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**Deconstructing the Legacy of the 'Savage' Woman: The
Politics of Displacing Boundaries of Difference in *Panache*
Magazine**

Christiana Abraham

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Communication Studies

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

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**Deconstructing the Legacy of the ‘Savage’ Woman:
The Politics of Displacing Boundaries of Difference in *Panache* Magazine**

Christiana Abraham

Abstract

This thesis deconstructs the notion of the ‘savage’ woman by focusing on the case of Saartje Baartman nicknamed the ‘Hottentot Venus’. Deemed a denigrated African woman, she was displayed and studied in Europe by Enlightenment’s scientists. Such studies were pivotal in defining her ‘anatomical difference’, and became the foundation of philosophies, and stereotypes that have defined images of non-European women for the centuries that followed. This case study examines how layers of acquired discourses developed through an ideology of ‘otherness’.

By locating media practice as central to the reproduction of knowledge, this thesis points to how the legacy of this ideology of difference has become an intricate part of contemporary print media practice. This knowledge is readily accessible through the reproduction of stereotypical representations of world majority women in mainstream fashion magazines. This thesis, therefore, explores how the naturalization of the knowledge of ‘otherness’ in media practice is challenged through an analysis of *Panache* magazine. *Panache* is a fashion and lifestyle magazine for world majority women that locates women other than ‘white’ and ‘western’ as its central subject and audience. This thesis places the construction of the ‘savage’ woman as the historical legacy that *Panache* magazine seeks to tackle. The thesis analyses how *Panache* magazine conducts its kind of resistance within the confining boundaries of the women’s magazine genre. It looks at how problematic resistance can become. At the same time, it also assesses the importance of media resistance in the production of counter-ideologies and discourses.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, Henry and Gertrude Rolle, whose love have provided me with the confidence to pursue all the dreams that I dare to envision as possible.

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Introduction

Research Problematic

Over the last four years, I worked as features editor of *Panache Magazine*, a fashion and lifestyle magazine for women of colour. Produced for an audience of women in the Caribbean and major cities in the US and Canada, the magazine's mandate is to reverse traditional fashion magazine practices that view non-white and non-western women as 'other'. It, therefore, refocuses a concept of beauty and high fashion by locating women other than white and western as its central subject and audience. A large part of the magazine's mandate is to counter the everyday representations of women who are not given primary consideration as audience in mainstream publications. At the same time, the magazine also sets out to counter extreme stereotypical representations of women of colour by other magazines for women of colour, particularly American magazines. Many of these magazines portray their audience as 'stuck in time', archaic, almost apologetic, and continuously struggling for identity within a mass culture. The *Panache* view is that a large segment of the world's women do not fall into these dominant categorizations, but are beautiful, sophisticated and educated. More importantly, these women see themselves as such, thereby refusing to adhere to the dominant burden of representation imposed on them by traditional fashion magazine practice.

Gayatri Spivak theorizes about the "subaltern" female who cannot speak and therefore cannot be heard (Spivak 1988: 295). Spivak's subaltern subjects are marked as economically marginalized women throughout the world. While this thesis locates race as its primary indicator, it will borrow some of Spivak's themes by looking at her

notion of the “historically muted subject” also pertinent to this thesis. In application, this thesis views its subjects as historically muted because they have not been given the right to speak and to be heard. *Panache* shares a vision with its audience that represents the unacknowledged complexity of the world’s women, by refusing to be stuck within the confining binary of viewing all women as either ‘struggling and oppressed’ or ‘liberated and beautiful’.

During my tenure at *Panache* magazine, the politics of representation of ‘women of colour’ was often an important point of debate. Almost every day, we were challenged to deconstruct current representations in other publications that depicted women in stereotypical pose: dressed in feathers, body grease, excessive or under-lit photography to hide or enhance their blackness, or wearing mainly clichéd African or animal prints. Depictions such as these are further reinforced by the language of editorials that frame women of colour, to project their difference.

Judith Williamson’s essay ‘Women is an Island’ explores the concept of ‘otherness’ by looking at the ways in which women from the world other than the west are depicted in advertising through representations of “wildness” and “oversexed”, “exotic”, “other” that signals “bestial qualities” (105). Williamson sums up the wide-ranging stereotypical depictions of mainstream media which have become the basis of *Panache*’s resistance. Furthermore, another major challenge stems from the work of many freelance writers and photographers who produce material within this dominant framework. They themselves address the subject as ‘wild’ and ‘exotic’. The task at *Panache* was to challenge these images from within and without by providing new frameworks for which depictions of these women could be seen.

A pertinent subject of inquiry that emerged during my academic work was an attempt at understanding traditional media practices that define a social hierarchy of *placing* women. Therefore, when I discovered an article on the ‘Hottentot Venus’ that pointed to the construction process of women deemed ‘other’, my excitement peaked. Saartje Baartman, the woman who was nicknamed ‘The Hottentot Venus’ by European showmen in 1810, was an African, ‘Hottentot,’¹ woman who was brought to Europe to be displayed and subsequently studied by scientists of the Enlightenment who confirmed and documented her difference (Sommerville 252). Examining her display and scientific study, provides a framework for approaching the origin and formation of a knowledge of difference that was produced about women who were non-European. Scientific examinations and studies of the ‘Hottentot Venus’ became the foundation of a philosophy, language, and subsequent approaches that defined how non-European women would be seen for centuries to come. Central to the case of the ‘Hottentot Venus’ is that it allows an examination of layers of acquired discourses and methods that have guided the development of a subsequent legacy of this knowledge of difference. This became for me the revelation of a puzzle that presented a classification grid, a way of seeing, placing, naming, and categorizing the ‘other’. This legacy is ever-present in today’s media representations of women, and is at the root of the work that *Panache* magazine faces on a daily basis.

Framing the Thesis

This thesis will focus on the legacy of images of women who have been termed 'other' to the Western/European conception of woman. This legacy in media constitutes the use of images and stories about these women and how such usage perpetuates a notion of difference. Stuart Hall describes the deep structures that reproduce racism as accounted for by "extraordinary immovable characteristics" that defy time (Hall 1981: 61). Using Hall as a reference point, this thesis will suggest that this produced notion of the 'other' that continues to defy time, is in fact, a legacy of the notion of the 'savage'. This legacy was constructed throughout Europe's *Enlightenment* period, when explanations for the diversity of people encountered through Europe's colonial conquest were sought. This thesis will explore the root of the social construction of the 'savage' woman in order to explain the perpetuation of this notion of difference in media, and the process through which this naturalization of difference has occurred. At the same time, it will scrutinize the alternative images that are reproduced in *Panache* magazine as a case study to demonstrate how a voice of resistance can defy historical and cultural approaches that have been perpetuated through media practices.

Knowledge Construction and the 'Savage' Woman

Throughout this thesis, a focus on the 'savage' woman will serve as a case study in the wider discourse of knowledge construction. Michel Foucault examines the origination of knowledge by drawing attention to its construction as an inherent part of history. The process of visiting this history according to Foucault is to identify the accidents, minute deviations and the complete reversals:

“The errors and false appraisals and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but at the exteriority or accidents”
(Foucault 146).

It is through this pertinent Foucaultian perspective of “searching” to “disturb” and “fragment” what was “previously considered immovable” (147), that this thesis will question the very basis of the construction of the ‘savage’ woman. The main objective of the study is to discover the root of social, historical, philosophical and other contexts that contributed to the construction of the notion of the ‘savage’ woman. Emphasis will be placed on the scientific intervention of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries; during that period, science had made its entrance as the process of reason through which authentic inquiry of ideas was verified. It was also the period of Europe’s conquest and colonization of the ‘New World,’ which also significantly impacted the continent’s world-view. This points to the process of the construct of knowledges of difference about peoples, and above all, the role that science played in that production. This theme extends to a major problematic in academic discourse. What constitutes the basis of knowledge and knowledge systems? And through what means are they formed and propagated? Through this thesis, a close focus on the case study of the ‘savage’ woman will provide ways of approaching the wider discourse of knowledge construction and its legacy in media.

Cultural Production as Tools of Resistance

This thesis will analyze how ideas and images about the ‘other’ woman have become an intricate part of cultural production, in this case print media. Through an examination of *Panache* magazine, this thesis will explore a case study of how such naturalization of knowledge and media practice is questioned and challenged. This thesis will, therefore, analyze *Panache’s* reversal approach by locating the construction of the ‘savage’ woman as the historical legacy, and model that the magazine actively seeks to challenge.

By merging the construction of the ‘savage’ woman with a content analysis of *Panache* magazine, this thesis will present a blueprint for the reversal of media practice that locates certain women as ‘other’. The thesis will, therefore, alternate between the construction of the ‘savage’ woman and media practice in order to show the link between the knowledge base and its legacy in media. The reason for this combined approach will be to depict that traditional, standard media practice stems out of empirical knowledge that if not questioned, remains a philosophical continuity. Stuart Hall cites media’s main sphere of operation as the production and transformation of ideologies (Hall 1990: 8). This approach locates media practice as central to the reproduction of knowledge and knowledge systems. Both the construction of the ‘savage’ in Enlightenment discourse and imaginary, and the continued use of images of the world’s women can be visualized through these lenses. Central here is how the media act as a conduit for larger belief systems and practices.

It is no longer taboo for fashion magazines to feature models of colour. However the images are scarce. They are used as token images to give the impression of

representation. When *Vogue (US)* used a model of colour on their cover for the first time in 1998, the Editor in Chief, Anna Wintour explained her use of the model.

It is a fact of life that the color of a cover model's skin (or hair, for that matter) dramatically affects newsstand sales. Although it is rare for an issue of *Vogue* to go to the printer without one or more black models featured prominently inside, black models appear less often than I, and many of you would like on *Vogue*'s covers – which, no one will be shocked to hear, are designed to appeal to as large a group of potential readers as possible. This month we feature a young, fresh-faced black model named Kiara Kabukuru on our cover, I am crossing my fingers that Kiara will be embraced by magazine buyers everywhere – not because she's black but because she is beautiful. (Letter from the editor. *Vogue* July, 1997: 26).

Justifying why she had decided to use this particular model says much about the values of *Vogue* magazine. This *Vogue* example encapsulates the notion that in most mainstream publications, images are produced for a primarily 'white' audience; therefore, images of people of colour continue to be presented as spectacle. There seems to be no sense that these images are coming from an informed look. They are tainted with anthropological methods². Added to this, are marketing conceptions that audiences do not want to buy magazines that feature women of colour. It is no wonder then that the Editor of *Vogue* has to "cross her fingers" in the hope that her audience will accept the new face. As for advertising, Anthony J. Cortese points out that despite increases in diversity of models, "ethnic minority models" in advertising often conform to 'white' standards of culture

and beauty (90). At the other extreme, models' "ethnic characteristics" are emphasized to portray their difference to the general Western culture. The grand generalization is that mainstream audiences will not identify with images of people of colour. What is the assumption then of mainstream readers? It is assumed that the norm is a 'white' audience (Dyer 3).

As a result of a "crisis in media representation" of women of the world 'other' to the European, notions of racism and 'otherness' are embedded in the "codes of recognition" that are an intrinsic part of magazine practice. Also the scarcity of images of women of colour says something fundamental about values, philosophies and central narratives of the imagined place of these women in magazine culture. Through their practices, mainstream magazines have had the power to make women of colour feel invisible and also mute, to the extent that they mark positions of marginality on the defined 'other'. They hold powerful messages of ethnocentricity and 'Euro-beauty'. In their essay 'Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Study of Controversy and Conflict' Tator et. al theorize that culture is a key site in political struggle to transform power relations. "*Cultural representations echo social realities. Thus all forms of cultural production must be understood in the context of how they are produced, by whom, at what historical moment and with what social, economic and historical impact*" (Tator, Henry and Mattis 7).

Applying this concept to the thesis will uncover new ways of mapping personal representation in media and their consequences. These new approaches result in a struggle for identity that challenge traditional ways of depiction. Through redefinition, voice, meaning and function are given to new forms of representation and self-awareness.

Traditional magazine practice of using women of color as 'savage', primitive, ethnic, 'other' communicates important and powerful meanings about these people and

about how they are constructed within the social and the fashion environments. Turning around this discourse is critical in creating and influencing individual ideas about the construction of racism and the place of world majority women in that construction. This approach therefore provides an avenue for images to be seen, voices to be heard, and stories to be told in ways that redefine and re-articulate new meanings about beauty. This case study therefore looks at how voiceless people empower themselves, and what form this empowerment takes.

The Research Question

Given the continuing power of the image of the savage woman, created and reinforced throughout the Enlightenment, how does *Panache* magazine resist the legacy of this knowledge base in the wider context of media practices that continue to depict world majority women as ‘other’?

Key Terms:

‘Savage’: Originally I approached this topic by using the term *primitive* women, but research indicates that pre-medieval Europeans are often referred to as *primitives*. However, the term ‘savage’ was used solely to describe people far away from the European reality. These ‘savages’ who were mostly encountered by Europeans in Africa and the New Worlds, were marked in temporal and physical imaginaries. The word ‘savage’ will therefore be placed within quotation marks throughout this thesis to highlight the word’s pejorative meaning.

The use of ‘**otherness**’ is based on Danny Saunders description – ‘symbolic entity located outside of the self – leading to symbolic interaction’ (O’Sullivan et al 213). The use of the term surrounds these very women who were considered ‘other’ to the European sensibility, a concept that is central to the notion of difference that is addressed in this research. Reversing the notion of otherness is also central to the resisting approach of *Panache* magazine.

Imaginary is used in this thesis as cultural construction and signifier. The imaginary reflects images, stories, myths and ideas that made the definition of the ‘other’ possible.

The use of **images**, reflects tangible and intangible signifiers that have come to represent the ‘savage’ woman in media. The use of the term is significant throughout this thesis as it is only through the reinforcement of images that a legacy of the ‘savage’ woman attained fluidity, utility, history, and reproducibility.

World majority woman is used to represent the non-white women that this thesis is addressing as its central subject. The term will be used throughout the work to depict the masses of women who were defined as the ‘savage other’ throughout the enlightenment, and who still remain exoticized today in mainstream media. By using this term, this thesis recognizes that the enlightenment period produced nomenclature and disseminated a lasting image that is contrary to the fact that these women are the majority of the women of the world. Richard Dyer discusses the problematics associated with finding such race-based terminology (Dyer 11). In struggling with the semantics of appropriate terms for

describing people who are non-white he argues that using the term “Non-White” privileges white; “Black” does not take into consideration all of the other people who are not white; “People Of Colour” suggests that white is not a colour. Dyer’s insight was taken into consideration in selecting terms that would accurately represent the women who are central to this thesis.

Editorial is used in this text to refer to magazine content that is deliberately produced as a part of *Panache* magazine’s philosophy of resistance.

Methods of Analysis

The methods of analysis to be utilized for this thesis will be three fold. The first approach will use interpretive analysis of research materials on the construction of the ‘savage’ woman and fashion magazines from both primary and secondary sources. Deconstructing the notion of the ‘savage’ woman will elaborate how philosophies of difference were built up over time and provided the basis for every taken-for granted stereotype about women who are of non-European origin. Women’s experiences as savages were specifically constructed and marked by their gender and sexuality. Sander Gilman puts forth the argument that the scientific studies of the ‘Hottentot Venus’ were conducted to present the European audience with a riveting anomaly (Gilman 25). Linking the role of the media in preserving and reproducing the enduring image of the buttocks of the ‘Hottentot Venus’ will be elaborated through the work of Robert Altick. The importance of print media, books, novels, human displays, and the intervention of anthropology, and ethnography will be incorporated in the analysis. This incorporation

will depict the interplay between colonialism and empire building as critical in the development of a knowledge system.

The second method will be content analysis of *Panache* magazine. This approach will include analysis of articles, advertising, fashion editorials, and other pertinent sections of the magazine. Themes such as voice, representation, and authenticity will be applied to the texts analyzed in order to frame the editorial resistance that *Panache* magazine conducts and the manner in which this challenge is met. Editorial pages will be analyzed to assess how the magazine selects its editorial material to present its women in positions of power.

The third approach will utilize interview quotes from the senior editor and managing editor of *Panache* magazine. These interviews will be contextualized within the analysis of the magazine and will be used to interpret the texts and themes discussed. As this is the first attempt to document material on *Panache* magazine, the use of these interviews will provide first-hand insight into the nature of editorial challenges that are involved in producing this magazine.

Focus

It is important to note that this thesis centers on a European construction of the notion of the 'savage' woman and its subsequent legacy in historically related media practice. It makes reference to European-centered activities and themes over the last 800 years. Through this research process, it has become clear to me that the tendency to construct the 'other' as different seems as old as humanity. Europeans themselves have always applied regional stigmas and stereotypes in viewing one another. 'Great empires'

from the Egyptians to the Romans have all had their own constructions of conquered peoples that have reflected various levels of inferiority, a phenomena that can be associated with power, empire and a need for categorizations. It must be noted that this thesis does not confine such a construction only to Europe. It is conscious that similar or other constructions about these same or other peoples have taken place in other empires and nations. And within various cultural contexts, these grand constructions also have similar implications as knowledge base, language, social ideologies and in extension a legacy in media practice.

***Panache* Magazine as a Response to the ‘Savage’ Woman**

Tracing the trajectory of the legacy of the ‘savage’ woman though this thesis is one among many other legacies that could be traced. Legacies such as commodity culture, constructs of femininity, construct of the pathological or bourgeois woman are just some that can be followed through, as all of these practices have historical precedents. The ‘savage’ woman provides the opportunity to look at the gendering of ‘savagery’ as a feminist topic, but more importantly, it examines how racism is masked in age-old media practice.

