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Governing bodies? Exploring normative sex and gender discourses in informal herbal healing flyers and posters in Johannesburg CBD

ABSTRACT

Using both intersectional and kyriarchy heuristics which acknowledge the interlocking gender, sexuality and class dynamics in the co-construction of power hierarchies, this paper examines how informal herbal healing flyers and posters in the Johannesburg CBD reinforce norms which govern and legitimate desirable male and female bodies and lives through written texts and images. This is done through invitations to potential clients to enhance their sexual organs and bodies as well as improve their marriages and finances. With the acronym of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Allies and Pansexual (LGBTQQIAAP) in mind, the paper explores how the flyers and posters pre-suppose that all bodies are inherently sexual, heterosexual, male/female, able-bodied, young and willing participants in sexual activities. Drawing on previous research which mainly focused on the power relations between the adverts' composers and their potential customers, the paper explores a different dimension of the adverts by problematising instances of these adverts' complicity in heteronormative, cisnormative, ableist, and ageist discourses that conceal the operations of power over bodies. Overall, we argue that the flyers and posters commodify sex, gender and class into a purchasable package of attributes which, supposedly, complete the individual, making them a fuller member of society.

Keywords: sexuality; gendering; advertisements; heteronormativity; cisnormativity; intersectionality.

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INTRODUCTION

Flyers and posters are affordable ways for people to market their businesses. In Johannesburg, informal herbal healers sometimes employ people to stand along various central business district (CBD) streets, distributing flyers which market their services. These agents generously hand out the flyers to passersby who are usually in a rush in the hustle and bustle of the city. Posters pasted on walls, street electric lamp posts and boxes are an alternative advertising channel. The competition for advertising space is evident in how these posters are usually pasted one on top of the other, sometimes resulting in layers of newer adverts on top of old ones (Figure 1). This scenario shows that there is great competition for customers, which again suggests that the business has a wide market pool.



Figure 1: Poster on an electrical box in Johannesburg CBD shows a multi-layered history of poster adverts centred on the theme of sex enhancement and economic prosperity

This paper seeks to flesh out how discourses in these posters relate to wider societal values in Johannesburg. First, we will discuss the site of the flyer and poster advertising in Johannesburg CBD and discuss the methodology that we used throughout the research. Finally, we discuss the findings.

1. INTERSECTIONAL AND KYRIARCHY HEURISTICS

The article makes use of intersectionality and kyriarchy as analysis heuristics. The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw (1998) according to whom intersectionality highlights the conceptual limitations of the analyses of the single issues. “Rather than examining gender, race, class, and nation as distinctive social hierarchies, intersectionality examines how they mutually construct one another” (Collins, 1998:63). Crenshaw (1998) likened intersectionality’s view on discrimination and privilege to a four-way intersection where each route has oncoming cars. “If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars travelling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them” (Crenshaw, 1989:149). In this paper, intersectionality allows us to make sense of the multiple layers through which identities are constructed. The flyers under study do not treat gender, class, sex and religion in isolation, but they hold all these different axes of power together as influential in shaping identities. To comprehend injustice in different social spaces, we need to consider the multiple factors that impact identity and power in our analysis, including race, class, gender, and sexuality (Osborne, 2015). The intersectionality of these identity markers is rarely acknowledged although it influences social positions and experiences of power, oppression and vulnerability (Osborne, 2015).

Intersectionality also ties in with kyriarchy, a theory of feminist theologian Elisabeth Fiorenza on how structural power operates. Fiorenza (2013) refers to kyriarchy as a sophisticated pyramidal system in which social and religious structures of super-ordination and sub-ordination, and privilege and disadvantage interlock. Edstrom (2014:121) defines kyriarchy as “multiple systems of oppression interacting without the necessity of one being more fundamental than others”. For Osborne (2015:132):

Kyriarchy, as a theory of power that dovetails with intersectionality and describes the power structures intersectionality creates, offers researchers interested in social and environmental justice a fresh way of approaching the interactions of power in planning practice, communities, space and places.

Kyriarchy also forms part of a critical feminist interpretation that realises the dehumanisation and the survival of wo/men struggling against multiple oppressions (Fiorenza, 1995).

Hence, both intersectionality and kyriarchy are used to analyse the interlocking nature of privilege and disadvantage. This means coming to terms with the fact that privilege co-exists with disadvantage, meaning that the elevation of patriarchy exists alongside the objectification of women. The expression of masculinity despises femininity and the expression of femininity often means implicating oneself in one’s oppression (Heyes, 2003).

2. THE SITE OF THE FLYER AND POSTER ADVERTISING IN JOHANNESBURG

Walking in the streets of Johannesburg CBD, one is likely to be confronted by marketing agents distributing pamphlets. If not, one is also likely to see posters pasted on different structures with content which markets the services of informal herbal healers. Mavunga contends that “Shoppers and other people going about their business in central Johannesburg are constantly bothered by people on pavements handing out leaflets and flyers advertising a variety of herbal medicines and spiritual healing services” (2013:85). These leaflets and fliers are at times invasive, making them difficult to ignore. The adverts are handed out frequently making them part of the everyday texts in the lives of most visitors to central Johannesburg (Kadenge & Ndlovu, 2012).

There is evidence that some who read these advertisements take them seriously (Mavunga, 2013). This is seen in some newspaper articles which provide narratives of customers who have been cheated by these informal herbal medicine vendors. Interestingly, it is not only the unsophisticated who fall for these adverts, as Kadenge and Ndlovu (2012) have demonstrated. Kadenge and Ndlovu (2012:481) posit that “African traditional/alternative healers may well be transmitters of ancient and powerful knowledge, but they are also, sometimes solely, inventors of a medical tradition, that is, agents facilitating the incorporation of new ways of thinking and acting”. What others might consider charlatanism by advertisers might be a viable alternative to biomedicine, especially in the Johannesburg’s context of high immigration and a variety of social and health problems (Kadenge & Ndlovu, 2012). While these scholars only allude to such problems, our analysis seeks to map out how these adverts thrive on the promise of a better life wherein an individual’s social, that is, material needs/class and “health”, especially in the form of sexual health, are interwoven.

