Broadcasting in South Africa

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Chapter 1

Broadcasting Technology as an Ideological Terrain: Some Concepts, Assumptions and Problems

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Broadcasting is usually regarded as one of the main sources of ideology in modern industrial societies, and, to a lesser extent in Third World countries. This has become increasingly true of broadcasting in South Africa. As a political, economic and social entity, South Africa shares attributes with both the industrialised countries of the West and with the countries of the Third World. This chapter seeks to describe the nature of broadcasting in South Africa, and to compare it with international broadcasting. It will be shown how international communications technology has been uniquely shaped and used within the South African form of racial capitalism, or apartheid. The focus of this chapter, then, is the relationship between an international technology and a local ideology. Before this comparison is drawn, a brief sketch of the concepts and assumptions which will be used is required.

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Levels of Broadcasting, Levels of Ideology

How and where is ideology identifiable in broadcasting?

What definition of ideology should be used to analyse broadcasting?

Even within the definitions of ideology used in this book there is a degree of uncertainty about how the various components of broadcasting can be analysed for their ideological characteristics. This derives from the multi-disciplinary origins of the neo-Marxist approach of this book, and the consequent shortcomings in the refinement and application of the approach[1]. There is a particular lack of analysis of the technology, although there has been some work on the ideology of technology in general[2].

Let us take a relatively simple definition of ideology from the neo-Marxist approach and attempt to apply it to broadcasting. Ideology operates to interpellate individuals through the apparently obvious and normal rituals of everyday living. Ideology, rather than being imposed from above, and being therefore implicitly dispensable, is the medium through which all individuals experience the world[3].

Leaving aside for the moment the problem of exactly how far individuals can escape from ideology, and assuming that such escape can be at least partly achieved through the kind of analysis that this chapter attempts, it is easy to say that radio programmes (the speech, music and other sounds that come out of the home receiver) are carriers of ideology. In modern urban society within a large nation-state, the radio is clearly the medium through which many people experience the world beyond the geographical limits of their daily life. The act of listening to the radio (switching on the receiver in the family home, with one or more members of the family present) could be considered as a daily habit or ritual in which ideology is present. It is also the main point of connection between broadcasting as an industry and its audience, the point at which studies of audience effects and decoding of programmes begin[4].

The level of *programmes*, then, is the first and most obvious level of ideology in broadcasting. Even at this level there is a range of differences, between news/current affairs/documentary (in which a particular or 'official' version of events is presented), and the sport, drama, light entertainment and music programmes. Any given member of the audience might find the first category objectionable but enjoy all or some of the items in the second.

A further aspect of ideology at the programme level is the division of material into the categories named above, and at this level it would be even more 'natural and obvious' to expect that fact and fiction would be kept separate, that drama and sport would be distinct[5].

The relationship between the ideological and the technical starts to appear when we consider the segregation of programmes into separate *channels*, the second level of ideology. 'Channel' is a word that covers two aspects: firstly, a transmitter operating at a certain frequency, whose signal reaches a particular and intended local, regional, national or international geographical area, and secondly a sequence of programmes whose style and content are different to those on other frequencies which the audience can pick up on their receivers.

At this level, the audience appears to have a greater choice than a single channel could offer, and thus ideology seems even less imposed. To use a common phrase, the audience seems to be getting what they want.

This brings us to consider elements in the third level of ideology, that is, the *broadcasting institution*. After 65 years of radio in South Africa, it seems natural and obvious in urban life that there should be particular, specialised institutions of broadcasting, alongside those of education, religion, paid employment, the military, representative government and the family. It also seems obvious that those people with the talent or inclination should have the choice of becoming broadcasters. It is less obvious that the only way for people to broadcast the products of their creative activity, or items of information, is through the broadcasting institution and its apparatus. As in other modern corporate institutions, this apparatus consists of the bureaucratic organisation of work into departments and sections (programme departments, engineering sections, accounts, for example), down to specific areas of individual responsibility and skill. The power of defining the boundaries between these areas is reserved for the top (or management) level of the hierarchical structure.

The fourth level of ideology in broadcasting is *legislation*. Statute law creates the apparatus of broadcasting, defines its powers and activities, provides for financial means, and establishes the system of authority by which it will be run. These laws also limit the way various kinds of radio technology can be used. They create categories and conditions of use: CB radio, radio hams, emergency services, police, military, private radio listener, commercial air traffic, marine and naval, etc. For all these, government lays down frequencies, contents and other conditions, as well as the sanctions against non-observance of these conditions. These legal specifications are both necessary for

the operation of radio as a communications system *per se*, as well as the means by which a ruling group in a society controls and supports the operation of broadcasting as part of that system[6].

It should now be obvious that there is an element of power and control over ideology in broadcasting that must be added to the definition quoted above. This power operates at various levels, from the overt and changing level of programmes, to the less publicly accessible and more structural level of the institution's internal apparatus. Where there is choice there is meaning, and where there is choice there is power. As with other large organisations, the broadcasting institutions maintain a boundary between themselves and the wider society, and this boundary conceals the operation of that choice: the items not included in the news, the programmes not shown.

The next level is that of the *technology* itself. The usual view of technology is that it is merely practical or functional, and thus separate from meaning, or ideology. The technology of broadcasting, although very expensive and relatively static, is very flexible. It consists of four elements which can be linked together in networks in a great number of permutations. These are studios (in which production of the message is done), transmitters (which convert the electrical energy of the message from the studio into radio energy), long distance links (such as cable, microwave and satellite, which connect several transmitters to one or more studios), and the home receiver (which picks up the radio energy and converts it back into audible sound (and vision, for television).

The technological level of ideology in broadcasting is the least visible. The only part of the network with which the listener comes into contact is the receiver. Due to market forces, government laws and regulations, this instrument is capable of picking up signals only from public broadcast transmitters, and not those from other kinds of radio users mentioned above. The possibility of alternative uses of radio, alternative messages between one listener and others, is thus concealed. Radio hams and CB radio users are more aware of this possibility, but they are prevented from putting this awareness into practice in any other form than that allowed by government regulations. These regulations typically exclude the playing of music, or transmission of any other material which is considered the province of public broadcasting.

These are the basic elements of how ideology operates in broadcasting technology, but several other points need to be developed, before it can be adequately dealt with.

Broadcasting in Modern Urban Societies

There is a great deal of popular writing on the media[7], and this often obscures the attempts of the media sociologists to describe the relationships between media systems and the societies in which they are found. Studies of the mass media which include broadcasting are usually conducted from two different sets of assumptions about the nature of modern industrialised states. The functionalists[8] derive their theoretical models and applied research from the assumption that there is a broad consensus among the population of modern states, and that broadcasting and other mass media fulfill a functional role in maintaining the stability of this consensus in large, highly complex modern states. Media sociologists from this school are thus typically concerned with the effects of the media upon their audience.

Structurally-oriented researchers base their writings on the thesis that the division between labour and capital creates an unavoidable conflict in industrial states. According to this thesis, the owners of capital exert their control over the mass media in order to maintain their dominance in this conflict. There is usually an implied or overt assumption that, if labour (the working class) could eventually get control of capital and the means of production, including broadcasting, an egalitarian society would inevitably result. These researchers have conveniently avoided turning their assumptions and research on the Eastern bloc countries[9].

The advantage, it is claimed, of the structuralist approach is the ability to deal conceptually with the entire social formation. Consequently, reply the functionalists, the former practitioners are unable to construct workable research designs which permit the study of particular cases and the rich detail which is found, for instance, in particular messages and particular audiences. The reason for this, say the functionalists, is the unworkable Marxist base-superstructure metaphor. In any event, the two approaches are constantly poaching ideas, data and conclusions from each other and re-interpreting them, hybridising them.

The main problem which both approaches seek to resolve is the dimension of power in the relationship between the media system and its wider society. Does the media system have the power to affect/change/control the society, or is the media system itself merely an expression of the power relationships already existing in the society? Williams cites the case of the press to illustrate the reciprocal relationship between a form of communication and its social context:

It was at once a response to the development of a social, econ-

omic, and political system, and a response to a crisis within that system. The centralisation of political power lead to a need for messages from that centre along other than official lines[10].

This is very close to functionalism. Williams' "operative relationship"[11] between communications and society was non- problematic; he is elusive on the nature of the crisis (which for structuralists would be the conflict between capital and labour during the industrial revolution) and yet tending towards a structuralist view:

> thus . . . broadcasting can be diagnosed as a new and powerful form of social integration and control. Many of its uses can be seen as socially, commercially and, at times politically manipulative[12].

Who exerts control, and how is power mediated and transferred? How were the political and social needs of the new industrial states mediated through the evolution of broadcasting? In other words, how and why did broadcasting come into being? The answers to these questions must be sought on an international scale, since a comparative reading of broadcasting history reveals that broadcasting began in a host of countries across the globe within the space of five years, between 1922 and 1927[13]. Further reading reveals relatively *similar* patterns and stages of development, particularly at the level of the technology. The *differences* between national systems become apparent mainly at the more overt levels such as programmes, channels and legislation.

Common Patterns in the Development of Radio

The Development of Radio Communications up to 1922

The development of two-way radio preceded broadcasting, and took place within an expanding system of trade between the metropoles and the peripheries in the colonial period[14]. Both military and commercial interests within the major capitalist countries desired ever more efficient means of controlling and disseminating information on markets, prices, products and raw materials. These forces had lead to the earlier forms of communication such as heliograph, semaphore, cable telephony and telegraphy, but radio was more efficient in several ways: greater distance, 24-hour operation, mobile and multiple send/receive points. Radio could use some of the existing components of cable telephony and telegraphy; in many cases radio systems were developed by the same companies who operated the older systems. Radio fulfilled a real need, and as Williams points out,

> A need which corresponds with the priorities of the real decision-making groups will more quickly attract the investment of resources and official permission on which a working technology, as distinct from available technical devices, depends[15].

The process of invention, refinement, application and acceptance of the new technology took place through the interaction of science, commerce and industry, the military and government. In most countries, the patent law was the specific stimulus which orientated researchers towards radio. This law enabled the particular components and devices to be legally identified as the property of individuals, and around the holders of these patents grew the nuclei of the modern electronic multinational corporations: Bell, Marconi and others[16]. In the commercial sphere, the aim was to market as many as possible of the working units which utilised the patented items. Governments, through legislation and military activities, further encouraged and shaped the spread of radio technology. The First World War temporarily ended a spate of patent lawsuits, between the holders of competing patents in America, and enabled joint research to proceed[17]. However, legislation on communication systems was usually framed to control the older technologies, mainly cable telegraphy and telephony. This fact, plus vested interest in the older systems, in turn hindered the rapid application of radio.

The War also brought many soldiers from various countries into contact with radio for the first time. That experience, in addition to the general experience of change and mobility that always occurs in war time, interested the returning soldiers and others in building their own cheap receivers and, less often, in building their own transmitters. The result was a huge increase in the amateur hobby of radio. Publications and amateur associations mushroomed. The manufacturers of equipment quickly spotted this potential market, and began marketing ready-made receivers (for those who had more inclination to listen-in than to build), as well as parts for the do-it-yourself addicts.

What did these people listen to? Anything they could pick up, which included military, naval and other two-way traffic, the conversations of amateurs who operated their own transmitters as well as receivers. The former was interesting if functional to listen to, and disturbed only the relevant authorities, who realised that the security of information that they transmitted was gone, destroyed by the easy access to radio equipment. The latter were much more

interesting to listen to, since they provided contact with people and places formerly inaccessible through the existing, official means of communication: road and rail, or telephone and telegraph. Much of the conversation was concerned with technical information about frequencies, power of transmitters, weather conditions, static, interference from other radio user, but the chatter and occasional music which was used to test the equipment was interesting. Eloquent, humorous amateurs who could improvise in front of a microphone soon attracted a following, since they had the kind of talent that would later become professionalised in the figure of the disc jockey.