Effectively merging the two main themes in this thesis – (1) the construction of the ‘savage’ woman and (2) a textual analysis of *Panache* magazine, will be critical. This merger will depict mainstream fashion media practice as a legacy of a knowledge base of the ‘savage’ woman, that is being challenged in *Panache* magazine. The two themes are not as dislocated as the three-hundred years that separates them. The merger is deliberate. It will show that the least suspected media text – the fashion genre, can be a place of

serious and sound resistance. Most of the academic work that has been conducted in this field has viewed the genre from empirical, historical, feminist, or political economy perspective or as ‘fluff’ media (Blix 56). While most fashion magazine research has focused on how magazines teach women to be consumers, little work has been conducted on their positive editorial impact. This case study intends to demonstrate the opposite. It alleges that although operating within the confines of the fashion magazine genre, *Panache* magazine does consciously function as a place for rewriting and re-reading the place of world majority women in the sphere of beauty and ‘womanhood’. Stuart Hall contextualizes this approach. “*Social science is about deconstructing the obvious, it is about showing people that the things they immediately feel to be just like that aren’t quite like that*” (Hall 1981: 61). One would expect the type of resistance displayed in *Panache* to function from a left-wing academic setting, but this case suggests that effective media resistance can occur in the simplest of places.

Chapter One

The Legacy of the 'Savage' Woman: Producing Difference

The 'Hottentot Venus' and Men of Science

The woman dubbed the 'Hottentot Venus' by showmen of London has become an important reference point as the central marker of difference for world majority women. When Saartje Baartman arrived in England in 1810, one wonders if she could have perceived the fate that awaited her. The primary purpose of her trip was to be displayed to thousands of spectators in England and later France, when she was studied by the continent's best scientists. After her death in 1815, her dissected genitals became a museum display at Paris' prestigious Musée de l'Homme. Saartje's story is of great importance to this thesis, as her legacy as subject of scientific study - has become one of the primary scientific and cultural markers that have defined 'savage' women. The science of her documented difference contributed to the biologically based belief that groups of people deemed 'savages' were a separate and lower race. What is even more important is the process of her definition, its legacy, and its contribution to almost all fields of knowledge. Using the example of the 'Hottentot Venus' provides one specific instance of how categories of difference were created.

During the most active period of Saartje Baartman's study and display, the site of greatest interest to onlookers was what has been described as her 'grotesque buttocks' (Gilman 85). Saartje's large behind was something that London had never seen before as she was the first person of the Hottentot tribe to be put on display in England. Described as a "one-woman beauty pageant" (Altick 269), she was considered a valuable

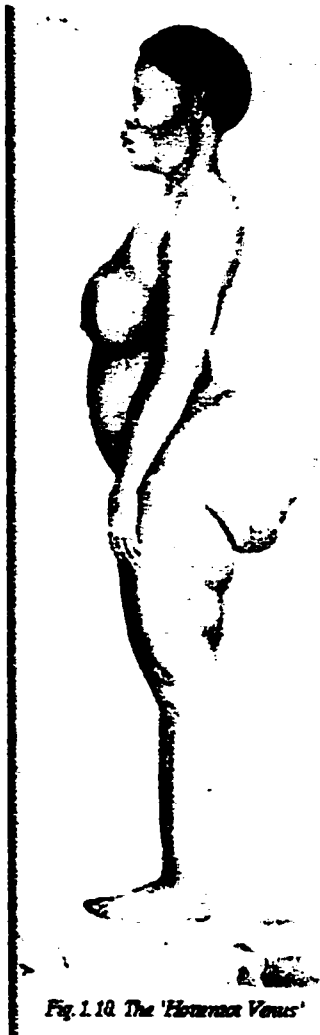


Fig. 1.10. The 'Hottentot Venus'

commodity by her owners who had repeatedly traded her as profitable display commodity³. Her extensive display in England caused great sensation and popularity akin to a 'cult of curiosity' that led to her exhibition in France by an animal showman⁴. Famous anatomist Georges Cuvier thoroughly inspected her to verify her difference in comparison to European women (see Fig. 1.10). He measured and documented every aspect of her physical anatomy, providing reports, drawings and charts. But it was her genitals that he seemed most interested in locating as the site of greatest pathology. Upon her death, a few short months after she was studied, Cuvier dissected her body to reveal that her great behind that had attracted so much attention over the years - was "une masse de graisse" (a mass of fat) (qtd. in Sharpley-Whiting 27: 218). He thoroughly inspected her genitalia, the interior of her vulva, womb, and pelvic bones. Together with his report, he presented her carefully prepared genitalia, a plaster cast of her body, and her skeleton to the Musée de l'Homme. Backed by Cuvier's famous report, her excessive genitalia as museum exhibit would showcase her difference for centuries to come. In life, she was a curiosity and scientific object; in death, a prized museum exhibit. Cuvier's science also verified that the 'Hottentot Venus' was ape-like and ugly. Her difference represented that of all women dubbed 'savage'. In extension,

this knowledge-base became an important foundation upon which esthetics of beauty were formulated.

Imaginary

A history of Western philosophy points to the gradual production of bodies of knowledge about 'other' people. Long before the colonial period, Europeans had interesting stories about people from faraway lands. The mediaeval period's stories were based mainly on colorful accounts of travelers' and explorers' tales (Jahoda 26-35). Adam Hochschild traces the European imagination about Africa to about 1350 when Ranulf Hidgen, a Benedictine monk mapped the world. He claimed that Africa contained one-eyed people who used their feet to cover their heads (Hochschild 6). The fearsome image of 'savagery' was not confined to Africa. It was easy enough to apply descriptions of 'savage' inferiority to natives of America, Asia, Australia or Malaysia, with the same lack of discrimination (Street 6). After the discovery of the new world, explorers were instructed to look for strange humans with "dog-like faces" (Jahoda 15). The 'savage' became the product of the imagination about the new world. The period of the enlightenment was one of intense interest in notions of primitivism which pointed to a search for self through encounters with people found in the new world and Africa.⁵ There was a huge appetite for the monstrous, grotesque and the fantastic. In part, they emerged from growing and changing ideas of philosophy, religion, literature and later science that collaborated in a systematic synchronization of a world view about the 'savage'. This knowledge base intensified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was instrumental in shaping public opinion about Africa in particular. It was clear that

the assumptions upon which explorers and anthropologists claims were made were strongly prejudiced by these colorful preconceptions. Accounts of 'savages' were therefore prejudices and myths of Europe that tell us about the imaginary barriers erected. They tell us more about the philosophies, attitudes and world view of the Europeans themselves than about the 'savages' that they were intended to describe.

Ideological Shift

Historical texts indicate that Europeans did not always explicitly view people of far-away lands as exotic or hideous – at least there did not seem to be an extreme focus on the fantastic during medieval times. There seems to be a marked shift in perception of 'other' people as 'savage' that occurred from about the 16th century onwards. Margaret Hodgen makes reference to the frequency of earlier traders and pilgrims who traveled extensively across Europe to the Mediterranean, North Africa and what today is referred to as the Middle-Eastern Region. According to Hodgen these frequent pilgrims consisted of ordinary medieval people who made extensive trips to visit holy shrines or as retribution for sins (Hodgen 85). The worldview at the time was Christendom versus 'other' as there was no clear sense of a European identity as yet. Even in Marco Polo's writings about his expeditions to Asia for example, he was in awe of his encounters and wrote elaborate praises about the riches and people he encountered (96)⁶. A distinct shift in an understanding of the 'other' appeared to have emerged with the discovery of the new world when the people encountered seemed to fit the idea of earlier mythologized difference. It was a crucial time of Renaissance scholarship when secular explanations

for human diversity were initiated. Influenced by race theory⁷, explanations for human diversity centered on the binary fields of polygenism and monogenism (Gould 71).

Hodgen links the church and its missionizing process in the New World as a distinct contributor to the shift in viewing 'other' people. Missionaries were given clear directives to investigate the new peoples' cultures and ways of lives so that the Christianization process could be more strategic (Hodgen 103). Comparison between the lives of these encountered peoples and Europeans became the basis upon which investigations were made.⁸ Added to this was the rise of the printing press and the correlating rise in literacy. Together, a distribution of a specific world view of the 'other' could for the first time be widely achieved. With the European conquest of the new world in full motion, the rise of political states across Europe and the Protestant reformation, a new sense of Europeanness emerged. Encounters with new peoples therefore mirrored an image of Europeanness for the first time. It seemed appropriate to view the world within the binaries of Europeanness versus the 'other' – 'savage'.

Why Study the 'Hottentot Venus'

An important significance of the study of the 'Hottentot Venus' is that she was not put on display as a random African woman brought to Europe. A correlation of numerous accounts of her life reveal that an important reason for the intense interest in displaying her, was because she was a 'Hottentot' female. The idea that Hottentot women possessed a *Hottentot Apron* (an over-development or hypertrophy of the genital organs) was a hotly discussed theory of female sexuality in the nineteenth-century. The

many attempts to decipher the circumstances under which she was brought to Europe has overlooked this fundamental interest in her genitalia.

Several reports on the Hottentot's peculiarities surfaced between 1668 and 1800. Missionaries, sailors and zoologists confirmed and refuted the theory that Hottentot females possessed "finger shaped appendages" hanging down from their private parts (Baker 313), or semicircular folds of skin hanging from the lower abdomen covering the external genitalia (314).⁹ The debate that Hottentot females had a 'tablier' is similar and related to another debate that the Niam Niam peoples of central Africa had tails.¹⁰

The Peron and Lesuer engravings were referred to by Cuvier in his investigations of the 'Hottentot Venus'. Upon the dissection of her corpse Cuvier reported that he had finally found the hypertrophy of her labia minora: "*We did not at all perceive the more remarkable particularity of her organization; held between her thighs, and it was not until after her death that we knew she had it*" (qtd. in Sharpley-Whiting 27: 215)

He concluded that like all Hottentot women she had tucked it inside of her vagina.¹¹ In his quest to find some kind of anomaly he collapsed the idea of a labia minora (the extending penis like object) and 'tablier' (the external genital flap). Upon Cuvier's authority her genital difference was established as scientific fact (Baker 316).

Science

Science as knowledge and practice became one of the important disciplines that contributed to marking and recording the difference of the 'Hottentot Venus'. To think about science is to think about the discipline that has become the most powerful influence on the way our minds and capabilities are valued and the ways we value them (Steinem

1992: 132). A marked shift from religious hegemonic authority to the seductive power of science by the mid-nineteenth century, was a response to the weakened practical authority of the church - science became society's "explainers, justifiers and providers of rules" (132).

For the most part, legitimization of the 'Hottentot Venus' status as 'savage' was facilitated through science. Cuvier's extensive examination involved detailed measurements of her various body parts: her skull, breasts, limbs and genitalia. This hierarchical approach to ranking people involved comparative measurements of skull sizes, informed by craniology. Out of interest in ranking race and human differences, this quantitative approach to science resembled a frenzy of measurements.¹²

Cuvier was particularly interested in measuring the 'Hottentot Venus' enlarged buttocks to make sense of her strange difference. Sander Gilman provides a thorough analysis of the medicalization of difference of the 'Hottentot Venus'. Gilman positions her study as a project of scientification that centered on notions of pathology as a central marker of difference. This approach was based on an understanding of the pathological, rooted in the fragility of human organisms (Gilman 88). This empirical use of a binary difference emphasizes the healthy and the pathological self. Her pathological, congenital anatomy required the intervention of elite medical practitioners in order for that unruly body to be mapped and disciplined. Science made sense of the female 'savage's' body by labeling, tabulating, measuring, naming and ordering it.

The medical model of pathology, approached sexuality in terms of disease.¹³ The 'Hottentot Venus' by her very strange appearance and sexuality was therefore seen as "abundantly pathological and symptomatic" (Kapsalis 42). The language of pathology is

central to Cuvier's analysis. Baartman's labeled parts were described as "ill", "enlarged", "congenital", "irregular" or "over developed. Her Labia Minora was described as being "remarkably developed", her buttocks "excessive" (Sommerville 252). Well-used illustrations reveal the largeness of her buttocks to represent their deviance and illness. The medicalization of her difference constituted a central methodology in the production of difference and points to the assumption of sexual excess in which her study was framed. Sexual excess often points to an excess of desire. Her excessive genitalia, in extension marks her as excessive. Therefore, all 'savage' women were an association of anomalies. This method of pathology collapsed difference, 'otherness' and women into one large identifiable 'savage'.

In looking at the premise of this scientific model, Stephen J. Gould sees science as a socially embedded activity governed by hunch, vision and intuition (106). As social construction, it resembles the imaginary myths that propel scientific hypotheses which are abstracted from social belief systems. It highlights the inability of this science to respond to social and cultural contexts and explanations of data that are gathered. Apart from the observation that the buttocks of the 'Hottentot' Venus were large (in comparison to that of most European women), what do these measurements really say about the cultural signification of these buttocks? It says nothing beyond the quantification itself. This quantification approach, flawed at its base, was conducted only for the purpose of ranking people. In this case, numbers were used to illustrate a point; a point that began with a conclusion. The numbers and measurements, were produced to support and return to the same conclusion. In itself, this quantitative method becomes a process of containment.

Producing Sexuality: Sexualized Difference and its Representation

Concerns about biological degeneracy coincided with a fascination with the body of the 'savage'. Some academics have described the intense interest in the sexuality of 'savages' as obsessions and fantasies of 'bizarre' sexual practices and manifestation of animal lust that underlie the sexual taboos of Western civilization (Sharpley-Whiting 16-31). 'Savage' females were received with sexual titillation and disgust. Overt sexual voyeurism seemed to have been masked with scientific concerns and approaches. Physical measurements of over and underdeveloped genitalia were obsessively pursued, breast forms and genitalia sizes were investigated and documented in detail. The 'Hottentot Venus' was at times exhibited in the nude to display her 'peculiar' genitalia. As scientific practice, the approach was largely about the ideas, fantasies and egos of a male dominated science. Cuvier's notes describe in detail specific aspects of her genitalia that reveal an intense voyeuristic interest. No wonder this part of her anatomy became the central marker of her difference. He found the internal reproductive organs normal, her shoulders, back and chest graceful, her arms well made, and her feet charming (Sharpley-Whiting 24). But his description of her breasts reveal their abnormalities:

..when left alone were a large hanging mass which terminated obliquely in a black-ish aureole of more than four inches in diameter pitted with radiating wrinkles, near the center of which was a nipple so flattened and obliterated that it was barely visible (qtd in Sharpley-Whiting 26: 214-215).

Not only did her breasts represent an anomaly, the details in measurements and descriptions provided scientific *proof* of a language of difference. Largely the scientific

explorations reproduced this acute interest in sexuality. At the same time it reproduced a language of inferiority about the 'Hottentot Venus' that could be applied to other 'savages'. But it was her external genitalia that Cuvier described in greatest detail.

The outer lips scarcely pronounced, were intercepted by an oval of four inches; from the upper angle descended between them a quasi-cylindrical protuberance around eighteen lines long and over six lines thick, whose lower extremity enlarges, splits, protrudes like two fleshy rippled petals of two and a half inches in length and roughly one inch in width (qtd. in Sharpley-Whiting 28: 216-18).

This detailed examination reflects the extensive quantification and articulation of the difference that made the genitalia legible. The "*tablier*" represented pathological sexuality. Why were the genitalia and buttocks of the 'Hottentot Venus' the most telling site of her anomalous sexuality? Sander Gilman suggests that black female sexuality signaled the antithesis of a hidden white sexuality (Gilman 8). Constructing a female 'savage' sexuality as heathen, lascivious and excessive was used to uphold a counter-construction of white female sexuality as frigid, fragile and the norm (Kapasalis 41-42).

Exhibition



Fig. 1.11: Poster, Human Zoo (Paris, 1892)



Fig. 1.12: Poster, Human Zoo (Lyon, 1897)

The exhibition of the 'Hottentot Venus' was part of the culture of extensive displays of humans in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Over the last five hundred years, exhibitions of exotic and fascinating peoples took place across major European cities.¹⁴ They were displayed as freaks, curiosities, and ethnographic specimen (Altick, 268, Fusco 41, Jahoda 208). The displays of humans deemed 'savages' were held in museums, zoos, street corners and other places of entertainment, and were considered an important part of museum exhibitions, circus acts, and world expositions and fairs. Human displays mirrored social approaches toward 'other' people and served to create perceptions of human hierarchy and supremacy. They were necessary in

conjuring and supporting an image of the 'savage' and were essential in reinforcing the idea of difference. Robert Altick describes these frequent occurrences as "urban culture" of the time that ran parallel to and sometimes mingled with that of the printed word (1). (Figs. 1.11 & 1.12 provide examples of how the human displays were marketed). They provided a great variety of public non-theatrical entertainment that catered to the same wide impulses that print media targeted - the desire to be instructed and amused. As an alternative to print, they reified the word by making the theoretical and general become the concrete and specific (Altick 1).

Curtis Hinsley describes the industrial expositions in North America and Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century as carnivals of the Industrial Age specializing in the display of humans deemed inferior (Hinsley 1991: 344).¹⁵ The physical and behavioral oddity, and exotic origin of these peoples represented the whole race to which they belonged (Altick 269).¹⁶ Representative of raw materials within a progressivist ideology, these people on display left lasting impressions on their audiences. The central role of the expositions as psychological construction was to determine distance and relative placements between peoples physically and psychologically (Hinsley 1991: 357).

The 'Hottentot Venus' was seen a fitting subject of display without modesty because of previously conceived notions of her lavish sexuality. In London, she was at times displayed on a platform wearing sparse clothing, sometimes she wore clothing that clung to her body to reveal her 'oversized' buttocks. Modesty was a taken-for-granted aspect of white female sexuality, therefore, the lavish available appearance of 'savage' sexuality provided grounds for difference.

Central in the construction of Saartje's display are elements of carnival showmanship and display. The carnivalesque as signifier of symbolic and cultural constructions is significant. In exploring the social construction of freaks, Robert Bogdan notes that in nineteenth century carnivals, exotic modes were often enacted with the serious intent of getting the audience to believe the façade (32). The carnivalesque display of the 'Hottentot Venus' was part-entertaining, and part-reinforcing of existing knowledge about groups of peoples. She was considered a freak on display. The role of the grotesque and freak in circus terms, is to reinforce the repulsiveness of the display. "The grotesque body is the open protruding, extended body" (Russo 62). Her display contained elements of fear and repulsion, the paradox of contained and container at once (Stewart 104).

