

Land Rover and Colonial-Style Adventure

THE 'HIMBA' ADVERTISEMENT¹

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Abstract

This article examines the infamous Land Rover 'Himba' advertisement (2000) that shocked South Africans because of its racism and sexism. The South African Advertising Standards Authority ruled that the advertisement constituted a violation of human dignity that perpetuated gender and cultural inequality. This article takes the position that the Himba advertisement builds on the colonial notions of adventure, exploration and discovery of the African continent by the western male. The mystique of travel and discovery during the nineteenth century inscribed the control of the African landscape and its people; colonial explorers and travellers consequently feminized Africa to signify conquest and control. It is proposed that these ideas are re-inscribed in the deeply embedded cultural connotations attached to the Land Rover and Africa as its so-called spiritual home. An investigation into some of the myths and ideologies in the Himba advertisement reveals that a set of binary oppositions operates that draw attention to the distinctions between culture/nature, power/powerlessness, male/female, technology/primitivism and West/Africa. An interrogation of this advertisement is important because of the contentious nature of its content, and because fantasy adventure is a significant tendency in tourism and leisure activities in South Africa.

Keywords

adventure, Africa, car culture, colonialism, feminization, Himba, Land Rover, masculinity, Namibia, postcolonialism

The world only has one role for Africa – as a destiny for other people's expeditions.

(Hall 1995: 198)

INTRODUCTION

In December 2000, a three-page advertisement for the Land Rover Freelander was published in a range of glossy magazines in South Africa. These magazines, aimed primarily at the leisure and so-called men's market, included *African Environment and Wildlife*, *Car*, *Complete Fisherman*, *Complete Golfer*, *Getaway*, *GQ*, *House and Garden*, *Leisure Wheels*, *Men's Health*, *Out There* and the international issue of *Time*. For the purposes of the arguments in this article, it is significant that the advertisement was not found in upmarket magazines such as *Tribute*² or *Ebony* that are aimed primarily at a black market and that generally focus on 'luxury items, and cars not carried at all by the other black magazines'³ (Bertelsen 1999: 230).

Produced by the South African advertising agency TBWA Hunt Lascaris, the first page of the advertisement shows a Himba⁴ woman from Namibia standing in a barren saltpan; the picture plane is divided into two equal horizontal areas, namely sky and earth, and forms the backdrop for all three pages. She wears traditional animal skin garments and ornaments, and is naked from the waist up. Although she is thin and conforms to westernized ideals concerning beauty, her elongated breasts are propelled sideways in a ridiculous manner. The second and third pages of the advertisement show that this distortion of her breasts has been caused by a rapidly passing Land Rover 4 x 4 Freelander that envelops her legs in a cloud of dust.⁵ She ostensibly 'admir[es] the product' (Keeton 2001: 1) by allowing her eyes to follow the movement of the Freelander. The body copy on the second and third pages reads: 'The new more powerful Freelander. The 130 kW, 240 Nm V6 or the 82 kW, 260 Nm Td4 diesel, both available with 5 speed steptronic transmission. The only thing tougher will be deciding on which one you prefer'.

The digitally manipulated image caused an immediate outcry, and forced South Africans to reconsider ethical and moral issues concerning the representation of race and gender. This article situates the so-called Himba advertisement in some of its possible constitutive and interpretive discourses, and argues that because 'Africa is the spiritual home of the Land Rover', which is a quintessentially 'male brand' (Keeton 2001: 2, 3), the Freelander is imbricated in both colonial-style adventure and the myth of masculinity.⁶ This contention is based on Stephen Bayley's (1986: 101) conviction that 'the car enshrines and projects the values of the culture which created it'. This article therefore proposes that the links between Western Namibia, so-called 4x4 adventure and (male) privilege (Henrichsen⁷ 2000: 172) are invoked in this advertisement to commodify the notion of freedom. That it does so by using imagery that arguably evokes colonialist discourses and power

relations that resonate with memories of constraint and confinement,⁸ make this advertisement a multi-dimensional text, but only a few of these nuances can be discussed within the confines of this article.

I agree with the journalist Andrew Donaldson (2000: 1) that the Himba advertisement is indefensible 'at this sensitive stage of South Africa's intellectual development'. Although an advertisement is always to some extent an open text that can be interpreted in various ways, for the purposes of this article, this analysis interrogates the ideological meaning of the text by suggesting that it is derived from discursive mechanisms and visual devices that position Africa as a site for colonial-style adventure or so-called leisure colonialism.⁹ Accordingly, this examination investigates selected features of the advertisement but by no means invalidates other interpretations or negotiated readings. What I want to point out is that the legacy of an imperial rhetoric continues to manifest in visual culture, and its appropriation by the advertising industry is typical of what is generally called a postmodernist sensibility.¹⁰ In order to reveal some of the cultural practices that underpin the advertisement, I focus on the myths and ideologies entrenched in it, and suggest that these are premised on notions such as travel and adventure that are deeply embedded in colonial discourse.¹¹ Because South Africa has been implicated in the colonial project, both as colonized and colonizer (in this case of Namibia),¹² this advertisement resonates on many levels.

This article proposes that the Himba woman symbolizes the colonized subject, who is represented as the embodiment of primitive Otherness to offset the glamour, sophistication and mobility of the Freelanders. Although she is used here as a signifier for the exotic Other, I do not believe that this reveals the conventional sexualized desire for the colonized subject, but possibly rather a nostalgic yearning for colonial-style adventure. Gender, race and class operate as markers of difference in the image, which can be read as sustaining the idea that Africa is undeveloped and predisposed to exploration and conquest. The Himba advertisement thus upholds Brantlinger's (1985: 199) opinion that the mass media continue to use stereotypical references to the imperialistic myth of Africa. I believe this advertisement offers a telling commentary on the moment of contact between two worldviews, and it is significant that this is symbolized by the car, traditionally associated with 'romantic interludes and sexual adventures' (Wollen 1992: 13).¹³

In capitalist societies, advertisements are considered to be instrumental in reproducing social structures and maintaining myths by establishing 'structures of meaning' (Williamson 1978: 12) that reflect ideological ways of perceiving the world. Advertising images therefore stem from sets of power relations and enlist cultural codes, stereotypes, myths and ideologies in their social production of meaning. Although advertisements generally 'depict particular mythologies or stereotypical ideals of "the good life" . . . [based on] representations of gender, class and race' (Wallis 1984: xv), the polysemic

potential of representations should be borne in mind. Deborah Root (1996: 25) states that the former colonies of the West are frequently represented by means of advertising images that are rich with colonial connotations, such as unbounded sexuality, luxury, power and adventure. I hope to show that the Himba advertisement is an example of how advertising can appropriate such discourses and keep certain representations in cultural circulation, even though these may be in the form of pastiche or parody. Michael Herbst (2005: 33) invokes Judith Butler's (1993) notion of 'resignification' to indicate the necessity of reorienting signs and images:

that have over time become significant in maintaining dominant world views and ideas . . . racist or sexist imagery in advertising can only be adapted by willing and informed advertisers who are prepared to be self-reflexive or self-critical about the stereotypes they use . . . Drawing attention not just to the images but also, in an ironic manner, to the stock ways in which such images tend to be read, they would signal that they are using their imagery consciously to both appeal to consumers and make them more aware of the contested and dynamic nature of media representations.