The amateurs also assisted in plotting the basic information about radio transmission and reception, which they exchanged verbally or through their amateur associations. The most important facet of radio activity in those days, however, was the experimental transmissions of the manufacturers, who quickly realised that the purely functional aspect of their tests was becoming overshadowed by the entertainment aspect of it. Entertaining transmissions provided a stimulus to the population for the purchase of receiving equipment.

The military, also good customers of the manufacturers, felt that the amateurs were cluttering up the airways. At that time equipment had been developed to use only a limited range of frequencies, chiefly in the long and medium-wave bands. The way in which these frequencies would be used had been agreed on at an international level through the International Telegraphic Convention (later the International Telecommunications Union, or ITU). Member governments were responsible for enforcing the terms of these agreements, and the huge increase in radio activity resulted in interference in two-way radio traffic across national borders. This conflict of interests was resolved in different ways in different countries, and resulted in the creation of broadcasting[18].

The Institutionalisation of Broadcasting: 1922–1927

During the five year period between 1922 and 1927 a complex set of formal and informal negotiations took place between the various pressure groups: the amateurs and listeners-in, the military, naval and air forces, civil air and marine traffic, the manufacturers, the press, government the various interest groups such as the church and the recorded music industry. The power of instant address to the new audience that was emerging was removed from easy access by amateurs, and reserved for the controllers of the new industry of broad-

casting. In each country the exact relations of production and consumption which characterised the new industry were slightly different, depending on the social, political, economic and cultural forces. In America, for example, the power of the new breed of cultural worker was defined almost exactly by the demands of the accumulation of capital[19]; in Eastern bloc countries the Party controlled broadcasting at all levels[20]. In Britain, the existing ideology of 'public service' was applied to broadcasters, thus neutralising their potential power as class agents for fractions of capital, and making them operate in the interests of capital as a whole[21]. In colonial or Third World countries, where broadcasting appeared almost simultaneously, the nature of broadcasting depended on the degree of colonisation, capitalist development and the country by which it was colonised. In South Africa, therefore, the features of broadcasting and the stages of development resembled very closely those of the United Kingdom[22].

Stages of Development

In the 1920s, broadcasting was formed as a compromise between existing interests, within particular social formations, and with available technology. As an industry, it thereafter rapidly developed its own dynamics of development, interacting with the wider social formation. A number of distinctive differences are thus apparent in the growth of broadcasting over the intervening 65 years. Only the commonest features can thus be indicated, and once again, the level of greatest similarity is that of the technology[23]:

Growth of the audience. This occurred in parallel with two other processes; urbanisation, and the growth of the 'consumer society'. Typically, the habit of radio listening spreads downward in the class structure, as sets become cheaper, electricity more available, and programmes more varied. Radio listening also spread outwards from the urban areas to rural areas, and internationally from highly industrialised to less industrialised countries, as a continuation of the process which began in the colonial period.

Growth of channels/frequencies. As the demand grew for access to radio in general, so the manufacturers developed transmitter and receiver technology which would operate at a greater range of frequencies, thus permitting the allocation of more channels. This in turn permitted broadcasters to offer a greater choice of programmes on different channels.

Expansion of the network. In parallel with the above, research into the nature of radio and cable permitted the development of long

distance transmission, which could link up several studios and transmitters. This allowed the various channels to be broadcast to different areas at different times of the day and week. For instance national and regional channels could be linked together for certain programmes like the news. Under certain conditions, transmitters were not suitable for distribution, and cable was used exclusively. This happened in parts of Africa where the low per capita income of the potential audience inhibited sale of the usual receivers, and the static interference common in Africa made medium-wave transmission unacceptable. Satellites and ground stations, or satellites direct to receivers, have been used in the case of television, where the population density and per capita income has made the erection of transmitters and connecting links too expensive.

Expansion in programme types and styles. The developments in studio and field production technology (such as tape recorders, microphones, records, mixing desks), as well as the discovery by broadcasters that there was a wide variety of tastes among the supposed 'mass' audience, (often corresponding to differences in class, culture, language, education, age and sex), resulted in a wider variety of programmes being developed, in an attempt to render a 'public service' in British terms, or enlarge the audience, in American terms.

Broadly speaking, broadcasting changed from being merely a disseminator of existing cultural forms outside broadcasting, to a generator of culture itself. The situation has now been reached in urban areas where broadcasting itself is the most powerful source of culture. Further, broadcasting has become an international industry, in which news, sport, drama and light entertainment programmes are bought and sold, exchanged and distributed internationally, much like any other commodity. It makes no sense to speak of broadcasting as the source or centre of a national culture, whether one agrees with the media imperialism thesis or not[24].

Additional sources of funding. When broadcasting began, each country evolved a particular form or mechanism for funding broadcasting. For various reasons these were found inadequate, and other sources of finance were introduced. The typical sources are advertising, licence fees for private home receivers, and government subsidy or grant.Each has a significant influence on the relationship between the broadcasters and the audience, and hence on the programmes which are broadcast.Many countries now have mixed sources of funding, either for one single network, or for several.

Legislation. At the time when broadcasting was formed, both national and international legislation was inadequate to control the new technology and the access to information that it permitted. New international agreements were required at the ITU. New legislation by individual states, in the form of charters, government acts on broadcasting, new government agencies for the administration of frequencies and regulations, were necessary before broadcasting could operate. In the British system particularly, legislation was required that would enforce payment of the licence fee. In the American system, with far more broadcasting stations, regulations to prevent jamming by adjacent stations were required. The less functional but equally important area was that of content. Typically, the legislation embodied a statement of principle but the real mechanisms of control and censorship operated via informal day-to-day practices[25].

Both nationally and internationally, new legislation and agreements are required at regular intervals to allow for the appearance of new technology, the demand for more frequencies, and the internal re-arrangement of the powers of broadcasting by government[26].

The Relationship between Radio Communications Systems and a Capitalist Mode of Production

The previous few paragraphs summarised the development of radio and its modification into the form of broadcasting in a rather narrative way, and thus presented a view of broadcasting which Williams describes as "technological determinism"[27]. This view implies that a form of technology such as broadcasting arises as it were by accident, is taken up and adapted, and has results and effects far beyond the intentions of those who developed it. Williams criticises this, and restores the notion of intention in the process of research and development: "Though some of the crucial scientific and technical discoveries were made by isolated and unsupported individuals, there was a crucial community of selected emphasis and intention"[28]. Williams does not always make it clear that this intention is not conscious, and thus not part of any international conspiracy of domination. It is rather a fundamental ideological aspect of technology and communications, in both capitalist and socialist systems.

In the rise of capitalism, production comes more and more to rest on exchange. This happens as commodity production becomes more specialised and hence more centralised. This exchange requires the

movement of goods and capital, labour and raw material, between points previously unconnected. Markets, factories, consumers and sources must be linked. Workers must be able to travel to sell their labour power:

> The revolution in the modes of production and industry and agriculture made necessary a revolution in the general conditions of the social process of production, i.e. the means of communication and transport[29].

The means of physical transport have been developing since trade between individuals and communities began. As the means of physical transport developed, so communication systems were necessary to coordinate movements along the physical pathways. Thus two-way radio supplemented the earlier systems of telegraphy and telephony.

Control of the physical means of transport – both the route and the means of conveyance – is retained by the owners of capital. Thus the subordinate classes are not enmeshed with a transport system which would allow them to serve their own direct common interests. They remain participants in a communications system which obscures their relation to one another, in a way beneficial to the ruling group.

Communications systems such as radio are thus, in the two-way form, elements of "productive forces", in facilitating the movement of goods and capital, and, in the one-way or broadcasting form, they are the ". . . social relations of production, factors in the formation of a new social personality, that is, new sensibilities, new interests, new ways of relating to the world"[30].

As a centralised information/education/entertainment network controlled by capital, broadcasting duplicates the centralisation of the means of commodity production. The programmes which are distributed through the network obscure this characteristic of the system[31]. Since radio technology is itself a commodity, existing within market relations, it follows that it must necessarily be developed according to the rules and interests of that system.

Last and most important, broadcasting, as a mass production technology, differs in one important respect from other industries. In commodity production, the commodity is *first* mass produced, and *then* distributed. In broadcasting, the network *simultaneously* distributes and mass produces the original, which was only a 'one-off' in the studio. Not only that, the state subsidises part of the distribution system (in the BBC model), and the audience, by paying for the receiver, pays for a further part. This gives broadcasting a massive economic advantage over the press and other media.

Characteristics of Different Transmitter Frequencies

For the use of radio in broadcasting, a high degree of fidelity of reproduction is necessary, in order for music to be pleasant and entertaining to the ear. By contrast, functional two-way systems require merely that the human voice is heard clearly enough to convey the content. The distance characteristics of the different frequencies is less important in broadcasting than in two-way systems. The design of the particular transmitter also affects distance and fidelity, but subject to the following three related variables.

A transmitter generates a radio wave or signal of constant frequency onto which the programme signal of variable frequency is modulated. These transmitter 'carrier' waves vary in their propagation patterns according to their frequency; that is, how far they will travel from the transmitter, in what direction and under what conditions. The categories of wave described below are those which are used in broadcasting[32].

Medium waves travel around the curve of the earth's surface for a distance of about 350 km. Part of the signal, the 'ground' waves, travel through the ground, and another part, the 'sky' waves, bounce down off the troposphere. They travel better by night than by day.

Short waves bounce up to the troposphere and down again, proceeding right around the earth in a series of hops. There are thus concentric rings of good and bad reception centred on the transmitter. These waves are even more subject to atmospheric interference than medium waves, but travel further than medium waves.

Very High Frequency (FM) waves travel in a straight line to the horizon and then continue through the troposphere and into space.

Encoding Method

Encoding is the way the programme signal is modulated onto the carrier signal. By international agreement, broadcasting in the medium and short wavebands modulates the *amplitude* of the carrier wave by the programme signal. This renders the signal liable to interference in the atmosphere, which is especially common in Africa. Broadcasting in the VHF band modulates the *frequency* of the carrier wave (hence FM radio vs AM radio). This method reduces interference, and hence enhances the realism or fidelity of the signal, but requires legislation to enforce the fitting of static suppressors to electrical equipment, and vehicles.

Frequency Band and Channel Width

The higher the frequency of the carrier wave, the more information it can carry.The carrying capacity of any one band is divided up into channels of different widths. The two characteristics are inter-related; the former (frequency) is a natural characteristic of radio waves, while the latter (width) is arbitrarily agreed at the ITU.

'Information' refers to electronic information from the studio, and it is the *transmitter's* (not the studio's or the receiver's) capability that determines the degree of fidelity or realism of reproduction in broadcasting. For instance, the medium waveband could be divided up into very many low-quality/narrow-width telephone chan-nels; or a lesser number of music-quality, broader channels for radio broadcasting; or a single channel suitable for one colour television channel[33].

By international agreement at the ITU, the medium waveband was divided into a number of channels suitable for radio broadcast-ing. The width of these channels is not great enough to permit perfect reproduction of the range of frequencies contained in orchestral mu-sic, but is wide enough for it to be tolerated by the audience. By con-trast, channels for broadcasting in the short waveband are narrower, because of greater demand for its long-distance capability, and thus give a lower level of fidelity or realism at the receiver. Broadcasting in the VHF system permits almost total fidelity. It allows reproduc-tion of sounds over the whole range of human hearing.

