

**GRACE AND THE TOWNSHIPS HOUSEWIFE: EXCAVATING SOUTH  
AFRICAN BLACK WOMEN'S MAGAZINES FROM THE 1960s.**

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## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

Grace and The Townships Housewife, two black women's magazines published in South Africa between 1964 and 1969, have slipped into obscurity. This thesis aims to write them back into the history of the black press, black journalism and literature in South Africa. The study is significant in that no research has as yet been conducted on these two magazines.

The first chapter excavates Grace and The Townships Housewife from obscurity by providing information on the magazines' publication, staff, editors, content, target audience and writers. A salient characteristic of both magazines' content that the study discusses is the ambiguous attitude of readers and writers towards modernity and tradition (and the negotiation of new identities) as they move from the country to the city. Some readers' embrace and others' rejection of early signs of feminism and womanism in the magazines also display this ambiguous attitude. The chapter foregrounds the various ambiguities and often colliding voices that infuse much of the magazines' content. The absence of explicit reference to apartheid in Grace's and The Townships Housewife's content provides another focal point of this chapter and is discussed in relation to the concepts of 'minstrelsy' and 'mimicry'.

Considering specifically the position of the black woman in apartheid South Africa, the second chapter compares the representation of white women in South African white women's magazines Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady to the way in which black women are represented in Grace and The Townships Housewife

in the 1960s. The role of the latter two magazines in positively representing black women during apartheid South Africa, and thus standing in direct opposition to the identities ascribed to black people in colonial and apartheid ideology, is a primary focus of this chapter.

The representation of black women in the 1960s is elaborated on in the next chapter which explores the shift in the representation of black women from Drum magazine (during its heyday in the 1950s), with its predominantly male staff, to the representation of black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife (in the 1960s), with their predominantly female staff. I hypothesise on the possible agencies at work within this shift in women's representation.

*Despite* the magazines' adherence at times to white standards of beauty (an aspect which the thesis engages with throughout), the 'creation' of black women within the pages of Grace and The Townships Housewife (as the previous two chapters articulate), often resonates with Black Consciousness's philosophy of black pride. This last chapter explores the possible connection between Grace and The Townships Housewife, on the one hand, and the early beginnings of an emergent black consciousness in South Africa in the late 1960s, on the other hand. It also discusses the sexism associated with black consciousness philosophy in relation to these two magazines, but the focus falls on how black female readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife negotiate imposed 'female identities' (for example, mother, housewife and supporter) towards greater agency.

## OPSOMMING

Grace en The Townships Housewife, twee tydskrifte gemik op swart vroue en wat in Suid-Afrika gepubliseer is tussen 1964 en 1969, is vandag onbekend. Die doel van dié tesis is om hierdie twee tydskrifte terug te skryf in die geskiedenis van swart joernalistiek en literatuur in Suid-Afrika. Dit is 'n waardevolle studie aangesien geen navorsing oor hierdie twee tydskrifte nog gedoen is nie. Dit is ook 'n ingewikkelde proses wat gepaard gaan met baie spekulasie, aangesien dit alreeds te lank gevat het vir hierdie tydskrifte om ontdek te word – dit is nie meer moontlik om die meeste van die bydraers tot hierdie twee tydskrifte op te spoor nie.

Die eerste hoofstuk 'grawe' Grace en The Townships Housewife as t' ware weer 'op' deur inligting te voorsien oor hierdie tydskrifte se uitgewers, personeel, redaktrises, inhoud, teikengroepe en skrywers. Die dubbelsinnige houdings wat lesers in die tydskrifte toon teenoor tradisie en moderniteit soos wat hulle beweeg van plattelandse gebiede na stedelike gebiede, is kenmerkend van hierdie tydskrifte en word in hierdie hoofstuk bespreek. Hierdie dubbelsinnigheid word ook weerspieël in lesers en skrywers se ambivalente houdinge teenoor die bemagtiging van vroue. Die verskeie dubbelsinnighede en dikwels botsende stemme in meeste van die twee tydskrifte se inhoud is 'n belangrike punt wat hierdie tesis uitlig. Die afwesigheid van direkte verwysings na apartheid in beide tydskrifte is nog 'n kenmerkende eienskap van die tydskrifte wat in hierdie hoofstuk ondersoek word.

Met die fokus op die posisie van die swart vrou in apartheid Suid-Afrika, vergelyk die tweede hoofstuk die voorstelling van wit vroue in Suid-Afrikaanse wit

vrouetydskrifte (Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais en Fair Lady) met dié van swart vroue in Grace en The Townships Housewife in die 1960s. 'n Primêre fokus van hierdie hoofstuk is die rol wat Grace en The Townships Housewife speel in die positiewe voorstelling van swart vroue tydens apartheid, in direkte kontras tot die voorstelling van swart vroue in apartheid ideologie.

Die volgende hoofstuk brei verder uit op die voorstelling van die swart vrou in die 1960s: hier word gekyk na die skuif wat plaasvind in die voorstelling van swart vroue van die Drum-tydskrif in die 1950s met sy hoofsaaklik manlike personeel, na die voorstelling van swart vroue in 1960s Grace en The Townships Housewife, met hoofsaaklik vroulike personeel. Die moontlike faktore verantwoordelik vir so 'n verandering in voorstelling word oorweeg.

Alhoewel die inhoud van Grace en The Townships Housewife gereeld 'wit' standarde van skoonheid ondersteun, toon die voorstelling van swart vroue in hierdie twee tydskrifte ook dikwels ooreenkomste met swart bewustheid filosofie se fokus op swart trots. Hierdie laaste hoofstuk ondersoek die moontlike verbintenis tussen Grace en The Townships Housewife, aan die een kant, en die vroeë begin van swart bewustheid in Suid-Afrika in die laat sestigerjare. Die dikwels seksistiese houdinge wat met swart bewustheid filosofie geassosieer word, word in hierdie hoofstuk bespreek aan die hand van voorbeelde uit Grace en The Townships Housewife. Dit is egter nie die fokus van hierdie studie nie: die fokus val op hoe swart vroue lesers van Grace en The Townships Housewife opgelegde rolle van moederskap, huisvrou en ondersteuners stuur tot posisies van groter mag.

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## Introduction

Between 1965 and 1969, most politically orientated magazines produced by the black press in South Africa were silenced as a result of apartheid's restrictive measures. This was, however, a time when black women's magazines could become more prominent, as they were viewed by the apartheid government authorities as apolitical and thus less of a threat to their political agenda. Sheena Duncan, former Black Sash President, for instance, explains that the government never banned the Black Sash, as they did not think the magazine was effective enough to worry about, because it was run by women (see Goodwin 142).

It is interesting to note that while black patriarchal views prior to and after the late 1960s created little space for black women writers to express themselves,<sup>1</sup> white patriarchy, with its dismissive attitude towards women's agency and its perception of the 'weak' female (the patriarchal perception of women belonging to the 'feminine' and domestic sphere and as being less capable of political activity), created a gap, a brief opportunity in the sixties, for black women writers to create a space in which to express themselves. Black men, who were taken more seriously as a political threat by the ruling white patriarchy, were restricted at this time in what they wrote and published. In contrast, and for the first time following the male-dominated Drum-decade, black women found space (albeit compromised by a white presence) in the print media to participate in the construction and negotiation of a black South African 'female identity'. Black women's negotiation of identity within their own magazines was, however, of short duration. In the early seventies and eighties the discursive

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<sup>1</sup> Consider here the male-dominated Drum-decade of the 1950s (elaborated on in Chapter Three).

power gradually gained by black women was once more vested in a male discourse that again, as was the case prior to the 1960s, largely excluded black women as active agents of resistance (see Gqola on Staffrider magazine).

Magazines for black women that existed as early as the 1960s in South Africa have remained unexplored in cultural studies and little research has been done on black female journalists who were making contributions to the South African media during a male-dominated era of the black press. It is this brief period of the 1960s in which black women had their 'own' magazine for the first time (in contrast to magazines such as Fair Lady and Sarie Marais that mostly featured only white women) that is the focus of my study.<sup>2</sup> The contributions of these black women writers, in the form of both short stories and letters, have been virtually ignored in the histories of both South Africa's mainstream and alternative presses. Two examples of magazines aimed at black women in South Africa that I have come across in my research are Grace and The Townships Housewife. The only source I have found that makes reference to these two magazines – Switzer and Switzer's The Black Press In South Africa And Lesotho, mentions them only in passing (157-158). This thesis aims to contribute to scholarship on Grace and The Townships Housewife by offering a detailed analysis of these two magazines. Their writings in fact constitute a category of their own, outside those of mainstream and alternative presses.

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<sup>2</sup> This thesis focuses on black women's magazine-writing, but it should be noted here that black women were also beginning to write themselves at this time in book form. Some of the first black women's novels and autobiographies appear at the time: Bessie Head's When Rain Clouds Gather (1968), Maru (1971) and A Question of Power (1974); Miriam Tlali's Muriel at Metropolitan (1979); Noni Jabavu's Drawn in Colour (1960) and The Ochre People (1963) (all except Tlali's work was written outside the country).

Grace, which ran from 1964-1966, was a general-interest women's magazine (also aimed at the whole family) published in Durban; it contains fashion tips, romantic serials, short stories and monthly features typical to most general-interest magazines, such as "Pen Pals", "The Stars" and "You Ask, We Answer". The Townships Housewife was published from 1968 to 1969 in Johannesburg. This magazine features recipes, fashion and gardening hints and consists largely of advertisements. Grace and The Townships Housewife tell their readers that they need modern kitchenware and the necessary accessories to make themselves appear 'soft' and 'clean'. Creating such needs in the large black population of apartheid South Africa would indeed be both an easy and profitable endeavor for both the white magazine owners (a fact on which I elaborate in the first chapter ) and commercial businesses which were largely white-owned. The magazines address a black population in apartheid South Africa who are desirous of such markers of 'civilisation' in the face of derogatory constructions of 'black barbarism'. By upholding dominant white patriarchal views of the woman's position in twentieth century 'civilized' society – the woman as a 'soft, beautiful and graceful feminine being', the good subjected woman of biblical representations (Malherbe et al 121) – the black women under apartheid who are represented or "hailed" by these magazines aimed for citizenship rights through the achievement of 'civility' (in other words, by conforming to a discourse that marked African ways of being as 'tribal', 'backward' and 'less advanced' than European, or white, ways of being – a discourse central to the workings of both colonialism and apartheid). The crude reality was, however, one of persistent alienation in apartheid South Africa

I initially started out with the hope of ‘discovering’ black magazines and writers that continued to exist ‘underground’ in the 1960s when most magazines and products of the black press were banned by apartheid’s restrictive laws. My research led me to Switzer and Switzer’s book, The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A Descriptive Bibliographic Guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines 1836-1976. While making notes on publications that *did* survive the 1960s, I soon realized these were all newspapers and magazines that did not have any overt political content, dealing instead with issues such as gardening, cookery and agriculture. The titles of two women’s magazines, Grace and The Townships Housewife, caught my interest. Much research has been done on the black mainstream and alternative press (see for instance Tomaselli and Louw; Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller; and Switzer), but I could not find any information on Grace or The Townships Housewife on the internet or on any other academic databases. Switzer and Switzer make brief mention of these magazines (157-158), but this is all my preliminary research was able to uncover. I was, however, able to locate copies of Grace (Oct. 1964-Dec. 1966) and The Townships Housewife (Feb. 1968-Dec. 1968) in the South African National Library.<sup>3</sup> These comprise the primary material of my study.

I then tried to find out what research had been undertaken in South Africa on black women’s magazines existing at this time (1964-69), but only found studies conducted in America on early magazine writing by African-American women. One such title that I came across is Noliwe Rooks’s Ladies Pages. Rooks’s research has influenced the direction of my research on black women journalists in South Africa.

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<sup>3</sup> I was unable to locate copies of The Townships Housewife published between January and April 1969.

Similarly, in Giving a Voice to the Voiceless, Jinx Coleman Broussard undertakes a study of black women journalists in America in which she examines, acknowledges and records the careers and contributions of black women journalists who were virtually ignored in the history of the black and mainstream white press. This thesis has a similar goal: it seeks to lift the veil of obscurity and place the women who contributed to Grace and The Townships Housewife, as well as the products of their work, the two magazines themselves, in South African journalism history.

Grace and The Townships Housewife are located between the most studied and iconic periodicals of South African cultural history, the male-dominated Drum of the 1950s and Staffrider literary magazine, which emerged out of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s. I am interested in the new creation of a “female culture” (Malherbe et al 227-37) post-Drum, and the possible birth of female resistance pre-Staffrider. This resistance comprises a subtle subversion of expectations performed within a labyrinth of patriarchies: as stated earlier, black South African women writers fell into white patriarchy’s category of the ‘weak’ and ‘feminine’ woman who is insignificant and unthreatening without her male counterpart, while, at the same time, black men under apartheid often assigned black women politically passive roles as supporters of fighting men and as caretakers in the domestic sphere (see Goodwin; Gqola “Burden”; and Ramphele “Dynamics”).

As Grace and The Townships Housewife have never been subjected to scholarly scrutiny before, this thesis consists to a large extent of primary and descriptive research, and is thus necessarily overtly and intentionally descriptive. Due to the paucity of available records, it is also at times necessarily speculative. The

documentary approach is particularly evident in the first chapter, which elaborates on the publishers, staff, editors, content and target audience of these two magazines. The first chapter also explores the ambiguities present in Grace and The Townships Housewife: at times it seems that both magazines are promoting modernity (equated in the magazines to white fashion and lifestyles and to living a technologically advanced life), yet at other times both magazines seem to critique modernity as destructive of African traditions. Grace and The Townships Housewife show a society in transition: many of the magazines' readers must have moved from the country to the city in search of work or in an attempt to realise various aspirations, and were now exposed to new values in the city. The embrace of modernity in these magazines cannot, however, be seen as eliminating the possibility of them advancing black pride. Rather, it could be said to enable black women under apartheid to see themselves as white women had been seeing themselves in their own magazines for years.

I also wish to acknowledge the process of transculturation whereby alternative modernities are constituted (see Attwell 1-27): black South Africans do not simply passively take on a Western persona after colonisation but “select...from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (Pratt in Attwell 17). They also influence and re-write the Western mould, resulting in alternative modernities that synthesise the European and African. Karin Barber reminds us that

[t]he circulation of cultural artefacts across social boundaries was not just a question of elite culture diffusing down from top to bottom; rather, both elite and common people constantly imitated and appropriated elements of each others' cultural forms. (3)

Another purpose of this study is to investigate the construction of a black “female culture” after the male-dominated Drum-decade and at a time dominated by



negative constructions – or erasures – of the black female in white women’s magazines. I am interested in productions and performances of ‘femaleness’ in black South African society as reflected in this new era of women’s magazines. What image of the ideal woman is promoted in Grace and The Townships Housewife? How does it compare and relate to the image of women that is constructed in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady, on the one hand, and Drum, on the other? And most importantly, how are black women in black women’s magazines represented as opposed to the way they have been represented by white women’s magazines? These questions comprise the second and third chapter of this thesis.

In the last chapter I highlight the relation between Grace and The Townships Housewife and the emergence of black consciousness.<sup>4</sup> In Cry Amandla!, Thenjiwe Mtintso states that 1968-77 was the era of the Black Consciousness Movement, that black consciousness addressed the colonized mentality of the oppressed and worked to overturn this mentality and that it spoke to *black* people (including under the banner of ‘blackness’ all groups oppressed under apartheid) and ignored whites (192). All three of these factors seem relevant to both Grace and The Townships Housewife. In my investigation of these two magazines it becomes clear that the content increasingly ignores white people and addresses black people in a tone that resonates with black consciousness’s motto ‘black is beautiful’. There is also a curious similarity between the title of Steve Biko’s column for a newsletter of the Black Consciousness Movement, entitled “I Write What I Like”, and one of the monthly

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<sup>4</sup> In this study I distinguish between ‘black consciousness’ and the ‘Black Consciousness Movement’. The Black Consciousness Movement was the *organised* anti-apartheid activist movement that emerged in South Africa and that was established through the official foundation of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1969. This movement could only have been established by black people who experienced a growing political awareness and understanding of the oppression of their own race in South Africa, and who resisted their oppression with a different mental attitude (of black pride) – thus through a developing black consciousness (this distinction is elaborated on in Chapter Four).

features in Grace, “I write what I like”.<sup>5</sup> I hypothesise a causal link between the two and probe the significance and implications of such a link. In 1976, the first issue of Staffrider magazine appeared, marking the resurgence of political activity defined by black consciousness. Whereas Staffrider was a conscious and outspoken effort to support the Black Consciousness Movement, I attempt to look at the more subtle traces of and negotiations around black consciousness in the earlier Grace and The Townships Housewife.

The Black Consciousness Movement appealed to women to function mainly as psychological and material supports in male-orientated struggles (the ‘grace’-ful wife by the man’s side, ‘the townships housewife’ who keeps the home running). I intend to establish whether what Pumla Gqola calls the “marginalising rhetoric of Black Consciousness” was part of the discourse of Grace and The Townships Housewife (“In Search” 33). Did the content in these magazines support black (liberationist) views on the role of the black woman? Were separate codes of conduct spelt out for black men and black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife?

Although I will aim to establish how the Black Consciousness Movement’s sexism permeated language and discourse in Grace and The Townships Housewife, my study’s purpose is to honour the black women writers of the 1960s. I thus intend to explore how black women readers and writers of Grace and The Townships Housewife subverted and adapted the limiting sexist identities that black consciousness created for them, negotiating their way through the “patchwork quilt of patriarchies” (Bozzoli) towards a position of greater agency. How did they adapt and

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<sup>5</sup> Steve Biko’s collected writings for this column which appeared in the SASO Newsletter (the South African Student Organisation is elaborated on in Chapter Four) was later published in a book called I Write What I Like edited by Aelred Stubbs (see bibliography).

subvert both European symbolism and black patriarchal definitions of the woman's role in order to consequently empower themselves? What did this empowered self look like?

This thesis addresses all of the above questions by excavating information on these unacknowledged black women's magazines, their readers and their writers, of this brief time of women's journalistic agency in the 1960s. As part of Western intellectual production this project of course faces the problem of what Gayatri Spivak refers to as the "silencing of the subaltern" (see Spivak). Spivak explains that the processes whereby postcolonial studies take place may ironically re-inscribe colonial domination and involve economic exploitation. Western ideology is also guilty of homogenizing the culture of the subaltern under inspection by not considering the variety of voices in play. For this reason, I include a large number of quotes from various readers from both Grace and The Townships Housewife in this thesis in an attempt to let South African black women of the 1960s speak for themselves as much as possible, and to avoid speaking for them. Ultimately, I avoid circumscribing the material discussed into a singular reading. Instead, I mark out the incoherence of the ideological positions at work in the magazines rather than impose a coherency on them from the secure standpoint of an authoritative theoretical position. Such an approach resists silencing the cacophony of discourses that accompanies the emergence of black women's voices in the South African print media.

## Chapter One

### **Introduction to 1960s Black Women's Magazines: Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

Magazine titles such as Drum (1951), Bona (1956), True Love (1974), Pace (1978) and Thandi (1985) are familiar to those knowledgeable about South Africa's black popular press. Few, however, have heard of Grace and The Townships Housewife. These two products of black South African women journalists of the 1960s deserve acknowledgement in recorded histories of South Africa's black press. Grace magazine features many black women writers who never received recognition for their contribution to black journalism. This invisibility may in part be ascribed to the fact that neither Grace nor The Townships Housewife falls into the familiar sensationalistic sex-and-violence formula and instead present what may be described as a 'conservative' or 'moralistic' outlook. Jane Bryce warns that

...[t]exts by women which...are not recognized as 'serious', may also fail to be seen as 'popular' precisely because their representation of gender is less objectified and stereotyped. Because they tend to place themselves in overt opposition to the sex-and-violence paradigm, *they may be dismissed* as too 'conservative' or 'moralistic'. (118; my emphasis)

My assertion in this thesis is that Grace and The Townships Housewife cannot merely "be dismissed"; these cultural productions should instead be valued for the light they shed on black lives in, and creative responses to, apartheid South Africa. The writers' stories and articles and readers' letters and opinions present many of their concerns. Following Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi's concept of "fictionalized theory" or "theorized fiction" (149), this study goes beyond conventional Western academic definitions of theory by bringing what is perceived as 'low' culture (for example

popular magazines) into the realms of what is perceived as ‘high’ culture (for example academic theses).

This first chapter aims to write Grace and The Townships Housewife into the history of the black press in South Africa. Firstly, it investigates the general nature of both magazines, including publishing facts, staff, editors, content and target audience. Secondly, the chapter explores the conflict between modernity and tradition in Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s content. Thirdly, it gives attention to the articulation of feminist discourses in the content of both magazines. Lastly, the chapter considers the magazines’ escapist nature: it is notable that neither of the two magazines addresses apartheid overtly – an issue which is discussed in relation to the concepts of ‘minstrelsy’ and ‘mimicry’. This chapter maps the ambivalence and various colliding voices that surface in both magazines, while allowing the women writing in and to the magazines to speak for themselves.

### **1.1. Grace and The Townships Housewife: General Publication Information, Staff, Editors, Content and Target Audience.**



*Fig. 1. Cover page. Grace, Dec. 1966.*

### 1.1.1 Publication Information

Grace magazine was a monthly publication produced during the brief period from October 1964 to December 1966. Although its subtitle is “The magazine for the whole family”, it clearly focuses on black South African women; women largely feature in the magazine’s content and men rarely feature on its front cover. The magazine’s main office was initially in Johannesburg, until it moved to Durban (Mobeni) in September 1965. The reason for this change is that Grace then joined up with its “sister magazine” True Africa (Grace, Sept. 1965: 3). At the same time, the magazine’s printers changed from Hayne and Gibson to Fotolit. Hayne and Gibson, responsible for printing from October 1964 to September 1965, was possibly an instrument of Afrikaner Nationalism (Rossouw 76). Research has delivered no information on Fotolit. Republican Publications, a subsidiary of the nationalistic, conservative Perskor (the conservative right-wing press empire of the Transvaal), was responsible for the publication of the magazine (Switzer and Switzer ix), which was distributed by the Banner News Agency.<sup>6</sup> From May 1966, the magazine was printed, published and distributed by the proprietors Grace Publications (Pty) Ltd. The reason for this change is uncertain, but possibly reflects a decrease in funding or an attempt at independence that then failed given the capitalist power of the white publishing houses. Such a failure, then, could be one possible reason why the magazine’s promised January 1967 issue never appeared.

The Townships Housewife was published during a brief period from February 1968 to April 1969 in Johannesburg. The magazine appeared monthly and was

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<sup>6</sup> Bantu News Agency, founded in 1939, became a subsidiary of the Argus-owned Central News Agency in 1952 and was later renamed Banner News Agency (for further information, see Switzer and Switzer 20).

subtitled “Being a journal to the ladies of the upper classes. Cookery, Homes and Gardens”. Bodley Publishing House was responsible for publications, but further information on this South African publisher is hard to find. The magazine was printed by Voortrekkerpers, which was also closely bound up with the conservative Perskor. Its agenda seems to be aimed at mobilising and controlling the spending power of South Africa’s large black population by casting women in aspirational roles of middle-class living.

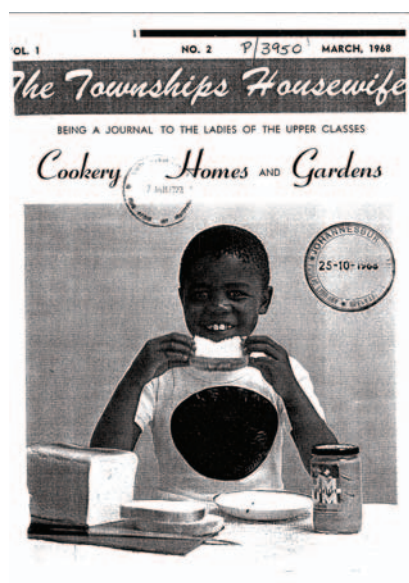


Fig. 2. Cover page. *The Townships Housewife*, March 1968.

Grace and The Townships Housewife, then, are both clearly products of the Afrikaans Press.<sup>7</sup> William Hachten and Anthony Giffard state that initially the Afrikaans press was a creation of Afrikaner (*white* Afrikaans-speaking South Africans) political aspirations, established by the National Party to spread its message (179). Afrikaner Nationalism supported Afrikaner pride and upliftment after the defeat by the British during the South African War of 1899-1902. It excluded other

<sup>7</sup> Switzer and Switzer states that “[a]longside the government - and sometimes in collusion with it - was the Afrikaans Press which published multi-lingual pictorial magazines like Bona, founded in March 1956 (14).

racess and linguistic groups, those who were not both white and Afrikaans-speaking, from their understanding and promotion of the 'South African nation'. In 1948 the National Party achieved electoral victory and apartheid, a legal system that delineated racial groups, was formalised.

From 1948 until 1967, every Nationalist prime minister had close links with either or both of the major Afrikaans press companies (Hachten and Giffard 180). After the political goal was reached when the National Party gained power in 1948, more space opened up for differences between its members to be articulated. Differences between Southern Nationalists (Cape based) and Northern Nationalists (Transvaal based) resulted in a press war starting in the 1960s between Voortrekkerpers and Afrikaanse Pers (trading as Perskor) in the Transvaal, and Nasionale Pers in the Cape. These differences resulted mainly from the South having more capital available due to wealthy wine farmers offering their money to Nasionale Pers (Naspers). This led to a more capitalist outlook in the South as its financial means enabled them to participate economically outside the constraints of their own region. In contrast to this stood the provincialism of the North, which had to participate in more region-bound economic activities due to a lack of financial means. These two different economic positions, of course, make the distinction between the North and South one of class hierarchy.

The South was also generally seen as more enlightened than the conservative North or *verkrampies* (ultra-conservatives) (Tomaselli et al, The Press 119, 131), and favoured a more liberal implementation of apartheid (Hachten and Giffard 184). In the North, the Broederbond dominated much of Perskor. The Broederbond was a



white, male secret society formed after the South African War to protect Afrikaner interests in the wake of the degradation and defeat at the hand of the British. The Broederbond “was born out of the deep conviction that the white Afrikaans-speaking *volk* (people) has been planted in this country by the Hand of God, destined to survive as a separate *volk* with its own calling” (Wikipedia “Afrikaner Broederbond”). Every prime minister and state president in South Africa from 1948 to the end of apartheid in 1994 was a member of the Afrikaner Broederbond (ibid).

In the early 1960s, the South realised that they needed a voice in the North and increased their influence in the Transvaal with the help of southern capital. The North now had to strengthen their standing against the South. In 1962, two years before the first publication of Grace, two northern press companies, Dagbreekpers and Afrikaans Pers, merged to form Afrikaans Pers Beperk (1962). Afrikaans Pers Beperk traded as both Perskor (responsible for newspaper publications) and Republican Press (responsible for magazine publications such as Bona, Thandi, Your Family, Garden & Home). Perskor and Afrikaans Pers, responsible for the publication of Grace and The Townships Housewife, thus represent a more conservative, right-wing Afrikaans ideology.

Republican Press owned a number of profitable consumer magazines sold nationally (“FXI Representations”). These “profitable consumer magazines” include Grace, as Grace was also a publication of Republican Press (Afrikaans Pers Beperk). Hayne and Gibson, the printers of Grace magazine, had a half-share in 1947 in the newly-formed Dagbreekpers Bpk (Rossouw 76), also mentioned above as part of

Afrikaans Pers Beperk (Republican Press and Perskor). Grace can thus certainly be linked to the conservative empire of the North (see Tomaselli et al, The Press 122).

The Townships Housewife was published by Bodley Publishing House and printed by Voortrekkerpers. Drummond Moir of The Bodley Head in London cannot confirm whether the Bodley Publishing House has any connections with their publishing house.<sup>8</sup> Stephen Johnson suggests that the reference to “Bodley Publishing House” might be an “error that...crept in with a book that may have been published in South Africa”.<sup>9</sup> Research presents contrasting information and it is difficult to determine whether Voortrekkerpers formed part of the Northern or Southern group of Nationalists. However, Phaswane Mpe and Monica Seeber write of “those twin pillars of apartheid publishing, Nasionale Pers and Perskor” (35), suggesting that no matter whether Voortrekkerpers was a part of Northern or Southern Nationalist publishers, whether it was more conservative or less, both Republican Press (Grace) and Voortrekkerpers (The Townships Housewife) can be linked to Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid National Party (supporters of an ideology focused on the dominance and prominence of *their specific* social community, for example here the Afrikaner or white Afrikaans-speaking community).

### 1.1.2 Staff and Editors

The staff at both Grace and The Townships Housewife seems to consist, for the most part, of black women. Grace magazine was the brainchild of a black South African woman, Mrs. Esther K. Nyembezi, who became one of the directors of the magazine.

The January 1965 issue states that

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<sup>8</sup> Moir, Drummond. “Re: From Stellenbosch.” Email to the author, 28 April 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, Stephen. “Re: From Stellenbosch.” Email to the author, 28 April 2008.

[w]hilst working among her own people, [Mrs Nyembezi] realized the need for a magazine *for women by women*. She set her heart on it and so she persuaded her husband to help. A board of directors was formed and Dr and Mrs Nyembezi became two of the directors. (32; my emphasis)

Considering the previously male-dominated black press in South Africa, the fact that Grace would be a magazine “for women by women” makes it a yard-stick for black women in South Africa (although this extract reveals the hidden male hand that is also present in Sarie Marais and Fair Lady, discussed in the next chapter). The black women who seem responsible for the content of Grace include the above-mentioned Mrs Nyembezi, as well as Amé, a woman only once featured in a photo in Grace and referred to as “Amé of Grace” (Dec. 1964:6). It is difficult to determine from the photo that appears in Grace (see fig. 3) whether Amé is a black or white woman – in my opinion, she seems to be white. Besides these women, the wives of men belonging to the Thabong Bantu Council (an interesting fact on which I will elaborate in Chapter Three) also seem to have been involved in deciding the content of Grace. In a December 1964 issue of Grace, a photo appears with the subtitle:

THABONG LADIES MEETING with Amé of Grace to discuss the November issue of “GRACE”. Starting with Amé and going left anti-clockwise and ending with the lady, Mrs. M. Mokgosi, at her left: 1. Amé; 2. Mrs. D. Ngake; 3. Mrs. E. Leutlwileng; 4. Mrs. E. Mosimane; 5. Mrs. M. Losala; 6. Mrs. A. Setai; 7. Mrs. Thelingoane; 8. Mrs. S. Makoli; 9. Mrs. R.E. Masole; 10. Mrs. M Mokgosi. (6)



Fig. 3. Thabong Ladies meet with Amé. Grace, Dec. 1964: 6.

The Townships Housewife also had a large black staff, as can be seen from a picture appearing in the February 1968 issue of a staff party (see fig. 4).

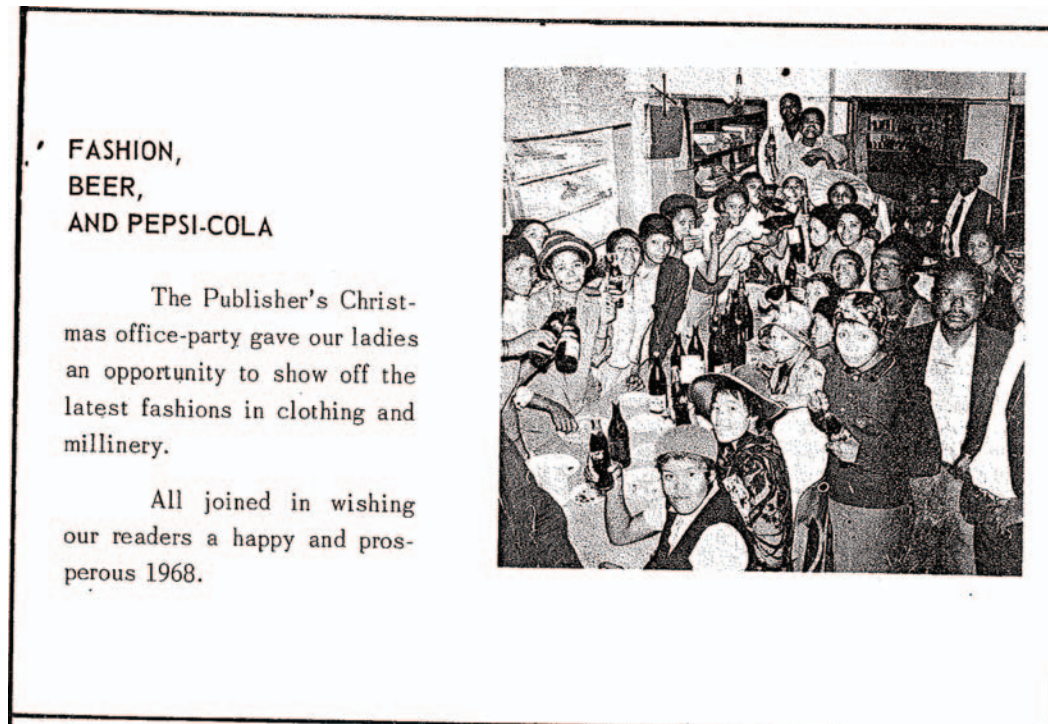


Fig. 4. *The Staff at The Townships Housewife. The Townships Housewife, Feb. 1968: 24.*

The editor of The Townships Housewife is unmistakably a black woman, but Grace makes it harder for us to determine the race, and even gender, of its editor. In the first issue of Grace, October 1964, the editor's name is not given; her editorial is simply signed "The Editress". However, in June 1965 the "Editress" signed her editorial with the initials "S.v.d.W" in brackets (5). This makes it most likely that the surname is an Afrikaans surname (such as Van der Westhuizen or Van der Watt) and that at the time the "editress" of Grace was a white Afrikaans woman. In contrast to

the “S.v.d.W” initials, the first editorial is articulated in the voice of a black woman (or otherwise possibly by a white woman who performs a black female voice):

For sometime a number of women have felt the need for a magazine that will help to broaden the scope of African women culturally, socially and economically, a magazine that will focus attention on *our* needs and problems, hopes and aspirations, a paper that will help stimulate *our* growth and advancement... *We* have a lot to do in order to catch up with women of other races. This magazine will attempt to foster and encourage this growth and advancement. (4; my emphases)

The “editress” speaks of “we” and “our”, suggesting membership in a social collectivity of black women.<sup>10</sup> If she is indeed black, we could conclude that *Grace* not only presents self-defining images of black women but also that it presents to its readers a black woman in a public position of honour. Unfortunately, due to the time lapse between the publication of this magazine and the investigation this study undertakes, we can only speculate as to the extent to which the black voice in *Grace* is unfiltered.

Sarah Slabbert states that “[t]he editorial content of a magazine...is a reflection of the editor’s personality and perception of the readers’ needs” (194). The editorials of *Grace* seem moralising and sentimental at face-value, but they can also be understood as providing encouragement to black South Africans under apartheid (which is of course even more possible if the “editress” was a black South African woman as speculated above). Two examples are:

It is not life that is not worth living today, the problem lies with us because we have not come to term with ourselves. We have not faced ourselves in the mirror and recognised the face that looks back at us...When we come to term with ourselves, we will find that life is a joy worth its struggle. (June 1966: 3)

Above all, let us be happy. When we are happy we will be satisfied with what we have. (Jan. 1966: 3)

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<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Driver notes that various male writers sometimes ventriloquised the female voice by writing under a female signature (“Drum” 157-159). This might be a similar yet different case of a white woman writing under a black woman’s signature.