Whether this advertisement succeeds in being self-reflexive is indeed part of the argument of this article. Eve Bertelsen (1999) approaches related issues regarding identity and subjectivity in South African post-apartheid advertisements. Bertelsen (1999: 222) claims that many post-apartheid advertisements tried to 'unsettle (disarticulate) the terms of existing discourses in order to realign them with new imperatives'. Bertelsen (1999: 221–2) points out, for example, how the African National Congress's (ANC) ideal of socialism has been supplanted by the pragmatic need to embrace the ideology of capitalism in order to create a new black consumerist class. She presents compelling evidence to show that many advertisements aimed at black consumers were constructed on the 'struggle' rhetoric of freedom, non-racism and equity, but that they redefined 'democracy as individual freedom and, especially, the freedom to consume' (Bertelsen 1999: 228). Bertelsen supports Fredric Jameson's (1991: 9) postulate that commodity fetishism is typical of late or consumerist capitalism¹⁴; the gesture of consumption thus becomes the defining characteristic of the postmodernist subject. Bertelsen (1999: 224) explains that the myth of social mobility is appropriated by the logic of consumption and desire: although the poor and unemployed of South Africa 'may not be able to afford to buy, their desire for commodities is just as great, and their "interpellation" by the discourse of consumerism is no less achieved'. Whether the Himba advertisement was a successful interpellation of potential black consumers and whether it signalled empowerment and freedom for them is, however, a moot point.

The central thrust of the analysis in this article is based on a (visual) culture studies approach that highlights the 'interplay of representations and ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity and nationality in cultural texts'

(Kellner 1995: 6). Post-colonialism's critique of the notion of Africa as a discourse constructed and represented by dominant ideological positions underlies this critical position. In terms of this, I have chosen to focus on the ideological nuances related to travel and adventure as central constituents of the colonial project. Furthermore, feminist cultural geography's interest in gendered constructs of power in the representation of spatiality is also significant, since landscape has the capacity to encompass cultural, political, social and economic meanings. This is relevant in terms of the politics of space in South Africa, where the 'topographies of colonial and apartheid power are being redrawn' (Delmont and Dubow 1995: 10) and renegotiated. According to Liese van der Watt (1997: 25), '[i]n all the various histories of this fractured country [South Africa], an obsession with land has been a common denominator, a central concern and an ever present bone of contention', and the concomitant representation of African landscape as a site of ideological inclusion and exclusion (see Hees 1996) offers a point of entry for the interpretation of this advertisement.

In order to understand the discomfort that the Himba advertisement elicited, it is necessary to understand some of the context of colonial rule in Namibia. Namibia, then known as South West Africa, was colonized by Germany between 1884 and 1918, and this period is characterized by the usual iniquities perpetrated by the politics of imperialism. The majority of the Europeans who visited the region during that time did so in their capacity as explorers, missionaries and hunters. Colonial rule was characterized by the violent suppression of the indigenous peoples; it is estimated that as many as 65,000 Herero (who include the Himba) were exterminated during their revolt against the Germans between 1904 and 1907.¹⁵ It is significant, in terms of the Himba advertisement, that the Germans were subsequently accused of destroying tribal culture and of exploiting women and children for financial gain (Grobler 1998: 7; 'Herero to File Atrocity . . .' 2003: 12). In 1915, during World War I, South Africa ejected Germany from the region and Germany renounced sovereignty in the Treaty of Versailles. In 1920, the League of Nations granted South Africa mandate over the territory, which was surrendered with the gaining of Namibian independence in 1990.

The Himba are nomadic cattle herders who live in parts of Northern and Western Namibia, southern Angola and Botswana.¹⁶ Unlike other indigenous peoples in Namibia, the Himba generally had little contact with westerners. During colonial times, the region where they lived was declared a reservation and access was restricted by the subsequent South African apartheid government. Only when Namibia became independent in 1990 did regions such as Kaoko in Western Namibia become popular tourist destinations (Rademeyer 2000: 2), particularly for South Africans. Because the Himba did not relinquish their traditions or mode of dress,¹⁷ they are considered one of the last so-called unspoilt, traditional peoples of Africa (Rademeyer 2000: 2; Pillinger 2001: 1).¹⁸

LAND ROVER AND THE ADVERTISING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The British Land Rover, owned by the Ford motor company since 2000, is the top selling sports utility vehicle (SUV or 4 x 4) in South Africa; over 5,200 were sold in the year of the Himba advertisement alone. The Freelander is the most popular all-purpose model and is promoted to an elite market of South Africans who have access to wilderness areas (Keeton 2001: 1). Land Rover, and indeed most 4 x 4 vehicles, is bought not only for the social image and lifestyle it encapsulates, but also because ‘of all 4 x 4 brands ... [it] symbolises the freedom of an adventurous, outdoor life ... now being marketed as the “Land Rover Experience”’ (Keeton 2001: 1). The South African leisure magazine *Getaway* characterizes off-road driving as the ultimate form of adventure travel that has become popular with a ‘larger section of the *white urban elites* throughout southern Africa’ (Henrichsen 2000: 163, emphasis added). I believe it is furthermore suggestive that the Land Rover has been humanized as ‘a *partner* with which to escape the drudgery of the everyday and to adventure’ (Keeton 2001: 1-2, emphasis added).

There has been an intimate relationship between Western Namibia (the setting of the Himba advertisement) and Land Rover since the early 1950s, when it became the preferred leisure vehicle that enunciated gendered notions of travel, exploration and adventure (see Henrichsen 2000). Although the Managing Director of Land Rover in South Africa, Moira-Anne Moses, protests that they ‘wouldn’t want Land Rover to be *only a white male* product’ (suggesting that it essentially still is), my reading of the Himba advertisement is based on the reality that ‘[traditionally most Land Rover owners have been male, and most still are]’ (Keeton 2001: 1, emphasis added). The assumption that is made in this analysis that the driver is a (white) male is defensible in terms of the overwhelmingly white market segment that has been able to afford the Land Rover, and because Land Rover has been coded as an adjunct of the myth of masculinity for many decades. This does not invalidate Bertelsen’s (1999: 228) viewpoint that since 1994, democracy in South Africa has increasingly been redefined as the individual freedom of (black) people to participate in the act of consumption, merely that this tendency has not yet been discernible in the culture surrounding Land Rover.¹⁹

The Advertising Standards Committee, a sub-section of the South African Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) met on 7 December 2000 to consider the complaints lodged against the Himba advertisement by members of the public, the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality and the Namibian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information and Broadcasting. The advertisement was subsequently ruled to be in breach of the International Code of Advertising Practice, and was withdrawn in April 2001. All the magazines that had carried the initial advertisement were obliged to print a statement from the ASA explaining the retraction, the costs of which were carried by Hunt Lascaris. Moreover, Namibian government officials considered

requesting redress for the damage perpetrated against the Himba by means of the advertisement (Pillinger 2001: 2).