Factors Affecting Network Design

At any point in the history of broadcasting, a number of technical choices exist. These occur at the international level of the ITU and at the national level, where governments the manufacturers, and at the national level, where governments decide how to use their allotted frequencies. Thus a choice exists be-tween a number of possible network configurations. The precise form that the network takes is determined by the interaction between technical factors and social, political and economic factors. Networks are designed to take advantage of all resources and factors in main-taining the unequal class relations among the population. The broad-casting network is thus "a structure of domination"[34].

As broadcasting developed as a separate market for the manufac-turers of radio technology, so they developed a greater range of de-vices, and thus offered a greater range of choices to broadcasters. The broadcasters were therefore able more and more to organise the net-work according to their perceived needs in maintaining control as

described above. As broadcasting came to be regarded as a valuable tool for maintaining control, so the intentions of the broadcasters *shaped* the direction in which technology was developed by the manu-facturers, and more particularly, installed by the broadcasting engin-eers. This tendency towards greater sophistication in and control over the technology does not of course lead to ultimate and final con-trol, because the composition, tastes and location of the audience are always changing; in other words, the social, economic and political factors are not static[35]. The following factors affecting the network design are applicable in all countries, but only the South African details are given below.

Transmitters

The variables in transmitters are the number, frequency and location of transmitters used. Broadcasting began with a small number of transmitters sited in the main urban centres. Later, medium wave transmitters were added, to reach the rural areas. After attempts SW transmitters were added, to reach the rural areas. After attempts had been made to reach the majority of the population with additional urban medium-wave transmitters and, briefly, a cable sys-tem, a VHF/FM system was installed which required 463 transmit-ters at 99 stations (1983 total) spread more or less evenly over the whole country. This network provided sufficient channels to reach most of the population.

Landlines

Landline connections between transmitters initially used to link the medium-wave transmitters into a national network using voice-quality, unreliable telephone lines. A national network of acceptable quality and reliability was created only in the 1950s when the Post Office installed a national carrier network for broadcasting as well as other users of telecommunications. This network was ex-panded in the 1960s to cater for the greater channel capacity of the VHF/FM system.

Studios

At the outset of broadcasting each transmitter was connected to a single studio. There were three, located in each of the main urban centres. The use of landlines made it possible to connect one studio to all or some transmitters, of the same or different frequencies. This made it possible to broadcast the same programmes to different

areas. The connection of several studios to several transmitters made it possible to broadcast several channels simultaneously in the same area.

Receivers

As with any new consumer technology, the early models were expensive, bulky and unreliable. On the other hand, broadcasting was still simple enough for amateurs to build their own receivers: the well-known 'crystal sets'. Initially, all receivers were powered by bulky and expensive wet-cell batteries, which had to be re-charged regularly with special equipment. When domestic mains electricity supply became common in urban areas, receivers were developed which could run from this source. As the propagation and reception patterns of radio waves in different parts of the country were charted, so aerial design and installation was improved. A range of types and styles was marketed, some combining radio and record players in the same cabinets. When the VHF/FM system was introduced, an entirely new market was created overnight, because the old MW/SW sets which used AM only, became redundant. Transistors replaced valves, allowing receivers to use less electricity. Small, cheap, disposable batteries could be installed in the casing of the receiver itself. The portable radio was born.

Language

South Africa has seven main languages. As in other parts of the Third World, language dominance is often associated with political dominance. In South Africa, language is also associated with racial dominance. An individual is more likely to be drawn into the broadcasting audience if addressed in the mother tongue. Segregation of each language onto a separate channel appeared to naturalise this political and racial element in programmes. The basis of this segregation was the provision of different frequencies/channels. Towards the end of the period, when common interests among the white ruling class (based on consumer culture), became more important than language differences (based on 'traditional' culture), bilingual channels were introduced for the dominant white group only. In order to maintain the fragmentation of the black subordinate classes, programmes in black languages were strictly segregated onto separate channels. Initially, a programme policy of traditional culture was followed, but this changed to include a more urban-based consumer culture.

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Per Capita Income of the Target Audience

In broad terms, per capita income determines the ability of the population to afford electricity and receivers. At the beginning of the period, the poor economic position of the white Afrikaner, and the largely peasant or farm labourer status of the black population, limited the degree to which they could be drawn into the audience. Per capita income increased during the period for both these groups. The introduction of the VHF/FM system was largely motivated by the cheapness of the portable, battery-operated receivers which transistorisation allowed.

When broadcasting started, South Africa's population was slightly smaller, thinly scattered and far less urbanised than it is today. Individual transmitters were thus less cost-effective than later in the period, when massive urbanisation occurred.

As the number of channels grew, so programmes became progressively more specialised, as the broadcasters attempted to draw more of the population into the audience. Initially, a high-culture policy with didactic overtones was followed. This changed to incorporate a mass-culture policy, in which the broadcasters apparently 'gave the audience what they wanted' in the form of popular music, light entertainment and sport.

The Ideology of Broadcast Technology

If ideology is the "medium through which all individuals experience the world," and also if it constitutes peoples' "sensibilities . . . interests . . . ways of relating to the world" (see footnotes 3 and 30 above), then ideology in broadcasting at the level of technology depends on two aspects: the degree of realism or fidelity of reproduction which the transmitter conveys to the receiver, and the extent to which it does so throughout the social formation, i.e. the extent of the network/size of the audience. The element of power in this area of ideology consists chiefly in the one-way, centralised characteristic of the network.

The factors which determine the extent of the network and the degree of fidelity or realism conveyed by it have been dealt with in the preceding sections, but the direct experience of the listener at the receiver needs examination. Analysis of the message in studies of the mass media has been conducted in both functionalist and structuralist schools. The functionalist approach – content analysis – usually remains at the level of manifest content, and does not deal with deeper levels of significance. In structuralism, a lack of sophisti-

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cation in the classic Marxist writings on ideology has lead researchers to borrow heavily from structuralist and semiological approaches. There has been an attempt to get to the level where messages are constructed, to the level where ideology operates:

"In ideological analysis we must go to the structuring level of messages – that is, to the level where the discourse is coded, not just to their surface forms"[36]. The problems inherent in this marriage of approaches[37] has resulted in several difficulties, among them a confusion about exactly where the most important level of ideology lies: at the iconic level or the symbolic level, the denotative or the connotative aspects[38]. Nowhere does this kind of analysis go to the level of technology that is proposed in this chapter. There are several possible reasons. One is that the ideology of technology – as a neutral, autonomous and apolitical agency that is universally available – is so powerful at this time[39]. Another possible reason is the lack of theorising about technology in the writings of Marx[40]. Ironically, message analysis within the Marxist approach has been unable to see beyond the limits of the very semiotic approach which it employs: "Iconic signs are very vulnerable to being read as natural because visual codes of perception are very widely distributed and because this type of sign is less arbitrary than a linguistic sign"[41]. The material nature of the sign, as a commodity which is produced with technology, subject to market relations like any other, has escaped such researchers. Analysis of the message which takes account of the technology must therefore locate the *iconic* level of the sign at the moment of *electrical* coding. How, then, does the individual member of the audience experience ideology at this level when listening to the radio. The answer lies in the two aspects proposed at the beginning of this section; the size of the centralised, one-way network, and the degree of realism/iconicity/fidelity of the images it distributes.

The first aspect – the network – leads the listener to believe that the image is presented to him/her and to no-one else:

> The technique of reproduction detaches the object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions, it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it re-activates the object produced[42].

In other words, the image appears unique, 'natural', to the listener because it is presented to him within his/her private home; s/he is not aware that that other people are listening to the same (duplicated) image simultaneously. The listener's perception of him/herself as merely *one* of a massive audience is obscured. This apparent

uniqueness of the listening act is buttressed by the apparent power which the listener has over the images. The listener's status and security are not at risk. All programmes are reduced to the same status as each other; s/he has a (limited) power of choice in imposing a hierarchy of value on them, which channel to listen to, when to switch on or off. This concealment of the rest of the audience brings us to the second aspect.

The realism of the images produced conceals the technology intervening between the *original* sound at the production or studio end of the chain, and the *image* of that sound at the receiver; the microphones, switches, transmitters, and the cable links between them[43]. The result is to subvert the normal rules of time and space which the individual learns from unmediated, direct experience of the environment:

> In all arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial[44].

The highly realistic, or iconic, nature of the image maintains the illusion that the old rules of time and space still exist, since this iconic image resembles the original so closely. Further, the geographical extent of the network removes the possibility of comparison between the original and its image.

The two characteristics of broadcasting (the realism of the image plus the network) together constitute the level of greatest ideological power. Broadcasting interpellates the individual and obscures his/her consciousness as a member of a group or community, but especially of class. This subversion of class consciousness prevents (for the subordinate classes) the formation of resistance to the dominant ideology. For the members of the dominant classes, broadcasting seems 'natural and obvious', since its programmes and advertisements closely match their own ambitions, wants, needs and experiences.

Notes and References

1. J Curran, M Gurevitch, and J Woollacott, "The study of the media; theoretical approaches." in *Culture, Society and The Media*, M Gurevitch, *et al*, (eds) Methuen, 1980, p17. Study of the broadcasting institution has ignored the technology and concentrated on four institutional aspects; structures and role relationships; political economy; professional ideologies and role relationships; interaction with socio-political environment.

2. For example, E Mandel, *Late Capitalism* Verso, London, 1983, Habermas, J *Towards a Rational Society*, Heinemann, London, 1971, Chapters 4 & 6; A Pacey, *The Culture of Technology*, Blackwell, London, 1983; D Albury, and J Schwarz, *Partial Progress; the Politics of Science and Technology*, Pluto, London, 1982. D MacKenzie and J Wajcman *The Social Shaping of Technology* Open University Press, Milton Keynes. Chapter 1, "Do artifacts have politics?" The functionalist approach   tends   to regard technology as non-problematic, and defines the problem as merely one of planning, diffusion and application, for example; I Spiegal-Rosing, and D de Solla-Price, (eds) *Science, Technology and Society; an Interdisciplinary Approach*; Sage, 1977. R Cowen, "Technology and Science" in Technology Review, vol 83, No 6, May/June 1981.

3. Curran, *et al*,1980, *op cit* p24.

4. Ibid. Both functionalist and neo-Marxist approaches come to the same general conclusions about the relationship between audiences and programmes.

5. Raymond Williams among others has identified common features among different sorts of programmes in an evening's television, and the way they form a sequence rather than a set of distinct units. See R Williams, *Television, Technology and Cultural Form*, Fontana, London,1974. Chapters 4 & 5. Compare this with the view of American professional production ideology, in G.Chester, *et al*, Television and Radio, Appleton Century Crofts, N.Y. 1971, (4th ed) pp54–55.

6. S Hall, "The Structured Communication of Events", stencilled occasional paper, Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, ND, page 32. This proposes the element of domination, rather than the notion of "transparent comunication". See also S Hall, "Culture, the Media and the Ideological Effect", in Curran, *et al*, (eds) *Mass Communications and Society*, London, Arnold, 1977, pp342–346.

7. M McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage* Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967 is one of the most well-known.

8. Well-known functionalist studies are: J.T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication*, Glencoe, Free Press, 1960; C S Steinberg, *Mass Media and Communication* N.Y. Hastings House, 1970.