How did the production and reinforcement of a knowledge of difference occur through these displays? They were done in systematic, psychologically, lasting ways. Lines were drawn literally and figuratively in telling ways through the cage in which the 'Hottentot Venus' was displayed, the platform on which she was displayed, the chains or ropes that were used to distance her from the viewing public. Another distancing element was the clothing worn by the 'Hottentot Venus' versus that of her spectators. She was dressed in 'fetish attire', (feathers, tight body wear and sometimes naked). Spectators, on the other hand, wore typical Victorian costumes, carrying parasols or a man's cane which served as personal emblems of civilized status. It was all about erecting and defining a large barrier between the "us" and the "strange". These carefully configured spaces in which she was displayed served as metaphors for the frontier between the defined worlds of civilization and 'savagery'. Evident throughout this process is an

ambivalence that collapses patriarchy, colonialism, science and medicalization, scientific racism and femininity into one grand reinforcing spectacle.

Increasingly, these exhibitions assumed importance within the educational landscape of Europe as they matched colonial conquest. In analyzing the culture of exhibition, Coco Fusco maintains that the specimens on display were presented as chiefs of conquered tribes, or last survivors of vanishing races, thereby matching themes of colonial conquest and fantasy.¹⁷ By the second half of the nineteenth-century, human displays had assumed the label of ethnographic exhibitions. Under the scientific umbrella, this label indicated a serious and educational purpose. The impact of these human displays were significant as economic enterprise, but even greater as propagandist tool that served to legitimize Europe's place in the world. They served to mirror individuals against a 'savage other' as more civilized and evolved.

Images of the 'Savage' Woman as Tokens of Representation:

Recurring Themes as Images

More than anything, these displays managed to create lasting images and associations of the 'savage' woman that were effective in psychological and emotional ways. The case of the 'Hottentot Venus,' like most displays of the time, was important as a propagandist tool and managed to recreate themes that represented the 'savage'. It was these enduring images that managed to systematically produce and reinforce the image of the savage. They mirrored themes which were earlier theorized, supported through novels, travel stories, and newspaper reports on displays of 'savages'. What was the process of becoming a savage? A savage had to fit into these preconceived grids of

difference, to bring an imaginary difference to life. In so doing, boundaries were created that provided the notion of a 'savage' with an identifiable identity. Themes such as bestiality, apelikeness, animality, child-likeness, fetishism, and overt, uncontrolled sexuality shaped the way in which the 'Hottentot Venus' was presented and studied. They were the same themes that shaped the existence of a 'savage'.

Bestiality and animality were pertinent themes that described the way in which the 'Hottentot Venus' was treated both as display and scientific subject. Ideas of animality involved ape-likeness, or laziness which were common terms used in describing the 'savage'. Thought of as the missing link between animals and civilized man, 'savages' were considered to be closer to animals. Cuvier himself had spent much of his scientific life studying orangutans. A major part of his approach towards the 'Hottentot Venus' was to prove her simian characteristics. In so doing, he suggested that the mass of fat on her buttocks had a striking resemblance to that of "female mandrills" (Jahoda 79). He found her pelvic bones closer to that of the female monkey than to that of a European woman. He found her movements "..... *had something of a brusqueness and unexpectedness reminiscent of those of a monkey. In particular she had a way of pushing out her outer lips in the same manner we have observed in orangutans*" (qtd. in Gould 118: 493-494).

By the mid-19th century the apishness of 'savages' had become extensively adopted as scientific fact.¹⁸ Jahoda concludes that the rise of the ape image was not only a top-down movement that emerged from science to the popular level, but was a process that resembled an "inverted U-shape;" from the bottom to the top and back again. Long

present among travelers and sailors, the ape-image spread to ordinary people in small communities.

Displays of the 'Hottentot Venus' used the ape image in dramatic fashion. During public displays in London she is said to have been enclosed in a cage on a platform raised three feet above the floor. Presented like a wild beast, she was ordered by her keeper to move backward and forward, and come out and go into her cage. The displays were highly directed to portray her bestial qualities. The myth of the Negro's bestial sexuality took firm shape during that period when French Naturalist G-L Buffon theorized that African females copulated with apes (Jahoda 56).

The role of the popular press in reinforcing the image of the savage is significant. Newspapers and other media reproduced in exaggerated, almost pounding fashion, the stereotypes that the displays showcased. She was portrayed as offensively ugly and frighteningly savage. Cuvier described her face as '*disgusting*' when he referred to her "*protruding snout and flat nose*" (qtd. in Jahoda 79: [1817] 1864: 214).

Added to the correlating rise of literacy with the printing press, these themes were represented in literature, theatre, travel writing and the popular press. Almost in synchronizing fashion, media texts presented the gamut of images, visual, symbolic and verbal about savages and their place in the world, how they should be viewed, reproduced, and re-presented.

Beyond the entertainment and scientific value of the display of the 'Hottentot Venus,' her most important role was in the creation of image. The image represents clusters of negative beliefs and knowledges regarding 'savages'. These images impacted on attitudes, world view, philosophies and perspectives on viewing the 'other'. When

audiences encountered the 'Hottentot Venus' displayed in zoo-like conditions, this powerful image resonated. She bore the burden of representation of all exotic people, in particular women, who were caricatured to the point where there was no sense of diversity - thereby creating one massive indistinguishable 'other' (Bancel et al. 4). The creation, construction and control of these images are at the core of this study with an emphasis on how these images managed to inform cultural knowledges and media practices today.

It is important to point to pockets of resistance that surrounded the display of the 'Hottentot Venus'. This counter-movement points out that often, general social ideologies are not homogenous. Protests about her display in London by a small but influential minority led to a court case about the conditions under which she was being displayed.¹⁹ Letters of protest appeared in London's *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Post* about the "offensive" "disgraced" and "indecorous" nature of her exhibition (Altick 270). A case against her owner was later dismissed and her exhibition continued. But that event triggered street ballads and was covered by newspapers and caricaturists. Sadly, the newspapers' involvement in the story moved her image to the realm of comedy.²⁰

This comical approach left her grotesque oversized behind as her legacy in the European mind (See Fig. 1.13). When South African filmmaker Zola Maseko visited the plastercast of her body form in the backrooms of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris in 1998, he expected to see that of a large "deformed South African Woman" with "quite a big bottom". Instead he reveals that he was actually surprised at the sight of the plaster-cast. "It was of a normal woman, she wasn't deformed. There was nothing at all wrong with her" (Chamley 42). Comparisons of her plaster cast and the numerous drawings of her

reveal gross exaggerations of her behind by nineteenth century artists. But the image that has remained to this day is that of the contrived enlarged behind.

These accounts indicate that the image of difference successfully created a racist-based mind-set towards the constructed 'other'. And with mainstream attitudes towards the 'savage' set, it was easy for empires to plunder lands and resources of these peoples as proof that the conquered lands contained degenerated 'savages' (Bancel et al 5).



Fig. 1.13: La Vénus hottentote (1814)

Summary

Influenced by cultural, political, and economic conditions, no one text can weave together the variety of elements that have contributed to this knowledge base. Cuvier provided a legitimized medical gaze that utilized heavily biased approaches of difference and inferiority. A female sexuality that was constructed as available, deviant and degraded, transformed into the female as spectacle, revealed sexist biases embedded in the assumptions of this science which permeates its entire structure (Sharpley-Whiting 6). Cuvier's methods moved the 'Hottentot Venus' from mere spectacle into measured,

quantified, tabulated difference that could subsequently be applied to a race, group and a whole other legitimized binary. The theme of conquest and exploration of empire can be applied metaphorically to the 'Hottentot Venus'. She had to be explored and powered by European scientists on their terms, in their own understanding to produce a re-affirmation of themselves and their place in the world. Through these explorations the 'Hottentot Venus' represented all colonial peoples as 'savages' a necessary categorization in moving a colonial process forward. Through this compliant science, a process of containment legitimized slavery, genocide, wars, and other atrocities that were committed to conquered peoples in the greed for territory.

The medical approach to the 'savage' woman was constructed within scientific, cultural, social contexts that reproduced attitudes toward the 'savage' woman that were already in place. They were based on the Aristotelian approach that the true form of being was male,²¹ Blumenbach's theory that the true form of humans and human beauty esthetic was Caucasian,²² and Cuvier's approach to medicalization that the true form of woman was European and Caucasian. These theories are all centrally threaded through as an egotistical approach of verifying 'others' by placing the male Caucasian self as the central image against which all others were seen.

This analysis points to a recorded history with social and structural hierarchies that locate people within given parameters of social difference. These imaginary theoretical structures of difference have used physical difference to reinforce themselves and to provide them with legitimacy, language and history. Despite cultural and political shifts that would find the display of humans in zoo-like conditions politically incorrect, a large part of the image of the 'savage' woman still remains accessible. The continuation

of these stereotypes result from drawing on a store of images that are still widely available in today's Western cultures. As collective memory, they are passed on through informal social networks. It is the "trans-historical" aspect of these images that have become the legacy of this knowledge (Jahoda xiv).

A fascination with the image of the 'savage' is evident in the way in which depictions of women who are deemed 'other' are exoticized in media. In a contemporary sense, 'savage' has been replaced by exotic. The 'other' remains the same. Tokens of representation are alive and well, and manifested through a fascination with portrayals of these 'other' women as different. This legacy is a difference that is ambiguous and resides within the realms of power, race, exhibitionism, and visibility. Her case study points to how deeply embedded ideologies about the 'savage' woman were formed, reinforced and are passed on. By extension, it points to traditional media practices and assumptions upon which representational decisions are made. This case study questions the process and assumptions upon which media images are formulated. When fashion magazines reproduce images of women of color as bestial, hyper-sexual, exotic 'other', they reflect the deeply embedded knowledge base of the 'savage' woman that still remain a vital part of media practice. Just how one magazine reacts to the history of these dominant constructions in media practice is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

***Panache* Magazine, A Voice of Resistance:**

Challenging the ‘Savage’ Stereotype

Introduction

Stuart Hall describes ideology as images, concepts and premises that provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, and understand some aspect of social existence (Hall 1990: 8). “*One of the ways in which ideologies function is to ‘naturalize’ and ‘externalize’ themselves. They disguise the fact that they are historic and symbolic constructions by appearing to be simply part of what nature ordained*” (Hall 1981: 64). Nowhere are images that seem naturalized more important than in a woman’s magazine where image is central to the message and to the ideological framework within which magazine practices operate. The ideological roots of images are the central theme of this thesis and point to the role of media in reproducing and producing concepts of representation.

This chapter will assess the role of *Panache* magazine in deconstructing and challenging the legacy of media’s usage of the world’s women as ‘savages’ in more modern practice. The term ‘savage’ is less used in a contemporary sense, because it connotes nineteenth-century colonial language. This thesis looks at one of the many possibilities for the sedimentation of images and language in relation to the notion of the ‘savage’. The ‘savage’/civilized binary is the base ground for the grammar of race. The contemporary use of the terms *ethnic*, *exotic* and ‘savage’ draw from empirical constructions of the ‘savage’ but includes other current (sometimes positive) meanings.

This study is one instance of its continuation. The general assumption that the 'other' exists in relation to the Euro/North American, remains sound, and so does the Western conception of representational domination over world majority women. This chapter will look at how *Panache* magazine manages to frame a particular voice and both represent and re-present world majority women as its target audience. As a fashion text, *Panache* magazine operates within the confines of the women's magazine genre that provides certain values of consumerism and particular images of self to audiences. Working within these dominant and confining spaces, the magazine has managed to produce a niche-type product that addresses the specific needs of world majority women.

At the same time, the magazine's approach in defining its primary audience is subtle, yet direct. Its subtlety is masked within the 'category bound' (Ferguson 158) values of the fashion genre as 'just another magazine', yet it speaks boldly to its audience by its choice of images and stories about women of the world. Stuart Hall theorizes "*an intervention in the media's construction of race is an intervention in the ideological terrain of struggle*" (Hall 1987: 8). This chapter will look at how *Panache* makes this intervention through its editorial content. It will analyze various editorial sections of the magazine in order to explore how the *Panache* voice is reflected through these pages. At the same time, it will look at the problems that such a genre presents. Most of the textual analysis will focus on issues no.6. vol. 1, to no.6 vol. 4. These issues have been identified as the most successful in production values that represent more succinctly the challenges set out to be accomplished by the magazine.²³ Their success has been judged by their overall quality of content, layout, number of advertisements, number of pages, and overall quality of articles.

Interviews with Senior Editor Evadne Anderson, and Managing Editor Adrienne Jones are cited throughout the chapter as central to explanations of editorial vision.²⁴ In assessing women's magazines, the role of editors as agenda setters cannot be overlooked. Editors hold editorial and philosophical visions and make final decisions central to the outcome of such a genre.²⁵ They decide what will be included or excluded from the agenda of feminine concerns. In that sense, editors' roles are boundary-setting, and reflective of social significance (Ferguson 131).

Magazines as Conduit for Social Values

As a fashion and lifestyle magazine, *Panache*, like most women's magazines, comprises a social institution that exercises certain regulatory functions on women's behavior (Durham 18). Women's magazines comprise the largest segment of the consumer market (Earnshaw 411, Ferguson 2). They encompass many forms of media: the pictorial, textual and oral, which account for the major element in their success.

Part of the complexity of magazine content is that it is geared not only to readers, but equally to advertisers who expect to see their products displayed. As *Panache* magazine attempts to defy mainstream colonial, patriarchal conventions of viewing women, it realizes its own limitations inherent in its own genre. These are marked by a history of patriarchal and commercial practices that sell women to advertisers (Steinem 1990: 19). *Panache* originates from a long and complex genre with an influential history that reflects the values of women's magazine as media practice deeply embedded in particular knowledge bases.

History of Women's Magazines

The period of the Enlightenment saw the development of print and by extension the development of the women's press. It was both a response to filling the void in reading material for women, as well as a response to the amount of leisure time 'ladies' were perceived to have. Since their genesis in the mid-seventeenth century, women's magazines sought to instruct women in appropriate conduct for living (Durham 18). Like the nineteenth-century middle-class home, women's magazines evolved during the last century as a 'feminized space' (Beetham 3) that catered to women based on a biological divide of gender. Within that gendered space, magazines attempted to reach women as a select audience through topics that were thought to relate to them. The early nineteenth-century magazine offered both amusement and instruction on how to be feminine. At the same time they served as a reminder of the instability of femininity.

Produced for bourgeois audiences as a source of news, etiquette and fashion, stories of other peoples were based on the 'view' from an 'English set' where *natives* were viewed as exotic, victimized or childish 'other', pointing to the model of self. True femininity was always white, British and upper-middle class. At the same time, some magazines began to respond to issues affecting women.²⁶ The period of 1880-1890 saw a shift in magazine style and content to a realization of women as shoppers. This shift meant the linkage of commodities to the work and essence of femininity; definitions of commodity became associated with the display of bourgeois commodity culture. This recognition of women as purchaser of commodities, also manifested itself in magazine advice columns. Feminism in the 1890s magazine, therefore, appeared in the female body constructed through the purchase of certain commodities (Beetham 8).²⁷ Femininity

became identified with economic consumption and with a female body constructed by and through commodities (Beetham 145). This linkage between female identity and commodities, signaled an important turning point in women's magazines and imprinted the genre for the century that followed. It also facilitated in the widening of the market to incorporate the lower and middle classes by the later end of the nineteenth century, and the movement to specialist products through the targeting of audience by the turn of the century. The twentieth-century movement towards concentration of ownership, and the development of the genre into huge industries, depicts how the industry has reflected economic and social values.

Intrinsic production and esthetic values in the history of women's magazines, have been passed on as media practice and have influenced contemporary women's journals. Deeply embedded in the values of the fashion genre are histories of social, and racialized, hierarchies upon which fantasies of femininity and consumerism are based.

Theory and Women's Magazines

A number of studies have focused on the role and impact of women's magazines. Most of the work on magazines have been from empirical, historical, feminist or political economy perspectives. Within many academic circles, women's magazines are brushed off as fluff media that serve to perpetuate a poor self image in women (Blix 56). This view defines them as oppressive means of women's domesticity that perpetuate the ideological oppression of women. This oppression is achieved through the provision of images that construct and perpetuate feminine consumer desires.

Giggi Durham looks at how discursive practices in women's magazine contribute to the negotiation of women's position in society. She concludes that women's magazines socialize women by governing their behavior and sexuality (Durham 18). In so doing, they channel women's sexuality in socially prescribed directions.

The contradictions in the construct of women's magazines have been subject to much comment by feminist scholars. Gloria Steinem, founder of *Ms. Magazine*, points to the undermining of magazines' credibility by advertising institutions. She sees the advertising environment as one that is in opposition to advancing women's well-being. This political economy perspective sees advertisers' exercise control on magazines to obtain "supportive editorial atmosphere" to "support" and "complement" themselves (Steinem 1990: 18-19).²⁸ Through this view, magazines are believed to exist for the well-being of advertisers first.

Contemporary approaches to theorizing about magazines have looked at their cultural significance. Naomi Wolf describes these magazines as oppressive to women, yet being the only chance for a female form of mass culture (548-85). This approach assumes a critical perspective, yet provides space for reading other meanings that could be generated through these texts. It, therefore, provides room for critical cultural studies approaches. Jacqueline Blix, in her essay on women's magazines, embraces this definition through a post-structuralist approach to locate breaks in the appearance of a dominant ideology of magazines. She utilizes the concept of 'excess' to identify 'alternative meaning' that is left over once the mainstream message has been delivered. This 'excess' is located within the domain of the audience who finds unintended meaning

to suit its own purpose. In women's culture, women's magazines are powerful vehicles in the representation of ideology (Durham 21).

Other feminist scholars have provided broader perspectives of viewing magazines as feminist voices. Marjorie Ferguson describes women's magazines as promoting a 'cult of femininity' (185). This 'cult of femininity' is achieved through magazines methods of targeting and focusing on women, thereby conferring status on women as a group and making womanly issues serious business. Through this method, 'woman' becomes a central symbol of cult-like significance making 'woman' herself the 'totem' of that cult (184). Through Ferguson's perspective, women's magazines can be viewed as an important form of media that focus attention on women and women's issues. This perception suggests that magazines are empowering, community-building and supporting.