The Himba advertisement elicited indignation on many counts. Whereas the Namibian government objected to the exploitation of a minority ethnic group, namely the Himba (Rademeyer 2000: 1), Mogam Moodliar, head of the South African Human Rights Commission's legal department felt that '[i]t demeans women generally, depicting them as sexual objects. The [breasts] are not in [their] natural form. They are tilted in a certain direction as a result of the speed of the Land Rover' (Jacobs 2000: 3). The Namibian Campaign on Violence against Women and Children believed that the advertisement contravenes the Namibian constitution (Rademeyer 2000: 1). Diane Hubbard of the Legal Assistance Centre in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, commented that the image is 'tremendously insensitive, poking fun at the Himba's traditional dress. It smacked of the same kind of exploitation that occurred during colonial times. Would a white woman in a bathing costume have been given the same treatment?' (Pillinger 2001: 1). Indeed, some critics pointed out that the advertisement operated in the same tradition of objectification and exploitation to which the Khoi woman Sarah Baartman had been subjected in the early nineteenth century²⁰ (Joubert 2000: 22). In addition to racism and sexism, which are inextricably linked (see hooks 1990: 57), the advertisement was also accused of encouraging 'people using 4x4 vehicles to drive recklessly through the Himba's remote ancestral grazing and burial grounds' (Pillinger 2001: 2).²¹

Following deliberations with Hunt Lascaris, the ASA articulated four issues in their judgment:

- When viewed against the diverse population and culture of South Africa the advertisement is irresponsible, as it does not contribute towards the work of gender and racial healing essential to the building of a new society.
- The manner in which the female figure is depicted is exploitative and constitutes racial stereotyping.²²
- It is not the nudity in the advertisement but the misuse, abuse and distortion of the woman's nudity that violates human dignity.²³
- The insensitive portrayal of the Himba woman is discriminatory and makes a mockery of African culture thereby perpetuating gender and cultural inequality.

Representatives from Hunt Lascaris responded to charges regarding the 'cultural pornography' of the image by stating that it had been conceived as a 'a harmless parody and exaggeration designed to amuse the consumer' (Jacobs 2000: 3), and explained that a multiracial pilot study had found it inoffensive.²⁴ Hunt Lascaris further declared that consumers of 'motor vehicles would likely view the advertisement on a humorous basis [as hyperbole] and would merely conclude that there is a quicker version thereof (TBWA Hunt Lascaris' Justification Document 2000). As Bertelsen (1999: 226-8) points out, advertisements are inherently parasitic and make opportunistic use of

jokes and puns. A common defence against offensive imagery is therefore that it is 'only entertainment', which obscures the reality that entertainment (and advertisements) operate on an ideological level and have the capacity to inscribe racist or sexist meanings (see Wolf 1998). Jameson (1991: 17–18) has established that the dominance of pastiche, the 'play of random stylistic allusion', is one of the defining tropes of postmodernism. Pastiche generally offers consumers nostalgic images and familiar stories (Jameson 1983: 115–6), but in this advertisement, the contentious nature of the image robbed it of the potential to be self-reflexive.

Moira-Anne Moses attempted to justify why the Himba image had been chosen:

We wanted to keep an African context and were obviously a little hesitant [about this advertisement], but research showed it was perceived in the light it was intended . . . We withdrew it immediately there were complaints. It was not our intention to offend people.

(Keeton 2001: 1)

Moses noted, however, that '[q]uite a lot of men phoned in to say that they had enjoyed the ad and people who were offended should not be so sensitive' (in Farquhar 2001: 22, emphasis added). Hunt Lascaris insisted that they had not exploited the Himba woman as she had given her consent and was apparently aware of the manner in which her photograph would be used. Her face was replaced, however, by that of an employee at the advertising agency before the whole image was digitally manipulated (van Wyk 2001).

CAR CULTURE, MASCULINITY AND POWER

It is necessary at this point to indicate a few salient features of sexualized car culture that intersect with the discourses of gender, race and class. Cars are regularly charged by society with ideological and symbolic meanings and express 'powerful visual messages about the age, sex, race, social class and lifestyle of the user' (Wajcman 1991: 133-4). What is important about Judy Wajcman's statement is that cars transmit class affiliation within the wider framework of gendered propositions about masculinity, sexuality, modernity, technology and progress. Wernick (1994: 2-3) points to three clusters of car imagery that have distinctive connotative meanings - the sports car, the luxury car and the family car. Wernick does not mention 4x4 vehicles, and certainly in South Africa, this warrants a new category that conventionally aligns macho 'Camel Man' adventure and freedom with sports utility vehicles ('Saddle Up' 2005: 150); as (Wajcman 1991: 134) confirms, 'rugged, four-wheel-drive "range rovers"' represent specific male fantasies.'

Cars have traditionally been held to assume a central role in male culture because they signify freedom, power, status, speed, sexual prowess and

success (Bayley 1986: 5, 7, 26, 31; Wajcman 1991: 134). Cars have the capacity to fulfil escapist fantasies whereby men are afforded escape from domestic and family responsibilities into a world of private fantasy, independence and mastery (Wajcman 1991: 134). Yet Bayley has recently revised his ideas regarding the car:²⁵

The real emotional pull of the motor car is not sex or social status, or all those things that we associate with car lovers – it is that the motor car gives you the sense that you are a free person.

(‘A Classic of Modern Design’ 1999: 1)

This notion of freedom is relevant to the Himba advertisement since Land Rover conventionally symbolizes an unfettered, adventurous life that bestows on the driver the liberty to ‘conquer’ space. Although Land Rovers are not notorious for speed as such, their technological sophistication allows the mastery and consumption of inaccessible terrain (Henrichsen 2000: 181). According to David Smith (1998: 12), ‘motorists buy Land Rover because they get a buzz out of its naked power and virtual invincibility over any surface’, which again emphasizes the notion that the Land Rover driver has the freedom to go anywhere.

The alignment between cars and power is based on the entrenched symbolic identification between masculinity and technology²⁶ (Wajcman 1991: 134). Because cars are still essentially based on nineteenth-century technology – the internal-combustion engine (Wollen 1992: 10) – they have been coded with modernist, masculinist and patriarchal values related to ‘heroic techno-industrial progress’ (Wernick 1994: 3, 6). When the anti-urbanism of the 1960s discredited techno-worship and called for the revival of nature as the oppressed other of omnipotent industry, advertising inserted cars in nature and linked them to leisure activities, thereby reversing the sign of technology into nature (Wernick 1994: 5–6).

To offset the connection between masculinity and technology, cars have usually been personified as female. In addition, nubile female bodies are frequently used to ‘eroticise cars as objects of desire’ (Lees-Maffei 2002: 363), establishing cars as vehicles for ‘men’s pursuit of sexual adventures’ (Wajcman 1991: 134). The assumption by car manufacturers that men use cars for work-related activities, whereas women use them for leisure, is no longer tenable (Lees-Maffei 2002: 364). In the Himba advertisement, for example, the connotation of entitled leisure, partly derived from colonialist notions of the gentleman-explorer, is foregrounded and undermines gendered binary oppositions regarding production and consumption. Penny Sparke (in Coward 1999: 2) adds that both women and men use cars for complex reasons that include ‘desire, narcissism, envy and a quest for self-identification – social, psychological and cultural needs which are deeply rooted’.

Although cars have invariably been projected as female, their phallic connotations render them sexual extensions of the male, leading Wernick

(1994: 4) to suggest that cars are both phallic and androgyne. Furthermore, he reasons that for both sexes cars evoke the enclosed, inner space of the womb, which has been accentuated by increased interiorization in car design since the 1980s (Wernick 1994: 4, 7). The isolation of the driver in the Himba advertisement is important – as previously stated, the Freelander becomes a ‘partner’ and accomplice, rendering the driver self-contained.