9. B Smart, *Foucault, Marxism and Critique*, London, Routledge, 1983, p13.

10. Williams, 1974, *op cit* p21.

11. Ibid, p20.

12. Ibid, p23.

13. *National and International systems of Broadcasting* Michigan State U. Press, 1969; Luke Uka Uche, *The Mass Media in Nigeria; a study in structure, management and functional roles in crisis situations*. UMI, New York, 1977; J A Lent, *Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1978; E Katz, & G Wedell, *Broadcasting in The Third World* Harvard U. Press, 1977; and S W Head, Broadcasting in Africa, Temple U. Press, Philadelphia, 1974.

14. Williams, 1974, *op cit* p20.

15. Ibid, p19.

16. P Danielian, 1939, "American Telephone and Telegraph Company: Science in Business", in A Mattelart, and S Siegelaub, (eds), *Communication and Class Struggle: 1. Capitalism, Imperialism*, IMMRC, Bagnolet, France, 1979, pp241–252; T Mayes, "The History of the American Marconi Company", in Lichty and Topping, 1975, *op cit*; S W Head, *Broadcasting In America*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin; 3rd ed. p86.

17. S W Head, *op cit* (1st ed. 1956) p104.

18. For an account of how this is accomplished at the ideological level of legislation, see the history of British and American legislation on radio broadcasting, in respectively A Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, 3 vols, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp308–324; 348–360, and L Lichty and Topping, *American Broadcasting; a sourcebook on the history of radio and television*, N.Y, Hastings House, 1975, pp534ff, 544ff, 556ff.

19. Williams, 1974, *op cit* pp34–35.

20. The State Committee for Radio and TV Broadcasting is the responsible body. Previously, it has been a joint stock company owned by the trade unions and educational bodies, and the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. B Paulu, Broadcasting on the European Continent, U. Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1967, p52ff.

21. Williams, 1974, *op cit* p39.

22. E Rosenthal, *You Have Been Listening*, Cape Town, Purnell, 1974.

23. E Katz, & G Wedell, *op cit*.

24. J Tunstall, *The Media are American*, London, Constable, 1978; A Smith, *The Geopolitics of Information*, London, Faber & Faber, 1980.

25. See for example M Gallagher, "Negotiation of Control in Media Organisations", in M Gurevitch, *et al*, 1982 *op cit* especially p162ff, and J Dimmick, "The Gatekeeper; an Uncertainty Theory", *Journalism Monograph* no 37, November 1974.

26. B Paulu, 1967, *op cit* chapter 2.

27. R Williams, 1974, *op cit*. Contrast his concept of technological determinism, p13, with its opposite, determined technology, p130.

28. Ibid, p18.

29. K Marx, *Capital I*, quoted in Y de la Haye, *Marx and Engels on the Means of Communication*, IG/IMMRC, Bagnolet, France, 1979, p41.

30. Ibid, p29, commenting on Marx's Grundrisse.

31. A Mattelart, 1971. "Communications Ideology and Class Practice", in A Mattelart, and S Siegelaub, 1979, *op cit*. For a more sophisticated, less determinist version, see S Hall, 1977, *op cit* pp323–325.

32. The characteristics described in this section are partly determined by nature and partly by international agreement. The latter is necessary to ensure compatibility of equipment produced by a large number of manufacturers in different countries. Other categories of radio wave, such as low frequency, super high frequency, high frequency, etc, are also classified into wavebands by International agreement at the ITU, but are used for other purposes in two-way systems. See S W Head, 3rd ed. *op cit* chapters 1 and 2; B Paulu, 1967, *op cit*; B Maddox, *A Tower in Babel*, London, Andre Deutsch, 1972.

33. S W Head, *op cit*.

34. S Hall, *op cit* in J Curran, 1977, *op cit* p346.

35. J Clarke, *et al*, 1976, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class", in T Bennett, *et al*, (eds) *Culture, Ideology and Social Process*. London, Batsford, 1981, especially pp60–61.

36. M C Heck, "The Ideological Dimensions of Media Messages" in S Hall, *et al*, *Culture, Media and Language*, London, Hutchinson, 1980, p122.

37. J Woollacott, "Messages and Meanings", in M Gurevitch, *et al*, (eds), *Culture, Society and the Media*, London, Methuen, 1982, p94.

38. S Hall, "Encoding/Decoding", in S Hall, 1980, *op cit* p133.

39. E Mandel, *op cit* p500ff. Technology is often presented as "revolutionary" (in an ironic co-optation of that phrase) in the sense of promising an escape from present contradictions and conflicts, thus concealing its real nature as the entrenchment and refinement of the existing relations of production. See also A Mattelart, "Communications and Class practice", in A Mattelart, 1979, *op cit*.

40. ". . . one can say of Marxism's perspectives on technology what Marx said of political economy's perspectives on value; namely, that "it has never once asked the question why this content has assumed that particular form". Thereby, the dominant Marxist understanding of technology remains at the level of immediate appearance, and the prospect of a critique is foreclosed. M Reinfelder, in P Slater, (ed) *Outline of a Critique of Technology*, London, Ink Links, 1980, p11.
41. S Hall, 1980, *op cit* p132.
42. W Benjamin, "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in J Curran, *et al* (eds) 1977, *op cit.*
43. Broadcasting programmes are typically "closed texts", in the style of classic realism; see C Belsey, *Critical Practice*, London, Methuen, 1980. The professional ideologies of broadcasting operating techniques lay stress on removing any sign of the operations involved in producing such images; voices of the operators, unwanted background sound, patches of silence, etc. See A Nisbett, *The Technique of the Sound Studio* London, Focal Press, 1962. At the production level, decisions about the selection and exclusion of images and whole programmes by production staff and management are also kept out. See D Davis, *The Grammar of Television*, London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1960, p10; S Hood, *On Television*, Pluto, London, 1980.
44. p Valery, *"The Conquest of Ubiquity"* in *Aesthetics* Tr J Mannheim, Pantheon Books, N.Y, 1964; quoted in Benjamin, W. *op cit.*

Chapter 2

Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924–1971

Graham Hayman and Ruth Tomaselli

In South Africa, the average population density has always been low, with pronounced imbalances in the urban/rural distribution of the two white language groups, and the regional distribution of the seven main black language groups. There are only six urban areas that have the size and population density approaching those of the USA or the UK, which supplied the technology and practices of broadcasting. There is a great linguistic, ethnic, racial and cultural diversity among the population, and a history of segregationist policies based on and exaggerating these diversities. Partly as a result of this, class conflict over the distribution of wealth has been more extreme than in the USA and the UK, requiring a great degree of repressive activity by the dominant group in order to retain its power. This group has had continually to modify the institutional and technological forms of broadcasting to take account of the above diversities, as well as of diverse geographical and climatic conditions. While these broadcasting practices have been the the site of struggle between the two white language groups, a large degree of ideological consensus has been revealed between them in using broadcasting to maintain their dominance.

The changes in South Africa's social, political and economic structures derive ultimately from the international and local conflict between capital and labour and, in a more obvious way, from the struggle for power between the English and Afrikaans-speaking whites who have, in recent history, constituted the hegemonic alliance[1]. Cer-

tain critical commentators writing within the liberal/humanist/functionalist tradition[2] have regarded the SABC as the tool of a power conspiracy, particularly after 1948, when the Nationalist government came to power. This body of work has underestimated or ignored the similarities between other western broadcasting institutions in Europe and the United States, and the SABC. It has more grievously ignored the similarity between broadcasting network technology of both western and communist countries, and the SABC. The SABC is seen in a crude determinist role, and the role and power of the Afrikaner interests, usually centred on the Broederbond, is overestimated.

The development of broadcasting in South Africa can be dealt with in four periods;

1924–1936: from the establishment of the first independent local commercial stations until the creation of the SABC as a 'public institution' by Act of Parliament.

1936–1948: from the establishment of the SABC until the coming to power of the Nationalist government. Under the Smuts government the SABC attempted to establish a technical equality between the two white programme services, and a consensus regarding programme policy, in the face of wartime limitations on imports and of open and violent conflict within the hegemonic alliance.

1948–1959: post War expansion under the Nationalist government, to the year in which Dr. P.J. Meyer, chairman of the Broederbond, became chairman of the Board of Control of the SABC. A commercial channel was introduced, with the intention, among other things, of financing technical parity between the original two white non-commercial channels. A national network was established which linked all transmitters across the country with one or other urban production studio.

1960–1971: the period of transformation under Meyer, when the SABC grew enormously with the introduction of the VHF/FM system. This expensive system was financed by government loans to the SABC. At the end of the period, a commission under Meyer recommended the introduction of television.

Licensing the Broadcasters 1924–1936

Because of post-war interest in radio and the increasing use of two-way equipment by amateurs, an inquiry was conducted by the Postmaster-General, Colonel Sturman. As a result, the government declared that although it "recognised the value of the work being done by the amateurs, it would probably be more circumspect in issuing license in future"[3]. In 1923, the state called for applications for licenses for the purpose of "carrying out official broadcasting by wireless in the Union of South Africa"[4].

Several competing applications were received, but only one licence was granted in each urban area. The reason for this is obscure, but the lack of frequencies is likely. It was significant that local authorities were the first bodies considered appropriate for conducting broadcasting, as opposed to, say, private individuals. In Cape Town, the municipality turned down the offer of running broadcasting, and the licence was issued to the Cape Peninsular Publicity Association. In Durban, the Durban Corporation was licensed, while in Johannesburg the Association of Scientific and Technical Societies (AS & TS), a club whose members came from management level in mining and other industries, won the licence. (Perhaps there was the fear that national security could be at risk if the licence was granted to the Johannesburg Municipality, as some of the councillors had shown sympathy to the strikers of 1922[5].)

All three stations began broadcasting in 1924, licensed under Act No 10 of 1911, which had been framed to take account of radio telephony only. This legislation was inadequate in enforcing the payment of listeners' licence fees, because the legislation assumed that the owner of the receiver apparatus could be as easily identified and located as could the user of a two-way apparatus. (Successive modifications of this aspect of radio and broadcasting legislation have been made, until the radio licence itself was abolished in the 1980s when income from TV licences and advertising on radio and TV was deemed adequate.)

The lack of common interest between broadcaster and government was reflected in a double form of licence; one was required for the receiver, and was issued by the Post Office, and another for the programmes, issued by the broadcaster. The latter proved hard to collect, and as a result of this and other weaknesses, the legislation was further modified in 1926. For example, broadcasters who had previously been allowed to issue licences in a 200 mile radius of the transmitter, were now allowed greater jurisdiction. This modification provided for variable licence fees, depending on the distance of the listener from the transmitter, in place of the previous flat rate of two pounds[6]. It had been established by then that some relationship existed between transmitter-receiver distance, and the fidelity of the signal. The precise relationship was established later. Thus it was assumed that the aesthetic experience of the audio image from the receiver could be

empirically measured, and that such measurement could be the basis of payment for the commodity.

Far from accumulating capital, however, the three stations ran at a loss, and despite naive and idealistic appeals through the press for payment of licences, the Johannesburg station ceased operation by the end of 1926. While negotiations were under way for the continuation of broadcasting in the Transvaal, it was run by an amateur body. The Postmaster-General, Madeley, was of the opinion that government should take over the concern, but was unable to convince the Cabinet. A very successful entrepreneur in the fields of insurance, theatre, and film, IW Schlesinger, was approached. Schlesinger made two conditions: that the period of the licence should be ten years, not the previous five; and that his new organisation, the African Broadcasting Company, should be given the licences of the Cape Town and Durban stations when they expired. He also requested that the legislation be modified so that production of a valid listener's licence should be compulsory on purchase of a radio receiver. Madeley agreed to give the licence to Schlesinger, but kept the licence period at five years. Consideration of the new legislation would be made "at an early date"[7], but was not in fact introduced until after the Second World War. Later in 1927 the licences of the other stations were ceded to the ABC.