Although the “editress” never encourages her readers to challenge their ‘lot’, she motivates them to be positive and do the best with what they have. In this way the encouraging editorials may have been – at least in part – subversive of apartheid’s degradation of black people in South Africa at the time. When the “editress” states that “[w]e have not faced ourselves in the mirror and recognized the face that looks back at us”, it reminds us of Jacques Lacan’s theory of the child’s misrecognition of its image in the mirror stage. In a similar post-structuralist mode, Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser formulated a political theory of the construction of the subject: each person is constantly interpellated or ‘called’ into a subject-position through the hailing of another. A relevant example would be someone who hails a person as lesser (as has been the case in apartheid South Africa through derogatory terms such as ‘kaffir’ or ‘boy’), which leads to the subject (in this case, the black person under apartheid) misrecognising themselves as an inferior identity – as inferior copies of the original standard of whiteness (see Childs and Williams 234). Could the “editress” here be suggesting that when black South Africans look in the mirror (for example, their representation by white people) and see themselves as inferior, they are misrecognising themselves? On the other hand, by suggesting that readers should “come to terms with [them]selves” in order to find happiness, the “editress” avoids challenging apartheid’s role in black readers’ possible unhappiness or dissatisfaction.

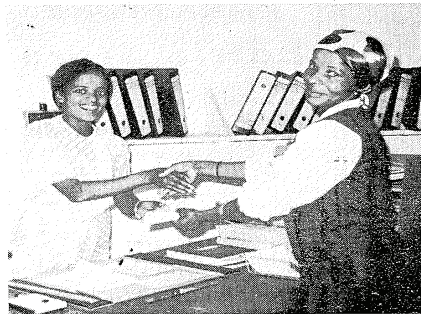
The editorials in Grace also reflect the missionary background of much of the black middle class of the 1960s in South Africa, which supports my speculation that the “editress” is black. Until the mid 1950s, mission schools were the first institutions



bringing education to South Africa's black population (Kuzwayo 251).<sup>11</sup> In them, Christian values were taught and African customs often belittled. In Grace the reliance on Christianity could, however, possibly also present a challenge to the status quo: the decisively strong Christian undertone of the magazine reminds apartheid's victims that 'God is on their side', which is reminiscent of black consciousness' liberation theology.<sup>12</sup> The December 1966 issue, for example, tells readers that:

...the shepherds, kneeling in adoration, surely remembered, as we in our own times remember... "unto you is born this day...a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (17)

In the previous month, the question is asked: "When will we open our eyes and look upon Our Heavenly Father for the help which He will give us?" (Nov. 1966: 29) The December 1964 editorial reminds readers of "God's promise of Peace on Earth and Goodwill to Men" (5). The regular meditative feature by the "editress", "We pause to think", also supports the message that "...whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (Aug. 1966).



**PRIZE WINNER.**

Have you sent in your entry for the recipe competition yet, ladies?

Mrs. Rebecca Sanyane did and here she is receiving her prize from our happy editress, Mrs. Patience Kumalo.

Send us a copy of your favourite recipe with your name and address and some interesting facts about yourself and your family, and you may be next month's lucky winner.

*Fig. 5. The Townships Housewife's 'editress', Patience Khumalo (left). The Townships Housewife, March 1968: 7.*

<sup>11</sup> From the mid-1950s many mission schools closed down as they did not want to support the apartheid government's policy of Bantu Education (1953) which saw no point in training the black person and presented them with an inferior form of education. For more information, see Lodge and Omond.

<sup>12</sup> Black Consciousness's liberation theology suggests an active image of God going into battle with the oppressed against the wrongs they had to suffer. The message of the Bible is redefined to make it relevant to black people's struggle and parallels are drawn between the situation of blacks in South Africa and the Israelite slaves in the Exodus story as reason for hope (Leonard 2).

Patience Khumalo (see fig. 5) is the black “editress” (as she is referred to in the magazine) of The Townships Housewife. The magazine also often refers to white compiling “editress”, Patricia Fitzgerald. Efforts to track down either of these two women have been fruitless, but future research might shed further light on them. The Townships Housewife’s editorial aims at making its readers positively disposed towards the advertisers in the magazine:

This is a good magazine. It is *your* magazine. It comes to you only because the advertisers pay to see you get it...Some [advertisers] have said they are not interested in the magazine, which means that they are not interested in our readers either, doesn’t it? ...Buy your advertisers’ products... (April 1968:3; emphasis in original)

The editorial interpellates readers as important members of the community: the companies that advertise in the magazine grant the readers social power by regarding them as having spending power worth the company’s “interest”. By interpellating them as valued customers, the magazine encourages readers to buy its advertisers’ products. The “editress” of The Townships Housewife acknowledges the black South African woman as an accomplished human being. This, of course, could possibly be a message dispatched by the magazine’s white owners: by playing on black women’s desire for racial uplift during apartheid, the magazine sells the distributors’ products:

“Townships Housewife” has been designed *specially for you*... (Feb. 1968: 3; my emphasis)

We are working to give you what you want in *your* own magazine... (March 1968: 3; my emphasis)

Whether the “editress” is white or black, whether her voice is filtered or not, both Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s editorials have the potential to empower black women in apartheid South Africa through representations of ‘black’ as ‘not inferior’.



### 1.1.3 Content: Grace

The content of Grace largely consists of the following regular features: “We are Proud to Meet”, which reports on black achievement in South Africa; “We pause to think”, a meditative Christian piece by the “editress”; “Grace and the arts” and “Record Review”, which feature mostly, and later *only*, black stars in the arts and cultural domain; and many beauty contests and “Mother and Baby” competitions. Other regular features of the magazine are the “Pen-Pal” and “Stars” features, as well as reader competitions and “Doctor Khumalo’s Advice” (advice for general illnesses from a Western medical perspective and through male authorisation). Practical advice for the homemaker, gardening tips, as well as beauty hints (“Beauty and Grace”) also appear regularly in this magazine. Grace reflects the recipe of most women’s magazines around the world at the time (see Gauntlett 50-55). This recipe has been a part of magazines aimed at women for a long time: in The Girl’s Own Paper published in London from 1880, themes are covered such as “Girls’ Attire: The Newest and Best” (Oct. 1895: 56), “Linen: Its Sewing and Washing” (Nov. 1895: 74), “Home Life: Its Possibilities and its Interruptions” (Dec. 1895: 166), “Recipes for February” (Jan. 1896: 245) and “Studies of Plant Life” (Jan. 1896: 259). This formula is still present in Grace.<sup>13</sup>

Photo stories, a popular phenomenon in the South African print media, (Martin 48), are popular among the readers and appear in almost every issue of Grace. The magazine first places photo stories that feature the South African movie star Ken Gampu (who had his big break in the 1965 film Dingaka by Jamie Uys). Later photo

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<sup>13</sup> Women’s magazines, initially usually controlled by men, have been used in the past to usher women into the domestic domain. There are various reasons for this phenomenon, which will be discussed in Chapter Two.

stories focus on ordinary everyday happenings, and in its last issues the magazine contains photo stories featuring “Sister Faith”, a nurse who is the heroine of the story.

The letters page in Grace, “I write what I like”, where readers voice their opinions on any matter and often praise Grace for its content, is intriguing due to its similarity to the title of black political activist Steve Biko’s later SASO Newsletter column, “I write what I like”.<sup>14</sup> Yet Grace’s content remains seemingly apolitical throughout the magazine’s lifespan. There are often reports on various black schools appearing in Grace, but these articles never take a political stance against apartheid systems such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953. When the National Party government in South Africa passed the Bantu Education Act in 1953 under then Native Affairs minister Hendrik Verwoerd, Verwoerd stated:

I will reform it [the education system for blacks] so that Natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them. (“Youth Struggle”)

The Bantu Education Act involved the separation of races in all educational institutions as well as the ‘tribalisation’ of black education. This Act saw mission schools close down as a result of these schools not wanting to be tenants of Bantu Education. Black national self-representation was no longer in the hands of a literate minority of missionary-trained Africans (Van Robbroeck, “Beyond” 209). This could be a possible reason for Grace’s eventual closing down in 1967: as magazines around the world became more modernized and urban (promoting a secular lifestyle and global connectivity), the ‘modesty’ of Grace must have seemed out of place.

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<sup>14</sup> The South African Student Organisation (SASO) was formed in 1969 by Black Consciousness leaders as a means of breaking away from liberal whites in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) who were regarded as not capable of fully understanding the ‘black situation’.

Grace also contains much fiction in the form of short stories. The women responsible for these stories are part of a significant new era in black popular literature: after a long period of male-domination in popular journalism, as Grace co-worker Mrs Dorothy Ngake states, “the African woman [now had] her own magazine in which to voice her ideas and to discuss matters of very great importance to women” (Dec. 1964: 7). In contrast to Drum magazine, fiction by South African *women* appears in Grace. Some of the writers whose short stories and articles feature in Grace are: Mrs I.G. Buthelezi, Thandi Zulu, Molly Moreni, Kathleen Mkwanzazi, Jo Simpi, Candy Mtetwe, Likhwa C.W. Mpofu, T. Dmbithula, Eileen Sithole, Fato Ngobebe and Violet Xolo.

Initially only American short stories by white writers appear in the magazine. Titles include “The Gambler” by Donna Reece, “Stormy Heart” by Mary Sergeant, “The Other Man’s Sweetheart” by Francis K. Allen and “Happy Landing” by Basil Haye, with characters such as Anna Gregorescu and Major Lethbridge. These stories all have illustrations of white people and must have seemed alien to Grace’s readers. For instance, in “God Sent Us Joanie” (Dec. 1964: 9), the wife finds comfort in the fact that “at retirement, which would come in [their] early fifties if [they] chose, [they] would be free to travel or stay put, work or not.” This is most often not the reality for the readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife.



Fig. 6. “The Other Man’s Sweetheart” *Grace*, Oct. 1964: 14.

From around mid-1965, however, *Grace* contains only short stories by South African black writers. The stories that appear in *Grace* by black women writers often provide advice to or encourage women who are challenged by the positions in which they are placed such as housewife, mother or child. In “Prescription for a Housewife” by Kathleen Mkwanazi (Jan. 1965), a doctor prescribes an hour and a half of rest every day of the lead character. Yet this is surely a luxury, rather than a prescription that her society would easily heed. Such ‘lessons’ challenge patriarchy’s convenient withdrawal of service from the ‘mothers of the nation’: the housewife is told to not consider tasks such as creating the perfect home and raising disciplined children as more important than her own health. “I Can’t Stand My Children” by Jo Simpi is a story about a woman who gets irritated with her children (Feb. 1965: 28). Her husband accuses her of being an “unnatural mother”, but a doctor comes to her rescue, explaining that it is very natural for a mother to have the feelings she is having. Doctor Silele suggests a part-time job to Jo. The moral of this story comforts women to whom motherhood does not seem natural (yet, it is notable that Jo is still authorised by a male figure – an example of the ambiguities at play in *Grace*). In “Manhunt for

Benjie” by Philippa Berlyn (Jan. 1966: 54), Malouisa tells her husband that she was “not to sit alone at home while [he was] paying heaven knows what compliments to the widow woman, Tiansayi...” It does not seem too far-fetched to think that these stories were meant to be picked up and read by the readers’ husbands.

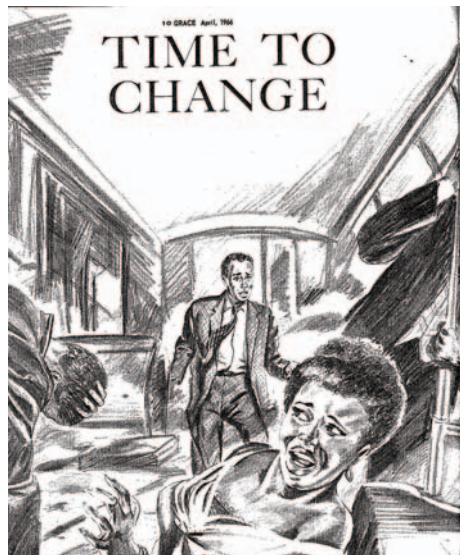


Fig. 7. *Time to Change*. *Grace*, April 1966: 10.

Even though women in *Grace*’s fiction often appear in inferior roles to men, they are regularly shown to be the heroines of the stories. “Young Doctor, Young Nurse” (Feb. 1965:52-62) is the story of the young nurse, Mary, and Dr Dimba, who falls in love with her. Mary teaches Dr Dimba the importance of human emotion and it is ultimately she who diagnoses a young patient with “kitten scratch fever” – a diagnosis that saves both Dr Dimba’s career and the little girl’s life. The contradiction in Mary’s victory, lies, however, in the fact that her active role is only enabled within the voice of a nurse – according to Ellen Kuzwayo the first group of black women doctors already emerged in the 1940s (243), and it would have been possible to cast

Mary in the role of doctor. Instead, however, she remains in the position of the helpmeet, second-in-command.

In “Manhunt for Benjie”, mentioned earlier, Benjie has to run from the authorities after a man is killed with a knife belonging to him. It is his wife, Malouisa, who comes to his rescue, explaining to the police that Temba, a man who loved her, tried to frame her husband in order to be with her. In “Ngaba’s first case” by Eileen Sithole (Oct. 1966: 9), Constable Ngaba wants to arrest the notorious Crimson Gang (discussed briefly later) in order to achieve promotion in his work. He manages to catch them due to the help of his girlfriend Faith. When asked at work how he did this “single-handedly”, he replies that “[he] used [his] head”. In addition to showing how women’s contributions are elided, Eileen Sithole might also be subversively implying that Ngaba’s girlfriend, Faith, is the “head”...

One cannot state that Grace promotes a coherent attitude towards women in its fiction. Yet, I would argue, that it is precisely this absence of a secure standpoint in the magazine that allows for various voices to surface. Attitudes vary from writer to writer. In Elayne Vietri’s “The Fat One” (Aug. 1965: 63), the fat daughter is taunted by her siblings and mother in a very cruel manner. In an effort to stop the teasing she presents them with a packet of ‘steaming’ love letters written to her, but later confesses to the reader that she wrote the letters herself. On the one hand, this story seems to portray this woman as a pathetic character; on the other hand, it touches on the agency available to women through the act of writing: ‘The Fat One’ could transform herself with her letters. In a similar story, “Even the Ugliest” by Molli Moreni (Jan. 1965: 10), a girl who struggles to find a job due to her ugly face, starts

working at a call center where she has to handle calls with a very famous and popular jazz singer, Jerry Lukele. She frets about facing him when he wants to meet her, but they ultimately end up together as he turns out to be blind. Neither of the above-mentioned stories challenges normative, Western ideas on beauty, but rather leaves both women to remain, respectively, “The Fat One” and the “Ugliest”. Both, however, create a space for women’s verbal or literary agency.

Other stories are overtly didactic and teach readers to live a ‘good life’. “Diamonds for Christmas” describes the criminal of the story in animalistic terms: he has a “flat nose that quivered like an animal’s that senses danger”, “[he]...was heaving and sweating like a demented animal” and “...he stared into the darkness, his nostrils flaring at the scent of the kill” (Dec. 1966: 6). This man, who steals diamonds, ultimately ends up being killed. He also throws away a copy of Grace at the beginning of the story, just before committing the crime. The message is explicit: readers of Grace are not criminals! “The Blue Shirt” by Eileen Sithole (Nov. 1966: 7), tells the story of fourteen-year old Thomas who wants to use his first wages as part-time worker to buy himself a beautiful blue shirt. Close to the shop where he has seen the shirt he wants, he comes across a man who hides a ball under one of three glasses, shuffles them around and then asks bystanders to guess where the ball is. The writer suggests through her writing that this is not an honorable man. Thomas decides not to use his money to gamble, but a lady with two crying, hungry children decides to spend her last money in an attempt to gain more. She loses everything and her crying daughter has to hear from her teary-eyed mother: “No cake...[n]o food at all this week.”

In “You’re Not Wild Enough” (Nov. 1964: 34), another didactic story, 28-year old Miss Funani is single and miserable, to which her mother suggests that she is too prim and proper. She dresses up, goes out and gets drunk and is then saved by single-father Dan Moloi, who rescues her from a drunken man wanting to dance with her. Miss Funani acts embarrassingly in this story – she is desperate for love and sex and makes no secret of it. Yet when Dan Moloi starts making love to her she stops him, deciding to “revert to the mouse [she] is”. He ultimately marries her because of this decision, which shows him that she is a good woman: she made the right, moral choice.

As can be seen from the above discussion, stories that appear in Grace often advance positive representations of women, at times present moral lessons on how to live the good life, and sometimes keep women in the familiar inferior spaces they are assigned to. There seems to be no single recipe according to which stories are chosen for Grace. “The Spell” (April 1965: 20) by Allan Harries is the story of a coloured couple in Hanover Street, District Six.<sup>15</sup> The female character in the story gets a “witch doctor” to place a spell on her husband so that he will have their next baby. When Jurie Petersen faces the fact that he will have to bear the next child, he jumps out of bed. Maria is content, “knowing that now, at last, her family was complete”. The story implies that men do not value what women have to go through bearing children. This is an interesting moral, coming from a male writer. I unfortunately do not know whether Harries was a white, black or coloured writer – his use of the term “witch doctor” in this story is a derogatory term largely used in white society, but it also would have been the view of missionaries and would have been imbibed by those

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<sup>15</sup> A former cosmopolitan residential area in Cape Town, made up of coloured, black, white and Indian residents, which was declared a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act in 1966 after which the forced removal of over 60 000 inhabitants by the apartheid regime followed.



Africans taught at missions schools to disregard their customs as ‘savage superstition’.

Harries’s next story takes on a completely different slant. “The Half-Single Man” (July 1965: 8) is the story of a white couple: Arthur is caught in the grip of Rosie, an absurd fat character who lost her index finger in a mincing machine and who wants to marry him. Arthur manages to make a “dash for freedom” after he entangles her steel finger in a cork-screw! These two narratives by Harries highlight the often haphazard nature of the stories that appear in Grace.

In concluding on the content of Grace, it should be noted that women *readers* become equally *creators or writers* of Grace as they place their opinions, letters of praise and profiles in the magazine. Writing to and reading Grace presented many of the magazine’s readers with an opportunity to see themselves in the public sphere (even if their voices were not unmediated). Some readers wrote with excellent literary flair. One such letter is that from a reader M. Gobo in the April 1966 issue:

Soweto is the criminal university of South Africa. The sprawling, brooding mass of townships lying south-west of Johannesburg, in a smoke-filled plateau, an African cosmopolitan area of South Africa, which is larger than some of the country’s cities, has become Hell’s Kitchen to many peace-loving people who live in the Rand. Yes, Soweto goes by the name of Hell’s Kitchen, for here the devil spawns the most notorious gangsters. Here in the melting pot of poverty, filth and insecurity, are committed some of the most ghastly crimes on the police records. (23)

Grace becomes not only a place for social commentary, but a space in which these women experiment with language, exercise their talent and abilities and receive public acknowledgement through placement of their letters.

Before moving on to a discussion of The Townships Housewife's content, I would like to refer to two magazines that might shed more light on the nature and content of Grace: Zonk! (1949-1964) and True Africa (first known as True). Grace often refers to Zonk! and True Africa is Grace's sister magazine with which it later merges. The content of Zonk!, as Sonja Laden describes it, has some similarities to the content of Grace:

Zonk!...focused on entertainment featuring American jazz and movie idols...Zonk! made a point of downplaying politics, and seeking to promote itself as a new public forum for urban sociability and egalitarianism, encouraged active participation in the magazine by all potential readers, literate, semiliterate, and nonliterate alike, by way of readers' letters, competitions, and word puzzles, and individual and group photographs of unknown readers (i.e., noncelebrities) In 1962 Zonk! became the first South African publication to feature photo stories, in which models acted out pre-scripted narrative sequences for the camera. (523-524)

As one of the first South African publications to feature photo-stories, Zonk! concentrates on visual representation (Laden 524). The photo-stories in Zonk! take on a very different format from those that appear in Drum as early as 1956 (see, for instance, "Baby Come Duze", April 1956): they have a typical, blocked comic-strip look, complete with speak bubbles, and they are quite lengthy. The use of the photo-story (in the format of the ones appearing in Zonk!) and visual representation are also present in Grace, although Grace contains a larger amount of text. Grace also regularly features *South African* film, music or cultural celebrities in contrast to Zonk!'s largely American focus: it invests more in presenting an authentic South African modernity – it shows black *South Africans*, not African Americans, coping comfortably with the age of industrialisation and urbanity. "[G]roup photographs" (as stated above) rarely appear in Grace and the magazine generally promotes the individual. In this respect, in particular, Grace seems a step closer to the 'modernised'

and urbanised South African black, a valuable step taken at the time to counter the retribalisation by the apartheid government.

In the 1960s, Republican Press, the publisher of Grace, produced a photo-comix magazine, True Africa (or True), which appeared fortnightly. It had three main serialised stories centered on three different characters: two were heroes, “Samson” and “Chunkie Charlie”, and the third, a woman named “Satana”, a wicked witch with snakes in her hair, was a villain. Samson plays himself in the photo-story “Samson”, and he appears also in Grace (in person) where many of Grace’s readers admire him (“Samson is the most popular man in Africa”; April 1966:5) – proof of the affinity between True Africa and Grace. Evil *female* characters such as Satana, however, do not appear in Grace. The name “Sister Faith”, one of the picture story heroines of Grace, stands in stark contrast to the name “Satana”, a feminised form of “Satan”.



Fig. 8. Front Cover. True, 11 May 1962.

My research on True Africa led me to an internet site where Mr Patric Tariq Mellet was asking whether anyone remembers True Africa. Knowing that Grace magazine later merged with its sister magazine True Africa, I contacted Mr Mellet for information on his memories of this magazine.<sup>16</sup> In response Mellet refers to the importance of True Africa as a voice in his childhood. Mellet remembers that only Africans appeared in these photo-stories and that he heroised the characters. He states that the themes were simple – the constant battle between the power of good and the power of evil and the victory of good over evil (this is reminiscent of Grace's editorials). Mellet also says that for a young working class boy removed from African people within the apartheid paradigm, reading the comic was one of the few mediums available to him to be able to hear the voice of an African person. Mellet explains that stories helped in building up respect and learning that the way Africans were treated was evil. He was hungry for stories and would seek out African gardeners, milkmen, railway labourers and security guards and ask them to tell him stories. Although the picture stories of True Africa and Grace were possibly written by white writers (such that they cannot be said to render 'black voices'), the black presence in the public sphere of the media surely empowered victims of discrimination and prepared the way for black pride.

Grace presents to its readers a multicultural community. In an article that appears in the magazine in January 1965, a writer states that:

I think Grace will be a magazine which all women in South African will love – do you remember in the first issue our Editress wrote that she wanted it to be for all of us – not only for the non-European section. (39)

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<sup>16</sup> Mellet, P.T. "Re: True africa???" Email to the author, 4 June 2008.

In another issue, a Mrs Masole writes that more articles should be in African languages only, to which a reader's response is that there are many coloured women that like to read Grace (Feb. 1965: 20). Grace was clearly not only for black people and having a European readership seems to be viewed as a compliment to the magazine: In "I write what I like", December 1965, S.D. Xolo writes:

My white friends give me money every month to get them GRACE each month from the location. This makes me very happy because I can see that GRACE is becoming popular even among whites. (15)

As can be deduced here from Mr Xolo referring to "[his] white friends", it seems that having a multicultural audience was seen to elevate the status of the magazine and consequently elevate the status of its readers. This cosmopolitanism would also enlarge the magazine's circulation. We are here reminded of the earlier reference to the notorious "Crimson Gang" which was situated in Durban,<sup>17</sup> as well as the reference in some stories to Cape Town's District Six (known for its racially mixed community). Despite the proud references to a white readership that we find in the magazine, white people rarely feature in Grace – definitely not to the extent that their representation is worth mentioning here.

#### **1.1.4 Content: The Townships Housewife.**

The Townships Housewife's general content consists of the monthly editorial by Patience Khumalo, letters to the "editress" (mostly consisting of readers praising the magazine), recipes, beauty and fashion and gardening hints. The "Children's Corner" features a monthly colouring competition, as well as the adventures of a little black

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<sup>17</sup> In his book The Kings of Durban, D. Panday brings to life Durban's most-feared Indian mobsters of the 1900s. The book focuses on, among others, the last surviving member of the Crimson League gang, Chotoo Bhana, who ruled Durban in the 1950s (see Naidoo).

boy, Zimbo, who lives in pastoral surroundings, and goes on adventures with his donkey, Imbongolo, and his girl friend, Rosie. There is also a monthly horoscope and an occasional “Your Letters Answered” by Auntie Meema, which covers mostly family-related problems. Two serial short stories, “Violet’s Two Men” and “Constance”, appear during the magazine’s lifespan and both are written by Zebedelia Malifi. As with the feature writers of Grace, she has now slipped into obscurity.



Fig. 9. *Violet's Two Men*. The Townships Housewife, April 1968: 26-29.

Taking up the most space by far in The Townships Housewife are advertisements. In its first issue, in an article entitled “Bread and Sandwiches” (Feb. 1968: 53), the consumer motives of the magazine become clear:

In the old days Housewives made their own bread at home but today very few of us have the time to do this so we buy bread from large bakeries like *Fotheringhams*. Toasting bread not only makes it more interesting but is a very quick way of preparing a hot snack. If you have no electric toaster, put the bread on a fork and toast it over a hot fire or your *L.P. Gas Cooker*. Hot buttered toast is

delicious and a scraping of *Marmite*...makes it into a nourishing meal...(my emphases)

The magazine advertises all the italicised items monthly. All other articles in The Townships Housewife follow this same recipe. In an article entitled “The Necessity of Sleep”, which appears in April 1968, the author states that “comfortable sleep...is something that we take for granted” (19). The article goes on to explain “the two most important features in a mattress” – “Posture Springing” and “Sanitization”. A full-page advertisement for the new “Slumberland mattress”, “with revolutionary Posture Springing... [and] exclusively Sanitized”, accompany this article. Another article in this issue states that

...every good housewife likes using fresh food, and we all enjoy having a refrigerator – it is something of which we can really be proud...Start saving up for a real refrigerator right away! (17)

This is, not surprisingly, complimented by an advertisement for “Zero refrigeration” (38). An advertisement for stoves follows the magazine’s recipe feature. There are countless examples of this phenomenon. In February 1968, an article on “What is Simmering?” explains to the housewives what it means when a recipe tells you to ‘simmer’ food (27). After explaining the concept of simmering, the article states that “an L.P. Gas Cooker is ideal for dishes which require to be simmered”. A full page advertisement for the “New Primus L.P. Gas Cooker” (26) compliments this article.

“Plain talk from the Editor” of April 1968 reveals the magazine’s profit-driven motive:

Ladies, this magazine comes to you free of charge...and it will come to you free of charge in the future...[p]roviding that the advertisers are willing to see that you get it, and they will be if you buy their products...Well now, it’s up to you. That is, if you want us to keep sending you this magazine free of charge every month...If you are interested, then there is a way that you can make sure of getting it. That is: Buy the goods advertised in your magazine...

In the March 1968 issue, readers receive free coupons to encourage them to buy the magazine's advertisers' products:

One thousand copies of 'The Townships Housewife' contain a coupon which will save you 10c next time you buy Marmite...we hope that in the future we will be able to get further gifts such as this, *but it will depend on what use you make of this offer...*As you know, Marmite has excellent food value, is very economical because you need to use so little, and has literally hundreds of uses. Spread it on bread, mix it with margarine, add a little to stews and soups, darken gravy with it, make vegetables more interesting with it... (9; my emphasis)

The Townships Housewife and its white owners clearly aim at producing the consumerist African woman – a profitable endeavour for both the magazine's owners and the mostly white owned businesses who pay the magazine to advertise their products.

The cover of The Townships Housewife also reflects the magazine's consumer-creating motive: from its second issue the cover remains the same for every issue published – a black boy, smiling very happily, is eating a sandwich (see fig. 2). The content describes him as a "happy, healthy child in a happy family" (March 1968: 3). A big "Fresh from Fotheringhams" logo is emblazoned on his T-shirt (Fotheringhams are bread suppliers advertised in the magazine) and a large bottle of 'Yum Yum' peanut butter is on the table. This displays the importance of branding in mobilising the profitable market of black people oppressed under apartheid. Some of the most regular advertisers in the magazine announce furniture, cold storage, food (wheat products, milk, marmite and tea), clothing and sanitary products. The Townships Housewife focuses on selling products sure to sell – the most basic needs of an emergent modern, urban middle class (a middle class that resulted from many South African blacks moving from the country to the city for higher wages, but also a



middle class that was the creation, as we have seen above, of white capital in an attempt to make more money through the mobilisation of a large black population).

In concluding on the content of both Grace and The Townships Housewife, I would like to highlight the strong emphasis in both magazines on domesticity. The Townships Housewife, for example, always addresses its readers as ‘housewives’. In addition to being a marker of ‘civilisation’ (and thus issuing a challenge to perceptions of ‘the savage black’), the establishment of homeplace provides readers some permanence in the face of the constant disruption of their family lives. It is well-known that due to poverty in the country and the opportunities created in the city through industrialisation and the mining industry, many black men had to move to the ‘white cities’, leaving their women and children in the country. In Muriel at Metropolitan, Tlali makes the point that the mining industry has flourished on this system “based on cheap labour, which undermines all laws of morality and decency, making nonsense of the concept of the family unit” (60).<sup>18</sup> In the city, legislation such as the Urban Areas Act of 1923 and Group Areas Act of 1950, which allocated black South Africans to specific living areas (this is elaborated on in Chapter Three) cleared the way for forced removals under legislative Acts such as the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954, which created further chaos in black South African’s already unstable lives.

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<sup>18</sup> Muriel at Metropolitan is a book by Miriam Tlali, originally titled Between Two Worlds, written in the sixties and only allowed publication in South Africa in 1975, as its content with its hints at life in a segregated society offended the Censorship Board. It is the story of a young black woman, Muriel, who works at Metropolitan Radio. The book was the first novel published in South Africa by a South African black woman. Muriel at Metropolitan was published in an unexpurgated version in London in 1979 and Tlali became the first black woman based in South Africa to publish outside the country (Librizzi).

Family disorganisation is thus also the result of female, migrant workers commuting between townships or Bantustans<sup>19</sup> and the city to work in white women's homes. That the women readers of Grace are victims of this "family disorganisation" (Cock 51) is clearly seen in an article appearing in the magazine in December 1966, "Spotlight on the Creche" (22). This article states that "[t]housands of working mothers have to leave small children unattended at home and start their day's work with a worried heart..." Yet, a photograph of Mrs Ngcongwane, her husband and children in their cosy home (see fig.12), is a picture of western domestic bliss – an unreal reality for most of those suffering under apartheid. Grace and The Townships Housewife present to their readers the possibility of running their own homes and having a permanent place of safety.

### 1.1.5 Target Audience

Considering the above-mentioned emphasis on urban domesticity in both Grace and The Townships Housewife, it becomes clear that both magazines aimed at black urban women and focused on the creation of a black middle-class. As explained earlier, this was significant for the increase of black pride, as well as a profitable endeavor for capitalism. Except for the fact that they are black, the women that appear on the cover of Grace are a reflection of women's magazines all over the world that have cover pages featuring beautiful, young and slim women, while in their inside pages both magazines focus much on the gender role of 'mother', an aspect I will elaborate on later. Concerning Grace's and The Townships Housewife's target

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<sup>19</sup> Bantustans (homelands) were rural areas specifically reserved for black people along 'tribal' lines during the apartheid era, whereas townships refer to residential areas around the cities reserved for blacks.

audiences, it is significant, as stated earlier, that they are not bound only to the representation of black people in Johannesburg, but that they reflect many ways of being.

## **1.2 Tradition versus Modernity**

The cosmopolitanism which Grace and The Townships Housewife often display is not stable. A salient feature of both magazines' content is the conflict between modernity and tradition: the magazines present a forum for debate between worldviews associated with progress in the West and those that had been passed down for generations in African culture, which were often perceived by the purveyors of modernity as 'backward'. From June to August 1965 a series appears in Grace on the questions which birth-control raises. One reader, Mrs Rantsane, states that "Birth control is a boon to the African woman" (June 1965: 16-18). Mrs P.P. Rust says it is necessary for women's happiness as "men are unreliable" (Aug. 1965: 60). Mrs Phoebe van Wyk writes, "God created man and gave him power to do things and God gave the man who invented the pill wisdom to do so" (Nov. 1965: 48). This reminds us of Allan Harries' "The Spell" (see earlier in this chapter), which is a liberatory presentation of birth-control: the story liberates the female character from having to have baby after baby, by shifting this responsibility to the male character.

On the other hand, many readers are completely against birth control by modern means such as the pill. Mrs Charlotte Singer writes that "[it] is not African"

(July 1965: 15) and Samuel Khumalo criticises it, saying that birth control means an end to the African custom of *lobola* (bride-price/ bride wealth). As *lobola* involves the transferring of reproductive value from the woman's father to the new husband, Samuel Khumalo is probably concerned about the ending of the custom of *lobola* as it would mean women, not their husbands, are in control of their reproductive value (Aug. 1965: 60-61). It is not only 'traditional' values that are evoked in decrying birth-control, however; a conservative missionary upbringing also influences readers to be negative towards birth control. Mr Steve M. Tshidi asks readers, "What will you mothers say on judgement day when God asks you: Where are your other children?" (Nov. 1965: 48). The issue of birth-control that readers discuss in Grace touches on various issues: the moving away from traditional discourses and missionary voices as a result of urbanisation,<sup>20</sup> the reality of population control by the apartheid government and the possibility of women's sexual freedom and non-reliance on men.