This paper is not necessarily concerned with whether the advertised services work, but with the ideological consequences which these texts exert on society, bodies and lives. To our knowledge, Edwards and Milani (2014) have conducted a feminist critical discourse analysis of herbalist pamphlets in Johannesburg about these ideological effects. In their article, the two scholars demonstrate how herbalist pamphlets are sites where “complex identity nexuses of gender, sexuality, race, age and culture intersect and compete with each other within the larger regime of representation in South Africa” (2014:461). They articulate how these herbal pamphlets’ representation of men and women reproduces heteronormativity and patriarchy. In this paper, we concur with Edwards and Milani’s (2014) position and seek to add to the knowledge produced by going further to explore how informal herbal medicine flyers and posters pre-suppose that all bodies are inherently sexual, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, young and willing participants in sexual activities. We also extend our analysis to include the dynamics of class and economic necessity and how these intersect with sexuality and gender. In this way, we uniquely cover other intersectional characteristics of these representations that Kadenge and Ndlovu (2012), Mavunga (2013) and Edwards and Milani (2014) do not explore in detail.

We locate these discourses in the wider process of the social reproduction of inequality and power abuse in post-apartheid South Africa. While we acknowledge the existence of such texts and discourses in other parts of the world, this paper focuses only on Johannesburg. However, further research on such texts has been conducted elsewhere, looking at medicine and sexual enhancement in India (Islam, 2017, 2010), China (Islam & Kuah-Pearce, 2013), while others have written about herbal medicine advertising in Africa more generally (Mawere, 2011; Sepota & Mohlake, 2012).

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative research approach in which data were collected from printed adverts. The data, in the form of words, phrases, sentences and pictures in the flyers and posters collected were analysed in terms of the themes which emerged from them. This research was carried out over six months. The fieldwork involved walking around the research sites looking for posters and agents distributing flyers and leaflets. In total, nineteen documents were collected for analysis. Six of these were posters pasted on walls, billboards or street-light poles or electrical boxes. The other thirteen were flyers or leaflets. Eight of these were double-sided while one had written text and images on four pages. The compilation of multiple adverts on each of the small flyers meant the data were thick. Not all of the data in these articles could be succinctly discussed in one paper. The nineteen flyers and pamphlets yielded had multiple sub-texts, which were so rich in data that they enabled reasonable deductions about general themes and meanings regarding implied ideal sexual identities. In some cases, these flyers and pamphlets had roughly the same information, showing how the healers use an almost similar template for advertising.

The data collected between January and June 2019 were analysed using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis. Discourse is defined as a language in use, what people say about something within different contexts. The product of discourse is knowledge and power (Fairclough, 2001; Hall, 1997). We also used semiotic analysis to unpack the meanings embedded in visual images and language. Socially created connections between expression and content inform the culture and are central to semiotics (Culler, 1975). Semiotics views culture as a reference point or a way through which one comes to believe in the reality of an expression (Eco, 1986). Images are therefore signs, which are “something that stands for something else” (Sebeok & Umiker-Sebeok, 1986:936). Semiotics, which is the “science of signs”, provides us with a set of assumptions and concepts which allow for a systematic analysis of symbolic systems (Cullum-Swan & Manning, 1994). Semiotics is therefore not only concerned with the analysis of actual images but also with language and the ideas it invokes in one’s mind.

During the research, we considered doing interviews with some of the informal herbalists. Through a series of WhatsApp calls to the practitioners we were able to solicit one interview,

which we eventually decided to suspend indefinitely owing to safety concerns.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

While most of the emerging themes are complex and intertwined, they were separated for readability. In total four themes and issues were discussed and analysed. These include a view of the adverts as gendering, an analysis of the relationship between marriage, fertility and disability, a discussion on choice and agency and lastly, intersections of miracle/magic, class, sexuality and gender. These selected themes are by no means exhaustive of the different possible readings given the polysemic nature of all texts.

4.1 ADVERTS AS GENDERING: EMPOWERING MEN AND OBJECTIFYING WOMEN

Sex and gender overlap. Sex consists of physical organs such as the male organ (penis), the female organ (the vagina) or ambiguous organs (intersex). These sexual organs are used to socially assign specific roles and attributes to different bodies at birth. The assignment of roles based on one's surface sex biological configuration is called gendering. Butler (1986:35) "understands sex to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas gender, is the cultural meaning and form that that body acquires". The distinction between male and female serves as a basic organising principle for every human culture (Bem, 1981:354).

Boys and girls, men and women, are expected to possess different traits such as masculinity or femininity by society. A cisnormative society expects them to acquire sex-specific self-concepts and personality characteristics such as masculinity or femininity as defined by that culture (Barry III et al., 1957) and nothing in between. The process by which a society recasts "male" and "female" into masculine and feminine is known as sex-typing (Bem, 1981:354). Sex-typing informs the gender schema theory

because sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information in terms of, and conforming to, whatever definitions of masculinity and femininity the culture happens to provide, it is the process of partitioning the world into two equivalence classes based on the gender schema, not the contents of the equivalence classes, that is central to the theory (Bem, 1981:356).

Gender schema theory allows one to read how the social construction of attributes that are associated with the category of "man" or "woman" influences individuals' overall perceptions of the world as existing mostly in binaries. In each case, one of the binary is valorised above the other (Steyn, 2014:381). We use this theory to make "sense" of the "organizing principle" behind the content of the adverts as they discursively seek to govern bodies along with idealised male and female norms.