Schlesinger's stipulations about the period of the broadcasting licence, and the need for compulsory purchase of listeners' licences, reveal his perception that the same economic imperatives which operated in other kinds of commodity production would also apply to broadcasting: namely, that production should be centralised, the commodity standardised, and then mass produced and distributed to as large a market as possible. If this were done, costs of production were more likely to be offset by income[8]. Schlesinger no doubt assumed that all three transmitters could be linked by landline network to one studio. This would free each studio from duplicating the others' production, and allow a portion of the resulting saving in production costs to be devoted to 'more ambitious' programmes. (The other portion of the amount saved would of course be profit.)

These 'better' programmes would then draw more listeners, and hence more licences would be sold. It was evident that Schlesinger often applied the principles of mass production and distribution that were being developed in his native America, to his South African activities. Unfortunately, the South African landline network was of far lower quality than those found in in America or Britain at that time.

Despite Schlesinger's business acumen, the ABC was by 1929 operating at a deficit and he approached the government for assistance. The ABC's proposals included several means by which state authority should support broadcasting:

- the government could subsidise the ABC, from an import tax on receivers;
- the government could take over the assets and allow the company to go into liquidation;
- the government could collect the licence fees and pay the ABC its share;
- subsidised relay stations could be established at Bloemfontein and Pretoria[9].

The same difficulties in establishing and enforcing the relations of production and consumption troubled the British Broadcasting Company in the years 1922–1926[10]. Given the close ties between Britain and South Africa, it must be assumed that the South African government was aware of the BBC's problems and how it had solved them, but that broadcasting had not become sufficiently popular with the audience, or an obvious means of political control, for it to warrant government's overt support. All of the above measures were later implemented, once the state had taken over broadcasting and established the SABC.

Having failed in its bid for government intervention and support, the ABC turned to the marketplace. The 'Blue Free Voucher Scheme' was the result of an agreement between the retailers of domestic radio receivers and the ABC, which stimulated sales of both receivers and listeners licences, as well as offering an opportunity for income to the listeners. The retailers agreed to include slightly more than the price of a listeners' licence in the selling price of a receiver, and to pay this amount to the ABC. The ABC in turn agreed to cease hiring receivers to listeners, and to use the amount from the retailers (over and above the amount for the licence) as prize money in competitions conducted over the radio.

Such competitions, in various forms, are now common practice in broadcasting, and stimulate radio listening. For the ABC, the scheme limited pirate listening, by ensuring that new owners of receivers had licences, but it did not ensure that licences would be renewed annually. In the Depression years this scheme would have been even more efficient, since radio provided a very cheap form of entertainment, and the prize money (up to £250) was badly needed when unemployment was widespread. The results of the Blue Free Voucher Scheme were startling, and once it was fully operational, listenership

and thus sales of licenses, increased rapidly. The African Broadcasting Company was able, within a few years, not only to meet its running expenses, but to carry out improvements of a capital nature, particularly transmitters[11].

Technology

The broadcasting system that the ABC tried to create was an amalgam of British and American models. In many ways, these models were unsuited to South African conditions. At the level of technology, the imported 1,5 Kw transmitters which were inherited from the preceding three independent stations did not operate as efficiently in South Africa as they did in the Northern hemisphere where they were designed and built. Atmospheric and geographical conditions limited their range and distorted their fidelity. In addition, the landline network of the South African Post Office, which was needed to link transmitters, was far inferior to those of America or of the UK. The immediate strategy of the ABC was to increase the power of the transmitters to 10 Kw, but a simple increase in power did not produce a commensurate increase in coverage or fidelity. While this step may have improved reception in urban areas, the rural listeners were still outside the range of satisfactory reception. Further, rural listeners were largely unable to benefit from the introduction in 1929 of the more economical mains-powered set, since municipally-supplied domestic mains power was not very common outside the big cities. In any case, Afrikaans listeners who were wealthy enough to afford radio were mainly rural dwellers, and these factors contributed to the unpopularity of the ABC with this group. This unpopularity was of course deepened by the predominantly English-language and British-oriented nature of the programmes.

Programmes

The weekly schedule proposed by the fist director of broadcasting for the AS & TS Johannesburg station, Theo Wendt (previously conductor of the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra), reveals the 'natural and obvious' way in which broadcasting drew its genres and categories of programmes from its social context[12]. Programming corresponded initially to the interests of the urban English elite who controlled broadcasting and constituted its chief audience. It revealed their assumptions about what activities were appropriate for their leisure hours, and the hierarchies of 'quality' in which they ranked various forms of culture. The news was supplied by Reuters, and thus reflected the news agenda of the English press which controlled it. Occasional re-broadcasts of events 'live' from the UK were regarded then (as now) as triumphs worthy of note.

The proportion of English language used in broadcasting at this stage indicated the power balance in the hegemonic alliance of English and Afrikaans, as well as the uneven distribution of the two groups in the rural and urban areas. The domination by the English fraction of business, government, and the leisure industry made the exclusive use of English inevitable. As a result of the Broederbond's campaign for Afrikaans programming, the ABC introduced half-an-hour of Afrikaans programmes from 1931, and later increased this to an hour-and-a-half. This naturally angered the Afrikaans group, but their lack of economic power did not not warrant more attention from a commercial organisation such as the ABC. Afrikaner-dominated capital, and therefore political power, was located mainly in the rural areas, where reception of the medium-wave signal was poor. In the urban areas the Afrikaners were predominantly the poorest of the entire white group, and thus least likely to afford radio receivers. This hybrid American commercial model of broadcasting was thus seen as sectionalist and discriminatory, and was identified with its British-oriented programming.

Among English speakers, the inclusion of commercialism with culture in broadcasting offended to a lesser extent, and for different reasons. The American commercial model of broadcasting demanded a maximisation of the audience through concentration on the most popular programmes. This militated against the hierarchical and elite notions of culture, adopted from the British cultural heritage, which proposed idealist and intrinsic values as the basis for programming policy[13].

Both these views were probable spurs to the establishment of greater state control over broadcasting. The two-stream policy of Smuts and Botha, who saw English and Afrikaans-speaking whites sharing in a general South Africanness, was opposed by the Nationalists, who regarded Afrikaans as a threatened culture, to be kept separate until it had achieved parity with English[14]. This weakness consisted chiefly in the lesser degree of commoditisation of Afrikaans culture, which was then more oral and community based. Afrikaans broadcasters, therefore, had far fewer ready-made resources in the form of books, records, newspapers or even printed music on which to draw. They had to create their materials 'on the job'[15]. To do this, they needed a state-supported form of broadcasting which would protect them from the bare imperatives of the commercial broadcasting mar-

ketplace, and ensure an equal distribution system to their audience. For English speakers, broadcasting was a merely a convenient distribution channel for existing cultural products and forms, most of them imported or based on imported models. They required a state protection which would give broadcasters the freedom to include the elite, 'high culture' forms which a commercial system would exclude. The solution to these problems was primarily a technical one: the provision of more frequencies for transmitters, which would allow the segregation of different fractions of taste, opinion and language among the audience onto separate channels.

Resumé: The Local Imitation

After an initial period (1910–1922) of random experiment and amateur operation of both send-and-receive and receive-only equipment, particularly in the urban areas, the state moved to bring this rapidly developing communications system under control. This was achieved by 1924. In doing so, the state rationalised the interests of private manufacturing and commercial capital with its own need for control. The right to broadcast was allocated to three separate organisations from 1924–1927, and when their economic and financial base proved inadequate for local conditions, the three stations were brought into a single commercial organisation (1927–1936). Although these stations thus became centrally administered, the low quality of South African landlines prevented the creation of a national distribution network. These stations consequently retained an orientation to the particular character of the urban English fraction, and continued to support the dominant position of the English within the hegemonic alliance.

The increasing power of the Afrikaner in the hegemonic alliance lead first to a small amount of Afrikaans programming through the chiefly urban-oriented transmission system of the private, commercial organisation of the ABC, and then to a legislative and financial rearrangement of broadcasting under a greater degree of state control in 1936. The relations of cultural production changed from being mediated through the operation of commercial capital to being mediated through the political structure of parliamentary representation. The English fraction was motivated towards this change by the assumptions of liberal idealism, which placed control through government above control via capital, whereas the Afrikaans fraction was motivated by a desire for greater control over and access to broadcasting than they had hitherto enjoyed.

Attempts to find Consensus: 1936–1948

At the invitation of Prime Minister Barry Hertzog, John Reith, Director-General of the BBC, toured South Africa in 1934 and recommended a new form of broadcasting. This change was not, of course, solely due to Hertzog's initiative or that of his party.

Betweeen 1927 and 1933 a succession of Ministers of Posts and Telegraphs, and the Postmaster-general of the period, had come to the following conclusions:

- that wireless was of great value as a means of instruction and entertainment;
- that it would be of benefit to the government to provide a simple, speedy and economical means of communication between the state and the people;
- that cessation of wireless, even for a brief period, would be resented by the people to a far greater degree in 1932 than in 1927[16].

The idealistic claims of objectivity and impartiality, which were seen as the hallmark of the BBC type of public broadcasting institution, would have been attractive to both sides of the House, for the reasons outlined at the end of the previous section.

The problem of translating the principle of language equality into the production and distribution of broadcast material was obviously crucial. It was proposed by the Nationalists that the two languages be put on separate channels, as in Belgium[17], a proposal that was not immediately taken up. The new draft Bill was introduced in March 1936, and on 1st August the SABC began operations[18]. The ABC ceased to exist on 31 July: its assets were bought out by the new SABC, through a SANLAM debenture issue, and its staff were taken over in toto.

The structure of the SABC as established in the 1936 Broadcasting Act, which does not mention blacks at all, presumed a national consensus between the English group and the Afrikaans group. In the case of the BBC, Reith had been able to draw on an already well-established consensus in British society, and on that foundation formulated a programme policy which would express it[19]. The presumed consensus in South Africa was to be represented and guaranteed in the first instance by the Governor-General's appointments to the Board of Control. Following the BBC example, eminent individuals would be selected who apparently were not tied to any particular interest or pressure groups within the whole hegemonic alliance. Reith's recommendation of this method obviously indicated that he was unaware of the degree of conflict between the two groups in the hegemonic alliance[20]. This might have derived from his Anglo-cen-

tric view of the world and the Empire, a milder version, perhaps, of Lord Milner's hated policy of Anglicisation. His advice regarding regional programming, which was to be adjusted according to language distribution in each region, revealed his misunderstanding of the degree to which each language group was informed by different ideological, economic and political perspectives, and had access to different kinds of power. These differences could not be accommodated by a simple translation of content from one language into another.

Technology I: Are Transmitters Impartial and Bilingual?

It was soon realised that there was no quick and easy way to implement the terms of the Broadcasting Act. The first attempt at equality was the inclusion of Afrikaans and English programmes on one channel, with announcements made alternately in English and Afrikaans. This policy caused much resentment, as did the continued poor reception in the rural areas of the medium-wave transmitters taken over from the ABC. The Corporation did not have the manpower, technical expertise or finances to expand the transmitter and studio network to give 'equal' technical facilities to an Afrikaans channel, as this would have meant more than doubling the existing number of transmitters in the country. Within a year, alternative arrangements were being made.

The Corporation therefore hired two short-wave transmitters for the Afrikaans channel, but this did not solve the problem of fidelity. The short-wave transmitters had greater coverage, but at reduced fidelity. In addition, shortwave quality varies greatly at different times of the day, requiring regular changes of frequency and thus tiresome re-tuning by the listener[21].