Many ambiguities are revealed as readers and writers negotiate their way between the acceptance of modernity and the rejection of a rural or traditional past. Lize van Robbroeck states that black South Africans had to "repudiate tradition" in order to inherit civilisation – tradition was seen as a "shameful relic of a primitive past" ("Beyond" 212). Yet, for the black person who has come face-to-face with the disillusionment of modernity, there was still the idealisation of a traditional rural existence. Van Robbroeck states that the black person's approach to tradition was characterised by a profoundly ambivalent blend of pride, nostalgia and shame (clearly

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<sup>20</sup> Migration at the beginning of the twentieth century to urban areas by African men was initially a way in which to make money to be able to marry and go back to the rural areas to farm. With the encroaching of segregation, black people did not have the right to land in 'white' areas (see Natives' Land Act of 1913). As a result of this, together with poverty in rural areas and rapid industrialisation, many black men moved from rural areas to the city in an attempt to seek job opportunities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many women also migrated to the city, either to be with their men, earn more money to aid the family or as a means to obtain a sense of independence, freedom from rural patriarchies and status that come with modernity and urbanity (see Bozzoli, Women 81-105).

seen in Grace) (ibid 212). The “pride” and “nostalgia” can be seen in the following message that appear in Grace in the October 1966 “We Pause to think”:

When we think of our own home towns, of *the peaceful living we enjoyed there*, the nearness of the earth, and then look at our lives in the big cities today, we realise *what a long way we have come*. We are not sure which of our traditions we should discard and which to take with us....Today the ways of our ancestors have become foreign to us, while the younger generation know nothing or very little about our customs in *the good old days*...For the sake of our people we ought to pray that they do not suffer this sickness of the mind and heart, that they do not become blinded by the shine of the temporary things offered by civilisation, but that instead our eyes will open upon *the truth*, so that we will be able to realise when a thing is good and when it is evil... We must teach the eyes of our hearts to look past...temporary, useless things...Only then will we be able to think back on our ancestors, not in shame but *with hearts full of pride*. (7; my emphases)

The writer relates ‘tradition’ to words such as “good”, “peaceful” and “pride”, and modernity or “civilisation” to words such as “evil”, “sickness” and “temporary”. The reference to “the shine of the temporary things” reminds of Marshall Berman’s statement (borrowed from Marx) that “[t]o be modern, is to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air” (15). With this statement Berman refers to the bureaucratic organizations that have the power to control and often destroy all communities, values and lives (ibid 13-14). This reminds us of the customers in Miriam Tlali’s Muriel at Metropolitan who buy radios and other furniture on lay-buy; as they fail to make their payments due to financial problems, the owner of the shop sends workers and they crudely repossess the items. On the other hand, in a collision with the “pride” and “nostalgia” (regarding tradition) that the above extracts reflect, the “shame” that accompanies an adherence to traditional values also surfaces in Grace: modernity, suggests the magazine, frees black victims of apartheid from a ‘primitive’ past and raises their status to ‘civilised’ human beings.

An example of Grace valuing modernity is evident in the article “Focus on Jongilizwe: A very special school for the sons of chiefs” (Grace, Sep. 1966: 12-13), which portrays traditional customs in a negative light, while it elevates ‘modern’ customs such as ‘ladies first’:

Barely a few years ago this young man, who will one day be the chief of his tribe, would have been the first to enter the hut...because he is of royal blood and also simply because he is a man, he would have walked through the door ahead of the women. But now the well-dressed young man politely stands aside while the women in the company step into the neat hut...In the meantime he has also remembered to take off his hat and to ask for permission before lightening a cigarette, for he knows that some of the women, especially the older ladies, do not like cigarette smoke... Yet barely a few years ago this proud young man ...would have taken the best seat himself...Small wonder, then, that a fresh-looking young Xhosa girl of about eighteen now looks at him with open admiration in her lovely eyes.

Note that the hut mentioned at the beginning of this extract becomes the “neat hut” as the man stands aside for the women, as he renders himself over to what is perceived to be civil. This reminds of the concerns of early missionaries who were worried about the round structure of African huts, believing that it made the neat organisation of the household impossible (De Kock 54). A missionary discourse of ‘civilisation’ is evident in the above extract, and it is presented as more admirable than ‘barbaric’ tradition.

Many of the short stories that appear in Grace are pro-modernity. In “The First Wife” (July 1966: 6), an old custom, which stipulates that a man is responsible for the wife of his brother should the brother die, troubles Mrs Gumede. Sarah’s husband’s brother dies and she has to face the fact that the evil and conniving Jane will become her dearly beloved Andrew’s second wife. Sarah decides, however, that “she could not abide by that custom”. Sarah and her husband eventually catch Jane stealing money from one of their dear friends and Sarah remains her husband’s only wife. The

story also ends with advice from Sarah and her husband Andrew to their dear friend Maria, to keep her money in a bank (an institution associated with Western modernity), rather than under her bed, as this almost led to her money being stolen.

The Townships Housewife is also fraught with ambivalence regarding the conflict between tradition and modernity. In June 1968 the magazine reports on the “Ntsikana Memorial Service”:

Ntsikana was the Prophet who foretold the coming of the White Man to South Africa and that they would offer his people two things, the Holy Bible, and money. The Bible they were to accept, but the money was to be rejected... The Townships Housewife sent representatives along. (5)

This extract suggests that capitalism should be rejected for the evils it brings. It seems as if Ntsikana knew what Berman (or Marx) would later proclaim: “all that is solid melts into air”. Yet, The Townships Housewife is the very vehicle of capitalism – the magazine (owned by whites) aims to mobilise the large black masses economically. Also, in contrast to talking about ‘prophets’ and ‘ancestors’, the magazine is written for the ‘lady’, who is given ample advice on how to dress and take care of herself from a Western perspective. The ‘lady’ in The Townships Housewife is a figure linked to economic racial advancement.

In line with this troubled negotiation between tradition and modernity, Grace and The Townships Housewife also host conflicting ideas on beauty. At times the magazines blatantly embrace western (or white and modern) ideas of beauty. In the February 1965 issue of Grace, in the regular beauty column, “Beauty and Grace”, a reader complains to the feature writer “Nancy” that “like most young girls of today [she] would also like to have [her] hair nice and straight” (26). Nancy replies that she will soon publish good information about hair straighteners for the readers. Almost all

the women in the manifold beauty contests covered in *Grace* wear their hair straight. The ideal weight that the magazine promotes also presents Western ideals: one writer states that “even the prettiest face is unattractive with an ugly fat figure” (Jan. 1965: 39). *Grace*’s articles and advertisements reflect modern, western clothes and hairstyles and a “recreation of the body” (Hansen 27) through diet, adornment, cosmetics, hygiene and clothing. A simple example here is the many skin-lightening advertisements placed in the magazine that “no modern girl can be without” (see fig. 10):

Karoo morning, Karroo at night/ makes you lovely, makes you light! (Dec. 1966: 80)

GRACE December, 1964

**Miss Hazel Jele**  
HAPPY OUTDOOR GIRL SAYS ...

**“There’s no secret about a lovely, light, clear skin!”**

... simply follow the famous Karroo Beauty Creams Treatment and in a very short time your complexion will be light and clear, your skin soft and lovely ... and you’ll find yourself more admired than ever before.

The way to a lovelier, lighter, clearer skin is easy ... just smooth Karroo Freckle and Complexion Cream on your face at night and while you sleep it gently does its wonderful work, making the skin light, clear and soft. The next morning you apply Karroo Moist Cream which protects the skin all day long and keeps it from becoming shiny, oil coated. Moist Cream is also a perfect powder base.

Yes, I always have the two famous Karroo Beauty Creams on my dressing table. No modern girl dare be without them.”

**KARROO CREAM**

“Karoo morning Karroo at night keeps you lovely keeps you light!”

**THE TWO KARROO BEAUTY CREAMS**

Fig. 10. Karroo Complexion Cream. *Grace*, Dec. 1964.

Modernity in the form of skin-lightening creams offers women the opportunity to leave the domestic space – they can be “happy outdoor girl[s]” like Miss Hazel Jele



(see fig. 10), because Karroo Complexion Cream (and other modern creams) will protect them from the sun's darkening effect on their skins. Again the collision between modernity and tradition becomes clear – skin-lightening creams promise access to modernity, but they disregard the traditional. Moreover, the adverts explicitly suggest that 'black is NOT beautiful.' The presence of such advertisements in magazines that elsewhere encourage black pride is part of the ambivalence of these texts.

The Townships Housewife also encourages a western sense of beauty. It reminds women to have a "sleek, perfect appearance" and that "a brassiere which keeps your bust in the correct position is essential to every kind of outfit" (April 1968: 22). The magazine tells women what goes together and what not in fashion: "Many a beautiful turn out has been ruined by the wrong shoes!" (ibid 22). Grace and The Townships Housewife chart the shift from the country woman to the city woman. Both magazines reflect the ambiguities present as black women attempt to make sense of these new developments in their world, negotiating the shift from the country to the city.

The conflict between tradition and modernity in Grace and The Townships Housewife is also evident in the relation between the magazines' content and advertisements. As noted earlier, in October 1966 Grace warns us against materialism:

For the sake of our people we ought to pray ...that they do not become blinded by the shine of the temporary things offered by civilisation...We must teach the eyes of our hearts to look past...temporary, useless things... (7)

In contrast to this warning against capitalism, Grace's advertisements create the consumer woman who is interested in western ways of living. Zoë Wicomb, however, argues that this relation between content and advertisements is only seemingly contradictory. For example, the idea that black people are a valid frame of reference, that black is beautiful (a message found in Grace which clashes with its manifold advertisements for skin-lightening creams), supports the selling of consumer products as the content shows that apartheid's oppressed deserve to wear beautiful clothes and accessories and use beauty creams (this process is referred to as transverse discourse) (Wicomb 99-127). The above-mentioned reference to the "shine of temporary things" also seems to contradict the Grace advertisement for Standard Bank: "Let your money make more money for you" (Dec. 1964: 12). Yet, the description of Standard Bank as a "bank in which to place your confidence", replaces the fear accompanied by the "temporary, useless things". A similar argument could be made for The Townships Housewife. The content of the magazines that embraces tradition encourages the consumption of modernity.

### **1.3. Gender Identity, Feminism and Womanism.**

An aspect of both magazines that present fewer ambiguities than the tension between tradition and modernity is the equation of motherhood to womanhood. The idea that being a woman is synonymous with bearing children is solidified through repetitive practice in society. Judith Butler explains this through the concept of 'performativity' and describes it as "that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names" – a production that happens through "repetition and recitation" (Butler in Osborne & Segal 33). Women come to feel that having children is a part of their identity as 'woman', and this creates a practice of childbearing as essential for

producing normative femininity. Bearing and raising children become performative acts through which a gendered identity as woman is produced and stabilized.

The monthly presence of features for children in all the issues of Grace, as well as the “Children’s Corner” in The Townships Housewife, is proof of the equation of womanhood to motherhood in these two magazines. Grace aims at women in general, but it is also subtitled “The magazine for the whole family”. This suggests that to read this new exclusive magazine for black South African women, you have to have a family, you have to have (or plan on having) your own children. This reflects what Butler says when speaking of “a norm that is regulating your sex” (in Osborne and Segal 34) – having children determines whether you can read a magazine *for women* and by extension it determines whether you can fall into the category of ‘woman’.

Mamphela Ramphela in her autobiography A Life, published in 1995, significantly deglamorizes motherhood and refers to the “*illusion* of having been programmed for the nurturing role” (173; my emphasis). This is a challenge not generally presented in Grace or The Townships Housewife, probably due to a combination of the desire to reach perceived ‘standards’ of civility (the nuclear family) and the traditional emphasis on the importance of bearing children in many African communities. During the 1960s Ramphela also experienced this pressure on women, and could only finally admit, also for other black women, the fallibility of such beliefs in an autobiography published thirty years later. Grace writer Jo Simpi, however, interestingly challenges the notion of motherhood as natural to women in her story “I Can’t Stand My Children” as early as 1965! Jo is a housewife who

struggles to handle her children. Her husband accuses her of being an “unnatural mother” (February 1965: 44). After Jo’s son lands in hospital and her husband accuses her of negligence, Dr Sililo addresses the couple and tells Jo’s husband:

Your wife has been explaining that she finds it hard to get along with her children. I want to point out to both of you that that’s not at all unusual...A good many women can and do crack under the strain – which is not to say they should be blamed. (44)

This story challenges husbands who assume that motherhood comes naturally for all women.

Although the above-mentioned revelation takes place through the exchange between male doctor and husband and is not subversive of the gender hierarchy that places men in positions of reason, Grace and The Townships Housewife often present overt challenges to the reality of female subjugation. This is more specifically true of Grace. In a Grace issue of November 1964, a reader, Daline Steam, writes that “Now we have a chance of raising our voices without the fear of the men...[t]his is our magazine where men cannot interfere” (6). This is reminiscent of The Townships Housewife’s inaugural words: “Hello Housewives, here it is/ The magazine more yours than his”. These are very strong words considering the patriarchal context at the time and they break the ‘silence’ to challenge both white domination and perceived black male superiority. In a December 1964 issue of Grace, in the regular feature “I write what I like”, Mrs Dorothy M. Ngake makes an “[a]ppeal to Bantu [h]usbands”:

Many of our people still believe at this late hour that a woman’s place is in the kitchen. The woman has more responsibilities than being a housewife...I deplore the idea that Bantu wives should do nothing to improve themselves and the lot of their people. They take their wives for granted, excluding my own husband James Ngake. When the husband should pay more attention to her he neglects her, does not give her money for nice dresses or take her to places of culture and interest. We cannot progress because our men do not give us a chance....Many wives I know take pride in their husbands, why cannot the husbands take pride in their wives. (30)

Another quite challenging article in Grace is “Mothers – overtime workers without pay”:

Remember that she is not only a somebody standing in the kitchen preparing meals for the family or standing by the washing machine...Although daddy might be the main bread winner he knows that his chores at the office end at 5pm, then he can come home and relax comfortably. However, on the other hand, mums are the unpaid slaves, their duties among other things, being cooks, cleaners, gardeners, laundry women, home doctors...and what is more without overtime pay, industrial rights, time off or luncheon vouchers. (May 1965: 20)

Grace certainly advances journalism centred on its readers’ interests. The magazine forms a bridge between the male-dominated Drum-decade and more woman-centred magazines to follow in the future. ‘Feminism’ was not yet a defined or structured movement in South Africa at the time of Grace, so the term never appears in the magazine. Yet, the concept seems to be embodied within the readers’ and writers’ words, as Nfah-Abbenyi explains with regards to African women’s fiction:

...before feminism became a movement with a global and political agenda, African women both “theorized” and practiced what for them was crucial to the development of women, although no terminology was used to describe what these women were actively doing... (10)

The word ‘feminism’ should nonetheless be used with caution with regards to Grace and The Townships Housewife. Nfah-Abbenyi explains how black women often feel that white Western feminists cannot relate to the black female struggle and that ‘feminism’ represents a particular Western or privileged group of women (11). In contrast to many white women, black women had to deal with the absence of basic amenities such as running water or food and they were also oppressed, with their men, as a race. Therefore, they could not relate to white women’s aim of equal status to men, as this division within the race would involve weakening their already vulnerable plight. Black women had to stand together with their men as an oppressed

group, whereas white women did not have the experience of being oppressed as a racial group:

...the *altruistic need to suppress individual desires and to act for the community* was stressed for all black South Africans at a time of concerted black opposition to apartheid. (Lewis, 168; my emphasis)

Instead of 'feminism', then, some black theorists suggest the use of the word 'womanism'. Elana Siev states that the core difference between 'feminism' and 'womanism' is that "where feminism strove for equality as its *raison d'être*, womanism strives for distinctiveness" (2). Womanism focuses on the endorsement, embrace and enjoyment of feminine qualities as opposed to only focusing on equality to men, and it also emphasises women's support for their men.

Unlike Grace, women in The Townships Housewife do not overtly take men on in the magazine, but an interesting coat of arms representing the magazine appears in the May 1968 issue: designed especially for the magazine, the shield contains a pan in the middle, with a wooden spoon and spatula forming the 'spears' (see fig. 11). Maurice Keen explains that heraldry, as expressed in a coat of arms, was "emblematic of the *pride of birth, station and culture* of the nobility in its broadest range" (128; my emphasis). Keen also says that it does not merely involve "the identity of the *individual*, but a *whole associated history of ancestral chivalrous achievement*" (132; my emphasis). The coat of arms that appears in The Townships Housewife says much of women using the homeplace as the space from which to challenge inferiority, and assert a place of communality with other women. The presence of articles on the Zenzele Clubs (elaborated on later) in The Townships Housewife also proves that this magazine aimed at the upliftment and embrace of womanhood. In these respects, the magazine can be regarded as promoting womanism.

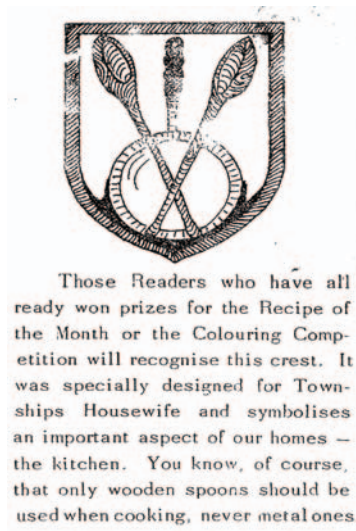


Fig 11. Coat of Arms. *The Townships Housewife*, May 1968:3.

Feminist or womanist practices and theorizations surface in Grace and The Townships Housewife both in overt and covert ways. In contrast to the oppositional attitudes to men and their opinions about women mentioned above, some readers and writers of Grace abide firmly to an ideology of female inferiority. In “I write what I like” of February 1965, a reader, M.M. Pihiso from Durban (Umbogintwini), responds to Mrs Dorothy Ngake:

Now I have read “An appeal to Bantu husbands” by Mrs Ngake – She appeals to Bantu husbands that they must treat their wives like her husband. Firstly, a woman is a child and I don’t expect a child to appeal to his or her father for better treatment. It is her father’s responsibility. Secondly, most women run away from that little heaven of theirs. I’m not despising what Mrs Ngake says, but she must not teach us and I am not going to write much about these wives, who were treated like eggs and still run away. (20)

Comparing this reader’s response to Mrs Ngake’s letter, it becomes clear that there are two different ‘rhetorics’ at work, suggesting a conflict between two different worldviews: modernity stands in opposition to tradition, the rural stands in opposition to the urban. Mrs Ngake refers to things such as “washing machine”, “office” and “industrial” in making her argument. In contrast to this, the second reader makes her point by using the image of being treated like eggs – a much more rural image. The

different attitudes towards women's rights (resulting in the ambiguities we often find in the magazines) also seem to be aligned with women's positioning in either the city (with more advanced ideas on female rights) versus the country (with more conservative ideas).

Although women in the city might have been developing more of what we might call a feminist consciousness, one should not assume, however, that this meant women in the city enjoyed more power or societal influence than rural women. Nfah-Abbenyi states that rural women in Africa often had more power as they were not limited to the private sphere and were key players in producing food on the farm (23). This stands in contrast to "daddy [as] the main breadwinner" (see Grace, May 1965:20). As Grace and The Townships Housewife chart the shift from the country woman to the city woman, they reflect the ambiguities present as women face and manage the new developments and orientations in their world.

#### **1.4. Minstrelsy and Mimicry in Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

When reading about these new developments in the worlds of Grace and The Townships Housewife, it seems impossible to believe that the readers' context is one of extreme oppression in apartheid South Africa. As stated earlier, the many articles on black schools in Grace never refer to the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Grace and The Townships Housewife also never discuss the laws of separation established under the Separate Amenities Act of 1953. These laws include the provision of separate buildings, services and conveniences – including sports, amenities and beaches – for different racial groups (Omond 53).



There is also no reference in the magazines to the Sophiatown writers of the 1950s, or to significant black political figures in South Africa at the time. Many black South African women were already politically active at the time: during the 1956 anti-pass campaign about 20 000 black women gathered in front of the Union Building in Pretoria to register their protest against the laws requiring women to carry passes (identification documents).<sup>21</sup> The magazines also never refer to the ANC Women's League, even though it was already established in 1948 and gave black women an active role in the struggle for national liberation (Lodge 141). References to apartheid South Africa only surface indirectly, as in the following comment on the life of Mrs Thipe in The Townships Housewife:

The winner of the Recipe of the month prize for March is Mrs Miriam Thipe who is a cook-housekeeper in the Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg. Mrs Thipe has two sons, Moses aged twenty, who works in the De Beers mine in the Free State, and William, aged seventeen, who is still at school. Mrs Thipe hopes that Moses will soon take a greater interest in the rest of the family. (March 1968: 56)

Moses works in the mine to produce white capital for a minimum pay, and, as stated earlier and as evident from the above quote, migrant work severed the structure of families due to men leaving their homes for long periods.

Given the socio-political conditions and the extreme state of oppression under which these two magazines were produced, however, neither Grace nor The Townships Housewife could contain overt political stances if they were to remain unbanned. Tom Lodge refers to the "relative tranquillity of the 1960s" and explains it

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<sup>21</sup> The aim of the pass laws, requiring from 1958 that all African men – and from 1963 all African women – carry their 'reference books' with them, was to control black population movement by directing African labour where it was needed by white capital. It was particularly aimed at preventing the movement of Africans to 'white' cities as they sought for better-paid work they could not obtain in the country. The fact that women had to later also carry passes is an indication of the need of more Africans to do manual labour in the city (Omond 123).

as a result of “the suppression of the nationalist movements and the imprisonment, banning or exile of an entire generation of politicians and trade unionists” (321). The Suppression of Communism Act<sup>22</sup> made it impossible for products of the black press to exist while publishing political content.

One might hypothesise that as a result of this and as a way to encourage a group struck down, both magazines instead portray the image of the ever-cheerful, joyous and happy black. This becomes a form of escapism – the tendency to seek, or the practice of seeking, distraction from what normally has to be endured (Oxford English Dictionary). Both magazines can be understood as producing a stage for elaborate minstrel performances.

The minstrel show, or minstrelsy, was a form of stage entertainment in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century where white people performed, in black face (for example covered in coal), the perceived slow-witted American black – the “plantation darkie” or “Northern dandy negro” (Bean et al 3). The minstrel performance involved demeaning and racist characterisations of African Americans reflecting elements of proslavery ideology which held them as lazy, dishonest and unable to reason logically.

Eric Lott explains that the only way for American black performers to gain entrance to the entertainment profession during the early nineteenth-century was to appropriate the minstrel blackface (i.e. painting white lines around their mouths and

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<sup>22</sup> The Suppression of Communism Act (1950) sanctioned the persecution of any individual group or doctrine intended to bring about “any political, industrial, social or economic change...by the promotion of disturbance or disorder, by unlawful act” or “encouragement of feelings of hostility between the European and non-European races of the Union” (Hellmann and Lever qtd. in Lodge 33).

eyes) and then perform themselves as silly, animalistic beings (see Bean et al 3). Black people in Grace and The Townships Housewife often resemble this image of the happy, dancing, clapping, singing black. Complaining about apartheid will not get them in the magazines, but playing the happy domesticated woman at home certainly would. It would also be a welcome escape from a reality of oppression.

The image of the cheerful Grace and The Townships Housewife reader (the minstrel) ignores the reality of many black women's struggle with poverty in 1960s South Africa. Another manner in which this avoidance of reality takes place is through the prominence given in both magazines to 'middlewomen', educated products of the coloniser such as the skilled teacher, doctor or student (see Childs and Williams 129). The 'middlewomen' in Grace and The Townships Housewife do not represent the black woman in South Africa in general. Having little access to basic amenities such as running water, electricity and labour saving devices, it was difficult for black South African women to achieve domesticity in the Western sense of the word. Mrs Moletse, one of the winners of a Grace "Mother and Baby" competition, is a case in point:

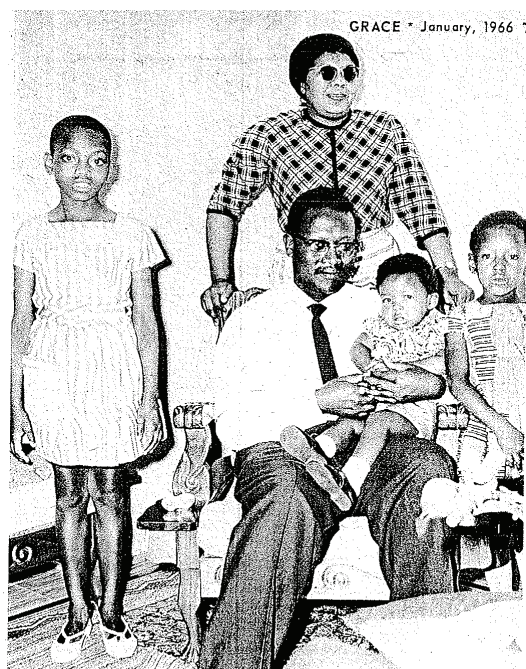
Mrs. Moletse is employed as a domestic servant, but she supplements her income by doing crochet work and selling it to friends and relatives. Her husband is at present working in Ladybrandt, Orange Free State, but she hopes to join him soon. (Jan. 1966: 7)

In a comprehensive study done by Jacklyn Cock on domestic workers in South Africa, she refers to the following two case studies that resemble, or better explain, the situation of Mrs Moletse:

The only time she [Mavis] sees her children is during her 'off' on Sunday afternoons...Mavis is devoted to her husband, and is extremely anxious that her marriage seems to be breaking up. Her husband is not allowed to sleep over with her [Mavis stays in]...He is now involved with a young nurse. (27)

Her [Elsie's] husband is a contract worker in Port Elizabeth and comes home for one month each year. (28)

In contrast to this reality is the image of Mr and Mrs Ngcongwane in their lounge with their family (see fig. 12). The Ngcongwane family are 'middlemen', like most other black South Africans who appear in Grace and The Townships Housewife. In a brief moment of escape, they present a desirable, yet unfamiliar lifestyle to the readers.



Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Ngcongwane in their lounge with their family. Themba, the only son in the family who won our second prize with his mother, is sitting on his father's lap. Left is the eldest daughter, Elizabeth and right is Eureka.

Fig. 12. 'Middlewomen' in Grace. Grace, Jan. 1966: 7.

This kind of escapism is prominent in Grace. The December 1964 issue shows "Miss South Africa Queen Malibatso" and the way in which the story is presented makes it seem as if Miss Queen Malibatso was chosen from among all the black, coloured, Indian and white people in the country to represent South Africa in this

prestigious title (14) (note also the appeal here to a national identity and citizenship). Not surprisingly, however, an internet search for “Miss South Africa 1964” does not present you with Queen Malibatso’s name – Vedra Karamitas was Miss South Africa 1964 and the first black Miss South Africa is listed as Amy Kleynhans in 1992 (see Lehmkuhl). In apartheid 1964, Queen Malibatso was certainly not on stage with South Africa’s white beauty queens, as black beauty queens were not presented with the same opportunities to partake in the country’s national beauty contests together with white women. But in Grace, Queen Malibatso is South Africa’s favourite beauty queen. Escapism, as presented in the pictures of ‘middlewomen’, is a welcome distraction from a reality of oppression and provides a platform – albeit compromised – for black self-representation.

The escapist nature of Grace and The Townships Housewife has possibly been a factor in the short print runs of both magazines. Escapism covers up the reality of oppression, while the oppressed, with growing political awareness, might not have wanted to continue engaging in such denial. Paul Gready argues that a major reason for Drum’s sustained commercial success in the Fifties was its accessible and humanitarian analysis of South Africa’s political situation (149) (although Michael Chapman has critiqued Drum for its escapist nature). A growing interest in challenging the status quo collides with the utopian world that Grace and The Townships Housewife present.

Black people who appear in Grace and The Townships Housewife could be seen as ever-cheerful minstrels, or as ‘middlewomen’ presenting an unfamiliar lifestyle. On the one hand both these understandings might be perceived as regressive concerning

establishing political change, or as establishing alienation as Fanon explains due to black people becoming dislocated from their root cultures (see Wyrick 32). On the other hand, mimicry (which takes place as the coloniser produces the educated teacher, doctor or student) becomes subversive as “to resemble is to threaten the basis of power and discrimination” (Childs and Williams 132). It is at this place that “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (Bhabha 123).

This first chapter writes Grace and The Townships Housewife into the history of the black press in South Africa. Grace and The Townships Housewife chart women’s relocation from the country to the city, from tradition to modernity and the ambiguities presented by such a change. In the next chapter the focus shifts to the significance of the representation of black women in these two magazines in a comparison between the portrayal of women in South African white women’s magazines and South African black women’s magazines during and prior to the 1960s.

## Chapter Two

### **The Construction of White and Black Women in South African Women's Magazines in the 1960s: Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady versus Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

In this chapter I first discuss the representation of white women in South African white women's magazines of the 1960s and compare it to the way 1960s black women's magazines, Grace and The Townships Housewife, represent black women. I then contrast the way in which the above-mentioned white women's magazines depict women to the image that Grace and The Townships Housewife construct of black women. As Grace and The Townships Housewife are the main focus of this study, I discuss the way in which these two magazines image black women in more detail, whilst giving a briefer overview of women in Die Huisgenoot (today known as Huisgenoot), Sarie Marais (today known as Sarie) and Fair Lady, as more research has been done on these magazines (see S. Viljoen and Froneman; Slabbert; Glenn).

#### **2.1 A Comparison between the Representation of White Women in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady and the Representation of Black Women in Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

##### **2.1.1. Publication History and the Representation of White Women in Die Huisgenoot**

Die Huisgenoot ('The House Companion') was founded as a general interest South African family magazine in 1916 in Cape Town. This magazine was first known as

the Dutch De Huisgenoot, but it was not written in Dutch and was subtitled “‘n Tydskrif vir Afrikaners” (“a magazine for Afrikaners”).<sup>23</sup> In its initial years the magazine served as a political mouthpiece of the Cape National Party and it consequently supported the cultural interests of white Afrikaans-speaking people (Afrikaners) in South Africa. In the aftermath of the *Vryheidsoorlog* (South African War, 1899-1902), two streams of Afrikaner alignment emerged. The first supported the reconciliatory rule of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, who ushered in political coalition between the British and Afrikaners; the second sought to mobilise Afrikaner culture, through the vehicle of language, in reaction to British imperialism and domination. The Afrikaans media house, Naspers, founded De Huisgenoot against this backdrop of post-war poverty and what was frequently perceived to be the cultural humiliation of British policies of Anglicisation (Viljoen and Viljoen 90). De Huisgenoot was first and foremost focused on the upliftment of the Afrikaner.

What was the Afrikaans woman’s role within Afrikaner Nationalism in the past? Represented as weeping, suffering and stoical (McClintock, “No Longer” 109), she affirmed male empowerment after the embarrassment of defeat by the British in the South African War. Secondly, she was valuable for her unpaid services to husband, family and the *volk* (people) (ibid 107). Thirdly, she was the biological reproducer of the *volk* and as mother she was the transmitter of Afrikaans cultural narratives (Davis qtd. in McClintock, “No Longer” 104). In general, the Afrikaner woman was a reflection of Afrikaans culture – the organisation of the house, as well as her appearance, reflected the status of her nation (a ‘nation’ that of course excluded black South Africans) (Schoombee 119). She was the mother of the nation, the

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<sup>23</sup> Afrikaans, a dialect of Dutch-speaking settlers in the Cape area from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and acknowledged as an official language of South Africa in 1925, was a combination of borrowings from High Dutch and ‘kombuistaal’ (kitchen language) of the slaves (Mngadi and Monson 23).



*volksmoeder* – a political concept which labels the Afrikaans woman as bearer of the nation through her position as domesticated heroine as described above.

It is to such ends that Die Huisgenoot represents white women, according to Louise Viljoen and Stella Viljoen, as either the *fraai vrou* (beautiful, fancy and sweet), the *plaas vrou* (farm woman) or the sublime woman (21). The *fraai vrou* is the representation of femininity – she is the woman with pouting lips, beautifully manicured hands and complimenting accessories. This woman is the passive beauty who affirms male superiority and physical strength. The *plaas vrou*, as the title’s relation to the farm suggests, is the mother and nurturer. This woman gives birth to male Afrikaner leaders and serves her *volk* (white Afrikaans-speaking people) through her unpaid services of washing, cleaning and taking care of the baby. She also educates and transmits important cultural values to her children. Lastly, the sublime woman is the woman in close connection to a higher being – she represents the Afrikaner as the good in the struggle between good and evil.

Although Viljoen and Viljoen are here referring to the representation of white women in Die Huisgenoot after the 1948 electoral victory of the National Party, pre-1950s Die Huisgenoot also contains these three manifestations of ‘femaleness’. In an analysis of De Huisgenoot of 1916 to 1923, E. Schoombee refers to the magazine’s monthly feature “Die vrou in die huis” (“the woman in the home”), which clearly sets the woman in the domestic sphere. Schoombee states that the needs of the woman as distinguished by De Huisgenoot at the time involved fashion and beauty questions; needlework, handwork, furnishing, decorating the home, cooking, gardening, educating children and curing illnesses (112) – clearly representations of the *fraai*

*vrou* and the *plaas vrou*. There was also a regular feature, “Gedagtes vir die maand” (“Thoughts for the Month”), that gave biblical advice and consequently constituted De Huisgenoot readers as Christian women. The womanly duties portrayed in De Huisgenoot resembled the message given to women in most women’s magazines around the world at the time (see Gauntlett 50-55). It was also important that women in De Huisgenoot of the pre-1950s were called back into the domestic domain after the First World War – their femininity associated with the quieter or safe space of home would differentiate them from the national leaders of the country, their men.

As stated earlier, the above-mentioned manifestations of ‘femaleness’ also appear in Die Huisgenoot of the 1950s, and these representations of women are set firmly in the domestic domain. As after the First World War, post-World War Two saw women being called back into the domestic domain after they had to fill the gaps in the industrial world left by men going into battle. Anne McClintock states that “a revamped ideology of motherhood was invoked to usher women back into the home” (“No Longer” 110). Jane Graves also notes that women were typically represented as ‘the angel of the house’ in commercial imagery in order to help secure the job market for men after the Second World War (qtd. in Viljoen 19).



Fig. 13, 14 and 15. The 'fraai vrou', the 'plaas vrou' and the sublime woman. *Die Huisgenoot*, 12 Feb. 1954; 24 April 1953; 7 Aug. 1953.

In the 1950s, *Die Huisgenoot* reached its lowest circulation figures. According to Wiets Beukes, most general interest magazines experienced a crisis due to the urbanisation of the population during and after World War Two<sup>24</sup> – a new public arose with other values and forms of entertainment and relaxation and a different temperament than the rural population (farming communities) of the past (351).<sup>25</sup> Johannes Froneman explains that idealism and formalised cultural life and mores were slowly making way for a more secularised money-driven culture with a strong focus on content that would sell magazines (61-79). From the 1950s to 1970s, *Die Huisgenoot* gradually repositioned itself from being the vehicle of support for Afrikaner Nationalism to a more populist, profit-driven motive. The content gradually became more sensationalistic, featuring information on international and local

<sup>24</sup> There was an increase in job opportunities in cities at the time: the disruption of the international capitalist economy as a result of the Second World War created boom conditions for South African industry with the proliferation of more sophisticated forms of import substitution and the development of production geared to military demands (Lodge 11).

<sup>25</sup> The different temperament that now entered *Die Huisgenoot* was also present in the black magazine *Drum* that experienced a similar shift in the early 1950s from the conservative, rural-orientated *African Drum* to the modern, city-orientated *Drum*. *Drum* magazine is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

celebrities. Die Huisgenoot's cover pages in the 1960s, at the time of Grace's and The Townships Housewife's publication, represent the Afrikaner in transition – images of a more independent modern woman gradually replaced images of the *boeremeisie* (white Afrikaans farm girl) as a more profitable focus on a broader cosmopolitan world replaced the support previously given to Afrikaner Nationalism.

### 2.1.2 Publication History and the Representation of White Women in Sarie Marais

Whereas Die Huisgenoot was aimed at the whole family, Sarie Marais, founded in 1946, was South Africa's first Afrikaans women's magazine. The name was taken from an Afrikaans folksong, "Sarie Marais", created during the South African War (c. 1900). The song's content involves the "forced removal of *Boer* men, women and children to faraway concentration camps by the British" (Wikipedia "Sarie Marais."):

My Sarie Marais is so ver van my hart,  
Maar'k hoop om haar weer te sien.  
Sy het in die wyk van die Mooirivier gewoon,  
Nog voor die oorlog het begin.