There is assumed compatibility between the femininity and masculinity that these adverts construct. It is important to note that the gender binary of male and female is historically shaped through media discourses. Hence, within the binarism (see Boellstorff, 2003) that media discourses perpetuate, the advertisers suggest a co-relation or duality in how the female and male bodies complement each other in the larger social spheres of heteronormative exercise of power. Power never names itself as such but rather, as Steyn (2014:286) argues “hegemonic language tends to obfuscate the ways in which social control is being exercised, how powerful groups may be benefiting or how the options of others are curtailed”. These adverts, which impose compulsory heterosexuality and cisnormativity, emphasise the need for a bigger, longer and stronger penis for men, not for female pleasure but male domination (Edwards & Milani, 2014). Contemporary research has conceptualised the relationship between the male penis and power, particularly patriarchal power (Ostberg, 2010; Vanyoro, 2020). The male penis symbolises the masculine domination of women (see De La Torre, 1999). One advertisement under analysis reserved the left column for men- related issues and the right for women. The columns offered “solutions” to sexual health issues as summarised in the text boxes below:

Table 1: An extract from a leaflet

1	WE MAKE PENIS BIGGER, LONGER, HARDER, STRONG & POWERFUL
2	PERMANENTLY IN ALL SIZES 18 CM, 25 CM, 35 CM IN 30 MIN BY USING UKTILI OIL AND LIKONKONO CREAM
3	ABNORMAL EJACULATION
	* Are you a ‘1 minute man?
	* Are you sperming quick?
	* You lost interest in sex...?

Another pamphlet, by Dr Bengo and Mama, who describe themselves as “Professional Psychic, Spiritual Traditional Healer & Sexologist” at the top of the pamphlet’s back, has the title “3 in 1 penis combo” followed by the words:

Table 2: An extract from a leaflet by “Professional Psychic, Spiritual Traditional Healer & Sexologist”

**1 SIZE (LENGTH AND THICKNESS)
2 POWER (HARDNESS & STRONG ERECTION)
3 STOP EARLY EJACULATION.
WE ENLARGE YOUR PENIS TO THE SIZE YOU
WANT IN 3 DAYS RESULTS ARE PERMANENT
MASAI OIL, 3 IN 1 PENIS COMBO AND BE
STRONG TO MAKE MORE ROUNDS’.**

The intention in making the penis “bigger, longer, harder, strong and powerful” (Tables 1 and 2 above) seems to be to give it more power over the vagina. The reconstructions or body modifications listed in the advertisements convey their meaning to the would-be client mainly by implication. There is a whole sub-text of beliefs about what constitutes a satisfactory heterosexual encounter between man and woman for both parties. For example, implied here is the notion that to satisfy a woman, a man needs a big penis that can sexually “discipline” a woman. A man’s failure to “discipline” their woman is viewed as the primary source of all marital problems (Chisale, 2016). To effectively govern the female body and put it in its right place, a man needs to be equipped with “suitably sized sex paraphernalia”. First, the assumption that someone assigned male at birth should be concerned about their penis size presupposes that this is the natural biological site of all male sexual pleasure. Such advertisements often ignore the possibility of queer relationships which involve anal stimulation. Second, an understanding of this masculine mind-set often leads women to fake moaning at strategic moments in the sex act to give the impression to their man that they have been overcome, subdued and thoroughly disciplined. Chisale (2016) found that young Zulu women in greater KwaZulu-Natal were attracted to young men who were macho, violent authoritarian and domineering. However, the adverts contain no testimonial evidence to suggest that women desire the so-called powerful penises which may measure up to 18 cm, 25 cm and 35 cm (Table 1), or have a desire to be disciplined and dominated.

As a result of this construction, men find themselves cowed by the fear of not sizing up, in what Edwards and Milani (2014:466) broadly define as “masculinity in crisis”, male response to the threat of emasculation that constitutional discourses of gender equality in South Africa represents. Ostberg (2010:47) suggests that “Normative messages in media and popular culture are so ubiquitous that men in western consumer cultures are bombarded with the archaic imperative: ‘Thou shalt sport a banana in thy pocket’” (emphasis added), meaning, a man has to have a huge and bulky penis the size of a banana. These discourses directly suggest that

men should continue governing women's bodies by subduing, dominating and disciplining them through large penises, in the belief that this is what satisfies a woman. Preoccupation with lasting longer in bed and avoiding early ejaculation among men also "Signals a broader crisis of masculinity, driven by a combination of socioeconomic and political factors" (Obadare, 2018:603).

Preoccupation with sexual organs by the advertisers emphasises the cultural differences between men and women. "The idea that women are inferior to men is naturalised and thus legitimated by reference to biology" (McNay, 1991:128) by these advertisers. Bordo (2000) conceptualises men's penis size as stereotypically linked with western cultural notions of masculinity which suppose that large penis size is a sign of one being "more" of a man. The "genitals symbolise virility, procreative potency, and power" (Pope et al., 2000:165). This speaks to how in western masculinity, men are expected to occupy space or "penetrate" space (Pronger, 1999). These are all "dictums which both lend credence to the need for a large, penetrating penis" (Drummond & Filiault, 2007:122) which can effectively occupy as a sign of the male penis governing the female vagina. In most languages spoken by the target clientele for the advertisements, the sex act between men and women is characterised in terms that connote domination. For example, the crude word for having sex in Shona is *kukwira* (see Vanyoro, 2020), or *ukukwela* in isiZulu, meaning "to mount" when loosely translated into English. The terms always suggest the male as exercising agency over a passively receptive female body as the sex object.

