, but economically too. The industry with undoubtedly the greatest impact, culturally, socially and economically, in the new democracy, was undoubtedly cellular communications. It is appropriate, then, that advertising for this new industry should use its advertising to investigate changing social relations. Unlike Castle Lager and SAB, Vodacom's advertising would test new boundaries, persuading South Africans to laugh at themselves even as their faults were pointed out to them. In the following chapter, I will examine how Vodacom took an insult and turned it into the most successful slogan of the decade.

Chapter Six

Yebo Gogo

> There are some things that all South Africans hold dear. Braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies and cellphones – and not necessarily in that order. It's our collective national identity.
>
> Elizabeth Donaldson (1998: 44)

If there is a quintessentially New South African phenomenon, it is the astonishing popularity of cellular phones. As one observer commented in 1998, four years after their introduction, "Everywhere you look you'll see a New South African surgically attached to a cellphone…Nowhere in the world is there a nation so passionate about cells" (Donaldson, 1998: 44).

With poetic justice, this most New South African of industries arrived almost simultaneously with democracy. South Africa's first cellular network, Vodacom, went public on June 1 1994, barely a month after the country's first democratic elections were held, and it was Vodacom's "Yebo Gogo" campaign, flighted for the first time in October 1994, that marked a sea change in the depiction of relations between black and white South Africans. The exploits of an arrogant but inept white city slicker and his wily black alter ego would prove extraordinarily popular with South African audiences for the rest of the decade.

From the moment of its launch, cellular telephony made a significant impact on South African culture. Soon the "Gauteng earring" was playing a leading role in almost every significant feature of New South African society[79], from political scandals to the country's well-documented crime epidemic. Cellular phones – known locally as "cellphones" - have ever since become an indispensable part of many South African lifestyles.

As more and more consumers have taken to using cellphones over the years, their social meaning has changed. When the devices first arrived, they were regarded as "more irksome status symbols than BMWs" and people who used them in public were dismissed as show-offs (Rumney, 1994). But as sales rose and the service providers came up with schemes to widen their subscriber bases beyond the very affluent, they became "ubiquitous" (Beresford,

[79] Cellphones have had an important influence on behaviour and public culture in other countries, too. Philippines president Joseph Estrada, for example, was driven out of power by "smart mobs" that were alerted to demonstrations by their cellphones. Cellphones drove political change in the Philippines in the way that "fax machines enabled Tiananmen Square, cassette recordings fired the Iranian evolution, photocopiers fuelled the Polish Solidarity uprising and shortwave radios aided the French Resistance" (Garreau, 2002: 11).

1998: 1). The cellphone, "that once distinctive sign of a yuppie" (Shapshak, 1998: 1), was no longer the sole preserve of the well-off.

Inevitably, its very popularity soon became a source of annoyance. "There is nothing worse than the constant ringing and chatting that seems to accompany everything we do in public these days," complained a writer to the *Cape Argus* (Disgruntled diner, 1998), who went on to aver indignantly, "I would rather walk in on a George Michael incident[80] than be subjected to the invasive cellphone." An editorial in *The Star*, reflecting on moves overseas to block cellphone signals in restaurants, wondered, "Could the unthinkable happen in South Africa, with its thriving cellphone market? Will social pressures eventually prick the bubble here, too?" (1998: 12).

Soon enough, cellphones became the butt of countless jokes, meriting an entry in the South African comedian Leon Schuster's *Lekker Thick South African Joke Book* along with "Affirmative Action", "Boere", "Zuma" and others (1998: 77). The popular comic strip *Madam & Eve* routinely targeted the ongoing love affair between South Africans and their cellphones, while the satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys made extensive use of the cellphone both as a narrative device and a target of humour in his shows. The rate at which subscribers were signing up for cellular contracts soon exceeded industry experts' wildest expectations, and the introduction some time later of prepaid access permitted meant that even minimum wage earners could afford to operate a cellphone – just.

Why did South Africans take to cellphones with such enthusiasm? Some ascribed the national love affair with Nokias and Motorolas to a love of gadgetry and the need for status. Cellphones – small, expensive, and a means to keep in touch with one's friends – soon became fashion items and status symbols not just for the wealthy, but for the masses, too. Many attributed the spectacular growth in cellphone usage to high crime levels. "[E]very South African is terrified of being murdered, raped, mugged or robbed. Our justifiable paranoia is appeased knowing that, with cellphones, we have immediate links to emergency services, family and friends." (Donaldson, 1998: 44). The fact that clothing retailers such as Woolworths and Edgars took to selling cellphones and contracts along with the new season's look in jeans and blouses was a reflection of a major shift in traditional spending patterns: South Africans, especially those earning lower incomes, were spending more on cellphones and less on clothing (Joubert, 2000: 78).

[80] A reference to the pop star George Michael's arrest for having sex with a man in a public toilet.

The relative ease with which one could obtain a cellphone as opposed to a Telkom landline was cited as another contributing factor to the burgeoning industry. Historically, black areas had been denied access to phone services by the apartheid government; by 1976, Soweto was still without telephones (Donaldson, 1998: 44). Vodacom "appealed to the Rainbow Nation's sense of Ubuntu" by subsidising cellphones in under-serviced areas (and kept its affluent subscribers happy by disguising its unsightly aerials as trees, windmills and lighthouses) (Donaldson, 1998: 47). Thus cellular telephony could be seen as a socially responsible industry.

The Yebo Gogo campaign

It was against this background that the Yebo Gogo campaign was broadcast. The campaign was launched while the South African market for cellular services was still relatively small. Access to cellphones was out of reach for the vast majority of South Africans and would be for the foreseeable future, yet Vodacom made a conscious decision to position itself as a brand for everyone, regardless of whether they could actually afford to use a cellphone or not[81]. MTN, Vodacom's rival network, had already achieved greater brand awareness by positioning itself as an aspirational, high-tech brand for high achievers. The marketers at Vodacom therefore decided to take a different tack: the brand "would not alienate or be perceived as elitist, but rather be positioned as the cellular network for everyone" *(Apex Awards*, 2001: 386)[82].

Such an approach should be viewed in the context of Vodacom management's awareness of the importance of advertising in a completely new industry and the need to claim an advantage sooner rather than later. As Managing Director Alan Knott-Craig argued:

> Cellphones will change our lives, much more than TV did…and Vodacom will be the leading cellular network in the country and one of the best in the world…To ensure this we need to embark on an effective advertising

[81] Later the launch of prepaid access – a concept pioneered in South Africa before spreading to the rest of the world – allowed individuals who could not gain access to credit to use a cellular phone. By 1998, 75% of the cellular networks' monthly sales consisted of prepaid contracts. In this way, cellphone use spread throughout all sectors of society.

[82] The campaign targeted a wide range of potential customers, from private individuals to small business and large corporates, as well as all race groups and both genders (Dorrian, 1998: 89). Psychographically, the advertising "was aimed at innovators and self-motivated people who saw themselves as trend-setters, were individualistic and could relate to technology…Those people would strive towards self-enhancement in terms of their lifestyles, both in the social and business setting." (Dorrian, 1998: 89-90) It is worth noting that the kind of people (innovative, self-motivated, urban and preferably wealthy) the Yebo Gogo campaign was aimed at were likely to be among the least conservative members of South African society.

> campaign…The first network to establish its brand name will become the generic brand for cellular in this country.
>
> (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 386)

In many respects, Vodacom succeeded in these ambitions. The company had forecast a subscriber base of 60,000 by June 1995; in reality, it achieved 252,000 subscribers by this date, far exceeding all predictions. Within its first year of launch, Vodacom was identified as the fastest growing network in the world (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 385). After five years in operation, Vodacom had reached a subscriber base of over one million, an impressive figure given that original projections envisioned a ceiling of 500 000 total users for the South African market, achieved over a number of years (*Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding*, 1998: 63). Writing at this time, Elizabeth Donaldson attributed Vodacom's greater market share to the Yebo Gogo campaign, "which epitomised its fiercely South African image." In a reference to the Yebo Gogo campaign, Donaldson observed, "Vodacom promised to connect everybody – from obnoxious Joburg Yuppies in BMW's to laid-back brothers out in the bundu" (1998: 47).

This first execution in the Yebo Gogo campaign – and the one that made the greatest impact on the South African public - 'Windmills', was flighted for the first time in the last week of October 1994. Its timing was auspicious: South Africa had spent six months under a black government, and the country had not fallen apart at the seams. It seemed possible that South Africans – particularly white South Africans – might be ready to laugh at themselves. Certainly, the makers of the advertisement took a risk in pitting a black hero against a white villain, a move that was quite radical in South African advertising of the time, particularly because it is difficult to read 'Windmills' – on the surface at least - as anything but a metaphor for the change in power relations between black and white South Africans in 1994.

South Africa's president was now, finally, a black man. After centuries of white rule and decades of apartheid, the country was governed, by and large, by black South Africans; their white compatriots, on the other hand, had seen their political power slip into what was widely perceived as terminal decline. Mirroring this state of affairs, white assumptions of superiority are quashed in this advertisement and white South Africans are invited to laugh at their own demotion.

Windmills - 1994

VISUAL	AUDIO
Wide-angle shot of a black man. Seated next to a farm gate and surrounded by wire toy windmills spinning in the breeze, he wears a white shirt, waistcoat, khaki pants, a medium-brimmed hat and glasses. On his lap is a book, and in the background is a battered old bakkie.	SFX: Bluesy American music
Cut to a low angled long-shot of a lonely Karoo tarred road, filmed at an angle so that the road tilts from right to left. Again we see the black man by the gate; this time the camera pans from left to right.	
Cut to mid-shot of the black man, who looks up from his book. From the slight grizzling in his beard and seriousness of his manner, he seems well past middle age.	
Cut to low-angle shot of a red car, which pulls up in close-up into the left of the screen. The driver's door opens and a leg – wearing jeans and silver-toed and healed cowboy boots - emerges.	SFX: Squealing brakes, crunching gravel.
From the point of view of Gogo, we see the rest of the man emerging from what is now clearly a 3 series BMW cabriolet. Balding and middle-aged, he is wearing designer sunglasses, a ponytail and a black leather jacket.	
The camera zooms in slightly as the man removes his sunglasses. His feet crunch on the gravel as he approaches Gogo.	SFX: Car door closing Music ends.
A young woman, dressed in a pink top, hotpants, leather jacket and high heels, appears and totters with her boyfriend towards the windmills. Looking to him for approval, she giggles. She squats to admire the squeaking windmills, gasping and giggling in vacuous pleasure. She reaches to touch the windmills and withdraws her hand; the paint is still wet.	Yuppie: Yebo Gogo Gogo: One hundred. Yuppie: One hundred bucks! You're ripping me off. I can get these anywhere, forget it.
Watching from the point of view of the black man, we see the Yuppie in mid-shot.	
Gogo, in mid-shot, returns his gaze, his expression neutral.	
The girlfriend giggles at the sight of the windmills.	
Gogo raises a hand, obscured by a windmill, while the Yuppie gestures.	
Cut to mid-shot of Gogo waving away flies. His expression is neutral.	
The Yuppie, smirking, begins to open the door. We see the rings on his fingers as he lifts the door handle. Suddenly his smile fades.	
He leans forward to look inside his car.	
Close up of car keys dangling in the ignition.	
Cut to mid-shot of Yuppie looking aghast.	SFX: Hands patting jacket
In response, Gogo, in mid-shot, smiles and waves	MVO: Even in an emergency…

a cellphone. Cut to mid-shot of Yuppie smiling uncertainly. Vodacom logo appears on screen Camera cuts to shot of a van next to the dilapidated bakkie. On the van is painted the legend: "Rusty Locke locksmith 082 419 5552". Cut to mid-shot of Gogo standing in the afternoon light counting a wad of banknotes. Cut to long-shot of BMW turning into the road and driving into the distance. The back seat is filled with windmills.	Gogo: (chuckling) Hello Vodacom! MVO ctd: …isn't it nice to know Vodacom has expanded its cellular network to cover major national roads. SFX: James Brown singing "I feel good" SFX: Gogo chuckling

Shifting the balance of power

The balance of power between the two characters in the advertisement is immediately established when we are shown the black character in the opening scene. Sitting on his chair reading a book, he looks comfortable and relaxed: this is his territory. His face is always shown. As Fiske points out, television realism uses mid-shots and close-ups in order to bring the viewers into "an intimate, comfortable relationship with the characters on the screen" (1987: 7). The relationship with this character is therefore coded as comfortable and non-threatening. In addition, the audience is further encouraged to identify with the black character - who, for the sake of convenience, I will refer to as 'Gogo' - through the use of music, which clearly correlates with his mood: it stops upon the arrival of the Yuppie, and resumes with "I feel good" once he has got the better of his adversary.

By contrast, the Yuppie is established as an invader through the use of tilted camera angles, sound effects (crunching gravel, squealing brakes) and through the way in which his body is broken up visually into discrete elements. The viewer's first glimpse of him consists of the lower part of his legs and feet in shots that draw strongly on cinematic conventions associated with Hollywood Westerns, where the hero and the adversary face off against one another in the dusty main street. At various other stages during the advertisement we see him from the back, as well as his hands: he is not constructed visually as "whole" in the way that Gogo is. This visual approach – in effect, a strategy of fragmentation - has the effect of depersonalising the Yuppie and communicating an atmosphere that hints at the possibility of menace. In this way, the viewer is encouraged to see the Yuppie as an adversary, the stereotypical 'bad guy' of countless Hollywood films. In contrast, the construction of Gogo – according to cinematic convention - as the hero is a strategy of unification, encouraging the viewer to side with this character.

The presence of the Girlfriend has an important function in offering more insight into the character of the Yuppie. In hotpants and leather jacket, with her vacuous giggle, she epitomises the "bimbo" stereotype. She, like the Yuppie, is an urban creature, and she seems thoroughly out of place on this lonely Karoo road. Especially little insight is offered into her character – like the Yuppie's red BMW and his ponytail, she functions as a prop to establish more clearly his identity as a shallow, arrogant materialist who fancies himself as a bit of a "stud". Her presence, along with the BMW, suggests that the Yuppie has the kind of disposable income to keep her as some kind of trophy girlfriend. In the company of the Girlfriend, the Yuppie is even less likeable than he would be if he had been shown alone. His refusal to pay R100 for one of Gogo's windmills seems unforgivably mean, given his obvious wealth. Therefore, the denouement, where the BMW is seen driving off with its back seat filled with windmills, is especially satisfying: a rich man has been hit where it hurts most, his wallet.

As has been noted, Vodacom's rival MTN was perceived as the "yuppie", elitist network. The use of the Yuppie in 'Windmills' campaign was therefore a subtle dig at the competition. (Comparative advertising is not allowed in South Africa, so more obvious comparisons were not possible.) Gogo "defeats" the Yuppie by compelling him to buy his windmills, and it is Vodacom and its superior coverage that gives him the advantage. In the advertisement, the balance of power between Gogo and the white man is in complete contrast to the way it would be in "real life", where a poor rural black South African would be likely to defer to a wealthy white man from the city. In this way, Vodacom presents itself as 'progressive', on the side of the underdog. The brand is, the narrative implies, a force for positive change in power relations between black and white, a tool of liberation and a force for justice. Thanks to Vodacom, Gogo the clever, plucky underdog is able to bring the arrogant rich man down to size.

But are they typical South Africans?

At the same time, however, the makers of the 'Windmills' are engaged in a subtle differentiation of the character of Gogo from other black South Africans. Gogo's construction by the codes of television realism conflict with South African stereotypes in a way that serves to portray him – perhaps unintentionally – as *not quite* authentically South African. Apart from the act of selling wire windmills at the roadside, none of the elements used to construct the character of Gogo are uniquely South African. The music that helps to establish the mood of the situation is not local in flavour: the harmonica melody and bass beat of this particular style are associated with the African-American musical tradition of the Blues. Later, when Gogo gets the better of the Yuppie, the music we hear is again African-American, this time

the Soul made famous by James Brown. In addition, the clothing this character wears – the porkpie hat, waistcoat and white shirt - are strongly associated with African-American stereotypes long established by Hollywood.

It is possible that these details were included to make Gogo seem a "cooler", more aspirational character, more the kind of man one might find in a movie set in Louisiana, for example. Both black and white South Africans, thanks to their exposure to American cultural forms, would have been familiar with this character type; nevertheless, all of these conventions serve to distance him from "typical" black South Africans. Because Gogo does not embody "typical" South African blackness, his triumph over the Yuppie cannot truly be taken to represent the metaphorical of triumph of all black South African men over all white South African men. By alluding to a foreign culture and society, the advertisers fail to make the kind of truly subversive statement that would have resulted from an engagement with distinctly South African modes of behaviour and cultural forms.

In the same way that analysis reveals Gogo to be anything but a 'typical' rural black South African man, the Yuppie is constructed, quite obviously, as an atypical white South African. What kind of whiteness *does* the Yuppie represent? The character has been described variously as "The Vodacom yuppie dripping in jewellery and mulish machismo" (Philp, 96), a "snooty Sandton yuppie", a "typical Sandton Yuppie" (*Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding*, 1998: 62), a "klutzy Cro-Magnon kugel" (Philp, 96), a "fat white slob" (Atkinson, 98), "the windbag with the cellphone" (Engelbrecht, 96) and - by the actor who portrays the character - "an Afrikaans version of a Jewish bagel" (Philp, 96).[83]

While no mention is made of his ethnic background in the advertisement itself, the Yuppie is coded in ways that would prompt most South Africans to classify him as Jewish, Italian, Portuguese or Greek, all of which constitute significant ethnic minorities in the white South African community. Furthermore, he drives a red BMW 3-series cabriolet, a vehicle associated with a lifestyle of materialistic excess and conspicuous consumption. He wears cowboy boots, a ponytail, designer sunglasses and flashy jewellery; he exposes his chest hair and refers to his girlfriend as "doll" (a term of endearment particularly associated with the

[83] A 'bagel', the male equivalent of the female 'kugel', is usually a Jewish man characterised by materialistic values and whiny, nasal intonation.

South African Jewish stereotype.) The Yuppie, it can safely be concluded, is not a man with good taste – certainly not in the snobbish Anglo-Saxon sense.[84]

It should be noted that many commentators, as suggested by the quotes cited above, also associated this character with Sandton, an affluent region north of Johannesburg. Sandton is associated above all with nouveau riche wealth, grasping materialism and hard-bitten business realities. The de facto business capital of South Africa after most major corporations fled north from the Johannesburg CBD during the 1990s, it is most famous for its large shopping mall, Sandton City, which teems with preening shopaholics. Sandton, the natural habitat of the Yuppie, can therefore hardly claim to be representative of South African attitudes or lifestyles. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, the Yuppie is a rich man who is reluctant to pay a fair price for Gogo's windmills – making him even less likeable to the average television viewer.

Significantly, then, the Yuppie represents a minority within the white community, rather than a typical South African Anglo-Saxon or Afrikaans character. Again, just as Gogo is not a typical or average black South African man, the Yuppie does not embody South African typicality, as the rugby- and braaivleis-loving 'oke' stereotype would have done.[85] For these reasons, the apparently risky step of representing the white character as contemptible and the black character as admirable is ameliorated. As it turns out, this advertisement is not about white South Africans being "defeated" by poor black South Africans; it is about one macho "jerk" getting what he deserves. (It is quite possible that there were some viewers who saw the decision to present a completely laughable white character as racist and offensive, but the popularity of the campaign suggests that they were in the minority.)

Having made the point that the depiction of Gogo undermines the potential of 'Windmills' for subversion, it is important to note that advertising as a genre of communication will always subordinate contextual surface to commercial demands. Though there are cases of advertising that are apparently social realist in style, capturing a moment and linking it to a product or service, advertising generally makes few gestures towards authenticity. There is a certain tension, therefore, in the Yebo Gogo campaign - and indeed many of the other advertisements I have analysed in this thesis. On the one hand, the advertisers endeavour to communicate a

[84] The Yuppie's lack of "good taste" is explored in a later advertisement set at an exclusive country club. In this instance the advertisers juxtapose him with stereotypes of "Englishness". This advertisement is analysed later on in this chapter.

[85] The rugby-loving *manne* stereotype is explored in a later advertisement in the campaign; it is analysed later on in this chapter.

message about something that is being "sold"; on the other, they simultaneously put forward an implicit understanding of the nature of South African identity.

The result is a constant conflict between the need to package a concise and memorable commercial message and the desire to represent an idea that must have at least a cursory relationship with the "truth" of what it is to be South African. I base the latter argument on the fact that if advertisers choose to make references to South African identity, they do so on the assumption that their audience will recognise the situation, identify with it in some way and therefore reward them with a greater affinity to the brand being advertised.

Yebo Gogo

The key moment in the advertisement occurs, of course, when the Yuppie refers to the black man as "gogo", or "granny". He thinks that he is humouring the other man by using a black language, when in fact he has just succeeded in insulting the man. This is because, in 'traditional' black culture is strongly patriarchal, terms of address are very important in establishing social hierarchies. In such a strongly patriarchal culture in which traditional male and female roles are well-defined, to refer to any adult man as "granny", a physically weak, old woman, is considered emasculating and therefore deeply insulting.

In this way, the advertisement pokes fun at whites who assume that, by attempting a few words of a black language, they are connecting with a black person. Talking about the decision to insert the phrase "Yebo gogo" into the dialogue, the chairman of the advertising agency responsible for the campaign, Gaby Bush, admitted:

> We could never have guessed the power of putting that phrase into the commercial. It was calculated to the extent that it was election time. The white character was the fall guy, trying to be cool and getting it wrong. The story in which a black man outsmarted a white man was just right for the new SA, though it might have caused offence for making the white man seem a fool or being demeaning and patronising to the black. But the joke came up almost as an afterthought.
>
> (1996: 150)

Here is the "cringeworthy" stereotype (Witthaus, 1995: 1): it makes people cringe because they recognise the embarrassing truth that these kinds of attitudes are more widespread than people might like to acknowledge: white South Africans weren't trying hard enough to understand their black compatriots. For his part, the Nigerian professor who portrayed Gogo felt that the Yuppie deserved credit for having made an effort: "although this guy is a braggart," he said, "he's making an attempt to understand an African language" (1996: 31).

The Yuppie's use of "Yebo Gogo" is a good example of the use of cultural intimacy or rueful self-recognition to confirm insider status. By having the Yuppie display such embarrassing lack of knowledge of his fellow citizen's language, both black and white South Africans are forced to recognise one another as members of what is broadly the same culture. Because they all understand what is going here, their membership of the imagined community that is South Africa is confirmed. Outsiders would be oblivious to the many subtleties of the situation: thus national identity becomes in part a function of the mutual acknowledgement of a shared history, and of the ways in which it shapes the particularities of modes of being.

However, the truth remains "harmless and amusing" (Witthaus, 1995: 1), because the Yuppie is sufficiently unlike most whites for them to remain comfortably distanced from him: "He represents the kind of person we all find embarrassing: therefore, we cannot really be like him" (Witthaus, 1995: 1). In other words, the Yuppie is a character we love to hate. Disliking him or dismissing him as a figure of fun requires no effort at all from the audience. In this way, the makers of the advertisement confront (white) audiences with a character that does not force any real introspection on their part, since he does not really resemble them in any meaningful way.

On the whole, the strategies of unification and fragmentation at work in 'Windmills' are designed to encourage audiences to identify with Gogo and distance themselves from the Yuppie. At the time of this advertisement, cellphones were still an expensive luxury and contracts were only within reach of individuals with good credit records. This implied a predominantly white target market. So these strategies are designed, more specifically, to persuade a white South African audience to identify with a black man, at the expense of a white character. In this the advertisers succeed admirably, subtly constructing Gogo using conventions associated with black Americans rather than black South Africans, and portraying the Yuppie as the kind of man who is all too easy to dislike. If the Yuppie and his girlfriend had been less outrageously stereotypical, more like ordinary middle class white South Africans, if Gogo had been a more typical (and therefore threatening) member of the black rural underclass, would Windmills have been as popular as it subsequently proved to be? I would argue that this would have been unlikely.