My Sarie Marais is so far from my heart  
But I hope to see her again  
She lived in the Mooiriver district  
But that was before the start of the war. (see Copeland; my translation)

Sarie Marais's name, then, at the time of its launch in 1949, represented the idea of the weeping Afrikaner woman, victim of the South African War. McClintock explains that as the representation of women as militant would not be emblematic of national (male) empowerment, "women's martial status as fighters and farmers was purged of

its indecorously militant potential” and Afrikaner womanhood became enshrined as “suffering, stoical, and self-sacrificial” (“No Longer” 109). The initial focus of Sarie Marais, as in early copies of Die Huisgenoot, is on the positive representation and encouragement of the Afrikaner *volk*. That Sarie Marais was launched a year after the National Party electoral victory is further proof that this magazine was initially a political tool of Afrikaner Nationalism.

Sarie Marais displays a similar pattern in its representation of women as Die Huisgenoot. Similar to Die Huisgenoot, the Sarie Marais of the 1960s represents the *fraai vrou*, *plaas vrou* and sublime woman. The feminine beauty or *fraai vrou* is, for example, portrayed in the article “Raad vir die eerste jaar” (“Advice for the first-year student”) (16 Feb. 1966:43). This article reminds the first year student that she will have to wear make-up every day, she will have to maintain a healthy weight and that she has to speak softly and must not laugh loudly. It further tells her:

[v]erwyder jou beenhare, verwyder jou beenhare, verwyder jou beenhare,  
verwyder jou beenhare – dis afskuwelik!

Remove your leg hair, remove your leg hair, remove your leg hair, remove  
your leg hair – it is detestable! (my translation)

In a fashion page on what she is to wear to university, lace, ribbons and floral patterns predominate (16 Feb. 1966: 66-69). The content also encourages women to perform the “[s]pel van die koket” (“the flirt’s game”) (13 May 1964:14): it encourages flirting, but with controlled sexuality and as a means to emphasise women’s femininity.

As the *plaas vrou*, the Sarie Marais reader is a mother and nurturer – a keeper of the Afrikaner people, or *volksmoeder*. The magazine regularly tells women how to

bath, feed and take care of their babies. That the woman is firstly a mother is shown in the article: “Slim mammas wat grade versamel” (“Clever mommies who gather degrees”) (13 May 1964: 22). This article praises women who make a “liefhebberij” (“hobby”) of further study, suggesting that further studies are not to be pursued as the main occupation of women. The magazine also advertises food products, suggesting that the readers of Sarie Marais are responsible for the cooking in the house. Advertisements of kitchen cleaners (such as ‘Windolene’ and ‘Easy Off’) make up a large part of the advertisements and emphasise the woman’s role in the domestic space. An article by Isabelle du Toit in the 30 March 1966 issue claims that the man should be able to rely on “’n knap en wakker vennoot tuis” (“an able and clear-headed partner at home”) (19).

In the 1950s to 1970s, Sarie Marais experienced, similarly to Die Huisgenoot, a strong decrease in its circulation numbers, reflecting again the movement from the rural to the urban within the Afrikaner community. The 1960s Sarie Marais was also in a state of transition from supporting Afrikaner Nationalism to informing readers about a broader, cosmopolitan world. The previous construction of femininity as a tool of Afrikaner Nationalism became a construction of femininity in accordance with Western notions of female-ness (Viljoen and Viljoen 92-93) – this “cult of femininity”<sup>26</sup> fed into the expansion of capitalism through its promotion of marketable products which would produce and stabilise ‘femaleness’.

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<sup>26</sup> The presentation of images to women from birth of what a ‘woman’ is, for example, ‘pink for girls’. The “cult of femininity” involves the ranking of women according to prevailing standards of beauty in society (see Ferguson).

### 2.1.3 Publication History and the Representation of White Women in Fair Lady

Fair Lady was launched as a monthly magazine in March 1965 under the editorship of Jane Raphaely. The magazine was the first English-medium magazine in South Africa to be aimed mainly at a female readership (Meyerson 57). Similarly to Sarie Marais, it was published by Nasionale Tydskrifte, a subsidiary of Naspers, and was generally known as the English sister magazine of Sarie Marais. The first issue featured on its cover a little girl in Victorian lace bloomers. The early Fair Lady was aimed at white (as its Aryan title suggests) adult women with families and contained stories on celebrities (local and international), recipes, knitting patterns, fashion articles, beauty-tips and fiction reads (see Meyerson 63).<sup>27</sup>

From 1965 to 1968, the Fair Lady mostly represents white women as rich, beautiful and feminine ladies. Women presented as leading very luxurious lives almost always occupy the covers of the magazine: they have manicured hands, wear fur coats and their hair and make-up are perfectly done (see fig. 16). Fashion and beauty form a substantial part of the Fair Lady's content and advertisements consequently largely sell beauty products. The *fraai vrou* that is present in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and women's magazines in much of the world at the time is also present in Fair Lady. The Fair Lady *fraai vrou* is, however, in a different class than the women of Die Huisgenoot and Sarie Marais: Afrikaner Nationalism, supported mainly by working-class people, is replaced in Fair Lady by a nostalgic sense of English-speaking South Africans's relation to upper-class Britain. The issues of April to May 1965 feature a series on "Fair Ladies of the royal families". This

<sup>27</sup> Tasneem Larney, the librarian at Fair Lady, provided me with further information on Fair Lady's publication history. Larney, Tasneem. "FAIRLADY." Email to the author, 22 Sept. 2008.



royal English lady fulfils very much the same purpose as the *fraai vrou* does for Afrikaner Nationalism – she is a symbol of cultural pride.



Fig. 16. *The Fair Lady Woman*. *Fair Lady*, 21 Aug. 1968.

Motherhood and homemaking are also essential aspects of the ideal ‘fair lady’. This can be seen from the features that remain relatively the same from the magazine’s inaugural issue to the late 1960s: cooking, homemaking, needlework, knitting, patterns. Although the magazine does not demand that women should be homebound (many writers and readers of the magazine are very positive about women



not only being limited to the domestic space), the image of the housewife and mother still dominates the magazine. Advertisements in particular interpellate the mother and housewife: Fair Lady regularly advertises tea, plasters, washing powders, washing machines and furniture wax. The Fair Lady representation of women as mothers and homemakers falls less into the category of the *plaas vrou*; as noted, the Fair Lady woman represents a more English-speaking British-influenced sense of ‘royalty’.

It was previously stated that both Die Huisgenoot and Sarie Marais of the 1960s were part of a shift in women’s representation: from the construction of femininity in service of the *volk*, to the construction of femininity in the image of a more international, cosmopolitan woman. The internationally successful female figure is very clearly a part of the 1960s Fair Lady image. “Showbiz” is a monthly feature of the magazine that reports on celebrities’ lives and this feature takes up much of the magazine’s content. The magazine’s cover often features female figures in the public world of entertainment (for example, Sophia Loren, Raquel Welch, Barbara Streisand).

The magazine’s first editor, Jane Raphaely, states in the first editorial about Fair Lady:

Like her readers, Fair Lady is all woman. Curious about the facts of a woman’s life, cautious in applying them to herself, eager to learn about beauty and baby care, the stars and showbiz, homemaking and health, fashion and food, and everything which keeps her hands and mind busy and stimulated. Fair Lady is and always will be, a magazine for modern women. (March 1965: 3)

This address to the reader summarises the Fair Lady woman as I have described her: the *fraai vrou*, the mother and housewife (or *plaas vrou*), the jetsetter. The first editorial clearly establishes the principles as to what should interest a modern woman

(Meyerson 62). That the magazine equates modernity with civilisation, with being a lady, becomes clear from the statement that “Fair Lady is and always will be, a magazine for the modern woman”. This is yet again a modernity, as in Die Huisgenoot and Sarie Marais, centred on progress in the West. Cultures that are not European or of white America are rarely a focus of any of these magazines: it is only in September 1983 that Fair Lady becomes famous for being the first white women’s magazine in South Africa to use a black model on its cover (Meyerson 63).<sup>28</sup>

#### **2.1.4. The Representation of Black Women in Grace and The Townships Housewife**

Having considered the representation of white women in 1960s white women’s magazines, I will now turn to explore, comparatively, the ways in which black women were represented in 1960s black women’s magazines. Women who appear in Grace and The Townships Housewife are mostly housewives. Readers of The Townships Housewife are addressed as “Dear Housewives” and the magazine’s title also indicates who its intended audience is. Readers of Grace receive household hints monthly:

Space-saving hanger (Dec. 1966: 36)

Handy pot-holders (Dec. 1966: 37)

Practical use for plastic bags (Dec. 1964: 22)

Teaching cookery and gardening are prevalent features in both magazines (gardening possibly helped rural women, used to agricultural work in the country, to bridge the

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<sup>28</sup> Tasneem Larney, the librarian at Fair Lady, states that the first black faces to appear on Fair Lady’s cover were in the 7 October 1981 and 21 September 1983 issues. It is, however, difficult to see that the woman on the October 1981 cover is black.

gap in becoming a more domesticated urban woman). The ideal woman is the prize winner of The Townships Housewife's 'Recipe of the Month' or 'Garden of the Month' competition. This woman is multi-tasking, efficient and skilled – a super-housewife:

She has a beautiful garden although she is a very busy housewife...She runs a spotless house notwithstanding all her activities. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 6)

She is a hostess:

Serve your Christmas pudding in a different way this time. Make individual servings as shown on the photo and top with cream. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 33)

She is a creative homemaker:

This amusing table decoration can be made cheaply and quite easily from bits and pieces' to be found in most households at Christmas time. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 37)

Why not go along with the old traditions [*sic*] and delight your family and friends with gifts of your own special Easter eggs, lovingly decorated by yourself? (Townships, April 1968: 15)

She is a seamstress:

[Mrs Thiipe] is a dedicated knitter and crocheter. (Grace, April 1968: 8)

Articles on 'housewife duties' make up a significant part of the content of Grace and The Townships Housewife. This domesticated representation of women resembles (but cannot be equated to) the *plaas vrou* present in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and (to a lesser extent) Fair Lady of the 1960s.

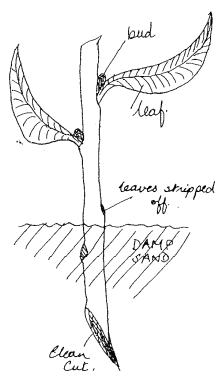
### Inside the Garden Gate in March

This month Autumn begins to creep into the garden and it is time to think about preparing for Winter. If you have a hedge or bushes which you keep cut back, you can cut them now for the last time before they begin to grow again in the Spring.

Late fruit – apples and pears – should not be picked until they are fully grown and ripe because they will not keep well if taken from the trees too early. If you do not have space to lay out apples to store them, they can be wrapped in news-paper and packed in a cardboard box in a cool place but they will not last as long this way as they do when carefully spread out in a dry loft or attic. Fallen or bruised fruit goes rotten quickly and affects the others so use that up.

It is not too late to plant seeds of some vegetables and flowers in boxes or prepared seed-beds, try onions, parsnips, peas, spinach, turnips and beets, and for the flower garden, calendulas, Namaqualand daisies, pansies, poppies, stocks and sweet peas.

Now is a good time for taking cuttings of your favourite shrubs, roses and geraniums. Make sure that you



cut the twigs cleanly with a sharp knife and not near a bud. Strip off the lower buds and leaves and plant the cuttings in sand using a tin or box in a sheltered place or a cutting-bed covered with straw. If you have a glass frame do not forget to leave it open during the day. The cuttings should have at least two inches of their lower ends under ground and the sand must be kept damp so that the roots form quickly.

The new plants are best left in their cutting-beds until Spring so do not put them too close together, leave room for them to grow.

Another job for this time of year is lifting bulbs, tubers, and corms (the thick roots of gladioli, fritsias, ranunculus, iris etc.) cleaning and storing them for use next year. Make sure you keep them in a dry place as damp will give them mildew.

How is your compost coming along? Remember that anything of vegetable origin, even paper or saw-dust will decompose well if kept slightly damp and layered with some earth. You will need plenty of compost in a few months, so keep it going!

Have you sent in your entry for the "Garden of the Month" prize? If not have a go for it next month. Good luck!

*Fig. 17. Gardening: A Central Occupation of 'The Townships Housewife'. The Townships Housewife, March 1968: 45.*

Grace and The Townships Housewife interpellate most, but not all, women as mothers – another representation which *resembles*, but cannot be equated to, the *plaas vrou* (see Mngadi and Monson 26-27). Grace hosts elaborate 'Mother and Baby' competitions (see fig. 18). The subheading of "Goodies for the Festive Season" states that "these recipes for the festive season will delight your family" (Grace, Dec. 1966: 24). The magazine assumes their female readers have families to take care of and it often excludes the unmarried girl or the woman who has no familial relations. In an advertisement for 'Marmite' that appears regularly in The Townships Housewife, the target audience is mothers:

Give your family healthy, tasty Marmite...Let your family grow healthy and happy with good-tasting Marmite...Marmite gives your family energy. (April 1968: 42)

The front cover of this magazine also features monthly a little boy eating sandwiches. The bread he eats is said to be “the food we give to our families to keep them healthy and strong” (March 1968: 1). These are just a few instances that show how Grace and The Townships Housewife at times exclude women who are not mothers. The fact that both magazines host ‘children’s pages’ is further evidence that they cater strongly for the mother’s needs.



*Fig. 18. Mother and Baby Competition. Grace, Jan. 1966: 6.*

Another popular image of the ideal woman that appears in Grace is the modest, timid beauty queen, similar to the *fraai vrouw* in white women’s magazines. The magazine regularly features beauty contest winners (see for example: Dec. 1964: 14; Oct. 1965: 43; Oct. 1966: 16-17; Feb. 1966 14-15). These beauty queens or cover-page girls of Grace mirror a western sense of femininity. African names do not feature

next to photos of these beauty queens and the use of European names instead mirror the aspiration to a modernity cast in the mould of whiteness.



Fig. 19. *The Beauty Queen. Grace, Dec. 1964: 14.*

The representation of the beauty queen mentioned above is not so prevalent in The Townships Housewife, but the magazine advises readers on beauty and how to take care of themselves by the monthly feature “Health, Beauty and Fashion”. Here the magazine often follows white American role models:

Lighter, lovelier skin today ...the American way! Thousands of lovely American women use the secret of ARTRA Skin Tone Cream to make their skin *lighter* and *lovelier*. (Dec. 1964: 63; my emphases)

Both Grace and The Townships Housewife often show black women wearing stylish hats, high heels and handbags that are similar to the styles of 1960s white America.

A similar representation of women in Grace to the category mentioned above is the good, fun-loving, single young girl (a different figure to that of the mother) who has acquired a Western lifestyle. Her hobbies resemble those of young and pretty white girls presented in white magazines: dancing, swimming, reading and, of course, going to the cinema (Dec. 1966: 4). These are often the young women placing their profiles in the “Pen-Pals” section:

Miss Agnes Martin, 8 Fox Road, Vincant, East London, is 25 years of age and wants to correspond with boys and girls 25-35. Her interests are cinema, music, Cliff Richard, Shadows, the Rolling Stones, James Bond and ballroom dancing. Please send photo with first letter. (Sept. 1966: 37)

Boys from anywhere and aged between 16 and 21, you are invited to write to Miss Sylvia Johnston...She likes swimming, tennis, dancing, cycling, driving, cooking and listening to pop singers. She is 16 years old, has straight black hair, brown eyes, has a light brown complexion and is 5 ft. 3ins. tall. (Dec. 1966: 13)

Besides being housewives, mothers and young beauty queens, women featured in Grace and The Townships Housewife are often nurses or social workers – occupations associated with the nurturing qualities assumed to accompany motherhood. Grace often reports on nurses in its monthly feature, “We are proud to meet...” The content celebrates these women for their loving kindness in helping and caring for the sick. The December 1966 “We are proud to meet” describes Victoria Zolo as:

...still find[ing] her greatest fulfilment and happiness in life in her present profession of helping and caring for the sick. (Grace 4)

Another “We are proud to meet” extols Mrs Grace Ntsele, senior social worker at the Entokozweni Family Centre in Alexandra Township, for her work among the young

(June 1966: 4). Grace's regular photo story, "Sister Faith", also revolves around the good deeds of a nurse: "Sister Faith enjoys her work...[n]othing makes her happier than attending to her patients" (Dec. 1966: 42). "Violet's Two Men", the monthly sequel that appears in The Townships Housewife, features Violet, a staff nurse, as the lead character.

In featuring nurses, both "Violet's Two Men" and "Sister Faith" represent the reality of black women's occupations at the time. Shula Marks explains the vast number of black nurses in South Africa at the time:

...it was under apartheid after 1948 ... that the numbers of African nurses expanded dramatically...By the 1950s, with the intensification of black urbanisation and industrialisation, the provision of health care in the major urban centres had become an urgent necessity for the reproduction of the black working class...And the racial ideology of the state dictated that black patients be cared for by black nurses... (9-10)

Black nurses were needed to care for the increasing number of black people moving to the cities. By becoming a nurse, a professional occupation, black women also showed that they had acquired modernity – they became part of the process of creating a black middle class and were "middlemen" or "harbingers of progress" (Marks 78). Marks suggests that mission-educated nurses were necessary in order to persuade Africans away from traditional methods of healing (11). The city's promises of modernity and mobility in Southern Africa more generally also lured many black women into pursuing a nursing profession (see Samuelson, "Yvonne Vera" 27).



# SISTER FAITH

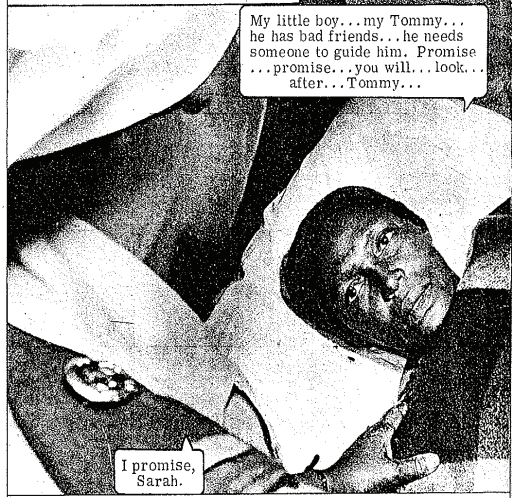
## The GAME of DEATH

LIKE ANY TEENAGE BOY TOMMY WANTED TO BE HAPPY; PLAY GAMES. INSTEAD HE FOUND HIMSELF PLAYING A TERRIBLE GAME ... THAT OF MURDER

SISTER FAITH IS AT THE DEATH-BED OF HER FRIEND, SARAH NDULI, MOTHER OF LILY AND TOMMY.



SARAH NDULI IS DYING OF CANCER.



A MONTH AFTER SARAH NDULI'S FUNERAL, SISTER FAITH IS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE CLINIC WHEN LILY APPROACHES HER.



Fig. 20. Sister Faith. *Grace*, Oct. 1966: 38.

Nursing in South Africa has a missionary origin and Florence Nightingale's assertion that "to be a good nurse one must be a good woman" (qtd. in Marks 4) certainly established the perception of nurses as "God-fearing ladies" (Marks 15). Being deemed a lady was important to women in a gendered, westernised South African society where being a lady was the 'proper' thing for those who wanted to be deemed 'civilised'. The word 'lady' connotes a "woman whose manners, habits, and sentiments have the refinement characteristic of the higher ranks of society" – it is an "honorific title" given to "women of rank" (Oxford English Dictionary). The women of Grace and The Townships Housewife are accredited social standing by being labelled 'ladies' – they enter the realm of aristocracy or at least, refinement. The representation of the black nurse in Grace and The Townships Housewife resembles at various points all three categories of the *fraai vrou*, *plaas vrou* and sublime woman.

'The good Christian woman' that resembles the sublime woman in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady, appears in both Grace and The Townships Housewife. Grace's regular feature, "We Pause To Think", shows its Christian stance. In December 1966, the writer of this feature states that "*We all know the story of the birth of Jesus so well*": this interpellates the readers as 'good Christians' who are aware that they *should* know this story "so well" (16, my emphasis).



We  
pause  
to think

#### HAPPINESS

"... whose trusteth in the Lord, happy is he". — Proverbs 16:20

**H**APPINESS is a spiritual quality which springs from a heart and mind in tune with God. Many think that happiness can be bought. But though money has its uses, and there are many rich men who think they are happy, wealth does not necessarily mean happiness.

What is happiness then?  
It is a mixture of so many valuable ingredients: Being content and at peace with oneself; having a steady and rewarding job and the satisfaction of doing it well; loving and being loved, be it the love of a man or a woman, of parents, of a trusting child, of a good friend or even of a faithful dog; the loyalty of a loved one or friend; the inspiration of a good book or magazine; the joy of a hearty laugh and the lighter side of life; the wonderful sense of being one with God when sharing in the wonders of his Creation like a beautiful sunset, the sweet smell of newly ploughed earth, the coolness of the evening after a hot day, the smell of rain after a long drought and the beauty of a flower.

These things, and so many other lovely things, are the essence of happiness that a Christian who believes in the wonderful ways of God can enjoy.

If you look around you, you will see that happiness is denied to those who do not know how to give it or how to receive it, and that it has nothing to do with social position or financial standing. But it is everyone's birthright and Christ meant it for all of us who open the eyes of the body and the soul and seek it.

Happiness is not in getting or in having — but in giving. ©

Fig. 21. We pause to think. *Grace*, Aug. 1966:19

The name of *Grace* also reflects its Christian connotations, as 'grace' is a quality predominantly associated with God. Similarly, the name of the heroine of *Grace's* photo story, "Sister Faith", already implies that this good and popular 'superwoman' is religious. This she certainly is, as she prays to the "Father in



Heaven” to help her on her many adventures (Dec. 1966: 52). The Townships Housewife celebrates Easter, emphasising the holiday’s Christian message:

The Children’s colouring competition for this Easter month represents the Angel telling two disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead and that there is no point in looking for Him in the tomb. (April 1968: 1)

The Zenzele Women’s Guild (which the magazine regularly involves in its content) associates with the Y.W.C.A (Young Women’s Christian Association), which runs on Christian principles.

#### **2.1.4.1. Grace and The Townships Housewife: Individuality versus Community**

Another representation of the ideal woman in The Townships Housewife is the woman who is part of women’s groups. Women in Grace on the other hand, show fewer tendencies towards communal identity and seem to be more individualistic – they are seldom featured in photos with other women as in The Townships Housewife (see fig. 22 and fig. 23). It is well known that individualism is associated with the West, whereas communality or the concept of *ubuntu*<sup>29</sup> is associated with black communities. The individualism in Grace emphasises the values of what is perceived to be civilisation (the West) – the girl in fig. 22 is shown talking on a phone, a modern appliance which is associated with distance between people.

In contrast to this, The Townships Housewife portrays a community assembled together in an attempt to make the most of what they have in apartheid South Africa. Whether such communality was the reality of readers at the time is

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<sup>29</sup> A Nguni word meaning ‘humaness’. This word refers to the emphasis on people’s relations with each other within a community – it comes from the African proverb: a person is a person because of and through other people.

debatable: in her autobiography, Call Me Woman, black South African women's rights activist and politician Ellen Kuzwayo challenges the perceived communality among all black people (see Driver, "M'a Ngoana"). The discrepancy between individualism and communality presented in Grace and The Townships Housewife shows the ambiguities at work as the readers of these magazines negotiate their position somewhere between the traditional past, present oppression and an aspirational future modernity. The focus on communality in The Townships Housewife might also be an indication of the awakening of black consciousness towards the end of the sixties: *ubuntu* was a central part of black consciousness philosophy (Driver, "M'a-Ngoana" 234), as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Various other examples demonstrate that The Townships Housewife embodies communality rather than individualism (as in Grace). The horoscope that appears in the April 1968 issue of The Townships Housewife encourages women to take care of their relations with those around them:

You will be in the wrong of a disagreement but swallow your pride and apologise

You will find yourself in the midst of an argument between two dear friends – try to resolve things diplomatically as possible...

Someone you know well is in trouble, rally round and help...

You will find yourself in a position to give some good and helpful advice.  
(36)

The magazine also regularly covers activities of the Zenzele Clubs for women, founded by mission-educated African Women who sought community development (see Higgs). An article on the "Zenzele Women's Guild" (March 1968: 5) shows

many smiling ladies grouped together, while another article describes the festive mood at the “Zenzele Founder’s Day”:

On Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, a Picnic was held at the Y.W.C.A Hall in Dube to commemorate the Founding of the Zenzele Women’s Club....Singing and dancing to the music of the YWCA song, all the ladies, visitors and members alike, had a wonderful day. New friends were made and old ones welcomed again. Many photos of jolly ladies! (April 1968: 13)

The activities of the Zenzele women’s groups are significant (as I will further elaborate on in Chapter Four), even though these women did not overtly oppose apartheid: Ramphele, for instance, refers to “[b]elonging to exclusive women’s organisations as a necessary step in the process of liberation and personal growth for most women” (Life 184).

Miss Louisa Klaas, 29  
Minnaar Street, Forest Hill,  
Johannesburg, enjoys GRACE  
so much that she never  
misses an issue.



*Fig. 22. Individuality in Grace, April 1966: 23.*



*Front row, left to right; Mrs. Eunice Maputle, Mrs. Johanna Modiselle, Mrs. Shuping, Miss Lilian Seeme, Mrs. Damarice Mealuse.  
Second Row: Mrs. Charlotte Opperman, Mrs. Mabel Modiga, Mrs. Bertha Makau, Mrs. Margret Rezant.  
Third row (behind Mrs. Modiga): Mrs. Ratsiane.*

*Fig. 23. Community in The Townships Housewife, May 1968: 13-14.*

The Grace woman, in another contrast to the ideal woman in The Townships Housewife, often portrays international glamour and fame. “Dance Champs of the Year” shows Daphne Joshiah and her partner Ronnie Gabriel who won the South African Professional championship for the second year in succession (Dec. 1966: 14-15). ‘Record Review’ covers monthly black achievement in the entertainment world and it often features black women. These articles place black women outside the private sphere and in the public world of entertainment, as opposed to the housewife or mother who functions only within the space of the home as in The Townships Housewife.

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The ideal woman in Grace and The Townships Housewife is mostly one or many of the following: a modern housewife, a mother, a beauty queen or young and fun-loving westernised single girl, a caretaker of her society, in close relation to other women (The Townships Housewife), glamorous and talented (Grace), and a good

Christian woman. It has become clear that these roles in Grace and The Townships Housewife also fall into the three categories mentioned earlier: the feminine woman (*fraai vrou*), mother and nurturer (*plaas vrou*) and Christian woman (*sublime vrou*). Similar to these representations in white women's magazines, the image of the ideal woman in Grace and The Townships Housewife supports an understanding of the male as active and capable leader of the community. It is in support of this that white and black women's magazines portray their female readers as such 'angels of the house' (a phrase which embodies both the sublime, domestic and beautiful woman – the three categories as discussed).<sup>30</sup> Sikhumbuzo Mngadi and Tamlyn Monson state that there is a similarity between black magazines such as Bona and Pace, and white magazines such as Die Huisgenoot – this confirms that all these magazines reinforce stereotypical gender differences to serve a male-favouring nationalism (29-30). The exploration of the various types of women in the black and white magazines under discussion also shows, despite the categories' often sprawling nature, that Grace and The Townships Housewife fit into a standard representation of 'woman' across race, as well as a general shift from the rural to the cosmopolitan in both white and black women's magazines.

Having explored various similarities in the representation of white and black women in white and black women's magazines of the 1960s, I now briefly refer to a significant difference which becomes clear as a result of comparing these various representations of women: sexuality is displayed more openly in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady than in Grace and The Townships Housewife. White

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<sup>30</sup> Although women's subjectivities were mediated through an ideology of motherhood in both African and Afrikaner Nationalism, the ideology of the 'mother of the nation' differs from the iconography of the *volksmoeder* in Afrikaner nationalism as white women did not have to experience oppression as a race (see Mngadi and Monson 26-27).



women, already constructed as civilised under apartheid, did not have to prove sexual modesty to the extent that black women – who were constructed as primitive – had to. Whereas white women were constructed as feminine ladies with controlled sexuality, black women were stereotypically viewed as extremely sexual. This is a perception that creates distorted images of black hypersexuality, as in the case of Saartjie Baartman.<sup>31</sup> Noliwe Rooks, in a study of African American popular magazines, explains that black women had to steer away from the image of themselves as wild and extremely sexual:

The single-minded focus by many elite African Americans on attempting to fit themselves into nineteenth-century constructions and ideologies of ladyhood was motivated in large part by a desire to replace dominant cultural assertions of the group as primarily understood through their bodily associations with sex and rape with narratives that proved them to be middle class and, as a result, pious, chaste, modern, and worthy of attaining the supposed advantages of membership in the cult of domesticity. (52-53)

Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady of the 1960s can ‘afford’ to place much more emphasis on women’s sexuality than either Grace or The Townships Housewife. Thus, we find in all three white women’s magazines regular advertisements for women’s bras. Just a few examples are:

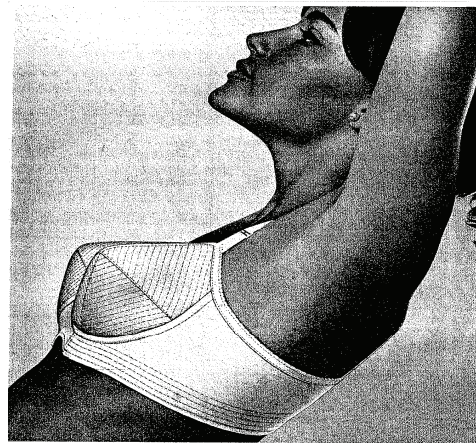
Loveable sorg vir ronder rondings... [Lovable enhances curves] (Sarie Marais, 30 March 1966)

So gemaklik dis amper ‘n sonde om dit te bedek. [So comfortable, it is almost a sin to cover it] (Sarie Marais, 30 March 1966)

Room at the top – Merry-go-round bra (Fair Lady, 1965: 70)

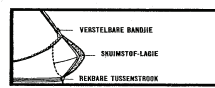
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<sup>31</sup> Saartjie Baartman was a Khoisan woman known for her interesting anatomy: Baartman apparently had a very large amount of fat in her buttocks and she was crudely exhibited in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yvette Abrahams explains that the image of civilisation was symbolised by colonial agents’ “fair countrywomen” – an image that was created and disseminated in a dialogue with the image of the sexualised savage (Abrahams in Samuelson, Remembering 95).



**Lovable sorg vir ronder  
rondings . . .**  
*met dié voortreflike skuim-verstewigde bra  
van net R1.79*

Hier's die Lovable-bra wat u subtiel aanvul. Skuim-verstewigde, sirkel-gestikte keels besorg u 'n voller figuur, ronder rondings. 'n Rekbare tussenstrook volg elke deining, elke beweging van u liggaam. Striksel hou die band stewig en glad om u lyf. Die skouerbandjies kan verstel word. Die hele bra is gemaak van die sagste, fynste katoen. Via om Lovable 805. Net in wit. Groottes: A-keel 32-36; B-keel 32-38.



*Fig. 24. Lovable Bras. Sarie Marais, 30 March 1966: 40.*

In contrast to this, Grace and The Townships Housewife rarely represent women as flirtatious or as sexy and feature no advertisements for underwear. The focus falls on the woman as modest lady: "...undignified or immodest she still knows the appeal of clothes that hide...rather than blatantly reveal" (Grace, Nov. 1964: 13). In the face of constructions of 'darkest Africa' and the colonizer's perception of the 'barbaric' or 'savage' black, and particularly the violence of constructions of black femininity, Grace and The Townships Housewife make a conscious attempt to represent black women as modest and thus 'civilized'. Through displaying high moral standards, black people were claiming white standards of 'civilisation' which would make them more human in the eyes of their oppressors. This is what Karen Hansen means when she says:

[Colonization]...is an act that turned the organization of household activity and sexuality into political matters...(5)

The organisation of the house and the expression of sexual modesty became political tools that could counter the inferior status ascribed to blackness.

Another interesting difference between Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady, on the one hand, and Grace and The Townships Housewife, on the other hand, is the contrast between men writing women in the former as opposed to women writing women in the latter. The first few editors of Die Huisgenoot and Sarie Marais are men – Sarie Marais in fact only gets its first female editor in 1996. Fair Lady has a female editor, Jane Raphaely, from the outset, but the magazine's content lists the editor-in-chief at the time (1965) as Fred le Roux. Grace and The Townships Housewife both proclaim themselves as having female editors from the start. The sexual modesty in Grace and The Townships Housewife could also be explained by the presence of female editors: the editor has to consider the readers' needs and scantily clad women would at the time not be considered as something for the female eye (as nice-time girls, for instance, were for male Drum-writers).<sup>32</sup> The perceived need to produce images of modest black women (ladies) can be illuminated by exploring the representation of blackness in white magazines.

## **2.2 A Comparison between the Representation of Black People in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady and the Representation of Black Women in Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

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<sup>32</sup> The possibility of Grace and The Townships Housewife having homosexual readers is ignored in these magazines, in contrast to what happens in Drum (see Mutongi).

### 2.2.1 The Representation of Black People in Die Huisgenoot

The black South African, especially the black South African woman, is almost entirely absent in Die Huisgenoot of the 1960s. Black people, and mostly only black men, appear in Die Huisgenoot of the 1960s only in a domesticated form as happy and contented servants (Van Robbroeck “Visual”) or as ‘uncivilised’ creatures of nature. As an unhappy (possibly black) reader of Die Huisgenoot states in a letter to the editor in 1968:

Baie nie-blankes lees Die Huisgenoot...Hoekom verskyn daar nie artikels oor belowende nie-blanke bokkers (sportmanne en akteurs) nie? – Historikus, Windhoek.

Many non-whites read Die Huisgenoot...Why are there no articles on promising boxers (sportsmen and actors)? – Historicist, Windhoek (26 July: 6; my translation).

Note that black women are excluded in this plea for black acknowledgement.

Die Huisgenoot of 1964-1968, represents black South Africans as unintelligent. The regular comedy feature, ‘Huisgenotjies’ (“home enjoyment”), contains jokes and comics that often portray the slow-witted black person, reminiscent of the black minstrel. Here is just one such example about a black female domestic worker:

Meraai moes vir die goudvissies water in die bak gooi, maar sy het nie. “Het ek jou dan nie gevra om die bak vol te hou nie?” vra haar werkgeefster kwaai. “Dja, Mies,” antwoord Meraai, “...ma’ hulle het noggie eers die water ytgadrink wat ek gister ingagooi het nie.”

Meraai had to fill up the water level for the goldfishes, but she didn’t. “Didn’t I ask you to keep the bowl full?” asked her employer. “Yes, Madam,” Meraai answered, “but they haven’t even finished drinking the water I poured in yesterday.” (9 Oct. 1964: 63)

Die Huisgenoot does not only show black South Africans in positions inferior to whites – as domestic workers, gardeners or farm workers – it also depicts them as incapable of doing their jobs.