Some scholars provide a feminist critique to normative constructions of gender. For example, for Butler (1986) to be a man or woman entails an ongoing process of culturally interpreting bodies. It, therefore, means to be dynamically positioned within a field of cultural possibilities. Gender identities are unnatural (Butler, 1986), and they should not be viewed as static. Rather, there are many ways of being a man, a woman or gender queer. Further, both transgender men and women transcend the gender assigned to them at birth. "Feminist theory has often been critical of naturalistic explanations of sex and sexuality that assume that the meaning of women's social existence can be derived from some fact of their physiology" (Butler, 1988:520). Hence our analysis does not deny the facticity or materiality of the body. It simply challenges the way through which these corporeal factors come to ascribe particular meanings to certain bodies (Butler, 1988). As such, the construction of the male penis in these adverts is linked to cisheteropatriarchal power. The conceptualisation of the penis as a symbol of manhood essentialises what it means to be a man. Hence, we view the construction of the male penis as interwoven with the construction of gender norms in society. Following Ostberg (2010:47), we concur with the position that "These norms ... serve to reproduce a particular political system in which categories of 'men' and 'women' are stable and unproblematic". Butler (1990) sees these norms as anti-queer, resulting in the exclusion or censure of those who cause "gender trouble" by challenging these naturalised categories. We therefore read these flyers as linked to the everyday social fabric of cisheteropatriarchal norms.

The advertisement's questions (see Table 2), "Are you a '1 minute man'?", "are you sperming quick?"; "You lost interest in sex?" suggest that the marker of an ideal sexual encounter is a lengthy performance by the man. This obsession with high sexual temporal quantity creates what we may refer to as "pleasure norms". We define pleasure norms as mythical discourses which circulate in heteropatriarchal societies, presenting sexual myths about what satisfies women as facts. These statements are discourses of power because they seek to usurp agency from women through speaking on their behalf about the sources of their pleasure. Advertisements such as this one, which seek to help men last longer in bed, objectify the woman the same way that they ask of the man to be more militant and enduring in bed. Militarism and endurance are both ideas associated with hegemonic masculinity and its call for the domination of the other (see De La Torre, 1999; Gqola, 2015). These discourses are also linked to the idea of athleticism and longevity, which are hegemonic spheres for the ascertainment of masculinity, particularly black masculinity (Azzarito & Harrison Jr, 2008). This shows just how the advertisements absorb "the patriarchal system characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition" (Sultana, 2010:3) as a given.

4.1.1 ADVERTS OBJECTIFYING WOMEN

Emphasis on biological difference is not an innocuous act. Sultana (2010:3), argues that "patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or masculine, roles and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones". For McNay (1991:128), "the body is central to the feminist analysis of the oppression of women because it is upon the biological difference between the male and female bodies that the edifice of gender inequality is built and legitimated". For example, buttock enlargement and vaginal tightening, which are tied to heterofemininity and youth, are marketed in these advertisements. These advertisements suggest the need to return to the virginal state during which the vagina is "tight". Women are particularly called upon to preserve their youth and beauty through taking good care of their skins and keeping their vaginas tight. Sanger (2009) suggests that this idea of youthfulness through skincare and vaginal tightening is a western construct. However, it seems just as prevalent in African contexts as the advertisements seem to indicate. In an exploration of constructions of femininities, race and hypersexualised bodies in selected South African magazines, Sanger (2009) observed that an editorial feature in one of the magazines linked the importance of youthfulness in white women to the idea of the right woman as "childlike and virginal, with an unused vagina" (Manderson, 1999 as quoted by Braun & Kitzinger, 2001:272). So-called "loose" vaginas are treated as problematic and in need of "panaceas" (Kadenge & Ndlovu, 2012). What Sanger (2009) terms the "problematic" vagina is perfectible and is, therefore "a viable site for beautification and normalisation" (Braun & Kitzinger, 2001:264). One of the flyer advertisements stated:

Table 3: An extract of virginal tightening and marriage texts from a flyer

<p>*ARE YOU NOT GETTING MARRIED? *VAGINAL TIGHTENING & STOP BAD SMELL</p>
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Using critical discourse analysis, we argue that the ordering of these two statements seems to suggest that the reason one is not getting married could be because they have a “loose” vagina or bad smell. In western feminist analysis, the “tight vagina” is an idea meant to control and regulate women’s sexuality (Sanger, 2009), because a “loose” vagina evokes a sense of exhaustion through overuse and over-exploitation of a resource. Hence, proportionately, a “loose woman” is one who sleeps around indiscriminately. The tight vagina is aimed at enhancing male pleasure, with little to no attention being paid to the woman’s pleasure. The vagina is also described as a site where there should be no bad smell, for it to be desirable for the man. Pumla Gqola (2015) argues that patriarchy refers to women’s bodies as dirty and excessive. “From being told that their vaginas smell like fish, to being taught that menstrual blood and body hair are dirty”, women are frequently raised to believe that there is something inherently wrong with their bodies (Gqola, 2015:39). While exploring the issues of vaginal size in conversation with USA women, Braun and Kitzinger (2001:273) observed that “heterosexual women’s bodies are defined in relation to heterosexual male pleasure, rather than their own pleasure”. Also, as a matter of relationality, the tight vagina is to women what the huge penis is to men. Overall, such constructions of femininity and masculinity in media discourses speak to the need for a huge and rigid penis to penetrate the tight vagina, for the satisfaction of the man. Discourses around the “smelly vagina” also seek to discipline women through inflicting insecurities, such as suggesting that failure to address these “problems” may result in their disposal by their male partners. This discourse reinforces existing perceptions of “the vagina as inferior to the penis; the vagina as absence; the vagina as (passive) receptacle for the penis; the vagina as sexually inadequate; the vagina as disgusting; the vagina as vulnerable and abused; and the vagina as dangerous” (Braun & Wilkinson, 2001:17).