TRAVEL AND COLONIAL-STYLE ADVENTURE

The discourses of travel and adventure are important in determining the ideological sediments of colonialism upon which my reading of the Himba advertisement is based. In this section, I therefore point out some of the essential issues regarding travel and adventure, and show how these intersect with the process of feminization that established Africa’s status as the other.

During the nineteenth century, travel, exploration and discovery celebrated the power of the West and justified the extension of its imperial power (Childs and Williams 1997: 100). Colonial travel became a gendered and racialized discourse wherein men were offered an arena in which to test themselves against overwhelming odds, mainly embodied by nature. The masculine activity of travel comprised symbolical ‘penetration’ of unknown geographical space such as Africa, ‘in search of a single transcendental truth’ (Bunn 1988: 22; also Brantlinger 1985: 175). In the male domain of imperial travel, the ‘idea of **adventure** became synonymous with the demonstration of the moral, social and physical mastery of the colonisers over the colonised’ (Hall 1995: 21). Exploration and empire building were hence intimately linked, and the discourse of travel accordingly approximated ‘a way of taking possession’ (Pratt 1992: 57). This signals that exploration was both an intellectual project and a spatial discourse (Carter 1987: 8).

In terms of the politics of gender, race and class, it is noteworthy that from the eighteenth century onwards ‘notions of individualized, erotic “freedom” and adventure began to be located . . . in the colonies’ (Root 1996: 32). This designates one of the intersections between colonialism and the mystique of travel, sexual desire and the contemporary tourist and advertising industries; in the words of Pritchard and Morgan (2000: 888), ‘[s]ex is one of the oldest motivations for travel’. Travel was consequently coded with ‘masculine ideas about adventure, pleasure and the exotic’ (Enloe 1989: 20). Colonialism consistently rendered Africa as a vast arena dedicated to western adventure, leisure and entitlement, which turned Africans ‘into extras on their own continent, into stage props that do not matter in the great undertaking being performed by Europeans’ (Pieterse 1992: 67).²⁷ The fact that the African safari became a metaphor for adventure (Pieterse 1992: 112) also indicates the concurrent alignment between adventure, leisure and entertainment. Root (1996: 177) makes a similar point when she reasons that the desire for escapism inherent in western aristocratic adventure is regularly enacted

against atmospheric colonial backdrops. Indeed, Stuart Hall (1995: 21) believes that the notion of adventure as such has become a vital component of modern entertainment media.

The heroic discourse of travel and adventure was produced as a masculine enterprise that instilled hegemonic notions of spatiality based on gendered constructs of power. Since space and place are socio-cultural constructions (Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 899), the metaphorical feminization of land was usually contingent upon colonial conquest. Feminization implies that qualities traditionally perceived to be feminine, such as passivity, irrationality and guile, were associated with pre-linguistic forms of expression and so-called primitive cultures (Bunn 1988: 14, 20–3). Feminization is indicative of an objectifying cultural politics that bestows inertia and powerlessness by means of asymmetrical power relations, and hence signifies the symbolical subjugation of nature, woman and the Other. Aitchison (2000: 136) contends that that which is Othered is usually automatically gendered and feminized.

The metonymic association of woman with the African landscape reverberates throughout the nineteenth century, when exploration was established as ‘an exclusively masculine act, a moment of penetration into a suggestively feminized [and empty] locale’ (Bunn 1988: 1, 7).²⁸ But this practice did not end with decolonization – the gendering of landscape has continued in the tourist and advertising industries. Places (and products) are feminized as ‘exotic, unspoiled, natural, virginal, and desirable . . . [where] the explorer . . . can make his mark’ (Aitchison 2000: 138). Swain (1995: 249) argues that ‘[h]ost societies differentiated by race/ethnicity, colonial past, or social position from the consumer societies are sold with feminized images’. This strategy enunciates the western representation of space in which gender and racial difference are stereotyped to naturalize power relations (Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 894, 900; Cohen 1995: 418). In their examination of tourist landscapes, Pritchard and Morgan (2000: 892, 894) point out that the “‘masculine”, “technological” west and north turns its gaze to consume tourism delights in the “natural” “feminine” landscapes of the south and east’; this meeting of opposites is also enacted in the Himba advertisement.

Colonial-style adventure, which is conventionally based on the notion of white privilege, is explicitly referred to in many contemporary advertisements and commodities, and words such as ‘discover’ are coded to reflect this (Root 1996: 133, 148). Accordingly, Land Rover’s choice of names such as Defender, Discovery, Freelander and Range Rover play on ideas of ‘defence, freedom, territory, and . . . mobility’ (Henrichsen 2000: 178). The Himba advertisement romanticizes the notion of colonial adventure as the triumph of European knowledge and imperialism. The problem therein is that it provides a platform for the nostalgic ‘aggrandizement of cultural difference . . . in which the would-be colonizer continues to articulate cultural and racial authority’ (Root 1996: 43).

One of the objectives of colonialism was the imperative to dominate and tame the Other, which was based on an ideological construct of the other

(Bancel et al. 2000: 22). The description of the Other encapsulated those characteristics that were deemed the binary opposite of western man; colonial discourse thus constructed the colonized 'as a fixed reality which is at once an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible' (Bhabha 1983: 23). The Other was invariably fetishized in fantasy images that operated on the principles of metaphor and metonymy (Bhabha 1983: 29), fashioning ambivalent stereotypes of attraction and repulsion that still inform the cultural politics of identity. A result of this was the initiation of a politics of display whereby Otherness was both objectified and commodified, often in order to reinforce the notion of white racial superiority (Bancel et al. 2000: 22). It is important for the argument in this article that from the late nineteenth century onwards, ideology was increasingly located in visual imagery that designated 'a new colonial mechanism for degrading natives' (Bancel et al. 2000: 22). There are many contemporary examples of exploitative representations of black women in South African advertisements, travel literature and tourist postcards. In these representations, women are the signifiers of absolute difference – racial, sexual and cultural. Although these examples are generally not as shocking as the Himba advertisement, they constitute a visual lexicon that has been naturalized by its continual use. Stuart Hall (1996b: 443) consequently alerts us to the fact that 'how things are represented and the "machineries" and regimes of representation in a culture do play a constitutive, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role'.

EXPEDITION DISCOURSE AND THE 'GENTLEMAN'S SAFARI'

In order to understand some of the further cultural resonances that I believe operate in the Himba advertisement, it is helpful to refer to two types of adventure travel that flourished in Western Namibia (specifically in the Kaoko region) during the twentieth century. First, the 'expedition discourse' was a predominantly visual discourse comprising photographic records of 'the technical conquest of an unfriendly natural surrounding by male-groups', in which hazardous car journeys featured prominently (Miescher and Rizzo 2000: 34). The inhospitable terrain of Western Namibia was consequently established as a stage for masculine heroism and a testing ground for western technological supremacy (Henrichsen 2000: 180). It can therefore be argued that the Himba advertisement was sited in a colonialist landscape to reinforce the notions of masculinity, freedom, modernity, status and a leisure lifestyle already attached to the Land Rover (see Henrichsen 2000: 176). The advertisement accordingly taps into nostalgic images of adventure and exploration, and invokes the African safari as a symbolic demonstration of the superiority of western technology (Pieterse 1992: 112).