The black in Die Huisgenoot is, moreover, decidedly not beautiful. The magazine shows black people as old and wrinkly, and uses derogatory terms in reference to them. The following joke appears in the “Huisgenotjies” of 26 August 1966:

’n Man sien ’n Bantoetjie aan ’n groot waatlemoen eet en sê: “Jong, maar dis mos te veel waatlemoen!” Bantoetjie: “Nog nooit nie, baas, dis te min kaffer!”

A man sees a little Bantu eating a big watermelon and says: “Isn’t that too much watermelon?!” The little Bantu replies: “Never baas, it’s too little kaffir!”

This extract shows the apartheid construction of the inferior black and the superior white through the reference to ‘baas’<sup>33</sup> and ‘kaffer’.<sup>34</sup> A regular comic in Die Huisgenoot by Doc Immelman and Johan van Niekerk also emphasises the ‘otherness’<sup>35</sup> of the black person: in “Uys Barnard en die krokodille van Oshipala”, a black man that appears in the comic is a “vreemde verrimpelde ou inboorling” (“a strange, wrinkly old native”; my translation) (9 Oct. 1964: 77). The white woman in this comic who sees this man exclaims: “Hy...lyk vreeslik!” (“He looks terrible!”; my translation).

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<sup>33</sup> An apartheid term, meaning ‘boss’, that black people had to use for their white employers.

<sup>34</sup> A derogatory term, similar to the American ‘nigger’, used in apartheid South Africa to refer to black people.

<sup>35</sup> German philosopher, Hegel, was among the first to introduce the concept of ‘othering’ or the ‘Other’. This is often used to refer to the way in which Western societies exclude groups who they want to subordinate and who do not fit into their society. The ‘other’, or ‘Other’, refers to that which is different than the self (usually associated with the West) which is accepted as the standard or normality – the other is thus ‘not right’, or less than the standard. This concept entered into postcolonial theory through Edward Said’s major concept of “Orientalism”. Said’s concept of Orientalism refers to a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” (the Other) and “the Occident” (the West) (2). Orientalism is a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans (ibid 7).

Die Huisgenoot represents black South Africans as incapable of achieving what is perceived, according to Western (white) standards, as ‘civilisation’. In Die Huisgenoot of 4 December 1964 an article appears on black political leaders in Africa: the photos show them in suit and tie and driving expensive cars. The writer states that

[a]l die aandpakke en Cadillacs is in Afrika glad nie ter sake nie. Omdat Afrika nog die oerwoud is.

all the suits and Cadillacs are irrelevant in Africa. Because Africa is still the jungle/ primeval. (88; my translation)

The writer ends this article by asking: “Wat kan mens ook van ’n man verwag wat uit ’n kokospalm geval en in ’n Cadillac te lande gekom het?” (“What more can you expect of a man who fell from a coconut palm tree and landed in a Cadillac?”; my translation). In the post-apartheid South African context, the term coconut is a derogatory term used to refer to a person who is black but speaks like “a white person”, who chooses to speak English rather than an African language, or is unable to speak an African language, and who is considered to “act white” or to be “black on the outside but white on the inside” (McKinney qtd. in Spencer). Considering that this use of the term is a post-apartheid one, the writer of the article in Die Huisgenoot is clearly using the reference to coconut in a different way, yet there is a peculiar resemblance in the derogatory content of both. In contrast to Carolyn McKinney’s explanation of the black who is, on the inside, essentially white, the Die Huisgenoot writer paints the picture of a baboon falling out of the tree – of black people being backward with only the surface appearance of civility (the man in the Cadillac here representing a black skin in a white mask, as opposed to being black on the outside and white on the inside as the current usage of the coconut image suggests).

All articles that appear in Die Huisgenoot from 1964 to 1968 concerning black people locate them in the desert or a jungle-like milieu, often in the bare minimum clothing. One such example representative of this type of article is “Die dans van die Luislang” (“The dance of the python”; my translation) (12 Aug. 1966). This article concerns the initiation practices of young black men and women and is reminiscent of apartheid’s re-tribalising attempts. Other similar examples appear in Die Huisgenoot of 7 September 1966 in an article on black people in the Okavango (42-43), and in Die Huisgenoot of 30 September 1966 on Botswana (42-49).

### 2.2.2 The Representation of Black Women in Sarie Marais

The Sarie Marais of 1964 to 1968 depicts black South African women either as housemaids, or, worse, as generally ‘bad’ and dirty:

Vriende van ons moes met skok ontdek dat hul sogenaamde “goeie” bediende hul babaseuntjie in yskoue water dompel as hy te veel huil...Nog ’n bediende se man het in die huismense se bad gebad, die man se seep, handdoek, skeermes en kam gebruik, en ’n heerlike ontbyt op hulle borde geniet...terwyl twee ander bediendes roomys en lekkers aan die kinders gee waaraan hulle eers self gelek het... Hoeveel siektes het kinders nie al by *vuil* bediendes opgedoen nie?

Friends of ours realised with shock that their so-called ‘good’ maid plunges their baby boy in ice-cold water when he cries too much. Another maid bathed in the house owners’ bath, used the man’s soap, towel, razor and comb, and enjoyed a lovely breakfast on their plates...two other maids gave ice-cream and sweets to the children that they tasted and licked at themselves...How many illnesses have children not picked up from *dirty* maids? (Sarie Marais, 6 Jan. 1965: 87; my translation and emphasis added)

Another article speculates on the advantages of housewives possibly having robots as maids in the year 2000. The writer, Susan du Raan, states:

Bedink die voordeel, mevrou, van 'n bediende wat nooit op haar perdjie is nie, nie maandeliks hoof betaal te word nie en geen fuifpartye in die buitekamer hou nie. Dink daaraan dat die kruideniersware nie meer spoorloos uit die spensal verdwyn nie en u hoof nie by elke maaltyd vir een ekstra te kook nie.

Think about the advantages of a maid that is never cheeky, who doesn't have to be paid monthly and who has no carousals or celebrations in the outer room. Think about the fact that groceries won't just disappear from the larder and you do not have to cook an extra meal every mealtime. (Sarie Marais, 5 Jan. 1966: 16; my translation)

Sarie Marais presents black South African women as dirty, sly, incapable and thieving. The story "Half-Mak, Half-Wild", which features a black character, describes Marais, "Die ou Boesman-huisbediende" ("The old Bushman maid"; my translation), in a positive light, and she becomes a loved figure. The story does not, however, describe her as beautiful or young. She is rather the "verrimpelde ou Boesmanvrou" ("wrinkled old Bushman woman"; my translation) (Sarie Marais, 6 Jan. 1965: 15 & 31). This reminds us of a similar extract in Die Huisgenoot, referred to earlier, that describes the black man as a "strange, wrinkly old man". The magazine does not portray black South Africans as 'normal' people, or as young and beautiful. It also does not link these people to images of the present and future, but rather depicts them as a group becoming archaic and extinct.

### **2.2.3 The Representation of Black People in Fair Lady**

Black women are even more absent in Sarie Marais's English sister magazine, Fair Lady, between 1965 and 1968. Fair Lady does not present black South Africans as



bad domestic servants in its readers' letters as occurs in Sarie Marais, but there is a complete absence of the black woman in any form of representation. In an interview with Jane Raphaely on the absence of black people in Fair Lady in the past, she states that "we managed to find a [sic] fiction story which showed a black person who wasn't a domestic" (in Glenn 35). That she "managed" to find "a" fiction story suggests there were not many to choose from. Fair Lady also does not do much towards promoting a positive image of black womanhood.

Trying to determine the representation of black women in Fair Lady, I really struggled to find any reference to black people in the magazine from 1964 to 1968. Except for advertisements for Ceylon tea featuring Sri-Lankan tea-pickers (see for example, 3 April 1968: 3 and 1 May 1968: 3) there is an advertisement that shows a white boy giving milk to a black Golliwog (a rag doll made to resemble a black minstrel) (26 June 1968). As discussed in chapter one, the black minstrel performs demeaning and racist characterisations of black people as slow-witted and ridiculous.

An article on the people of Tananarive entitled "The Worlds of the Outer Sea" in the August 21<sup>st</sup> 1968 issue of Fair Lady (14-18), confirms the representation of the black person as primeval or "Other". The writer compares the people of Tananarive to Africa's Bantus with their "high black frizzy hair" (18). She states that the "Pygmy and Bantu bred their strains into this strange mixture of blood." The dark-skinned here is clearly the 'Other' – "strange" and from the "Outer" sea. The writer affirms the contrast between European self and black 'Other': she states that she is too scared to try some of the inhabitants' sugar cane, nuts, honey or rice wrapped in banana leaves

due to a fear of the tummy bug, and then ends by stating that “[i]n the hotels the Frenchmen send up huge bottles of Evian (bottled water) to their rooms” (18).

#### **2.2.4 Grace and The Townships Housewife: Filling the Gap Left by White South African Women’s Magazines**

Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s support of black pride (among black South Africans) in its representation of black women is significant when we compare it to the image of black people that Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady depict. Grace and The Townships Housewife convey a positive picture of blacks, not as maids or as inferior, not as old and wrinkly, uneducated or incapable of ‘civilisation’, but as valid points of reference in themselves. Now all women, not only whites, have the opportunity to become beauty queens as Grace and The Townships Housewife portray black women as beautiful beings with ‘normal’, even desirable, lives. In the “Pen-Pal” section, readers like to write about their hobbies such as swimming, dancing, singing and going to the bioscope. These are indeed “counter-hegemonic images” if we consider the portrayal of black South Africans in Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady (hooks, 184). That white magazines such as Fair Lady were up to the 1960s some of the few sources representing women that were available to black women becomes clear in an instance where a Grace-reader seems to be quoting from a Fair Lady reader’s letter:

This magazine, putting it mildly, is just dynamic! It has everything a housewife, career girl or retired woman could wish for, for a relaxing first class read – Mrs Audrea Vorster, Carletonville. (Fair Lady, May 1965: 15)

Quite honestly, I think your magazine is dynamic. I read the October issue and found that it has everything a housewife, career girl or retired woman could wish for – Mrs. Lydia Kekana...Germiston. (Grace, Jan. 1966: 8)

On the other hand, this might also be the “editress” of Grace copying from Fair Lady and creating a “Mrs Lydia Kekana” to direct the readers’ concerns. This raises the question of how many of the ‘voices’ presented by readers’ letters and personality profiles are true representation of the self.

Nevertheless, Grace and The Townships Housewife give more scope to black South Africans as they get to write themselves. The following comparative analysis of the coverage of the South African film, Dingaka, is an interesting example of whites writing black South Africans versus South African blacks writing themselves. Dingaka, a 1965 film by South African director Jamie Uys, is the story of a tribesman, played by a black actor, Ken Gampu, who avenges his daughter’s murder according to his tribe’s laws. This leads him to be tried under government laws, where justice for black people does not exist at the time. In contrast to the attention given to black star Ken Gampu in Grace, Die Huisgenoot features large photos and an elaborate account of Juliet Prowse and Stanley Baker, the white lead characters of Dingaka. Ken Gampu gets a brief one-liner and Jamie Uys patronizingly adds that: “ek moet byvoeg dat die Bantoespelers besonders goed gedissiplineerd was...” (“I must add that the Bantu actors were very well disciplined”; my translation) (6 Nov. 64: 87). This clearly shows that the black person is not deemed naturally capable of disciplined behaviour. The February 1965 Grace, in contrast, has a two-page spread on “Ken Gampu: South Africa’s own international FILM STAR!” (35) The writer states that “Ken Gampu managed to snatch the acting honours in the film from under the famous noses of both

Stanley Baker and Juliet Prowse.” Grace magazine even launches a Ken Gampu fan club.

In contrast, then, to the ‘backward’ depiction of black South Africans in white magazines such as Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady, black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife are young, modern, beautiful and glamorous. Grace and The Townships Housewife challenge the representation of black women in white women’s magazines, while simultaneously disturbing the representation of black women by a mostly male magazine staff during the preceding Drum-decade, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter Three:

### From Drum to Grace and The Townships Housewife: Representations of Women

There is a distinctive difference between the representation of black women in the male-dominated Drum magazine of the 1950s and that of Grace and The Townships Housewife in the 1960s. The identity of the modest black lady is instantly recognizable in both Grace and The Townships Housewife. Women in general in Drum magazine, in contrast to this, are much more extravagant, brash and sexual, although more modest manifestations of women such as housewife, mother and beauty queen are found in all three magazines. This chapter aims at exploring the shift in the representation of black women from Drum to Grace and The Townships Housewife. Hypotheses follow on the possible agencies at work within this change.

#### 3.1. Black Women in Drum

The various ways in which Drum represents black women pose opposition to the apartheid policy of re-tribalisation (the attempts by the apartheid government to keep black people 'backward' and deny them access to urban modernity). Drum's women represent self-sufficiency, black prosperity and, especially, acculturation in the city. Representations of black women in Drum that represent resistance to black inferiority, some invested with more agency than others, include: the modern urban housewife and mother, the modern urban single girl, the beauty queen, the so-called 'nice-time' girl, the *shebeen* queen or strong African mother, the politically active black woman and, lastly, the female jazz singer. These representations of women emerge in the new Drum, while its forebear, African Drum, focused on the conservative rural African,

also embodied in the figure of woman. Meg Samuelson explains that women in Drum have been used to represent and extol both rural and urban African lifestyles: in the new Drum, most of the above-mentioned castings of women (women as housewives, mothers and beauty queens) are used to attain Sophiatown's legendary metropolitan status, while in African Drum, women represented the pristine realm of the rural ("Urban" 64).

At its inception in 1951, the magazine, under its editor Bob Crisp, was known as African Drum and was "condescendingly rural in its assumptions" (Nixon 25).<sup>36</sup> Ten months later Jim Bailey bought African Drum from Crisp (Bailey 20), and with the help of editor Anthony Sampson the magazine was revamped into a more urban and cosmopolitan publication now called, simply, Drum. This new focus, along with the publication of some political exposé pieces, increased the magazine's circulation, profiting the liberal English whites responsible for Drum's publication. Bantu Press, first responsible for the publication of Drum, was founded in 1932 by the "liberal segregationist", Bertram F.G. Paver, who saw a fertile market in the 'civilised' and urbanised African (Switzer 189-190). Bantu Press was later taken over by the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, which was controlled by the mining industry that consisted of mostly English capital.

Although Drum was largely a commercial and profit-driven endeavour for white English capital, black male writers were often given free rein in their writing –

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<sup>36</sup> Drum was first published as The African Drum in 1951 and its editor at the time, Bob Crisp, tried to sell the magazine by focusing on the history of various tribes, tribal music, religion and farming. Mike Nicol states that "[w]hat was wanted ...were hot dames, jazz, pin-ups, sport. Kraals, chiefs and tribes were out. So was the white hand...The African Drum was what white men wanted blacks to be (Nicol 27).

especially so in the representation of black women. They could create the Drum woman in her various manifestations of acquired modernity or self-sufficiency (housewives, mothers, single urban girls, politically involved women, *shebeen* queens); they could create the woman of their fantasies (pin-up girls, jazz singers, beauty queens); and they could entertain themselves with images of the stereotypical nagging wife. There are no fixed categories in the ‘creation’ of these women, and one representation flows into another as the writers of Drum and the rest of the Sophiatown community negotiate their way from tradition into modernity.<sup>37</sup>

Drum magazine often represents black women as urban, modern homemakers and mothers, adept in managing the challenges of modernity, and in enjoying its rewards. As explained in the previous chapters, industrialisation led to the influx of many black South African men to cities such as Johannesburg to find work: due to the decrease of job opportunities in the rural areas, the agonising distance from their men, or the lure of modernity that the city presented, many black women also moved to the cities. Having come from rural backgrounds where women did much of the physical work, these women now had to adapt to life in the city. Adapting to life in the city, to the restriction of gender roles, would be a way of acknowledging that black people can achieve modernity:

Women had to show they had successfully made the transition from the country to the city, from African values to maintaining the western idea of the nuclear family. (Driver, “Drum” 158)

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<sup>37</sup> Sophiatown was a racially mixed, free-hold residential area outside Johannesburg regarded as the centre or home of the Drum-decade. It was later abolished under the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954, which gave the state the authority to remove Africans from any magisterial area in Johannesburg and adjacent areas (“History Timelines”). Acts such as the 1923 Urban Areas Act and the Group Areas Act of 1950 provided the base for these forced removals: the former prohibited the sale of land in urban areas to Africans and the latter stipulated that people had to live and work in areas allocated to their specific race group (Boddy-Evans). A white working class suburb, ‘Triomf’, was established in Sophiatown’s place. For more information on Sophiatown, see Chapman (192).

The importance of the representation of the modern black nuclear family in Drum as a sign of achieved modernity is evident in Sampson's delineation of various staple Drum images, such as

[t]he breakfast-table picture, almost compulsory in every number, of an African hero sitting down to a meal with his wife and children in a small location house, *like anyone else*. (Sampson 118; my emphasis)

“Like anyone else” creates the illusion of living like white people – but “in a small location” shows the fraudulence of modernity: modernity seems to present freedom from ‘backwardness’ and dehumanising oppression, but it is this modern world, the city, that has no place for its black inhabitants and casts them out to the townships.

As stated in Chapter One concerning Grace and The Townships Housewife, the modern black nuclear family, represented by the housewife in Drum, is a symbol of permanence in a time where forced removals were a constant threat to black domestic security. Forced removals such as the slum clearance of Sophiatown where residents were compelled to move to Orlando and Meadowlands, townships later known as Soweto, did not allow for any permanence in establishing a home (see Daymond 53).

In Miriam Tlali's Muriel at Metropolitan, Muriel finds herself thinking that

[t]here is nothing firm for you; nothing you can hold on to or fall back on. It is like that with everything you try to build up in every sphere of your life – your home, your work, your future, the future of your children – everything hangs on a thread. At any moment everything about you can be snapped off just like that. (70)

The crude repossession of hire purchase commodities at ‘Metropolitan Radio’ triggers these thoughts of Muriel. Tlali also refers, through the narration of the character Muriel, to the destabilising destruction of Sophiatown. Trevor Huddleston, white priest in Sophiatown at the time, suggests that the houses (townships shacks) were a reminder to black people of “the arbitrary power which...had determined that no



sense of the future – which would give the present meaning and purpose – could be developed” (qtd. in Daymond 54). The apartheid government could demolish these houses at any time. The creation of homeplace that we find in the pages of Drum becomes an important way in which to establish some permanence in the city.

On the other hand, the achievement of homeplace or modernity introduced a new set of restrictions for black women. Away from the country where African women were caretakers and often *de facto* heads of the family as well as producers of food (breadwinners), women who moved to the city now experienced more clear set, spatialised gender boundaries (Driver, “Drum” 156). Ellen Kuzwayo remembers how

[she] was astonished to find that the black rural community at Legkraal had very similar habits and practices to those [she] had known so well as a child in Thaba Patchoa some 25 years earlier – and some 600 miles distant...women took the leading role in hoeing the land and harvesting. Other household duties such as threshing corn, drawing water from the well and collecting wood were also seen as women’s responsibilities... (128)

In the city, however, women were restricted to domestic duties – either for other white people or for their own families. Women in the city were generally ‘assigned’ to the private domestic sphere while men were in ‘the real, hard world’ (the public sphere) as noted below in an article that appeared in Drum:

Housewife! Rose Rachel Thlopane of Sophiatown is just one of Africa’s thousands of unknown heroines. While men go out *into the world for fame and fortune*, Africa’s women are working, *quietly and modestly, keeping the home and family*. (March 1953: 17-19; my emphases)

This extract shows the stereotypical ‘feminine’ quality assigned to homeplace as opposed to the more adventurous ‘male’ quality assigned to the public sphere. Dorothy Driver explains this demarcation of masculine and feminine spheres as a result of urbanisation which forged an ideology of domesticity in order to construct consumer desires (“Drum” 156). She also argues that Drum established gender roles

in their Western configuration (ibid 157): in line with Western definitions of femininity, black women now had to adopt modesty in quietly keeping the house, whereas formerly, in the rural areas, women generally had more power as they were responsible for much of the physical work performed towards the production of subsistence. On the other hand, life in the city presented women with a better income in comparison to the decreasing income received in rural areas. Women achieved greater independence as they became less dependent on their men's remittances (Bozzoli, Women 121).

The representation of the modern, urban unmarried girl also celebrates modernity in Drum's pages. Editor at the time, Anthony Sampson, describes this woman as:

...poised with her umbrella and vanity bag, dazzling and sharply in focus, with *the blurred faces of ordinary Africans* carrying paper bags in the background, looking round at this apparition of African glory. (117; my emphasis)

This woman is a symbol of cosmopolitanism and she reflects an anti-tribal energy:

Durban's Joy! Rich, young and pretty, Joyce Alexander is a businesswoman and intelligent society. Meet Joyce Alexander, the girl in a million – and both ways too. Her father is a millionaire, and she has a character you find once in a million girls – if you're lucky! At the age of 21 this petite, intelligent and vivacious little rich thing has built herself a reputation as one of Durban's leading society ladies, and one of the Garden City's most lavish hostesses. Not a week passes without her driving herself in her American car to some fashionable party or dance... (Drum, Jan. 1955: 22-23)

These two extracts show that the 'ordinary Africa' can indeed become an 'apparition of African glory', if only they aspire towards modernity. Joyce Alexander is a prestigious marker of Western modernity. She drives *herself* in her *American* car – she is modern and independent, she is a lady and hostess. Drum writer Can Themba's description of the "Modern African Miss" is memorable for the ways in which it captures this new young modernity in the figure of woman:

She's city slick and sophisticated. She's smart. She's delicate and unselfconscious in the way she handles men, the home and life. And that's been achieved in less than 50 years, for 50 years ago she was content to sit in the sunshine of mud wall and on dung-smear'd floors...at first she was gaudy and brash, and flourished her newly-won freedom and funds in the colourful manner of the prostitute and brazen flirt... But soon she learned grace and poise and finesse. (Drum, March 1958: 24-27)

Learning sophistication (“grace and poise and finesse”) and acting with refinement of movement, action or expression is preferable to “sit[ting] in the sunshine of mud wall”. Similarly to the modern urban housewife in Drum's pages, the “Modern African Miss” is a marker of black modernity, a symbol of achieved integration into the city and a representation of the “New African”.<sup>38</sup>

Another marker of modernity and more specifically of Western femininity in Drum's pages is the beauty queen – a similar figure to the modern, urban and single woman:

Queen of Africa! Norah Mosiakoko 20-year old Johannesburg domestic servant wins a free air trip to Durban as 1<sup>st</sup> prize in DRUM'S Africa 52 Beauty Contest...she's just a rather *shy* domestic servant in the Johannesburg suburb of Houghton. She's an *easy-going, soft-spoken girl*...Whether on the *tennis court* or baking a cake, Norah always looks smart and well-dressed – her lovely, *willowy* figure showing off one of *the latest fashions*. (Feb. 1953: 6-7; my emphases)

These beauty queens represent the achievement of ‘femininity’ and a modern, city lifestyle. The extract describes Norah Mosiakoko as “shy”, “easy-going” and “soft-spoken” (in other words, she is tamed and not threatening to men) and she has a “willowy figure”. She has also acquired the skills to play tennis, bake and remain on top of fashion – exemplifying modern understandings of femaleness. In that Norah

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<sup>38</sup> De Kock refers to ‘New Africans’ as a generation of Africans who reached adulthood in the 1930s-40s, who accepted Western culture, or much of it, as the norm. They sought to conduct their own lives in what they considered a ‘civilised’ manner and also were anxious to acculturate their fellow Africans (33). The ‘New African’ can also refer to the heightened rhetoric of ‘newness’ that held a particular resonance for artists, journalists, and political leaders intent on displacing the distorted, minstrel-inspired images of black people that persisted in mainstream popular culture (Rooks 17).

Mosiakoko is “just a rather shy domestic servant”, she also presents the possibility of modernity for the ordinary black woman.

The so-called “nice-time girl”, a very sexual being (Driver, “Drum” 156), is a manifestation of modernity in Drum’s pages in its more daring form. Drum often features the ‘nice-time girl’ or ‘pin-up girl’ on its front-cover and she is “a figure passively positioned by the male gaze” (ibid 156). Similar to the female manifestations of modernity in Drum discussed so far, she has no verbal power. A picture that appears in Drum of Ruth Molefi shows a typical portrayal of the ‘nice-time girl’: she looks down coyly, not facing the camera, while lifting up a little skirt, giving viewers a glance at her underclothes. One strap is off her shoulder and her long legs become the focal point of the picture (see fig. 25). That this woman is again infantilised is noted by Drum photographer, Jurgen Schadeberg, when he quotes Drum writer Todd Matshikiza’s description of her as a “cute fashion conscious little [*sic*] dame, sizzling with appeal” (57).



*Fig. 25. Nice-time girl, Ruth Molefi. Photo by Drum Photographer Jurgen Schadeberg.<sup>39</sup>*

The representation of the ‘nice-time girl’ constructs her as inferior to men, as she passively models for male scrutiny, allowing herself to be positioned as an object of desire (see fig. 26). Driver states that

Drum presented itself as if it owned its models, made jokes about the journalists ‘beauty editing’ all night, [and] teased readers about their (sexual) possession of Drum’s women... (“Drum” 157)

Hence, Driver’s conclusion that Drum’s vibrancy was constructed at women’s expense, and that the magazine’s shift from rural ‘past’ to urban ‘present’ was

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<sup>39</sup> See Schadeberg 56-57.

negotiated largely by means of belittling representations of women (“Drum” 157). On the other hand, former Drum editor (successor of Sampson), Sylvester Stein, says that “[i]t wasn’t a matter of demeaning anybody...[i]t wasn’t a meat market...[m]en like to look at women and women want to see what they could be” (qtd. in Nicol 143). Similar to the modern urban housewife and single girl in Drum’s pages, portrayals of the ‘nice-time girl’ also aided the establishment of a positive self-consciousness among black people: Drum was the first magazine in South Africa that featured black cover girls (Schadeberg 53), showing black people and their lives to be a valid frame of reference. Another of the magazine’s editors (successor of Stein), Tom Hopkinson, said of Drum that: “the readers like glamour girls...[t]heir *own* glamour girls” (qtd. in Nicol 143; my emphasis). The ambiguity that we find in representations of women in Grace and The Townships Housewife is clearly also present in Drum – proof of the uncertain nature of life for black South Africans under apartheid, negotiating their identities in the city.



Fig 26: ‘Beauty Editing’. Photo by Drum Photographer Jurgen Schadeberg.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Schadeberg 59.



The modern woman in Drum, a symbol and celebration of black modernity, becomes a complex character as she is produced in the magazine's pages: unforeseen by the men who created this "[a]pparition of African glory", this modern woman gained a significant amount of authority over her man as he had to pay his way to her heart. The following letter from female Drum writer Marion Welsh (known as Marion Morel) entitled "Luminous Boys" appeared in a monthly column in Drum and shows that black men had to keep up with this new modern woman's sense of fashion:

How does your boy friend dress when he comes to take you out? Does he wear luminous socks in colors that scream, a leather lumberjacket and a luminous tie with a nude girl painted on it who wiggles her behind with every breath he takes? If so, cure him or *get rid of him*. I once had a guy who...was crazy about luminous things in violent colors. It was a blessing in a way because you could see what he was up to in the dark. But that was the only advantage. It is infuriating after you have spent an hour or more preparing yourself in your best clothes to be called for by someone who dresses so casually and without taste, and then have to appear in public with him. My boy friend, who dresses conservatively and well, thrilled me the other day by appearing in a new dark pinstripe balance-line suit, which is the latest style. (Morel 73; emphasis in original)

As Can Themba acknowledges of his celebrated "Modern African Miss", she brings brand-new problems for her man: "This creature was talking back, was catty and gossipy, was asking for nylon stockings..." (24-27) The modern single woman incurred for men the threat of financial debt as men strove to win her love: she was considered a drain on his pocket (Nixon 20) and threatened the black man's ability to secure permanence for himself in the city. Samuelson refers to this as the contradictory space opening up between the conditions of black urban existence and the ideology of domesticity through which Drum proclaims black urbanity ("Urban" 69): Drum claims black modernity through its creation of the modern woman, but it is exactly this woman who demands money for kitchen appliances or beauty and fashion

products, consequently ensnaring black men who worked for little wages under an oppressive regime's cheap labour system.

In the face of this threat that modern black South African women present to their men, Drum writers use language in the powerful form of print to infantilise these women to children. Women have no speaking voice in Drum.<sup>41</sup> The male writers of Drum often refer to them as 'girls', 'little things' (Jan. 1955:22-23), 'thingamys' or 'wifeys' (Feb. 1954: 49, 51). Gready notes how Drum writer Casey Motsisi refers to women as "'girlos', 'cherries', 'sizzlers', sheilas' and so on" (151). In Motsisi's "On the Beat" he refers to women as unintelligent "bambinos" or "gum-chewing cherries" (176). Women, then, are powerful markers of modernity in Drum, but as they come to threaten male superiority, the magazine increasingly silences and infantilises them. It is evident that there are many ambivalences and contradictions present in the representation of women in Drum: these are representations in transition and they are far from stable!

The silencing of women's voices in Drum also takes place through the degrading creation of the 'nagging housewife' in the magazine's pages. The 'nagging wife' is a prevalent representation of black women in Drum. In October 1956 Mr Drum, Henry Nxumalo, takes housewives on:<sup>42</sup>

YAK-YAK-YAK! Yak-yak-yak. Every Second of every day. That's women for you, brother... But what really gets my kraal of goats is the way they're always railing about how hard they work while we, the stronger of the species, do N-O-T-H-I-N-G. Nothing! (63)

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<sup>41</sup> Marion Welsh (also known as Marion Morel) and Ruby Mayet are two of the first and few women writers to work for Drum.

<sup>42</sup> Drum writer Henry Nxumalo was nicknamed Mr Drum. He was an investigative journalist whose political exposé pieces revealed the slave-like conditions of black labourers on South African farms, as well as degrading prison conditions. For more information, see Chapman.



Before continuing the discussion on Drum's nagging housewives, I would like to draw attention to Nxumalo's reference here to "what really gets [his] kraal of goats".<sup>43</sup> It is ironic that in establishing urban modernity through Drum, Nxumalo here falls back on a rural reference in his retort to the verbal power that women have achieved in and through an urban lifestyle. His reference to "what really gets [his] kraal of goats" reminds us of the well-known complaint made by an African reader about the content of the early African Drum:

"Ag, why do you dish out that stuff, man?" said a man with Golliwog hair and a floppy American suit, at the Bantu Men's Social Centre. "Tribal music! Tribal history! Chiefs! We want Duke Ellington, Satchmo, and hot dames. Yes, brother, anything American. *You can cut out this junk about kraals* and folk tales and Basutos in blankets – forget it! You're just trying to keep us backward, that's what! Tell us what's happening right here, man, on the Reef!" (qtd. in Chapman 187; my emphasis)

Yet Nxumalo, as a means of challenging the threat of the urban female voice and the demands she is articulating, responds by claiming the male authority presented by the rural cattle-kraal. The cattle-kraal was traditionally the sanctuary of men: women were forbidden entry to cattle-kraals, which provided meeting places for male political forums (see Samuelson, Remembering 55-56).

While offering women the excitement of a new lifestyle, modernity did not, it seems, exempt women from suffering at the hands of their male counterparts. In "Drum pin-up gets pinned", an interview with a well-known pin-up girl who got married, Drum writer Casey Motsisi asks the husband: "Does she nag you like the proverbial housewife?", to which he answers: "Why, my girl is the ORIGINAL Nagger. You should hear her yak,yak,yak when I come home late or I forget to bring her candy on pay day" (April 1956). Another article in Drum, which threatens the

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<sup>43</sup> A kraal is an enclosure for cattle or sheep (Oxford English Dictionary).

female voice, states: “Housewives? God bless them, the Masterpieces in Bronze. But, can they nag!” (Sept. 1958: 55) Yet another Drum writer writes that “...[women] want to sit in the cinema all afternoon or sit in their parlours yak-yak-yak all day” (Aug. 1957: 41). The reference to candy, as well as the constant reference to ‘yakking’ (a nonsensical way of talking), compare these women to children. Replacing women’s voices with the words ‘yak-yak-yak’ contrasts strongly with men’s verbal power in Drum and is presumably a response to the emergence of a threateningly vocal female presence in the nuclear home.

In contrast to the silencing of the female voice in Drum, is the presence of the *shebeen* queen in Drum. She does not feature in the magazine frequently: it is mostly in Drum’s short stories that *shebeen* queens appear. In her autobiography Call me Woman, Ellen Kuzwayo explains that, for those women who could not be absorbed into domestic service in the cities, the only alternative occupation was beer-brewing (30-35). The brewing of beer was an acceptable practice in the rural areas many of these women came from – in these areas, beer was a nourishing drink. This, together with the fact that South African liquor laws at the time banned the selling of liquor to blacks, made the brewing of beer an occupation of those women (*shebeen* queens) who could not find regular employment in the cities such as domestic work or factory work. Drum presents these women as tough and hardy – they do not ascribe to Western perceptions of femininity. Can Themba’s “Let the People Drink” describes the “huge hostess” as “always hurrying you to drink quickly, or *swearing at somebody or other*” (note their verbal power) (100; my emphasis). Nixon explains that among women, the spirit of self-empowering lawlessness was conveyed principally by older not younger women – by the beer brewers and the *shebeen* queens (32). Although

both *tsotsis*<sup>44</sup> and *shebeen* queens represented a self-sufficient black community (Glaser), in contrast to *shebeen* queens *tsotsis* rejected a work ethic.

The politically involved black woman also raises her voice during the Drum decade. As stated earlier, in the 1955-1956 anti-pass campaign about 20 000 black women gathered in front of the Union Building in Pretoria to register their protest against the pass laws that required women to carry passes (identification documents) with them everywhere they go.<sup>45</sup> In Drum's January 1956 issue, Henry Nxumalo writes an elaborate account of the threatening pass laws: "Will our women carry passes?" (17-19). Quoted in this article is 49-year old Elsie Mloli stating, concerning carrying passes: "*I detest the very idea*. When I was 18, my mother was sent to gaol in Boksburg for three weeks because she couldn't produce a pass. *I demand respect*" (18; my emphasis). Elsie Mloli clearly has more verbal power than 'nice-time girl' Ruth Molefi (see fig. 25). In February 1956, a writer in Drum states that "[o]n the political plane too, women have come to the fore. They are making their voices heard in the affairs of the African National Congress" (19-21).<sup>46</sup> Ezekiel Mphahlele refers to political activist Lilian Ngoyi as "GUTS AND GRANITE":

Lilian Ngoyi springs to fame as the new tough type of woman leader. 'She's ambitious!' '*She's a remarkable orator!*' She knows too little about political theory!' 'She has a brilliant intellect!' 'What kind of woman is this?' '*She almost rocks men out of their pants when she speaks!*' So say people about Mrs Lilian Ngoyi, now president of the African National Congress Women's League for the second term – the most talked-of woman in politics. (March 1956: 63, 65; my emphases)

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<sup>44</sup> The term *Tsotsis* refers to a youth gang subculture that gripped the townships of South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s (Glaser 2).

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter One for explanation of the pass laws.