Ascribing certain normative corporeal expressions to nature and biology is one of the ways power operates. As such, the “natural” body must be understood as a central tool in the legitimization of specific strategies of oppression (McNay, 1991:128). Other products which the pamphlets offered for women included a lotion on whose container was written: “Stretch Mark Tummy & Stomach Reducing OIL 3 in 1”. Others included “Hips & bums enlargement”. accompanied by images of black women with big buttocks and very slim waists (see Figure 3):

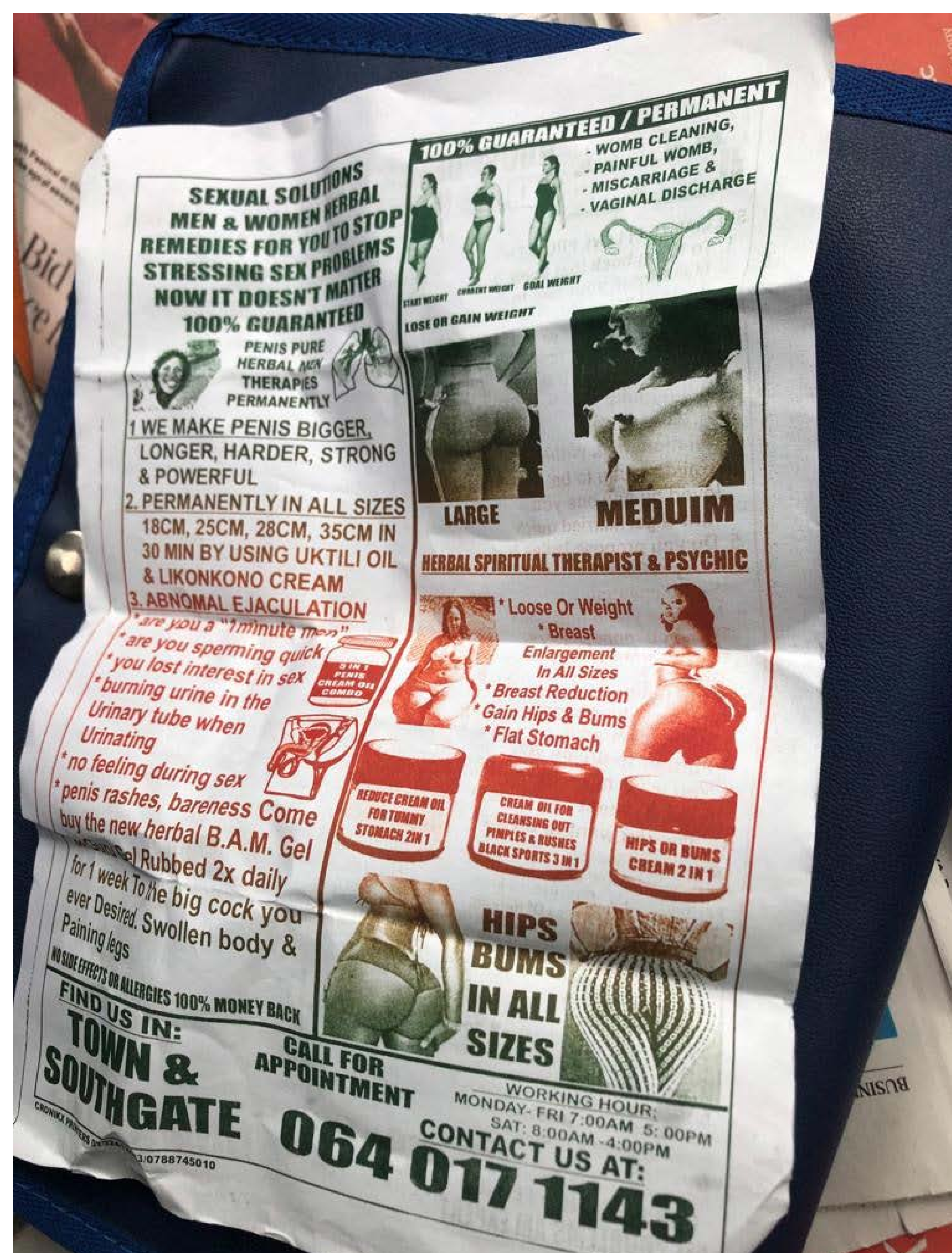


Figure 3: A semiotic reading shows that although it also mentions male sex organs, the pictorial matter in this advertisement over-sexualises and dismembers the feminine body into nothing but an ensemble of selected sexual body parts.

“Breast enlargement & reduction” was also on offer. The pamphlet had sections for men and women, with the men’s column on the left and the women’s on the right. It also had an image of the buttocks of a naked woman with the caption “large” to go with it. Next to this were two firm and pointy breasts captioned “medium”. Below these two images, there was an image of a naked woman on the left and a woman with a slim waist and a large butt on the right followed by text in the middle dividing these two. Indeed, all these advertisements subscribe to an idealised female body which is perceived as having medium or big breasts, a slim waist, bigger hips and bums and a tighter vagina. In effect, the advertisement reduces the feminine body to its sex organs – hips and bums mediated by a tight vagina, more or less. We argue that this is informed by the wider cisheteronormative societal belief that these are features which most men are attracted to. Scholars like Appleford (2016:1) investigated the black women’s changing

understandings of beauty and body image, and in particular young black women's desire for a "slim-thick" look. "This is a body shape that brings together aspects of black and white beauty, seen to be embodied by Kim Kardashian, due to her full-figured bottom and thighs, and her very petite waist." Kim Kardashian is famous American reality television celebrity. These advertisements, therefore, feed into the creation of a consumerist culture informed by popular culture, in which the female body is commodified for pleasurable consumption by men. "Kim Kardashian and the 'slim-thick' ideal perhaps offers an example of cultural hybridity, and yet they also work to exaggerate cultural stereotypes, encouraging a notion of beauty that is unrealistic, and far outside the reach of ordinary women." (Appleford, 2016:1). It can be argued that the femininity that these advertisements advance is compatible with the type of femininity that popular culture is also forwarding. All in all, what is central in these advertisements is the preservation of cisheteronormative conceptions of male/female power relations through the objectification of women.