Mild subversion

In the light of such strategies of unification and fragmentation, it is hardly surprising that 'Windmills' dissimulates many social realities. In reality, it is extremely unlikely that a rural black man making a living out of selling toy windmills at the side of the road would be able to

afford a cellular phone and a Vodacom contract. The era of prepaid access, which would have made this scenario more likely, was still some way off. It is also interesting that the urban phenomenon of the cellular phone should be promoted in a rural setting (though this can of course be explained by Vodacom's key advantage over MTN being the greater coverage of the former in isolated areas outside urban areas).

In addition, an older rural black man would be unlikely to sell windmills, since this is an activity associated with younger men and children, as any motorist who has driven through the Eastern Cape town of Cradock will testify. It is also unlikely that a real-life "Gogo" would be anything but deferential to a rich white man. In this case the world that Vodacom constructed was one in which the downtrodden could indeed get the better of an arrogant, posturing individual like the Yuppie. In so doing it played out a fantasy with which many South Africans who felt oppressed could identify, but at the same time, this kind of divergence from lived reality eroded much of the subversive potential of a narrative pitting affluent urban white against poor rural black.

It is in later advertisements in the Yebo Gogo campaign that Gogo's true identity will gradually emerge. As we shall see, Gogo is anything but a country bumpkin, as the narrative in 'Windmills' implies. In fact, I will argue that Gogo is representative of the qualities of the emerging black elite: astute, adaptable, comfortable in different social situations and always more than happy to show up the failings of affluent whites. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued that in 'Windmills' Gogo is in fact masquerading as one of the rural poor. Gogo's cosmopolitan style of dress and leitmotif as well as his educated demeanour and dapper appearance in later advertisements in the campaign certainly conflict with his apparently rural situation in 'Windmills'.

At this point it is worth juxtaposing this observation with the South African political scientist Lawrence Schlemmer's contention that "successful blacks" would choose to identify themselves with the poor rather than find common interests with the white middle class. "They will realise full well that a large part of the justification for the policies which promote their interests lies in the enduring condition of the poor which get left behind. The emerging black middle class would be foolish to dispense with the 'identity politics' of claiming to be a part of, or spokesperson for, the disadvantaged majority" (1996: 24). In light of these comments, it is tempting to view the positioning of Gogo as a member of the rural underclass in 'Windmills' as an unconscious anticipation of precisely the situation that Schlemmer predicts.

To summarise then, referring to Barthes' understanding of myth as a form of second order signification, what 'Windmills' constitutes is a narrative ostensibly dealing with the conflict between an arrogant rich man who happens to be white, and a poor rural man who happens to be black. The parallels: white/black and rich/poor are quite explicit; and to these obvious dualities may be added contemptible/admirable. The rich man's character flaws – notably his arrogance - lead to his downfall and the poor man triumphs thanks to his cleverness. The myth in turn communicates, firstly, the shift in the relative power balance between black and white South Africans and, secondly, the notion that redemption from years of apartheid oppression is made possible by mechanisms associated with a capitalist economy. The benefits of capitalism are demonstrated in two ways: the black man achieves dignity and equality by forcing the rich white man to purchase his goods from him, and it is Vodacom and its services that offers the former (Gogo) the leverage with which to force the white man (the Yuppie) to accede to his demands.

Somewhat like a holographic image, which gives the illusion of three dimensionality and movement depending on the angle from which it is viewed, myth in 'Windmills' shifts according to the perspective one takes in assessing the assumptions – the falsely obvious, or the goes-without-saying described by Barthes in *Mythologies* (1972, 2000: 11) - that are contained within the narrative of 'Windmills'. The first and most obvious assumption (and certainly the assumption that would have been most obvious at the time that the advertisement was first broadcast) is that of the apparent achievement of greater equality between black and white South Africans, a change made possible by the advent of democracy in April 1994.

Another assumption, as I have noted, is the idea that capitalism offered the best means to achieve equality and dignity for all races – rather than the kind of equality enforced by the state in a socialist system. Thirdly, there is the myth that emerges with hindsight: the supposition that the emerging black capitalist class will begin to assert its desire for greater power and influence in relation to white capitalist power, and that it is by leveraging their membership of a group that goes under the rubric of 'previously disadvantaged' that it will be successful in accessing power and wealth. In this way, one apparently simple narrative is able to support more than one instance of second order signification, or myth.

Yebo Gogo and the New South Africa

As in Castrol 'Double', the narrative in 'Windmills' addresses one of the most awkward consequences of the transition to democracy, the devastating loss of power by white South Africans. In the context of the mythology of the New South Africa, however, 'Windmills'

offers an interesting case, because it in fact it does *not* endorse the central tenet of the New South Africa, the rainbow nation myth. Instead, the argument here refers to the triumph of the canny black businessman over his posturing, ignorant white counterpart: reconciliation is not the point. If 'Windmills' does make any claims about the New South Africa, it is that success in business is the best way to dignity as well as economic power. When Gogo triumphs at the end, it is not only because he has humiliated the Yuppie – he has forced him to buy every single one of his windmills in return for calling a locksmith on his cellphone.

In light of the claims that 'Windmills' makes on behalf of capitalism, there are also representations of consumption that deserve comment. Conspicuous consumption, as I have observed, is indeed mocked - but not consumption as such. The Yuppie, with his flashy BMW and gold chains, is deserving of contempt in 'Windmills' and other advertisements in the campaign because he does not know how to consume in the right way. His consumption patterns veer too far towards the ostentatious display of wealth (the gold, the expensive car) and the excessive stress on a performative, almost camp masculinity (indicated by such details as the chest hair, the stubble and the cowboy boots). The girlfriend's overemphasis of female characteristics in her sexy clothing and giggling naïveté also serve to underscore the Yuppie's exaggerated machismo.

'Windmills' and other advertisements of this time, such as Sales House '1994' and Castrol 'New South Africa' are worthy of comment because they are putting forward arguments for operating within a capitalist – or to use Barthes' term, bourgeois – paradigm at a moment in history when it was not clear whether the South African government would indeed embrace the free market. So the way in which capitalism is incorporated into texts that endorse the transition to democracy and the shift in power between black and white is of great importance. Hindsight brings to mind Mark Gevisser's assertion that the shift to capitalism represented the "quietest and most profound revolution of our time" (cited in Adam et al, 1997: 5), but in 1994 there was still a strong possibility that the ANC would remain true to its socialist roots: therefore, the stakes were high. 'Windmills' is not merely making a case for adjusting to new racial dynamics, but for an approach to the economy that remains traditionally capitalist, even if it is nonracial.

Engagement in business is offered as a means by which black South Africans can achieve equality with – even superiority to – their white compatriots and, more importantly, recover their dignity and express their humanity. It is as businesspeople, not as politicians, that white South Africans will be forced to recognise black South Africans as equals; in the wake of the rise of a black business elite and the patriotic bourgeoisie it can be argued that this is exactly

what happened. On the surface, then, the New South Africa is concerned with race relations – but, I would argue, on a deeper level, it is concerned with economic relations. After all, goes the argument, capitalism is colourblind.

For all these caveats, it must be acknowledged that 'Windmills' was ground-breaking (if not quite revolutionary in the strong sense of the word) for its time. While other advertisers had alluded to changing race relations, no one had addressed the change in power balance between black and white quite so openly, and in so populist a format. The Castle Lager campaigns, embracing the vision of the rainbow nation, had always depicted friendly, non-adversarial situations based on the notion of camaraderie between drinkers of a particular brand of beer. Vodacom, in contrast, looks to the reality of inequality and conflict that co-exists with the rainbow nation myth and uses the comic possibilities contained within this tension to generate a narrative that simultaneously questions and reconfirms prevailing notions of South African identity.

More interestingly, the campaign unconsciously evokes another emerging strand in the mythology of the post-apartheid South African nation. If, on a conscious level, the advertisers are addressing the need for the change that must surely accompany the transition to democracy, they are also (unconsciously) anticipating the occasionally acrimonious battles for supremacy between South Africa's white incumbent economic and cultural elite and their emerging black equivalents, many of them under the rubric of the African renaissance. Black economic empowerment, transformation, white liberal racism – all of these conflicts are anticipated in the complex dynamics of the narrative of 'Windmills'.

Cultural impact and popular appeal

'Windmills' cannot be understood without acknowledging its enormous popularity with television audiences - a fact which, given its apparently controversial nature, may seem surprising. An immediate hit with the South African public, 'Windmills' won the SABC channel TV1's annual One Award for the most popular advertisement in 1995. As the *First Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa* sums it up:

> No one could have ever anticipated the response [Vodacom's Yebo Gogo campaign] evoked when it appeared on national T.V. Maybe it was the way [the line] was delivered by the Yuppie. Maybe it was the crucial timing in South African political history. Whatever it was, Vodacom knew they were onto something big when they started getting feedback of 'Yebo GOGO' plays at schools, incentives at companies and 'Yebo GOGO' placards at sports meetings.
> Yebo GOGO has become far more than an advertising line. It has become part of the colloquial language of the nation, transcending all vernaculars. It helped take Vodacom into the hearts and homes of South Africans.

(1998: 62)

As it turned out, the Yebo Gogo campaign achieved all of its advertising objectives with impressive success. It achieved a verified noting of 48 percent as opposed to the 19 percent average for all television advertisements, and a liking of 7,8 in comparison to the 6,9 norm for all advertisements (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 388). The stars of the campaign, Omotoso and the actor Michael de Pinna, soon became celebrities. The advertisement "captured the imagination of South Africa" Financial Mail's Advertising Focus declared in 1996, when designating Vodacom as its advertiser of the year (1996: 18). The phrase "Yebo Gogo", it observed, had "acquired a life and a meaning of its own" (1996: 150). "Yebo Gogo" quickly entered every day speech in South Africa (*Advertising Focus*, 1996: 18) and over the years has even been altered and used to promote other activities not related to cellphones, such as the Johannesburg Zoo's annual "Yebo Gogga" insect festival. "Vodacom's Yebo Gogo advertising campaign cemented the slogan as part of our new cultural heritage for years to come" (Wolfaardt, 1997: 13)[86]. These examples all serve to demonstrate how "Yebo Gogo" had become a remarkably successful meme, replicating itself furiously through South African media and culture within a short space of time.

Searching for an explanation for the enormous popular success of 'Windmills', a journalist wrote: "It is easy to see [the advertisement's] appeal for a broad SA audience – it deals with cringeworthy stereotypes, but in a harmless and amusing way" (Witthaus, 1995: 9)[87]. Herein lies the crux of the matter: while 'Windmills' set new precedents in its portrayal of relations between black and white, my analysis suggests that it was too "harmless" to be truly radical. Both Gogo and the Yuppie are sufficiently distant from what could be defined as a "typical" black South African or a "typical" white South African to be construed as representative of their race group. Crucially, white South Africans were the group from whom the advertisement won greatest acclaim – mainly because, while it acknowledged the changing balance of power between black and white, it did so without pointing fingers at white South Africans as a group.

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[86] Market research, however, showed that while the advertisement was most popular with whites aged between 16 and 24, it did not feature on the lists of advertisements favoured by blacks in any age category. (Ad Focus, 1996: 110) Clearly the Yebo Gogo campaign appealed more to whites than it did to blacks.

[87] Witthaus observed that all good South African advertisements had certain qualities in common: "They are short and to the point; they are either funny or touching but never crass; they make good use of music and they respect the intelligence of the viewer". (1995: 9)

Omotoso felt that the reason why the advertisement was so successful was that South Africans

> are living in a country where people are looking for positive images of blackness. It is naïve, yes, but the point is that here is a situation where a black person does win. And even for people who don't know the meaning of Yebo Gogo, it's a nice-sounding sentence, and when they get to know the meaning it becomes even more interesting…because of the contradiction.
>
> (1996: 31)

Omotoso's comments are interesting, for according to this view, different elements within the advertisement appeal to different segments of the population. Presumably the people searching for positive images of blackness were blacks themselves, whereas the audience members who don't know the meaning of "Yebo Gogo" are most likely to be whites. "Yebo Gogo" sounds "nice" because it is easy on the ears of the white (and to a lesser extent, Indian and coloured) community, the majority of whom do not speak a black language. The irony of course is that in its original context, "Yebo Gogo" is rather insulting and insensitive to the feelings of black men in particular. In this way, it can be argued that the slogan perpetuates the insult though a kind of deliberate ignorance. However, the expression aroused relatively little criticism, becoming so ubiquitous that it lost most of its original meaning. [88]

The campaign continues

'Windmills' stands on its own as an exemplary narrative of the changes taking place in the New South Africa. At the same time, it was also the first in a long-running series of advertisements that over time have engaged with the nation-building project, albeit it in a way that is quite different from the advertising of Castle Lager or even Castrol. The Yebo Gogo campaign is noteworthy for the way in which it advances an argument for a national sense of self through the use of comedy with broad mass appeal. Unlike the Castrol advertisements analysed in chapter three, the Yebo Gogo campaign as a whole is not characterised by subtle political commentary.

It should be noted that there are important differences between 'Windmills' and the campaign it inspired. The characters in 'Windmills' may be stereotypical to an extent, but they are ultimately rooted in reality. In the rest of the campaign, however, the relationship between Gogo and the Yuppie becomes more stylised and formulaic. As in many theatrical forms, comedy relies on specific types or stock characters for effect. These stock characters – of

[88] In later campaigns aimed at the younger market, the slogan was altered to become "Yebo Yes?", a rendition of a greeting used when answering a cellphone and representative of South Africa's multilingual nature. It also offered a means for the brand to move away from the problems associated with "Yebo Gogo", which was both specific to Omotoso's character and not particularly relevant for a younger market.

which Gogo and the Yuppie are both examples – have been defined in various ways in classical literature in the theory of comedy.

Through the juxtaposition of Gogo, who functions as the hero (since the audience takes his side), and his nemesis, the Yuppie, who functions as the "fall-guy", what emerges during the course of the Yebo Gogo campaign is a picaresque narrative in which the characters are subjected to various comic episodes that all reveal some insight into the nature of society. "Bee Sting", the next advertisement in the series, takes place in a setting similar to that of the 'Windmills'. The Yuppie is stung by a bee while drinking a soft drink at a rest stop in the middle of the Karoo. He mistakenly visits a senile veterinarian for treatment, and is rescued by an emergency service helicopter called up by Gogo on his Vodacom phone. This advertisement was followed by a seaside situation where the Yuppie's penchant for leopard-print underwear is first revealed. Wearing a vulgar leopard-print swimming costume, he rushes out of the sea upon hearing a cellphone ring, only to discover that he has in fact been hearing the cellphone belonging to Gogo, who happens to be seated on the deckchair alongside the Yuppie's towel.

The next three advertisements in the campaign merit more detailed analysis. All three explore what I propose to categorise as various ethnic stereotypes: exaggerated, comical black "savages" in 'Bride to Be', Afrikaans rugby fans in 'Naartjie' and English snobs in 'Swing'. As a group, these advertisements may be viewed as a series exploring a range of identities within post-apartheid South Africa, and an argument for the inclusion of different cultures within a national sense of self. All three make use of broad slapstick comedy and in tone are much further removed from "reality" than is the case in 'Windmills'. 'Bride to Be' was the first of the three to appear, and is concerned with selling the personal security benefits of being a Vodacom customer.

Bride to Be – 1997

VISUAL	AUDIO
The action opens on a wide angle shot, from a low angle, of the Yuppie, whose face is visible above a large black pot over a fire. The camera cuts to a high angle shot of the Yuppie, revealing that he is in some kind of cannibal village. He is tied to a stake while the cannibals, who wear grass skirts and carry spears, dance in a circle around him. He is shirtless and wears a pith helmet and khaki shorts with khaki socks and thick boots. Cut to a close-up of the Yuppie. Spears point at his throat. He looks tense. Dissolve to a close-up shot of hands gesturing at his face.	SFX: drumbeats, shouting

Dissolve to close-up of wild-eyed, cannibal's face, covered with war paint. His mouth is wide open as he yells. Cut to mid-shot of the Yuppie looking terrified as a cannibal tugs down his shorts. As the shorts fall to the ground, the Yuppie's leopard-print Y-fronts are revealed. Cut to high-angle shot of the cannibals bowing down to the Yuppie.	
Cut to a mid-shot of the Yuppie. Behind him, the enormously fat cannibal chief emerges from his hut. The camera cuts to the chief's point of view. The Yuppie, in long shot, looks up at him. The tribe, in the background, is still bowing to the Yuppie. Cut to close-up of chief smiling. Dissolve to close-up of the Yuppie looking amazed. Cut to mid-shot of the chief gesturing at the Yuppie's underwear as the camera pans down his body to reveal his leopard skin "loincloth". The chief wiggles his hips. Cut to a close-up of the Yuppie looking confused. The camera pans down his torso to the leopardskin print Y-fronts. Cut to close-up of the cannibal chief smiling and clapping.	SFX: Gasps of amazement Chief: (Speaking in cannibal language): What's going on? Chief: (We have the same clothing)
Night scene. High-angle shot of the same village. Cannibals dance in the firelight. Mid-shot of beautiful, sexy women in grass skirts dancing. Dissolve to a mid-shot of the Yuppie, holding a gourd in his hands and smiling in appreciation. Cut to close-up of beautiful, smiling woman. Long-shot of Yuppie reclining at the feet of the chief as women dance in front of them. Cut to a close-up of hips swinging rapidly in a grass skirt. Cut to close-up of chief laughing. Close-up of Yuppie winking at the chief. Cut to long shot of Gogo peering through the bushes, watching the scene. He shakes his head as the women dance past.	SFX: party music (saxophone, piano) SFX: Music stops Chief: Unintelligible shouting
Long shot of Yuppie and the chief, who stands up and raises his arms. The chief gestures to the Yuppie and towards his hut. The Yuppie looks happy, gets up and does a little disco dance. Dissolve to a close-up of the "bride" emerging from the hut. She is wearing a white dress and veil. As she lifts her head we see that she is fat and missing a tooth. Her hair is braided with small bones. Cut to close-up of the Yuppie. He looks appalled. Mid-shot of bride smiling lasciviously. She wiggles her hips. Cut to mid-shot of Gogo dialling his cellphone. Cut to mid-shot of cannibal chief holding the Yuppie with one hand and the bride with the other. The Yuppie tries to get away but the chief pulls him toward the bride. Cut to mid-shot of the bride lifting the Yuppie into her arms. He looks terrified.	SFX: Music stops. SFX: Crickets.

Cut to mid-shot of Gogo shaking his head, laughing and pressing a button on his phone. Cut to close-up of phone screen, which reads: Emergency call cancelled.	SFX: Makin' Whoopee begins
Cut to a long shot of the bride carrying a gesticulating Yuppie to the hut, which is decorated with Christmas lights in the shape of a heart. Cut to mid-shot of Gogo laughing and shaking his head. He puts the cellphone in the breast pocket of his khaki waistcoat.	Voice over: No matter where you are, or what you're doing…
Cut to a long shot of the hut shaking and the Christmas lights flashing.	Voice over ctd: …Vodacom will make sure you're always in touch.
The Vodacom logo appears against a jungle background together with the words: Vodacom – South Africa's leading cellular network.	
	Gogo (V/O): Yebo Gogo!

Camp cannibals and a klutzy colonial

The style of 'Bride to Be' is similar to 'Windmills' in that it employs a series of rapid edits with little dialogue, relying on the soundtrack to convey mood, while an authoritative white male voice supplies an explanation of the message behind the narrative. However, it takes place in a generalised fantasy environment rather than one that is recognisably South African. The situation is inspired by stereotypical images of African cannibals most familiar from the swashbuckling imperial novels of Rider Haggard; countless cartoons have featured the image of the pith helmet-sporting explorer about to be boiled alive by his savage captors. In its use of ridiculous exaggeration, 'Bride to Be' is firmly ensconced in the world of comedy, and is clearly not intended to be interpreted in a literal, serious manner.

The brief opening shot makes it quite clear that the style of this advertisement is one that celebrates camp, in the sense that it makes self-conscious use of exaggeration for humorous effect. Just as the situation depicted is unrealistic, so the filmic conventions used are associated with the genre of Hollywood adventure movies rather than any variety of social realism. For example, the Yuppie is shot from a low angle so that it appears as if he is imprisoned inside a giant pot standing over a burning fire. In fact, in the next shot it is revealed that the pot is actually rather small, and the Yuppie is in no danger of being boiled alive. Such playful use of scale in relation to the camera emphasises the non-realistic nature of the mise-en-scene and draws the viewer's attention to the way in which perception may be manipulated: the camera can indeed lie.

The cannibals, for their part, are the typical wild-eyed savages of stereotype. Echoing his captors, the Yuppie is also shirtless (no explanation is offered for why this should be, but it gives the opportunity for the camera to dwell on his luxuriant chest hair); the rest of his outfit consists of the stereotypical colonial explorer's costume of pith helmet, khaki shorts and khaki socks and boots. Much mirth is caused when the Yuppie's shorts are pulled down and his leopard-print underpants are revealed. Ironically, they are similar to the loincloth of the cannibal chief; the supposedly sophisticated urban denizen has similar tastes to a comic book savage. The leopard-print is presumably a sign of superiority, as the cannibals promptly bow down before the Yuppie in yet another clue to their "primitiveness". As always, the Yuppie is portrayed as the idiot who is oblivious to his own silliness. This lack of self-awareness sets up dramatic irony in which the viewer is aware that ill fortune is sure to befall the character, but the Yuppie himself is happily clueless.

For example, just as the Yuppie has relaxed in the knowledge that his taste in Y-fronts has inadvertently saved his skin, he faces a new danger: the prospect of sex with his gargantuan new 'wife'. The penultimate shot, of the native hut decorated with flashing lights in the shape of a heart, is – like the opening scene – characterised by exaggeration and absurdity of the type associated with the comic book genre. The advertisement ends on a shot of the Vodacom logo against a jungle background with the voice of Gogo uttering the by now much-loved words "Yebo Gogo!" Gogo has by now taken possession of this phrase for his own use, and now uses it against the Yuppie. His revenge is complete.

That it is Gogo who must rescue the Yuppie from danger is a new development in the series: previously, the Yuppie was faced with inconvenience rather than physical danger. Both are threatened by the cannibals – the Yuppie quite literally, Gogo implicitly (since he chooses to hide from them in the bushes). In this way, the advertisers construct the former adversaries as allies of a sort. However, lest the viewer be fooled into thinking that there has been some kind of détente between the two characters, the final shot makes clear Gogo's cancellation of the emergency call.

So it is that the Yuppie is left to the mercies of his enormously fat cannibal bride, a development which the audience finds funny because (we assume) the worst possible fate awaiting him is nothing more than exhaustion from excessive sexual activity. As Yuppie's taste in women runs to the svelte, sexy 'bimbo' stereotype, exemplified by the Girlfriend who appeared in 'Windmills', the viewers know that this encounter must be particularly distressing for him. The clues offered by the music and the ridiculous heart-shaped lighting over the hut

indicate that the audience is invited to enjoy the Yuppie's misfortune rather than feel any kind of sympathy for him.

How not to be politically correct

Overall, the tone of 'Bride to Be' is light-hearted – nobody gets hurt, and the Yuppie merely gets what he deserves. Anomalies such as the cellphone, the Western party music, and heart-shaped party lights are included in the mise-en-scene, further emphasising the non-realistic nature of the situation. These are all clues to the comic nature of the narrative, and serve to remind viewers – if they needed reminding - that they are not meant to interpret this advertisement as a literal evocation of a time and place somewhere in the world. That it is not intended to be taken seriously is an important point because a 'serious' analysis - taking as its point of departure the work of Fairclough and Thompson used in the chapter analysing the campaigns of Castle Lager – must acknowledge that in this instance the black and female characters (with the exception of Gogo) are portrayed in an unflattering light evocative of the racist attitudes associated with imperialism and colonialism.

Indeed, 'Bride to Be' offers an interesting challenge to the analyst of advertising texts as a vehicle for the representation of political and social change in the context of the nation-building project – because, at face value, 'Bride to Be' is a racist and sexist text. The cannibals, for example, are stereotypically violent and superstitious, devoid of the capacity for reasoning, while the women are portrayed as either sexually available or possessing voracious sexual appetites. A white male character is terrified when faced with the prospect of coerced sex with an obese black woman, while the chief is apparently a primitive despot.