<sup>46</sup> In 1948 The ANC Women's League was set-up after women were granted full membership status in the ANC. Madie Hall-Xuma became its first president. For more information on the role of the ANC Women's League at the time, see "ANC Women's League".

Ngoyi becomes a character with verbal authority and she challenges male ‘superiority’ – she almost “rocks men out of their pants”.

Women in Drum are, however, mostly encouraged to “wag... their own tongues” (Nov. 1957: 32-33) not for their own upliftment, but in order for the number of black people opposing apartheid to increase. Yet, instead of viewing this as a disadvantage to women (a limitation on the various roles available to them), we should note that Ngoyi can use accepted and familiar roles among women, such as the housewife and mother supporting her husband, to mobilise other women. She appears to act in accordance with accepted gender roles, but from within this accepted role she can destabilise the ‘natural female identity’ and present to women other possibilities (see Butler, “Subjects” xiii-xviii).

One of the strongest and most significant appearances of the female voice in Drum is the female jazz singer. Similarly to Lilian Ngoyi, the jazz singer destabilises the hierarchy of male superiority and female inferiority in Drum’s pages. Can Themba in a 1957 issue describes one of the most popular jazz singers at the time, Dolly Rathebe, as “using the stage as a boxer does the ring”, attributing to her masculine qualities that suggest a measure of agency (qtd. in Beukes 90). Another of Drum’s celebrated jazz singers, Dorothy Masuka (Dotty) wrote a song, “Nolishwa”, celebrating a very daring young woman for the 1950s, Nolishwa, who wore trousers (Masuka 245).

Unlike the figure of the beauty queen, jazz singers like Dolly Rathebe, Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka become the desiring subject (Driver, “Drum” 158). In

their representations, according to Driver, a different form of sexuality enters Drum's pages – a female sexuality in dialogue with male sexuality rather than subordinated and owned. Can Themba's description of Dolly Rathebe in "The Life and Love of Dolly Rathebe" is evidence of this:

She wanted men at her feet, gazing up at her in awed admiration. She knew that a wiggle of her hips imbued a suggestive phrase of song with infinite seductiveness. She went before her audience and treated them to live, wriggling flesh and she purred to them in shaggy, hairy, deep, sultry mezzo. (182)

In an article on Dorothy Masuka, Todd Matshikiza approvingly quotes her singing "I love my thing, 'cause my man's my thing" (Jan. 1955: 34). Reflecting nostalgically on the golden age of the jazz singers, Jurgen Schadeberg, in his photographic account of the 1950s (Black and White 1950s: Jurgen Schadeberg's South Africa), states that "[t]hose were the days in Sophiatown when men were men and women sirens" (93). I wish to highlight the contradiction in Schadeberg's quote: when women become sirens, can it still be said that 'men are men'? Sirens are threatening female figures in Greek mythology, sea nymphs who lived on an island surrounded by cliffs and rocks. These beautiful but fatally dangerous women lured sailors to their death with their enchanting singing, causing these men to sail into the cliffs and drown (Wikipedia, "Sirens.") Schadeberg's comparison of 1950s black women to sirens indicates an irresistible sensuality and sexuality that gives these women power in Drum's pages, showing that these 'jazz women' had agency potentially threatening to dominant masculinities (and thus to "men being men"). On the other hand, this agency (as well as the power that the African beauty queen or single girl wields) is a very frail power: according to Florence Stratton, the "African Mother Trope", which embodies Africa in the figure of woman – as sensual, young and beautiful – belies the real economic, political and social position of African women (see Stratton, 39-55). Nonetheless, in

Drum, South African black women can see themselves in positions other than domestic house cleaners – which was in itself empowering in the face of apartheid.



*Fig. 27: The Jazz Singer: Miriam Makeba 1955. Photo by Jurgen Schadeberg.*<sup>47</sup>

The female jazz figure is also an important political instrument. Driver explains that “[i]n black America, jazz had become the signifier of an energy that had not been harnessed by white authority....” (“Drum” 158) Similarly, jazz in South African townships became an expression of a tradition of black vitality and ‘vibe’, which

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<sup>47</sup> Taken from [www.jurgenschadeberg.com](http://www.jurgenschadeberg.com)

white oppression could not restrict. Ruth Weiss recalls that even the toughest apartheid laws failed to dampen the explosive spirit of black township jazz (“King Kong”). Singers such as Dolly Rathebe, Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka posed opposition to the notion of black inferiority in the face of apartheid. James Weldon Johnson, leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance,<sup>48</sup> proclaimed in 1928 that black people in America were smashing racial barriers, faster than they have ever done through any other method, through their artistic efforts (Nixon 18). Through “unlawful association” with the Harlem Renaissance (ibid 16), black South African writers became the instigators of what has been called the “Sophiatown Renaissance”.<sup>49</sup>

Dolly Rathebe was the face of the new African jazz movement and her role on screen and stage and in pin-up posters paved the way for others like Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka (Beukes 89). In 1949 she was discovered by a talent scout at a picnic and was cast in the role of a nightclub singer in the iconic film Jim comes to Jo’burg, becoming the first black African star and Drum’s favourite cover girl (Beukes 98).<sup>50</sup> Drum editor, Anthony Sampson, gives us a brief glimpse at this jazz star:

Dolly stepped out...[s]he sang the Xhosa hit tune, *Into Yam*, which had sent the Reef locations crazy with delight. Instantly the stone-faced figures round the room sprang to life...Their eyes lit up and their feet beat time, and they clapped as one man, with the beat of the music...Europe was translated into Africa. Every movement, every look, had the touch and feel of Africa. As I walked across the room in my European way, I felt like a corpse striding out from the grave. (146-147)

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<sup>48</sup> A New York centred movement in the 1920s by black intellectuals and artists celebrating blackness as a valid frame of reference.

<sup>49</sup> See Nixon for a comparison between the Harlem Renaissance and the ‘Sophiatown Renaissance’.

<sup>50</sup> Jim comes to Jo’burg (1949) is a South African produced film that follows the story of a black man from the country who tries to make his way in the threatening city, and who eventually succeeds in doing so by entering into a romantic union with the night club singer played by Rathebe.

The liveliness of Africa stands in strong contrast to Europe, which Sampson compares to living like a corpse in a grave. Jazz here indeed becomes what Driver refers to as a “signifier of an energy that had not been harnessed by white authority” (“Drum” 158). Although the process of translation referred to in the above extract (“Europe was translate into Africa”) involves a complex relation between two cultures coming together, where one takes on forms of the other in a hybrid formation, Africa seems to dominate Europe in the act of translation that Sampson describes. The extract shows the stone-faced Europeans beating their feet on time and clapping as *one* man – a communality usually associated with Africa rather than with Europe.

The representation of the female jazz singer, as with all other representations of women negotiated in Drum, however, becomes complex and contradictory. On the one hand, the jazz singer is the subject, rather than object; on the other hand, gangsters frequently pester and abduct her (as Beukes notes, “[i]t was common practice for the gangs to kidnap beautiful women for a few nights of pleasure-taking, oft-times willing but just as often not” [91]). It has become clear that ‘female identity’ in Drum is not a fixed category: the representation of women by Drum’s men is full of contradictions and ambivalences as they negotiate urban modernity in Drum’s pages. Dolly Rathebe is an example of the complexities and contradictions present in the female manifestations in Drum: in “The Life and Love of Dolly Rathebe”, Can Themba describes her as a tomboy, a gangster’s girl, as always neatly dressed, a girl-guide, a Bible-reading blues mama, sultry jazz singer, wife and mother (175-205). The representation of women in Grace and The Townships Housewife is somewhat more stable.



### 3.2 Black Women in Grace and The Townships Housewife: Similarities to and Differences from Drum.

Grace and The Townships Housewife follow the ‘death’ of Sophiatown and the dispersal into exile of many of the Drum-writers of the 1950s. When South African Minister of Justice, B.J. Vorster, in April 1966 gazetted a list of 46 people living abroad as statutory communists, effectively ‘silencing’ them, he delivered the final blow to the Drum-generation (Chapman 221). Drum’s brash commentary on white people whose “furs flapped in the wild wind” (Drum, June 1959: 19, 21) would now change to black women submitting modestly to an ideology which stipulated that “[w]e [black women] have a lot to do in order to catch up with women of other races” (Grace, Oct. 1964: 4).

Unlike Drum, Grace and The Townships Housewife never show women as angry political protesters. Consider titles that appear in Drum about black women involved in political affairs: “The Battle of the Women” (Dec. 1958), “Meek Women Talk Back!” (Nov. 1957) and “Guts and Granite! Lilian Ngoyi” (March 1956). Such titles are absent in Grace and The Townships Housewife, as are the women who evoke them. The magazines do not mention women such as Lilian Ngoyi, Mamphela Ramphele and Thenjiwe Mtintso, who were politically active at the time. Grace and The Townships Housewife foreground instead the apolitical black woman, a quiet character not overtly threatening to defy a ‘civilised’ image of the ‘tamed’ South African black. This representation emerges in an era in which the fight for the city (urban) has been lost and marginalisation to the townships is taking place. The project that Grace and The Townships Housewife undertake through their representation of

women is to imaginatively recreate the townships as suburbs. This can be seen as both subversive to an ideology of black inferiority, and as escaping from a crude reality.

Presiding over this 'suburban' home, is the black 'lady' created in Grace's and The Townships Housewife's pages. The new modern woman in these two magazines shows the shift from the extravagant defiant Drum woman to a more modest version of being woman. As opposed to women in The Townships Housewife who embrace more communal values, women in both Grace and Drum are independent and individualistic. Figure 28 represents the modern young woman in Drum's pages – the threat to black men's pockets and their authority over women. The Grace woman (fig. 29) seems less flashy than the Drum woman – she has no comb to comb her hair, no matching handbag and necklace, and her head is tilted downwards in a less bold expression. She reveals the shift from the extravagant defiant Drum woman to a more modest version of this figure in Grace.



*Fig. 28. Brushing Up - Getting Ready for a Photo Session 1954 (Priscilla Mtimkulu).<sup>51</sup>*

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<sup>51</sup> Photo taken from [www.jurgenschadeberg.com](http://www.jurgenschadeberg.com)

**GIRLS!**  
**A great new**  
**idea . . . .**  
**Pendant plus**  
**Mirror!**



*Fig. 29. Advertisement. Grace, May 1966: 33.*

Yet, similarly to Drum's women, the new modern African woman in Grace seems to 'keep her man on his toes' as she also authorises the demands Drum's men were so anxious about. In a letter entitled "Hint to the Gentlemen", Grace reader Mary Mcunu writes that "[she] want[s] to give a hint to gentlemen who don't know how to behave" (Feb. 1966: 9). She goes on to explain how she left a man alone in a café after he did not want to buy her apples, which he said were "very expensive, Baby". She ends her letter by warning men: "I stepped right out of the café, leaving him with his hands in his pockets. Gentlemen, be careful!" This man, similar to men's responses in Drum to the female voice, tries to infantilise this woman by calling her 'Baby'. Differently to the women of the Drum-decade, however, women in Grace have the power of the written word and are thus able to establish a public voice – in this magazine of their own they can issue a retort to men, warning them to "be careful" through their printed letters. This reminds us of the woman in the short story "The Fat One" – through her written letters she has the power to transform herself. Black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife are the authors of their own

stories and letters and nonsensical ‘yak-yak-yakking’ does not merely replace their words.<sup>52</sup>

A much more consistently positive image of women appears in Grace and The Townships Housewife in contrast to Drum. As Chapman notes, Drum often depicts women as fickle temptresses, *shebeen* queens or models of dull domesticity (224-225). Also consider the following articles that appear in Drum which ironically perpetuate apartheid laws that constitute black women as minors:

The Trouble with Women! (May 1952)

Heart Breaks: Can I Trust Her? (Feb. 1953)

Should Women have Equal Right with Men? Drum Readers vote: NO (May -July 1954)

It’s a Farce! Mr Drum tackles housewives. (Oct. 1956)

This kind of representation of women never appears in Grace or The Townships Housewife. These two magazines do not represent women as nagging, as children, infidels, drunk, or unromantic and unlawful *shebeen* queens. Grace portrays a community devoid of *tsotsi* characters and the like, and housewives are presented as valued caretakers of the family and society.

Preference to women can also be seen in Grace’s “You Ask, We Answer” column. Whereas the “Dolly Drum” advice column that appears in Drum-magazine favours men (see Mutongi), Grace seems to favour women in its “You Ask, We Answer” feature. Kenda Mutongi explains that ‘Dolly’ dismisses serious concerns of women at the time (single-parenting, abortion) by not correcting young men on their

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<sup>52</sup> That black women in South Africa were indeed finding it hard to get their voices in print is reflected in that Miriam Tlali had to get her husband’s signature for the publication of Muriel at Metropolitan.

sexually aggressive behaviour towards women (10-11). In contrast to this, the “editress” in Grace is quick to reprimand tardy male lovers. In the January 1966 issue of Grace, “Lonely Bachelor” G.M.M. Livingstone from Zambia writes:

I am a handsome young man of 24 but find that girls are not interested in me. All the girls I fall for show no interest, and often use abusive words when I approach them. A man should have a partner in life, otherwise he cannot enjoy life going through it lonely. (14)

The “editress”’s answer addresses a concern for many women who find themselves treated as inferiors by men:

You do not tell me how you approach the girls whom you like, and I am sure that a decent girl will not use abusive words to any man if she is approached in the right way...Behave yourself at all times and let me give you a tip that’s worth remembering: no girl likes to be seen with any man who hasn’t good manners and does not behave like a gentleman at all times. Good luck for the future.

In another letter, titled by the editor as “Bully”, a woman writes:

I am...in love with two men...The Pretoria boyfriend and I have many rows, and he takes my money without asking me... If I talk to him about this he says that he is going to pay it back, but he never does. He keeps on telling me that he is going to pay lobola for me. The man in Port Elizabeth is also coming to visit me. I don’t know what to do. Must I wait and see if the Pretoria one is going to pay the lobola, or must I agree to marry the Port Elizabeth one? (May 1966: 25)

The “editress” answers:

I can’t understand why you let your Pretoria boyfriend bully you like this. Think twice before you agree to marry him. He is obviously not much interested in you as a person, but in your money. Get rid of this bully, and make sure that you love the person you are going to marry.

Grace clearly sets up new relationships between men and women in the city. The “editress”’s answer also forecloses traditional gender relations in the avoidance of the topic of *lobola* that the woman raises in her letter.

There is one over-arching ‘identity’ which can describe all the women of Grace and The Townships Housewife: the black *lady*. In the various representations

of women in these two magazines, they are always ‘ladies’: whether housewife, mother, beauty queen, single girl, nurse, socially active, international star or good, Christian woman, Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s women never threaten to spill over the borders of the refined lady. Marjorie Ferguson, in her study on dominant female roles in women’s magazines, describes the “Decent Woman” (who resembles the Grace and The Townships Housewife lady):

Here is the decent member of society (female variant), conformist in thought and deed, being ‘nice’ about it, whatever it turns out to be – from house-moving to holocaust. No non-conformist or indecent woman ever appeared, no bad-mannered nose-pickers or exhibitionists ever leapt from the page. (64)

Both Grace and The Townships Housewife explicitly interpellate their female subjects and readers as ‘ladies’:

Mrs Emma Losala... [is] [o]ne of the foremost ladies of Thabong. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 6)

We hope to see articles on slimming and the correct way to dress...and specially something on needlework for the young ladies’ trousseau kist. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 6)

Being a journal to the ladies of the Upper classes. Cookery Homes and Gardens. (subtitle of The Townships Housewife)

Ladies, this magazine comes to you free of charge... (Townships, April 1968: 3)

The Townships Housewife’s cover page describes it as a magazine published especially “for educated African Housewives in the higher income groups, *ladies* who have had to wait a long time for anything so well-suited to their requirements” (March 1968: 5; my emphasis). These women are the “foremost ladies”, “ladies of the upper classes” – educated, ‘civilised’ and modern, in contrast to the image created of them

by white people in Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady (see previous chapter), and in contrast to the outspoken, independent ‘girl about town’ that Drum presents.<sup>53</sup>

A far more modest, less sexualised image of women is present in Grace and The Townships Housewife than in Drum. Women in the former two magazines are not often shown as sexy jazz singers and they are not ‘Dolly-figures’ or ‘nice-time girls’. The likes of Drum-subjects such as “Sex Problems of Africans” (Feb. 1954), “Angelina Ann writes on ...UNDIES” (May 1951), or “DRUM Pin-up gets Pinned!!” (April 1956) do not appear in these magazines. The sexuality of black women and men is very much a focus of Drum magazine, appearing in ample discussions on prostitution, infidelity, homosexuality and African sexuality in general. Here are just a few examples of the ‘sex issues’ discussed in Drum:

Gertie Williams – “he-baby” who refuses to remain a girl in the teeth of Nature’s dictates and society’s raised eyebrows. And she found a girl-friend for herself more than once. (April 1956: 24-25)

Sex problems of Africans. Africans have in fact greater sexual virility than Europeans. As a result of town-life, “petting” is becoming increasingly prevalent among all races as it is in America. (Feb. 1954: 23-24)

RAND’S DUSTBIN BABIES. Abandoned babies. Tiny kids, just out of their mothers’ wombs, thrown away. It’s happening twice a week on the Rand at least, probably much more. To shut the mouths of these tiny creatures scared mothers are tying string round a new baby’s neck, or wrapping it in blood-soaked clothes from the birth and dumping it in a rubbish heap. (Nov. 1957: 22-25)

Grace and The Townships Housewife ignore the fact that many of their readers may also have thrown a baby in the dustbin due to poverty – their readers are ‘good’ and ‘civilised’ – they do not participate in sexual behaviour such as “petting” and they do not engage in, or even debate, homosexuality. While most of the Drum writers

<sup>53</sup> “Girl About Town” was a regular feature appearing in Drum from 1959 and written by one of the magazine’s first female writers, Marion Welsh, under the pen name Marion Morel (Driver “Marion” 253).

received their education at St Peters School near Johannesburg, established and run by the Anglican Monks of the Community of the Resurrection (Visser 46), the good, Christian woman that appears in Grace and The Townships Housewife is an identity that does not have prominence in Drum. Why, then, is it the case that ladies of Grace and The Townships Housewife, at a time when missionary schools were closed down by the South Africa government due to their non-compliance with the policy of Bantu Education, were so much more modest than the women of Drum?

### **3.3. Possible Reasons for the Shift in Women’s Representation from Drum to Grace and The Townships Housewife.**

#### **3.3.1. The Thabong Ladies: Pro-Government Views**

In the December 1964 issue of Grace (6), it becomes clear that the “Thabong Ladies” (from Welkom) are responsible for vetting the content of Grace (see Chapter One). Johannes Mentz’s “Die stedelike Bantoeraad van Welkom” (Welkom’s Bantu City Council), in a chapter on the establishment of the Thabong Native Advisory Board and the Thabong Bantu City Council, refers to Mr Ngake, Mr Thelingoane, Mr Makoli, Mr Masole, Mr Leutlwileng and Mr Mosimane – representatives or nominees playing a part in the Advisory Board and Bantu City Council (22-70). These names sounded familiar to me, and when I compared it to the Dec. 1964 issue of Grace, I found that the wives of all these men were part of the “Thabong Ladies Meeting” that is shown discussing the November issue of Grace (Dec. 1964: 6). Emphasising the close bond between the magazine and the Thabong Council, the December 1964 issue of Grace also features pictures of both Mrs Dorothy Ngake, “[w]ife of the Chairman of the Bantu Council of Thabong”, and Mrs Masole, “wife of a councillor of the



Bantu Council of Thabong, Welkom” (7). The next section considers the influence of the Bantu Council of Thabong and its activities on Grace’s contents.



Fig. 30. Wives of the Men of the Thabong Bantu Council. Grace, Dec. 1964: 7.

In reference to these city councils, Mentz indicates that they were “closely bound up with the functions of central government departments” (72). These councils were “administrative subdivisions or local units through which governmental power may be deconcentrated or decentralized” (ibid 76). Another source describes them as an apartheid institution scorned by the black people and against whom Black Consciousness would set itself (Pohlandt-McCormick). This information suggests that the Thabong Bantu Council and their affiliated “Thabong Ladies” were fulfilling their duties under close watch of the apartheid government.

What would the connection be between the apartheid government and the representation of the modest black lady? One might hypothesise that the promotion of the ‘black lady’ was part of the attempt to control the number of black births: the modern and civilised lady knows everything about birth-control. James Ngake, Mrs Dorothy Ngake’s husband (see fig. 30), head of the Bantu Council of Thabong and probably representative of the apartheid government, comments very positively on the practice of birth-control in an article for Grace (July 1965). This affirmation by the concerned governmental department of the advantages of birth-control was possibly required by the apartheid government: birth-control could be a tool used to ‘limit’ a growth in the black population. In this article, Mr Ngake states that family planning is not immoral or harmful and he proceeds by listing its advantages (14-15). That Mrs Ngake, James Ngake’s wife also condemns promiscuity can be seen in her statement that “What I would like most is a happily married couple in a conspicuous [sic] place” (see fig. 30). That someone else than the “Thabong Ladies” (such as the government) had the final say about Grace’s content, becomes clear when one of the ‘Thabong Ladies’, Mrs Masole, states that she *would like* the “articles pertaining to African

affairs...[to] be in an African language” (see fig. 30): these ladies did not have absolute control over the magazine’s content.

The moral ‘black lady’ is ‘called into being’ by the government as she would profit Afrikaner Nationalism – she would now bear two children, instead of maybe eight. This creation of the modest lady in Grace and The Townships Housewife is what Kerry Braye refers to as the “governmentalisation of women”: the population is governed into a different way of thinking about women that in turn constitutes a different population altogether – here literally a smaller population that mimicked white behaviour (2). Chapman confirms that this “governmentalisation” of the black South African population through the print media was indeed taking place when he says of Bona (a popular magazine for black South Africans first issued in 1956) that it acted as propaganda medium for pro-government views (186).

### **3.3.2. Profitable Endeavour**

Another manner in which Grace and The Townships Housewife aimed at changing women’s values towards profitable ends was through luring them into a western-orientated consumer culture through the promise of ‘upliftment’. Both magazines hail readers as ‘ladies’ and consequently constitute them as such. As suggested earlier, this would be a profitable endeavour for magazine owners and advertisers as the 1960s black lady needs high heels, hats, handbags and furniture for her house. The fact that The Townships Housewife, which consists largely of advertisements, was free of charge is proof of the profitability of this new modern black lady. Advertisers would

gain much from placing their products in Grace and The Townships Housewife as, in an attempt to challenge apartheid's dehumanising effects, both black men and women wanted to achieve modernity in their lifestyles. The ladies of The Townships Housewife support the advertisers of their favourite magazine by buying their products for their homes (see April 1968: 3), while the ladies of Grace order their beauty products through the magazine:

...for the benefit of our readers we now offer a unique MAIL ORDER system. All the cosmetics and preparations which I discuss in this column will be obtainable direct from us. In this way even readers who live far out in country districts can benefit. (Grace, Dec. 1964: 25)

Magazines such as Grace and The Townships Housewife sold products through the interpellation of the figure of the 'black lady', who feeds into what Marjorie Ferguson dubs the "cult of femininity". The "cult of femininity" refers to the normativity that is a distinguishing characteristic of women's magazines (Slabbert 193). Women's magazines function as the bible on the beauty, fashion and lifestyle of the ideal feminine woman. It becomes even more evident that these new magazines for the black woman would focus on the black *lady* when considering the role models for Grace and The Townships Housewife at the time: South African white women's magazines that existed at the time or just prior to the 1960s indicate that they focus on women as ladies or as feminine, with titles such as Femina, Milady and Fair Lady.

### **3.3.2.1. The Cult of Femininity**

Through content analyses of features, problem pages, beauty articles and fiction of various magazines, Margaret Ferguson (1983) identified five themes that promulgate the "cult of femininity" in women's magazines in the pre-feminist period between

1949 and 1974 (see Currie 25). As stated in Chapter One, the “cult of femininity” involves the presentation of images to women from birth of what a ‘woman’ is, for example, the discourse that insists pink is for girls. Ferguson explains that the “cult of femininity” requires that women adhere to certain standards in order to be deemed feminine or womanly. Ferguson highlights the following five requirements of the cult of femininity as presented in women’s magazines between 1949 and 1974: keeping and getting a man, maintaining a happy family (domesticity), overcoming misfortune and achieving perfection, considering working as detrimental to being a good mother and wife (the centrality of family life), and becoming more beautiful (44-59).

Readers and writers of Drum do not obey these rules as meticulously as the readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife do. Some Drum women do not want to get married. Drum’s “Girl About Town”, Marian Morel, defiantly exclaims: “I’ve made up my mind I’ll never marry.” (June 1959: 19, 21). Other Drum women do not want to adhere to any requirements stipulating that a woman’s place is at home. In an article “Is a Woman’s Place the Home” (Drum, Sept. 1952:10-11), the answer seems to be “[a] woman’s place is all over” or “[w]here she wants to be”. Many readers and writers are politically active (and do not consider working in the public sphere as detrimental to being a good mother and wife): “She, woman of Africa, is in a way behind most of the riots and strikes and boycotts and bull-baiting at political round-ups” (Aug 57: 41). To some of Drum’s readers, self-making is not necessarily a heterosexual endeavour:

Behind the rugged front of Gertie Williams’ life is the sensitive suffering of a person who feels misplaced in her sex. Gertie Williams is Cape Town’s girl discovered by Golden City Post who refuses to remain a girl in the teeth of Nature’s dictates and society’s raised eyebrows. She prefers the rough and tumble of life as a man... (April 1956: 24-25)

In contrast to the “big-bosomed battleships of women” (Aug 1957:41) often depicted in Drum, Grace and The Townships Housewife do not contain explicit challenges to the “cult of femininity”. Why is there this shift in representation from Drum’s girl-about-town to Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s modest lady in the house, member of the “cult of femininity”? Ferguson states that reader demand determines what readers get (31-38). On behalf of the readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife, then, the modest lady possibly reflects a more desperate desire for acceptance and humanity in the face of apartheid’s increasing degradation of black people in the 1960s. It also shows a shift in market as a black middle-class comes to the fore. This suggests another reading of the figure of the modest modern black lady to that which I have already advanced in suggesting that the emphasis on modesty could also be read as an apartheid conspiracy. Such contradictory readings elicited by the material evidences the variety of voices at play within both magazines.

### **3.3.3. Women Writing Women**

Another possible explanation for the shift to the modest lady in Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s pages is that both magazines had mostly black *female* staff members. Unlike in Drum, in other words, black women were here writing women, instead of men writing women. With women writing women for women, the ideal woman created in Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s pages did not have to fulfil some male desire such as accomplished through the creation of the sex-object.



It is also possible that these women writers were concerned with rendering the life of black South African under apartheid a more positive experience for those of their own sex. This could entail placing articles that would be helpful to women – that would make their work easier and that would make being a woman something positive. Articles in Grace and The Townships Housewife provide women with helpful information on crèches and on writing better letters, thoughts of encouragement to get through the day and knowledge on women’s organisations or on how to take care of themselves through beauty and fashion tips. Both magazines also show women as respected members of the community and exhort them for their beauty. Similarly to many women’s magazines, it is very much about female empowerment when the female voice is given the liberty of speaking out (see Gauntlett 193).

It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to determine whether Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s apparently female writers were really women. Driver reminds us that “[t]he South African short stories Drum published in the 1950s under women’s signatures, under the names Rita Sefora, Joan Mokwena, and Doris Sello, were in fact not written by women” (“Drum” 157). “Dolly Drum”, Drum’s advice column, has also been revealed to have been “a worried syndicate of men” (Anthony Sampson qtd. in Driver, “Drum” 157). Following my detailed engagement with Grace and The Townships Housewife, however, I do not think that this was the case with these two magazines: the question that remains here is rather whether Grace’s and The Townships Housewife’s many anonymous writers were white or black women.

### 3.3.4. The White Hand

It is indeed possible that many of Grace's and The Townships Housewife's writers were white: we have seen in Chapter One that a white hand, to one degree or another, was behind the publication of both Grace and The Townships Housewife. Considering this white hand behind these two magazines, one possible motive behind the representation of the 'black lady', might be the confirmation of white power through what Homi Bhabha calls mimicry. As explained in Chapter One, mimicry is something the colonizer produces (Childs and Williams 129), such as the educated black, the teacher, the doctor, the student and the nurse. Through Grace and The Townships Housewife, white people were creating a black middle-class that mimicked them – the already approved. This meant that white people were in control – they were the creators of this new black middle class – and that black people would remain 'under control'. They were only copies of the real – a reminder of white superiority – as to be *made* civilised is to not *be* civilised. Grace and The Townships Housewife thus to some extent maintained the master/learner dichotomy. The white hand could now educate and civilise the black South African, while simultaneously offering a pleasant reminder to white people of their superiority.

Mimicry also aids in creating the domesticated Other (the Other that can be known), as opposed to the absolutely Other (the other that cannot be known) (Spivak in Cunard 28). The 'middlemen' (Childs and Williams), then, the educated teachers, nurses and ladies, are the domesticated and known Other, whereas the rest of the black population is the unknown. These 'middlemen', or 'middlewomen' in the case of Grace and The Townships Housewife, serve as interpreters between the local



government and the masses they govern. One such example would be the education of nurses according to Western methods of healing in order to persuade black people away from their traditional methods of medicine. Thanks to the *ladies* of Grace and The Townships Housewife, the apartheid state now did not have to teach ‘acceptable’ values to all black people, but it would spread through the “middlewomen” through which the “governmentalisation” of a whole population (see Braye) can take place.

Following Bhabha, Peter Childs and Partrick Williams refer, however, to mimicry as a subversive and “active force” (134). While intended to solidify colonial rule, mimicry produces an adverse effect on colonial power: to resemble is to threaten the basis of power and discrimination. Black people now developed closer towards equality with whites: black pride (the “menace”, see Bhabha) increased as black people were no longer only stereotypical maids and workers in magazines (see Chapter Two). This is possibly what Switzer means when he states that “publications such as Bona” (and I add Grace and The Townships Housewife) “were apolitical, *on the surface at least...*” (14; my emphasis).

It should be noted that in the instances where Grace and The Townships Housewife do mimic ‘white ways’, the readers and writers generally mimic *American* ways and not white South African lifestyles. Ulf Hannerz, in referring to Drum magazine, states that “[a]ccepting New York could be a way of rejecting Pretoria” (168). It is about accepting the American in an attempt to ‘achieve civilisation’ and not about being a white South African. In Muriel at Metropolitan, Muriel, the black female lead character, says to one of the white women working with her (after this woman accuses her of wanting to be white): “That’s an insult Mrs Kuhn...I don’t *want* to be like you. I’m very proud of what I am. You’re too small, too full of hatred”

(70). Similarly, Grace and The Townships Housewife do not idolise white South African 'heroes'.

This chapter explored the shift in the representation of black women from Drum to Grace and The Townships Housewife. One of the primary markers of this shift was found to be the production and performance of the black *lady* in the two later magazines. The new modest black lady in Grace and The Townships Housewife's pages is possibly the result of attempts at birth-control by the apartheid government, or capitalist attempts at making profit from the promises modernity presented the black lady. Alternatively, I speculated that new representations of women may equally be a consequence of women writing themselves or of white people putting 'middlewomen' into place in an attempt to maintain a master/learner dichotomy between white and black. Regarding the latter, I suggested that this dichotomy might then be destabilised through the menace of mimicry. The challenges presented by Grace and The Townships Housewife to apartheid South Africa will be discussed in the next and last chapter, which considers the connection between Grace and The Townships Housewife, on the one hand, and black consciousness and the Black Consciousness Movement, on the other hand.

## Chapter Four

### **Grace, The Townships Housewife and Black Consciousness**

This chapter investigates the relationship between Grace and The Townships Housewife and the early beginnings of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. Although not overt political mouthpieces for the Black Consciousness Movement, I would like to show that both magazines possibly influenced and encouraged the development of black consciousness among their readers in the 1960s, helping to create a platform from which the Black Consciousness Movement could emerge. In often encouraging the emergence of the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement, both The Townships Housewife and Grace unfortunately also at times anticipate its sexism. It is more important, however, to note that women readers and writers of Grace and The Townships Housewife subtly adapt the roles black consciousness philosophy imposed on women, negotiating their given female identities as Mother, Housewife and Supporter towards greater agency. In examining all of the above, it is necessary to look at the basic principles of black consciousness philosophy in order to explore all its possible relations to Grace and The Townships Housewife.

As stated in the introduction, readers should distinguish between 'black consciousness' and the 'Black Consciousness Movement'. Whereas the Black Consciousness Movement was the *organised* anti-apartheid activist movement, black consciousness refers to a more general growth in political awareness among black South Africans. Steve Biko, considered the father of black consciousness, defined black consciousness as

the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression - the blackness of their skin - and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the "normal" which is white. (I Write 49)

With reference to the role of black consciousness in the liberation of black people, Biko wrote: "The first step ... is to pump back life into [the black man's] empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity..." (qtd. in Mzamane and Howarth 198).

#### **4.1. Historical Background to Black Consciousness and the Black Consciousness Movement:**

The 1960s in South Africa was a bleak time for black politics and the decade is often remembered as one in which apartheid's restrictive measures reached a climax in an attempt to silence resilient black people fighting for freedom under an oppressive white regime. The banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), two of South Africa's leading black political parties at the time, followed the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, where a "peaceful demonstration against pass laws ended in the police shooting dead 69 people" (Omond 19). This banning created a vacuum in black politics in South Africa (see Marathodi). With black resistance silenced, the stage was left open to liberal whites, such as members from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the University Christian Movement (UCM), to represent blacks in their fight for a just society (Buthelezi 112).

Rejecting white spokespeople and influenced by the American Black Power Movement,<sup>54</sup> the South African Students Organisation (SASO) gradually came into being and was officially established in 1969 to fill the gap left in black politics. SASO initially consisted of black university students (many from ANC and PAC family backgrounds) who envisaged a common non-racial society. Natal was the centre of these developments and Steve Biko (1946-1977), a black medical student at the University of Natal and first president of SASO, took the lead in a resurgence known as the Black Consciousness Movement. This growing political activity was not limited to black *students* – the South African Students' Movement (SASM) and National Youth Organisation represented high school learners and the adult wing of the Black Consciousness Movement, the Black People's Convention (BPC), was launched in 1972.

Under South Africa's apartheid government ruled by the National Party, the Black Consciousness Movement was banned in 1978 and yet another vacuum in black politics was created. This vacuum, however, was soon filled by the launching of many other organisations such as the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA), which continued the black consciousness legacy, with slight variations and adaptations to its philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The Black Power Movement in America grew out of the Civil Rights Movement. Prior to the American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968), the system of segregation forced blacks to live in a separate and limited world characterised by poverty, racial discrimination, powerlessness, symbolic subordination, and imperative acts of deference to white supremacy. The Movement aimed at abolishing racial discrimination against African Americans. The Black Power Movement marked a turning point in black-white relations in the United States and also in how blacks saw themselves (see Morris 286-290).

<sup>55</sup> For further reading on these organisations, see Pityana et al.