Second, from the 1950s onwards, the so-called *Herrensafari* or gentlemen's safari became established in Namibian society. Because travel in Western Namibia was only possible in a 4 x 4, Land Rovers became popular as elite

leisure vehicles for off-road risk and adventure from 1953 onwards when they were first imported (Henrichsen 2000: 173-5). The *Herrensafari* was a privileged form of leisure and colonial travel only available to those in possession of a 4 x 4 vehicle. It was also gendered since it was an exotic leisure experience reserved almost exclusively for men that served to anchor popular beliefs about masculinity (Henrichsen 2000: 161, 164). According to Henrichsen (2000: 161), *Herrensafari* men were designated as:

'Lords of the Land': they had mastered a seemingly uncivilised, hazardous and unmapped region by putting their powerful 4 x 4s and themselves to the test and had remained in absolute control. By means of their trip the men had elevated themselves into conquering men of a special kind, not simply colonial masters 'off the road' but a distinct group of motorized gentlemen.

Henrichsen (2000: 160, 167-8) points out that the main activity of the *Herrensafari* was driving, thereby not only enacting the physical control of space by leisure adventurers, but also emphasizing their symbolic temporary escape from an urban middle-class milieu.²⁹ The *Herrensafari* was thus primarily concerned with driving, mobility and technological supremacy. This was reaffirmed each time a *Herrensafari* encountered the Himba – by contrast with the male adventurers, the local population was framed in a controlled and unchanging image as 'native', 'traditional' and 'static', thereby explicitly confirming the status of the so-called colonial masters (Henrichsen 2000: 178, 179). Henrichsen (2000: 178-9) points out that the *Herrensafari* did not usually set out to meet indigenous peoples, which reinforces the familiar colonial trope that sought validation for conquest of the empty African landscape.

MYTH-MAKING IN THE HIMBA ADVERTISEMENT

Having determined some of the main concerns that afforded the colonizer a superior position towards the colonized subject and land, it is now possible to investigate some of the main binary oppositions, myths and ideologies that I believe operate in the Himba advertisement. As previously stated, this interpretation is based on the assumption that the driver of the Freelander is a white male; as Root (1996: 162, emphasis added) aptly states: 'the Westerner is always in the frame, regardless of whether we can see him in the picture'.³⁰

Binary Oppositions

Ashcroft (1997: 14) explains that binary oppositions established power relations and sustained 'the violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates'. Binary oppositions are mutually exclusive,

and because they attach positive values to only one of the pair, they naturalize ideological meanings. For the arguments proposed in this article, it is important that myths that privilege a western paradigm are invariably implicated in the constitution of a binary logic. The dominant ideas encapsulated in the Himba advertisement reflect a worldview that endorses masculinity and patriarchal values, technology, progress and mastery of nature. The binaries cluster around cultural practices regarding gender, race and class,³¹ and although they are separated below, they form a subtle network of mutually reinforcing ideological propositions. The manner in which the advertisement is structured, with the Himba woman on the left of the picture plane and the Land Rover on the extreme right, seems to validate a reading in terms of binary opposition.

The first set of binaries gravitates around the notion of a western paradigm and includes the following: white/black; first world/third world; West/Africa³²; North (Euro-America)/South (Africa); colonizer/colonized; centre/margin; self/other; modernity/pre-modernity; technological/pre-technological; civilization/primitivism³³; present/past; and fast, change/slow, changeless. These binaries are self-explanatory and sanction the implicit symbolic presence of male power, representative of the domains of culture and technology, in the landscape. Two issues may be emphasized here: first, it is customary for emerging nations (and colonial authorities) to demonstrate their command over nature by imposing a human and technological impression on landscapes (Zimmer 1998: 645). Second, it is significant that the Himba woman is positioned not only as the conventional Other of the white European male, but also specifically of the South African male at whom this advertisement is targeted. This is suggested by the linguistic sign of the number plate on the Freelander: the initials GP signify Gauteng Province, which connotes wealth, culture and technology in the industrial and financial hub of South Africa.

As already noted, the narrative of the advertisement unfolds from left to right over three pages, and this conventional western vector connotes movement and linear progress that literally overtake or leave behind the Other. This rhetorical strategy resembles the colonial habit of representing 'Europe's Other as its past' (Duncan 1993: 47). But paradoxically, whereas 'Other cultures are often portrayed as occupying remote places that are . . . desirable . . . where one can escape the social and psychological pressures of modernity and retreat into a "simpler", more "natural" place and time' (Duncan 1993: 46), this nostalgic longing is not dominant here. On the contrary, the driver of the Freelander is isolated and removed from engagement with the Other and the landscape she embodies by his technology. She is not pertinent to his quest; she is present yet irrelevant; she is not the object of his desire, the Land Rover is.³⁴ Moreover, Land Rover would have consumers believe that the Freelander (and possibly its driver) stimulate the Himba woman's desire and become the objects of her envious gaze.

The second set of binaries involves conventional gendered constructs, and includes the following: male/female; culture/nature; urban/rural; exploring the land/of the land; empowered/disempowered; active/passive;

strong/weak; public/domestic; and action/reaction. Historic representations of the Himba in the landscape were conventionally also gendered – the female was habitually depicted in the private and domestic sphere, often verging on a type of ‘primitive pornography’, whereas the male was usually ‘equated with space, motion and economic life’ (Miescher and Rizzo 2000: 42). But the traditional gendered binary that associates men with work and utility, and women with leisure and pleasure is dismantled here to allow the empowered male to enter the domain of leisure and entitlement reminiscent of the privileges of empire.

The prevailing underlying issue in this set of binaries is the empoweredness of the male protagonist – both the receptive landscape and woman await his ‘technological, scientific, and rational’ gaze (Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 894). The Himba advertisement represents the conventional western pastoral image of Africa ‘as a world of nature, not a cultural or human-made world’ (Pieterse 1992: 81, 113). The association between indigenous populations and nature serves to emphasize their natural yet uncivilized state. Whereas nature frequently signifies purity, goodness, freedom and (Africa’s) unspoiled exoticism, uncorrupted by technology and pollution, here it possibly functions more negatively to suggest primitivism. It is obviously important that the conventional conflation between woman and nature is used here to create a foil for the technological superiority of the Freelander driver. The ‘universal devaluation of women’ that is enshrined on a symbolical level in the need for cultures to control nature (Ortner 1974: 69, 72), here becomes a metonym for the supposed inferiority and backwardness of African existence. The Himba woman is inscribed in and as nature. She is semi-naked, wears animal skins, stands rooted in the dusty earth that is indexical of both primitivism and the speed of the Freelander, and she assumes the same colours as her environment. The Land Rover, on the other hand, is blue, the colour of the sky and transcendental values associated with the benefits of (western) culture. Blue conventionally connotes spirituality, ethereality and the retreat from mundane affairs, and hence assumes further ideological weight in this advertisement.