The expansion of the transmitter network was hampered to some extent by World War II, since almost all components were imported, but very gradually it was expanded until there were approximately eight transmitters in medium-wave. The *Annual Reports* of this period reveal the growing conviction of the SABC management that the licence fee system was inadequate for financing two equal and separate medium-wave networks for a small audience, especially since the limitations of distance were now being realised. The low population density of whites in South Africa made any comparison between the SABC and the BBC or other Commonwealth systems regarding income and expenditure extremely misleading. The effects of African geography and climate further qualified the imported assumptions of efficiency and quality.

In response to these pressures, the manufacturing capability of the SABC technical personnel became apparent in this period. The needs of management revealed considerable technical ability to innovate. In this respect, the SABC was on a par with broadcasting developments internationally. From 1936 the SABC had manufactured much of its own studio equipment, tailoring it to fit local requirements since foreign manufacturers could not guarantee suitability for local conditions. A great deal of aerial and transmitter equipment was also assembled and tested in the Corporation's workshops[22].

Technology II: Production

In addition to commercially available recorded music, broadcasters had recorded their own material onto acetate discs since the days of the ABC. This provided a permanent form of storage for programme material originated in the studio[23]. The storage of selected material enables management to reinforce standards and assumptions regarding programme content and quality. In such pre-recorded programme production, unlike 'live' production, both technical and non-scripted performers' faults can be eliminated by re-recording or editing[24].

There are also economic advantages, since such material can be re-broadcast for very little if any additional production costs. A further advantage concerns the scheduling of studios and personnel in programme production. Such production can be done outside the scheduled broadcast time, at the convenience of artists, technicians and production crews.

Last and most importantly, recording technology enables broadcasting to become a generator of culture rather than a simple transmitter of it. Broadcasting institutions can actively commission and store work in an economic and practical way. During this period record manufacture by the SABC while under the control of the English fraction of course complemented the use of other recorded material available commercially in South Africa and from abroad. In subsequent periods, when broadcasting came under the control of the Afrikaner fraction, this manufacturing capability made up for the lack of commercial availability of such material in Afrikaans, or in black languages. (See below.) In this period, the SABC also began manufacturing its own tape recorders. This form of recording fulfills the same broad functions outlined above, but editing is easier, and their greater portability makes them more suitable for use in the field, rather than the studio alone[25].

In 1948 the SABC began planning and installing its own disc-making equipment, allowing it to press multiple copies of original programme material. These additional copies could be distributed through non-broadcast channels in South Africa, as well as sent to foreign broadcasting services. A plant for the recycling of the blanks used for such disc-making was also started, saving the costs of new blanks and making the SABC independent of foreign supply sources[26].

Other innovations in this period included experimentation with FM transmission as a way of solving the problems of interference and distortion. In addition, the SABC continued the attempts of the ABC to link up transmitters in the larger urban centres to each other and to the main studios via landlines (i.e. telephone lines). Where the ABC had been motivated largely by economics, the SABC was also motivated by the 'public service' principle, which required that the broadcasting service be made available to a greater audience than was merely profitable.

A further stimulus to the establishment of landlines and the creation of a national network was the radio coverage of the 1938 re-enactment of the Great Trek. Stage-managed by the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations – FAK) as part of the Afrikaner Volkseenheid (Unity) movement, this re-enactment was a highly successful project. Initially, radio coverage was planned solely for the departure of the wagons from Cape Town and from a few points along the way. The sudden and very large demand from Afrikaans listeners for further coverage after the first broadcast prompted the SABC to send a reporter with the wagons to report, through the use of landline and local telephones, on their daily progress. While arousing great enthusiasm for the project, the reporting exposed the poor quality of the landlines and telephone system, and thus the difficulty of drawing the rural population into programmes produced largely in or around the urban areas. On the positive side, it demonstrated not only the need to involve the rural Afrikaner to a greater degree[27], but also that radio could be used an efficient vehicle for stimulating Afrikaner cultural unity.

The events of 1938 exemplified the contradictions which the SABC had to resolve in its transmitter policy: urban vs rural; regional vs national; Afrikaans vs English. A further complication was that the different provinces and regions had differing political and linguistic orientations. In addition, the urban English-speaking audience, in close proximity to the medium-wave transmitters, were resentful of the demands for additional funds for technical improvement, and the expansion of the network to cover rural areas[28]. The establishment of studios was, of course, a determining factor in the degree of regionalisation. The SABC took a position of apparent neutrality by stating that it was their policy to establish studios which could "be reached by telephone lines of good quality" while at the same time claiming that where "suitable and sufficient broadcasting talent is available . . . as many centres as possible should be called on to provide material for its programmes, as by this method the life of the nation can best be reflected"[29]. This statement sums up the way in which broadcasting was organised and operated according to hierarchies of quality, which reinforced the dominant ideology. Only those elements of culture which conformed to these hierarchial criteria were selected for encoding into programmes, and distributed via the network[30].

It is noticeable in the development of broadcasting that, as with other consumer products, it spreads downwards in the class structure and outwards from the urban centres to the rural areas, or, from the metropoles to the peripheries. In countries where broadcasting is based on the BBC model, the claim of both broadcasters and the state that the technology of broadcasting is available as a 'public service' or a public right conceals these unequal relations, and the ideology at the programme level. In South Africa, the inequity between the public service claim and listeners' licence figures for whites was more glaring than in Britain, let alone the exclusion at that time of blacks from every area of South African broadcasting.

Technology III: Expansions, Improvements

The first broadcast-quality carrier link was installed between Grahamstown and Johannesburg in 1938. Grahamstown had, until that year, been virtually an independent regional station, with the station engineer acting as a programme producer, drawing on local talent from the Border region[31].

A short-wave receiving station was established near Panorama, outside Johannesburg, in June 1939. The various uses to which this station was put reveal some of the ideological tendencies of the SABC at different points in its history. Firstly, it was used for the reception and re-broadcast of foreign (chiefly British) programmes. The BBC news was relayed via this station and broadcast over the SABC network from 1940 until 1950. Conflicts about these broadcasts arose in Parliament (see below). Secondly, the station acted as a wartime

monitoring service. It intercepted news programmes from all over the world and assisted the Union's military forces in the collection of intelligence from enemy transmitters. Thirdly, it aided short-wave propagation research. Various countries which broadcast on short-wave to South Africa were supplied with data on the reception characteristics of their programmes in this country. The assumption was that such broadcasts were to be welcomed and assisted, an attitude which conflicted directly with that of the SABC under National Party control in the 1950s[32].

Legal Controls

The powers of the SABC were extended to include broadcasting to South West Africa (Act no 14 of 1938) and also, (subject to such conditions as the Minister might prescribe), the broadcasting of programmes for reception in any country outside the Union of South Africa. This laid the foundation for an external service under direct government control, and the legal foundation for broadcasting to South West Africa was completed by an amendment to the Broadcasting Act (1936), which required the Director of Posts and Telegraphs in that territory to issue a licence to the SABC. In South West Africa, broadcasting was to be conducted as a normal internal programme service of the SABC, rather than as an external service. The important distinction regarding external broadcasting was that the Minister laid down the conditions, instead of delegating decisions to the SABC Board and chief executive, as was the case for internal broadcasting.

Finances

There was a serious decline in the rate of growth of listeners' licences after 1938, which was probably due to wartime shortages of receivers and batteries, and the disenchantment of Afrikaans listeners with the SABC's wartime programmes (see below). On taking over the assets of the ABC, the new Board pointed out in detail the difficulty of financing national transmitter coverage on the income from licences alone. Every *Annual Report* from 1937 to 1947 gives an exhaustive analysis of the distribution of licences, the relationship to white population, increases in licence sales and total income. In 1938, the government introduced two measures to assist the SABC financially: the SABC was exempted from income tax on investments or income therefrom (Act no 17 of 1938), and the Post Office's share of the licence fee was reduced from five percent to one percent.

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In 1946 the SABC announced that it was going to introduce commercial broadcasting, as a way of financing the provision of equal networks for English and Afrikaans. While the Broadcasting Act did not forbid it from doing so, such a proposal obviously caused a stir, for the reasons suggested above, and the Schoch Commission was appointed in September 1946 to investigate. Its final report was delivered in February 1948, the year of the General Election. A summary and assessment of the Schoch Commission appears at the end of this section.

There was an apparent difference of motives for the introduction of the commercial channel (i.e. Springbok Radio) between the SABC Board of 1936–48 and the Nationalist-appointed board which took office that year[33]. The former wanted to use the additional income to improve programmes over the existing network, and the latter to expand the transmitter network and the Afrikaans programme service[34].

Programmes: What Did They Say?

The Board's attempts to interpret the equality clause in the Broadcasting Act found expression in the areas of transmission and of content. Initially, there was an 8:2 division of time on the single medium wave channel, except where the numbers of Afrikaans listeners justified an increase[35]. This proportional representation could hardly have encouraged an increase in Afrikaans listenership, and was surely cause for further complaint by them. The segregation of Afrikaans programmes onto the SW transmitters solved this problem, but introduced the other problem of fidelity.

In current affairs, the policy was to avoid 'political broadcasts', controversial material in religious programmes, and matter which was in any way relevent to discussions in Parliament. No mention has been found of the difficulties of news reportage which this last restriction might have caused, although it effectively seems to preclude any talks on matters of current national importance[36]. This policy quickly revealed the breakdown of consensus:

> Nationalist members (of Parliament) protested about the political speeches of British statesmen. The ruling and largely British-stock United Party replied through its Minister of Posts and Telegraphs that remarks by British leaders were sometimes broadcast due to their intrinsic international importance. Pronouncements by domestic politicians were, said the Minister, largely vehicles of local and partisan interest, and broadcasting of these would inject an unwanted element of party political propaganda[37].

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This exchange exemplifies the difference in political orientation between Smuts' party, which regarded South Africans as both English and Afrikaans within the wider Commonwealth, and the National party under Malan, which viewed the interests of the Afrikaner as primary and separate from those of the Commonwealth.

The animosity between certain groups of English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans also affected the character of the SABC staff. During the war many English-speaking staff (sixty-one out of four hundred and thirty in 1943) volunteered for military duty, and to a some extent they were replaced by Afrikaans speakers[38]. Thus, while the SABC's leadership was at this stage firmly in the hands of Smuts' supporters, many of the rank and file personnel were antagonistic towards the Commonwealth orientation punted by his United Party. This was most clearly evident in the contradictory reponses to the war itself.

At the beginning of the War, the *Annual Report* (1940) made it clear that the SABC would support the government, and pledged to set aside "some period each day for the broadcasting of statements by the government information office relating to the war". The crisis in the hegemonic alliance during World War II manifested itself inside the SABC over these government announcements. They were apparently read by the SABC staff announcers, not by government personnel. This greatly angered the Afrikaans announcers who had to read them, many of whom were supporters of the Afrikaner unity movement, if not the Broederbond itself. Reports in the Press that some announcers had pro-Nazi sympathies and were injecting their own remarks into the reading of the news resulted in a Commission of Enquiry, headed by J. Maynard Page, the chief magistrate of Johannesburg[39]. In evidence to the Commission, some of the Afrikaans announcers stated that reading these announcements was distasteful to them and prejudicial to their careers. Others, including Kowie Marais, a Broederbond member who was later interned, left the Corporation, only to rejoin after 1948.