These varying and extensive theoretical positions point to some of the strengths and weakness of the genre, and their associated significant contestations for meanings. Embracing these myriad and interlocking positions makes theorizing about *Panache* and its resistive work meaningful.

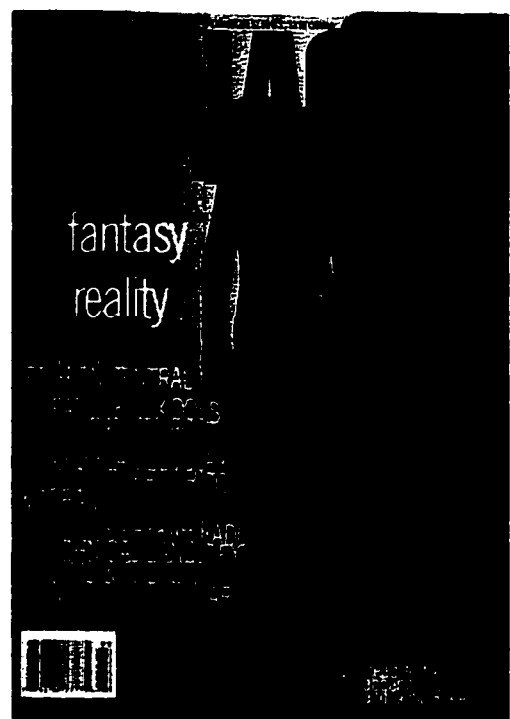
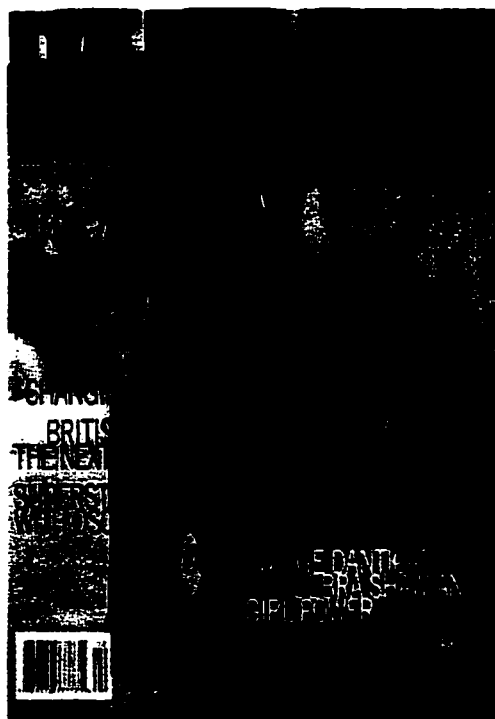
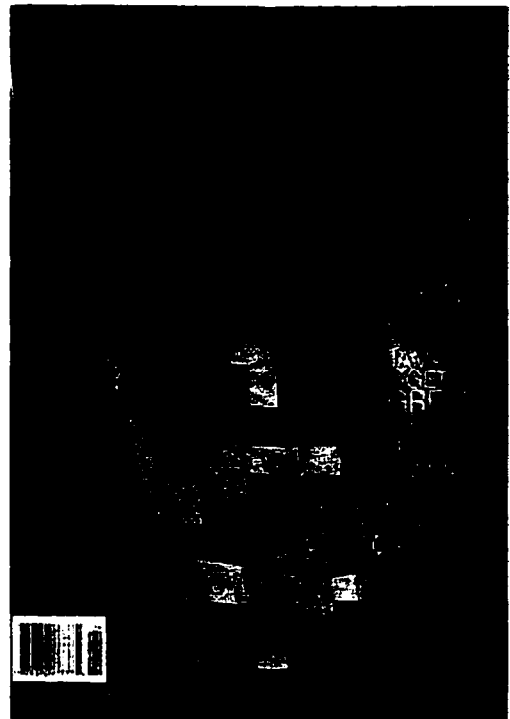
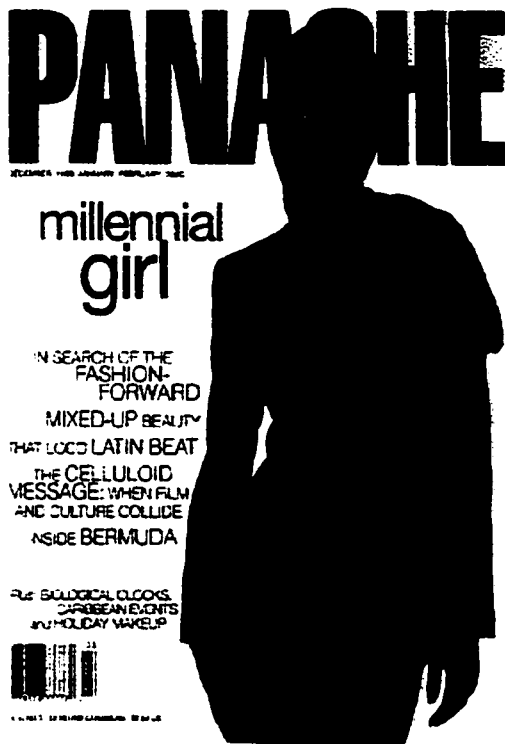
Background *Panache* Magazine

Primarily positioned as a text for Caribbean women, *Panache* magazine's target audience comprises women of the English-speaking Caribbean spanning Jamaica in the North to Guyana in the South. With circulation figures of 68,000, the magazine is distributed to its primary audience in the Caribbean and secondary readership in the US and Canada. With an estimated pass-on rate of one-to-four, the magazine is projected to

reach an audience of more than 200,000 readers. Demographically, the Caribbean comprises groups of Black, Asian, Middle Eastern and Caucasian peoples, a large majority of whom are an eclectic mix of all of these mentioned groups. As a Caribbean magazine, *Panache* reaches out to a wide array of non-white women generally considered to be 'other', by mainstream publications²⁹ (See Fig. 2.14). Mainstream magazines that are produced in major cities of the world have catered to mainly 'white' women as their dominant market and tend to view all other women as exotic but not necessarily beautiful. In these magazines, token images of a handful of top models of colour are sometimes used in editorials, however, imagery is largely set to cater to 'White' audiences. Like the eighteenth-century British women's magazine, language is from the 'Northern set' and looks at the world from that perspective.

Panache is a result of a marketing shift in the business of fashion magazines and the wider fashion industry that has seen the emergence of niche markets. Women are segmented (Cortese 3) into groups as both audience and consumers as a response to available resources for leisure industries. Owned by a small Canadian company that at first produced a Caribbean-based newspaper, the idea of producing a woman's magazine surfaced when it was realized that a lucrative duty-free market existed in the Caribbean region. As a market, the duty-free sector is well financed through large public relations and advertising budgets distributed geographically. A lifestyle magazine, therefore, emerged as a vehicle that could attract cosmetics, fragrance, and accessories advertisers operating within the duty-free realm.

Fig. 2.14: Panache magazine covers



Initially, *Panache* magazine's content emerged from a market-driven context. During its first two years, content read more like a cosmetics catalogue that presented new products that could be taken on a Caribbean vacation.³⁰ When a new Managing Editor took over the editorial management in 1996,³¹ magazine content began to slowly assume its current focus, and look. Marjorie Ferguson points to the importance of the editor's vision in shaping a publication and locates the editor's role as central to how a magazine looks (Ferguson 121). Radical changes were made through the definition of a clear focus and new mandate that located Caribbean women as the audience and subject. This meant finding a new team of freelance writers who were more inclined to understanding the magazine's required positioning. Like the editor's vision, the quality of the editorial team is also important in defining magazine content and vision.

As a niche product, *Panache* represents a response to a 'crisis in representation'. This crisis points directly to the lack of representation of world majority women in major presses in any significant way. Senior editor Evadne Anderson points out this "crisis in representation" as an important part of the magazine's mandate.

I think it is to give a forum for women of color, who are also women of distinction, making some kind of significant contribution on the local scene and the world scene as well. And I feel *Panache* can effectively establish role models, because these women are not often profiled in mainstream publication. You need to have someone to model your life and dreams on (Anderson, Evadne. Personal interview. 12 December 1999).

Panache, therefore, is a direct response to the need to represent life experiences, fashion and concerns of educated, sophisticated Caribbean women. The magazine's advertising material describes its typical reader as:

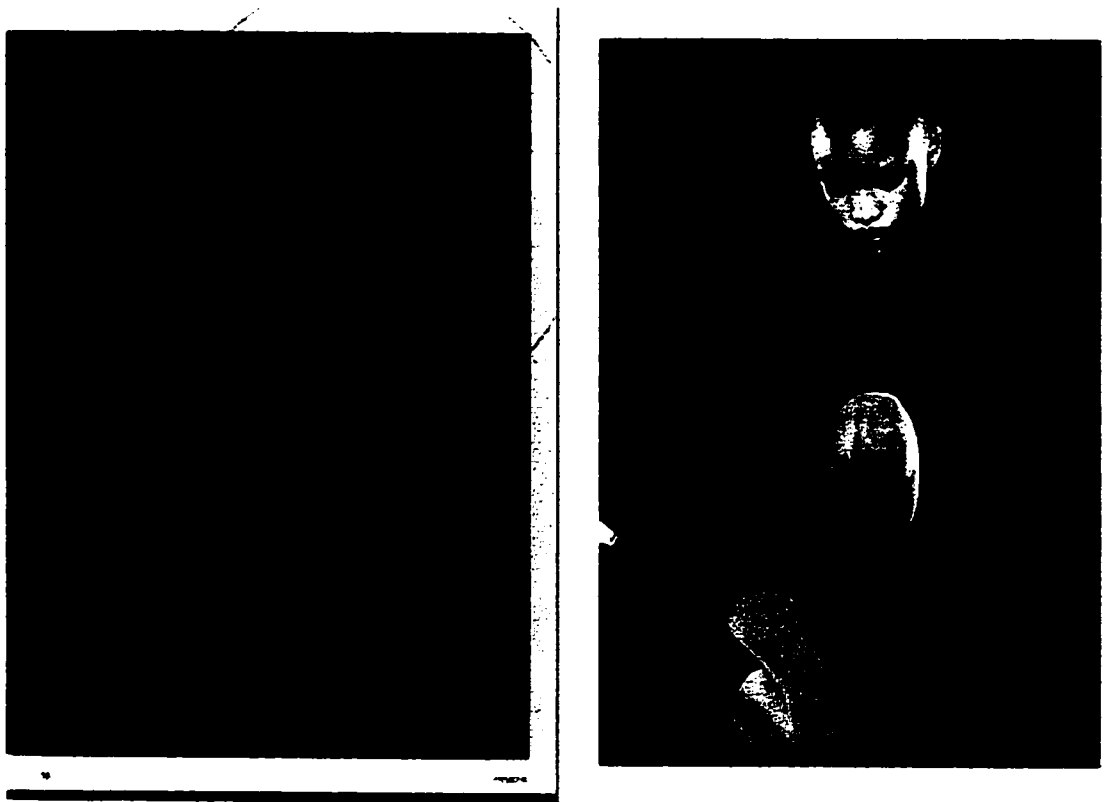
A single, professional, university-educated woman between the ages of 25 and 49". She may be a "bank manager, a university professor, a business owner, a lawyer. She's invested a lot of time and money in her education and career. She has a lifestyle that allows her to travel (Panache magazine, Advertising kit, August, 2000).

Such reader descriptors reflect the magazine's dominant ideology, based on the idea that there are sophisticated, educated women who are not catered to in mainstream publications. Earmarked as a high fashion product, standards were set about paper quality, print, layout and photography standards.³² Self-described as the 'Vogue' for world majority women, the aim was to reflect elite glossies such as *Vogue*, *W* and *Bazaar*. In addition, elements of editorial content were similar to the daring intelligent edge of *Ms* magazine.

There are lots of people who have contacted us to say this is the first magazine that shows high-fashion on Black models or models of colour. And that says a lot about our society. I think other black magazines – American or British, they have a different kind of fashion esthetic than we do. Photography, make-up, we're on a different level altogether. And yes, French Vogue casts black girls, but just see the way they handle it. We recently saw an editorial where the top girls in New York were stripped naked. They are constantly being objectified: it's animalistic, it's body paint, it's feathers, it's headdresses, it's bones that are around their necks. I mean how many times do I have to see that. I am sick of it.

Yes it may be a beautiful photograph; yes their bodies are fantastic. But it's objectification of culture, of woman, of colour. They see us as jungle cats. Let's not mince words about that. The core thing is why can't we just have a beautiful Black model instead of a white model wearing a beautiful dress (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 January 2000). (Figure 2.15 shows typical fashion pages in *Panache*).

Fig. 2.15: Fashion *Panache* vol.5 no 3: 58-59



The implications of such a depiction of models of colour meant featuring Caribbean women by making clear departures from other mainstream publications. These departures located world majority women as central to the significance of the choice of story and angles. More importantly, it meant the magazine would be turned into a text that celebrated its audience by producing and locating them as central beauty esthetic.

Choosing stories and themes that held meaning for readers also meant clear departures from traditional writing about that audience by placing them as beautiful and sophisticated. Close scrutiny of US publications³³ revealed, clichéd-type products with outdated production styles.³⁴ Voice for most of these publications represented a sub-cultural text that came across as wanting to live up to the standards of the culture in which the magazine was located. Generally, stories tend to have themes such as overcoming adversity, or finding one's self within a dominant culture. Almost every personal achievement is presented as a grand struggle for the individual and an entire race. Although these media set out to resist dominant images, their resistance remains premised on confining, progressivist ideologies,³⁵ assumptions of which are deeply embedded in the construct of the notion of the 'savage' woman. *Panache's* aim was to side step these enclosures to reflect another space, and to present other stories. The idea was to say that "there are non-white women who are not confined to seeing themselves within such narrow purviews". In fact, most world majority women live in countries where they are the majority culture, and the central beauty esthetic. As a cultural product, *Panache's* resistive position is on its own terms.

Voice

In publication terms, the magazine has created a unique, high-fashion product for world majority women by creating an authentic voice that enables it to connect with its readers. *Panache*, therefore, seeks to challenge traditional media practice by targeting its audience in 'their' voices about issues that concern them. A combination of voice, authenticity and finished quality, therefore manages to produce a unique product.

As part of the women's magazine genre, *Panache* adheres to genre-bound distinctions that are prescriptive, normative or explanatory in tones. Marjorie Ferguson describes the pre-packaging of customary and expected subject matter in women's magazines as "culture bound" and "category bound" (Ferguson 158). This prescriptive format, creates a sense of continuity, that makes the magazine time-based and a reflection of social and cultural values (Durham 18). But *Panache* magazine is also about more. It sets out a clearly defined voice that does not convey issues of domination and subjection. Instead it chooses to present stories that reflect its audience as empowered and central.

Political Economy

As a small magazine owned by a parent company with no other media interests, the magazine's operations do not benefit from cross promotions in distribution infrastructure, and other economies of scale.³⁶ Advertising goals and finance of the magazine point to the realities of political economy which is often reflected in editorial decisions. Stella Earnshaw notes that of all British magazines, women's magazines are the most dependent on advertising subsidy, some of which gain as much as 82% of their revenue from advertisers (Earnshaw 411). More than 90% of *Panache's* operating budget is provided by advertising revenues.

The quality of content and visual identity of how the reader perceives the magazine is one thing. But when you are looking at the daily operations and future goals of the magazine it becomes very much a situation of survival financially. We have to go back to the advertising location, which means editorial decisions are increasingly being based on

providing environments that are friendly to the advertisers, so that will draw in new advertisers. This is conflicting with the editorial belief ...it's a compromise and the question is how far that compromise has to go in order to financially survive in the marketplace. (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2000)

In her exposé on *Ms. Magazine*, Gloria Steinem discusses the compromises that fashion magazines face as an accepted part of the fashion magazine business (Steinem 1990: 19). She sees these compromises as a vital problem in the way in which magazines operate. *Panache*, like most magazines, produces product and advertorial pages to provide an adequate 'advertising environment' to attract advertisers. Companies also request specific placement of their ads in relation to editorial pages,³⁷ and high-end companies request premier positioning in the first third of the magazine.³⁸ They also request profiles on their fashion empires as part of advertising packages. Advertising is extremely influential in defining the way in which fashion magazines look.

An example of advertising in Vol. 6.no.4 provides a break-down of the number of advertising versus editorial pages:

In a 96 page issue, 33 pages including the back cover were advertising pages.

An additional 12 were product-related (meaning articles and photographs on perfumes, and cosmetics products). The fashion Runway section consisted of 2 pages, and the main fashion segment - 27 pages. (The fashion pages are included here as they consist of images that reinforce designer and product names). In total, 73 out of 96 pages were advertiser-related. This means that 76% of the issue was advertising or advertiser-related, leaving 24% for "full" editorial content.

(Appendix 1 (p.105), provides advertising statistics for issues 6.1 to 6.3)

Steinem's view that advertising in women's magazines informs its content is reflective of this glaring disparity of advertising pages to editorial. With more than 70% of any issue consisting of ads or advertising-related material, the notion that magazines sell readers to advertisers is reinforced. Yet within these confining spaces, *Panache* consciously seeks to produce a unique product with its remaining editorial pages.

Panache's Unique Features

Despite the ever-lurking presence of the advertising mandate, the room for flexibility is exercised through editorial pages.³⁹ Editorial decision-making, choice of photographs, and page-layout speak for and define such a magazine, thus creating a voice that positions itself from the perspective of the reader. Topics are discussed from her perspective in the way in which issues such as *beauty, hair, and fashion* are framed. *Panache* actively sets out to be different in tone, choice of articles and writing styles as shown in its editorial pages. Fashion pages, despite their advertising significance, also speak for the *Panache* vision. An analysis of content depicts this projected difference through the categories of *Frontlines, Letter from the Editor, Arts and Culture, Fashion, Cover-page* and *Afterword*.