'Bride to Be' is therefore, on the surface at least, profoundly politically incorrect. However, the fact that it is so obviously comic in tone makes any analysis that does not take this into consideration inappropriate. It is, of course, quite possible to choose to deliberately ignore the comic intent of the text, or stated in another way, to refuse to be drawn into the comic logic that underpins the narrative. But this kind of analysis would at best choose to disregard the intention of the creators of the text embodied so clearly in its semiotics. Intention is a significant factor, because Vodacom would never *intentionally* produce an obviously racist campaign in South Africa in 1997. To do so would have amounted to an act of commercial and political suicide. It is the intent – which, despite the apparent political incorrectness of text, becomes explicit upon more searching analysis - of the producers of this campaign (as in the case of all authors), then, that ultimately determines the difference between a literally racist text and one that mocks the stereotypes of colonialism and imperialism.

On the surface, as a 'serious' analysis of 'Bride to Be' would reveal, the advertisement offers the unedifying spectacle of racial stereotype being used for commercial gain. At the level of second order signification, however, 'Bride to Be' uses the ridiculousness of the stereotype to mock the absurd lack of self-awareness of the Yuppie. On the surface, the laughter is directed at the cannibals, who embody the stereotype; below the surface, the comedy is directed at the silliness of the stereotype itself. Barthes himself notes that myth is commonly associated with what he describes as "poor, incomplete" images already divested of much of their meaning, such as caricatures, pastiche or symbols (1972, 2000: 127), and there is certainly a long history of myths associated with caricatures of cannibals and foolishly intrepid, pith-helmeted explorers. I would argue, however, that the myths associated with the cannibal stereotype were not particularly potent in South Africa in 1997. The cannibals appear naively cartoonish, reminiscent of a bygone era when cannibals were no doubt a more genuine source of fear for nervous (white) audience members: the myth of the savage African cannibal in 'Bride to Be' is a faded facsimile of the earlier versions made familiar by the work of Rider Haggard and other authors associated with the halcyon days of the British Imperial project.

Given the presence of such myths, there would appear to be more than one way in which to interpret this advertisement. Barthes divides the potential approaches to myth into three categories, namely producers of myth, mythologists and readers of myth (1972, 2000: 128). A journalist, for example, may seek an example for a concept and become a producer of myth (1972, 2000: 128). The producers of myth in the case of advertising are the various individuals and systems involved in the production of advertising campaigns (as outlined in chapter four), including those analysed in this thesis. In the case of 'Bride to Be', the creatives who conceptualised the script sought out examples of situations where the Yuppie would find himself in danger, and elected to have the character interact with cannibals. In the course of the production of the advertisement, the director, casting agent, costume designer, editor and the actors themselves would all contribute to fleshing out the myth.

In the second instance, one sees the distortion of myth and becomes a mythologist (1972, 2000: 128). The mythologist – quite likely an academic, perhaps drafting a paper on the use of racial and gender stereotyping in advertising - would understand how the cannibals may be viewed as symbols of African backwardness against which to champion the cause of South African (capitalist, patriarchal) technological prowess. Barthes (who defines himself as a mythologist) dwells on the melancholy lot of the mythologist in the final section of *Mythologies*. He paints the picture of the mythologist as an essentially lonely figure, forever seeking the ulterior motives of what is apparently innocent. Consequently, the mythologist is isolated from the myth-consumers; if the myth penetrates the whole of society, then the

mythologist becomes estranged from the world in which he lives, even, ultimately, the history in the name of which he conducts the entire exercise in the first place. "His connection with the world is of the order of sarcasm," Barthes concludes (1972, 2000: 157).

Finally, the reader of myth focuses on the material in a way that Barthes describes as dynamic, consuming the myth "according to the very ends built into its structure: the reader lives the myth as a story that is at once true and unreal" (1972, 2000: 128). Citing the example of the saluting black French soldier, Barthes argues that the latter is "no longer an example of a symbol, still less an alibi; he is the very *presence* of French imperiality" (1972, 2000: 128). The reader of myth, in the case of 'Bride to Be' – and indeed, in the case of all of the campaigns analysed in this thesis – would absorb the entire production as the producers intended. The reader of myth laughs at all the jokes, enjoys the silliness of the Yuppie, absorbs the message about the safety aspects of having a cellphone linked to the Vodacom network and gives the advertisement no further conscious thought. Unless a particular viewer objects to the message and the way in which it is communicated (and in so doing, becoming an accidental mythologist), the average viewer will almost certainly be a reader of myth – the end consumer for whom the myth is produced in the first place.

In light of my position both as a mythologist and, simultaneously, as a reader of myth, where - given the use of racist stereotype within a genre that emphasizes the ridiculous and the arbitrary - can the concept of the New South Africa be located? How can a text that is, on the surface, so profoundly politically incorrect (according to the interpretation of the mythologist), possibly contribute to the nation-building project? It is important to note that the communication of services that had become necessary owing to the rise of crime offered something of a conundrum to big national brands like Vodacom, because crime was one of the most contentious and vexatious side effects of the transition to democracy.

If Vodacom were to communicate the benefits of their emergency service in the face of danger, it would have to do so in an endearing, amusing way that made its point without generating unease. This is why the advertisement demonstrates a comic situation in which the Yuppie is in danger and it is up to Gogo – with the help of Vodacom - to rescue him. In a story where the Yuppie faces the absurd prospect of being eaten or sexually ravished by cannibals, Vodacom provides a benevolent and reassuring presence; a cellphone on the Vodacom network therefore becomes a metonym for security and safety. But because the situation is so exaggerated – no one is actually afraid of being held hostage by cannibals in the jungle – the potential anxiety provoked by such a message is avoided. Notably, the situation resolves the risk of death into another kind of physical threat, one that because it is

sexual in nature is rendered as amusing. In this way, the very real dangers of living in South Africa are transmuted into a more entertaining and less unnerving form.[89]

Why the dangers of life in South Africa should be represented by black cannibals raises the question of whether the advertisers are deliberately evoking the racial overtones associated with the Dark Continent of colonial legend and modern day South Africa, or whether the choice was purely opportunistic – cannibalism being so extreme that the situation could not possibly be taken seriously. However, the fact that all of the cannibals are black (while in later episodes in the campaign, there is more evidence of multiracial casts), and, for various reasons, most violent crime in South Africa is committed by black men, suggests that the choice was ultimately a little too close to reality for comfort.

At the same time, the advertisers are careful to draw a distinction between the savage, dangerous cannibals and ordinary, cellphone-using citizens. Thus the presence of Gogo, who embodies the brand values of Vodacom, ensures that the company cannot be seen to be endorsing racial divides. In fact, the contrast between Gogo and the Yuppie and the cannibals relates to the larger question of national identity. Gogo is as much an alien in the world of the cannibals as is his traditional adversary yet, unlike the ridiculous Yuppie, Gogo embodies positive qualities associated with the New South Africa – intelligence, presence of mind, a sense of humour, and an affinity with technology. The viewer takes note of the cannibals and contrasts them with these qualities displayed by Gogo and the myth is able to do its work of perpetuating the notion of an ideal towards which South Africans of all races should work.

So it is that while the cannibals do represent, on some level, the criminal forces threatening ordinary South Africans, they are also metaphorical representations of 'backwardness'. It should be remembered that the enormous and unexpected popularity of cellphones was a source of a certain degree of national pride: if cellphones had become part of South Africa's collective national identity, they were emblematic of the ability of the nation to master and exploit the best that modern technology had to offer. We, as part of the much-maligned African continent (which is represented in 'Bride to Be' in the form of the stereotypes with which Africa has all too often been saddled), are not as 'backward' as the rest of the world makes us out to be; we can take something like the cellphone and make it our own. In this way, the comedy of 'Bride to Be' functions on several levels: the situation offers an

[89] Rather bizarrely, one academic saw this advertisement as a positive demonstration of cultural cohesion: "Vodacom's representation of a Sandton yuppie trapped in the tribal lore of an arranged marriage reflects the integration of once separated cultural activities in an entertaining and humorous way" (Wolfaardt, 1997: 13).

opportunity to mock the Yuppie, celebrate the New South Africa's embrace of modernity and deride the assumptions and stereotypes associated with Africa which the popularity of cellphones and cellular technology rendered irrelevant.

Afrikaner oafs and English snobs

The next two instalments in the campaign, 'Naartjie' and 'Swing', were launched on the same day in March 1998, with the aim of appealing to different elements of Vodacom's target market. 'Naartjie' was targeted at ordinary white South Africans, while 'Swing' was aimed at the corporate market; as in the case of 'Bride to Be', the former communicated the benefits of Vodacom's emergency services whilst the latter focused on the benefits of voicemail (*Apex Awards*, 2001: 389). In contrast to the cartoonish tone of 'Bride to Be', both of these advertisements take place within a recognisably South African setting; both 'Naartjie' and 'Swing' address ways in which cultural forms associated with the old South Africa might be rehabilitated in the new.

'Naartjie', in examining and thereby endorsing rugby as a nexus of cultural rituals appropriate to the New South Africa, takes on what is – given the sport's history – a challenging task. Rugby enjoys special significance in South African culture and, thanks to a history deeply entwined with imperialism, colonialism and apartheid, the game is saturated with political and cultural meaning. After rugby's introduction to South African by the British in the nineteenth century, the sport rapidly became an emblem of cultural and racial superiority and - ironically in view of its British public school origins - became strongly linked to Afrikaner identity. Because the Afrikaners were arguably better at playing the game than the English, rugby became the anti-imperialist weapon *par excellence*, and excellence at rugby became the litmus test of Afrikaner manhood.

Such was the centrality of rugby to Afrikaner nationalist culture that devotion to the game was frequently likened to religious fervour. In 1976, a sporting official wrote that "rugby is the Afrikaner's second religion" (in Nauright, 1997: 148), a form of worship or *volksgodsdiens* (du Preez, 2002: 18). Remembering his childhood, the journalist and official voice of the left leaning Afrikaner, Max du Preez, recalled a time when rugby was more important to him than either the church, school or braaivleis, and how going to a Test match was "a sacred act that made you a better person" (2003: 20).

Similarly, another prominent Afrikaner journalist, Hans Pienaar, has compared rugby to religion; neither, he notes, is possible without sin, and the outcome of a match depends to a considerable extent on which infringements the referee chooses to overlook. Indeed, the rules of the game of rugby became a corollary to the pillars of Afrikaner ideology. "On Saturdays the referee told them which interpretation held sway on the rugby field; *dominees* told them on Sundays which interpretation of the Bible to believe; on Mondays their bosses brought them the latest interpretations of the secret Broederbond[90] masterplan" (Pienaar, 1996: 10).

Such was the political significance of rugby that the decision by Prime Minister John Vorster to allow Maori players to tour South Africa in 1971 helped precipitate the formation of the far-right *Herstigte Nasionale Party*, while the opening up of the Craven Week schools rugby tournament to all races in the early 1980s lent further impetus to the formation of the Conservative Party (du Preez, 2002: 18). It was also in the sporting arena that white South Africans were most keenly aware of the pariah status of their country - though the strength of the ties between South Africa and its traditional rugby rivals ensured that rugby was the sport least affected by boycotts (Nauright, 1997). During the apartheid years, sport was yet another means of further separating black from white: blacks played soccer, while whites played rugby (significantly, neither activity involved women). As a result, it is rugby of all sports, argues Nauright, "that did the most to divide South Africans in the long-term" (1997: 158).

In spite of this problematic 'racial' history, Vodacom recasts rugby in 'Naartjie'[91] as a sport representative of all South Africans, while acknowledging its central role in Afrikaner culture. Here modes of behaviour once associated with apartheid are rehabilitated as comically and typically representative of the national character. Rugby was admitted to the New South Africa with the patriotic success of the 1995 World Cup, and its appearance in this commercial confirms its status as a genuinely New South African 'cultural' activity.

Naartjie – 1998

VISUAL	AUDIO
Mid-shot of heads bobbing in a crowd of people. One of the people is recognisable as the girlfriend from Windmills. On another of the heads we can see bull's horns attached to a helmet. Cut to mid-shot of entrance to stadium. The hat with bull's	SFX: Middle of the road rock music

[90] The Broederbond was a secret society (perhaps analogous to the Masons, though without the predilection of the latter for arcane ritual), membership of which was reserved exclusively for Afrikaner men. The Broederbond infiltrated all sectors of South African society, including business and politics, and was widely – and not inaccurately - regarded as the real power behind the apartheid regime.

[91] 'Naartjie' is the South African term for a tangerine.

horns appears in the entrance. Close-up of middle aged white man cutting biltong with a knife. Long-shot of the Yuppie and his girlfriend above the stairs at the entrance to the stadium, surrounded by fans who are already seated. The Yuppie is carrying a large cooler box. Cut to mid-shot of the Yuppie and his girlfriend smiling. The Yuppie is wearing a great deal of gold jewellery.	
Cut to close-up of a white man looking up admiringly at the Girlfriend as she moves past him. He whistles. Wide-angle shot of rugby players on the field, in a scrum. One exceptionally fat player is bending over with his back to the camera, bum crack visible above his shorts. Cut to close-up of a knife cutting biltong. Mid-shot of Girlfriend looking quizzically at the biltong, which is being cut by the Yuppie. He puts the biltong in his mouth. In the background, a black rugby fan is visible. Cut to long shot of rugby players stumbling across the field. Close-up of old white man shouting. Close-up of Yuppie yelling.	
Cut to mid-shot of fans jumping up. The girlfriend looks up quizzically at the Yuppie. She gets up after she realises that this is how people behave at rugby matches. Low angle shot of player kicking the ball. Close-up of girlfriend smiling. Mid-shot of player catching the ball. Wide angle shot of tackle forcing the player to the ground. Cut to close-up of the referee blowing the whistle. Close-up of coloured rugby fan shouting. Wide angle shot of multiracial crowd. Cut to close-up of girlfriend looking pleased with herself. She looks down, fiddles in what we presume is the cooler box, comes up with a naartjie, and throws it. Cut to mid-shot of referee blowing the whistle. Close-up of the naartjie hitting the fat rugby player in the face. Close up of girlfriend cheering.	Old white man: Vat hom flaffie! SFX: Booing.
Cut to mid-shot of crowd looking worried. The girlfriend looks uncertain. She looks to the Yuppie for approval. He lowers his binoculars. Cut to wide-angle shot of the crowd pointing to the left of the screen. Cut to low-angle shot of large video screen, evidently sponsored by Vodacom. The shot is played in reverse, showing the naartjie flying in slow motion from the face of the rugby player to the hand of the girlfriend. Cut to long shot of the crowd turning to look at the girlfriend seated with the Yuppie. Cut to close-up of the rugby player bellowing in fury. Wide angle shot of crowd in stadium scattering, leaving the Yuppie and his girlfriend sitting alone. Cut to long shot of Girlfriend smiling and the Yuppie looking nervous as they sit. A bag of naartjies is visible on the cooler box. The Yuppie shifts away from the Girlfriend.	SFX: Shouting stops.

Cut to close-up of Gogo typing a number into his cellphone. Cut to long-shot of Gogo in the stands, surrounded by spectators who are all dialling their phones, too. Screen fades to black and the Vodacom logo appears. Cut to high angle shot of two medics rushing across the field with a stretcher.	Voice over: For any emergency… SFX: Music (Rescue Me) Voice over ctd: …call Vodacom 112 and 114. South Africa's leading cellular network.

'Cultural weapons'

Unlike 'Bride to Be', 'Naartjie' takes place in what is represented as contemporary South Africa. The makers of the advertisement signal the more realist style of 'Naartjie' in several ways. In the first instance, the setting - a rugby match - is at the very least an approximation of a situation one might reasonably expect to encounter in South Africa. Use is made of multiple edits to create vignettes of the activities surrounding a rugby match, building up a strong sense of the lively culture associated with the game. For the most part the characters behave in ways congruent with what would be accepted as the broad spectrum of "typical" South African behaviour. Although these characters are of course more accurately described as caricatures (as is the case with all of the characters in the Yebo Gogo campaign), they are of a less extreme variety than the ridiculous cannibals that appeared in 'Bride to Be'. Finally, the music that accompanies much of the action is appropriate rather than deliberately incongruous, as was the case with the use of modern party music in a jungle setting in 'Bride to Be'.

It should be noted that 'Naartjie' differs from both 'Windmills' and 'Bride to Be' in its use of classic cinematic realist techniques intended to give the viewer the impression of full access to the action, without any attention being brought to the presence of the camera. Thus in this case there is little use of the kind of low angles or fragmentary filmic conventions seen in the earlier advertisements. This lack of manipulation of the camera can perhaps be explained by the fact that by 1997, there was less need for the advertisers to set up visual cues for the audience because a relationship with Gogo and the Yuppie has been established. By this time, viewers had been conditioned through repeated exposure to the conventions of the Yebo Gogo campaign to enjoy the Yuppie's misfortune while anticipating the intervention of Gogo, the comic hero. The establishment of the presence of the Yuppie in the opening scene is clue enough to the correct response to the characters and interpretation of the advertising message, since a pattern has already been established.

The game of rugby itself - as depicted in 'Naartjie' - involves scrumming between large, aggressive men under the ostensible discipline of a referee, while around it certain rituals are enacted in the watching crowds. These include the consumption of naartjies and biltong, ogling of women and the yelling of abuse and encouragement at both the players and the referee. In this way, the atmosphere of a rugby match is depicted as redolent of testosterone, a contained space where South African men can express their aggression without fear of rebuke. Thus the stadium represents a safe space, where behaviour considered inappropriate in the world outside is permissible inside. Therefore, the atmosphere, while marked by displays of aggressive male posturing, is ultimately amicable.

This mood of camaraderie is further underscored by the upbeat soundtrack, which eventually mutates into the chorus of the famous track "Rescue Me" as the Yuppie falls victim to the rugby player. As in previous Vodacom advertisements, the message – in this instance, that Vodacom offers two emergency numbers – is conveyed by the authoritative white male voice over. In an amused tone of voice, he gives the audience Vodacom's emergency number, making the point of the narrative clear, to demonstrate the need for an emergency service, while, at the same time, reminding the viewer not to take the violence depicted in the commercial too seriously.

Rugby and the New South Africa

The modes of behaviour of the spectators and players are incorporated into the New South Africa as examples of a specifically South African kind of culture – one that should be celebrated rather than censured. Indeed, such a notion of national identity had long since become a cliché, one that had (and has) survived from the apartheid era. To cite the comment quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "There are some things that all South Africans hold dear. Braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies and cellphones – and not necessarily in that order. It's our collective national identity." (Donaldson, 1998: 44). Here, in a variation of the oft-quoted advertising slogan, rugby is confirmed as a core marker of South African identity.

Though the crowd depicted in the stands is multiracial, there is little doubt that the focus of the narrative is the type of behaviour typically associated with rugby (and therefore, in light of the history of the game outlined earlier, Afrikaner men in particular). Viewed from the point of view of Herzfeld's theory of cultural intimacy, it can be seen how depiction of these embarrassingly rowdy and sexist aspects of Afrikaner culture (which is recast as South African culture) can conversely reinforce group identity, confirming who is an outsider and

who is not. (Even the title of the advertisement suggests the use of cultural intimacy as a strategy, since naartjies are known as tangerines in the rest of the English-speaking world.)

By depicting this type of behaviour, even if it is embarrassing, on television, and exposing it to a large audience of South Africans, the advertisers draw attention to it, and thus make a case for including it in a broad definition of what constitutes South African identity. The more particular types of South Africans are shown to the nation at large, the more their bona fides are underscored; what begins ostensibly as a process of mirroring society begins to shift society's perceptions of itself – for the mirror reflects certain aspects of the nation and not others. It is not wholly unreasonable to suggest that publicity has been used as vigorously to market the status of certain groups and cultural rituals as representative of an inevitably hazy concept of authentic South African identity as it has canvassed on behalf of certain consumer brands.

In this way, cultural identities that held sway during the apartheid era continue to be held up as emblematic of national culture as a whole, even as the class of people who claimed membership of this particular group lost their hold on political power. Indeed, in a supreme twist of irony, many black opinion-leaders suggested throughout the 1990s that blatant Afrikaner racism was preferable to what they saw as the hypocrisy and dishonesty of English-speaking liberals – the cultural group examined in 'Golf'. 'Naartjie' and 'Golf', then, should be viewed in tandem, as an exploration of the two dominant strands in white South African culture, one Afrikaner, one Anglophile. Through the Vodacom campaign, both of these subcultures are included in the national culture of post-apartheid South Africa. The choice of situations centred on rugby and golf were of course influenced by the fact that Vodacom is a prominent sponsor of both these sports, and needed to justify its involvement.

Golf in South Africa

Golf, like rugby, has a relatively long and illustrious history in South Africa; the South African Open, which was first played in 1893, is the oldest national golfing championship in the world after the British Open (Whales, 2002: 8). During the apartheid years, golf also helped to bolster white South Africa's sense of self-justification, chiefly through the success of Gary Player. And, like rugby, golf has its own set of cultural connotations. Generally associated with affluence in South Africa and elsewhere, golf is the principal sport of the corporate classes. According to conventional wisdom, any businessman who wishes to further his career must play golf, and the corporate golf day is a staple activity on most marketing calendars.

South Africa's apparently insatiable appetite for residential golfing estates during the 1990s testifies to the ever-increasing popularity of the sport, and to the ingenuity of a concept that guaranteed security and seclusion from crime (and less affluent sectors of the population) as well as easy access to a favourite leisure activity[92]. The popularity of golf as both a networking opportunity and a lifestyle choice was not restricted to the white minority. Along with the expansion of the black managerial class in the 1990s was a corresponding increase in black interest and involvement in golf, and tales abounded of wealthy black businessmen who had built homes in exclusive golfing estates such as Zimbali, north of Durban. The unprecedented success of Tiger Woods also raised black interest in golf. Like the consumption of expensive whisky, golf was a game you had to play if you wanted to consider yourself part of the new elite.[93]

Swing - 1998

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens on a close up of a pair of red and white golf shoes, shot from above. Dissolve to close-up of hands pulling on golfing glove. A large, vulgar ring is visible on one finger. Cut to close-up of a red tartan tam o'shanter being lifted from the doorknob of one of the wooden lockers in a change room. Cut to wide angle shot of putting green. The Yuppie, resplendent in red, lime green and black golfing attire, strides into shot. He takes a practice swing as his caddy, an earnest-looking young black man, follows him into shot. Carrying the golf bag, the caddy trots after his charge. Cut to low angle shot of a group of golfers. The Yuppie's legs stride into shot in the foreground. They look up as he walks across the frame. Cut to close-up of a slim, middle-aged white woman in blue. She grimaces in disapproval and jabs the old man next to her in the chest with her elbow. He adjusts his spectacles. Cut to a low angle shot of the Yuppie with the group of golfers, gesturing to his caddy. Cut to close-up of the caddy removing a leopard-print cover from one of the clubs; his eyes widen as he sees the size of the driver. Close-up of a fat black man, recognisable as the cannibal chief from "Bride to be" - this time dressed in a Panama hat and golf shirt. He laughs out loud.	SFX: Music (It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing)

[92] The success of Dainfern, a high security residential golfing estate north of Johannesburg, points to the popularity of this model. Despite bordering on a squatter camp and the local sewage works, and boasting golfing greens on the banks of the cholera-infested Jukskei river, Dainfern is packed with large, tasteless mansions fetching prices in the multiples of millions.

[93] Even President Thabo Mbeki took up golf in 2002.