Other evidence of the SABC's orientation towards the war was the formation of a mobile unit which was sent to report on the military forces in North Africa, and in the broadcasting of various talks by Smuts, including his appeal for volunteers after the fall of Tobruk. This particularly angered the Afrikaans Nationalists. The SABC's comments on the worth of relaying BBC talks clearly indicated the strong orientation towards Britain in terms of authority and 'quality':

The talks material available from the BBC was so outstanding in quality, and of such abundance, that there was little room for similar material of South African origin. It seemed better to concentrate on South Africa's part in the war which was reflected in a wide variety of topical talks, interviews and commentaries[40].

Most of the features which marked this period of overt conflict over broadcasting were to re-appear when the Afrikaans fraction of the hegemonic alliance gained control of the SABC after 1959. (See last section (1960–1971) for details.)

The activities of the Afrikaans programme department reveal the extent to which the SABC was already becoming a generator of culture. The SABC formed a *boereorkes* (Afrikaans music orchestra) in 1938, which served to copy and reconstruct Afrikaans traditional music. A translation department was set up to make the classical European writers accessible to Afrikaans listeners; the works of Gogol, Aeschylus, Euripedes, Pirandello and Shaw were broadcast. In addition, much drama was written by Afrikaans-speaking SABC employees, since the established writers were at first hesitant to write for radio. In 1938 alone, ninety-seven such pieces were broadcast. Radio play competitions and commissions later stimulated writers to submit works to the SABC, and in the 1950s many significant pieces by Afrikaans writers were broadcast prior to being published[41].

Programmes: Stabilising Black Labour

The needs of primary industry and the mines had required that, during the hegemonic crisis sparked off by the war, the growing urban black labour force be won over to the support of the ruling English fraction. With the cooperation of the Department of Native Affairs, the SABC established a service to compounds, hostels and 'institutions' in all the cities and major towns[42]. This service was conveyed by cable (telephone lines), and was transmitted every night of the week. In addition, there was a broadcast programme on three mornings a week, via the English and Afrikaans channels, and both systems were operated in "Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho, according to the linguistic needs of the territory served"[43]. The system was suspended in 1945 when the Department of Native Affairs withdrew its cooperation[44]. In the same year the *SABC Annual Report* mooted the question of a comprehensive programme for black audiences, despite the fact that the Broadcasting Act made no mention of black audiences or culture,

and did not empower the SABC to run a service by cable such as it had done during the war[45].

Finance was seen as the main hindrance to setting up such a service. While radio bypassed the problem of low literacy levels among the potential audience, low income made the existing means of reception – privately-owned receivers with mains or expensive battery power – impossible for a large black audience. Even a cable system (which had been used in other parts of Africa by that date) posed problems:

> ... the system is costly to install and maintain, and while the native householders could be expected to pay a small weekly or monthly fee, it would be impossible to make them carry the whole cost of installation[46].

Resume: Under Smuts' Control

The SABC attempted to translate the principle of equality of interests between the white language groups into technical terms, with inadequate technology or resources to improve it. The poor operation of radio in Africa, compared to its country of manufacture, and the different geographical distribution of English and Afrikaans language groups, jinxed the embryonic system. This geographical imbalance paralleled an urban rural imbalance, and broadly speaking, different class positions of the English and Afrikaans speakers within the hegemonic alliance.

The changes that occurred in broadcasting in the late 1930s and early 1940s were partly the result of differing orientations to the European metropoles on the part of the English and Afrikaans speakers. The English were oriented to, and drew their power from, the Anglo-American metropolises, whereas the Afrikaners, although cut off from Europe because of the English fraction's strong trade and ideological links with Britain, aligned themselves more with Germany. The local conflict between English and Afrikaans thus echoed an international clash during the Second World War between the liberal-humanist ideologies of the USA and the UK, and the strongly Fascist, Nationalist ideologies of Germany and Italy. The local conflict was based on a class conflict, and provoked a re-alignment of various sections of the hegemonic alliance, culminating in a change of government in 1948.

Broadcasting's lack of any real independence from the State or from the dominant ideology was demonstrated by the abandonment of neutrality by the SABC during the period of wartime conflict.

When the Nationalist group became the ruling fraction in 1948, the BBC type of control structure enabled them to coopt and re-fashion broadcasting in a slightly different mould. These changes were most evident at the programme level, while changes at other levels proceeded more or less as intended by the previous control board, under Smuts.

The Schoch Commission

The Schoch Commission is the only comprehensive public investigation into broadcasting during the entire period examined in this chapter, and deserves more attention than can be devoted to it here. Unlike the BBC, on which the control and administrative mechanisms of the SABC are largely modelled, the SABC is not subjected to regular and statutory commissions of enquiry. In the case of the BBC, these commissions (named, like this one, after their chairmen; Ullswater, Annan, etc) are a means whereby, on the occasion of the renewal of the BBC's licence, it is called to account for its conduct of broadcasting during the preceding period. The conclusions and recommendations of these commissions usually define the parameters by which broadcasting will be conducted for the next ten years[47].

The terms of reference of the Schoch Commission were much wider than the issue of commercial broadcasting, and included the organisation and functions of the SABC, the question of transmitter technology and its coverage of the Union, the advisability of introducing an external service, the attraction of local talent and the training of broadcasters, the problem of identifying and satisfying the audience's expectations of broadcasting, the possibility of using broadcasting to provide a synchronised soundtrack for films, and a cable distribution system aimed at the urban Black population.

The Commission held 12 meetings, and received written evidence, over the 18 months of its enquiry. Its *Report* of 72 pages confirmed several of the trends and characteristics of South African broadcasting which had appeared in the SABC's *Annual Reports* up to that time, but also contradicted many of the Corporation's arguments, policies and proposals. On the most important issue of commercial broadcasting, the Commission at first seemed ready to reject it altogether[48].

The chief motivation of the SABC for the introduction of commercials had been that the existing licence fee system was an inadequate source of revenue from which to establish two equal distribution systems for the very small and dispersed white audience[49]. The Com-

mission, using the services of an accountant from the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, found fault with several of the SABC's managerial and financial practices (and in the representation of them in the Annual Reports), and decided that the licence fee system would be sufficient for the provision of two separate distribution systems for English and Afrikaans programmes. This was conditional on several things: more efficient management, an alteration in the licence fee structure, and the provision of a complete landline system for a national network, which was promised by the Dept of Posts and Telegraphs within two years[50]. (In fact, it took ten years.) Most significantly, the Commission also reported that the only support for the introduction of commercials, besides the SABC, had come from the advertising companies and their clients in commerce and industry.

In its Report, however, the Commission changed its mind, negating or contradicting its own arguments against the introduction of a commercial channel. It then went beyond its terms of reference, which had framed the issue purely as to how the SABC should introduce commercial programming. The Commission advised instead that commercial broadcasting should be conducted only by private interests, independently of the SABC. In this decision, the Commission obviously bowed to pressure from the private sector, which anticipated the goldmine that private commercial stations had proved to be in the USA and elsewhere. The government, in turn, accepted commercial broadcasting, but gave the SABC the right to introduce it. This decision in favour of the SABC was an additional indication, perhaps, of the Smuts government's confidence in winning the imminent General Election.

The Commission praised the SABC for its development of the Afrikaans programme service, which had been almost non-existent when the ABC was bought out ten years previously. The credit for this was probably due to the committed efforts of the Afrikaans programme staff. On the other hand, the *Report* revealed in several sections that there had not been sufficient attention by management to the needs of the Afrikaans group (particularly in the area of transmitter technology), and it severely reprimanded the SABC for this. At one of the first meetings, a technical advisor had proposed experiments with a new type of short-wave aerial, to improve Afrikaans programme reception in the rural areas; but by the later meetings of the Commission, the SABC had done nothing about it. Nor had it made any move to equalise the medium-wave transmitter allocations with the stocks at its disposal[51].

The Commission criticised the SABC for its management of several other areas, and taken as a whole, these criticisms revealed the necessity of either competition from other broadcasting stations, or regular mechanisms of review. The Commission recommended, for example, a type of Ombudsman from the Department of Posts and Telegraphs to fulfil this function, the tabling of the SABC's financial statement in Parliament, and a review of the salaries of top management by the Minister.

The SABC's management also could not satisfactorily answer complaints by artists and performers that it had been biased in its selection of artists, that it had not moved fast enough in appointing temporary staff onto the permanent staff, which carried several important fringe benefits, that the management structure was top-heavy (in terms of the number of posts, the amount of work to be done, and the salaries which such posts carried), in comparison to the announcer-producers who did the actual broadcasting.

Regarding relations between the SABC and its audience, the Commission was more equivocal than in any other area, but ended by leaving management with a great degree of independent power, rather than recommending mechanisms which would ensure that they would be responsive to demands from the audience[52]. For instance, the Commission received allegations that appointments to the board of control were subject to personal or political favouritism, and rejected that listeners should elect such members. A similar recommendation was made regarding the local councils, but such elections, the report said, would be too time-consuming and expensive. The Report also supported management's view of the role of the local councils; that they should be strictly concerned with local affairs; programmes, coverage and quality of reception. The councils, who had a history of conflict with management, had regarded their role as relevant to programme policy in general.

On the other hand, the Commission recommended a degree of decentralisation, and advised that the regional managers should play a more active role, rather than referring most decisions to Johannesburg. The report also recommended that the regional directors should meet regularly with the local councils in their areas. At the Johannesburg headquarters, it was recommended that the heads of the two programme departments (Afrikaans and English) should each have a seat on the board of control, and that the post of Controller of Programmes was unnecessary[53]. The intention behind the latter suggestion was probably to prevent the Director-General from becoming too autocratic, and possibly to guarantee the equality between the two language channels.

In the area of programme policy, the Commission showed that its grasp of broadcasting's central characteristics was inadequate. It thus embodied the main contradictions in its Report[54]. It supported the idea of commercial channels competing with the SABC, using the old argument of the American model that the audience should get what it wanted. On the other hand, it advised that the commercial channel, which it assumed would have to carry very popular light entertainment, should subsidise the SABC (via a 10 percent tax on the gross revenue of the independent stations) for production of good quality 'high culture' items on its non-commercial channels. At the same time, it proposed the Reithian policy of cultural didactics: that the SABC should continually educate its audience to 'higher' levels of taste, to appreciate and prefer items of 'high culture', classical music and drama, and so on.

In recommending that the SABC should run commercial channels, the government merely heightened these apparent contradictions, by putting both mechanisms of audience response in one institution[55]. Underneath the contradictions, of course, lay the imperatives of control, the need to propagate a consensus within the hegemonic group.

With regard to the relationship between English and Afrikaans programmes, the Commission also assumed that it was possible to have one's cake and eat it. In line with the Smuts two-stream policy, it agreed with the SABC that each of the two language channels should be intended for all the (white) audience. This meant that similar items should not be broadcast simultaneously on both channels (Saturday afternoon sport, for instance), so that people who were not sports addicts would have an alternative. On the other hand, it acknowledged that the audience of each language group was likely to want the same kind of programme in its home language at similar times of the day, and that some overlapping between the two channels was inevitable[56].

The biggest mistake that the Commission made was to assume that most of the audience was bilingual, or would like to become bilingual. In this, it showed itself either wilfully or actually blind to the political dimensions of language choice, of which Afrikaner Nationalists were acutely aware, and were ably exploiting. Despite this blind spot, the Commission noted that the SABC had begun to broadcast talks and discussions on controversial topics, thus following Reith's advice in his Report, and the policy advised by the recent Ullswater report on the BBC. For the white audiences, this policy of 'impartial objectivity' was to be continued in the next period, and was to reveal the degree of real conflict within the hegemonic alliance, as the Afrikaner became the more powerful fraction. The area of greatest agreement betweeen the Commission and the SABC, and between the two fractions in the hegemonic alliance, was the introduction of a rediffusion or cable service for 'Natives'. This agreement was expressed in the *Report* in two ways. The first is the apparently neutral face of the dominant ideology, the paternalist liberal version:

> In a community where illiteracy is as high as it is among the Natives the value of the spoken word assumes much greater proportions than in a more educated community. Although broadcasting is primarily a means of affording entertainment and conveying news, there could be a conscious educational purpose in programmes designed for Natives[57].