Frontlines is an opening one-page editorial essay written in the first person about a personal experience of triumph. Written by a freelance writer or a reader, it is often about a woman's story of overcoming adversity, risk-taking and celebrating life. *Frontlines* usually signals an issue's theme and sets the tone for the issue. It is intended to give readers inspiration for personal success.

The *Letter from the Editor* page, written by the senior editor, serves as the central voice of any issue. It pulls the various articles together and echoes the magazine's relationship with the reader. Its tone of respect and mutual affection is philosophical and positive.

The *Arts and Culture* section, described as the backbone of the magazine, comprises feature stories about the arts. Ranging from between four to eight pages per issue, this section profiles prominent writers, photographers, painters and thinkers, and sometimes features articles on culture. Mostly written by the senior editor, it provides incisive quotes that speak directly to the audience and demonstrates the *Panache* view of audience and subject as sophisticated, educated women of the world having informed positions. Profiles of prominent women or women of power are a frequent portrayal in this section. By providing examples of outstanding women, the section supplies an endless symbolic procession of successful, inspirational role models to follow and emulate. In so doing it serves to provide female solidarity (Ferguson 185).

Afterword is another defining section of the magazine that features a feminist columnist's comments about a plethora of issues. This last editorial page is daring, sometimes radical and cutting-edge and provides feminist positions on topics ranging from men to commodity culture. It is strategically positioned to provide 'food for thought' until the next issue, but also to project the magazine's feminist, thought-provoking position.

Our Rights is a one-page editorial that presents an on-going series on international conventions that highlight women's and children's rights that would relate to readers. Again this section is seen as empowering and provides much needed information that is

not normally published for women. Together, these particular *Panache* choices of editorial content are geared at providing a central identifiable voice of the magazine.

I think it comes from the core senior staff having the sensibility. It seems that during the planning of the editorial we are able to really look into something that nobody else has done. I think the people at *Panache* who plan the editorial are talking to people outside their little circles, and going to sources in different countries (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 January 2000).

Other 'category bound' segments such as music or travel are also given a *Panache* spin. A travel story on Bermuda provides such an example. Instead of the clichéd white sand beach approach, the story focused on Bermuda as an interesting place to visit not only because of its beauty, but for its female leadership. The four-page spread focused primarily on the vision of the country's recently elected female premier, the female opposition leader and other women of high-profile positions in the country.

The *Fashion* segment is an important aspect of the magazine as it deals primarily with imagery and provides an environment for fantasy. Since fashion entered women's magazines at the end of the eighteenth-century as aristocratic discourse, it became deeply embedded in the format of women's magazines and has captured the imagination of editors and readers for the decades that followed. The *Runway Report* like the 'Letters to the Editor' page, is one of the 'category bound' sections of the fashion genre, yet in *Panache*, it is one of the most defining pages. *Panache*'s runway report features 'models of colour' at major fashion shows. Other high-fashion magazines showcase these exact shows regularly held in fashion capitals of Milan, New York and Paris but rarely select

the models of color.⁴⁰ Magazine editors edit in and out their desired images. The editing process, therefore, serves to reflect 'who is woman', and 'who is beautiful' through racial codes. *Panache's* selections reveal its own biases and its conception of audience, subject and beauty. (Appendix 2 (p. 106-107), showcases an example of the difference between *Panache* and *Vogue* runway pages).

The central fashion hold, the *Panorama* section, consists of up to 24 pages of fashion. This section comprises three to four separate shoots with various models including the cover model. Models are unique in the *Panache* sense; their positioning, color casting, and fashion are geared to showcase a variety of world majority models through positive, high production quality photographs.

Obviously we have a fashion and beauty mandate which in and of itself is derivative and difficult to make original. I think how we've gotten around that in our fashion and beauty is that we are very careful to present women in a very confident light at all times. Our casting is very diversified; it's not that same look, that same person every time. We don't necessarily cast for standard Western beauty, we look for all kinds of faces. All different kinds of people throughout the magazine. And we are always showing a position of power, where the woman is making a choice (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 January 2000).

Just how does a magazine create a unique look, while confining itself to a highly rhetorical category (Duffy & Gotcher 35) such as fashion, is key to this section's success. With the use of its indicators of beautiful, diverse models, the magazine deploys this rhetorical fantasy-vision in hues that are specific to the audience. These hues are

expressly made beautiful in photography, bearing in mind the history of negative stereotypical imagery that has been used based on notions of the 'savage' woman. Although *Panache* uses the same fantasy themes that mainstream magazines utilize, its version of fashion redeems a contrived image and reverses notions of beauty by saying boldly that world majority women are the esthetic of beauty. (Appendix 3 (p.108-113), show a typical *Panache* fashion spread).

Other regular categories such as *Health, Fitness* and *Relationships* also focus on issues and perspectives of the readership. *Letters to the Editor*, one of the pillars of the genre, provides feedback that shows that readers are responding to the message. It serves as a central bond of community that unites the editorial team with readers and provides relevant story ideas for the audience. Typical letters commend the work of the magazine:

Flipping through your pages I noticed such a broad range of women and men, and I was actually shocked! Most of the magazines that I read do not showcase such wide ranges of ethnicity. *Cosmopolitan, Glamour*, etc. talk about diversity and taking pride in it, but you guys actually do it. *Panache* is changing the American standards of beauty ..You represent the whole spectrum. Thank you for keeping it real with yourself and your readers (Seavy, Beverlee. Letter. *Panache* Vol 6. No.3: Dec.1999/Jan/Feb: 2000).

Other readers point to editorial shortfalls and engage in follow-up discussions on published articles. An example is a letter written by a reader responding to an article on African beauty, published in Vol. 5. No.3:

I am a new reader of *Panache*, and by the way I thank your staff for acknowledging our intelligence as well as our interest in fashion. I am a mixture of African and West Indian; born and raised in France". She later writes. "Alek Wek is beautiful - no question about that.....Who cares about colonial literature, it wasn't written by us, for us..... Our original beauties add sensuality and humanity to the most beautiful clothes. We wear them like no one else. Different is beautiful (Awa. Letter. *Panache* Vol. 5. no.4 March/April/May: 1999).

This kind of letter reinforces the notion of the audience as intelligent, racially and culturally diverse women of the world who engage with the message. They, therefore, serve to legitimize, validate and enhance the work of the magazine.

Advertiser-friendly articles are reflected in the *Scents, Beauty* and *Make-up* pages that present information about the latest products. The *Hair* section which falls within this category is particularly tricky. As an area where much work is needed on traditional depictions of world majority women's hair, (especially Black),⁴¹ there is an attempt to be provocative and questioning. Yet the *Hair* editorial is the place to attract hair product advertisers. Stella Earnshaw points out an unstated assumption that overtly critical articles are just not done in women's magazines (Earnshaw 421). A kind of balance is attempted by alternating stories on straightened hair with natural hair and by adopting a hair vocabulary, conscious of the extreme negative history of language that has been associated with hair (especially Black hair). Words such as *kinky, coarse, and hard* traditionally used to describe black hair are loaded with negative connotations that relate black hair to 'savage' inferiority. These words are not utilized in *Panache* articles.

As one of the most mixed media forms, women's magazines are without a single authorial voice. The genre is mixed with photos, and textual content that reflects wider social, cultural values. Ferguson describes the 'symbolic order' that is produced through verbal and visual symbols employed (Ferguson 157) that governs the message and its form. Through the symbolic order, a non-rigid form is produced which invites readers to flip through, read in their own order, ignore certain sections and read others carefully. Out of a particular tangle of the 'oral and the literary' (Beetham 208), *Panache* produces its own femininity which is marked and identifiable. This is achieved through its woman-to-woman tone. Emphasis is on shared experiences, associations and vision. Through its laid-back approach in this seemingly ordered genre (the last place to expect resistance), it produces its resistance. *Panache* actively seeks to write its own story through its vision and it is this subtle but direct vision that produces a package of images.

Editing Process

The importance of editorial intervention cannot be underestimated in the final outcome of any issue. Editors act as the gate-keepers of the female world, who as agenda setters, create and foster images and symbols of sexuality and femininity. In their power of decision, they decide what world majority women representation involves as image and text. They work through copy editing, layout decisions and attention to detail to effect social change (Ferguson 121). Much of *Panache's* content is directed by strong individual and group vision, beliefs and commitments and unrelenting passion.

The voice of *Panache*, therefore, mirrors the editors' vision of audience. The editing process is particularly sensitive to language that is considered condescending,

eurocentric, or euro-paternalistic. A constant battle originates from within the magazine itself with writers who submit articles that convey not the *Panache* vision, but the mainstream vision of the audience. bell hooks describes language as a pertinent site of struggle (hooks 145). It is through close attention to and reversal of language that much of the resistance work is accomplished.

An example is a travel feature on India submitted by a veteran freelance travel writer. The article was journalistically sound, except that it was sprinkled with colorful stereotypical clichés often used to describe India in the Western press. Referring to the “oppressive heat” of the country, she lamented the number of “cows” that “affected traffic” in the city of New Delhi. The editorial room considered the article condescending, and rude. It was completely oblivious to the religious significance of cows in the country. It was also oblivious to the fact that a large number of *Panache* readers are Caribbean women of Indian descent for whom an article on India presents a window to a romanticized motherland. The story was very heavily edited. The writer never pitched another story.

The magazine is rooted in people. You see that, over time, the writers who are not able to find that voice are no longer with the magazine. They are ‘let go’ not in a cruel and nasty way, - but because they stood out so much (Jones, Adrienne, Personal interview. 10 January 2000).

Although writing for *Panache*, many writers retain dominant constructions of writing-styles. Often, Eurocentric notions of peoples are represented in articles as a symbol of the post-colonial framework that form ideologies of representation even for

world majority people themselves. As a legacy of the ideology of the 'savage' woman, this practice speaks to the embeddedness of images as a knowledge base. bell hooks describes this practice as "the manifestation of what it means to be taught in a culture of domination by those who dominate" (hooks 1990 150). Defining a different voice to represent another ideology of self becomes for *Panache* an important challenge.

Like writers, some photographers also reproduce images of world majority women within perspectives of the 'exotic' other. Such images were often rejected, but low operating budgets do not always allow such luxuries of choice. Therefore, a clear attempt at directing fashion shoots are made on assignment, and over time, the managing editor developed relationships with photographers who understood the vision.⁴²

Authenticity is therefore, achieved through the positioning of a *Panache* voice. Stories are presented from the cultural inside, where close attention is paid to a set of linguistic codes used to describe world majority women that is shared with readers. A conventional list of words that should be deleted from articles developed overtime. The word "poor" for example (part of the Western lexicon used haphazardly to describe Third World women) was always deliberately edited out. References to colour like 'people of color', 'Black people' or 'sisters'⁴³ were used only within context. It was intrinsically understood that there was no need to describe that audience to itself. Instead, the magazine adopted a sophisticated approach to language deliberately intended to convey a set of positive linguistic codes that the reader identifies with. This approach creates a sense of shared understanding and shared resistance to linguistic representation of world majority women.

An interesting example of the editing process of an article that was produced in issue Vol.5. No.3 provides some insight into the kind of editing decisions made on a feature article. When Elite modeling agency⁴⁴ held a “face-of-Africa” contest in South Africa, it was decided that the contest should be incorporated into a wider thought-provoking feature on the implications of African beauty. Story angle and other specifics were discussed with the South Africa-based male journalist on assignment. Being somewhat off the mark by the first submission, the article was sent back for re-writing with specific instructions to incorporate more interview quotes that could better balance the story. The second submission was accepted, but major editing changes were applied. These involved changing of sentences and words for cultural sensitivity, eurocentricism, condescension, and for the purpose of having an authentic story written about world majority women for world majority women. Some examples of the edits are:

In talking about the actual winner of the contest, the writer wrote:

When judges announced the winner to be 17-year-old Nigerian contestant Patricia Oluchi, a 6 foot 2 giant, she seemed as if she would be more comfortable on a basketball court than a catwalk. Some writers scoffed that she was just a Western catwalk clone. On the ramp she appeared like a baby giraffe learning to walk.

After editing, the section read:

When judges announced the winner to be Nigerian Patricia Oluchi, a willowy 6-foot-2 17-year-old, some fashion writers scoffed that she was just a Western catwalk clone.

In the *Panache* view, she was a tall beautiful model, not a “giant”. The stereotypical reference to the “basket ball court” is reminiscent of an often imposed belief that people

of color are natural athletes. “A baby giraffe learning to walk” was also reminiscent of the animal like appearance of the ‘savage’ women. Pandering to the exotic to describe this woman was not the ‘*Panache* editorial culture’.

In a later section on the meaning of African Beauty he wrote:

On a continent where many see beauty in the form of a “fleshy” bottom, strong thighs and fuller breast.

This problematic anthropological treatment was dropped as it served to label, to describe the strange. It read as if he was writing for another audience for whom African beauty needed to be described. It lacked authenticity as an internal script. It employed an external gaze like the one that pathologized the buttocks of the ‘Hottentot Venus’ to reproduce “fleshy” abnormal, buttocks. The look of an African bottom is a normal aesthetic to the *Panache* audience for whom it does not need to be described. After final editing, the feature turned out to be strong and provocative. It only occurred after direct tackling with semantic codes that placed cultural and historical perspectives of the audience as central.

This kind of active negotiating with imagery became the daily task of editing. Most stories went through three editing stages, and copies were often sent back to be re-designed in order to portray strong and empowering women. There are countless other examples of this kind of negotiating in the editing process that produced a unique voice as a counter-voice to hegemonic discourse.

We are the culture, not that we define the culture, but we are the culture. The ease and comfort and personal confidence of whomever is putting this magazine together is

reflected in the content and goes beyond that to the reader. Then it's fed back to you from a positive empowered reader, an aware reader and confident reader (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2000).

Negotiating this kind of resistance through language produces an active reader who reacts to the tone of the magazine. In theorizing about counter-hegemonic discourse bell hooks writes "while it may resemble the colonizer's tongue, it has undergone a transformation, it has been irrevocably changed" (hooks 1990: 150). Not only is that transformation of language recognized through reader response, it is also validated. As a transformed approach to discourse, it also serves to provide a sense of community, a shared meaning through renewed images.

Contradictions

The magazine falls short in depicting world majority women in its advertising pages. In theorizing about advertising in women's magazines, Beetham notes a radical disjunction between advertising and the rest of the journal, symptomatic of the practice of publishing and reading conventions (Beetham 144).

Evadne Anderson sums up some of this disjunction in *Panache*:

I am concerned by some of the ads that we get which don't really mirror the image that we want to present, because these ads represent more Caucasian standards of beauty and even Caucasian values. But since the ads run the magazines sometimes you don't have a choice because you have to accept them to keep the magazine running. So it is a kind of catch 22 situation – something is better than nothing. And for sure, some of these present

implicit statements, that may be a little inconsistent with the vision, but I guess after a certain point you have to compromise (Anderson, Evadne. Personal interview. 12 Dec. 1999).

These implicit contradictions associated with the will to showcase a different esthetic of woman, yet being confined to advertising pages that contain the very images that the magazine sets out to resist remains the ultimate dilemma. A representational breakdown of the advertising pages in Volume 6.no.4 depicts these representational issues.

Out of 33 ads, only 6 featured models of color.

7 were product-only, and 17 were of white models (male and female).

All the ones with non-white faces were located from the center to the back of the issue.⁴⁵ In the hierarchy of ad placement, the front end of the magazine is loaded with high-end expensive beautiful products, and by extension - beautiful people.

The few ads of people of color are ghettoized in the rear end.

Appendix 4 (p. 114), details similar break-downs for Volumes 6. no.1 to vol.6. no.3.

This centrally depicts the major contradiction within which the editorial position of the magazine is located. The advertising pages are at odds with the magazine's mandate as they reflect mainly European women representing high-fashion products. (Figures 2.16-2.19 provide examples of four ads that appeared in the magazine. Ads for high fashion products depict 'white' faces. Ads with non-white faces have lower production values, they are junkier and pander to stereotypes such as extreme sexuality.) The dominant message embedded within these ads are that the products are for another audience.

Beetham describes this practice of contradictory messages as a “fractured femininity” (1) an assumed femininity, yet still to be achieved. *Panache* practice is caught in this fractured, contradictory space. While left hand pages provide strong empowering editorials that speak to the readership, right hand pages spell commodity culture in ‘white’ esthetic that is seen as doubly difficult to achieve. In this case, the media becomes a fractured message that contradicts itself.

But at the same time, it points to a glaring bias in advertiser attitudes towards world majority women. The advertising environment operates within dominant marketing assumptions that purchasing high-end products are beyond the reach of world majority women. The marketing profession appear to be ignorant of audience profiles that delineate incomes, educational levels and attitudes of segments of world majority women. Gloria Steinem relates her experience of trying to attract reflective ads for *Ms.* ‘readers of color’. “*The ad world often creates Black and Hispanic ads only for Black and Hispanic media. In an exact parallel of the fear that marketing a product to women will endanger its appeal to men, the response is usually, “But your white readers won’t identify”*” (Steinem 1990: 67). Anthony Cortese refers to this practice as a symbolic status quo that portrays groups of peoples as having a secure place in society, a noted identity (13).

But the message is two-fold, it denies its own logic, as the ads are in actuality appearing in *Panache*, therefore, the high end products are geared at targeting the magazine’s readers. On the one hand, it highlights the glaring bias that exists in institutional advertising practice where there is very little material geared at and representative of world majority women. Yet it reflects the desire to promote the same

products to sophisticated world majority women, the perceived audience of *Panache* magazine. This blatantly reveals the biases and racism of institutional marketing approaches for whom the knowledge base of the 'savage' woman governs hunch and intuition. Many marketing approaches are governed by the hunch and intuition of elite advertising industry gatekeepers who set the agenda of imagery (Cortese 13). And at the same time, this void serves to challenge advertising production practice that isolates a particular esthetic of women based on empirical knowledges.