#### **4.2. Brief Overview of the Characteristics and Philosophy of Black Consciousness and the Black Consciousness Movement (1960s to 1977)**

A non-racial society, which the Black Consciousness Movement envisaged, meant an overhaul of the socio-economic system apartheid had sustained. Many black political leaders felt that the only people who would have a genuine commitment to such a struggle were the victims of the oppressive system. This consequently gave rise to the perception that in all matters relating to the struggle, “Whites must be excluded” (Buthelezi 123). The Black Consciousness Movement’s slogan, ‘Black man, you are on your own’ indicates a refusal of help from liberal whites in opposing apartheid. The Movement’s presence was marked by the belief that liberation can only be achieved *by* black people *for* black people. The importance of doing things for oneself was seen as a vital part of a decolonising consciousness. Consequently Steve Biko led SASO (or the Black Consciousness Movement) to break its alliance with the white liberal student group NUSAS.

Considering the slogan, ‘Black man, you are on your own’, it is understandable that group solidarity was a significant element of the Black Consciousness Movement’s objectives. Solidarity among *all* oppressed people was necessary to achieve change and this led SASO to adapt its definition of what it meant to be ‘black’. According to Biko “all the oppressed were involved in the struggle for freedom...be they African, Coloured or Indian” (Buthelezi 116). SASO’s definition of ‘black’ was consequently adapted to include Africans, Indians and Coloureds: blacks were defined as those who are by law politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations (Buthelezi 120). This definition of ‘blackness’ which included Africans, Indians and Coloureds, served a mobilising function as it created a greater awareness

among the oppressed of their potential power. Considering the emphasis placed on group cohesion, it is understandable that the concept of *ubuntu* (African communalism or the perception of self as inseparable from the group) became an important concept in black consciousness discourse: “Black Consciousness sought to arrest the further erosion of African culture by emphasizing communal rather than Western-inspired individual values” (Mzamane and Howard 194-195).

Therefore, although an urban bias is often associated with the Black Consciousness Movement (activities of the Black Consciousness Movement were mostly centered in urban areas and mostly involved proletarianised blacks), black consciousness activists realised the importance of eradicating materialism, as the widening gap between the elite and working class could threaten group cohesion (Christensen 8). In support of this, Vizikhungo Mzamane and David Howards state that Biko critiqued the “black petty bourgeoisie” who felt superior to other blacks (192).

The mobilisation of all oppressed groups through group solidarity would not have been possible without an awareness of self-worth among the oppressed, who were disempowered by the humiliation experienced at the hand of the oppressive white and needed to tear off the minstrel masks in order to be empowered and liberate themselves. Steve Biko put this to words:

You have been trying to emulate whites...go back to your roots and from there you can emerge as a man in your own right. (qtd. in Halisi 100)

The core of black consciousness and the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement were vested in Biko’s belief that an alternative to psychological complicity with racial oppression had to be provided – resignation to racial domination, or the

“emulat[ion of] whites”, as Biko refers to it, was seen as rooted in internalised self-hatred (Halisi 100). Education and social upliftment were thus valued and identified as key objectives by the Black Consciousness Movement. More than any previous resistance organisation in South Africa, the Black Consciousness Movement would privilege cultural forms in seeking to raise the political consciousness of the black community (Mzamane and Howard 189). Much of these ideas of Biko on black consciousness were published in the SASO Newsletter in a column titled “I Write What I Like”, later collected into a book of that title edited by Aelred Stubbs.

Under the leadership of Steve Biko, black students were now urged to reassess their position within South Africa and the Movement’s philosophy of ‘black is beautiful’ was born. This concept involved a shift in the perceptions of oppressed people: it encouraged a pride in being black and a rejection of ‘whiteness’ as the norm and standard to aspire to. The term ‘non-white’ was dropped, as SASO members viewed this as a negation of themselves as human beings; it was “a description that implied something else was the standard and they were not that standard” (Mzamane and Howarth 180). Until the era of black consciousness, being black simply meant being ‘non-white’ or ‘non-European’ – ‘blackness’ was understood in relation to and inferior to ‘whiteness’ (Lorenz 165).

Biko encouraged black South Africans to “go back to [their] roots”: this new-found self-pride would especially be vested in an embrace of African traditions. As a result of this, many now indulged their ‘African characteristics’:

Black women could liberate themselves from ‘white’ body images and find pride in their typical black features in terms of hair, body shape and particular dress style. (Lorenz 183)



It was necessary for black South Africans to start looking at themselves as valid reference points in order to mobilise a liberation movement. Nicole Lorenz also indicates that many black people at this time switched to the use of their African names and abandoned their 'slave' or English names (183).<sup>56</sup>

In order to reach the large South African black population in an attempt to bring this new message of black pride, it was important that black consciousness' philosophy was communicated in a way that spoke also to the uneducated, which, at the time, made up the largest percentage of the country's black population. As Lorenz notes,

[t]he way English was applied in ...[black consciousness] writings was rather different from the English black students were taught in school. [Black consciousness] writers did not aspire to communicate through a sophisticated, eloquent 'Oxford terminology'. Their aim was to elaborate a [black consciousness] readership among township people, especially the youth. Literature had to be written by, for and about black people. (170)

Black consciousness obtained group cohesion through a straight forward writing style that mirrored the everyday life, frame of reference and interests of the average township inhabitant. It signalled a break from the mission discourse, following the impact of missionary schools closing down as a result of resistance to the 1953 Bantu Education Act. A "language of liberation" (Buthelezi 118) is another key characteristic of writings produced under the influence of black consciousness philosophy and it was successful in encouraging and inspiring a down-trodden black community. Steve Biko's explanation of the essence of black consciousness reflects this "language of liberation":

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<sup>56</sup> In her autobiography, *A Life*, Mamphela Ramphele explains that African names were regarded by missionaries as heathen and unacceptable to God (8). Many black South Africans consequently received 'baptism' or 'slave' names given to them by white people. Many African names were also tongue-twisters to white people, and thus replaced in schools and places of employment with 'recognisable' or 'pronounceable' European names.

Black Consciousness is in essence the realization by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to *rid themselves of the shackles that bind them* to perpetual servitude. The interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory program is of paramount importance... Blacks are out to *completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish*. (qtd. in Goodwin 5; my emphases)

These words by Biko clearly signal a break from “the shackles” of perceived black inferiority “that bind” those oppressed by apartheid.

In the development of black pride, however, the Black Consciousness Movement focused largely on a positively redefined black *masculinity*. Black consciousness’ language and philosophy mirror its patriarchal attitudes in its ‘male language’. Much of the ideology of the Black Consciousness Movement was articulated in terms of ‘the black man’ and ‘the black man’s struggle’ – the terminology of the Black Consciousness Movement was certainly male dominated insofar it was constantly burdened with masculine pronouns and references (see Yates 90):

The type of black *man* we have today has lost its *manhood*. Reduced to an obliging shell...a shadow of a *man*...an *ox* bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity. (Biko qtd. in Sanders 176; my emphases)

Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black *man* of the need to rally together with his *brothers* around the cause of oppression – the blackness of their skin. (Biko, “Black Consciousness”; my emphases)

Gender concerns were largely suppressed as focusing on gender equalities within the Movement would pose the danger of disrupting solidarity against oppression as a race (see Gqola, “As If” 46).

### 4.3. Black Women and the Black Consciousness Movement

The Black Consciousness Movement's rallying cry, 'Black man, you are on your own', indicates that the Black Consciousness Movement in its early years focused on black men's need to recover self-worth, without giving attention to the oppression women were also facing under the same government *and* under both white and indigenous patriarchies. This avoidance of gender issues in the Black Consciousness Movement can be seen in the following statement by Steve Biko, which indicates the Movement's priorities:

We are looking forward to a non-racial, just and egalitarian society in which colour, creed and race shall form no point of reference. (Biko, "I write" 139)

Biko does not refer to a just and egalitarian society in which colour, creed, race *and gender* shall form no point of reference. Mamphela Ramphele explains that

[c]entral to ... [black consciousness'] approach was an understanding of racism as the dividing line between South Africans, as well as the barrier to access by those not 'white' to the country's resources. Women were thus involved in the movement because they were black. Gender as a political issue was not raised at all. ("Dynamics" 215)

Women were appealed to for support and the encouragement of their husbands who were (as women also were) humiliated and dehumanised by apartheid: due to discrimination and the abuse of a large cheap black labour force, black men could not define themselves and their masculinity in terms of what they could own or provide for their families. Women's subservience to men was thus important for male empowerment: the claim of ownership of his family was the only thing left to demarcate the black man's masculinity (Yates in Lorenz 167).

Although the Black Women's Federation (as part of the Black Consciousness Movement) was established in 1975, the objective was to mobilise women's active participation in the struggle against apartheid. As Ramphele notes,

[t]here is no evidence to suggest that the [Black Women's Federation] was concerned with the special problems women experienced as a result of sexism both in the private and public sphere. Women were important as wives, mothers, girlfriends and sisters, in fighting a common struggle against a common enemy – namely white racism. ("Dynamics" 216)

The dominant position at the time did not question sexist expectations: the focus was uniformly against the oppressive force of apartheid, and feminism would hinder this process. The confrontation of gender issues, or the hanging out of 'dirty linen' as Emma Mashinini refers to it,<sup>57</sup> was a threat to black solidarity and the successful attainment of freedom from white oppression.

Although the Black Power Movement in the USA caused a wave of feminism in the late 1960s in response to sexism within this Movement, there was clearly, as can be seen from the above discussion, no forum for female gender activists in South Africa. Another haltering factor was a lack of access to relevant literature in South Africa due to rigid censorship by the authorities (Ramphele, "Dynamics" 221). It is also understandable that a fundamental change in gender roles would not take place in a short period of time: many black women still had much respect for African customs and traditions which acknowledged the superior role of the male in a patriarchal society (ibid 224). With reference to this, Ramphele states that:

...there was nothing funny about getting to a university and continuing to play that role – even in an organisational sense – because it's what you were brought up to believe was your calling and your responsibility. (qtd. in Yates and Gqola 91)

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<sup>57</sup> Emma Mashinini's Strikes Have Followed Me All My Life states that wife-battering among black people in apartheid South Africa was regarded as dirty linen – women would suffer it in silence (see Lewis 171). Lewis explains this as the "tacit acceptance of the need to confirm an organic national or racial solidarity in the face of white racism (170).

Asked whether Steve Biko's outlook on women or that of the other black consciousness men was traditional, Thenjiwe Mtintso, a significant female figure in the Black Consciousness Movement, said that "there was no discrimination" but "if we were not discussing serious politics, the men would say, 'We are hungry, make us food'" (qtd. in Goodwin 21). Women were clearly associated with 'natural' or 'feminine' roles such as nurturing. Ramphele explains that one of the ways in which black women became involved in the Movement was as participants in community projects run by Black Consciousness operatives or as members of self-help groups like the Young Women's Christian Organisation (Y.W.C.A.) ("Dynamics" 216). Political activity and the public sphere 'naturally' became the domain of men who were associated with rationality and reason. Women were not expected to have the ability to reason – Ramphele recalls remarks made by men in the Movement that reflect their limiting perception of women's abilities: "Oh, it's very surprising that not only are you beautiful but you also have brains." (qtd. in Yates and Gqola 91)

According to Mtintso and Ramphele, those women who did become part of the leadership of the Black Consciousness Movement had to adopt a male identity. A major part of becoming socialized into activist ranks was to become 'one of the boys' (Ramphele, "Dynamics" 219). Black politically active women had to accept their status as "honorary men" (ibid 220). This suggests that 'female identity' was perceived as lacking in the ability to reason and partake in the public sphere; women who wished to do so had to act as 'one of the boys', because men struggled to relate the 'female identity' with intellectuality. Mtintso explains that these women were then regarded as "less woman" (qtd. in Goodwin 178), which suggests that intellectuality was seen as being in conflict with the gender identity of 'woman'. The double bind in

which South African black women were caught at the time becomes clear: not only were their own issues irrelevant to the black national struggle, but as they chose to get politically involved, they were not regarded as entirely women.

During discussions at the Fifth National Council of AZAPO in 1992, the successor of the Black Consciousness Movement, it was agreed that “the traditional and cultural practices which dictated that men were the ‘leaders’ and women mere ‘followers’ still found expression in liberation organisations...” (Moodley 46). Later, with the pressure of apartheid lifted, black women could shift their attention and consider sexism – they could explore the ‘luxury’ of gender politics. In an article titled “Black Woman you are on your own”, Asha Moodley indicates how, by the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of AZAPO in 1993, it was finally *acknowledged* that:

...within the current political, social and economic dispensation which subjugates Black people in general, black women are, further, specifically oppressed organisationally and in society at large through patriarchy and its expression in sexist attitudes and practices; That the philosophy of Black Consciousness, through its various organisations and formations and structures has not consciously addressed itself to an analysis of patriarchal attitudes and practices which militate against the development and emancipation of black women generally... (48)

These and similar statements in this article are followed by recommendations the organisation resolved to employ to promote women’s interests, gender sensitivity and anti-sexism.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, then, many South African black women started a more conscious struggle for freedom by negotiating their way through the “patchwork quilt of patriarchies”.<sup>58</sup> These women faced both white and black

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<sup>58</sup> Belinda Bozzoli’s “patchwork quilt of patriarchies” refers to nineteenth century South Africa: everywhere women were subordinated to men, but there were important contrasts in the operation of

patriarchal attitudes. White patriarchy involved the silencing of women's voices with a set of 'feminine' voices (Driver, "Drum" 156): this "cult of femininity" (Ferguson 39-77) represented the woman as a soft-spoken, gentle and graceful being, willingly subjected to her more competent husband who provided as the head of the family. Black patriarchal views of the woman involved the strong 'African Mother' figure – the black woman as supporter of her politically active man and caretaker and upholder of the domestic sphere, with a reverence for tradition and custom. Both black and white patriarchal perceptions of women assigned them an inferior and subjected position in the private as opposed to public sphere, although "African women, 'unlike their Afrikaans counterparts' were less 'mothers of the nation' than 'mothers of revolution'" (McClintock, "No Longer" 116). This was because for black women systematic state harassment and violence traversed the private and public spaces similarly (ibid 117).

#### **4.4 Grace, The Townships Housewife and Black Consciousness**

In the light of the above-given historical background to the Black Consciousness Movement, and specifically women's place within its philosophy, I turn now to a discussion of the primary texts of my study, Grace and The Townships Housewife. The significance of these magazines, whose existence is not noted in any scholarly works covering the black press in South Africa, could easily be seen as negligible. In order to avoid such negligence, I refer to the research done by Noliwe Rooks on African-American women's magazines. In Ladies Pages, Rooks undertakes a study of

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gender between different social systems in the region ("Marxism" 139-171). The concept refers to the complexity and diversity of women's experience of oppression in this country (Walker, Women 1).

what she perceives as some of the most influential African-American women's magazines in America's history of the black press. At the opening of her book, Rooks quotes Walter Daniel's reference to Half-Century Magazine, an early African-American magazine:

*Half-Century* was not an impressive publication. But it stands among those general-purpose magazines that reflected and guided, to some extent, the newly developing ethos of black Americans... (1)

Similarly, I believe that both Grace and The Townships Housewife, published between 1964 and 1969, to some extent reflected and guided the new developments in black South Africa brought on by a strongly developing black consciousness in the 1960s. In this section, I discuss both magazines separately as I consider the relation between the relevant magazine and black consciousness.

#### **4.4.1 Grace and Black Consciousness**

Steve Biko wrote a number of opinion pieces on the Black Consciousness Movement which appeared in the SASO Newsletter in a feature called "I Write What I Like". "I Write What I Like" is also one of the most regular features that appear in Grace. This feature provides a space for readers to voice their opinions on anything from trivial to controversial issues. Readers' letters discuss issues such as birth-control (Oct. 1965: 50), polygamy (Feb. 1966: 8), sexist remarks by men ("Hey there, Baby, just come my way"; Feb. 1966: 9) and crime in Soweto ("Hell's Kitchen...the criminal university of South Africa"; April 1966: 23). In another issue an angry reader makes an appeal to people to keep their dogs in their yards (May 1966: 33). "I Write What I Like" also often features powerful and inspirational messages from readers. For



instance, the following message insists on the importance of speaking and doing, even in the face of criticism:

There is one way never to be talked about again, never to be criticised – by saying nothing and doing nothing. You wouldn't like that, would you? (April 1966: 23)

This feature of Grace becomes a space in which black South African women, in particular, could voice their opinions on public matters. Considering the often 'fiery' nature of the feature "I Write What I Like" in Grace, it is not impossible that Steve Biko borrowed the title of his own feature in the SASO Newsletter from Grace's monthly letter column. This concurrence led me to enquire further into the resonances between Grace and black consciousness.

Published between 1964 and 1966 – a time when the Black Consciousness Movement was not yet firmly established and apartheid laws such as the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 halted black writing in South Africa<sup>59</sup> – Grace was clearly not an overt political mouthpiece for the Black Consciousness Movement. Grace never features any reportage on living conditions in the segregated townships, lack of land, or the poor wages and working conditions of blacks (in contrast to the exposé features that appeared in Drum).

Another aspect of Grace which distances it from the Black Consciousness Movement and again indicates the magazine's ambivalent content is that early copies of Grace represent whiteness as a standard – an ideology the Black Consciousness Movement explicitly challenged. Grace hosts many skin-lightening or complexion

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<sup>59</sup> The Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 provided for the censorship of newspapers, books, films, stage shows and art exhibitions ("Censorship").



economically...*We have a lot to do in order to catch up with women of other races...*For this reason we will limit ourselves only to women of our race. We shall endeavour to present to you, women of other races their problems, and achievements and we shall try to *show how they have reached their present stage of development and how we can also attain that standard.* (Oct. 1964: 4; my emphases)

Contrary to the Movement's philosophy, 'blackness' is here not propagated as a valid standard or frame of reference. Although the black "editress" assures readers that they will limit the content of the magazine to "women of our race", the editorial goes on to claim that when it comes to achievements and success stories, it will present to its readers "women of other races, their problems, and achievements". This implies that when it comes to standards of excellence, there are not enough black models and readers will have to learn from a 'superior' race<sup>60</sup>. Grace fortunately does show a change towards the use of black models of success in its second year of publication, indicating an awakening of black consciousness.

With whiteness held forth as an acceptable standard for living, many black readers of Grace take on a western idea of femininity where women are 'soft and helpless' as opposed to 'hard, rugged and capable men' (see fig. 31). In A Woman's Thoughts about Women, a book I was introduced to by chance by a family member and published as early as 1885, the author, Dinah Craik, states that "[t]he difference between man's vocation and woman's seems naturally to be this – one is abroad, the other at home: one external, the other internal: one active, the other passive" (in other words, the delineation of gendered space is between the public and private spheres)

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<sup>60</sup> The use of the word 'race' in this editorial is a reminder that this concept is a socially and politically constructed category – one that, in apartheid South Africa, shaped and circumscribed every aspect of life.

(14).<sup>61</sup> In an article on “Man and Woman” in The Girl’s Own Paper,<sup>62</sup> another treasure from the myriad of old books from which I found the former, the writer states:

But she has not received the same measure of strength and activity. This is a wise precaution of Providence who aimed at confining her [woman] within the circle of lesser cares and at making her choose for her portion domestic operations, whilst the husband should watch and be active outdoors. (Dec. 1895: 183)

The “Artra” advertisement for skin-lightening cream captures this ideology (see fig. 31): the woman’s careless laughter reflects a life of “lesser cares” and that “the husband should watch and be active outdoors” can be seen in his darker skin-complexion. An article that appears in Grace entitled “What became of modesty?” (Nov. 1964: 13) also places the soft and helpless ‘Artra woman’ in contrast to rugged masculinity. The writer states that

[t]he girl of today is hardworking...independent and self-reliant...She can cope with a man-size job. But the *smart girl* of today *doesn’t let this make her hard-boiled*...(my emphases)

In another article entitled “Together” by Beth Brown (Grace, Nov. 1964: 50), the writer states that

...your picking out a suit for John which doesn’t suit his style, Sally, makes you the man of the family. Who’s wearing the trousers anyway, the world will want to know. It will ridicule him for letting you rule him. It will ridicule you for being a fool...know your place – a woman’s place – and let him be the man.

This “governmentalisation of women” through the media in Grace, influencing the way people think about ‘womanhood’ (European gender constructions as opposed to black people “going back to their roots”), becomes what Foucault refers to as a “technology of the self”: people ‘police’ themselves (regulate their bodies, thoughts

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<sup>61</sup> The author of this 1885 A Woman’s Thoughts About Women, describes her book as “the expression of what they [women] have themselves, consciously or unconsciously, oftentimes thought; and the more deeply, perhaps, because it has never come to surface in words or writing” (iv).

<sup>62</sup> Aimed at the young Victorian lady, The Girl’s Own Paper was a weekly magazine that appeared for the first time in London in 1880. For more information, see Ward.

and conduct) in accordance with available discourses (qtd. in Gauntlett 129). Women who are always told to “know their place” come to accept that there *is* a “woman’s place”: in the home, and not wearing the trousers. This is an example of what Chapter One discusses as the ambivalences of modernity: on the one hand, modernity empowers apartheid’s victims as it bestows status upon them; on the other hand, it limits the various roles that women play in everyday life.

In contrast to upholding whiteness as a standard, there is a definite shift in Grace, especially from about mid-1965, toward portraying black people as beautiful, handsome and desirable – toward “going back to their roots” in search for beauty. In the December 1966 editorial the “editress” states that “[b]esides the pretty girl on ...[the] cover, there are many others inside to please the eye” (2). Only two white people feature in this edition (and neither is the focus of these relevant articles), therefore, the ones who “please the eye” are by no means white. One reader writes: “At first I was dull and lean. Now I am fat and good-looking...” (May 1966: 33) – whiteness as a standard is dislodged as this reader promotes ‘black’ perceptions of beauty as a valid frame of reference. A regular advertisement in Grace for “Glenryck Pilchards” portrays a muscled, black “Mr Glenryck chosen from *among South Africa’s leading strong men...*” (Dec. 1966: 33; my emphasis)

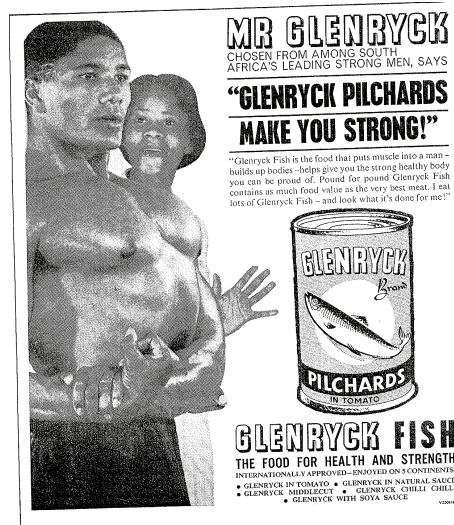


Fig. 32. Glenryck advertisement. *Grace*, Dec. 1966: 33.

This person, it is suggested, was chosen from *all* South Africa's 'men' – a word that implies not only blacks, but also whites (we are reminded here of Samson from True Africa described in Grace as “the most popular man in Africa”; April 1966:5). Grace's coverage of Miss South Africa, similarly to that of “Mr Glenryck”, creates the idea that the black Miss South Africa will not be chosen from all *black* people in the country – “she will be the luckiest girl in the history of beauty contests” and will be chosen from “the most beautiful girls” from “all corners of the country” (see fig. 33). Placing South African blacks, if only in writing, on stage with white people, might indeed have been “morally uplifting” (see fig. 33, June 1965: 31).

Most issues of Grace report on beauty contests and mirror the black consciousness philosophy of ‘black (or Africa) is beautiful’. Just a few examples here are:

Teenager Queens. (Oct. 1965: 43)

Beauty Queens prepare for the great day – Miss Johannesburg is chosen. (Oct. 1966: 16-17)

The 1965 Miss S.A. Teenager. (Feb. 1966: 14-15)

Such beauty contests illustrate Claire Colebrook's notion of the power and resistance present in the everyday: through seemingly insignificant events such as beauty contests, apartheid's oppressed were denouncing inferiority, claiming their position as valid and asserting their South Africa citizenship equal to other races legislated as superior. There are many more examples of such validating competitions, for instance, the many "Mother and Baby" competitions the magazine hosts (see April 1965: 16-17 and June 1965: 10-11).

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## ANNOUNCING!! THE 1965 MISS S.A. CONTEST




— She will receive the biggest and most valuable prizes in the history of the contest —

IN association with the South African United Non-European Cultural Syndicate we will be looking for the buckskin girl in the history of beauty competitions!

"We want to try and make it the biggest as it is our tenth anniversary," said Mr. Dale Quaker, spokesman for the Syndicate.

"Grace" magazine has offered to publish, on an exclusive basis, monthly winners and contestants and also to give details of prizes and the programme of the contest.

So the call is going out to all corners of the country to gather around its most beautiful girls in one big bouquet, and to come to Port Elizabeth on the 9th October.



There under a blaze of lights and publicity and in the presence of thousands, she will be selected and crowned . . .

Remember the closing date for the competition is the 31st August! Full details of the contest can be obtained from the organisers.

We will also welcome details of where local contests are being held so that our reporters can gather first-hand information.

"It is the policy of the syndicate to raise the standard of its contests by educating its contestants in improved social etiquette, deportment, make-up and behaviour," commented Mr. Quaker.

Although Beauty Contests have come in for a lot of criticism, we believe that its functions are morally uplifting and certainly it helps to mould character and personality. And the next time year will also be on these two qualities.

"Let us help and build together what was smothered by the Late Victor Mkhize," Mr. Quaker commented. He expressed the wish that patrons will not be misled by imitation competitions and that the eleventh anniversary will be one of the highlights of the social calendar.

So keep in touch! In next month's issue we hope to publish some of the first competitors as well as details of some of the prizes!

Fig. 33. Black Miss South Africa. *Grace*, June 1965: 31.



Grace strongly conveys the idea that ‘black is beautiful’ through its reportage on black achievements in a world dominated at the time by coverage of white people’s achievements. In an article on Efata, a school for the blind near Umtata, the writer states “[e]xcept for the principal, Mr. P.P. Peach, and vice-principal, whose duties are *mainly administrative*, the 21 teachers, 17 administrators and hostel personnel and the nurses are *all Africans*” (Dec. 1964: 30; my emphases). Similarly, in “Christmas Rush in the Post-Office” (Dec. 1966: 11), the writer notes that

[a]t Sibasa in Vendaland, a senior African postmaster is in complete charge; at Zwelitsha in the Eastern Cape the post office is *supervised* by an African postmaster. These are just two of the Department’s *highly trained staff*. The same pattern extends to places such as Atteridgeville, Mamelodi (near Pretoria) and Leoncross (near Durban). (my emphases)

The writer clearly wants to make the point that it is not only white people who are “supervis[ors]” or “highly trained”. “We are proud to meet”, a monthly feature in Grace that encourages black readers towards greater aspirations, reports enthusiastically on the achievements of black men and women: the feature showcases teachers, nurses, beauty queens or readers of the magazine (see fig. 35). Of course the limitation of women to roles associated with nurturing or the male gaze resembles black consciousness’s perceived sexism, an aspect elaborated on later in this chapter.

“Record Review”, another regular feature in Grace, lists and gives brief descriptions of events in the music industry. Whether the artists featured were from South Africa or not, by 1966 all of the artists reviewed are black. In this feature we can note a very definite shift towards a message of black pride. While from November 1964 to July 1965 “Record Review” features only white men, from July 1965 this feature is replaced by a new one, “Our Own Artists”, which focuses exclusively on black South African male and female artists. Examples here include “Poetry from



Africa with music” (June 1965: 51) and “Hendrietta Ndlovu” (July 1965: 22). After a brief period, “Our Own Artists” disappears and again becomes “Record Review”, this time featuring only black artists. Just a few of these black artists are: Penny-whistle player Lemmy ‘Special’ Mabaso, born in Alexandra Township, who is praised for his role in King Kong; black actor Ken Gampu, who is honoured for his role in the South African film Dingaka through regular reportage on this “great film of Bantu life” of which “South Africa can be proud” (note again the appeal for a national identity and citizenship) (Nov. 1964: 57); the black actors of the play Black Orpheus (Jan. 1965: 52-53) and the South African child star, Paul Sele, from the film Tokoloshe (Aug. 1965: 46). Grace also reports on the “first African women announcers” for radio, Jaconittah Poho and Basi Mahlangu, and on “Millie the Bluebeat” – the 16-year old Jamaican girl who is “a success story to beat all success stories” (Oct. 1964: 25). The magazine describes jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald as having “that electric quality that makes all the great ones” (Dec. 1966: 34). Grace thinks beyond dependency towards black capability and citizenship.

Grace explicitly promotes black talent and achievement in the arts and culture.

The July 1965 issue contains the following advertisement:

Calling all schools. Send us reports about your cultural activities. Grace is anxious to promote the arts. (7)

bell hooks explains this ‘anxiety to promote the arts’:

[w]hite supremacist ideology insisted that black people, being more animal than human, lacked the capacity to feel and therefore could not engage the finer sensibilities that were the breeding ground for art. Responding to this propaganda, nineteenth-century black folks emphasised *the importance of art and cultural production*, seeing it as the most effective challenge to such assertions...Whatever African Americans created in music, dance, poetry, painting etc., it was regarded as testimony, bearing witness, challenging racist thinking which suggested that black folks were not fully human, were

uncivilized, and that the measure of this was our collective failure to create “great” art. (105; my emphasis)

The above-mentioned advertisement, the monthly “Record Reviews”, “Grace and the arts” and “We are Proud to Meet”, all “emphasise... the importance of art and cultural production” (as explained above by hooks): they are a testimony to black ‘civility’ and a challenge to racist thinking.



Fig. 34. *We are Proud to Meet.* Grace, May 1965: 18.

The acceptance of black consciousness’s philosophy of black pride meant a gradual but definite exclusion of whites from the pages of Grace. This exclusion takes

place more specifically in the magazine's later issues (from July 1965 to December 1966) and it anticipates and participates in black consciousness's attempts to establish blackness as a valid standard. Black South Africans had to believe in their own validity and power – only then could the fight for freedom from oppression be successful. This direction is already nascent in its early issues: in the December 1964 issue, as we have seen, Mrs Dorothy Ngake, wife of the chairman of the Thabong Bantu City Council (See Chapter Three), states that she is “very glad that the African woman has her *own* magazine” (7; my emphasis). Grace increasingly ignores white people in its content – by 1966, almost no white people appear in the magazine. Grace's exclusion of white people and refusal of black inferiority in the face of apartheid advances the image of the self-sufficient black person in ways resonant with black consciousness ideology.

As stated in Chapter One, in 1964 the short stories that appear in Grace are all written by whites and represent white lives. The stories that appear in the magazine such as “Happy Landing” (Dec. 1964: 21), “Stormy Heart” (Dec. 1964: 27) and “Experiment in Heartbreak” (Nov. 1964: 30), to name just a few, are all a far stretch from the life of the South African black person. They feature white protagonists, illustrated in accompanying drawings.

It is interesting, however, to note the shift that takes place over the course of the magazine's life. By 1965 most stories appear to address themselves to a black audience. In February 1965 all three short stories, “I can't stand my children” (28) , “This child is precious” (48) and “Young Doctor, Young Nurse” (52) feature black people and most of these appear to be by black writers. Grace Ntuli, Eileen Sithole and Candy Mtetwe penned stories for Grace with increasing regularity at the time.



towards Western ideals and customs: the December 1966 issue of Grace shows many colourful Christmas trees and little black children dressed as angels in the nativity scene (16-17). One reader of Grace writes that she “hope[s] to see articles on slimming and the correct way to dress...and especially something on needlework for the young ladies’ trousseau kist” (Dec. 1964: 6). Yet, on the other hand, there are clear traces of a holding on to and a pride in African traditions. Grace describes Lemmy ‘Special’ Mabaso as “proud of the fact that he is Mshangaan” (Jan. 1965: 30). The monthly horoscope in Grace, “The Stars”, features a picture of a *Sangoma* (see figure 36).<sup>63</sup> The ideal Grace reader possibly represents the synthesis between modernity and tradition that Steve Biko, as described by Mzamane and Howard, embodied: “...the personification of the African paradox – detribalized and Westernized, a committed Christian even, but still African” (194).

In an article on Basutoland’s independence in the December 1966 issue of Grace, tradition triumphs over modernity:

Just before the ceremony a dust storm and a sharp shower of rain swept Maseru. While foreign delegates scurried for shelter, the Basuto, who were grouped about the hillock on which the statue stood, merely pulled their gay distinctive blankets closer round their shoulders and laughed into the rain. (19)

The writer connects the “Basuto” to natural images such as “dust storm” and “shower of rain” and for this brief moment their blankets (traditional attire) provide more shelter than modernity and civilisation can offer the “foreign delegates”. The article describes how the rain sweeps over Maseru and the foreign delegates “scurr[y] for shelter”. In contrast to this, the Basuto merely “laughed into the rain”.

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<sup>63</sup> Traditional African healer.



Although Grace encourages its readers to ‘better’ themselves through the acquisition of a Western way of life, the magazine also reminds them that this should not be at the cost of their own traditions and values. Grace conveys the idea that ‘modern’ is *necessary*, but not *better* than tradition. The achievement of modernity was necessary, because the acquisition of education, modernity and racial equality by black people, and a perception of self-worth and black pride, stood in strong opposition to the objectives of apartheid and threatened the successful implementation of apartheid ideology. Yet, validating tradition was also important, as it established ‘blackness’ as something not-inferior.

In many of its articles Grace portrays this new ideology and discourse of freedom that can be associated with black consciousness’s “language of liberation” (see Chapter One). In almost every issue of Grace there are articles that report on Southern African states that have gained independence. These stories that project African solidarity and self-reliance are significant for their potentially deviant political discourse (see Switzer, “Bantu World” 205). An article by Jeanne Ukosi in December 1966 describes Lesotho’s independence with great joy:

A powerful light was turned on the flagpole where the Union Jack was waving and, amidst a trumpet fanfare played by the red-coated Lesotho Mounted Police band, the British flag was lowered. The light switched to another flagpole and slowly, while the solemn strains of their national anthem carried over the hills, the new flag of Lesotho was raised. The silence was shattered. Forty thousand throats yelled their happiness and fireworks lighted the sky, signalling the birth of Lesotho. (19)

Black consciousness’s “language of liberation” is clearly evident in Ukosi’s recounting of the event. The Lesotho national motto “Khotso, Pula, Nala!” which means “Peace, Rain and Prosperity” (Bakker) accompanies his article. These three words are powerful as they signify the desire for freedom from oppression, the

possibility of a new beginning and the belief in black competence, sufficiency and success. In another article, “Botswana celebrates independence” (Nov. 1966: 9), a photo caption describes “*the great moment* [with] princess Marina the Duchess of Kent, about to hand over to Sir Seretse the document, signed by Queen Elizabeth, which granted independence to Botswana” (my emphasis). In “Lesotho – Africa’s youngest independent state”, the writer states that in 1884 Basutoland became a colony of the British Crown, but that “[n]ow, this month, this allegiance will be *broken off* when Lesotho becomes the youngest independent State in Africa” (April 1966: 35; my emphasis).