Close-up of the Yuppie placing a pink golf ball on the tee. Cut to close-up of the caddy looking expectantly. Cut to a low angle shot of the Yuppie, his back to the viewer, examining the ball and scratching his buttocks. Montage of various shots of the Yuppie preparing to take his shot. Cut to close-up of the Yuppie. He looks up. His expression is one of concentration. He winks at something. Cut to close-up of the woman golfer, who smiles insincerely. Her face quickly assumes an expression of distaste. Cut to low-angle shot of the Yuppie, this time from the side, preparing his shot. The clubhouse building is visible in the background.	
Cut to mid-shot of Gogo seated at a bar. He is smartly dressed in a white linen suit and Panama hat. He smiles as he looks off screen. Cut to low-angle shot of the Yuppie preparing to swing. Cut to mid-shot of Gogo dialling his cellphone and laughing. Cut to close-up of the Yuppie smiling as he looks down at the ball. Wide-angle shot of the Yuppie as he lifts the club. Cut to close-up of a pink cellphone in the back pocket of the Yuppie's tartan knickerbockers.	
Dissolve to close-up of the Yuppie's face as he swings. Long shot of the pink ball hitting large concrete replica golf ball. Long shot of the Yuppie ducking as the ball flies over his head. Cut to mid-shot of the golfers looking to their right and then their left, looks of amazement on their faces. Long shot of Yuppie standing with the club over his shoulder, looking to his right.	SFX: Cellphone rings (William Tell overture) SFX: Club swinging and connecting with ball.
Cut to mid-shot of Gogo at the bar, laughing. Long-shot of club members inside the clubhouse, examining the broken window. Cut to mid-shot of the Yuppie and his caddy peering cautiously around a French door inside the clubhouse.	SFX: Breaking glass.
Wide angle shot of the club members in the dining room, turning to look towards the camera. Dissolve to mid-shot of seated club members. Behind a black matron, a white English colonel-type turns to look towards the camera. He looks very stern. Cut to mid-shot of the caddy looking under one of the tables. In the foreground is a podgy pair of women's legs. Wide angle shot of the club members. The colonel-type stands up to address the Yuppie, who is facing him. The colonel wipes his mouth with a serviette. Cut to close-up of the colonel. The Yuppie, out of focus, is just visible in the left of the frame. Cut to mid-shot of the caddy standing next to a red curtain behind the diners. His eyes widen as he takes a second look to his left.	Voice over: To avoid embarrassing interruptions… let Vodacom take a message.
Cut to close-up of elderly woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat bedecked in feathers. She looks rather like the English Queen Mother. She looks down. The camera	Colonel (fruity English accent): Rule thirty-one sah…play it as it

follows her gaze to her bosom, where the pink golf ball is nestling. She looks up disapprovingly. Cut to Vodacom logo juxtaposed against the green hedge.	lies.

Visually, 'Swing' differs quite markedly from the fairly realist style of 'Naartjie'. Instead, the advertisers return to the visual fragmentation that characterized 'Windmills'. While the bulk of the action is shot in a relatively unobtrusive style with little use of extreme angles, the opening sequence focuses on distinctive parts of the Yuppie rather than showing him in his entirety. This has the effect both of heightening the sense of anticipation by delaying the revelation of the identity of the Yuppie to the audience, and at the same time enhancing the comic spirit of the narrative. The cheerful, somewhat flippant tone of the accompanying music offers a further clue to the correct interpretation of the initial action.

As in 'Windmills', the filmic conventions used here succeed in shifting the attention of the audience to the Yuppie's inappropriate consumption patterns. A garish pair of golfing shoes is the subject of the first shot; in the second, a man's hand adorned with a large, vulgar gold ring is shown. Throughout the narrative, the camera reveals further evidence of the Yuppie's penchant for ostentation and inappropriate aesthetics: his exaggerated, excessively colourful tartan golfing outfit, the le opard-print club covers and the cellphone – which is bright pink instead of restrained, manly black. The close-ups of the faces of the other golfers reveal their disapproval - even disdain - of the Yuppie and underscore the fact that his behaviour is inappropriate in a snobbish country club setting. Thus, even though the catalyst of misfortune is the ringing cellphone, it is the "bad taste" of which the Yuppie is guilty that is to form the fulcrum upon which the comedy of 'Swing' is constructed.

Mocking Englishness

If 'Naartjie' was concerned with Afrikaner identity, 'Golf' is interested in the meaning of Englishness in South Africa. Naturally the rainbow nation is evident in the presence of black characters both in the clubhouse and on the green, but all of them adopt stereotypically "Western" modes of behaviour. Englishness is defined in 'Golf' in a number of ways: through accent, age, dress, attitude and social ritual. Most of the people seated in the clubhouse are white and elderly. Dress is conservative and old-fashioned - tweeds and cravats for the men, floral print dresses and hats for the women. The sense of a 'bygone era' is enhanced by the use of a well-known Duke Ellington song dating from 1932, which was presumably chosen for the advertisement because of its use of the word "swing": the Yuppie, of course, meets his downfall directly through an errant swing of his golf club.

The attitude of the characters ranges from disapproval on the part of the younger woman on the green to the stiff, beetle-browed dignity of the old gentleman in the clubhouse. The character who speaks does so with an upper-class English accent. Apart from golf, the social rituals demonstrated here include tea, sandwiches and champagne in the clubhouse. Politeness and a firm adherence to rules are also cast as typical of Englishness. When the elderly gentleman addresses the Yuppie in the clubhouse, it is not to berate him (he addresses him as "sir"), but to advise him of "rule thirty-one", which is to play the ball as it lies. The English are clearly interested in doing things in the proper way – the one deemed appropriate by an arcane set of rules - and their manners are far too impeccable to indulge in unseemly outbursts.

Unlike the raw emotion and uncouth behaviour displayed by the Afrikaners in 'Naartjie', the stereotypical English are a self-controlled group of people, characterised above all by good manners and emotional restraint. The lively camaraderie of the rugby match is entirely absent in this situation. (It should be noted, however, that the younger woman shown earlier in 'Golf' does not conform to all of these stereotypes: unlike the people in the clubhouse, her snobbery is worn on her sleeve. She makes her horror of the Yuppie only too plain, and he worsens the insult of his presence by viewing her, quite openly, as a sexual object. Not only does the Yuppie overrate his own attractiveness, he fails to acknowledge that her social station renders her out of his reach.)

The focus of the humour in this instance is the inappropriateness of the Yuppie's attire and behaviour in amidst the genteel surrounds of the golf club. He does not know how to fit in; he is out of place and represents crassness and kitsch in the midst of "good taste". Fiske points out that aesthetic sense or good taste is "typically used as a bearer and naturalizer of class differences…the metaphor of "taste" works in a similar way by displacing class differences onto the physical, and therefore natural, sense of the body" (1987: 13). Thus the class differences between the Yuppie and the members of the club are highlighted by the former's lack of aesthetic refinement.

In marked contrast to the Yuppie, Gogo is comfortable in this environment. This time he is dressed – with suitably dapper panache - in a white suit and Panama hat; he is marked by a sense of good taste and the restrained colours he wears are in complete contrast to the garish reds and greens worn by the Yuppie. He belongs here (although not entirely, as he is seated at the bar rather than in the dining room with the other members) in a way that the Yuppie does not.

As I have noted, the advertisers are careful to acknowledge the rainbow nation in depicting both black and white members of the country club. The similarity between black and white South Africans is emphasized by the depiction of the elderly black couples in the clubhouse as really just as stuffy as their white compatriots, while the black golfer – the cannibal chief of 'Bride to Be' - is as amused by the Yuppie's ineptness as the white woman is annoyed. The Yuppie, through his failure to conform to accepted codes of behaviour and standards of dress, is marked as an outsider who will never fit in regardless of his identity as a white man, which under the old apartheid regime would have assured him of a higher social status than any black South African.

In depicting the Yuppie as an outsider, therefore, the advertisers put forward an argument that race alone is no longer a determinant of social status. In the world of 'Swing', both black and white South Africans are capable of using wealth and culturally determined notions of "good taste" to construct a barrier between themselves and those they view as their inferiors. Significantly, the Yuppie's only ally is his young black caddy. The divisions between South Africans, which have traditionally run along the fissure of race, are here recast along cultural lines, although in this case the culture to which both black and white conform – illustrated by the game of golf and the institution of the country club - is strongly Western in orientation.

Now everyone can be a snob

What implications does the representation of class divisions of this kind hold for a mythology of the New South Africa? It can be argued that, since it was only through common cause with the black elite that their own status could be guaranteed in the long term, it was important for South Africa's white overclass that the link between race and wealth be weakened. In this case, then, myth in 'Swing' works hard to accomplish this state of affairs: what is depicted here is not simply a rainbow nation of rich people; it is a group whose primary allegiance is to their class position, not their ethnicity. In this way, myth takes the many historical factors that led to whites dominating the economy and renders them irrelevant. Now there are black and white rich people, and this is a sign that all is well in South Africa. Merely by depicting a multiracial group in the rarefied atmosphere of the clubhouse, an immediate impression of racial and economic equality is created, even if the viewer knows this to be a fantasy.

Viewed from this perspective, it may be argued that the advertisers further de-emphasise the link between race and class by depicting Yuppie as the crass outsider who does not know how to behave appropriately, and Gogo as the suave gentleman sitting at the bar. The opening shot of 'Swing' has already made clear that the Yuppie's preferences tend toward the gaudy and

vulgar. Unlike Gogo, his consumption patterns indicate a lack of what is commonly accepted as 'good taste'. Taste is obviously not a fixed, objective concept, but is socially and culturally defined. As the foremost chronicler of the vicissitudes of fashion and fad, Stephen Bayley, observes, there is no such thing as objective good taste, "only an evanescent, culturally and historically specific preference for certain things" (1991: xv). Throughout the Yebo Gogo campaign, the advertisers ensure that anyone who sees the advertisement correctly understands that the Yuppie (and by extension, his personal tastes) is deserving of contempt by portraying him as a buffoon.

These references to so nebulous and shifting a concept as taste point to the fact that myth in the campaign as a whole takes it for granted that identity is determined by consumption: by those material props with which one chooses to express oneself. Here, in its depiction of a world defined almost entirely by access to money, myth is what Barthes describes as the turning of history into nature: history disappears from the object, leaving one to assume that the object is eternal (1972, 2000: 151). This is hardly surprising, given that most advertising campaigns must by their very nature endorse consumption as the most appropriate means of engaging with the world.

So it is the Yuppie's failure to consume the *correct* material goods – that is, his lack of good taste – rather than any other markers that ensure his exclusion from polite society. Here the effectiveness of myth as Lévi-Strauss's machine for the suppression of time can be witnessed in the assumption throughout the Yebo Gogo campaign that good taste is universal - rather than a historically, culturally and socially determined set of preferences for certain material goods. If such an assumption were not embedded into the ongoing narrative, it would be much harder for the audience to understand the humour of the campaign. I would go so far as to suggest that one interpretation of the Yebo Gogo campaign is that the Yuppie must be punished, repeatedly, for his failure to be a "good" consumer.

In addition to their juxtaposition of "good" and "bad" taste, the advertisers dissimulate the culturally and socially determined nature of taste through the assumption that all South Africans regardless of race aspire to the same preferences. As in Castrol's 'New South Africa', black South Africans take on white characteristics rather than the other way around. Such an approach leads to the conclusion that myth, in presenting golf as a game for black and white South Africans, conceals the earlier, racialised history of golf in South Africa, where black South Africans could only serve as caddies.

As it is, golf has never been the most egalitarian of sports; historically it has always been the preserve of white Anglo-Saxon males. In fact, golf has long been associated with racism, sexism and anti-Semitism, with some clubs in the United States still refusing to admit black members, women or Jews. The rapidly growing popularity of golf amongst the new black elite - some of whom have complained that they felt compelled to play golf in order to fit in to white corporate culture – does not alter the fact that 'Swing' effectively sidesteps the issue of historically bound economic and race relations and sets up supposedly universal values which are in fact specific to a particular, historically privileged community.

The mystification undertaken by myth in 'Swing' relates to both capitalism and class structures. Class, like capitalism, appears to be colourblind (when even a cursory glance at the history of South Africa will reveal that class and race are intimately linked). Here can be located an element of insidiousness, since the second order signification of the black and white guests seated together in the clu bhouse puts forward the notion that people may occupy elevated class positions regardless of race.

The implication is that, provided one is able to master the stylistic attributes of class – as the black couples seated in the dining room are able to do – then one will be permitted entrance to the upper echelons of society. One will, quite literally, be permitted to sit at the table of the ruling class. Stated somewhat differently, one might paraphrase the implication as an injunction to behave in a certain way (like white Anglophile people) and the colour of one's skin will be overlooked.

Ultimately, the clubhouse in 'Swing' presents an illusory capitalist ideal in which the link between race and class is broken. Here myth perpetuates the notion that racially determined limits to social mobility have been transcended, and that the kind of social markers to which all South Africans aspire regardless of race are the same markers that symbolise success in Western societies. In this way, myth in 'Swing' perpetuates one of the core tenets of capitalist, free market ideology: that society is structured along the principles of meritocracy, where access to wealth and power is determined by one's individual qualities and talents rather than race or other group allegiances.

Nation-building through comedy

In general, nation-building tends to be conceived of as a serious exercise, surrounded as it often is by narratives of noble self-sacrifice or appeals to the possibilities of the

transcendental. The imagined, mythic state evoked by the concept of the nation does not immediately lend itself to a comic vision of the world. Yet nation-building through comedy – or at least, attempts at nation-building – is possible, as the Yebo Gogo campaign demonstrates.

It should be noted, however, that such a nation-building project is only possible at a time when there is enough confidence in the state of the nation – or what constitutes national identity – for citizens to feel able to laugh at themselves. The New South Africa is a condition of the type of advertising represented by the Yebo Gogo campaign and, by its appearance, confirms the existence of a new order in which mockery of what was previously considered sacrosanct political territory is permitted.

For example, if 'Windmills' had been produced prior to the 1994 elections, it is unlikely that it would have elicited the kind of positive response it did in fact enjoy. Then, it might have been perceived as anticipating an alarming shift in the balance of power between bla ck and white, rather than a cheerful acknowledgement of what had already transpired. The historical context in which this commercial was produced effectively permitted and legitimated its production. The elections had passed relatively peacefully, a new industry was developing, and life was proceeding with relative normality. South Africans felt able and free to laugh at themselves, perhaps for the first time ever.

From the relatively light-hearted conflict between black and white South Africans depicted in 'Windmills', the Yebo Gogo campaign has moved into a different direction, one that is reminiscent of Castle Lager in its continuous bid for inclusiveness. The world of Vodacom has become a (comic) fantasy version of South Africa, where everyone has the freedom to participate in any activity and take on any identity regardless of ethnic origin. Here the New South Africa is a meritocracy based upon the principle of social mobility, where the strictures of historically inflected realities have been cast off. In this sense, the Vodacom campaign does indeed endorse the rainbow nation myth, since it puts forward the notion that all South Africans are equal and enjoy equal access to the upper echelons of society, regardless of their access to social or economic capital.

That the producers of the Yebo Gogo campaign elect to couch this fantasy within a comic vision of the world has interesting implications, for comedy is concerned – amongst other things - with the discrepancies between the ideal and the actual. (Compare, for a moment, the approach of Vodacom to that of Castle Lager in 'Homecoming', where racial equality underpinned by free market capitalism is also proffered as an appropriate vision for post-

apartheid South Africa.) There are various ways in which this disparity may be understood. The American raconteur, Louis Kronenberger, defines comedy as a form of criticism because it "exposes human beings for what they are as opposed to what they profess to be" (1960: 195). Similarly, the Marxist Shakespeare theorist Scott Cutler Shershow argues that comedy is a useful tool in helping to understand society, showing us "partly how we are, and partly how we perceive ourselves" (1986: 38).

Viewing the disparities exposed by comedy from another standpoint, the theorist of humour, Murray S. Davis, argues that humour gives insight into the way in which society is constructed. It "separates the joints of the seemingly seamless social structure, making them visible" (1993: 313). If this is the case, then it can be argued that one of the functions of humour is to demystify myth – to expose the myths that circulate within society and culture and reveal the ways in which they do the work of legitimating the structures within which we operate. Indeed Davis, citing Mary Douglas, argues that humour attacks the very notion of structure itself, weakening the legitimacy of dominant conceptual frameworks (1993: 309). Yet, at the same time, from a political point of view, humour (though probably not satire) hedges its bets.

> Comedy's political implications are paradoxical, for it makes both conservative statements – "A system's traditional elements are necessary to this system" – and radical statements – "The traditional system as a whole is arbitrary" – simultaneously.
>
> (1992: 311)

This characteristic of comedy is seen to good effect in 'Swing', where tension between conservative and progressive tendencies is evident. Here the class differences that constitute a social system are portrayed in an unquestioning light; it is assumed that they are necessary and natural. At the same time, however, the refusal to acknowledge racial divisions and their link to class suggests that the way in which South African society has been (and in most cases still is) structured is arbitrary, and has no basis in past injustice, implying that individuals are responsible for their own misfortune or success without the intervention of government policy or the vicissitudes of history. Thus one may argue that 'Swing' is a typically paradoxical comic text, carrying both conservative and progressive political implications.

While Davis (1993) examines the internal structure of comedy, Northrop Frye (1957) focuses on the role of the audience in the communication of the comic message. Frye argues that comedy is principally concerned with the transition from one kind of society to another, one that the audience agrees is preferable to society in its prior form. Like Davis, Frye observes that comedy tends to find solutions to problems within the structures of a system. "As the

final society reached by comedy is the one that the audience has recognised to be desirable all along to be a proper and desirable state of affairs, an act of communion with the audience is in order" (1957, 1971: 163).

Frye also argues that comedy moves towards a happy ending, a sense of "this should be". Importantly, this is not a moral judgment, but a social one; comedy that attempts to moralise quickly descends into melodrama, or comedy without humour (Frye, 1957, 1971: 167). Since comedy concerns itself with transition while simultaneously allowing for a happy ending that will not leave its audience with a sense of discomfort, it is well-suited to the needs of South African advertisers who wish to present the transition to democracy and its attendant embrace of consumerist capitalism in a positive light. The uses of comedy as a tool in the nation-building project are therefore fairly obvious; it is not surprising that an advertiser boasting the prominence and resources of South Africa's leading cellular network should have elected to present audiences with a comic narrative of the transition from racial division to capitalist meritocracy.

Notably, this is a narrative available for interpretation by all, since the type of comedy presented in the Yebo Gogo campaign, particularly those advertisements following in the wake of "Windmills", is designed to appeal to a very broad South African audience. As such it is characterized by slapstick and physical comedy, which present no language or cultural barriers. This type of comedy is in contrast to the humour found in the Castrol and Nando's advertising analysed in chapter three. In those cases, irony and ambiguity prevail, often characterized by wordplay and wit. Thus the world of the Yebo Gogo can be described as a democracy of comedy – not only because it recalibrates relationships between black and white South Africans by presenting situations in which all are available for mockery, but because almost everyone, regardless of background, can laugh at the situation playing out nightly on their television sets.

Can slapstick, then, lay claim to the status of a truly South African comic form? Paul Taylor, writing in the *Washington Post*, attributes the South African love of slapstick to language and cultural differences and the divisions entrenched by years of apartheid.

> Blacks and mixed-race Coloreds have a rich tradition of township humor-of-the-oppressed, but it remains largely inaccessible to the white media and artistic establishment. White humor draws from a European heritage of Dutch Calvinism and British irony that don't thrive especially well in Africa. Throw in decades of censorship, the angst of apartheid and the shame of being a world pariah, and it's no wonder that South African humor tends to be low, slapstick and silly.
>
> (Taylor, 1993: A26)

Such disparaging remarks aside, the wide appeal of physical comedy in the South African setting is certainly the experience of Pieter-Dirk Uys, who has first hand experience of the challenges faced by a comedian performing across the country. “I have to use gesture, I go back to Commedia del’Arte” (Britten, 1997: 5), he has said of his experiences of performing for rural black audiences. The phenomenal – and to many critics, incomprehensible - success of the local filmmaker Leon Schuster, who relies on candid camera skits, physical comedy and scatological jokes, underscores the ability of slapstick to overcome cultural and racial barriers.

Yet there are South African subcultures in which comedy is based on a strong tradition of verbal wit. The ribald wordplay associated with Cape Town’s Coloured community is a staple of many a local stand-up comedian’s routine, and the slang used in the townships points to a widespread grassroots appreciation of the wryly comic potential of the verbal. But these subcultures of comedy do not necessarily travel far beyond their own worlds. Thus it is always to the physical that those comedians (and advertisers) who wish to appeal to most South Africans must return. It is probably safer to conclude that, not surprisingly, South African comedy is in a state of constant evolution, and so it would be more accurate to talk of “South African comedies”.

Yebo Gogo, the rainbow nation and the ideal New South African

The Yebo Gogo campaign is clearly open to criticism on the grounds of a failure to acknowledge class divisions that cannot in fact be dissimulated by the apparent ability of capitalism to provide a vehicle for social mobility. Varda Leymore has argued that advertising, like myth, is concerned with the conservation of the status quo, and there certainly are elements within the Yebo Gogo campaign that support such a contention. In ‘Naartjie’ and ‘Swing’, activities stereotypically associated with Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans respectively are rehabilitated and cast as acceptably New South African. Activities such as the throwing of naartjies at a rugby match, which in the past was burdened with connotations of racism, may now be celebrated with affection: this, so the argument goes, defines us as South Africans and marks our uniqueness in the family of nations or other national types. As is the case in the Castle Lager Friendship campaign, the Yebo Gogo campaign offers a capitalist solution to the problem of the social inequalities generated by apartheid, thus putting forward the argument that a solution to the problems generated by a particular system may be found within the system itself. This kind of circular argument, where social problems are dealt with and accounted for within the logic of a social system – thus ultimately confirming the validity of the system itself – is typical of myth.

In 'Swing', attitudes associated with the ruling class are also expressed by black South Africans, so that snobbery is divorced from race. If different races are able to take on the modes of behaviour associated with English colonials, then this behaviour is rendered harmless and amusing and therefore not in need of critique. In this way, the Yebo Gogo campaign is simultaneously able to push forward an agenda in which historically constituted power relations between blacks and whites are turned upside down, and present a case for the preservation of cultural traditions and economic relations associated with the old South Africa.

There is yet another level on which the Yebo Gogo campaign expresses a particular notion of what constitutes South African identity. It should be noted that Vodacom uses Gogo rather than the Yuppie in its print advertising, and on the surface, Gogo is Vodacom's spokesman, a walking advertisement for the benefits of using the service. Yet the character represents something more than a commercial proposition or a brand-building exercise. The obvious popularity of the characters aside, why depict the Yuppie and Gogo together in so many different situations?

As I have already noted, the episodic, comic nature of the Yebo Gogo campaign evokes the picaresque, and in so doing suggests that some of the triumphalist tendencies inherent in modes of communication that celebrate the nation and its achievements (whether they be portrayed in advertising or other genres) are only won at the expense of ironic distance. Gogo is typical of a picaresque hero in his appearance in various adventures and situations and his observation of the folly of others. Though he always intervenes in order to rescue the hapless Yuppie, Gogo is more a detached observer than a participant. Such detachment is a key characteristic of the modern picaresque hero, as Bernhard Malkmus argues. "The modern brother of the rogue is afloat on top of the social situation, because he is capable of adopting different registers; he is a parasite of the fertile soil of intersection between different social circles, although he is not actually participating in them at all" (2003: 3). Though I would hesitate to describe Gogo as a "parasite", such a description otherwise fits this character well.

Gogo's chameleon-like ability to fit into any situation is in part a function of his status as a typically detached, ironic picaresque hero, but it also points to the possibility that he is in some way a metonym of a particular aspect of the nation. In fact, there is a strong case to be made for viewing Gogo as an embodiment of the New South Africa: or, perhaps more correctly, a metaphor of an idealised "New South African" state of mind. Gogo's sophistication, intelligence and wicked sense of humour constitute those character traits the campaign posits as most desirable in the nation-as-individual (in contrast to the arrogance,

stupidity and vanity of the Yuppie). Most importantly of all, Gogo is comfortable with technology in the form of the cellphone as well as evincing a firm commitment to the principles of capitalism – as evidence of the latter, witness his exploitation of the hapless Yuppie's desperation in 'Windmills'.

If Gogo does indeed represent the ideal New South African, then 'Bride to Be' 'Naartjie' and 'Swing' explore what might be considered the extremes of tendencies in the South African national character. There is the primitive violence of the comic book cannibals, the rowdy Afrikaner male camaraderie of the rugby match, and the rigid social codes of Anglophile snobbery. The Yuppie himself embodies a certain excessiveness epitomized by the leopard print underpants but also indicated by his chest hair, jewellery and his girlfriend, who in turn embodies the "bimbo" stereotype.