Fig. 2.16: Hair product ad

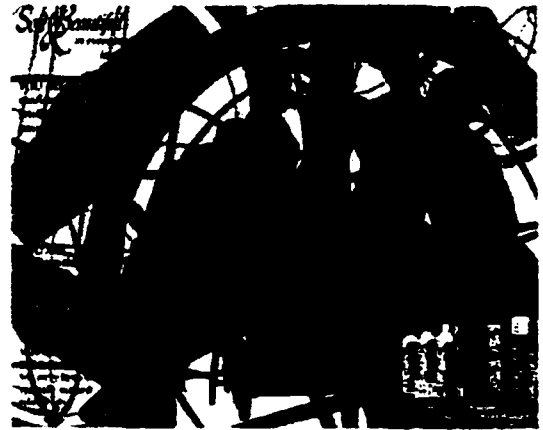


Fig. 2.17

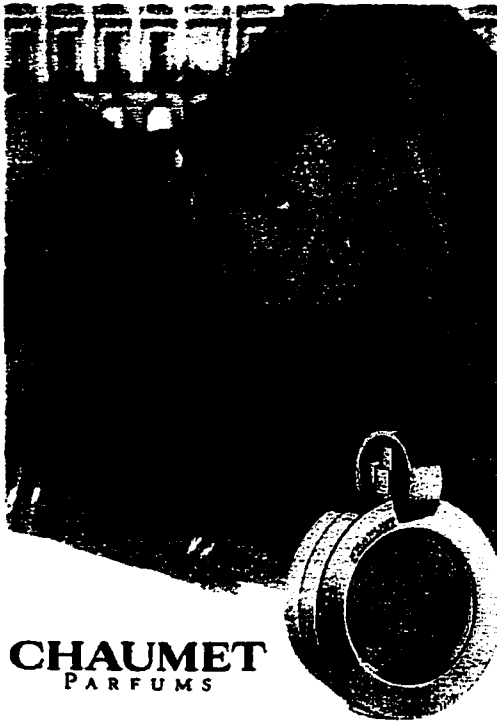


Fig. 2.18: Perfume ad

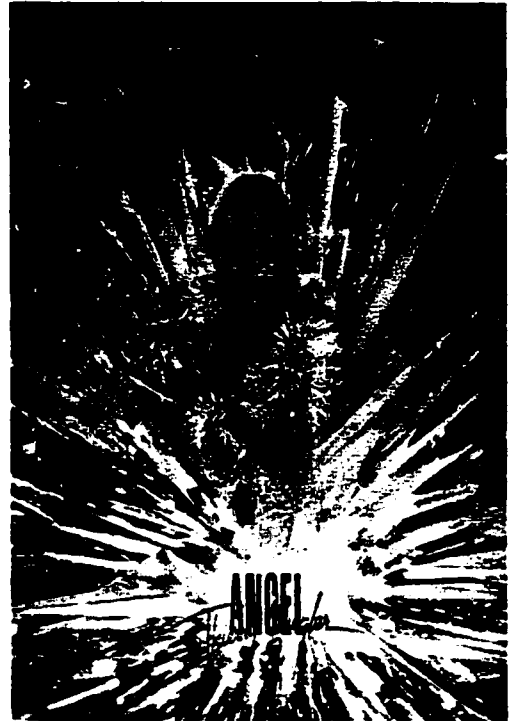


Fig. 2.19

Representation

Very important themes present throughout an analysis of *Panache* are representation and voice. These point to larger areas of editorial responsibilities that the magazine embraces to effectively reach its readership that have been bombarded with “other” images of themselves .

What we have to combat is the constant reproduction of certain kinds of images of beauty: the thin nose, the small lips, the flat behind, the straight hair, the lighter skin. So in response, we try to present models who run the gamut in terms of the Caribbean reality (Anderson, Evadne. Personal interview. 12 Dec. 1999).

Issues of representation cut to the core of the magazine's political mandate. This is the place where editorial philosophy is tainted with strong commitments and beliefs. Magazine covers, therefore, become the site for re-enacting political positions. Traditionally, what moves a cover from a news stand is a beautiful woman making eye contact. Deciding the cover model, the choice of 'call-outs'⁴⁶ that hold promise, and choosing the banner and colours are supposed to make a grand statement about the issue.

As I got more experienced, I realized that covers are probably the most important part of the magazine. It really takes a lot of care and thought and you have to put yourself in many different positions, as a consumer, as a retailer, as an advertiser and say "is this a seller?" I don't use people on the cover without a great decision....and I know we've been hurt by some of the casting that has been done for the magazine. For example, when we've used obviously African girls, we have problems with certain people,....even our own readers and especially advertisers have said "well you know, she is too Black" and I find that appalling. But I know it is the market reality. Inevitably I think if we had the resources, I would test the cover (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2000).

The cover referred to, featured an artistic image of a very dark African model, is probably the most infamous cover of *Panache* (See Fig.2.20). What was perceived as the model's excessive 'blackness' made advertising personnel (in particular) within the magazine uncomfortable. It was subsequently blamed for low news-stand sales. A cover, therefore, becomes a series of decisions, central to which is race politics. Issues of race politics are

embedded in empirical knowledges of blackness. “How Black is Black or how light can

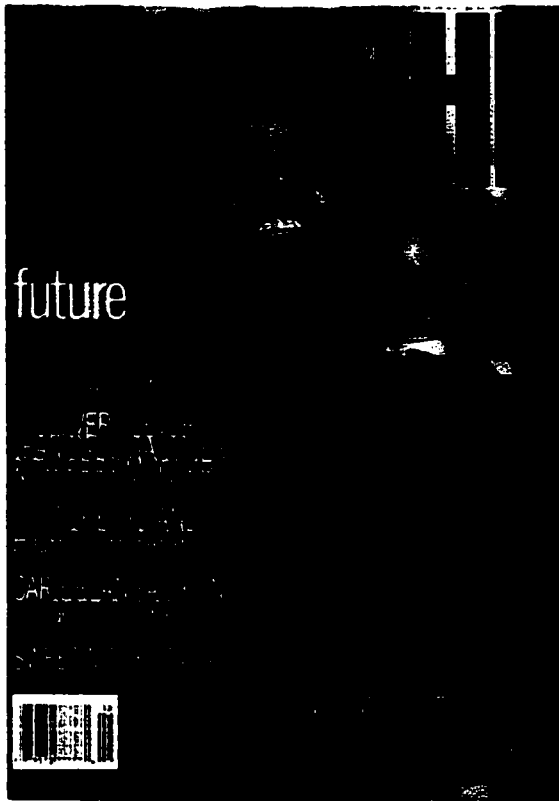


Fig. 2.20: (vol.4 no.2 Sept.- Nov. 1997)

Black be?” More specifically “how Black can a safe cover be?” These are esthetic questions that are constantly debated. The question of why people were uncomfortable with so strong a sense of Africanness on the cover begs to be asked. Probably because it presented esthetics that they were not used to seeing on a typical fashion magazine cover. Perhaps it also reflected a negative, contrived image associated

with African women. On one hand,

some people expect to see a safe profile of a model who may be closer to a ‘white’ esthetic of beauty. On the other hand, there is a more radical approach to dismantling traditional images of acceptable ‘Black’ beauty. Within this environment of representation, philosophies could not be further apart.⁴⁷ Editorial decision-making is caught between the philosophy of representation and the philosophy of financial success. Using a cover that will not ‘hurt’ indicates a pre-occupation with news stand positioning and sales. Selecting models, especially cover models, becomes a juggling act of color balancing.

Resistance

Almost any deliberate act that the magazine attempts to deliver its message can somehow be construed as resistance. Such resistance can be interpreted as choice of models, stories, cropping and cover. It also is a response to the advertising environment through the kinds of high-end ads that are sought for the magazine.

I think that if we were in the hands of a different culture they would change us definitely. A dominant Western perspective would look at this and say ‘what’s this?’ I’ve had it happen to me. When I talk on the phone and they see the magazine, the assumption is that I am calling from *Essence* or *Ebony* and they are very condescending. And it makes me extremely angry that they look at us as a second tier magazine. The experience with Chanel’s⁴⁸ agency in New York is a prime example. (Chanel buys advertising space from the Caribbean Duty Free advertising). Because we’re on the stands in New York, the agency called me very rudely suggesting that we stole the ad somewhere and put it in to look like we had Chanel. That was an incredible educating experience for me because I realize that there is still very much a “how dare you” attitude toward *Panache* in some circles, in circles where there is still racism. It’s like “you’re not supposed to be this good, this smart, this self possessed, or this self assured” (Jones, Adrienne. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2000)

Why would an agency representing *Chanel* think that *Panache* stole the ad? The answer to that question may never be known. Based on audience, a hierarchical approach in magazine practice places *Panache* in a set place. As a magazine that reflects world majority women, it is automatically thrown into the sub-category of inferior magazine. It is almost as if it is catering to the ‘wrong’ women, ‘wrong’ audience, reflecting the

'wrong' esthetics of beauty. These assumptions are based on conventional marketing wisdom that targets high-end products to only certain women on the assumption that they alone have disposable income, they alone are the beautiful women, they alone are the norm. Such conventional wisdoms can be linked to structures of imagining the 'savage' woman.

Discussion

In order to understand the appeal of this magazine, there is a need to return to its framing of audience as sophisticated and empowered. Defying conventional approaches to media practice means defying conventional images of beautiful, sophisticated woman. In this sense, it means reaching out to an audience with whom a bond of understanding is shared, and in effect, creating new visual and verbal symbols with impact and meaning to create a "symbolic order" (Ferguson 157). At the same time, this 'symbolic order' fills a void of neglect whereby mainstream publications have not recognized these readers as primary reader or subject. In response, the magazine works to recognize the positioning of this audience not as 'other' and 'exotic', but as central. Together with fashion spreads, runway pages, letters, and articles, editorial decisions are translated into messages to achieve visual and textual effect aimed at certain audience responses. The magazine's main role, therefore, becomes the provider of open resistance to traditional media's address. What is achieved together with readers is a sense of community, a group with an inner understanding of self and a shared need to resist. By addressing the reader as sophisticated, articles provide codes and symbols, to re-enact these shared attitudes and beliefs. They reinforce symbols that bind the group and sub-culture. By defining itself,

Panache also defines its readers. Reading the magazine becomes then the signal of a group, and the producer of that group. Altogether they signify a community, a 'rhetorical community', whose shared realities, and fantasies converge.

Fig. 2.21



More than anything, the *Panache* approach rewrites the codes of beauty and image of woman. Naomi Wolf describes beauty as being similar to 'a currency system' that is "determined by politics" (12). Gloria Steinem describes beauty standards as "capricious, perishable standards" that "people make" and can "unmake" (Steinem 1992: 220). Remaking a concept of beauty that involves images of world majority

women through the pages of the magazine, highlights media's pertinent role in producing and transmitting ideologies (see fig. 2.21). This act of production takes the political, perishable standards of beauty to task. It questions the seemingly objective esthetic that appears to have been naturalized by time and media reproduction. Using (for example) Model - Clara (the notorious African cover model Fig. 2.20), as a cover icon, challenges what appeared to be a naturalized practice that would not find her fit for a choice of cover. By selecting certain photographs, language, story angles and cover models,

editors decide standards and esthetics of beauty. Their roles are, therefore, critical in creating these standards.

By embracing the advertising and 'category bound' constraints within which the magazine operates, a deliberate approach of 'excess' (Blix 56) is contrived within the message of editorial. Jacqueline Blix's notion of editorial 'excess' deals with alternative meanings which the reader locates within the text. 'Excess' is a way to point out how a text offers contradictions to its own main theme. The concept of 'excess' applies here, but from the point of view of deliberate and subtle messages that are factored in after mainstream message of advertising and product information have been provided. This excess involves the shape, look, and complexion of a beautiful woman. Excess here emphasizes that beautiful women come in many shades with different bone structures, eyes, nose, mouth and 'buttocks'. It depicts that the language that defines this beauty is itself not plagued with a history of negative semantics. Excess represents a deliberate attempt to introduce themes of resistance within the text. It is this excess that itself becomes a form of cultural production that allows the 'historically muted' voice and image to be expressive. This excess allows the articulation and re-appropriation of a cultural esthetic and vision.

Marjorie Ferguson's 'cult of femininity' is applicable here through the community that is produced. Magazine content is directed largely by teams of women;⁴⁹ comprising editors, writers, readers, photographers, stylists, make-up artists and graphic artists. The 'cult of femininity' therefore involves a feminine vision, that is an interplay of ideas that focus on redeeming the image of world majority women. Readers' letters feed back into the notion of female voice. The 'cult' acknowledges the active involvement of

photographers whose visions of beauty have made world majority women its “totem”. In this cult-like sense, the magazine attracts a number of photographers whose work would not be acceptable to large mainstream publications. It also creates avenues for these photographers to develop an even freer vision, as a result of a market potential for their work.

The mainstream media investment in maintaining the notion of ‘otherness’ involves their role in the reproduction of the ideology of difference. This ideology is made up of shared intellectualism, language, meanings, signs, symbols and imagery. There has been an uneven exchange of images marked by a highly articulated set of practices through which values and doctrines of European superiority have been woven through texts. *Panache*’s clear editorial voice says that the image of the ‘savage’ woman that has perpetuated an ideology about world majority women is false and biased. In fact, this ideology of difference was a space and time-based construction that was produced from perceptions that were eurocentric, colonialist, racist and hierarchical. *Panache*, therefore, challenges most of the assumptions upon which depictions of women and standards of beauty are based. Deconstructing traditional approaches of media’s depictions of world majority women shows how stereotypes and empirical knowledges penetrate media practice at almost all levels. Bearing this in mind, *Panache* has provided its own blueprint for women and beauty through its own rhetorical vision of cultural production.

Stuart Hall’s concept of “structures” that maintain racist practices cannot be overlooked in this analysis. These structures represent dominant ideologies, media practice, distribution and marketing infrastructure that maintain the status quo, therefore

making resistance difficult. In an operational sense, they represent the unavailability of racial-appropriate ads for high-end products to correspond to the appeal of the magazine. They represent the advertising agency's telephone call suggesting that *Panache* may have stolen the *Chanel* ad. They also represent the hierarchy of audience profiles that place ads of people of color in the back pages of magazines. Racism as processes and practices of whole societies is deeply resistant to attempts at amelioration. "*It is not possible in the end to deal with this issue in a wholly analytic way – that is to say in a way which does not raise the question of changing the existing structures that we are examining*" (Hall 1981: 60). Resisting in such a tightly regimented genre then becomes a space on the edge, a margin. A difficult yet necessary location that is not safe, it is contradictory, and where one is always at risk (hooks 149). "*Marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited colonized people*" (150). True resistance also requires challenging ideologies of media and social structures themselves so that visions like *Panache*'s will not remain solely confined to marginal excess.

This case study addresses theoretical questions about the place of images in reflecting and producing ideology. Just as science, philosophy, popular culture and media created and sustained the binary image of the 'savage' woman, a reversal approach can be effective in creating another image. Within this framework of imagery, re-writing the codes of recognition, in effect, results in redeeming the image of the 'Hottentot Venus'. This redemption becomes an intervention in an authentic self-representation that speaks for the reproduction of an ideology of the place of world majority women in the world.

Chapter Three

Convergence: Redeeming the Image of the ‘Savage’ Woman versus Reproducing Venus

As a theoretical ideal, the *Panache* magazine’s approach embodies the need to reposition an image of world majority women that provides alternative meanings to those produced about the ‘Hottentot Venus’. However, there are many problems with this approach from a philosophical point of view. This chapter poses pertinent questions that have surfaced during the course of making meaning throughout this thesis by questioning the implications of media resistance and knowledge production. I shall merge the identified themes discussed in the previous chapters by critically depicting the foreground/figure-ground relationship between *Panache*’s methods and the construction of the ‘savage’ woman. I will discuss how the resistance in the *Panache* model can sometimes produce similar kinds of knowledge systems like the ones being resisted in the first place. Although the case study discusses how *Panache* resists dominant media practices, in this chapter I will also point to the continuing blind spots and various problematics that relate to the embeddedness of knowledge systems and media practices that themselves imprison resistance.

In addressing the theoretical versus practical applicability of the *Panache* approach, one questions how a voice of resistance can exist in isolation of institutional and social frameworks to support it? Stuart Hall locates media’s workings as an ideological continuum of social practices and belief systems. In looking at the problems associated with the ‘lone voice’ of *Panache* it is clear that this singular approach has impacted on the operability of the magazine. At the time of writing this thesis,

(Spring/Summer 2001), production had been temporarily suspended as a result of financial difficulties experienced by the magazine. In addressing the financial woes of *Ms. Magazine*, Gloria Steinem delineates *Ms.*' many financial hurdles over the years⁵⁰ and notes that as a result of fashion magazines' dependence on advertisers' confidence, any kind of resisting activity results in a lack of financial support (Steinem 1990: 18-28).

Panache's problems are not dissimilar. As a product, it has maximized the duty-free cosmetics and fragrance market in the Caribbean, and faces the difficulty of breaking traditional markets that do not target their products to world majority women. These marketing assumptions are safely embedded in the knowledge base of the 'other' as 'savage', primitive unsophisticated and poor woman, not able to buy high-end products. In addition, an ownership/editorial schism in philosophy which makes for an extremely difficult creative environment has not helped. On the one hand, the editorial department sees its work as an important potential for political and social interaction through which marketing, expansion and corporate affairs should be guided. But this vision is caught in an ownership approach of operation solely concerned with profit making. This contestation points to the vulnerability of small magazines which become doubly vulnerable without editorial/ownership unitary vision. This discord translated to a lack of financial support and sustainability.