Grace’s “language of liberation” is not only evident in articles that portray political freedom, but in the content of the magazine as a whole, which celebrates a socially independent black community. The magazine regularly reports on black schools: in an article on “Efata”, a school for blind and deaf Africans, the writer states that at this school “blind and deaf Xhosa youngsters are taught to be as *independent* and as useful as possible” (Dec. 1966: 30; my emphasis). In “Focus on Alexandria Secondary School”, the article notes that the school will soon move to a new location “where matriculation classes will be added as well as a modern laboratory” (Aug. 1966: 10). The words of a reader, Mrs. Dorothy M. Ngake, make it clear that this struggle for equal social status was a conscious endeavour: “We are competing with other races that are highly educated socially...” (Dec. 1964: 30).

#### 4.4.2. The Townships Housewife and Black Consciousness

Like Grace, The Townships Housewife was also not an *overt* political mouthpiece for the Black Consciousness Movement – in large part, perhaps, because its consumerist nature and perceptions of the desirability of white lifestyles distance it from the Black Consciousness Movement. As stated in Chapter One, the objective of establishing a profitable consumer consciousness among black South Africans becomes clear when analyzing the content of The Townships Housewife. I refer again to the editor's letter on page four of the April 1968 issue:

Ladies, this magazine comes to you free of charge...and it will come to you free of charge in the future...[p]roviding that the advertisers are willing to see that you get it, And they will be if you buy their products...Well now, it's up to you. That is, if you want us to keep sending you this magazine free of charge every month...If you are interested, then there is a way that you can make sure of getting it. That is: Buy the goods advertised in your magazine...

The Townships Housewife clearly focuses on the profitable possibilities presented to white capitalists by black women's desire to have their humanity recognised.

It is difficult, however, to detect whether some of the companies advertising in the magazine were owned by black entrepreneurs. If most companies advertising goods in the magazine were white-owned, it shows white people attempting to make profit from black people's needs. Considering black consciousness' philosophy of exclusion of whites in the liberation struggle and its emphasis on helping black people become independent from whites, it would support the argument that The Townships Housewife by no means had the conscious objective of being a mouthpiece for the Black Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s if all the companies that advertise in the magazine were white-owned.



If, however, some of the companies responsible for the magazine's funding were black-owned, The Townships Housewife becomes a significant tool in black empowerment through its support of black capital and economic independence.<sup>64</sup> This is a possibility as some businesses appear to be black-owned. An advertisement for 'Habakuk Cane Furniture' states that the customer should write to or phone Mr. H. Sinkwane for information (see fig. 37) (April 1968: 41). Another advertisement for dairy products refers customers to Mr Ezekiel Moabi (April 1968: 49). As most of the companies advertising in the magazine at the time no longer exist, the presence of black businesses in The Townships Housewife remains something we can only speculate about.

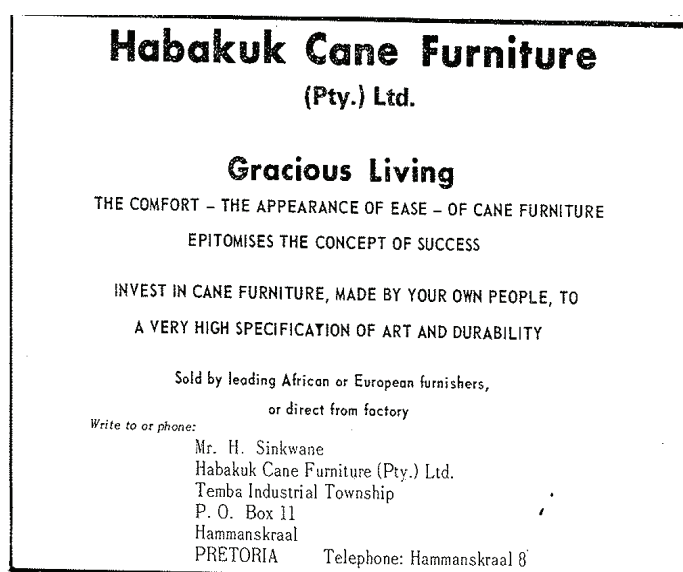


Fig. 36. *Black Entrepreneurs? The Townships Housewife*, April 1968: 41.

The white presence in The Townships Housewife, however, distances this magazine from the Black Consciousness Movement. White compiling editor of The

<sup>64</sup> We are reminded here of South Africa's current system of Black Economic Empowerment which attempts to help and advance the businesses of those discriminated against during apartheid, in an attempt to avoid South Africa's economic sector being largely in white hands.

Townships Housewife, Patricia Fitzgerald, receives much scope. The Movement's philosophy opposed the presence of whites in the struggle for freedom, as black people believed that whites, not ever having experienced black oppression, were not capable of meaningfully representing black needs. The Townships Housewife, on the other hand, allows the white benefactor into its pages. An article titled "Pitco bursaries" (April 1968: 9-10) states that "[t]he days of African men and women being regarded only as a manual labour force in today's modern factories... is fast drawing to a close." The Townships Housewife regularly reports on these Pitco bursaries and the articles extol the concerned company's help in "the community in which it operates".

Our picture shows five of the students who have been awarded Pitco bursaries

We would like to congratulate them and let them know that our best wishes go with them in their scholastic careers.

To all who were disappointed we would like to say –  
try again



*Back row, left* Godwin Mokwatle. Godwin is a Form IV student at Orlando High School, Soweto

*Back row, right* Ephraim Sebopelo. Ephraim is a Form IV student at Sekano-Ntoane High School, Soweto

*Middle row, left* Joyce Khunjwa. Joyce is a Form IV student at MUSI High School, Pimville, Soweto

*Middle row, right* Maria Mthinkulu. Maria is a Form IV student at Orlando High School, Soweto

*Front row* Patricia Thela. Patricia is a Form IV student at Morris Isaacson High School, Soweto.

*Fig. 37. Pitco Bursaries. The Townships Housewife, April 1968: 9-10.*

Not surprisingly, an advertisement for “Pitco Tips – Superb Quality Tea” directly follows the above-mentioned article. A Pitco-article in the June 1968 issue of the magazine also states that “[t]he Africans were always *grateful* for anything done for them and *loyal to their benefactors*” (my emphases). Such statements are a far cry from the Black Consciousness Movement’s striving towards black pride and self-sufficiency of the black community. The article also states that

*...there is an urgent need for trained personnel and management, and no one realises this more than the makers of ‘Pitco Tips’ tea and for this reason they have donated to the Rand Bursary Fund R700 for fourteen Junior Matric and Matric students. (my emphases)*

This resembles Black Consciousness Poet Mongane Wally Serote’s “City Johannesburg”. In Serote’s poem he addresses the city by saying: “That, that is all you need of me”. By “that”, Serote is referring to his ability to perform labour (from which capitalism will benefit). It seems from the above Pitco article that “that” is the “reason they have donated” money to the Rand Bursary Fund for these matric students.

Elitism in The Townships Housewife also distances the magazine from the Black Consciousness Movement. Although the Movement was often critiqued for not taking the experiences of black people in rural areas into consideration, Sharon Christensen, as noted earlier, states that there was a consciousness within the movement of the threat to the cohesion of black communities that a materialistic value system held (8). If this was indeed the case, The Townships Housewife does not propagate this warning against the material divide. Rather, it reflects elitism and rural discrimination. The subtitle of this magazine reads, “Being a journal to the ladies of the upper classes”. Except for food products, advertisements promote luxury consumer goods such as stoves, sewing machines, gramophones, refrigerators and the

latest fashion apparel. There are no advertisements for working implements or goods more suitable for the rural black worker.

While The Townships Housewife's embrace of a philosophy of 'black is beautiful' is inconsistent, it is notable that, in comparison to other magazines at the time aimed at a black readership, there is a vast decrease in the advertising of bleaching creams, possibly indicating a growth in black pride or a developing black consciousness over the lifespan of the magazine. Nonetheless, the August 1968 edition of the magazine hosts a competition for "Miss Plus-4". "Plus 4" is "the amazing new skin-lightening cream with Built-In-Sun-Filter" (4). The competition invites "ladies" of all ages who have a "lovely, light and bright" complexion to enter. That a dark face is not to be claimed as one's pride is reflected by the blame, repeatedly given in this article, to the sun responsible for darker complexions. We are reminded here of the "Happy Outdoor Girl...Miss Hazel Jele" (see fig. 10): only with Karroo Beauty Cream, can you be a happy outdoors girl – without it, you'll be sun-burned (dark) and unhappy. This contrasts strongly with the Black Consciousness Movement's objective to eliminate self-hatred and encourage self-worth among black people.

The Townships Housewife, as I have noted, was published from 1968 to 1969 – a period perceived as the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. Bearing in mind also that the initial centre of the Black Consciousness Movement was in Natal, and that The Townships Housewife was published and printed in Durban, it is worth considering whether its black "editress", Patience Khumalo, and other writers and readers of The Townships Housewife in any way endorsed black consciousness' emergent language and ideology of liberation.

Although there is an ever-present striving after a modern lifestyle in The Townships Housewife, there are also many instances where this magazine encourages readers to value African customs and traditions. In the March 1968 issue of The Townships Housewife, in an article on “Health, Beauty and Fashion”, the writer states that

[t]his is the year of the African Woman. Fashion designers throughout the world have at last seen that there is much to be gained from copying the age-old traditional designs and colours of Africa. (19)

“Zimbo”, the regular children’s story that appears in The Townships Housewife, neither places the characters in a city milieu nor replaces African names with English ones – there are no children riding on bicycles or living in modern suburbs:

One Tuesday afternoon Mr. Phala had no work for the donkey Imbongolo to do so he called to Zimbo to come and take him out into the veld... They trotted off down the hill...right down into the open veld of the valley. Imbongolo soon wanted to stop and eat some nice green grass which he had found so Zimbo stopped too and, sitting down, began to weave a little grass mat to stand his mother’s tea-pot on. (April 1968: 32)

Chapter One refers to the June 1968 report on the “Ntsikana Memorial Service” in another example of a rejection of the West:

Ntsikana was the Prophet who foretold the coming of the White Man to South Africa and that they would offer his people two things, the Holy Bible, and money. The Bible they were to accept, but the money was to be rejected... (5)

This is of course another dissident moment in the magazine’s ideological stance, considering the magazine’s primary focus of creating the consumerist black woman. Noliwe Rooks, researcher of popular African-American magazines, refers to an additional contradiction that lies within the new spending power of black people:

[t]he purchase of such products was positioned as an instrument of aggression, or a weapon, in the overall struggle for racial equality. (115)

Considering black consciousness’s philosophy of self-validation and black pride, black people’s participation in the economy can indeed be seen as a “weapon...in the

overall struggle for racial equality”. The Townships Housewife with its consumerist nature can be seen as a significant – if contradictory – instrument in this regard.

Another way in which The Townships Housewife is a “weapon...in the overall struggle for racial equality” and instigator of a growing black consciousness, is through its manifold competitions held for readers such as ‘Garden of the Month’, ‘Recipe of the Month’, ‘Baby of the Month’ and monthly colouring prizes for children. Women who receive these prizes are reported on in a positive manner and pictures of these winners regularly appear in the magazine. Here is just one such example:

Our recipe prizewinner in this edition is a courageous woman who has spent nearly forty years in the service of God and humanity, her story is as fascinating as her cookery is good. We are proud to be able to number her among our many readers. (May 1968: 2)

Similarly to Grace, The Townships Housewife ‘ignores’ white people and their achievements in its content. The magazines do not refer to whites directly and never show them in photos as ‘models’ for anything (in contrast to the “editress” of Grace stating in the inaugural issue that when it comes to achievements and success stories, the magazine will present to its readers “women of other races, their problems, and achievements”) (see Chapter One). “Zimbo and The Little Girl”, for example, does not present us with a white master calling a servant boy to do work for him. The Townships Housewife shows black people as self-sufficient, not servile.

### Zimbo and the Little Girl

One Tuesday afternoon Mr. Phala had no work for the donkey Imbongolo to do so he called to Zimbo to come and take him out into the veld. This pleased Zimbo very much because he was fond of Imbongolo and liked to play with him. They trotted off down the hill, Zimbo holding the rope of Imbongolo's new halter, past the school and the church and the hall and the last of the houses, right down into the open veld of the valley.

Imbongolo soon wanted to stop and eat some nice green grass which he had found so Zimbo stopped too and, sitting down, began to weave a little grass mat to stand his mother's tea-pot on. His fingers were very clever and the mat went round and round getting bigger and bigger. He was so interested in what he was doing that at first he did not notice Imbongolo pricking up his ears and looking around, but when he did, he said,

"What's the matter, Imbongolo? Do you want me to play with you now? Just wait until I have finished this mat for my mother's tea-pot and then we shall have some lovely games." But Imbongolo was not taking any notice of Zimbo, he was looking away across the grasslands with his ears pricked forward.

Zimbo stood up to try to see what Imbongolo was watching. He could see



Fig. 38. *The Adventures of Zimbo. The Townships Housewife, April 1968: 10*

Activities of the Zenzele Women's Club that The Townships Housewife reports on also support the imaging of independence and self-sufficiency among black South Africans (see April and July 1968). As can be seen from the following letter that appeared in The Townships Housewife, the magazine was closely affiliated with the Zenzele Women's Clubs:

Dear Madam – I wish to thank Townships Housewife magazine for the support it has given us in the past. We are proud to say that during our advertising campaigns and demonstration, your magazine has shown untiring support and encouragement. Through this magazine we have been able to contact the working housewife who is unable to attend these demonstrations, especially Y.W.C.A. Zenzele members. (July 1968:4)

The Zenzele Clubs, 'Zenzele' meaning 'help yourself', date from the late 1920s and sought to improve the lives of rural African women by enhancing their farming and cooking skills and through educating them about household cleanliness, basic child care and health care (Higgs). Mrs Madi Hall-Xuma, an African American from North-

Carolina and the wife of Dr. A.B. Xuma, one of the early presidents of the ANC, was the founder of Zenzele Clubs (directed and geared to the principles of the Y.W.C.A.; see Kuzwayo 162).

The ‘Inside the Garden-Gate’ feature in The Townships Housewife also reveals the magazine’s affiliation with the Zenzele Clubs. This regular feature teaches women how to work vegetables for their own consumption:

The vegetables which would do best this month are Broad Beans, Spinach. Lettuces and Radishes. (April 1968: 59)

Late fruit – apples and pears – should not be picked until they are fully grown and ripe because they will not keep well if taken from the trees too early. If you do not have space to lay out apples to store them, they can be wrapped in newspaper and packed in a cardboard box in a cool place... (March 1968: 45)

Catherine Higgs states that:

...[T]he Zenzele gardens were praised in a 1939 letter from the Chief Native Commissioner of King William’s Town...to an article in the East London Daily Dispatch...Many of the women interviewed in 1998 still kept vegetable plots and considered the gardens among the finest accomplishments of the women’s associations. (see Higgs)

The Zenzele gardens are an example of the developing racial uplift among black South African women. The cultivation of a beautiful garden became an object of pride to The Townships Housewife’s readers. In February 1968, the writer of “Inside the Garden Gate” asks: When visitors arrive at your home what is the first thing they see? The garden!” (61)

That the Zenzele Women’s Clubs or Y.W.C.A. groups can be affiliated with an emerging black consciousness becomes clear from the following incidence Kuzwayo recounts in her autobiography, Call Me Woman: Kuzwayo’s son warns her that if anyone should decide to arrest him for the literacy programme he is



participating in to improve black education, “[she] should know [she is] next in line for [her] Y.W.C.A. work” (185). That such organisations were indeed perceived as a threat by the apartheid government is supported by Kuzwayo’s statement that “since the coming to power of the Nationalist government, there is absolutely no line of demarcation between civic, welfare and political programmes for blacks, with blacks, by blacks” (114). Higgs states that the Zenzele clubs did not evolve into political organisations, but were focused on community development. This abstinence from political involvement can be explained as a result of the government overseeing the actions of these clubs. Yet, these clubs nonetheless aided the development of black pride that enhanced the challenge to an oppressive system in apartheid South African. Iris Berger argues of the African-American Clubs that

[w]hile some contemporaries and historians have dismissed the Zenzele clubs for their domestic orientation, labelling them as apolitical organisations, I would argue that the clubs were linked to a profoundly political philosophy of African American advancement and racial uplift. (547)

A similar argument could be advanced about the South African Zenzele Clubs and about Grace and The Townships Housewife: although these magazines could be dismissed for their domestic orientation and labelled as apolitical, my research so far has proven that they can be linked to a profoundly political philosophy of black South African racial uplift.



Fig. 39. *The Townships Housewife and the Y.W.C.A. April 1968: 14.*

Grace and The Townships Housewife were not organised, or even consistent, tools of the Black Consciousness Movement, but both magazines increasingly reflected an emergent black consciousness. While advancing racial liberation, black consciousness's ideology is, however, notorious for its perceived sexism. The following section discusses the presence of such sexist perceptions in Grace and The Townships Housewife.

#### 4.5. Black Consciousness's Sexism in Grace and The Townships Housewife

The Black Consciousness Movement has often been critiqued for ignoring and omitting women's contribution to the freedom struggle. As mentioned before, women were generally expected to serve in the private, domestic sphere, while the more 'intellectually capable' men were to represent the freedom struggle in the public sphere. Black women at the time were mostly expected to support their hard-working husbands by maintaining the domestic place as housewives and mothers. Grace and The Townships Housewife reflect black women's confinement to the domestic space.

In both magazines, articles that focus on women report on beauty contests, cooking recipes, household hints, health and home remedies, personal etiquette, safety, child rearing, love and marriage. In advertisements and many articles that appear in Grace, men fulfil all the office jobs, while women engage in less important and frivolous activities such as spending time on looking beautiful and spending money on luxuries. Women are the *passive* 'signs' of prosperity in their community. For instance, an article called "Christmas Rush in the Post Office" (Dec. 1966: 10), tells readers of Grace what happens "behind the scenes" after their Christmas cards have been mailed. The article features many photos and the senior postmaster, a clerk, the telephonists, switchboard assistants, a proprietor and delivery people are all men. The only picture of a woman in this article is of a neatly dressed lady mailing a Christmas card. Men clearly organise while women add the frivolous gloss – writing and making Christmas cards.

The Townships Housewife's rhetoric reflects gendered ideologies largely imported from Europe. The magazine addresses women as "Dear Housewives" and

constantly tells them how to be good mothers. The magazine's target audience is the South African black woman, keeper of and nurturer in the domestic space. As opposed to doing work in the public sphere, women remain in the private sphere as housewives and mothers where they "borrow the children's paintbox after they have gone to bed and paint easter eggs" (April 1968: 15). The magazine's horoscope also reflects the sexist perception that men should be at work in the public sphere while women remain in the private, domestic:

A lucky month for the household, husbands will make progress at work.

Make an effort to keep yourself happy and pretty for your loved one and you will find the whole atmosphere at home changing for the better. (April 1968: 36)

In Zebedelia Malifi's "Violet's Two Men" the monthly story sequel that appears in The Townships Housewife, women seem less capable of coping in the public sphere: Violet, a nurse, "hat[es] the thought of a new day of hard work and worry" (April 1968: 26-29). She likes the stranger in the story who romances her, because he takes her away from "the hard grind of her every day work" to "romance and excitement". Violet seems most comfortable in her night-gown at home, as she is depicted in an accompanying picture (see fig. 9). That poor Violet is living in a man's world becomes clear when she ponders why her husband wants to postpone having a baby. She thinks to herself that "[m]ost men wanted sons at least" (April 1968: 27).

As noted earlier, Mamphela Ramphela states that the Black Consciousness Movement expected ordinary women (those not part of leadership structures) to participate in the Movement through participation in community projects ("Dynamics" 216). The Townships Housewife often portrays women as community

project participants. The April 1968 issue of the magazine, as we have seen, hosts an article recounting the events at the “Zenzele Women’s Club Founder’s Day” (13).

The aim of my study, however, is not to focus on the ways in which Grace and The Townships Housewife were conservative in the support they gave to sexist perceptions of gender roles. My objective is instead to reveal how black women in these magazines subverted sexist expectations and cleverly negotiated their identities, creating spaces of power for themselves through the magazine. The agency black women achieved through Grace and The Townships Housewife possibly resulted in a gradual awakening of a black female consciousness that would come to challenge black consciousness’s male-centric philosophy in the future.

#### **4.6. Black Women Negotiating Identities in the Face of Sexism**

While Grace and The Townships Housewife contributed to the mobilisation of the masses through their enhancement of black pride, they focused specifically on the empowerment of black women. Black women readers and writers of Grace and The Townships Housewife seem to have used these consumer-orientated magazines to create small spaces of agency for themselves as they became masters of the private or domestic sphere. This section considers how readers and writers of Grace and The Townships Housewife negotiate their given roles as supporters (followers of leading men) and housewives, through subtle adaptations and ‘alterations’ to their performances of ‘female identity’ in a sexist society.

Judith Butler’s notion of gender ‘performativity’ is useful here. She describes this as the “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates

and constrains” (Butler, “Subjects” 2). Butler suggests that through repetition and recitation of discourse we produce the roles expected of us. By not challenging the imaging of women in the domestic sphere, black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife ‘perform’ these roles and strengthen the stereotype that ‘women belong in the kitchen’. However, women readers and writers of these two magazines use this repetition (or performance) of stereotypical behaviour to challenge their ‘inferior positions’ (see Butler’s Gender Trouble). In a subtle challenge to the confinement of women to the domestic space, these women *adapt* their domestic identities in such a way that the given roles of housewife, mother and supporter (discourse repeated and recited) gain more agency.

Before explaining these more subtle subversions at work in Grace and The Townships Housewife, I refer to more direct challenges to gender performativity that appear in Grace. We are reminded of Mrs Dorothy M. Ngake who makes an “[a]ppeal to Bantu husbands” in the regular feature “I Write What I Like” (see Chapter One):

Many of our people still believe at this late hour that a woman’s place is in the kitchen. The woman has more responsibilities than being a housewife... (Dec. 1964:30)

In “I write what I like” of January 1965, in a letter entitled “Women’s Prosperity”, Doris Ditsebe states that

[t]ill twenty years back the African woman in the Republic of South Africa was still very much confined to the home and certain types of occupations like nursing, teaching, domestic services. Today we have taken big steps towards prosperity...In every sphere of life we find women taking an active part...(45)

Doris Ditsebe’s statement can be seen as a significant challenge to the gender perceptions of the time. Women were clearly becoming conscious of the fact that they were being confined. In light of this, it seems disappointing that Doris Ditsebe ends her letter by stating: “We have not however forgotten our most important duty

towards mankind – Wife and Mother”. But, by speaking within, or ‘performing’ these identities, she authorises her critique of gender norms – from within the familiar and socially-sanctioned space of ‘wivehood’ and motherhood, Ditsebe can challenge and interrogate existing perceptions of gender reality (see Butler, Gender xiii). Opinions like those voiced by Mrs Ngake and Mrs Ditsebe are evidence of an emergent gender politics at work. Grace had many male readers (it was subtitled ‘The magazine for the family’, but with a very strong focus on women) and letters like these were possibly also placed to convince husbands and boyfriends to ‘change their ways’.

Advancing new gender ideologies, Grace features women in the public sphere: black women who are school principals, dance champions and entertainment artists appear in its pages. Job titles such as the “Secretary of The Transvaal National Council of African Women” (Dec. 1964: 13) and impressive figures such as “Mrs C.M. Khoza of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research” (Dec. 1964: 28) introduce a new perspective on the job possibilities available to black women. A reader, Mrs Apleni, writes in the June 1965 issue that “[she] did not know that a woman could write an article such as the one Mrs C.P. Ntlola wrote” (7). Through Grace, then, writing becomes another possibility to the magazine’s readers. In a December 1964 issue of Grace, a Mrs Masole states that she was “the first African woman to have been issued a driver’s licence in the Transvaal” (7). This proud claim to a driver’s licence becomes almost representative of a literal crossing over of women from the private to the public sphere.

Women readers and writers of Grace and The Townships Housewife negotiate their limiting ‘female identities’ in more subtle ways by ‘steering’ reiterated gender roles towards greater agency. Women who remain in the private sphere find their

power in it. In an interview with Kimberley Yates and Pumla Gqola, Mamphela Ramphele states that:

...there are women who enjoy...the fact that they are in control of the household. They do this: it's my kitchen, my this, my that and they derive pleasure out of feeding people, out of being admired for what they do in that domain... This defines them... (92)

Grace clearly reflects this attitude. Black women show they can take the private sphere and make it their own – they can become the *masters*, above their men and children, of this space. Women have to cook for their families, but they can look like experts doing it. These women do not make plain mealie pap; they ‘spice things up’. They do not make a batch of plain biscuits; rather, they follow Grace’s instructions on “[h]ow to make four different kinds of biscuits from one dough – Chocolate Biscuits, Caraway Seed Biscuits, Fruit Biscuits and Coconut Biscuits” (Dec. 1966: 24). Women in Grace become excellent achievers in their own domain and their achievements in the private sphere are brought to light and are rendered significant. In a December 1968 issue of Grace, a Mrs Emma Losala is praised:

She has a beautiful garden although she is a very busy housewife. Twice already has she won a first prize for the most beautiful and well-kept garden in Thabong. As you can see, she is a zealous knitter and with her knitting machine she earns her own money. She runs a spotless home, not withstanding all her activities. (30)

Black women in The Townships Housewife are clearly *experts* in the private sphere – they are *masters* of *their* kitchens and gardens:

There are some Do’s and Don’ts below, when you have *mastered* them and a few of the recipes you will be able to branch out and invent some soups of your own; you might even win the Recipe of the Month prize with one of them! (April 1968: 43; my emphasis)

‘The township’s housewife’ is not an average housewife – she never only uses marmite on toast – she knows all the possible interesting combinations necessary to ‘spice things up’ in the kitchen (see figure 41):



# Give your family healthy, tasty Marmite

Marvellous Marmite is rich with body - building proteins and vitamins. Adds real honest-to-goodness nourishment to every meal. Tastes good on bread. Brings out the flavour of meats. Let your family grow healthy and happy with good-tasting Marmite.



**TRY OUT THESE MARMITE IDEAS:**

Add a teaspoon of Marmite to every meat dish.

A stew with Marmite in it tastes better and stronger.

Give putu a flavouring of Marmite.

Mix Marmite with margarine or fat and let it melt into cooked vegetables.

A teaspoon of Marmite in a cup of boiling water is a good soup.

Scrambled egg with a taste of Marmite is healthy for baby.

Marmite spread on bread or toast is everybody's favourite.

**MARMITE GIVES YOUR FAMILY ENERGY**

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Fig. 40. Spice things up with Marmite. *The Townships Housewife*, April 1968: 42.

The magazine also teaches women to do wonders with little resources and it accepts no simplicity. A “Cook Craft” article teaches the housewives how to cook different chicken meals – ‘Pollo Alla Cacciatora’ (Chicken done the Italian way), “Paella” (Spain), “Chicken Maryland” (America), “King Fesial’s Chicken” (Iraq) and “Nasi Goreng” (China) (Feb. 1968:7-11). The ‘townships housewife’ is a cosmopolitan, modern wonder. Noliwe Rooks, in her study on early African-American women’s magazines, explains that:

Housekeeping allowed black women increased opportunities for self-definition, for claiming not only space but self-hood. Black women authors especially could use domestic settings as a vehicle for addressing issues of self-

articulation, *claiming a distinctly female space*, and emphasizing the power for political change that they saw inherent in the space. (92-93; my emphasis)

Women empower themselves in the domestic space by reconstructing it as a place where they could have authority.

In a time dominated by the actions and achievements of men, The Townships Housewife becomes a space that prominently displays women's achievements. Each edition of this magazine shows a picture of a proud winner receiving the award for the 'Recipe of the Month'. The May 1968 issue of The Townships Housewife tells the story of Maria Maboko who won the month's prize for the best recipe submitted. The article describes Maria's missionary work:

Little Maria was sixteen years old before she realised that God was calling her, and she answered the call. Mrs Maboko also taught handicrafts, beadwork, clay modelling, spinning and weaving – in addition to her preaching. The Townships Housewife offers congratulations to Miss Maboko on a life of service to others... (40-41)

Rooks says of the early African American women's magazines she studies that they "...highlight achievement often overlooked and ignored by the dominant or African American male press" (3). The same could be said of The Townships Housewife.

Grace and The Townships Housewife *elevate* the domestic space to life-important status, *claim* this space as women's domain and *glamorise* women's function and skills within this space. The "Stars" of May 1968 warns the housewife – "be careful not to take too much on yourself *or your family will suffer*" (my emphasis). This means that the 'township's housewife' holds the key to her family's health and happiness. She is indispensable when it comes to her family's health and well-being:

Let your family grow healthy and happy with good-tasting marmite. (April 1968: 42)

The little boy on the cover is Ephraim, a happy, healthy child in a happy family. We have chosen this picture from the many submitted because Ephraim is a symbol of all our children – an ideal of happiness. The bread he is so obviously enjoying is another symbol, The Staff of Life, the food we give to our families to keep them healthy and strong. Ephraim is the picture of all our children, the centre of our lives, an eternal reminder of what it means to be a Housewife and Mother. (March 1968: 1)

These women are in control of maintaining their family's health – the domestic sphere is *their* space – they claim this space and elevate its importance. How can the husband function at work if he is not a healthy happy husband, fed and taken care of at home? How can the husband be held in high esteem if not for his good wife? The success of the man depends on 'the townships housewife'! 'The townships housewife' becomes the one on whom her family's health and happiness depends.

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Both Grace and The Townships Housewife subtly assisted the growth of black pride among its readers and must have fed into the development of black consciousness. Although sexist divisions of space (which reminds us of the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement) confront the readers of these magazines, they respond creatively and strategically to the challenges of limiting gender roles through expansive performances of their gender identities. The writers and readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife elevate the domestic space and make themselves indispensable to their community.

## Conclusion

Grace and The Townships Housewife should be considered as two important magazines in the history of the black popular press in South Africa. Both portray the ambiguities and uncertainties of black readers negotiating their way between country and city, tradition and modernity, while bestowing on South Africa what Steve Biko referred to as “the greatest gift” – “a more human face” (I Write 98).

*Mrs. Nyembezi relaxing in her lounge.*



*Fig. 41. Mrs Esther K. Nyembezi. Grace, Jan. 1965: 32.*

Mrs Esther K. Nyembezi (see fig. 42), whose brainchild Grace is, deserves much praise for her realisation of the need for a magazine for black women *by women* (Grace, Jan. 1965:32). This is a gap that these magazines filled – after the male-domination in journalism of the 1950s, black women now had the opportunity to write and represent themselves, although their voices may have been filtered or mediated by

white proprietors or editors. Patience Khumalo, black “editress” of The Townships Housewife deserves acknowledgement for her position as black female editor of a magazine for women – not even the popular Afrikaans women’s magazine, Sarie Marais, had a female editor until 1994. Unfortunately, the “editress” of Grace, as noted, has proven to be elusive. This lack of information contributes to the speculative nature of this thesis. I hope that further research will deliver more detailed information on the editors of both Grace and The Townships Housewife.

Grace and The Townships Housewife also host early black female writers in South Africa who should receive attention for their groundbreaking work. Women who penned stories and articles for these two magazines, such as Zebedelia Malifi (in The Townships Housewife), Mrs IG Buthelezi, Thandi Zulu, Molly Moreni, Kathleen Mkwanzazi, Jo Simpi, Candy Mtetwe, Likhwa C.W. Mpofo, T. Dmbithula, Eileen Sithole, Fato Ngobele and Violet Xolo (in Grace), deserve recognition for being a part of this new decade of women’s magazines. Readers of Grace and The Townships Housewife are also creators of the magazines’ content through their letters, questions and personality profiles. These women’s voices deserve scholarly recognition and attention.

The general content of Grace and The Townships Housewife follows the same recipe women’s magazines have followed in the past: the content revolves around women’s activities in and around the house and community. This includes gardening, cooking, housekeeping, fashion, beauty care, health care, reading, needlework and raising children. What makes these magazines more significant than their predecessors, however, is that for the first time *black* women are shown doing these

activities. These magazines chartered the course for other black women's magazines to follow, wherein blacks, and especially black women, are admired and accepted as valid models of accomplishment. Grace and The Townships Housewife filled a gap left by white women's magazines such as Die Huisgenoot, Sarie Marais and Fair Lady: black women were now being portrayed as modern housewives, young beauty queens (rather than old and wrinkly servants) and international stars. In a letter to the early Grace, a reader, Mrs N.E. Mkele, expresses her wish for the magazine to "unearth more of our talent" (Nov. 1964: 13). This is exactly what happens in later issues of Grace and The Townships Housewife.

Although Grace and The Townships Housewife could not overtly address political issues if they were to remain publishing, performing identities with white masks of 'normality' resulted in an increase in black pride. Postcolonial theory maintains that this kind of mimicry has an adverse effect on colonial (or in this case, apartheid) power: as black women in Grace and The Townships Housewife performed 'whiteness', they paradoxically increased black pride and self-belief: black readers no longer saw themselves reflected in the media only as maids or old and incapable labourers.

Grace and The Townships Housewife were clearly not overt political instruments and were seen by the white ruling authorities of the time as harmless women's magazines. It becomes clear from this study, however, that both magazines were more disruptive: through positive imaging of the South African black population, they influenced black readers towards a new discourse of liberation from oppression, even in the presence of such racist expressions as skin-lightening

advertisements. Grace and The Townships Housewife, at various times in their publication history, act as harbingers of black consciousness and the eventual establishment of the Black Consciousness Movement.

In “The Politics and Potential of Everyday Life”, Claire Colebrook refers to the politics and resistance that exists in ‘everyday life’. When speaking of ‘everyday life’, Colebrook refers to those apparently frivolous pursuits such as magazine reading, decorating, fashion and entertainment. In the context of Grace and The Townships Housewife, ‘frivolous’ activities such as fashion, food and entertainment become subversive or powerful as they resist the apartheid ideology of the time by portraying black people under apartheid not as mere workers and servants, but as independent organisers of their own lives. Apparently meaningless articles on entertainment and fashion in fact portray and create the black world as a valid frame of reference. Consequently, in their own informal way and without being a powerful *organised* tool like the Black Consciousness Movement, both magazines became an influential aid to the development of black consciousness and the dispelling of black inferiority.

Considering the principles and philosophy associated with black consciousness, both Grace and The Townships Housewife display the philosophy of ‘black is beautiful’ and articulate a discourse of liberation. Although both magazines also host black consciousness’s sexism, the women readers and writers of these magazines challenge this both directly and indirectly: directly, through explicit comments about sexist behaviour; and indirectly, through the readers and writers of the magazine elevating the domestic space to life-important status and glamorising

women's function and skills within this sphere. For these women, writing is, as Mariama Bâ stated, "a weapon, a peaceful weapon perhaps, but ... [nonetheless] a weapon" (qtd. in Nfah-Abbenyi 13).

I end this thesis with a quote from Grace to emphasise the value of magazines such as Grace and The Townships Housewife:

GRACE, O! What a name, sparkling name for a Woman's Magazine, has not only come to grace African Journalism and the shelves of bookstores, but to give dignity, erudition, information, life and humour to my countrymen who are in need of and desire something 'NOT' inferior. (Jan. 1965: 5)



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