Myths

The binary oppositions in the Himba advertisement do not operate in isolation; rather, they are constructed upon myths that support their ideological propositions. Roland Barthes (1972) considers that images and words are equally complicit in generating texts of mythological weight. Accordingly, myth naturalizes and legitimates social constructions, and reduces things to simplistic essences or stereotypes (Barthes 1972: 156). Mythic discourse ‘freezes into an eternal reference’ (Barthes 1972: 136) that which it wishes to justify, and in the Himba advertisement the woman is literally frozen to the spot: static, unchanging, devoid of interest. The ‘white mythology’ of colonial discourse consolidates and codifies legitimating myths or meta-narratives. Since myth

serves social interests, it appropriates and 'has at its disposal an unlimited mass of signifiers' that reinforce each other (Barthes 1972: 129). Thus, the mythical meaning of the Himba advertisement conveys a politicized message about the world that upholds the hegemony of bourgeois technocratic capitalism, and by implication, white (male) supremacy.

Specific so-called male myths and fantasies serve as metaphors for the ideological statement the advertisement conjures up. These gendered myths revolve around the establishment of patriarchal power in a feminized landscape, and can be summarized as the myths of: masculinity; patriarchy; western power; empire; adventure, exploration, discovery and travel; and science, technology, empirical knowledge and progress. The overriding myth is obviously the myth of masculinity. Since this Freelander advertisement is undoubtedly scripted to appeal primarily to a male (heterosexual) audience, it uses codes that emphasize the notions of pleasure, privilege and power. As noted previously, cars have conventionally been coded as potent social signifiers of masculinity that stand for power, freedom, control over technology and speed. This is further inscribed by the associations of entitlement, imperialism and patriarchal ideals that adhere to Land Rover itself, which are encoded by the name Freelander. What is interesting in this advertisement is that the tradition of using women to sexualize cars is sustained, but, I would suggest, for different mythological and ideological ends.

The myths of personal freedom, success and individualism; individual, romantic experience of nature³⁵; leisure; and escapism furthermore suggest a gendered experience of the world that is congruent with a colonialist and capitalist mentality. Root (1996: 183, emphasis added) points out that the desire to escape often reinforces western authority because 'the sense of an outside to Western culture is so often articulated within an aristocratic, colonialist ethos (which . . . means travel at will with many changes of clothing, which implies money, leisure, and porters)'.

Lastly, the myth of Africa, which is based on age-old stereotypes of Africa as an exotic, mysterious, untamed, primitive, timeless space, waiting to be transformed into spectacle by the imperialist imagination, forms an important subtext of this advertisement. The colonial feminization of Africa, as previously suggested, sexualized place and mapped the intersection of difference and desire. From the 1960s onwards, the stereotypical, ideal inhabitant of Kaoko for the western gaze was the 'Himba woman', as she symbolized both the beauty of the landscape and the so-called 'timeless, never changing genuine Africa' (Miescher and Rizzo 2000: 45). Typical colonial and tourist representations of Himba (women) showed them as anonymous, inactive, passive, and by implication innocent and harmless (Miescher and Rizzo 2000: 47), rooted in 'timelessness or . . . pre-historical time' (Henrichsen 2000: 183). This strategy establishes a potent genealogy for the visual rhetoric of the Himba

The notion of timelessness was an important sign in the myth of Africa that can be aligned with the (western) picturesque aesthetic that designates advertisement.

‘a world without change, a world of timeless, atemporal customs and rituals’ (Nochlin 1991: 35–6, 39). In the advertisement, the traditional dress and body adornment of the Himba woman function as metonymic cultural markers that identify or typify a whole continent. The colonial images of conquest, possession and control of a receptive and feminized landscape articulated the premise of Africa as an empty land. The spatial metaphor of Africa as a *tabula rasa* justified, and indeed seemed to necessitate the presence of European capitalist expansionism (Bunn 1988: 9; Pratt 1992: 61). Furthermore, the ostensible absence of inhabitants in the African landscape underlined the putative lack of history and culture before European intervention (Pratt 1992: 59; Childs and Williams 1997: 209). It is therefore significant that in the Himba advertisement, one lone figure represents ‘Africa’; this exemplifies imperialist discourse where, in the words of Brantlinger (1985: 167), ‘the voices of the dominated are represented almost entirely by their silence, their absence’. The rhetoric of absence translates into a visual strategy that echoes the mythical premises of the advertisement.

Ideologies

The binary oppositions and myths articulated above are naturalized in the ideologies presented in this advertisement. The colonial-style ideology that manifests here is usually indicative of a man’s world as such (Pieterse 1992: 94), and aligns comfortably with patriarchy, capitalism and neo-colonialism,³⁷ which are particularly pertinent realities in South Africa. The advertisement does not seem to encourage a nostalgic longing for the ‘colonised culture as it was “traditionally”’ (Rosaldo 1989: 107–9) – the ideological desire here is rather for the display of power encapsulated in colonial-style adventure (and obviously, for the commodity being advertised).³⁸ Donaldson’s (2000: 1) statement that the woman’s breasts follow the movement of the Land Rover, ‘mirroring her envious eyes’, signals an inversion of colonial desire, and ultimately validates ‘capitalism as the determining motor of colonization’ (Young 1995: 167).

I have already suggested that ideological statements regarding race, gender and class are framed in the Himba advertisement. Whether it invokes an elegiac yearning for imperialism wherein ‘racial domination appear[s] innocent and pure’ (Rosaldo 1989: 107) is an issue that deserves further attention. It should perhaps be read as an example of what Stuart Hall (1995: 20) calls inferential racism: ‘apparently naturalised representations of events and situations relating to race . . . which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions’.³⁹ The advertisement is certainly racist in its representation of a minority group, and its sexist depiction of the female was one of the main reasons why it was banned; as Robert Young (1995: 182) admits, ‘our own forms of racism remain so intimately bound up with sexuality and desire’. The class statement by this advertisement

is equally clear, since it upholds the privilege of the stereotypical wealthy 'gentleman explorer'. The above-mentioned binaries, myths and ideologies can therefore be read as presenting a consistent worldview or lifestyle that is predicated on capitalist (and presumably masculinist) values that commodify and glamorize the notion of freedom as represented by the Freeland and the unbounded space of Africa.

CONCLUSION

I have pointed out in this analysis of the Himba advertisement that it seems to be based on established cultural signs that argue in favour of technology as an agent of liberation, progress, speed and consumption. I have suggested that it naturalizes the 'ideological sediments' of colonialism by attaching specific ideological values to the Freeland. As with most luxury commodities of this kind, the vehicle is imbued with mythic meanings that invite consumers to buy into the myth. This advertisement functions as an indexical sign of social status and mobility, proposing a life wherein dreams of unlimited leisure time, freedom and escapism are already anchored in the existing values (and desires) of the target audience (Jhally 1995: 79–80).

I furthermore argued that this advertisement seemingly encodes power relations and inscribes a narrative of domination by embodying the individual experience of (neo)colonialism in the Himba woman. The signs are embedded in a network of signifiers that reverberate with the colonial narrative of invasion, conquest and domination. It is undoubtedly significant that Western Namibia was chosen as the setting for the advertisement precisely because it only became widely accessible to South Africans as a site for exploration and adventure after 1990, thereby echoing the original moment of colonization. In representing the Himba woman as the Other, it establishes a text of power that enunciates a cultural and racial hierarchy – and in terms of the politics of power between North and South, it is clear who the victor is. It is often stated that the tourism industry has appropriated colonial imagery (Echter and Prasad 2003: 661), and this is a clear example of the advertising industry doing the same. The resultant 'colonization of the commodity image-system' (Jhally 1995: 83) here affirms compellingly that the functions of colonialism have indeed 'been taken over by multinational corporations' (Childs and Williams 1997: 218).