4.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISABILITY, FERTILITY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

What is important to note here is the implied relationship between the discourses of disability, fertility, marriage and family. Another flyer (Figure 4) stated that it could help "people who don't produce babies" and those with "pregnancy problems". This service perceives non-reproductive relationships as unproductive and problematic. The idea of reproduction follows normative ideals of family, seen as a natural or biological arrangement that is based on heterosexual attraction and given legitimacy through marriage (Collins, 1998). Family is also viewed as legitimate through the children born from it. McEwen (2017) views the normative construction of family as heteronormative and "nuclear", as infused with unequal power relations. When "family" is imagined as strictly heterosexual, married and monogamous, it is not innocuous but embodies power relations (McEwen, 2017). The family becomes a hegemonic unit in which we find the enforcement of social kyriarchy and hierarchy. For example, "Marriage is one of the central arenas in which men prove their manhood, demonstrating to the world and to themselves that they are 'real men'" (Johnson & Loscocco, 2015:147). The man who fails to impregnate a woman is seen as not man enough. Likewise, the woman who cannot conceive is seen as incomplete, useless and disabled. And, in most cases, the man whose wife is seen as barren is advised to take a second wife. This conceals the possible infertility of the husband.

Few problems are more threatening to a marriage than infertility, especially in African belief systems. While infertility is more often blamed on the woman, both men and women can be socially excused for terminating a marriage with an infertile partner (Smith, 2001:14). Therefore, infertility can be treated as a socially excluding phenomenon. The woman who has children is more entitled to complain of her husband's shortcomings than one with no children. In other words, the latter is not accorded her full humanity and rights within the marriage institution. Such beliefs of marriage tie it to the community and extended family, privileging fertility and the social role of mother and father. "While modern courtship fosters a more egalitarian gender

dynamic, modern marriage reinforces a more patriarchal hierarchy” (Smith, 2001:132). Gender organises the institution of heterosexual marriage and social life by placing women as unequal to men (Risman, 2004, cited in Johnson & Loscocco, 2015:143). These social relations of kyriarchy place women at the bottom of the pyramid (Fiorenze, 1995).

Marriage constructs gender roles as an oppositional binary, pitting man against woman. Johnson and Liscocco, in conversation about industrial societies, posit that:

the gender binary presents itself in the physical separation between women and men into separate spheres of activity, sharpening the notion of women and men as opposites. Women are relegated to the now de-valued private, domestic sphere, while men head off to the public sphere of paid work. The “cult of domesticity” is central to making sense of this division of labour by sex (2015:146).

Edwards and Milani (2014:461) assert that the pamphlets are “banal sexed signs” promoting the services of “herbalist” healers; promising solutions to a variety of ailments and life problems. The intersection of sexuality and disability is visible in these advertisements “because”, Morris (1991:20) asserts, “normative discourses about sex represents those with disabilities as ‘asexual, or at best sexually inadequate, that [they] cannot ovulate, menstruate, conceive or give birth, have orgasms, erections, ejaculations or impregnate”. Moreover, people living with disabilities are infantilised and asexualised through such discourses. This is a sign of adultist and ableist constructs of both young people and disabled sexuality (Chappell, 2014). While some of these things are not really mentioned in the texts, Van Dijk (1996) argues that the analysis of the unsaid is at times more revealing than the study of that which is expressed in a text.

The advertisements construct infertility, small penises, flat bums and lack of big hips as a form of impairment which needs to be remedied through herbal and spiritual healing services. According to Turner and Stagg (2006), bodily deformities such as spinal curvature, pock-marked skin, red hair, slouching posture, effeminate voices in men and deep voices in women were historically viewed as disabilities. Turner and Stagg (2006) hence contend that disability is any condition which does not necessarily cause physical difficulty but may yet have socially disabling consequences. In 2016, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared infertility a “‘disease of the reproductive system’ [that] results in disability¹.” Therefore, a disability can be temporal; with socially disabling consequences. For example, not fulfilling motherhood leads women with infertility to experience a sense of incomplete motherhood (Sternke & Abrahamson, 2014). By appealing to “impotent” or “infertile” women or men to visit the herbalist “healers” or assistance, these advertisements seek to legitimise society’s perceptions of infertility and small sexual organs, especially in respect of men, as associated with disability, or abnormalities that

¹ <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/infertility/perspective/en/>

need a cure as well. They also prioritise reproduction, a phenomenon at the forefront in the oppression, domestication and dehumanisation of women (Collins, 1998).

Lastly, the pathologisation of those who ejaculate early or are asexual as suggested by the caption “*you lost interest in sex” (Table 2) treats asexuality and premature ejaculation as conditions needing to be cured. This pathologisation divides masculinity into a binary of sexual ability and disability; with the latter being associated with non-normative sexual performance. Hence the intention of these advertisements could be that, those that interact with them should experience a sense of inadequacy and feel like non-normative bodies living in gender and sexual deviance that requires correction to conform.

4.3 CHOICE AND AGENCY

By portraying those who are not well endowed in terms of sexual organs as being deficient and inviting them to take steps to make up for the deficit, the advertisements seek to erode their target clients’ capacity for individual choice and agency. Ardley and Quinn (2014) suggest that agency has to do with intentionality and the choices which people make in response to what is happening in their lives. Through their individual and collective agency, human beings therefore choose to behave in certain ways. However, perhaps without the healers being aware of it, the messages in the advertisements are premised on the strong theory of advertising which assumes that potential customers are bound to react as is intended by the advertiser. To an extent, this overlooks the customers’ capacity to rely on their own choices and agency for their responses to advertisements. The weak theory of advertising, however, holds that customers have the freedom to make their own purchasing decisions which are not necessarily influenced by messages from marketers (Cant and van Heerden, 2011). The healers’ approach is understandable, nonetheless, given the cultural pressures that are exerted on both men and women to ensure that they have sexual organs whose dimensions are such that they satisfy their partners. Evident in this are the advertisements’ reliance on socially constructed beliefs to govern human bodies.