In contrast to these instances of excess, Gogo is an example of moderation in all respects. He is able to blend in seamlessly with any situation in which he finds himself, but at the same time has an identity distinct from any of the groups he interacts with. Despite the supposed emergence of this character from the dusty rural depths of the Karoo, he is in fact suave and sophisticated, able to adjust with ease to any situation. The ideal New South African, according to this narrative, acknowledges that South Africa is made up of different types of people and different groups, but is comfortable with all of them. While Gogo never quite joins in with them, he nonetheless moves in and out of their worlds with ease. Thus the model New South African must of necessity sacrifice some of his own identity and dispense with his group allegiances in order to be flexible enough to mix with different social groups. While South Africa itself is full of colourful characters who embody group characteristics, the ideal New South African must practise a studied neutrality if he is to successfully embody the capacity for social mobility that characterises the new order.

Conclusions

The campaigns of Castle Lager and Vodacom were probably the most significant of the decade, Castle Lager for its unquestioning endorsement of the rainbow nation myth; Vodacom for its success in bringing attention to the change in power relations between black and white South Africans. These campaigns contribute to the nation-building project in different ways. Castle Lager's approach tends to evoke the nation quite explicitly, interpellating the audience as South Africans. Vodacom elects to promote the nation-building project through a dual strategy of imagining a South African society that has been freed from history (in that it is not divided along racial lines), as well as the portrayal of various cultural identities.

Merely by depicting these social types, and encouraging the audience to laugh at them, Vodacom promotes the idea of a society able to laugh at itself. Jokes of this type, which allude so strongly to cultural intimacy, are a way of confirming insider status. The mere fact of recognising the behaviour on display serves to confirm one's status as South African, for it is a condition of South Africanness that one recognise typically South African modes of being. The very existence of this advertising campaign confirms the presence of a rhetorical space in which a more relaxed approach to viewing the national self is permitted. It is fitting that Gogo, a character embodying the characteristics of the successful New South African, should function as the brand icon of cellular telephony, that most New South African of industries.

In chapter three, I explored the implications of a nation-building project that has become open to satire of the kind witnessed in many of the Nando's campaigns. The Yebo Gogo campaign takes a different approach. Yet it is noteworthy because, not only does it poke fun at South African mores, it managed to do so while remaining popular with a broad spectrum of South African audiences. It is this popular success that deserves particular comment, because it suggests that the campaign resonated in important ways with the public.

As I have argued, South African audiences responded positively to the campaign because, while it placed the necessity of social and political change firmly on the agenda, it did so in a way that was palatable to white audiences and accessible to black viewers. In its use of slapstick rather than satire, it both employed a mode of comedy open to decoding by most South Africans and avoided what might have otherwise been construed as a threateningly critical stance towards South African society. At the same time, the campaign also moved in a direction in which fantasy mingled with a typically South African setting, creating a vision of a nation in which historically constituted relationships between race and culture were no longer in evidence. The South Africa portrayed in the Vodacom campaign was just as idealised as the South Africa in the Castle Lager campaigns - but because the former is rooted in the world of comedy and therefore not intended to be taken seriously, the Yebo Gogo campaign has arguably achieved more success in communicating a vision of what constitutes "nationness" in the context of South Africa. As evidence of this claim, it should be noted that, unlike the Castle Lager campaigns, the advertising of Vodacom has never been criticised for portraying an excessively idealised vision of the New South Africa.

Indeed, the Yebo Gogo campaign continues to be extremely popular with black and white audiences, and Gogo and the Yuppie are into the eleventh year of their comically adversarial

relationship. The campaign has survived the transition from the rainbow nation myth to the myth of the African renaissance and the myth that in turn replaced it at the turn of the millennium. The latter is a myth that I have named Brand South Africa. In chapter one, I discussed the phenomenon of the brand state (van Ham, 2001) and it is this understanding of the nation state as a brand that must be marketed if it is to compete with other nation states in the global economy that provides the context for the emergence of the South African version of the brand state. In the next chapter, I will discuss the emergence of South Africa as a brand state, and examine the ways in which advertising responded to a national myth that was strongly driven by marketing principles as much as it was by political expediency.

Chapter Seven

Selling Brand South Africa

> A brand is an agent for change. South Africa is a work in progress.
> - Yvonne Johnston, CEO, International Marketing Council of South Africa (2002: 11)

In chapter three, I traced the history of the mythology of the New South Africa, noting how the rainbow nation myth reached its apotheosis in 1995, during the Rugby World Cup final. Once the euphoria generated by the victory of the South African team began to dissipate, the power of the rainbow nation myth also began to slip into decline, as the reality of challenges facing the South African nation-building project began to overwhelm the commitment to racial reconciliation that was the hallmark of the Mandela presidency. I noted how, in 1996, a new national myth was named into being, when Deputy President Thabo Mbeki defined a vision for an African renaissance. The concept of an African renaissance soon came to dominate the discourse of government and big business, while references to the rainbow nation or the New South Africa appeared with less and less frequency. In this way, the African renaissance superseded the rainbow nation as an officially endorsed national myth.

But the key narrative features of the mythology of the New South Africa - among them, the inauguration of President Mandela in 1994, the Rugby World Cup and the ratification of the Constitution in 1996 – were destined to be resuscitated on behalf of a new national myth. For, in the last years of the twentieth century, and the first three years of the new millennium, a new understanding of the nation emerged, one that was premised less on the necessity of racial reconciliation and the ideal of multiculturalism as embodied in the rainbow nation (and catalysed by Madiba magic) and more on the need for a national myth suitable for exploitation in the interests of economic development.

The new national myth can be discerned in the efforts of South Africa to market itself internationally and locally as a nexus of a specific and unique set of values and identities. The implementation from 1998 to 2003 of such projects as the Welcome South Africa campaign, Celebrate South Africa (in the United Kingdom), the Circle of Sunshine, the International Marketing Council and Proudly South African points to a new emphasis on conceptualising the nation in accordance with branding principles, for the purpose of growing the economy. Indeed, the International Marketing Council coined the idea of "Brand South Africa". This is, they argue, "a way to put a label on ourselves. The label says: We're distinctive, we're

competitive, and we're not asking for charity. Give us a chance to prove it." (2002: 6). In this way, South Africa embraced Peter van Ham's concept of the brand state, which he defines as "the outside world's ideas about a particular country" (2001: 1).

The new national myth made its presence felt in advertising both for the initiatives mentioned above and for brands that stood to benefit from positive national sentiment. The engagement of South African Airways with the Brand South Africa myth was to be expected, as it ferried international tourists to and from the country and, as national carrier and flag-bearer, explicitly identified itself with the nation. A television campaign publicising the airline's purchase of new Airbus aircraft is especially noteworthy for its use of references to the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final. Reference to past glories in an epic history was a typical strategy of advertising associated with the Brand South Africa myth; the example of South African Airways points to the availability of the mythology of the New South Africa for re-use in a slightly different context, one that is sufficiently distanced from the nation-building project in its original form to render it a relatively anodyne form of nostalgia.

However, before I examine the engagement of advertising with the Brand State myth, it is necessary, not only to gain insight into the relationship between South Africa as nation and its metonymical relationship with South African Airways but to understand the concept of the brand state itself.

The nation as brand

While countries have long been marketed as tourist destinations, during the 1990s, the principles of branding practice began to spread through to arenas more traditionally regarded as the purely rational domain of geopolitics. Increasing competition for trade, investment and tourism have forced states to market themselves more vigorously, using the same techniques and terminology that first evolved with the aim of selling goods and services to consumers. In the light of these developments, it is worth repeating van Ham's comments cited in chapter one. He argues, "Image and reputation are…becoming essential parts of the state's strategic equity…Globalization and the media revolution have made each state more aware of itself, its image, its reputation, and its attitude – in short, its brand" (2001: 2, 3).

Indeed, the link between consumers and brand states may be closer than at first one might imagine. This is because, more often than not, a country's image rests upon the power of the brands associated with it – Coca Cola, Marlboro, Nike and Microsoft have all contributed to the powerful brand image of the United States. Motor vehicle manufacturers are especially

potent ambassadors for their country of origin – BMW and Mercedes-Benz encapsulate German precision and engineering, while Ferrari and Lamborghini are synonymous in many minds with Italian flare and passion. As a result, countries that boast prominent brand names become powerful brands in their own right.[94]

In some cases, countries have found it necessary to re-brand themselves. Belgium (probably associated in the minds of many with Godiva chocolates), beset by huge image problems as a result of widely publicised child abuse and corruption scandals, has attempted to recast itself as a modern, technologically astute nation with the use of its internet suffix ".be" in a revised visual identity. Former eastern bloc countries join NATO less for reasons of security than prestige: membership of such an organisation is a guarantee of that particular state's sophistication and commitment to Western values. "In today's branded society, being able to "afford" NATO or EU membership gives the state emotional satisfaction and important public exposure," notes van Ham (2001: 7).

Then there is the case of Japan, which has seen its economy crash since the heady days of the 1980s when it seemed to many that Japanese businesses were buying up America. Ironically, however, as the Japanese economy languishes, so its cultural influence continues to grow: it is "reinventing superpower – again" (McGray, 2002: 1). As Douglas McGray, a contributing writer to *Foreign Policy* magazine puts it, Japan's "gross national cool" is at an all-time high (2002: 1). National cool, as McGray explains, "is an idea, a reminder that commercial trends and products, and a country's knack for spawning them, can serve political and economic ends" (2002: 7). National cool is a kind of "soft power", a term coined by Joseph S. Nye Jr to explain the non-traditional ways in which a country can influence others, mainly through popular culture. The modern world is dominated not just by Coca-Cola, Marlboro and Levi's, but also by sushi, Hello Kitty and Pokémon, while Japanese fads, fashions and pop stars are idolised in the Far East. Japan's relative decline as an economic superpower seems not to have affected its ability to wield cultural influence.

In fact, McGray argues that it is the ongoing economic shambles and associated social instability that have allowed innovation and experimentation to emerge in notoriously rigid Japanese society. Now that a job for life in a big Japanese corporate is no longer a viable option for many young Japanese, they are free to experiment with new ideas and new career

[94] South Africa is no different: here the invention locally of automatic pool cleaners, Pratley Putty and plastic supermarket trolleys is frequently cited as a cause for national pride. Internationally renowned companies such as De Beers and, more recently, South African Breweries, have helped to boost South Africa's reputation in the face of stereotypes of Third World Africa.

paths. “In fact, in cultural terms at least, Japan has become one of a handful of perfect globalization nations (along with the United States),” notes McGray.

> It has succeeded not only in balancing a flexible, absorptive, crowd-pleasing, shared culture with a more private, domestic one but also in taking advantage of that balance to build an increasingly powerful global commercial force. In other words, Japan’s growing cultural presence has created a mighty engine of global cool.
>
> (McGray, 2002: 7).

While Japan continues to gain credibility as a source of cultural influence, the best-known example of the rebranding of an entire nation-state remains the “Cool Britannia” phenomenon. A pun on the jingoistic hymn “Rule Britannia”, “Cool Britannia” attempted to manipulate international perception of Britain, casting it as a country that embraced the new millennium rather than the glories of the colonial past. If “Rule Britannia” stood for the fuddy-duddyness of empire and tradition, then “Cool Britannia” evoked trendsetting fashion and music and ethnic diversity. “Cool Britannia” was not, however, a campaign developed by marketing experts: instead, it appeared spontaneously in the national media before being co-opted by the Labour government. Shortly after *Newsweek* pronounced London the “capital of cool” in 1996, the phrase “Cool Britannia” started to appear in the British press (Quinion, 1998:1). The Labour government, elected by a landslide in 1997, was quick to take advantage of the new spirit of optimism. Soon after taking office in 1997, British prime minister Tony Blair invited eccentric fashion designer Vivienne Westwood and other celebrities to 10 Downing Street; “Labour,” notes Kevin Davey,” was keen to harvest the political associations and economic benefits of Cool Britannia” (1999: 1). Panel 2000, a group consisting of leaders (or “gurus”) in the media, design and the arts, was given the task of developing a strategy to project a positive, modern image of Britain to the international community as the new millennium approached. The diversity of modern Britain (rather than its Anglo-Saxon history) was to be emphasised, much to the disgust of more conservative Britons.

While New Labour and its vision of a “New Britain” were still in the honeymoon period of 1997 and 1998, the idea of Cool Britannia was embraced with enthusiasm. For a while, the phrase was even a registered trademark for a new Ben & Jerry’s ice cream flavour (vanilla with strawberries and chocolate-covered shortbread) aimed at the British market (Quinion, 1998:1). “Has London really changed?” wondered an American journalist who visited the city in 1998. “Or have some clever flacks simply managed to mask the land of Oliver Twist, the National Coal Miners Union and the Duchess of York with Richard Branson, Tony Blair and Spice Girls?” (Lampley, 1998: 1). He bewailed the failure of the famously cynical English press to react to Cool Britannia with proper scepticism, but accepted the Labour version of

events, which was that "under New Labour the sun shines brighter. That the water is purer. That the people are happier. That the streets are safer. That the schools are smarter. That the food tastes fresher. That the theatre is sassier. That the sex is better. That the websites are cooler. That the traffic runs smoother" (Lampley, 1998: 1).

Nonetheless, the success of Cool Britannia was relatively short-lived, and within five and a half years it was pronounced "pretty much dead" (Fray, 2002: 1). Marketing experts Kuper Research linked the ultimate failure of "Cool Britannia" to its excessive emphasis on fashion, music and the arts at the expense of technology and industry, as well as its perceived celebration of style and image over substance (2002: 18). In addition, Cool Britannia was so closely tied to the government of Tony Blair and the similarly re-branded "New Labour" that its success was highly dependent on Blair's popularity. As disillusionment with New Labour set in, so cynicism about "Cool Britannia" took hold. In 1999, a book with the obviously punning title of "Cruel Britannia" appeared; in its pages the author mounted a sustained criticism of New Labour policies. Tessa Jowell, the British Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, ascribed the failure of Cool Britannia to an overly ambitious attempt to codify a definitive British identity. "This country is just too complex and too varied," she argued in a speech in late 2001. "You can't distil our national character to a liking for designer water or retro lamps…Cool Britannia was at least a well meaning attempt to codify what makes this country special. But it was, I'm sorry to say, doomed to inadequacy because it tried to codify a culture. And if you codify, you ossify" (2001: 1). At its apotheosis, however, the dominance of Cool Britannia in public discourse pointed to the importance of branding and communication in determining the international image of a particular state.

In the wake of such developments as Cool Britannia and the acknowledgement of soft power, traditional diplomacy is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Politicians are having to become au fait with the delicate balancing act that is brand asset management – so much so, van Ham argues, that the state will have to become the State® (2001: 7). A strong brand image will be essential for any state wishing to promote itself as both a political force and an investment destination. For those who reject the notion that marketing is now a force to be reckoned with in international politics, van Ham has the following words of warning: "[T]he change in slogans is not merely rhetorical window-dressing. On the contrary, it implies a shift in political paradigms, a move from the modern world of geopolitics and power to the postmodern world of images and influence" (2001: 4).

That advertising experts were hired by the US government in the wake of September 11 to formulate ways to change perceptions of America (especially in the Arab world) simply

underlines the truth of van Ham's statement. Similarly, a Romanian graphic design expert points out, "Every nation has a brand. The nation's brand is defined by the people, by their temper, education, look, by their endeavours" (Ursache in Logo Lounge, undated: 1). For this reason, national branding is a momentous task, since a nation's image is built on so many different and frequently conflicting – and difficult to control - messages. Despite these challenges, South Africa is attempting to do just that.

South African engagement with the Brand State

No gold at the end of the rainbow nation

The first stirrings of the Brand South Africa myth began to emerge in 1998. It is somewhat ironic that in June 1998, at around the same time that Thabo Mbeki made the famous "two nations" speech, which in many ways signalled the final decline of the rainbow nation as national myth, that a book entitled *The South African Dream* appeared. In its pages, promised the authors – John Hunt and Reg Lascaris of the advertising agency TBWA Hunt Lascaris - the South African equivalent of the American Dream would be described. Here, they declared, was a unique opportunity to participate in the launch of a new country, to contribute to the building of a 'brand new" nation (Hunt and Lascaris, 1998: 1). Noting the prevailing climate of pessimism, the authors declared a wish to explore the positive aspects of South Africa. "We became sick and tired of hearing nothing but doom and gloom," the authors explained. "We knew the downside [of life in South Africa] only too well. We thought the upside deserved an airing. This is not a country of peace and quiet, but of opportunities and excitement." (1998: 5)

What is interesting about this book is not only that it represents an explicit attempt to define a new national myth, but that it is premised upon the assumption that the prevailing mythology of the New South Africa had ceased to inspire the imagined community of South Africans and reassure them of future prosperity. In this sense, the publication of *The South African Dream* marks the beginning of a new stage in the imagining of the South African nation. The celebratory tone that marked the era of the rainbow nation, and lauding the infinite possibilities of Madiba magic as a solution to all the country's problems, was all but over. For many disadvantaged South Africans, life had not improved significantly under an ANC government, while many of those who could afford to, chose to flee to the greener pastures of Canada, Australia and Britain.

Criticism of the rainbow nation myth grew increasingly vociferous in the wake of the first five years of democratic government. The comments of the political analyst Kaiser Nyatsumba are typical of the disenchantment that dominated the public mood at the time. "In

this post-1994 South Africa of ours there has been too much denial, far too much superficial reconciliation and not enough real peace-making," he complains (2000: 14). Criticising what he perceives to be a desire on the part of white South Africans for collective amnesia, he argues, "We are actively encouraged to regard the ideal of a harmonious, non-racial society as an existing reality (even as it becomes increasingly clear that this is no more than just a dream, noble though it is), to focus only on the things which seek to deny the hideous past from which we have emerged." (2000: 14). Although Nyatsumba admits that political freedom is important, he argues that it is more important for the poor to see changes in their lives "if they are to continue embracing the New South Africa and the once in-vogue philosophy of reconciliation" (2000: 14). Similarly, Mosibudi Mangena, president of AZAPO, points to the inequalities still permeating South African society. "As the reality of this gap between the theoretical framework of our society and the actual situation asserts itself, so does the gloss of "rainbowism" fade" (2000: 22).

Echoing Hunt and Lascaris, prominent black businessman Saki Macozoma argues that great societies are held together by something akin to the American dream, something that South Africa lacked. A dream like that which bound Americans as a nation should be characterised by an uncompromising sense of nationhood, convey a fundamental commitment to equal opportunity, encourage freedom in its broadest sense, have space for each epoch to insert its own great challenge, and be accessible to ordinary people. "A great national dream…must be easy to incorporate into…the cultural tapestry of a society" (2000: 20), and this, he argued, had yet to happen in South Africa. It is at this time, when cynicism and disenchantment with the ideals of the New South Africa began to prevail, that initiatives aimed at improving the perception of South Africa internationally first appeared, to be followed by campaigns designed to encourage patriotism and a positive attitude to the country within South Africa itself. Brand South Africa was beginning to take shape, as a response in part to the inability of the New South Africa to direct the energies of government, business and civil society by providing a template for a vision of an increasingly uncertain future.

Love your country: it's good for the economy

Brand South Africa functions as a national myth in much the same way as the collection of tendencies I have titled "new freedoms": while it has seldom been named explicitly as a national myth, it serves as an appropriate heading for developments that endorse the concept of the brand state. These range from the initiatives listed earlier on in this chapter, to the national obsession with tourism figures and the performance of the Rand. In the era of the brand state, patriotism is entwined with economics: according to this particular logic, citizens should love their country because it is good for the economy. Trevor Manuel, the minister of

finance himself, has argued that there is a correlation between national unity and consumer confidence, which in turn will lead to economic growth. Manuel has cited the example of France, which enjoyed increased economic growth after the victory of its football team in the 1998 World Cup. "Does this industry lead or lag when it comes to helping South Africa create economic growth?" he asked the advertising industry at the 2002 AdFocus conference. "Does it truly capture those moments of national unity on which we can build consumer confidence, create increased demand?" (2002: 2). This emphasis on economic benefits points to a strong vein of pragmatism that runs through the myth of Brand South Africa, in contrast to the idealism of the New South Africa or the African renaissance.

Linked to the concept of the brand state is a heightened awareness of international perceptions of South Africa. This is something that was a source of great concern to South Africans during the first three or four years of the new millennium, from the upper echelons of government down to ordinary citizens counting on international investment to stimulate economic growth and jobs - and South Africans, of course, are more familiar than most with the tribulations associated with citizenship of an international pariah state. The enthusiastic embrace at all levels of South African society – from schoolboys to government ministers - of IT billionaire Mark Shuttleworth's $20 million quest to be the "First African in Space" in 2002, should be seen in the context of a nation engaged in an energetic search for positive narratives around which to shape its self-image.

Shuttleworth – who, as luck would have it, had made his fortune before the Internet bubble finally burst - had previously been heavily criticised for relocating to London, and for making the supremely insensitive comparison of foreign exchange regulations with apartheid-era pass laws. But by casting himself as a bona fide patriot (largely through the donning of the uniforms of national sports teams) linking the trip to Science and Mathematics education and conducting live interviews with Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki from the international space station), Shuttleworth ensured that all past transgressions were forgiven. Despite being an extremely wealthy and privileged white male who had enjoyed the benefits of a private education, he was held up as a genuine national hero, embodying the kind of entrepreneurial and risk-taking qualities to which South Africans of all races could aspire. Indeed, he enjoyed the kind of adulation of which few sports stars could boast, and the entire event was a public relations triumph. By some loose estimates, the worth of the coverage he was given by international news organisations ran into the millions of dollars, and Shuttleworth's mission was widely perceived to have boosted South Africa's international image: here was an African country that could produce audacious IT billionaires as well as politicians.

In fact, the official response to the Shuttleworth episode is evidence of one of the more positive aspects of the brand state. The value of minorities to the nation can be assured as everyone is perceived – according to the pragmatism of the brand state concept – to be working together for the economic good of the country. For example, van Ham has argued, the brand state can both attenuate and marginalize nationalist tendencies:

> The brand state's use of its history, geography, and ethnic motifs to construct its own distinct image is a benign campaign that lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity that can often accompany nationalism. By marginalizing nationalist chauvinism, the brand state is contributing greatly to the further pacification of Europe.
>
> (2001: 2)

In the South African case this can be seen to good effect, as the Eurocentric winelands of the Western Cape are as important to attracting foreign visitors and their currency, as Zulu cultural villages or the Apartheid Museum. The government therefore has an interest in retaining evidence of colonial cultural influences, while it has admittedly come under fire for pandering to the interest of big business and "elite" tourists.

The Brand South Africa myth can also be discerned in public discourse relating to international sporting events, particularly the right to host such events. Public despair over the failure to win the right to host the 2004 Olympics or the 2006 Football World Cup stemmed as much from the loss of hoped-for revenue from tourism as an assault on national prestige. Large signboards reminding passing traffic of the importance of tourism to job creation were erected on the main highway to Durban; being nice to tourists had become an act of patriotism. In line with the activities of many other countries, South Africa embarked on a much more aggressive campaign to market itself as both a tourism and investment destination[95]. The old Satour campaigns of the 1980's, with their desk calendars full of smiling Ndebele women and noble Kruger Park lions - using the slogan "The world in one country" - were long forgotten as marketing experts set about the task of luring visitors to South African shores with the prospect of encounters with unique South Africanness.

The first promotion of this new kind of self-awareness, of South Africa as a product to be marketed overseas, was the Welcome campaign, which was launched in 1999. It was designed to raise awareness among South Africans of the importance of tourism – as the

[95] It took a while for the government to commit itself to expanding tourism to South Africa. In 1998, the budget for Satour (now South African Tourism) was cut to R64 million, despite a budget request for R290 million. Tourism in South Africa, one finance journalist suggested facetiously, would have a much greater chance of success "if government were persuaded to find a Minister [Pallo Jordan] for what could be a portfolio of increasing importance who did not regard tourism as a devious Eurocentric device to deprive his people of their right to ancestor worship" (Keenan, 1998: 19).

campaign pointed out, for every eight tourists that visited South Africa, one job was created – and to encourage the locals to be friendly to visitors. The award-winning Welcome television advertisement showed a diverse range of South Africans – coalminers, a Basotho tribesman, a conservative Afrikaner, a coloured fish packer amongst others - attempting to learn greetings in various foreign languages. The end frame of the advertisements reminds viewers that one job is created for every eight tourists that visit the country: it is important to treat visitors well, because the economy and therefore all South Africans will benefit. It is instructive to note that this kind of enactment of multicultural South African identity was for the ultimate benefit of overseas tourists; South Africans needed to see themselves from the point of view of an outsider in order to project a particular version of the national character to foreign visitors. (It is interesting to note that this kind of strategy was anticipated in the Castle Lager 'Foreigner' advertisement analysed in chapter five, where South African identity is marked out in relation to Americanness.) The 'performative' nature of South African identity also served to ameliorate internal divisions, at least in theory, as everyone worked together to make visitors feel welcome.