Many theorists now believe that the car epitomizes freedom over and above gendered propositions of technology, power and entitlement. In terms of Bertelsen's (1999) exposition of post-apartheid advertisements referred to earlier, the Himba advertisement could be interpreted as a signifier of (social) mobility or liberation that also offers (new) black consumers the freedom to participate in commodity fetishism. It is debateable, however, whether this advertisement could have been transformative or could have succeeded in creating new historical subjects. To my mind, it did not neutralize

(or defuse) the trope of colonialism by resignification, possibly because the choice of image is still too culturally loaded. Although freedom is equated here with the possession of a car, Catherine Addison (2002: 219) notes that in South Africa cars are frequently associated with crime and violence, and are not just straightforward status symbols. To many South Africans, the Himba advertisement was itself an act of violence that foregrounded the violence embedded in colonial desire (Young 1995: 108).

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Notes

- 1 This article is an extended version of a paper entitled 'Roving the Land: The Exploitation of Otherness in a South African Land Rover Advertisement', delivered at the Design History Society Conference 'Sex Object: Desire and Design in a Gendered World' in Norwich, United Kingdom, on 12 September 2003. I am grateful to the insightful comments and suggestions made by the referees of this article prior to publication.
- 2 Annie Coombes (2003: 12) notes that *Tribute* is a 'glossy magazine aimed at a middle-class black entrepreneurial readership'.
- 3 The recently launched South African magazine *Blink* (subtitled 'The key to being a man') targets upmarket black male readers and carries an advertisement for the Land Rover Range Rover (*Blink* 2005: 88-9). However, the Freelander and Range Rover are not coded in precisely the same manner and have different connotations since the Range Rover has limited on-road performance ('Land Rover: The Fifty Year Miracle Origin of the Species' 1997).
- 4 The use of the Himba woman as a stereotype of Africa is common; another example with a similar context is an advertisement for Britz 4x4 rentals that features a Himba woman and three images of 4 x 4s. The text reads: 'Self-drive ... into the wilderness and see the parts of southern Africa you only dreamed of (*Getaway* 2004: 306).
- 5 It is strange that her skirt does not seem to move in response to the speed of the Freelander. The notion of speed has traditionally been coded as an adjunct of male success and sexual power (Bayley 1986: 31), and supports the assumption made in this article that the driver of the Freelander is a male figure.
- 6 The seemingly unproblematized and essentialist use of the word 'masculinity' in this article is used because the social context of the Land Rover in South Africa to date justifies this almost unilateral association between the car and male consumers. Two points need to be addressed here: first, the nature of masculinity and second, females as consumers of Land Rover. The notion of a unitary and

normative hyper masculinity has been under question since at least the 1970s, and in South Africa today there is a range of masculinities that are each influenced by different discourses, including those of race, class and leisure (Morrell 2001: 3 - 8). But media images that continue to inscribe hegemonic images of white masculinity are still very prevalent (Morrell 2001: 25) and affect the reading made in this article. Second, cars are by default still mainly coded as masculine in South African advertisements and very few explicitly target women in the manner of the British Peugeot advertisements discussed by Grace Lees-Maffei (2002: 367-9). A South African print advertisement for Caltex petrol (2004) is a rare exception: it shows an upmarket black woman getting out of a mud-spattered 4 x 4 to buy petrol -but the product that is being advertised is petrol, not the sports utility vehicle. The most recent Jeep advertisement, found in the woman's magazine *Fairlady* (2005: 151), is possibly indicative of a new trend. It shows three shots of a woman's legs in which she is busy discarding her high heel shoes. These images are placed above a photograph of the Jeep with the following body copy: 'Free your mind. The new Jeep Cherokee Renegade. Get in. Turn the key. Leave the world behind... freedom is never far away'. An article in the same *Fairlady* states that manufacturers are now offering cheaper 4x2 versions of sports utility vehicles that 'will no doubt woo women drivers who feel more secure in lofty, chunky vehicles but have no Camel Man fantasies' ('Saddle Up' 2005: 150).

- 7 I am grateful to Prof. Patricia Hayes of the University of the Western Cape for referring me to Henrichsen (2000).
- 8 The importance of memory and narrative in the construction of post-apartheid subjectivities and identities is examined by Nuttall and Coetzee (1999) and Coombes (2003: 8), who points out that 'all memory is unavoidably both borne out of individual subjective experience and shaped by collective consciousness and shared social processes'.
- 9 For example, the colonial photographic tradition of depicting Himba people in an 'overwhelming [or panoramic] landscape' (Miescher and Rizzo 2000: 42) is apparent in this advertisement, and is almost certainly not coincidental. The colonialist aestheticized panoramic view generally alluded to the fact that the landscape was available for conquest.
- 10 The Himba advertisement is by no means the only recent South African advertisement that invokes colonial rhetoric and iconography; I believe the reason for this lies precisely in the intertextual competence that John Fiske (1989: 125) maintains allows the cultural production of popular meaning. In terms of Frederic Jameson's (1983, 1991) examination of postmodernism and late capitalism, the Himba advertisement is a typical example of pastiche.
- 11 It is also significant that the Himba advertisement was followed by at least two other Land Rover advertisements wherein the colonial trope was predominant, namely 'The Northern Trail' and 'Royal Geographical Society', both by Young & Rubicam. The body copy of the latter reads: 'Before venturing into unknown territory that forms Africa's schizophrenic landscape in your Defender, remember that generations of scientists and explorers would be lost without it. That's why the Royal Geographical Society relies on Defender. The Land Rover experience.'

This article does not suggest that colonialism itself is a homogenous discourse, but rather that colonial-style rhetoric has been appropriated by the advertising industry in a stereotypical and simplistic manner, depicting Africa as a 'backdrop for the advertising of colonial products' (Pieterse 1992: 123).