4.4 INTERSECTIONS OF MIRACLE/MAGIC, CLASS, SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Evidence from elsewhere suggests that the motive for enhancing sexual organs is not that clear cut. Hannaford and Foley (2015:208) are of the view that “marital success also implies that both husband and wife find emotional and sexual satisfaction”. In Senegalese society among the important attributes of a husband is the ability to “clothe”, “house” and “sexually satisfy” and this is even codified in Senegal’s “Code de la Famille”, a civil document on familial rights and responsibilities (Hannaford & Foley, 2015). “Lack of sexual satisfaction is in fact grounds for the initiation of divorce proceedings by either a man or a woman, and co-wives in polygamous marriages are lawfully entitled to an equal number of nights with their husband” (Hannaford & Foley, 2015:208). However, what is also common in these relationships is the conceptualisation

of the man as the provider, the breadwinner who (if he is wealthy enough) is entitled to having multiple partners. This presents an intersection between material and sexual satisfaction on the husband's part. Drawing from the above advertisement, we argue that "lost love", "misunderstanding and divorce", "business attraction", "more rounds during sex and getting a job, transfer or promotion" are related.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE OUR FUTURE BRIGHT
STOP SUFFERING**

DR. HARKIN
AN ASTROLOGY, HERBALIST HEALER

WE GUARANTEE 100% RECOVERY FOR ALL PROBLEMS. IF YOU HAVE TRIED OTHER DOCTORS AND YOU ARE UNSATISFIED BY THEIR FAILURE, JUST COME TO ME

CONSULTATION FEE R100.00

IMMEDIATE CHANGE ON:-

1. GET MORE MONEY FROM YOUR PARTNER
2. PENIS ERECTION / ENLARGEMENT
3. BRING BACK LOST LOVER
4. BEWITCHED PEOPLE
5. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
- 5 B. CHASE AWAY TIKOLOSHE
6. UNSETTLED MARRIAGES
- (B) TO MAKE DIVORCE / BLOCK DIVORCE
- 7 COURT CASES
8. JOB PROMOTION
9. ONE WITH BAD LUCK
10. INSANITY / MADNESS
- 11 INTERPRETING DREAMS
12. PEOPLE WHO DON'T PRODUCE BABIES
13. SWOLLEN BODY, DIARRHOEA, CANCER
14. PREGNANCY PROBLEMS
15. WOMEN WITH MENSTRUATION PROBLEMS
16. BODY PAINS, LEGS, CHEST AND THE BACK
- 17 BRING BACK STOLEN THINGS
18. SANGOMAS WHO NEED MORE POWERS
19. HIV SYMPTOMS & SIGNS
20. BLOOD PRESSURE / VOMITING
21. PAINFUL WOMB / STOMACH
22. CUSTOMER ATTRACTION
22. (B) MEN ATTRACTION
23. PROTECTION OF BUSINESS, CARS AND HOUSES
24. WIN LOTTO & CASINO
25. ALCOHOL / DRUGS ADDICT

MAGIC WALLET

HERBAL PENIS CREAM

MAGIC RAT

CALL AND BOOK BEFORE YOU COME!

ADDRESS:
RISSIK & BREE STREET, JOHANNESBURG

CELL: 0732555019

Figure 4: This advertisement extends the same magical quick-fix cures for small penises, erectile dysfunctions to social and economic problems

Hence, we use intersectionality to show that sex and gender do not exist in a vacuum but are inextricably related to class (that is, economy and finances). Using intersectionality, we can map out interlocking relations of dominance along with multiple social, political, cultural and economic dynamics of power that are determined simultaneously by identity categories

of gender, class, sexuality and others (May, 2015). An “intersectional” reading shows that advertisements which promise financial success, sexual potency and fertility as not separate but intricately linked with constructions of marriage. The co-location of “big and hard penises”, “tight vaginas” and “winning lotto”, among other miracles in the advertisement above, is not accidental. It connotes intersectional co-determination between sex, gender and class as closely linked to one’s social positioning. It discursively constructs the potential client for sexual enhancement as also most likely to need some miraculous and magical social mobility from poverty to instant prosperity.

JOHANNESBURG HERBAL CENTER
No More Pains Again, Call For Help
The One 'u' Know About Is Here
DR. HAMZA MAGIC RING
WITH MORE SPIRITUAL POWERS / MEDICINES
CONSULTATION FEE IS R100.00 ONLY

1. BRING BACK LOST LOVER
2. MISUNDERSTANDING AND DIVORCE
3. BUSINESS ATTRACTION
4. MAKE MORE ROUNDS DURING SEX
5. GET JOBS, TRANSFER OR PROMOTION
6. WE DESTROY TOKOLOSHE
7. COURT CASES
8. WIN LOTTO, CASINO OR ANY CLAIM
9. PROPERTY AND SELF PROTECTION
10. AIDS AND ITS SYMPTOMS
11. SKIN DISEASES
12. BLOOD PRESSURE
13. WE MAKE PENIS BIG & STRONG PERMANENTLY
14. CONTROL EARLY EJACULATION
15. PASS INTERVIEW OR EXAMS
16. BODY PAINS
17. WE REDUCE WOMEN'S VAGINA
18. MENSTRUATION PROBLEMS
19. WOMEN & MEN WHO CANNOT PRODUCE

MAGIC WALLET
MAGIC STICK
HERBAL PENIS CREAM

CORNER JOUBERT & BREE STREET
JOHANNESBURG
CALL: 078 755 7570

Figure 5: Numbers 1 to 5 in the flyer are about bringing back lost lovers, divorce, business affluence, more rounds during sex and success at work. The advertisement links these five to suggest a relationship- between sexuality, gender and class/economic affluence