This understanding of South African identity as a kind of product - a self-consciously perfomed identity for outside observers or visitors – is key to the Brand South Africa myth. Whereas the mythology of the New South Africa focused on perceptions of South Africans by other South Africans (with the approval of the outside world serving as an added bonus), in Brand South Africa, the approbation of outsiders is now crucial for the economy, The myth of a multicultural nation united by the shared commitment of the people to the values upon which it was founded in 1994 – referred to implicitly by the Welcome campaign, and explicitly in other marketing efforts – has now become pragmatic and practised: South Africans now consciously re-enact their national characteristics in order to generate foreign investment.

Other initiatives focused on targeting other countries, most notably the United Kingdom; the coverage these events received locally helped to ensure that South Africans were aware of efforts to market the nation overseas. "Celebrate South Africa" was a month-long festival of arts, culture and innovation which took place in London during May 2001. The South Africa Freedom Day Concert, scheduled for the weekend of the seventh anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections, represented "an opportunity to celebrate with the people of the UK, South Africa's hard fought for and won freedom and democracy" (www.gov.za, accessed 2002). The concert included such international stars as The Corrs, REM and Atomic Kitten, as well as local artists such as Mandoza and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Mandela was present at the concert and one of its major drawcards. The so-called "Mandela effect" was

still a powerful attraction for tourists, even in the wake of September 11. "Many Americans do not know South Africa," observed SA Tourism's country manager in the US. "You say you are from South Africa and they ask you which country in Southern Africa. They only get it when you mention Nelson Mandela" (Malala, 2002: 3). The Circle of Sunshine campaign was developed in order to turn that much-maligned group, South African expatriates, into assets instead of liabilities. Launched in London in October 2000, the Circle of Sunshine aimed to incentivise South Africans and people well-disposed to South Africa to become "ambassadors" for the country. Several high-profile British figures were given free trips to South Africa in the hope that they would spread a positive message about the country.

As I noted earlier, the International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMC) was especially prominent in its promotion of the Brand South Africa myth. The IMC was established by President Thabo Mbeki to counter negative international perceptions of South Africa. "Negative perceptions of South Africa have damaged the country's ability to compete optimally in world markets, to encourage investment and attract choice," noted Yvonne Johnston, the council's CEO. South Africa therefore had two choices: "either to actively position South Africa ourselves, or allow this to be done for us by the international media, according to their own agendas" (2002: 11).

The IMC also hoped to influence South Africans themselves as well as the international community. "By changing perceptions, we hope to change the topics of conversation among South Africans, to get us talking about all of the great things we may not have been aware of and of which we can all be proud. When we understand the values of the country and see the strategy for the brand reflected in the specific behaviours, the gap between the actual brand and the perceived promise will close," explains Johnston (2002: 11). "A brand is an agent for change. South Africa is a work in progress" (Johnston, 2002: 11). As Johnston's comments make clear, the Brand South Africa myth was intended, not only to capture the essence of South African identity and project it to the outside world, but also, crucially, to project a version of national identity to South Africans themselves, in order to encourage them to change their behaviour – so that the image of South Africa and the actual experience of South Africa would not be too different.

Proudly South African: nation-building through consumption

If South Africa was to become Brand South Africa, then the linking of patriotism to consumption was an entirely logical development of the shift in emphasis to branding. The idea of a campaign to promote job-creation and job-retention by encouraging South Africans to purchase locally manufactured products was first mooted at the Presidential Jobs Summit

of 1998. The campaign was dubbed Proudly South African and launched in 2001; founding sponsors included the state-owned enterprises SAA, Eskom and Telkom and insurance giant Old Mutual. Companies that wished to use the Proudly South African logo to promote their products and services had to fulfil several criteria, including incurring at least 50% of direct production costs in South Africa; a commitment to high quality; equitable labour practice; and a commitment to minimising the environmental impact of their activities (Von Lieres, 2002: 4).

Taking its cue from the enormously successful Australian Made campaign, Proudly South African sought to encourage South Africans to engage in nation-building through the act of consumption. By purchasing products made in South Africa, consumers would be helping to create jobs and in so doing, combat poverty and crime. "If you believe in South Africa, and you want to make your country a better place in which to live – you can make a difference," announced a supplement designed to spread the Proudly South African gospel. "By actively looking for the Proudly South African logo when you go shopping, and by supporting companies, products and services that are members of the campaign, all South Africans can stand proud" (Proudly South African supplement, 2002: 1). A Proudly South African Day was created, and, in order to celebrate it, members of the public were encouraged to make South African meals or cocktails, write poems and decorate their offices in an appropriately patriotic fashion. Even the producers of the television reality show *Big Brother* announced that the day would be "100% South African from the moment the housemates open their eyes" (Van Zilla, 2002: 7).

Proudly South African, in theory, gave everyone "the opportunity to play a practical, positive role in making South Africa a better place to live and work" (Proudly South African supplement, 2002: 1). "Every South African can be a nation-builder," was the message from the chairman of the initiative, Tim Modise (Van Zilla, 2002: 7). Just as importantly, Proudly South African also served as a guarantee of quality, and sought to change deep-rooted perceptions that imported goods were better than locally made equivalents. Martin Feinstein, the chief executive of Proudly South African, was careful to point out that the campaign was not anti-import, but rather "pro-choice". "We want the South African choice to be identified in any particular category and consumers to understand that they have a choice and what the implications of that choice are" (von Lieres, 2002: 4).

The response of advertising to the rise of Brand South Africa is especially revealing. It is from 2000 onwards – once cynicism about "rainbowism" had taken hold - that overt references to those events that underpinned the mythology of the New South Africa begin to

appear in television and radio advertising campaigns. In chapter two I traced the most significant events that mark the history of post-apartheid South Africa: these included, in chronological order, the release of Nelson Mandela, the 1994 elections, Mandela's inauguration, the 1995 rugby World Cup final and the ratification of the Constitution in 1996 (which, conversely, marked the beginnings of the African renaissance myth). Yet explicit references to these events are relatively rare in advertising of the time; it appears that only after the mythology of the New South Africa began to lose favour that they appear in campaigns for such advertisers as Castle Lager, South African Airways, Telkom and the International Marketing Council. Castle, for example, fondly recalled the SAA flyover at the 1995 Rugby World Cup; for its part, Telkom explored the role that telephones may have played in significant moments in South Africa's history, from Chris Barnard's heart transplant, to Mandela's release, the Rugby World Cup final (of course) and Lucas Radebe's captaincy of the national soccer side.

If Castle Lager sought to epitomise South African identity during the rainbow nation years, it is South African Airways that takes its place at the turn of the twenty-first century. Like Castle Lager, South African Airways has attempted, quite forcefully, to create equivalence between its own brand and the nation, but even more explicitly than Castle, it has endeavoured to define exactly what the essence of that nation might be. In 2000, SAA produced 'Anthem', an advertisement that is probably the most successful produced to date in terms of its attempts to locate a national sense of self within ambiguity and paradox. [96] Describing South Africa in terms of a series of apparently contradictory statements, represents the most coherent and concise attempt by the advertising industry both to define South African identity and make a case for national unity in the face of apparently insurmountable differences.[97]

Subsequently, SAA has produced other campaigns that seek to awaken South African pride and put forward an argument on behalf of a particular understanding of what constitutes the essence of what it is to be South African. This kind of hailing of the nation is to be expected, because, for various reasons rooted in history, it is airlines , more than any other industry, that

[96] Not entirely coincidentally, the campaign was produced (as was the Welcome campaign) by the same agency – TBWA Hunt Lascaris - whose chairmen, Hunt and Lascaris, had published *The South African Dream*.

[97] Nonetheless, 'Anthem' cannot be considered a typical example of South African advertising's attempts to put forward a case for a particular understanding of the national character or national identity. For example, it makes reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission rather than more typically favoured moments in South Africa's history. It is most similar in tone to a 2004 advertisement for Standard Bank that celebrates ten years of democracy; perhaps not surprisingly, it was produced by the same agency responsible for 'Anthem'.

have come to symbolize nations. As the SAA entry in the *First Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding in South Africa* declares in characteristically breathless PR-speak, "South African Airways… is…an expression of a nation's pride and a reflection of a people's spirit" (1999: 68).

Airlines and nations

Airlines have always been congruent with nations: British Airways and Great Britain, Iberia and Spain, Alitalia and Italy, to mention but a few. It is generally assumed that to fly with a national carrier is to encounter a particular essence of the nation: its reliability or lack thereof, its commitment to service, the friendliness of its people, the competence of its technical staff. National characteristics are imputed to national airlines, so that passengers may be reluctant to fly with Aeroflot for fear of Russian technical backwardness and lack of customer service, or Ethiopian Airlines because of its supposed cavalier attitude to safety.

Historically, the prestige of a nation has been invested to a considerable extent in its national airline. It is this apparently unique ability on the part of the national carrier to exemplify the nation that has led to ongoing state involvement in airlines, despite ongoing criticism from the private sector.[98] State involvement in airlines has been based on various considerations, among them economic, legal, military and psychological. In some countries, airlines are considered public utilities and should therefore be run by the government. In those countries where tourism is an important industry, government control of the airline delivering all-important tourists is considered essential to ensuring the continued viability of this source of foreign exchange. "Airlines in some countries," observed the ICC Commission on Air Transport, "are regarded as important symbols of the national identity, as "flag carriers" which carry the nation's emblem to distant destinations. By extension, these airlines have become instruments of government policy." (1995, 2001: 3)

At a time when financial pressures have resulted in a trend away from national airlines, attempts by airlines strongly identified with particular nations to alter their corporate identity by shifting away from a direct conflation with national identity, have not proven successful. British Airways, which had long positioned itself as the "world's favourite airline", attempted during the late 1990s to claim an identity beyond a purely British one. The Union Jack-inspired tail livery on many British airways aircraft was replaced by imagery representing

[98] "In principle state assistance to airlines, whether direct or indirect, should be deemed to distort the market and to be detrimental to airlines and users" was the view of the International Chamber of Commerce in its 1995 Commission on Air Transport (1995, 2001:1).

different parts of the world, from Ndebele patterns to Chinese calligraphy. The "world colours" were introduced in 1997 after the then chief executive argued that 60% of the airline's passengers were not British, and that the old red and blue colours looked "stuffy" (BBC, 2001: 1). The exercise – which cost £60 million - turned out to be a "public relations nightmare" as management were accused by the British media of wasting millions on an unnecessary and un-British design (Sheldon, 2001: 1). Significantly, the designs were derided as "third world" and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously draped a handkerchief over a model aircraft displaying the new logo, denouncing it as "awful" (BBC, 2001: 2). In 2001, a decision was taken to revert to the Union Jack insignia after a drop in passenger numbers was linked to the fact that the airline's Britishness was one of its selling points. "Britishness has been at the core of BA and that view is held worldwide," explained a BA spokesperson after the demise of the world colours was announced (BBC, 2001: 1). "In motoring, BMW is associated with quality and makes no bones about its being German. In the same way, we see ourselves as being a quality, British airline."

Not entirely coincidentally, BA rebranded itself at the moment when Cool Britannia became fashionable, and returned to its more traditional livery once Cool Britannia had lost favour with the public. Indeed, the fortunes of the national airline may have profound implications for the national mood and the nation's perception of itself, as the example of Switzerland suggests. Swiss prestige was seriously damaged by the collapse of Swissair in October 2001. Until the grounding of the entire Swissair fleet on October 2, the public had no clue that the airline was facing bankruptcy; across the world (including South Africa), passengers were left stranded and without compensation. The publicity was extremely damaging. As a BBC journalist observed, "the humiliating demise of Swissair has left the nation stunned" (Bonsu, 2001: 1). Pilots were forced to dry clean their own uniforms and carry cash to buy aviation fuel. "It was like we were a bush airline," was a phrase commonly used, as if the Swiss felt their very first world status to be under threat in the wake of the collapse of their "ultimate icon" (Bonsu, 2001: 3).

SAA and South Africa

As the above examples illustrate, flag-carrying airlines are the bearers of powerful psychological associations. They are metonyms of the nation, perceived to embody the characteristic of the nation they represent (hence the shock of the failure of SwissAir to the citizens of Switzerland, a nation perceived to be the epitome of order and precision);

historically they have also played a critical economic role in bringing in investors and tourists.[99]

The relationship between SAA and South Africa is for the most part typical of flag-carrying airlines. As is the case with many flag carriers, the fortunes of South African Airways have in many ways mirrored those of its parent country. One of the world's oldest airlines, SAA was founded in 1934. During the apartheid years, SAA was denied landing rights at many international airports, limiting its ability to provide a sufficiently comprehensive network. During the 1980s the airline carefully avoided political overtones with advertising campaigns that emphasised service. "We didn't invent flying, we just perfected it" went the slogan. In 1992, in recognition of changing political circumstances, SAA changed its pay-off line to "Africa's warmest welcome", a shift in emphasis that unintentionally anticipated the African renaissance. Interestingly, the campaign was based on the concept of Ubuntu at least a year or two before it was to become such a fashionable concept in public debate. "The style we're evolving through the ubuntu philosophy of African communication is not to make ourselves hugely ethnic, but to make the point of the very personalised style of African service," explained a senior SAA marketing communications manager (Koenderman, 1994: 86).

After the democratic elections of 1994, SAA changed its old "flying springbok" livery to reflect the colours of the new flag. "South African Airways has taken on a new look and values," notes the *Encyclopedia of Brands and Branding* with the glibness typical of the public relations press release (1999:68). "Distance has to be put between past and present...Uncomfortable memories have to be left behind without jettisoning established brand attributes that consumers value in a brand offering safe, reliable air travel." Just prior to the 1995 World Cup Final, an SAA 747 flew over Ellis Park stadium, neatly marrying the airline to events of national significance.[100] A specially painted 747, "Ndizani", carried the South African team to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. In 1997, TBWA Hunt Lascaris won the SAA account and produced a television campaign using stock footage of sleepy world leaders, contrasting them with footage of a sprightly looking Nelson Mandela. Some of the advertising produced by the agency used sexist stereotypes of dumb blondes to communicate messages about SAA's services. Yet other campaigns aimed at a broader audience – beyond the relative few who could afford air travel - worked hard to evoke a sense

[99] The latter role has diminished in the face of increasing competition. In fact, SAA has been accused of obstructing tourism and investment because of its refusal to allow international airlines to schedule more flights to Cape Town International; consequently, there is insufficient capacity to bring in more visitors.

[100] The centrality of the SAA jumbo to memories of the Final was subsequently exploited by a Castle Lager advertisement for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, which featured a group of Castle drinkers lining up at the end of a runway in order to recreate the sensation of being underneath a low-flying SAA 747.

of South African identity within a context that had moved on from uncritically cheery references to the rainbow nation. [101]

In chapter two, I argued that the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final was the most significant event in the history of the New South Africa, symbolising as it did the coming together of black and white South Africans in support of a common cause. The Final was also the event at which both the rainbow nation and Madiba magic myths were seen to best effect. As South Africa entered the era of the Brand State, the Final and other events began to appear in advertising campaigns. SAA referred to the 1995 Final in a 2002 campaign intended to raise awareness of the impending arrival of its new Airbus A-340-600 aircraft. In the following 45-second advertisement first broadcast in November 2002, a French Airbus employee reminiscences about his presence at the World Cup, and links it to South African Airways' decision to purchase the world's "most sophisticated aircraft".

SAA - Airbus

VISUAL	AUDIO
The scene opens on a long-shot of a dark-haired man seated at a table on a pavement, lifting a coffee cup to sip at it. In the background, the word "Brasserie" is visible. The lighting is sombre and the colours washed out. A scooter chugs past the scene in front of the camera.	SFX: Moody music that continues throughout. Snatches of an exchange between the man and the waiter are just audible. The word "merci" can be heard.
A fish-eye shot of a dark, narrow alley. A cyclist rides up the alley away from the camera, while a blue Citroen DS approaches the camera and passes it to the right.	
Mid-shot of dark-haired man getting out of the blue Citroen. In the background, a Concorde and the tail sections of several large jetliners of visible.	Voice-over (strong French accent): My name is Christophe Panisse.
Mid-shot of Christophe walking from right to left with papers under his arm. Behind him, two huge transporter planes are visible. On one of them, the word "Airbus" can be read. The light remains overcast and gloomy.	Um, I would like to show you what I do.
Long-shot of wing of jet with engine visible. It appears to be parked inside a hangar. Next to the wing, and dwarfed by it, two men are raised on a portable platform. Title: Airbus. Toulouse, France.	

[101] Another noteworthy television advertisement in the Fly the South African Dream campaign features a white South African family returning from Australia: emigration in reverse. For most of the narrative, we assume that the family is leaving all the life they have made in South Africa: home, friends, family. It is only when they are shown entering "Sydney Airport" and their eyes mist over at the sight of an SAA tail that it becomes clear that they are in fact returning to South Africa. Emigrants – members of the widely despised "chicken run" – become patriots par excellence. This advertisement addresses a highly contemporary - and controversial – issue and turns it on its head. South African identity, suggests the narrative, cannot be left behind when South Africans leave the country; it tugs at their hearts until they feel compelled to return home.

A blurred figure crosses the frame.	
Mid-shot of Christophe leaning in a relaxed manner against an enormous jet engine. He addresses the camera directly in a friendly tone of voice.	Christophe: This is the world's most sophisticated aircraft. It's an Airbus, naturally.
Fish-eye lens shot of cockpit.	
Wide angle shot of the aircraft from the front. A man in a blue uniform rides across the frame in front of the plane.	
Wide, high angle shot of the aircraft from the side. Now the SAA livery is visible on the tail and on the wings. The men on the platform ere visible in the foreground. One of them runs his hand across the SAA logo on the wing.	Voice-over: South African Airways have chosen this for their entire fleet and I'm proud of it.
Low angle shot of man standing below the tail, which dwarfs him.	
Rapid fade to a wider-angle shot of the same scene.	
Rapid fade to a close-up of Christophe looking up and smiling at something. He adjusts his gaze to smile broadly at the camera. The jet engine is visible behind him.	
Wide angle shot of the aircraft from below the wing. The words "South African" are clearly visible on the fuselage. The two men shown earlier appear to be inspecting the writing.	Voice-over: You know, I was in
Close-up of light meter being held up to the blue of the words "South African".	
Shot of same two men, this time from the front of the plane. This time "South African" is obliquely visible.	South Africa once,
Mid-shot of light reflecting on engine as the hangar door opens	For the Rugby World Cup,
Long shot, from a low angle, of the aircraft. In the background, the hangar doors slide open. The sky behind is blue and clear.	And I saw Nelson Mandela –
High angle shot of plane being reversed out of hangar.	Madiba -
Low angle shot of plane being steered outside by a man driving a small vehicle.	And I saw a country…reborn
Low angle shot of tail section against a bright blue sky.	It was a very special
Wide angle shot of aircraft taking off.	time for me.
Low angle shot of Christophe standing , a glass wall behind him in which the reflection of the plane flying above is visible. His gaze follows the plane's flight path.	This is a very special people.
Wide angle shot of aircraft in distance, the sun behind it, its livery barely visible in shadow.	So to you in South Africa I say, "Bon voyage".
Fade to black. Title: South African Airways	Voice-over (South African accent): Today, we're especially

Fade to black.	proud we're South African.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this advertisement is the fact that the events that Christophe refers to are never shown. There are no clips of Mandela presenting the trophy at the Final, only shots of the aircraft, resplendent in its South African Airways livery. In this case, the imagery establishes a sense of awe at the enormous size and technological superiority of the plane. The mood is sombre, an effect created through the use of portentous music in addition to the grey and blue tones that dominate the quality of the light in the outdoor shots. The style of the direction and editing is typical of the time. Blurred figures walking into frame, washed out colours and deliberately awkward editing lend the production a "gritty" feel, reminiscent of documentary. The makers of the advertisement, through the use of such an approach, are clearly attempting to construct a narrative that feels "real". Though there is no mention whether Christophe is a genuine Airbus employee who really did attend the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa, the style of the advertisement leads the viewer to assume that this is the case.

The opening scene is used to establish – beyond any doubt - the identity of the narrator as a Frenchman. Thus we see him sitting at a typically French café (the word "Brasserie" visible in the background and "merci" faintly audible in order to confirm this assumption). A scooter drives past, while, in the next scene in a narrow alley in amongst old, quaint buildings, we see a cyclist and then a Citroen DS. The pavement café and the DS are both typical – indeed clichéd - signifiers of French culture and identity, so there can be no doubt that we are in France. This reduction of French culture to the most obvious and over utilised of symbols is extended further when the narrator introduces himself to the audience in an accent that is so typically French as to sound contrived.

The narrator only begins to speak when the main protagonist arrives at what appears to be an airport (and which we soon realise is the Airbus factory). The sense of gritty reality is emphasised by the hesitation in the narrator's voice. "Um," he says, before adding, "I would like to show you what I do." His tone is rather humble, and when he addresses the camera in a later shot, he appears friendly and approachable despite his acknowledged pride in his employer's products. Christophe is a likeable, approachable character rather than an executive representing a large, European corporation. His humanity is important, because it helps to balance the vast scale of the plane, the virtues of which he extols.

"This is the world's most sophisticated aircraft," he tells the audience as he leans against one of the huge engines. The shots from this point on are devoted to expressing the enormous size of this aircraft and the awe-inspiring way in which it dwarfs the men around it. A shot of the plane from the side reveals that its tail and wings bear the livery of South African Airways. At the same time, Christophe explains that SAA have chosen this Airbus for their entire fleet. This is something that makes him proud (whether he is proud of the Airbus itself, or proud because SAA have selected it above other aircraft, is not clear).

There is then a short pause in the narration, as if Christophe is reflecting on the significance of this moment. In the mean time, the plane is filmed from various angles, revealing the words "South African" on its fuselage. It is at this point that Christophe reminisces about the Rugby World Cup. His immediate association with this event is Nelson Mandela – Madiba as he describes him, using the South African term of endearment. It is not necessary for him to describe why he associates the World Cup with Mandela, because this event is well-known to South Africans. "And I saw a nation…reborn," he adds hesitantly, as though searching for the right words (and as though this voice-over has not been carefully scripted). "It was a special time for me. This is a very special people." At the same time, the hangar doors are opened and as the plane is wheeled out into the open, the grey, stereotypically European skies of the earlier scenes have been replaced by a bright blue sky. As the aircraft's link with South Africa is revealed, so the atmosphere brightens, and, free at last, it can take off and fly into a sunny, metaphorically South African sky. Symbolically, South Africa's special status is confirmed.

Thus Christophe-the-Frenchman bestows nationhood upon South Africans, associates South Africa's growing sense of identity with his own emotional state, and links, explicitly, the coming into nationhood of South Africa with the Rugby World Cup – not the 1994 elections. The final word comes from the South African voice-over, which is used in conjunction with the SAA logo: "Today we're especially proud to be South African." "South African" is of course, a pun, referring as it does to "South African Airways" and to a generic South African national identity. The use of the word "proud" neatly ties up the narrative, linking back to Christophe's pride in the sophistication of the Airbus. Everyone involved – both the airline and the nation of which the airline is a metonym – is entitled to feel proud; this pride stems partly from South Africa's unique ability to inspire others, even rugby-loving Airbus employees, and partly because investing in the world's most sophisticated aircraft somehow confirms South Africa's own sophistication and commitment to advanced technology.

Identity, mythology and the approval of others

Several tendencies can be discerned in this narrative. Some of them are typical of South African narratives in general and advertising in particular, and have been used before, while others are new. For example, the use of advanced or "Western" technology to underpin a sense of national identity is not new; the juxtaposition of "First World" and "Third World" signifiers is used in Castle Lager 'Foreigner' and as a dualistic view of the world is present, both overtly and implicitly, throughout the Yebo Gogo campaign. And, like 'Foreigner', this advertisement seeks to reassure South Africans of their significance in the world by presenting the nation to itself through the eyes of an outsider or foreigner.