Quite apart from the financial hurdles are the blind spots. In looking at a philosophical problematic that the *Panache* model holds, one of its important shortfalls is the framing of audience and subject through the assumption inherent in framing all women 'other' than white as subject/audience, thus presupposing a monolithic mass. The problem with this model is that the framing of the audience falls within the boundaries of

the empirical construction of the 'savage' female in the first place. It thus accepts the grand notion of the 'other', assumes that identity and plays back that identity to create its own 'other'. Who therefore becomes *Panache's* 'other'? This resistance uses the same markers that it is resisting to carve its own place. It simply flips the 'them' and the 'us'. This non-radical intervention is still rigidly confined to old configurations of marked entities of people and difference. It points to an acceptance of the empirical grid of race construction and a willingness to accept the self within this confining space of the 'savage' woman rather than a complete and radical dismantling of boundaries. This model therefore does little to challenge established boundaries of difference except to say 'at last we can be as sophisticated as you' or 'we too can buy the high-end products.' This model, comparable to the earlier criticized models of US 'Black' publications, is also steeped in a progressivism model of human development that sees 'White' Western culture as the ideal to aspire to. How a publication can challenge dominant ideology while working within the confining framework of language and history to create a counter-language is itself the ultimate challenge.

Another problem with simply reversing the subject and object, is that *Panache* is itself accepting the fluidity of the monolithic mass of 'savages' that was produced in the first place and attempts to unrealistically produce a product for this imaginary mass. The question is how can this be realistically achieved? How can editorial staff who have successfully produced images and stories for Caribbean woman and its Diaspora do the same for women of Asia, Africa or the Middle East.⁵¹ It may be an unrealistic goal, the assumptions of which point to questions of authenticity. Who does the magazine really speak for, becomes the critical question. There is a sense of a community that is produced

through reader responses and reader purchase of the magazine, but how much of this is real and how much remains within the realm of fantasy is an important question. Maybe this question is not necessary in assessing such a cultural product for which fantasy is an important anchoring theme. A reader's letter confirms this difficult space:

On the one hand I am pleased that a magazine so classy and slick has come – and stayed – for Caribbean women, and with such great beauty and fashion. But on the other, I have to say *Panache* contents do not speak to me in Port of Spain, where I live. Where are the Caribbean esthetic, the Caribbean designers, the Caribbean products? But if Caribbean is the focus, *Panache* has to do better than one look at the Miss Universe debacle and an admittedly gorgeous spread on Cuba. I feel *Panache* cheats me of the opportunity to see myself and my sisters on its pages (Allen-Agostini, Lisa. Letter. *Panache* vol.6. no.1:14 June/July/August: 1999).

This reader response sums up many of the problems of reach that are associated with this kind of production. Who really makes up this audience that proposes to be of Caribbean women when it is clear that content and fashion clearly intend to portray all non-white women⁵² and provide them with an identity through *Panache*?

Another problem with the model is the reproduction of an esthetic of beauty that holds the same values as the dominant group being resisted, but with different skin colors. It holds the same values of the anorexic model as beautiful, but with a different shade. Gayatri Spivak uses the term “chromatism” to address the problem of using color as the only reference point in locating difference. This non-substantive, chromatic approach does little except to reproduce colored clones of the ‘white’ beauty aesthetic.

What then becomes an acceptable redeemed value of the image of the 'savage' woman? A chromatised clone is without the cultural and historical imagery that is attempted in the first place. What does this production do for the legacy of the savage woman? The magazine is operating within the confines of a genre whose format and values are the basis for production. The real question that needs to be asked is how much can really be achieved within the confines and contradictions of the genre. Remaining within the genre for the kind of resistance necessary, appears to be so confining that it almost infringes on the work that should be done. There are glaring omissions in topics that the magazine dared not tackle through thought-provoking editorial for fear of advertiser reprisals.

The hair section is one such section worth revisiting, as it is an area where much resistance work to combat the layers of negative connotations that have marked non-European hair is needed. This approach to hair has led to a market driven industry premised upon the notion of "hair that needs fixing" through a plethora of chemical products. *Panache* has not dared to tackle this important subject - not because it has not been raised as possible editorial content, but because it would be too risky to do from an advertiser's point of view. Gloria Steinem provides an example of a similar experience at *Ms* magazine. "*When the Ms. Gazette did a brief report on a congressional hearing into chemicals used in hair dyes that are absorbed through the skin that may be carcinogenic, Clairol,⁵³ is outraged and suspends almost all advertising with Ms.*" (Steinem 1990: 21). This advertiser fear has real impact on content, and in many ways limits and confines the extent of resistive work that can be tackled. These genre bound problems themselves produce supplementary problems that make the work at hand difficult to achieve.

What knowledge system remains intact and what actually shifts with this model of resistance? Although aiming to be authentic, an approach towards the reproduction of

images that focus on the world majority woman is reminiscent of the focus on the sexuality of the 'savage' woman. Within the fashion genre, *Panache* being no exception, the subject becomes the sexuality and femininity of the model that is reminiscent of the 'gaze' upon the 'savage' woman. In this case, not much has changed. The subject remains the same, the spectacle remains the same, but the audience shifts. What does this shift imply? Abigail Solomon Godeau points to the "spectacularization" – cultural articulation of femininity, that becomes an "ideological naturalization of the feminine as spectacle" which is at the heart of the challenge:

"At work here is the complex social psychic and material processes that collectively foster connotative associations between femininity, modernity, and the commodity, is an economy of desire operating on the register of the visual, which is itself commodity culture's primary and privileged mode of address" (114).

Through the *Panache* model, much has changed, but at the same time much has not changed. Although audience and subject focus has changed, the spectacularization of the feminine form, in this case that of the world majority woman, has become the spectacle and association of commodity culture. Bearing in mind the depth of scientific research that constructed the sexuality of the 'Hottentot Venus' as pathological, the long term impact of that construction is that knowledges and practices associated with the sexuality of the world majority woman run deep. Solomon-Godeau points to the sexualization of commodity which inflects the psychic structures of consumer desire of the image of desirable femininity as central and as becoming a supplementary emblem of commodity itself (113). The feminine emblem operates as a 'mirror of desire' reflecting the commodity's allure. In this case, production of image, produces a chromatised image of

desirable femininity thus making an image of desire the esthetic that readers should themselves desire.

Presented as 'commodity', these new images continue to rely on the conceptualization of feminine images as 'fetish' and 'sexualized'. There is a clear connection between this concept and the underlying approach of the display of the 'Hottentot Venus' that almost plays back itself. It means also that the body of the world majority woman becomes the bearer of contemporary meanings especially related to the concept of modernity, as if the notion of modernity is determined by a kind of femininity put on display. The attempt at producing imagery also boils down to another effort to target and offer explicitly middle-class values of bourgeois feminine behavior. The emerging forms of identity that are produced through this process of cultural production in and of themselves become production.

Again questions arise regarding the instrumentality of the *Panache* practice in breaking traditional media conceptions. Is creating a space away from the dominant voice not providing itself a reproduction of the exact dominant ethos - a separation of 'them' and 'us'? Apart from the purpose of providing representation to the 'in group', (the audience) what else does it reflect? The problem is that the 'other' (the historically 'savage' woman) can see herself in an '*unsavaged*' way through renewed images of self that are positive and central to the beauty esthetic. But this kind of niche production and distribution allows her alone to see herself. This approach reflects a kind of 'ghettoization' (Spivak 1990: 59-60) in media practice. A kind of marginalization that is one of the problems of the niche approach where a cultural product is produced and marketed to a select group. Despite *Panache's* resistive work, the dominant culture still

does not see the renewed images of world majority women, because they are hidden away in the niche space of the tropical stores as media product in North American cities. Yet this same woman continues to see dominant images of European/North American women everywhere, as the dominant esthetic. And she continues to remain invisible to the masses. For whom does the imaginary really change? The niche approach becomes the contemporary distancing element that reinforces the frontier of difference through specialist stores in 'ethnic' neighbourhoods. Spivak frames this problem within the niche approach: "*For me the question 'who should speak' is less crucial than "who will listen". I will speak for myself as a third world person....but the real demand is that when I speak from that perspective I should be listened to seriously*" (Spivak 1990: 59-60).

The continued failure of mainstream media to imagine the existence of a problem of representation is central to the notion of 'hearing'. By not 'hearing' the call to represent world majority women, mainstream magazines continue their essentialist practices that says "let them represent themselves", while they continue the status quo and represent what is considered the norm – European/North American women. This practice suggests a kind of duality in representation, but only for one group, as dominant images of perception propagated by the mainstream remain. The knowledge base of a monolithic massive 'other' therefore remains intact - as 'exotic', embedded in the stereotypes of the 'savage' woman. In this contested space of representation, editors still continue to largely reject images of non-white models, and cast only a specific kind of cover model. And so the search for the void in recognition and identification continues.

To critique the theoretical ideal associated with *Panache's* resistance versus the practical application of this model and its associated problematics, do not take away from

the depth of reader response that this cultural product has generated. Even within the genre-bound, institutional and philosophical complexities associated with this kind of media product, the extent to which readers have responded to the magazine as textual representation, points to the importance of its impact. As a media product aimed at resisting deeply embedded empirical constructs of the 'savage' woman, the implications of *Panache's* resistance are complex. Resistance represents an attempt to disturb what was previously considered immobile. The act of disturbance itself seems fragmentary within the context of the larger media practices that it attempts to destabilize. The associated problematics therefore have to be considered in order for the impact of this kind of resistance to become more effective.

Conclusion

This thesis has deconstructed a genealogy of knowledge of the 'savage' woman which informs media practice about esthetics of beauty. As a study, it is about the history of imagery and its significance and about uncovering the buried epistemology (Shohat & Stam 2) of colonial and eurocentric links and processes that have normalized taken-for-granted ways of portraying world majority women in the press. *Panache's* voice encompasses a vision that can make a difference but begins with a bold conviction of challenging the status quo. Merging the deconstruction of the 'savage' woman with *Panache* magazine attempts to locate and lay bare media practices and beliefs systems as social constructs. The process provides a framework where almost every stereotype related to viewing and representing world majority women can be traced by pointing out the systematic production of a set social hierarchies that have *placed* women. As a study, this thesis has not been geared at finding specific conclusions. Its main aim has been to deconstruct empirical knowledge and media practice, to question media's assumed norms, and to raise important questions on the issue.

One of the immediate questions that it raises is: how can the resistance that takes place through *Panache's* work reproduce itself? The deconstructing process that has occurred realizes that in a contemporary sense, mainstream fashion media still do not produce a reflection of society, instead they reproduce media practice that has been handed down from generations. Furthermore this practice is steeped in a knowledge base of difference that is very deeply embedded in the socio-historical psyche. This is manifested in the continued reproduction of images of world majority women loaded with certain static, biased ideologies. Dominant audience conceptions have not shifted.

Many of these magazines have yet to make the connection that their audience could consist of people of the world. When a magazine such as *Panache* attempts such a shift, it stands out as radical, marginalized, counter-hegemonic discourse. This is so because the surrounding structures are not available to support this kind of shift. *Panache's* images still remain within the realm of the marginal, suggesting that there is lots more to be done in order to have widespread images of world majority women without cliché. The challenge is for the images produced by *Panache* to become mainstream and not remain hidden as 'lone voice' media. But before that, what is needed is the normalization of the knowledge base, upon which media practice is premised. Stuart Hall locates media's work as an ideological continuum of social practices and beliefs. As surface manifestation of deeper embedded structures of thinking, imagining and reproducing of images (Hall 1981: 61), it will only be through ideological evolution that social and media practices will themselves evolve. The case study of the 'Hottentot Venus' however lays out the building blocks of the process of creation of a knowledge base of difference, and points to the enormity of the un-learning task at hand.

In the wider discourse of the construction and legacy of knowledge, media plays a central role as agent of reproduction. As a conduit for larger belief systems, "*the media construct for us the definition of what race is, what meaning the imagery of race carries, and what the problem of race is understood to be*" (11). Just as the construction of the 'Hottentot Venus' resulted from a systematic build-up of an ideology of difference, counter-hegemonic discourses can be effective in building its own imagery through media messages. As a distinct site of social struggle, (10) ideologies are themselves a

practice. Through the *Panache* practice, new ideologies of beauty are themselves created. This act of resistance is necessary in speeding the process on.

Through the methods of post-structuralist theory, there is clear indication that we live and dwell within language and representation, and have no direct access to the real (Shohat & Stam 179). This speaks loudly for the process of creating new kinds of representation of world majority women. It is through this awareness of language and representation that an exercise in re-mapping and renaming can be achieved. World majority women as an esthetic for beauty does not have to remain an antithesis of the white female form. This binary seems no longer necessary outside of the colonial, enlightenment framework within which it was produced and especially as many aspects of this process of knowledge have been devalued. An ideology that governs the image of world majority women no longer has to be seen within empirical frameworks of fetishism, apelikeness, child-likeness and ugliness. And these images no longer have to be achieved through props, masks, paint, make-up or body grease. Instead, it should be seen as another equal esthetic of woman. At least the image has to be redeemed for the world majority woman herself for whom traditional imagery is no longer acceptable.

An analysis of *Panache's* work lays out the complexities of institutional, ideological and social, road blocks that makes resistance problematic. It points to the formidable structure of cultural domination that sustains hierarchies of difference and shows how resistive work can be difficult. Resisting media within such a genre is rife with political, structural and contradictory challenges. There is no written or proven formula of effective media resistance, just as there are no guarantees of an overnight change in media practice. But somehow this difficult line has to be treaded as the status

quo cannot continue. No longer are world majority women willing to be reproduced as 'exotic other'. And media practice can no longer be simply passed along as tradition, but should be de-constructed to lay bare the ideological building blocks that inform its practice. Only then will meaningful production values that will impact on the lives of marginalized peoples be achieved.

This thesis points out that media resistance is political and problematic but such resistance cannot exist in isolation of the history that has shaped it. The role of the media is central in reproducing social ideology, but its role is also important in contributing to the dynamics of shifting ideological frameworks. In commenting on the articulation of the body in history, Foucault says the "*task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history, and the process of history's deconstruction of the body*" (148). To literally imagine a body inscribed by events, and imprinted by a history of images, is to deconstruct the genealogy of the 'savage' woman. The process of her recorded history has made her a symbol of other's 'otherness'. The task at hand is to see her as a symbol of herself. The possibility for redemption within *Panache* and a range of other media and cultural products exists, but can only be effective in initiating the necessary ideological shift if well thought out and pursued boldly.

Endnotes

¹ The Hottentot tribe, of South Africa was long regarded by scientists as the missing link whose 'low state of culture' positioned them on the hierarchy of creation between civilized man and animals. (Altick 269)

² Challenging the anthropological gaze that is loaded with a history of meaning for the European audience becomes the task.

³ Records that have been provided on her life indicate that she had been bought in South Africa by a Dutch Farmer, Peter Cezar, whose brother urged that she be taken to England. In England an Army surgeon Alexander Dunlop bought part interest in her. (qtd. in Altick 269: Times,) 26, 29 November, 1810 and Lysons I, 101-103)

⁴ Her exhibition in Paris lasted more than fifteen months (Altick 272).

⁵ The idea of primitivism was rooted in evolutionist beliefs that Europeans had developed to their stage of civilization. Encountering true 'savages' mirrored what seemed to be their former state of primitivism.

⁶ It was only towards the end of his travels that Marco Polo became increasingly critical and judgmental of the people and places he visited. Prior to that, most writings of the period concentrated on interest in commodities and their associated marketing problems. Other pilgrim writings focused on details of routes, mileage etc.

⁷ German scientist, Johann Friedrich Blumenback pioneered an empirical approach to race classification based on skull shapes in 1795. He suggested the division of humans into five major races: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malay Sian. His nomenclatural theory emphasized degeneration that saw Caucasian as the highest type and original race from which all others were subsequently derived.

⁸ To travel writers, ethnographers, sailors and missionaries, European lives became the antithesis of that of the people encountered.

⁹ Some of the accounts were from Wilhelm ten Rhyne, (1668), a physician of the Dutch India Company, who wrote about the finger shaped appendages. In 1708, Francois Legaut, the man in charge of a group of French Protestants provided drawings of a 'tablier', a semicircular skin attachment. In 1770, Captain James Cook dismissed the previous reports as fables and in 1880, French zoologists Peron and Lesuer provided compelling engravings of an object that descended from the vulva. It measured 3.3inches in length and resembled a penis (Baker 313-315).

¹⁰ Famous French Explorer Duroucet brought back compelling evidence that the Niam Niam people had tails as long as 5-7 cm. Subsequent explorations set out to verify that claim, and journals and naturalists debated this during the period of the mid-nineteenth-century.

¹¹ European explorers held the popular belief that Hottentot females tucked their 'tabliers' inside of their vagina.

¹² This science assumed that men as a group had more cranial capacity than women, and that the Caucasian race had more cranial capacity than any other.

¹³ The medicalization of female behavior in the nineteenth century defined minor transgressions of social structures of feminine modesty as diseased pathology.

¹⁴ Some of the peoples who were displayed include Australians Aborigines, Tahitians, Aztecs, Iroquois, Hottentots, Nubians, Somalians, East Indians, and Laplanders.

¹⁵ Beginning with the great International Exposition at London's Crystal Palace in 1851, it was followed by the New York's Crystal Palace Fair in 1853. Several great fairs were subsequently held in the world's largest cities for the next seven decades.

¹⁶ When humans were displayed particularly at fairs, elaborately staged industrial achievements were juxtaposed against displays of 'savages'. This positioning celebrated the ascension of civilized power over primitives (Hinsley 345).

¹⁷ Based on this, one questions the biographical information that has been presented on the 'Hottentot Venus'. She was described as one of the last survivors of her tribe that was under

siege by Dutch Settlers (Altick 269). In Other reports she has also been given a husband, a child, and a drinking habit (Sharpley-Whiting 17-18).

¹⁸ The ape-like image was further reinforced during the eighteenth-century through entertainment that featured 'ape-men'.

¹⁹ One of the persons who led the court case about her exhibition was John Kembly, a humane Londoner, who had visited her at an exhibition and was deeply troubled by her condition.

²⁰ Most of the images of the 'Hottentot Venus' that are available today reveal this comical caricature that became central to almost any discourse about her image.

²¹ Aristotle's explanation that women had a brain defect in heat that impaired female brain development was the explanation of female intellectual inferiority (Tuana 1).