Previous research on this subject (Kadenge & Ndlovu, 2012; Mavunga, 2013; Edwards & Milani, 2014) does not analyse the relationship between financial affluence, sexual prowess and heterosexual relationships. Some of the advertisements that promise mystically generated finance and wealth operate in the realm of the unproven and the mystic. For example, there is no scientific evidence attesting to the fact that a magic rat or magic wallet can enhance one's finances. This representation of magical wealth intersects with the myth of penis enlargement as a source of ideal manhood (refer to the poster in Figure 1, penis enlargement; magic rin; financial problems). Belief in the likelihood and possibility of magic offering quick rewards conceals the fact that poverty may be the inevitable corollary of affluence in capitalist modernity based on class differentials. These discourses, we argue, are meant to result in an obsession with the dreamy and wondrous. We dovetail this point with the emergence of the so-called "prosperity gospel" (Chitando, 2007) in African-based Pentecostal churches. In the world of these churches, financial miracles are possible and they sit side by side with family and the risk of hypersexuality and infidelity on the part of the male believer (Meyer, 2002). In a study of Ghanaian films' representation of Pentecostalism, Meyer (2002) found that while these films idealise "morally controlled materialism" (Marshall, 1998:282), they "often point out that there are also immoral, selfish ways to achieve wealth and emphasise how modernity is full of temptations and seductions, which mainly operate through the desire for sex and money" (Meyer, 2002:78). Suggested here is that sex and money are affiliated, hence it can be argued that these advertisements seek to exploit this connection.

In the same manner in which these herbal advertisements claim to provide quick solutions to genital issues, so do some of the pastors in Pentecostal churches, who promise instant wealth and health (Kramer, 2005). Some Pentecostal churches in Nigeria openly discuss sex, sexuality, masculinity, privacy, gender, and eroticism (Obadare, 2018). The Pentecostal pastor is the centre for an erotic economy, like "Bishop" Daniel Obinim, who openly massages the penises of his male congregants who have erectile anxiety (Obadare, 2017, 2018). This erotic economy has implications for scholarly understanding of the character of social citizenship because through these discourses the pastor is complicit in the production of "governable" or "suggestible" citizens (Obadare, 2018: 606). "Whilst the political sociology of the pastor is a well-trodden ground, the idea of the pastor as an object of erotic fascination, part sexual healer, part sex symbol, the throbbing centre of an intense Pentecostal sexual economy, is comparatively less frequented" (Obadare, 2017:n.p.). The argument that there exists an underexplored relationship between the discourses in Pentecostal churches and the herbal healing advertisements can be further illuminated by the pamphlet below.



Figure 6: This handbill disguises advertising of the usual herbal healing services with a front cover that looks like an invitation to prayer, making use of Christian symbols such as the cross and the dove

The advertisement is subdivided into four pages through folding in the middle. The right side of the flyer is the cover. Passers-by walking along Bree Street shop pavement in Johannesburg CBD one Sunday afternoon and who were handed this flyer could hardly construe it as other than an invite to some church service. The words “Prof Julius come for special prayers”, “special prayers at my beautiful temple or in the comfort of your home”, the image of a dove and a cross on the cover page easily passed it off as a flyer advertising a Pentecostal church service. This is because the flyer makes use of Christian signs and words such as the cross, the dove and the words ‘prayer’ and ‘temple.’ However, the interior of the advertisement suggest a different story altogether. On page three of the pamphlet, headlined “Financial breakthrough” there is a list of things on offer:

Table 3: Content on page 3 of the pamphlet

HOLY WATER & HOLY OIL
MAGIC WALLET
RATS THAT BRING MONEY IN YOUR HOME
MAGIC RING FOR MONEY

Our understanding of all these objects which miraculously generate money is that they are also related to masculinity and power. This is because, in roadside posters, images of objects such as the magic ring are juxtaposed with textual messages on penis enlargement. The co-location of penis enlargement, a magic ring and magical financial solutions in one poster (Figure 5) suggests that these three are perhaps related. The poster links penile and financial health, suggesting that there cannot be one without the other. Money and a big penis, it is suggested, are needed for the completion of the man. Mohamed (2011) found that in South Africa conspicuous consumption of brands and commodities is associated with the reclamation of black masculinities. The idea of redirecting sufferers away from seeking political solutions to social problems obfuscates the exploitative nature of capitalist relations of production as the real source of working-class people's misery. Answers are to be looked for inside one's body, or to some mystical/miraculous powers in the magic rat, ring or wallet or in marriage and sex in which the woman is further objectified, and not in addressing structural inequalities of the capitalist world order. Cross-fertilisation of all these issues which may appear unrelated allows researchers to realise the interconnectivity of masculinity, gender, patriarchy, femininity, studies of affect, crowd engineering and crowd control, the religious spectacle, media studies, emotions, pornography, sex and sexuality, and ethics (Obadare, 2017) in structuring society.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has tried to unpack the seemingly innocent messages found in flyers and leaflets advertising herbal medicine in Johannesburg's CDB. The main arguments we made here are that these advertisements seek to govern bodies through alluding to what ideal sexed, gendered and classed lives ought to look like. Through offering to enhance bodies for them to be compatible with society's gendered expectations, the advertisements legitimate heteronormative sexuality. This is also informed by the fact that heterosexuality is the norm in society. They also instruct the female to acquire marketable features such as a tight vagina, tiny waist and large buttocks for male "consumption". Unlike previous research on this subject, we have also tried to show the relationship between gender and class by demonstrating how sexual satisfaction speaks to material satisfaction in patriarchal relationships. Overall, through these advertisements, queer identities are erased, infertility is pathologised as a disability and classed hetero-patriarchal relationships are promoted. Because this research is not an audience study, the researchers did not examine how these messages are consumed. However, we do acknowledge that individuals have agency and choice in their consumption of such advertisements.

Using intersectionality and kyriarchy heuristics, the paper also highlighted the interlocking dimensions of masculinity, femininity, fertility, gender, patriarchy, femininity, sex and sexuality, finances and religion in social relationships. While it can be argued that there is succinct research examining these dimensions, there still exists a lacuna in research which examines the relationship between gender and sexuality discourses in informal herbal healing and

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African Pentecostal circles.

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