On one level, the use of a French rugby fan who happens to work for Airbus was clearly a device that allowed the advertisers to link the manufacture of the A-340-600 in France with a seminal event in South Africa; somehow, the presence of the Frenchman at the Rugby World Cup final infuses the Airbus with a South African flavour. The fact that his presence at the Rugby World Cup had an impact on Christophe's emotional state also confirms the unique status of South Africa as a symbol of hope in the eyes of the world.

Thus, South Africans remain as hungry as ever for validation from outsiders. According to the emotional logic of this advertisement, even if the technology involved in the manufacture of the Airbus is European, South Africa can claim a special status as a source of inspiration. In a way that goes beyond the mere purchase of the aircraft, South Africa has infused the manufacture of this pinnacle of Western technology with a unique spirit. Presumably Christophe will not feel as emotionally involved with planes that have been purchased by other airlines, because he does not have a special emotional bond with the countries of which they happen to be the flag carriers. Once again, South Africans are reassured of their uniqueness amongst nations.

The one important way in which 'Airbus' differs from other advertisements that have been analysed in this thesis is the fact that the events referred to in this narrative are already beginning to gain a distinct patina of nostalgia. For the first time, nostalgia about the events that shaped the New South Africa is a strategy available to advertisers. As the comments I cited in chapters one and two make clear, the Rugby World Cup Final was recognised as a mythical event at the time at which it took place. But the passing of time makes all the difference to a myth, especially a national one. Now the mythology is being recycled, and its function has changed subtly. It has become a founding narrative, something to be recited, almost as if by rote, every time an attempt is made to define the nation. Instead of eroding its significance, the passing of time has made longing for the glories of the past more intense.

The fact that the Rugby World Cup Final of 1995 represents a past glory for South Africa should not be underestimated, because the return, over and over again, to this event – in this particular campaign and others – is evidence of a failure to repeat this kind of accomplishment. South Africa's sporting fortunes declined rapidly in the second half of the 1990s and into the new millennium, so that there were simply no other past successes on which the foundations of the nation, its prestige, its ego, could be built. It can be argued, therefore, that South Africans have something of a repetition compulsion; they are doomed to re-enact the glories of 1995 until some other great success emerges during the course of history to take its place.

That said, however, the reasons for the favouring of the 1995 Final as emblematic of a rare victory for post-apartheid South African sport should not undermine its significance as a nation-building event. What is interesting is that Christophe should recall that he saw "a country…*reborn*." (My emphasis.) (The use of the word "country" is rather odd in this context, since "country" refers to the territory of a nation or a state and what Christophe actually means is the psychological entity, the nation. Nonetheless I will assume that what is being referred to is indeed nation-building.) Christophe, and thus SAA, links the birth of the new, post-apartheid South African nation not to de Klerk's announcement in 1990, or the democratic elections of 1994, but to the World Cup in 1995.

Mythically, then, the birth of the New South Africa is tied to this date and to the presence of Mandela at the Final when, as contemporary observers noted, he made a magnanimous and irresistible gesture of reconciliation to white South Africans. Democracy did not establish the nation, only the rights of citizenship for all races: the psychological leap to a sense of shared destiny was only made when Mandela donned the number 6 jersey and presented the trophy to Francois Viljoen. Clearly, as time passes and memories begin to grow frayed at the edges, it is this event that stands out as the single most significant event of the New South Africa. The mythical status of the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final is assured.

That SAA should find it necessary to invoke the power of this myth in raising awareness of its new fleet is confirmation of its legitimatory power. The purchase of the A340-600 was an expensive exercise, and SAA needed to make sure that it was viewed in a positive light by the South African public.[102] In the retelling of the myth at the same time as he introduces a South

[102] The funding of SAA's fleet purchases would later give rise to adverse publicity for the airline. SAA's hedging activities, designed to protect itself against fluctuations in the Rand/dollar exchange rate, led to a massive loss which was uncovered in 2003. Several executives, including the CEO, left

African audience to his pride and joy, Christophe links the events of June 1995 to the A-340-600, thus conferring the blessing of history on SAA's purchase. Somehow, because one of the men involved in the building of the new Airbus attended the Rugby World Cup, the plane has been invested with the spirit of the South African nation. The past that has shaped South African identity is linked to this present embodiment of the South African nation (an embodiment, we know, because the plane not only bears a logo that is reminiscent of the flag, but the words "South African"). The national spirit that animated the Rugby World Cup Final continues to aspire to great heights, this time quite literally, in the form of the aircraft that takes off and flies high into the sunny blue sky.

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Recycling the mythology of the New South Africa

What is apparent from 'Airbus' and other advertising campaigns that appeared at the time is that the mythology of the New South Africa has become available for use by advertisers now that it had lost its hold on the terms of public discourse. It is available because, as the rise of the Brand State on the form of Brand South Africa indicates, South Africans began to take a more pragmatic approach to national identity. In the search for appropriate signifiers, it is necessary to use whatever one can find to hand. As the present proved itself unequal to delivering stirring moments capable of generating national pride, the past began to take on a new credibility. In this way, national identity becomes a matter of reciting past glories by rote. Mandela and the Rugby World Cup Final have become fully mythical: through their mere mention, one is able to conjure up a host of meanings and associations. Nonetheless, they are, at the same time, meaningless in and of themselves. They are meaningful insofar as they connote South African pride and success in the international arena, but the emotional connection has become rehearsed, reflexive. One is taught to regard this event as a kind of equation where Mandela + World Cup = South African pride. Here one witnesses Barthes' argument put into action, as the form is emptied of meaning while the concept is filled with it.

With this development in mind, it seems an appropriate moment to recall J.M. Coetzee's comments on the opening ceremony of the Rugby World Cup in 1995. Coetzee saw in the spectacle a "de-historicized version of Tourist South Africa" (1995: 2). Eight years later, the opening ceremony of the Cricket World Cup presented much the same version of events, all designed to punt South Africa as a tourist destination. That South Africa is now much more savvy about brand-building was evident in 2003, with the pilot of the new SAA Airbus making a short speech inviting overseas television viewers to visit the country as he flew over Newlands cricket stadium during the opening match of the tournament. The presence of the

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SAA as a result. The South African taxpayer, through the transport parastatal Transnet, covered the loss, which amounted to some R6 billion.

South African Airways jet was of course a deliberate echo of the Rugby World Cup Final, one which has along with Mandela and the number six Springbok jersey found its way into the chronicles of the epic of the New South Africa.

So it is that many of the events and associated narratives that first emerged during the era of the New South Africa are being recycled very effectively as Brand South Africa takes hold of public discourse. Brand South Africa therefore offers a useful vantage point from which to examine the mythology of the New South Africa. This turn of events demonstrates how a myth may serve different purposes at different times. Firstly, when the myth is fresh – when it has just rolled off the production line of history – it serves to lend a sense of order and purpose to the contingency of current events. This kind of myth is closer to myth as Sorel understood it, a construction in which the future is imagined as a battle in which triumph is certain.

But as distance grows between the events that supplied the raw material for the mythology, and newer and fresher national myths replace it, the character of the myth changes. It becomes frozen in time, and its use represents a return to the past in order to provide reassurance in an uncertain and threatening present. This kind of myth often relies upon nostalgia for effect, and it is closer to myth as Barthes conceived it: myth as an instrument of ideology in society. As the Scottish political scientist Robert M. MacIver observed in 1947, "The most complete exposition of a social myth often comes when the myth itself is waning" (cited in Bell, 2004: 7). This was certainly true of the mythology of the New South Africa, which, though it had lost most of its initial power, proved so useful to the Brand South Africa myth. This was partly because the former had established a set of conventions for representing South African identity, but also because it offered a ready-made litany of defining moments for a nation which remained uncertain of what the future might bring.

In its re-use of the mythology of the New South Africa, albeit to somewhat different ends, the Brand South Africa myth effectively brings this thesis full circle. As the emergence of Brand South Africa has indicated, national myth is always evolving, ever-ready to adapt itself in order to fulfil the requirements of the day. Whether those mythical events and personae that have featured so prominently in advertising at the turn of the millennium – the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final is a case in point – continue to be re-used in the future will depend both on the needs of the powers that be and the receptiveness (or otherwise) of the South African citizenry to the emotional power of these associations.

Chapter Eight

One way of ending the story

In the first decade of the new millennium, advertising faces a perplexingly wide array of challenges. The South African advertising industry may be grappling with the peculiar demands of transformation, but across the world, media fragmentation, recession, new technologies that allow television viewers to delete the ad breaks are adding up to what *Fortune* describes as a "nightmare on Madison Avenue" (Leonard, 2004: 43).

Still, those who are passionate about advertising refuse to be bowed. Even if the advertising industry is being forced into a corner by changes both in the way companies pay suppliers and consumers absorb and decode messages, for them, advertising still matters. "If you landed here from Mars and you looked at all the elements of society – commerce, pop culture, humanity – advertising defines us more as a civilization than anything else out there," claims Donny Deutsch, probably America's best-known advertising man. "It's selling in its most grotesque obviousness. It's human manipulation. Yet it's charming. It's something we all participate in. It's what makes all the engines go. It's what allows television to exist. It's what drives people to stores" (quoted in Leonard, 2004: 46).

Deutsch's summary of advertising's central role in defining "civilization" goes at least some of the way towards explaining why it was that advertising took upon itself the role of summoning the New South Africa into being while it simultaneously sold motor oil, fast food, or beer. Such a development was perhaps unexpected, because, on the surface at least, advertising does not appear to be the most suitable candidate for the responsibility of strengthening the institutions of democracy, fostering a sense of common purpose amongst a mutually alienated citizenry and enhancing a sense of distinct national identity.

As I have noted in previous chapters, advertising has long been regarded by many theorists as well as academic and social commentators as ideologically unsound, if not downright morally suspect. Advertising was, and in many cases, is still commonly regarded as exploitative and manipulative, encouraging consumers to desire goods they do not need and instilling undesirable materialist values. According to the profoundly influential theoretical tradition established by the Frankfurt School, advertising is viewed, to put it baldly, as bad for society.

So it is interesting that in post-apartheid South Africa, the view (be it explicit or implicit) by a range of commentators, from journalists to industry mavens, that advertising can potentially

play an ideologically progressive role in the all-important nation-building project should become increasingly prominent over the past decade. According to this analysis, advertising must not simply task itself with the communication of a compelling message about a product or service, it also has a responsibility to strengthen the very foundations upon which the national imaginary is constructed. So it is that advertising in South Africa has been burdened by many prominent black industry practitioners with a role bordering on the evangelical, charged as it is or was with assisting in the restoration of national pride as well as defining South African identity in a new democracy (Dlamini quoted in Mpye, 2004: 9). This view, that advertising has a positive contribution to make to the national psyche, extends to the highest levels of government, as evidenced by the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel's comments at the AdFocus conference of 2002, where he suggested that advertising could improve confidence and, therefore, strengthen the economy, by enhancing a national sense of self (2002).

Engaging with the nation: three broad trends

My concern in this thesis is ultimately less with the reasons behind the prominence of advertising as a nationalist cultural phenomenon and more with the content and style of, not only the advertisements themselves, but of the myths that are embedded within these thirty-second narratives. My task has been to present a critical analytic history of advertising in post-apartheid South Africa, specifically with a view to tracing the various ways in which advertising has engaged with nation-building myths as they emerged.

In no other country in the world – certainly not one with so sophisticated an advertising industry – has so much change taken place in such a short time. The very definition of what constitutes the nation, and the principles upon which the nation is based, have altered quite fundamentally since 1990. Thus it can be said that South Africa has provided a laboratory of sorts, one in which the relationship between advertising and myths of nation may be studied in a particularly focused way.

In the previous chapters, I have sought to define the points at which advertising becomes a vehicle for the communication of a particular ideology. While the range of advertising I have reviewed in this thesis precludes the possibility of simple categorization, it is possible to classify more or less typical approaches to the nation-building project. In chapter two, I traced the emergence of the key national myths in post-apartheid South Africa. The central narrative of this time is the rainbow nation myth, which focused on themes of racial reconciliation and the possibility of multiculturalism under an umbrella of South African identity. Together with

a second myth, what was subsequently referred to affectionately as "Madiba Magic" (Mandela the hero), the rainbow nation myth reached its apotheosis during the 1995 Rugby World Cup Final. As a history of the New South Africa makes clear, it was soon after this historic victory that a measure of disillusionment about the process of democratisation began to set in. Consequently, the rainbow nation myth gradually gave way to the myth of the African renaissance, the emergence of which was signalled in the speech given by then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki at the ratification of the Constitution in 1996.

In contrast to what was perceived by some as the naively conciliatory tenor of the rainbow nation myth, the African renaissance emphasized an African – and, by extension, racial – identity over and above a South African one. In parallel with the rainbow nation, Madiba Magic and the African renaissance, a fourth, less distinct mythical theme emerged, one revolving around the new sexual freedoms available to South Africans. Whether addressing the depiction of sexual situations or celebrating the inclusion of alternative sexual identities within public culture, advertising embraced this myth with considerable enthusiasm.

While it is possible, then, to construct something resembling a typology of the contests of the myths constituting the mythology of the New South Africa, the advertising campaigns which engaged with these themes can themselves be grouped into three broad trends distinguished by the way in which they treat the subject of the nation. Overlapping to varying degrees, these trends emerge in roughly chronological order, changing to accommodate other myths as they evolved in shifting historical circumstances.

The first type of advertising to make reference to nation-building during the period under review is also the most distinct and clearly defined of these three tendencies. This form of advertising is what Graeme Turner, in his examination of Australian advertising, defines as "incantatory", calling the nation into being (1993: 8). In this type of advertising, Australia is "explicitly figured (and interrogated) as image, myth – nation" (1993: 8), often using what Stuart Cunningham describes as an "established repertoire of Australian tropes" (1993: 130). Many examples of advertising of this kind appeared to be selling a particular type of Australian nationalism, constructing viewers, not as individual consumers, as members of a distinct Australian national community (King and Rowse, 1990: 38). "[T]he ad is calculated not to describe a good but to identify a product, a sentiment or a service with an imagined community, diverse but essentially unified" (King and Rowse, 1990: 39).

Taking the Australian example as my point of departure, I will argue that in the incantatory approach to advertising, the audience is interpellated as South African primarily through the use of national symbols (such as the flag or the national soccer team) and reference to defining national moments (such as the 1995 Rugby World Cup final). Allegiance to the nation is always assumed and the tenets from which the nation draws the justification for its existence are never questioned. The incantatory approach is one in which myth is closest to the surface, as explicit attention is drawn to those events from which the putative nation-state may seek legitimation. Typically, this type of advertising coincides with events or anniversaries of events of national significance, or international sporting contests which have the same effect.

Indeed, from the point of view of tonality, but not necessarily ideological intention, incantatory advertising at its most effusive may be compared with some justification to the kind of political propaganda more commonly associated with totalitarian regimes. As in the case of propaganda, advertising of this kind employs various well-established cinematic devices in order to leverage the emotional capital invested in national symbols to achieve its ends, in this case a positive association with the brand in question. In Castle Lager's World Cup advertisement, for example, low camera angles, powerful music and a repeated chant of "one nation, one soul" – hence, quite literally incantatory - are used to exploit an emotional connection with the national soccer team and the nation itself (and hence cement an emotional connection with the brand of beer).

Certainly, Castle Lager is the brand most consistently associated with incantatory advertising. Throughout its history of television advertising dating from the late 1970s, it had been positioned in relation to South African history. In the late 1980s, Castle Lager advertising campaigns began to feature multiracial casts in vignettes that looked quite clearly to a future in a post-apartheid society. 'Homecoming', which appeared in the same year in which the New South Africa was officially named by F.W. de Klerk, is quite subtle in its endorsement of the nation-building project. This is because, in contrast to the situation in 1998, when South Africa had both a national flag and a national soccer team entitled to participate in international competition, in 1990 there were as yet no suitably unifying national symbols available for exploitation by advertisers. Instead, using the characters of George and Mike to personify the effects of political change, the advertisers call the nation into being through an analogy with lasting friendship between individuals. At the time that it was produced, 'Homecoming' was probably the most potent available demonstration of the possibilities of a new post-apartheid national identity, particularly to the black audience at which it was targeted.

In ‘Homecoming’, the emergence of a South Africa no longer defined by racial separation and exile is inextricably linked to a capitalist system based on individual ties rather than racially defined loyalties, a theme further expanded on in later instalments in the Friendship campaign. In ‘Foreigner’, South Africans are defined by their familiarity with the unique inflections of South African life and their allegiance to a particular brand, while ‘Kariba’ portrays a middle class utopia in which black and white men share the same fundamental concerns.

In contrast to the advertisements in the Friendship campaign are more overtly patriotic approaches to advertising the nation, as witnessed in Castle Lager’s 1998 World Cup campaign, Sales House’s ‘1994’ and South African Airways’ campaign for its new Airbus A330-600 aircraft. Symbols of the South African nation-state such as the flag, and national teams are used to invoke an implied call to unity. Here the advertisers rely on the identification of the individual audience member with the symbol of the nation (which is evoked literally in the Castle Lager advertisement, when footage of crowds of soccer fans is included in the action). Similarly, when the French Airbus employee recalls the 1995 Rugby World Cup in the SAA advertisement analysed in the previous chapter, viewers are invited to include themselves in the “special people” to which he refers.

Notably, incantatory advertising is often used in order to put forward the bona fides of corporate brands (South African Breweries, the big banks and the cellphone network operators) and parastatals (SAA, Eskom and Telkom). Large private sector corporations have a vested interest in portraying their commitment to South Africa, not simply for the benefit of ordinary citizens, but, more importantly, for the political and business establishment that wields most of the power in post-apartheid South Africa. The role of individual egos of key executives, rather than marketing imperatives in producing such campaigns, should not be underestimated.

If brands linked to consumer products and services are promoted using the incantatory form, these are typically big, mass-market brands involved in the sponsorship of major sporting events. In recent years, debate has arisen as to the effectiveness of advertising that associates a company with the nation, with industry commentators asking whether such campaigns really result in benefits for the brand concerned, or simply generate positive feelings about being South African. It could be argued that, even in the case of the latter, there may well be benefits for the economy as a whole, as citizen-consumers who feel more positive about the current situation and optimistic about the future are more likely to spend more, particularly on

large purchases such as property. Therefore, there are likely to be distinct economic benefits that are likely to accrue, directly or indirectly, to corporations that promote positive national sentiment.

Related to the need to generate a positive attitude to South Africa to counteract negativity generated by crime and dissatisfaction with government performance is a third type of incantatory advertising. This form can be witnessed in the campaigns produced by Proudly South African and more particularly by the International Marketing Council. Here the aim is not merely to link a company name to patriotic sentiment, but to build positive perceptions around South Africa itself: South Africa *is* effectively the brand, and it is the role of the advertising to create a basis for national pride.

This kind of use of advertising by South African government bodies to attempt to shift perceptions further underscores the extent of the belief that advertising can be a very effective nation-building tool. The International Marketing Council and Proudly South African were both influenced by the success of similar campaigns in the UK, Australia and the US. In fact, advertising has been used, quite frequently, to promote national pride as an end in itself. Overall, however, the question of whether, in the act of referring to the nation, incantatory advertising advances the nation-building project by presenting the nation to itself or cynically co-opts the signifiers of an already established type of national unity and reroutes them into a discourse of consumerism is likely to remain open for debate.

If incantatory advertising is epic both in the type of narrative form it uses and the tonality of the communication, then a second broad tendency to emerge in South African advertising can be defined, in contrast, as "novelistic". The link between an extended work of prose fiction and thirty seconds of television broadcast time may not immediately be apparent. It is important therefore to note that I use the term "novelistic" in the sense that it draws on those characteristics of the novel as a genre that attempt to account for the complexity of modern, historical life through the examination of particular characters in specific settings. Maurice Shroder offers particular insight into the potential of the novelistic form as a source of direction for advertising when he argues that the novel is concerned above all with the difference between appearance and reality. "The novel," he argues, "records the passage from a state of innocence to a state of experience, from that ignorance which is bliss to a mature recognition of the actual way of the world." (1964, accessed 2005: 10).

Viewed from this perspective, "novelistic" advertising therefore refers to the tendency of advertisements of this nature to present relatively complex situations in which the stance on a

particular subject (such as national identity and race relations) may be ambivalent, in which characters undergo some kind of change, and in which the gap between the real and the ideal is acknowledged. This second type of advertising presents a more complex, nuanced narrative of the South African nation-building project, usually by homing in on moments of transition. Unlike incantatory advertising, which presents a largely uncritical – indeed, usually strongly idealized - view of the nation (in order to call the nation into being), novelistic advertising examines the strains produced by the discord between the old dominant paradigm and its successor. Vodacom's Yebo Gogo campaign, for instance, may be viewed as a key narrative of post-apartheid South Africa. But it does not call the nation into being through the representation of idealized moments in which alleged South African values may be crystallized.

Incantatory advertising reproduces dominant national myths without questioning them; in contrast, novelistic advertising interrogates the assumptions upon which such myths are based even if, in many cases, it ultimately endorses them.[103] Initially, for example, the Yebo Gogo campaign elects not to take the glib narrative of the rainbow nation at face value. There must be some conflict between black and white South Africans, some tussle for status, if equality is to be achieved. Ultimately, however, the ideal of reconciliation triumphs, even if it takes place in the background while Gogo and the Yuppie embark on their picaresque adventures. This second modality of advertising almost invariably makes use of humour as a way to make its point; in contrast, incantatory advertising, while it may include elements such as light-hearted banter (as in the case of the Friendship campaign) never goes so far as to question the assumptions upon which the nation-building project is based. South African incantatory advertising always takes itself very seriously.

The type of humour used in novelistic advertising ranges in tone from the gently affectionate to the satirical. In the case of the latter, novelistic advertising does not make a compelling case for the nation-building project, at least not the idealised vision associated with incantatory advertising. An example of this kind of approach is a campaign for Nando's which was centred on a proposition of "Something you never see". One execution focusing on attitudes to drunk driving showed a beefy white South African man refusing to drive because he had had too much to drink. Another showed a bakkie filled with white men; in the cab was

[103] On this point, it is interesting to note Maurice Shroder's argument that it is the function of the novel as a genre to present the experiential disillusionment of the novel's protagonist, a process to which he refers as "demythification" (1964, accessed 2005: 10). Shroder is careful, however, to distinguish between two different understandings of "myth", the first being the "transformation…of reality through imaginative projection" (1964, accessed 2005: 10), the second in the more conventional sense of myth as epic. In the latter case, Shroder entertains the possibility that the novel is the epic of the modern world, and hence a modern form of myth.

a black driver in a complete reversal of the typical situation with which South Africans were so familiar. Even as it informed viewers of the price of the latest flame-grilled chicken special, the advertisement succeeded in drawing attention to the arbitrary nature of entrenched race and class positions in South African socie ty.

Many of these campaigns propagate what might be the new mythology of the New South Africa by demonstrating the error of the previously dominant myths of white superiority and black inferiority. Castrol and Vodacom tackle the predominant myth of the apartheid era and demonstrate how misguided it was: blacks are not inferior because they are in fact able to get the better of white characters, whose arrogance make their downfall all the more deserved. Nando's uses a similar approach to address attitudes to homosexuality, when it mocks the naïveté of an older generation of white South Africans in 'Tailgunner'.

What is most interesting about the novelistic approach, however, are the undercurrents circulating in the narratives. These reveal that even at its most dominant, the mythology of the New South Africa was being undermined by prototypical myths that would consolidate under the heading of the African renaissance. Thus Vodacom 'Windmills' anticipates conflicts between the white elite and its putative black successor and Castrol 'Double' addresses the consequences of the shift in political power to the black majority even as both ostensibly address the issue of white racism.

Importantly, the novelistic approach allows for the exploration of larger issues through the prism of individual experiences. In this way, the transition to democracy is brought to life through the encounter of Castrol's Boet and Swaer with Moegae (who in a sense embodies the arrival of democracy when he sits alongside the two white men as an equal) and the picaresque adventures of Gogo and the Yuppie. It should also be acknowledged that there is an element of overlap between the novelistic and the other two categories I have defined. For example, 'Homecoming', while incantatory in its evocation of the nation, is also strongly novelistic in its use of the experiences over several years of the two friends, George and Mike, as a device to put forward an argument about the nature and possibilities of South African national identity.