²² Blumenbach's race theory was also premised on what he considered to be the maximal beauty ideal of people (Gould 401). He concluded that the Caucasian race was the most beautiful which he named after the Caucasian Mountains, the location of the most handsome people he had seen.

²³ Other issues will be referred to with relation to specific examples that will be discussed.

²⁴ As Senior editor, Evadne Anderson's role is philosophical. Her goal is to ensure that the magazine is representative of the audience. Managing editor, Adrienne Jones makes daily management and financial decisions about the operations of the magazine.

²⁵ Articles are not based on current affairs and news events, therefore selections are based on an expected set of criteria governed by hunch and insight.

²⁶ Some women's magazines were vocal in championing women's causes such as work rights and the suffrage movement. During World War Two, for example, they served to mobilize women about war issues and have been described as "mediators of war time social policy" (Ferguson. 18).

²⁷ Advertising shared the medical conception of the female body under threat, needing treatment through clothing, hair coloring, ointments, books etc. The body could be cured, or rendered beautiful through commodities.

²⁸ Steinem describes 'supportive' editorial as articles that praise food/fashion/beauty products.

²⁹ In North American publication terms, this audience would be considered ethnic, but in Caribbean terms it would be considered mainstream.

³⁰ The magazine was positioned as a travel magazine for North American tourists visiting the region, with articles written mainly by North American expatriates living in the Caribbean.

³¹ Managing Editor Adrienne Jones recruited an editorial management team of women of mainly Caribbean origin. This recruitment also included Senior Editor Evadne Anderson who brought a wealth of new approaches to embracing the essence and cultural depth of Caribbean woman.

³² High level quality photography, air-brushing, and the use of white spacing in layout on thick glossy paper produced a sophisticated product.

³³ Publications referred to are those such as *Ebony* and *Essence*, well known publications for Black audiences.

³⁴ Some of these are production qualities (paper, font), story choices and focus.

³⁵ Often these ideologies are reproduced through the exact stereotypes that these media have set out to resist. They pander to exotic fashions, greased, darker skins or imagery of hyper-sexual females.

³⁶ Such benefits occur with multiple titles that share costs of production and distribution and advertising through packaging.

³⁷ For example, pharmaceutical companies often insist that their products be placed next to the editorial *sports* page, or cosmetics companies insist on placement next to *Beauty Tips* pages.

³⁸ Fashion magazines reserve the first third of advertising for products and companies that are considered premier. Premier positioning costs more than ads positioned in the last third of the magazine.

³⁹ Editorial pages as used here refers to the small number of pages left over after advertising environment has been catered to.

⁴⁰ In these magazines runway pages overwhelmingly reflect models who are 'white', although there are a number of models of color at every fashion show.

⁴¹ Black hair has been and continues to be presented in such media through analogies of pathology; problemed or inferior, in need or repair.

⁴² It must be noted that *Panache* also represented an opportunity for photographers with similar visions to express their work. The magazine became a magnet for these artists who wanted to photograph world majority models in a positive and empowering light but did not, as they could not sell their work in traditional mainstream magazines.

⁴³ Sisters is used particularly within the lexicon of Black American as a woman-to-woman tone that implies a sharing of experiences. But this experience is identified as an American one.

⁴⁴ Elite Modeling Agency is one of the premier modeling agencies that represents some of the industry's top international models.

⁴⁵ The back location is reserved for low-end products and ads of low-production quality.

⁴⁶ Words and sentences on the cover that sell the content of magazine that are intended to entice readers to notice the magazine.

⁴⁷ Similarly issue vol.7 no 2/3 became extremely contentious as it was considered to be too 'white'. Both cover model and fashion editorial pages reflected light chromes of blackness. The following issue had to pay close attention to balancing model skin tones to make up for this shortcoming.

⁴⁸ International cosmetics and fragrance company.

⁴⁹ Although some writers and photographers are male, a large majority of the staff is female.

⁵⁰ In an effort to control editorial content of *Ms. Magazine* outside of the pressures of advertising, the magazine has undergone many difficult financial crises over the years.

⁵¹ These women have been targeted as audience in the USA and Canada.

⁵² Models utilized in the fashion spreads of *Panache* are almost exclusively international models. The reader's comments could be understood to point to her interest in seeing 'the girl next door' featured in fashion spreads. Then this could be perceived as being a real representative magazine.

⁵³ Hair product company.

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- Vol. 6. no. 3. December: 1999 January February: 2000
- Vol. 6. no. 4. March April May: 2000
- Vol. 7. no. 2/3. November December: 2000 January: 2001

Appendix 1

Ratio of Advertising to editorial pages

Panache Vol.6. no.1

Total no. of pages:	88
Total no. of Ads:	27
Total no. of Fashion pages:	27
Scents, cosmetics and other product related pages:	9
Total no. of advertising and ad-related pages:	63 = 71%
Percentage of pages left for non direct ad-related editorial	29%

Panache Vol. 6 no.2

Total no. of pages:	96
Total no. of advertising pages:	35
Fashion Pages:	30
Scents, cosmetics and other product-related pages:	9
Total no. of advertising and ad-related pages:	74 = 77%
Percentage of pages left for non direct ad-related editorial:	23%

Panache Vol. 6. no.3

Total no. of pages:	112
Total no. of Ads:	49
Fashion pages:	21
Scents, Cosmetics and ad product related pages:	16
Total no. of Advertising and ad related pages:	86 = 79%
Percentage of pages left for non direct ad-related editorial:	21%



SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF DESIGNERS SAVED ON FABRIC THIS SEASON; SKIN IS DEFINITELY IN!

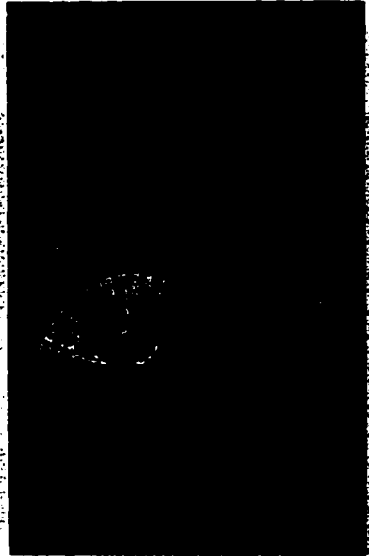
by ANISSA DIEB

Just when I started hoping that the new millennium would be kinder to the "non-thin" (how's that for PC terminology), along come the spring-summer 2000 collections. Now, I'm not saying the fashions are not interesting, lovely, feminine, daring, etc. They are all that and more. It's just, well, I find the predominance of the double-b's (bare and body-conscious) to be daunting for those longing for the truly wearable.

Shorts, a salute to the hot pants of the early '70s, appear to be a must. Hilfiger, Chanel, Versace, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana — they all had 'em. And are they short! Paired with high boots, there's a definite Foxy Brown vibe happening. It's downtown, it's exces-

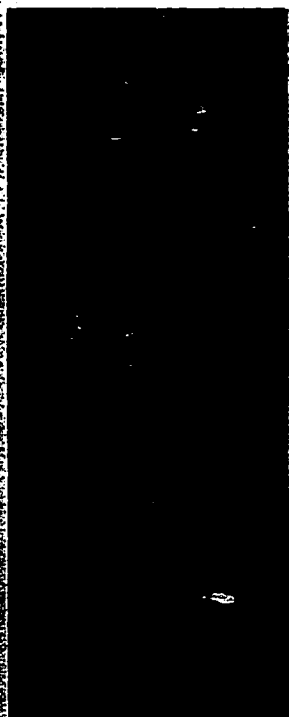
Appendix 2

talkingfashion



Lauder and Karen Groos), Vera Wangs (Nathalie Kaplan), and Tullehs (Lauren duPort) were ornamented with Edwardian feathers and chokers. Marina Rust in pink Chanel was a standout among the 200 revelers on the dance floor and elegantly wandering through the galleries. "If it weren't for the Edwardian Ball," she said, "I may have never fallen in love with couture." Proof that every fairy tale has a happy ending.

—ALEXANDRA KOTUR *talkingfashion* ▶ 134



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VOGUE MAY 2009

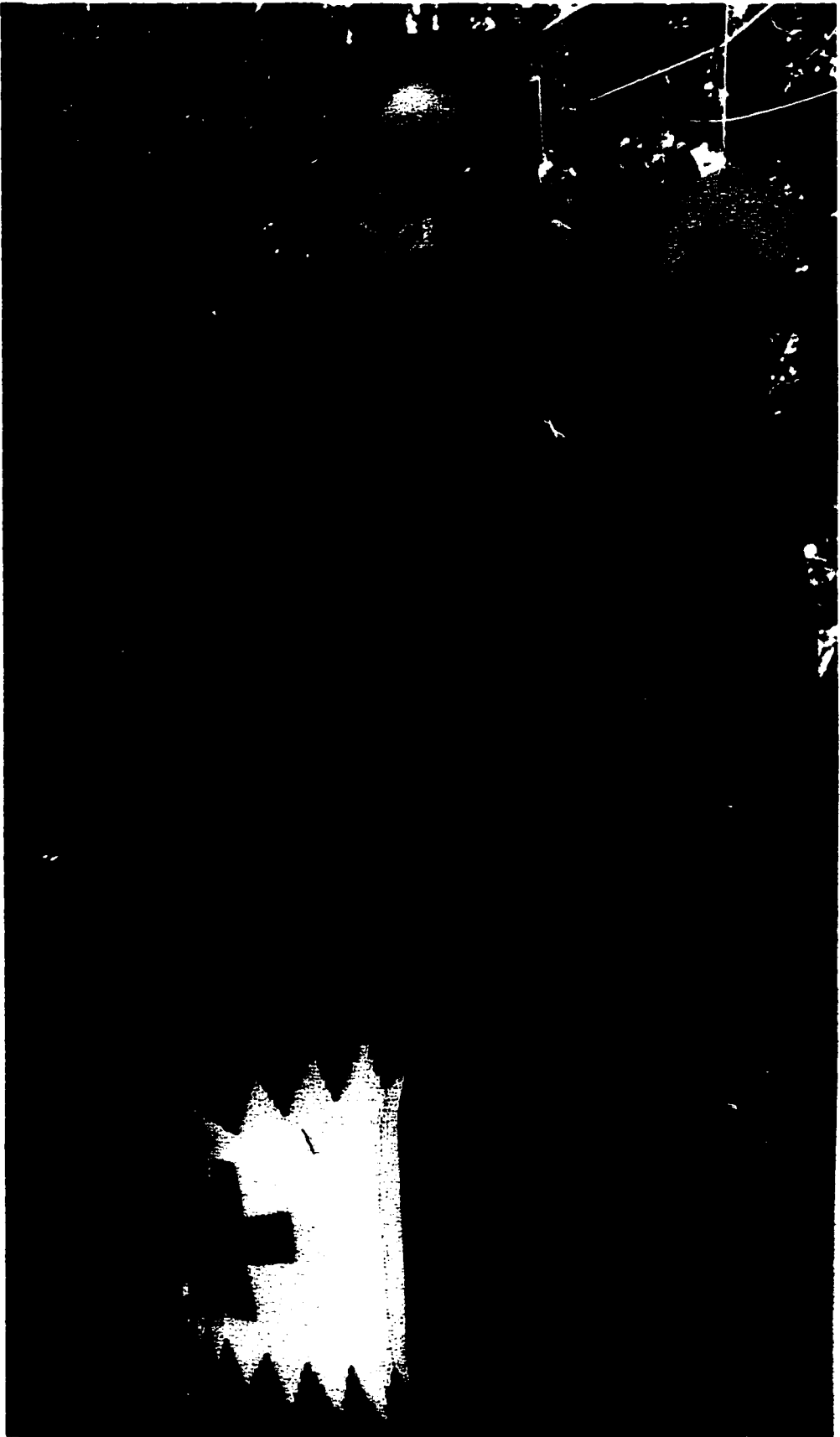
MOSES FERRELLIO

Appendix 2



THIS PAGE, KITE: Pure wool, grey and white tweed 3/4 length coat by LIDA BADAY. Sleeveless wool turtleneck by TOMBOEIR. Cigarette style pants in lycra and silk by CHANEL. Black leather and vinyl money belt by RUGBY NORTH AMERICA. Shoe by CHANEL. OPPOSITE PAGE, MOBILE: Wool jacket and lambskin skirt in caramel both by CHANEL. Bag by MISS SIXTY.

Appendix 3





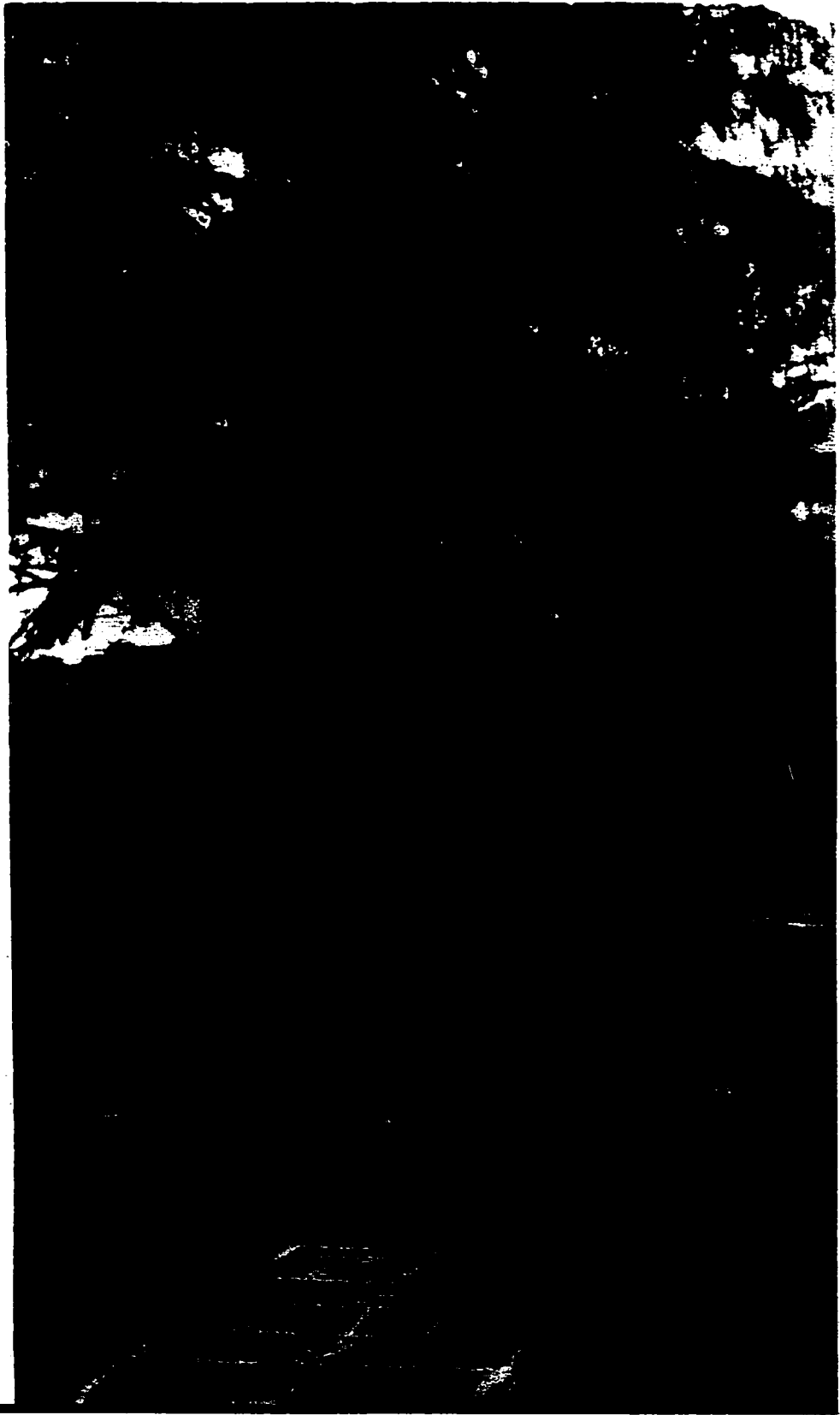
Appendix 3

TEPAGE. VVA. Long beige sleeveless mesh dress with big furtrineck, both by TOMBOUNI. Colorless tweed jacket by KENNY Z. THIS PAGE. YO-YO. Wool
3-white tweed tube top by TOMBOUNI. Tweed skirt, belt and shoe, all CHANEL.



Appendix 3

ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER: GEORGE LALOS; STYLIST: MARIE-JOSÉE HÉNAULT; ASSISTANT STYLIST: JILLIE FUGÈRE; HAIR: JOY (NEXT, NY); MAKEUP: PHILIPPE GAGRIAS (AGENCE MONTARÉ); ALL MAKEUP FROM MAC.



Appendix 3



WHITE, HOPSCOTCH: Simulated leather top by MISURA. Tweed pants by MISS SIXTY. Shoe by CHANEL. Bag: model's own. THIS PAGE. PICK-UP STICKS: Black lambskin top by CHANEL. Denim and tweed skirt by MISS SIXTY. Lambskin boot by CHANEL.

ICHE

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Ratio of racial-representation in Advertising

Panache Vol. 6. no.1

Total no. of pages:	88
Total no. of advertising pages:	27
Total no. of ads featuring world majority people ¹ :	7
Total no. of Ads featuring product only:	7
Percentage of ads featuring specific Caucasian images:	51%

Panache Vol. 6. no.2

Total no. of pages:	96
Total no. of advertising pages:	35
Total no. of ads featuring world majority people:	6
Total no. of ads featuring product only:	10
Percentage of ads featuring specific Caucasian images:	54%

Panache Vol. 6. No. 3

Total no. of pages:	112
Total no. of advertising pages:	49
Total no. of ads featuring world majority people ² :	8
Total no. of ads featuring product only:	10
 Percentage of ads featuring specific Caucasian images:	 64%

¹ Ads in this category include one double page spread (Tommy Hilfiger) featuring a group of different racial profiles. The first ad in this category appears at page 31, the remainder are from page 43 onwards.

² These include two ads located in first third of the magazine. The remainder are positioned in the back of the issue.