- 12 Coombes (2003: 6) points out that the dual legacy of settler colonialism and British imperialism in South Africa has a profound impact on the creation of contemporary subjectivities.
- 13 For the purposes of this analysis, it is also essential to recognize that cars are important status symbols in South Africa (Addison 2002: 219).
- 14 It is significant in terms of this article that the new cultural sensibility that Jameson aligns with postmodernism coincides with 'the arrival of automobile culture' (Jameson 1983: 123–4).
- 15 General Lothar von Trotha's infamous proclamation issued on 2 October 1904 ordered that 'every Herero, whether found armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot' ('Herero to File Atrocity . . .' 2003: 12). The Herero filed claims against the German government and two German companies (Deutsche Bank and the shipping company Woermann Line (also known as SAFmarine)) in 2003 for \$4 billion to compensate them for the enslavement and alleged atrocities committed during colonial times ('Herero to File Atrocity . . .' 2003: 12).
- 16 The Himba are part of the Herero who currently number about 100,000 out of the total population of Namibia of less than 2 million.
- 17 The Himba dress of animal skins and bodily adornment by animal fat and ochre have become iconic for the tourism industry.
- 18 It is ironic that this 'innocence' is confirmed by the fact that very few Himba saw the advertisement under discussion, as they are not the target market at which the product is aimed.
- 19 See note 3. Although the advertisement for the Land Rover Range Rover previously referred to occurs in a magazine (*Blink*) that targets the elite black male, it is interesting that even though the figure shown in the advertisement is clearly male, all indication of colour has been elided. This strategy would support Bertelsen's (1999: 230) opinion that new consumerist subjectivities are being formed in South Africa by means of aspirational advertising.
- 20 Sarah Baartman was taken from Cape Town to Europe in 1810 and was put on display in London and Paris. She was exhibited as a so-called oddity because of her physical appearance (particularly her breasts and sexual organs), and in the minds of many, she illustrated the cherished notion of a kind of missing link between man and ape. When Baartman died in Paris in 1815, the palaeontologist Georges Cuvier dissected her, and her skeleton, genitalia and brain were exhibited in the Museum of Man in Paris until 1985. After prolonged negotiations with the French government, Baartman's remains were returned to South Africa in 2002, and were buried on National Women's Day (9 August). She has become an important cultural icon in South Africa, symbolizing the exploitative practices of both colonialism and patriarchy. The restitution of expropriated cultural property and human remains is a highly contentious issue – two British institutions, the Manchester Museum and London's Horniman Museum, recently returned

openUP (May 2007)

indigenous Australian skulls for burial in their homeland ('Return to the Native' 2003: 18), but such cultural sensitivity is relatively rare.

- 21 This accusation is ironic given Land Rover's ostensible commitment to conservation and environmental issues (Keeton 2001).
- 22 The charges of racism in the advertisement were also projected onto the advertising industry in general in South Africa, which was alleged to be 'still white and racist' (Donaldson 2000: 1).
- 23 The clash of value systems inherent in this advertisement is evident in the fact that according to the Himba, the nudity depicted is not erotic, whereas they found the distortion of the breasts unacceptable (Rademeyer 2000: 2–3). The amount of nudity in the advertisement did not contravene the ASA Code.
- 24 Lesley Sutton, a media co-ordinator for Land Rover South Africa, explained (in Pillinger 2001: 2) that,
Pillinger 2001: 2) that,

[t]he advertisement was subject to a pilot research test among a racially mixed sample and was found to be acceptable. Respondents did not find it offensive whether on the basis of gender discrimination, nudity, racism or otherwise. We acknowledge and respect the opinions expressed to us and have made the decision to discontinue the advertisement.

- 25 Grace Lees-Maffei (2002: 368) reasons that Stephen Bayley revised his understanding of the meaning of cars in response to feminist analysis of gendered technology.
- 26 It is generally understood that technology is not neutral and has been coded by society to privilege the male gender, leading to the paradigmatic alignment between technology, masculinity and power. Judy Wajcman (1991: 137) explains:

To emphasize . . . the ways in which the symbolic representation of technology is sharply gendered is not to deny that real differences do exist between women and men in relation to technology. Nor is it to imply that all men are technologically skilled or knowledgeable. Rather . . . it is the ideology of masculinity that has this intimate bond with technology.

The stereotypical alliance between men and technology is problematic, and indeed untenable in terms of discourses such as cyberfeminism. The inversion of this stereotype reclaims technology for women and presents convincing arguments that demythologize gendered technology (see Wajcman 1991). Cyberfeminism disrupts and unsettles this gendered alliance between masculinity and technology, and proposes that it is just another cultural construct that builds on the existing binary oppositions such as male/female, culture/nature and body/technology. But in the Himba advertisement, the traditional gendering of technology still seems to be operative; the fact that the advertising agency used computer manipulation on the image of the woman demonstrates how the power of representation is located in the privileged binary.

- 27 Pieterse (1992: 111) contends that once the '[d]angers were under control . . . Africa came more and more to resemble a vast recreational area, an ideal setting for boys' adventures'.

- 28 Travel writing was established as a decisively gendered trope, in which the '[e]xplorer-man paints/possesses newly unveiled landscape-woman' (Pratt 1992: 213).
- 29 Henrichsen (2000: 166) believes that the Herrensafari was a ritualized form of temporary escape from modernity that was necessary specifically during the fraught political circumstances contingent upon the practices of colonialism in Namibia.
- 30 Nochlin (1991: 36–7) makes a similar point when she states that the supposed absence of westerners in orientalist paintings of the nineteenth century is paradoxical since '[t]he white man, the Westerner, if of course always implicitly present . . . his is necessarily the controlling gaze, the gaze which brings the Oriental world into being, the gaze for which it is ultimately intended'. In terms of Bertelsen's (1999) contention that black consumers are being wooed with images of putative freedom in the form of an invitation to participate in consumption, it could certainly be possible to argue that the identity of the driver of the Freeland is deliberately elided in order to make interpellation of black consumers possible.
- 31 The binary oppositions that operate from a specific class position and lifestyle in the Himba advertisement are not discussed in detail here as the argument focuses more on gender. The binaries related to class include: upper middle class/lower class, classless; and consumerism/nomadic lifestyle. Within a capitalist society, a luxury product such as the Land Rover serves as the epitome of a lifestyle based on consumption, which is reinforced by the resultant commodification of space and Otherness. Specific notions of moneyed class adhere to the Land Rover and connote the imperialistic gentlemen explorers of the nineteenth century who explored the world at their leisure (see note 14). But Hall (1996a: 423) warns against a reductive reading of class because the "'unity" of classes is necessarily complex and has to be produced – constructed, created – as a result of specific economic, political and ideological practices'.
- 32 Brantlinger (1985: 199) affirms the presence of the constructed binary opposition between the West (self) and Africa (Other):
- '[t]he spirit of Tarzan . . . lives on in Western culture . . . In criticizing recent American and European failures to imagine Africa without prejudice, Chinua Achebe notes the continuing "desire . . . in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar."'
- 33 Primitivism here designates 'the fixed proximity of such [generally indigenous] people to Nature' (Hall 1995: 22) and is represented in the *mise en scène* of the advertisement.
- 34 Similarly, in orientalist paintings, according to Nochlin (1991: 45) there are:
- two ideological assumptions about power: one about men's power over women; the other about white men's superiority to, hence justifiable control over, inferior, darker races . . . the (male) viewer was invited sexually to identify with, yet morally to distance himself from, his Oriental counterparts depicted within the objectively inviting yet racially distancing space of the painting.

- 35 In the romantic (tourist) gaze, the emphasis falls on 'solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze', which usually implies solitary communion with, and consumption of nature (Urry 1990: 45, 86). Zimmer (1998: 645) points out that the 'deliberate human interference with nature' is usually followed by a later stage when nature is valorized as a place of refuge or escape.
- 36 Root (1996: 37–8) also establishes timelessness and primitivism as important components of the trope of exoticism by which other cultures were classified.
- 37 Ahluwalia and Nursey-Bray (1997: 4–5) emphasize the fact that neo-colonialism's indirect influence is exercised primarily through discourses such as communications and tourism.
- 38 See Rosaldo (1989) and Root (1996) for more about the idea that nostalgia for colonialism is implicit in a great deal of western visual culture.
- 39 Hall's (1996a: 435) Gramscian reading of racism points out that it is not the same at all times or in all places 'either in its forms, its relations to other structures and processes, or its effects'.

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