There is also potential for overlap between the novelistic approach and the third category of advertising that seeks to evoke South African identity. The latter I have reserved as advertising that effectively advances the nation-building project through the act of representation of apparently typical South Africans (thus offering a means for the nation to mirror itself). In this way, certain modes of being or 'types' – characterized by a particular

accent, idiom and behavioural patterns – are marked as emblematic of South Africanness. This third broad category of advertising is one to which I will refer as "identificatory" advertising because it relies for effect on recognition of or identification with the characters and situations it portrays. For, as I have noted, while there has been a considerable amount of overlap between categories – novelistic advertising in particular often relies for its comic effectiveness on the depiction of "typical South Africans" – many advertising campaigns seek neither to call the nation into being nor critique social change. Their engagement with the New South Africa is solely through the portrayal of South Africans independent of any apparent ideological agenda.

Identificatory advertising without any attached overt ideological agenda is relatively uncommon during the core period under review in this thesis, when the change from apartheid to democracy was still recent and the associated myths still fresh. However, as I have noted, much of the modulated advertising that appeared between 1990 and 1998 makes use of the portrayal of uniquely and recognisably South African traits in order to communicate its message in a more emotionally appealing and entertaining way. Nando's 'Tailgunner' advertisement is able to juxtapose old and new social codes in a humorous way because its portrayal of the old South African couple is so compellingly specific and recognisable. Every aspect of Norman and Joan – accent, use of language, the pronunciation of the word "Rand" – is immediately recognisable to English-speaking South Africans. It is this recognition, which is often based on shared acknowledgement of an outwardly embarrassing aspect of South African modes of being, that both cements the relationship of the viewer with the brand being advertised and confirms one's cultural identification with the nation.

Notably, advertising tends to present those characteristics that are already regarded as typically South African, so that their appearance in advertising campaigns further entrenches their status as markers of South African identity. Boet and Swaer of the Castrol "Can of the Best" campaign, for example, are positioned as embodiments of South African rural authenticity. At the same time, the foregrounding of types that are not regarded as representative of the average South African have been used to good effect. In the Yebo Gogo campaign, the ridiculous figure of the Yuppie characterizes an affluent, urban white South African identity that lies outside of the mainstream and in this way, as I have argued, the advertisers have avoided censure from the public for being excessively critical of white South Africans in general.

I have repeatedly referred to Herzfeld's concept of cultural intimacy or rueful self-recognition in my analyses and it is worth reasserting the observation that most identificatory advertising

makes use of cultural intimacy to a greater or lesser extent. Herzfeld links cultural intimacy to alleged national traits that "offer citizens a sense of defiant pride in the face of more formal or official morality….These are the self-stereotypes that insiders express ostensibly at their own collective expense." (1998: 3). Vodacom made effective use of this kind of self-stereotype with its affectionate portrayal of uncouth Afrikaner rugby fans in "Naartjie", as has Castrol with the lovably lazy Boet and Swaer.

National myth of the official, somewhat chauvinistic sort tends to be at its least obvious in this type of advertising, though of course, even embarrassing self-stereotypes can be recycled into suitably invigorating national myths. Australians have famously mythologised the figure of the underachieving underdog in the form of the "little Aussie battler", and while there is no equivalent figure in South African national myth, bumbling, lovable (usually white, male) underachievers do appear often in advertising. Again, Vodacom's Yuppie and Castrol's Boet and Swaer fit into this category. As these examples suggest, cultural intimacy may also be a refuge and a source of support for recalcitrant male whiteness, and thus deepen divisions between one version of national identity (linked, in the case of both Australia and South Africa to an unjust past in which the supremacy of white men was unchallenged) and a new, more inclusive order.

Capitalist male South Africans

Popular figures such as Boet and Swaer, the Yuppie and Gogo, are a reminder that the New South Africa as portrayed in advertising has also tended to be very male. An overview of the campaigns analysed in this study reveals a marked disparity between the number of male and female characters depicted. Women are entirely absent in Castrol's "New South Africa' and 'Double' as well as Castle Lager's 'Homecoming' and 'Kariba'. They are present in relatively minor supporting roles in Nando's 'Tailgunner', Castle Lager 'Foreigner', the Vodacom campaign and to a lesser extent, Castle Lager 'World Cup', while it is men who frame the narrative in Sales House's '1994'. In every single one of the campaigns examined in the preceding chapters, it is men who drive the action and women who take a relatively passive role. Even when the woman is ultimately responsible for the situation that develops, as in the case of 'Tailgunner', it is the man who takes charge.

The preponderance of male characters may be explained in part by the nature of the products being advertised: beer, motor oil and to a lesser extent, cellphones, were more likely to be purchased by men than women. Therefore, the situations depicted in these advertising campaigns use genres (such as comedy) likely to appeal to male consumers. In addition, products targeted exclusively at women tend to feature advertising that is focused on the self

(both physical appearance and self-esteem) or the home, and larger issues are not often actively engaged with. Most advertising of this type endorses traditional gender roles: smiling mothers are depicted as the epitome of domestic efficiency, complete with stereotypical angelic children and proud, breadwinning husbands. It was not until 2002 that a television advertisement (for a household cleaner) chose to explore that most problematic of all South African female relationships, that between a white madam and her black maid. The discourse of advertising targeted at female consumers has been the subject of many academic papers.

The absence of women from most of these narratives can also be explained by the relatively subservient state of women in South Africa. It furthermore suggests that male resistance to the loss of status implicit in the transition to democracy was regarded as a key barrier to the nation-building project, and that this needed to be accounted for and dealt with before advertising could move onto other subjects. Gender, like race and class, was deeply implicated in the apartheid system. Apartheid ideology also discriminated according to gender, with white men unchallenged for supremacy at the apex of society and politics. Significantly, they dominated the capitalist economy of which advertising is an integral part. Indeed, the nation-building myths in South African advertising can be viewed as a way in which the white male captains of the capitalist economy attempt to persuade the rest of South Africa to embrace their particular philosophy on the one hand – and to dissuade other white men from resisting the new status quo. Unconsciously acknowledging the power of the racial hierarchies entrenched throughout society by the apartheid system, advertising both positions itself from a white male point of view (seen to best effect in the Castle Lager campaigns and Vodacom 'Swing') and appeals for support from other white men who may feel alienated from the nation-building project (as in Castrol '1994').

For these reasons, not only is 'he' predominantly male, the New South Africa(n) in the world of advertising is also almost always avowedly capitalist. In Castrol 'New South Africa', black South Africans achieve equality with their white compatriots through their status as consumers; it is only through rationalising political change by regarding it as an opportunity to exploit new economic opportunities that whites are able to adjust to democracy. Similarly, in Vodacom 'Windmills', dignity for the black character is achieved through a business transaction, when the Yuppie is forced to purchase all of Gogo's toy windmills. Consumerism is thereby offered as a route to liberation.

In Castle Lager's 'Homecoming', an argument is made for individualism in which friendships are sustained under the benevolent aegis of big business, rather than group identities engineered by the state. 'Homecoming' can therefore be viewed as both an argument against

the apartheid government's attempts at social engineering and any attempts by a future black (and quite possibly socialist) government to police private relationships and transactions in the same way. Equality here is best experienced between individuals and catalysed by business.

'Homecoming' is typical of advertising in South Africa during the 1990's, which was in many ways an instance of capitalism presenting its case to the nation at large. Before the 1994 elections, there was a real possibility that the ANC would embrace socialism – indeed, nationalization of industries such as mining was one of the tenets of ANC economic thinking in the early 1990's. Big business was compelled therefore to persuade the broad South African public that its existence was good for the nation.

The use of advertising to promote the role of business in post-apartheid South Africa brings me to an important point about the difference between product-focused advertising and pure brand or corporate advertising. One type of message focuses on selling a product or service, while the purpose of the other is to generate goodwill around a company or corporation (often the same corporation that sells the aforementioned product or service). Most of the product or service advertising produced in South Africa during the 1990s (and indeed subsequently) is targeted at consumers, while corporate advertising is intended to resonate with individuals in their capacity, not just as consumers, but as corporate decision-makers, investors, government policy advisers, members of parliament and so on. Thus corporate advertising is almost always incantatory in its evocation of the nation, while consumer advertising that engages with questions of national identity does so either through novelistic or now, more commonly, identificatory advertising.

Differences of this kind go some of the way towards explaining why the African renaissance, for instance, made so little impact on consumer advertising, tending to appear in print campaigns featuring pictures of African drums or pots alongside the logo of a Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed corporation. Only MTN, Vodacom's chief rival, produced a consumer brand campaign that attempted to relate the benefits of the African renaissance to the ordinary consumer. The rainbow nation – with its theme of racial reconciliation – featured more prominently in advertising in part because it was a concept to which middle class consumers found it possible to relate. By contrast, the African renaissance, with its implied coming together of the peoples of an entire continent, was simply too big, too abstract, for South Africans to incorporate into their shopping lists - if not into their worldviews.

Bearing this in mind, it is significant that the most popular advertising campaigns that dealt with questions of national identity in the period under review were not those that featured huge groups of South Africans joining in celebration of the values that bound the nation. Instead, the campaigns with the most popular appeal were those that focused on the conflicts and compromises between individuals brought together by social and political change. If advertising is good at accomplishing anything, it is taking the universal and making it specific by distilling it to vignettes that focus on individuals – and by focusing on the specific, making it universal once more. Boet, Swaer and Moegae, George and Mike, Yuppie and Gogo were, in their encounters, able to articulate the issues and concerns circulating in society at large. Because they are engaging characters, consumers are able to relate to them as individuals rather than simply as abstract concepts of democracy and national pride.

The limits of advertising the nation

For all the ingenious ways in which advertising has engaged with the nation-building project, it must be acknowledged that advertising's ability to be truly altruistic in its promotion of the cause of national identity formation or subversive in its examination of the implications of national myth is constrained by the limitations of the genre. Advertising cannot be truly self-reflexive; as a genre it cannot subject itself to genuine self-critique, since, while it may – for example - interrogate the basis on which national unity is offered to the public, it cannot cast aspersions on the product or service that it is selling at the same time. Even as advertising elects to deconstruct one type of myth, it endorses or manufactures another. In a related point, Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) recognised that consumers were always inevitably drawn into the myths offered by advertising. "The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them" (1944, 2003: 4). In the same way, advertising can never escape myth: myth will always find a way in, for the propagation of myth is a function of the genre itself.

Stated in a slightly different way, it may be argued that it is of course the central condition of the definition of advertising that an offering to the public is publicised in some way. If advertising does not sell something – be it a product, service or even, in the case of public service advertising, a cause – it ceases to be advertising. Advertising does of course make use of irony, which emerged as a distinct technique during the 1980's, as a strategy to contend with growing distrust of commercial communication. Campaigns acknowledging public cynicism about product claims and which ostensibly distanced themselves from traditional

selling techniques became common in product categories aimed at the youth, who had grown up under constant bombardment by advertising messages.[104]

Irony and satire have been used effectively in South African advertising, as I have demonstrated in the case of the campaigns of Nando's and Castrol. Nevertheless, even these advertisers stop short of questioning the assumptions upon which their own internal logic is constructed. Nando's may have tackled every subject from Madiba to sexual taboos and racially entrenched class positions in entertaining and often surprisingly subversive ways, but needless to say, it never suggests that the flame-grilled chicken it sells is anything but tasty and wholesome. In the same way, Castrol explores the consequences of the shift to democracy, while at the same time holding fast to the assertion that its motor oil is a superior product. Thus the power of advertising as a tool for the public good is always held in check by the commercial realities of the genre. The requirements of the marketing strategy will always trump any requirements of the body politic; ultimately, consumer advertising campaigns must answer to an agenda whose interest lies in selling – usually - more product, more profitably.

After all, it should not be forgotten that advertising is never without some kind of sales agenda. What has been so remarkable about much South African advertising is that it has contributed so energetically to the nation-building project despite the fact that this kind of social commentary falls outside of the ambit of the genre. South African advertisers were not in any way bound to comment on the transition to democracy (and indeed, many of them ignored it completely); the fact that many of them elected to tag social commentary onto commercial messages was really just a bonus. Now, of course, that audiences have become accustomed to seeing the nation reflected in its advertising, it has come to be expected, perhaps even demanded of the industry.

[104] To cite an example of the lengths to which an advertising campaign can and cannot go in disparaging its own product, Skoda, a European motor vehicle manufacturer, ran an award-winning campaign in the UK in the late 1990's Skoda was widely regarded as a manufacturer of sub-standard vehicles, a brand with which the discerning motorist would not choose to associate him- or herself. The new campaign was premised on the understanding that the new vehicle was so good that nobody would believe it was a Skoda. In one advertisement, the driver of the carrier delivering the cars is mystified when he drives up to a Skoda dealership, and begins to drive off. While the campaign ostensibly knocks the Skoda brand, it uses this type of ironic disparagement to promote the new model – which, because it is such a good car, will ultimately improve Skoda's image. This was an ingenious strategy, since it was based on the understanding that a conventional campaign showing beautiful shots of the car speeding along country roads would have failed dismally. The example of Skoda demonstrates that even when advertising uses irony, it does so in order to promote the product or service it is selling.

Back to the future: advertising and the nation

Given these constraints, how will the relationship between myth, the nation and advertising be played out in the future? In this, the eleventh year of South Africa's transition into democracy, the nation-building project as it was originally conceived is technically over. The myths themselves have been forced to evolve in line with South Africa's changing society. I have already traced the transition from the multicultural idealism of the rainbow nation, through the grand continental vision of an African renaissance to the more pragmatic economic emphasis of brand South Africa.

Recent developments suggest that it is likely that advertising that engages with the nation through the representation of ordinary South Africans will become more common. "Today there are many adverts that look South African, sound South African and feel South African" observes the author of a recent article examining the ongoing debate over transformation in the advertising industry (Mpye, 2004: 9). The enormous popular success of advertisements such as Telkom's charming depiction of a rural pensioner who has a telephone installed in his hut but still yells cheerfully to his neighbour across the valley suggests that South Africans appreciate and enjoy seeing themselves through the lens of advertising. A senior black copywriter argues that the success of this campaign and others (notably Yebo Gogo) had proven that South African advertising could be inclusive of the country's various cultures without being patronising. "In fact such campaigns have helped us to restore national pride and are starting to help us define our identity in a new democracy." (Dlamini quoted in Mpye, 2004: 9).

An early 2004 campaign for a low-cost Internet service provider is evidence of this trend in its depiction of a pair of typical Indian South African men working on a car, and two black women in a nail salon. "Sirious!" exclaims one woman to the other, in an expression that could well take on the kind of broad popularity last seen with the emergence of "Yebo Gogo" in 1994. The characters in these commercials are particularly well-observed and present, through accent, inflection and gesture the appearance of an authentic South Africanness, one that relies on detail and specificity rather than clichéd generalities.

This is the kind of advertising that will in all likelihood advance the nation-building project in the future. Myth no longer concerns itself with the transcendental grasping at great visions that characterised the rainbow nation and the African renaissance, Instead, myth becomes a deliberate and studied narrative of ordinariness, a quest to embrace the small pleasures and particularities of daily living without the need to cast South Africanness on the kind of epic scale associated with much incantatory advertising. In the recognition that the South African

self consists of many facets, the sense of a nation to which diverse people may owe a common loyalty is strengthened. Its implication is that the recognition alone of South African idiosyncrasies when they are presented on screen will serve to confirm one's membership of the nation. In its working and texturing of the national imaginary, advertising advances an argument for the inclusion of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the imagined community.

While advertising is likely to celebrate ordinary South Africanness in slice of life vignettes, there will periodically be times at which incantatory campaigns make an appearance. These are likely to be linked to anniversaries of events of national significance or instances where the nation is metaphorically at war, as in international sporting tournaments. They will serve as echoes of the original project, reminding South Africans of the values to which they adhere as a (figurative) condition of citizenship.

The celebration of the tenth anniversary of South Africa's transition to democracy in 2004 has led to a renewed mobilisation of the cultural power of advertising in order to reflect upon the state of the nation. The most interesting of these campaigns is one from Standard Bank, in which a day in the life of South Africa is tracked through the clever use of visuals that link apparently disparate people whose daily rituals echo those of their fellow citizens. This advertisement is striking because it offers a return to the rainbow nation and a significant variation on the theme of what one might call "rainbowness". There are echoes of the founding rainbow nation myth in the insistence that South Africa is indeed a nation to which all of its diverse citizens owe a sense of loyalty and from which they draw a common identity: 44 million people (South Africa is always implicit in this narrative) still constitute one nation.

But in the declaration that "There's more holding us together than keeping us apart" lies an acknowledgement that the original concept of the rainbow nation was flawed in its assumption that reconciliation would be a process unencumbered by the constraints necessarily imposed by reality. In the wake of cynicism about naïve "rainbowism", a message endorsing the nation-building project must take into account the fact that reconciliation had not necessarily succeeded as originally envisioned. Thus the advertisers circumvent disillusionment with the imperfect state of the South African nation by insisting that the similarities between South Africans outweigh the differences that are acknowledged.

The way in which those similarities have been represented in advertising indicates one direction in which attempts to imagine the nation, and advertising's engagement with it, may evolve into the future. Previous campaigns have called the nation into being through the use of official symbols of national identity – notably the flag – or defining moments in history.

Sales House looks to Parliament, Castle Lager hoists the flag as it cheers for the national team; SAA reminds the nation of its proudest moment, during the Rugby World Cup of 1995, while at the same time invoking the benevolent, sanctifying presence of Madiba.

In the Standard Bank campaign South Africans both rich and poor, young and old, male and female, traditional and modern, enact their daily routines in an echo of Anderson's observation that nation is imagined in part thanks to the confidence of its citizens in their "steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" (1983: 31). Many of the advertisements that engage with South African identity therefore constitute a demonstration to a South African audience of the "image of their communion" (1983: 15). It is evidence of how advertising, following Homi Bhabha's observations on the emergence of national narrative, is able to take the "scraps, patches and rags of daily life" and turn them into "signs of a national culture" (1991: 297). By drawing attention to these small rituals, this particular advertising campaign and many others enable them to become part of a generally agreed understanding of what constitutes South African identity.

So it is that after more than a decade of being beholden to the myth of a great manifest destiny – to be a shining example to the world - ordained by the forces of history (which include terrible injustice, oppression, forgiveness and heroism), it appears that South Africans may finally be permitted to be ordinary. Now, advertising campaigns propagate a myth that that revolves around the idea that South Africans are both unique in their place in history and ordinary in their enactment of the rituals that constitute everyday life. This myth takes the form of a narrative of emergence from a painful past into shared middle class values, and is conveniently suited for exploitation by marketers; if anything distinguishes the middle class mindset, it is the desire to improve one's lot in life through the acquisition of material goods.

At the time of writing, the South African psyche is balanced somewhat precariously between optimism and dissatisfaction. Levels of optimism in the South African public and amongst business have been at an all-time high, thanks largely to economic factors in the form of low interest rates and the strength of the Rand. The recent boom in sales by clothing retailers and car manufacturers is indicative of the mood of ecstatic acquisition that has prevailed over the past year. At the same time, however, the economy continues to shed jobs, AIDS deaths continue to wreak havoc on the social fabric and the gap between rich and poor does not appear to be narrowing.[105] Finally, the kind of black nationalism that first emerged with the

[105] During a recent Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing presentation, Dr Jannie Hofmeyer asserted that at current levels of growth, it would take twenty years for those South Africans currently defined as "struggling" to reach a marginally - though significantly - higher living standard.

myth of the African renaissance appears to be reasserting itself over officially endorsed public discourse as the ANC consolidates its grip on power. [106]

Since it is from the ranks of the struggling that a substantial proportion of votes will come for the foreseeable future, national myths will be required to accommodate the competing needs of the marginalised poor, the upwardly mobile middle classes and the incumbent affluent elite who control the economy and influence foreign investment patterns.[107] Already the black elite, which has benefited to a remarkable degree from the government policy of Black Economic Empowerment has come under fire from the government for failing to share their good fortune with the less fortunate. Whether or not any of these myths bear a substantive relationship to truth will of course be irrelevant: as long as they lend a sense of purpose and comprehensibility to the daily lives of South Africans, they will have fulfilled the function for which they are intended.

One way of ending the story

Reflecting on the changing nature of South African national identity as portrayed in advertising campaigns and elsewhere, Celean Jacobson writes in October 2005,

> It is hard to pin down what South African cultural and national identity is, the terms being so slippery and so loaded. And in some ways it is too soon to try. It is from the coming generations and their hybrid future that new national identities will bloom.
>
> (2005: 39)

It seems appropriate, at the conclusion of this study, to reflect on the enormous scale of change in South Africa since February 1990. At the same time, there are many different ways of understanding what it is that has in fact changed. There is the conventional narrative of how South Africans – in particular, a hero of the moral stature of Nelson Mandela - negotiated themselves into democracy and embraced change in what is usually described as a "miracle". There is also the story of how liberation from apartheid failed to deliver much in the way of improvement to the lives of many of South Africa's poorest citizens, while at the

[106] The ANC and Thabo Mbeki's continued criticism of the press and the party's ongoing quest to marginalise its critics as members of a so-called "elite" (which may be understood as a white elite) as well as the more assertive government control being exercised over the South African Broadcasting Corporation suggest that we may well see the emergence of a new, revitalised version of the African renaissance put forward as the officially endorsed myth of the day.

[107] In September 2004, the well-publicised spat between President Thabo Mbeki and the CEO of Anglo American, Tony Trahar, after the latter told the international media that there still existed a small level of political risk in South Africa, served as a telling reminder of the dynamics influencing perceptions of South Africa. Who gets to determine the direction of the national narrative, and the form that narrative takes, are continually open to debate.

same time white South Africans refused to acknowledge the ways in which they benefited and continued to benefit from past injustice.

A version that is impossible to ignore is the story of how South Africa became, by and large, a nation of consumers. Many black South Africans effectively defined themselves as such through their ardent loyalty to brands, especially in the case of fashion or motor vehicles.[108] Following Mark Gevisser's assertion that the conversion of the black elite to capitalism was the "quietest and most profound revolution of our time" (Adam et al, 1997: 3), one of the most salient features of South Africa's transition to democracy has been this remarkable shift to a worldview dominated by the precepts of consumerism.

In the light of this development, it is hardly surprising that a campaign for a beer stands out as the most succinct statement of all that the New South Africa stood for, or that a fast-food chicken chain was the most visible satirist of post-apartheid South African society. In advertisements for cellular telephony and motor oil one can track the gradual shift in power relations between black and white elites. Those that feel the need to present the nation to itself tend to be airlines and telephone companies rather than poets and playwrights. It is to advertising that opinion leaders look for evidence that South Africa has in fact embraced democracy.

The contradictions inherent in this juxtaposition of apparently noble ends and less than altruistic means are, in the final analysis, entirely consistent with the South African nation-building project. As Brian Rostron reflects,

> South Africa, juggling with its bizarre contradictions, is in a position to lead the quest for something, hopefully, unique. The only certainty is that out of such complexity the resolutions will be neither black nor white. We will have to learn to live with – and celebrate – complexity, even paradox.
>
> (2000: 56)

Despite the challenges that remain for South Africa, paradox and complexity should not present an obstacle to the process. National identity is always flexible and modulated, open to ongoing adjustment and reassessment as changing circumstances require.

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[108] South African gangsters have defined themselves through allegiance to particular clothing brands since at least the 1950's. Favoured brands are always imported and expensive, and their purchase is supported by criminal activity. Thus - somewhat ironically - the South African love of brands contributes to crime. As a gang member told the director of a youth outreach organisation, "I know Sandton City like the palm of my hand." (McCloy, 2003: 43)

As long as marketers wish to sell products and services to the South African consumer, it is almost certain that advertising will continue to contribute to the South African national sense of self, whatever that may be. As they have in the past, disparate advertising campaigns will continue to accumulate over time into narratives, not only of changing consumption patterns, but evolving attitudes to race, gender, class and taboo. These developments are likely to be worthy of analysis, and I hope that the project begun with this thesis can be continued in future studies. After all, the story is only just beginning to get really interesting.

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