The second became progressively more overt, as the levels of class conflict in South Africa intensified in the period studied:

> ... several educated, intelligent and responsible Natives with a well-developed sense of proportion ... stressed the importance of the radio to strengthen Native home life and and to keep at home young Natives living in towns, who, for want of entertainment in the evenings, wander about the streets in search of some form of diversion and thus get into mischief.
>
> Others again who are concerned about the developing trend of political, sociological and economic thought among Natives ... have urged the desirability of a broadcasting service for Natives in order to counteract the warped and dangerous doctrines which are being propagated assiduously by agitators among Natives throughout the country and particularly in urban areas, and in order to enlighten and educate Natives generally[58]. *Commiss. p 59.*

Of the two possible systems which could have been introduced, the cheaper one only was considered, since the economy of the cable system was its main attraction. The system consisted of a network of paired wires connected to each subscriber's home, where a speaker with simple controls would be installed on hire. The system could relay signals from transmitters or direct from a studio. The Commission proposed that the system be installed by a private contractor and operated under the following conditions:

- programmes to be carried by the system would only be those supplied by the SABC;
- the programmes would be prepared by the SABC especially for this distribution network, and with the assistance of the Department of Native Affairs;
- the cost of preparing the programmes would be subsidised by the

government[59];
- the cost of subscribing to this system would be one shilling per week[60];
- municipal authorities would assist the operators of the rediffusion system in collecting the subscription fee.

Despite the low cost of the system, which didn't require domestic mains power, the Commission realised that this system would reach a relatively small number of Black people, in view of the low per capita income of most urban Black people[61]. In other words, the system would reach only the urban Black elite, besides those migrant labourers in hostels and compounds where the system was installed.

The Last Attempt at 'Impartiality': 1948–1959

In this period, the Afrikaner Nationalists, led by the Broederbond, gained more control of broadcasting for the policy of moulding an ethnic unity across class lines which divided Afrikanerdom. The Broederbonders appointed to the SABC Board of Control could not find a fellow member either inside or outside broadcasting sufficiently experienced or capable for the job of Director-general, and so promoted Gideon Roos to that position. A Cape Afrikaner, Roos did not share the Bond's views on how broadcasting should be run, and maintained a relatively objective style inherited from the BBC. Pellissier, the chairman of the Board, was not powerful enough to dominate Roos and steer him into carrying out the Broederbond's policy[62].

The relative independence of the BBC-model of South African broadcasting from both the State and from capital, existed only in terms of its predominantly urban, white licence-paying audience, and its urban-oriented transmission system. In order to bring other sectors of the population into the audience, the SABC began to expand, and thus required more capital. It attempted to do this without direct government support.

Between 1949 and 1959, a more extensive network was developed to reach the two white language groups in urban and rural areas. A commercial channel, which drew capital from the marketing sector in return for providing access to consumers, was introduced. Together with public borrowing of capital, this Americanisation permitted the SABC to expand and diversify its programmes and channels. In addition, the emergent urban black labour force were thought to require broadcasting to orient them to the dominant ideology, and a separate cable distribution system was set up in an attempt to reach them.

Despite increased income, and perhaps because of the ambitious expansion programme, the SABC ran into financial difficulties. Appeals to the government for assistance failed, largely it seems as a result of the clash over programme ideology between the Broederbond-dominated government and the liberal head of broadcasting. In addition, a proposal to introduce television was refused by the government.

The world-wide post-War boom in capitalist economies assisted the conscious attempts of the new Nationalist government to increase the power of the Afrikaner in the hegemonic alliance. This found expression in the stricter enforcement of bilingualism and in the appointment of well-disposed Afrikaners to key positions in the civil service. Volkskapitalisme appeared as State capitalism, which:

> ... reflects the Afrikaner conception of South African economic development. It attempts to diminish the English and foreign control of the economy, especially their virtual monopoly of mine ownership. The state-initiated enterprises have been instrumental in expanding secondary industry, thus making the country less reliant on the gold-mining industry and on private business in certain vital sectors of the economy ... This growth of the public sector has provoked great resentment from the English-dominated private sector[63].

The rise in income among the Afrikaans group, as a result of government policy favouring their advancement, drew Afrikaners into a more consumer-oriented, materialist life-style. This orientation towards material consumption reduced the power of the hierarchical church/family/school/party matrix which had tended to cut across class and regional divisions in Afrikaner society, and prevented the penetration of an urban commodity culture into their daily life.

Technology: Expansion and Re-orientation

To reach both the urbanising Afrikaner and his rural counterpart, the radio network was expanded by means of both short-wave and medium-wave. The policy had been up till this period to erect 10 Kw transmitters with one transmitter per mast in a few large urban centres. However, when it became apparent that increasing the power did not commensurately increase signal propagation, a larger number of 5 Kw transmitters with better earthing devices were installed in smaller towns. In addition, an extra transmitter was installed at each site to carry the new commercial service. SABC engineers developed a unique method of coupling the three transmit-

ters at each site to a single mast, thus effecting considerable savings[64].

To serve the rural areas where medium-wave was ineffective, the three white services were also carried on the short-wave band. At the beginning of the period, these transmitters were located at Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town, but were later shifted to the Paradys site near Bloemfontein. More powerful transmitters were later installed there. This central position in the country made better use of the short-wave propagation pattern.

The external and SWA services were also broadcast from this site. Both of these programmes consisted of selections from the internal broadcasts[65].

In 1959, ten years after the date originally promised by the Post Office, the entire system of carrier links was completed, permitting the national network to be fully operational. This network permitted a more economical and centralised decision-making policy with regard to programmes on the three white services. The aims and assumptions were clearly spelled out in the 1950 Annual Report:

> During the year under review, the Department of Posts and Telegraphs succeeded in providing the landlines and it became possible for the SABC to integrate the programmes of the various stations in such a manner as to allow them to share their best material. As each station is now required to produce less than before, it has become possible to devote more time, money and effort to each programme. The beneficial effect of this system soon became apparent from the marked improvement in programme quality. The purpose of the policy of integration can be summed up in the phrase; "the best in the country for the whole country"[66].

Not only did this system enable to programmes produced in one or other of the urban studios to be broadcast nationally on a regular basis, but it also reduced the amount of regional or local content by amateurs on the fringes of broadcasting; broadcasting became a more specialised version of older professions such as theatre, journalism, music, literature. Producers could now more easily ignore local events and artists unless these were deemed suitable for the whole country. The pressure on the performers and creators was therefore two-fold; there was a demand for a professionalised technique, and an acceptable content. Listeners were deprived of the ability to hear their own local or regional elements on the radio, which would presumably have reinforced a regionalism which would have compromised the centralised power of the ruling group. Instead they were

entertained and educated by slicker, more professional productions which were intended to create a sense of unity among English and Afrikaans groups respectively.

The development of the national distribution network was complemented by a vast programme of studio construction. This was made necessary in part because the studio facilities inherited from the ABC were almost without exception hired or leased. All equipment for these studios was designed and built by the SABC to carry all the white services, plus the expected black services. All equipment designed from 1948 was compatible with the requirements of VHF/FM.

The flexibility of connections between the three elements of the network (studios, transmitters and carrier links) enabled the SABC to develop in several directions, matching the ideological needs of the hegemonic group which was now becoming dominated by the Afrikaner fraction. First, it enabled decisions about programming to be centralised in Johannesburg. Second, the erection of studios in the smaller cities and towns enabled a degree of local and regional programming, such as regional news, to be incorporated into the national programme policy, but according to the ideological assumptions and standards of management in Johannesburg. Third, the variety of channels available enabled a more specialised programme policy to be followed for the specific race and language groups. This laid the foundations for the tactics of the Afrikaner ruling group; to cement Afrikaner unity, and achieve parity with the English group; to 'divide and rule' the black population. To sum up, the network characteristics enabled closer control by management of the ideological functions of broadcasting in orientating various segments of the social formation with regard to the dominant ideology: the creation of national consensus.

Finance: The Commercialisation of the SABC – Springbok Radio

The first broadcast of Springbok Radio took place through the Northern regions of the medium-wave network on 1 May 1950, and nationally on 1 October the following year[67]. The introducton of a commercial service was controversial, since there had been many complaints about the broadcasting of advertisements by the ABC stations in the 1930s, much resentment about the virtual exclusion of Afrikaans programming from this private commercial station, and many objections made to the Schoch Commission. The public service model of the

SABC up to that time had been seen as **the** guarantee against such sectionalism and against a popularisation of broadcasting programmes to the detriment of 'high culture' items. The introduction of Springbok seemed to compromise that safeguard. The advent of commercial broadcasting created contradictions within the SABC itself as it sought to mix the American and British models of broadcasting, with their different definitions of the 'public interest' and how it should be served[68]. This mixture within one system prevented the competition for listeners that characterised the mixed systems of Canada and Australia, where commercial stations were not under the control of one centralised public utility such as the SABC. The ambivalent feelings towards commercials were clearly indcicated by the SABC's policy to delete all commercial copy, except for "the bare institutional mention of the sponsor's name and product"[69] on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, and Dingaan's Day. To accord with the 'underlying spirit' of these days, programme contents were also modified. Equally indicative of the SABC's dilemma over the propriety of advertising was their reaction to the death of Field-Marshall Smuts, when Springbok Radio "was faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances"[70]. Their response was to abandon all advertisements, and to play "music suitable to the occasion" on the evening of the Field-Marshall's death. All spot announcements were cancelled on the day of the funeral, and during the funeral itself Springbok Radio was shut down. Similar treatment was accorded to the death of King George VI in 1953 and ex-Prime Minister Hertzog in 1958, while the station was also closed down on the news of the attempted assasination of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd in 1960.

The channel was designed to reach a bigger audience than the English and Afrikaans services, and also paradoxically to compete with them. In terms of mass appeal, the station soon succeeded. From 1954 onwards, Springbok Radio had a higher audience than either of the other two stations. By 1957 the top ten programmes attracted a listenership of more than a quarter of a million adults each[71]. Nevertheless, the SABC's ideology of 'quality' remained important. The setting of a 'worthwhile standard' was one of the main reasons quoted for the initially high number of imported transcripts[72], while advertising agencies and programme sponsors were urged to be "fully conscious of the vital importance of maintaining high standards of programmes, not only as a sound commercial policy, but also as a duty to be discharged in the public interest"[73].

An important spin-off of the establishment of Springbok Radio was the growth of a dozen independent production houses whose existence

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was 'directly attributable' to that station[74]. These companies produced both programmes and spot advertisements. In addition, a Springbok Radio production unit was established, and both the studios and personnel were made available to outside producers. Thus, while in 1950 eighty percent of the broadcast material on the station was imported, this had been reduced to five percent in 1964[75]. Advertising time could be bought either as spots or as sponsored programmes, and there were also participation arrangements. When sponsored programme time on Springbok Radio was bought by advertisers, they usually chose English in preference to Afrikaans, owing to the greater affluence of the English audience, the greater proximity of that audience to the urban centres of production and distribution of consumer goods, and the supposedly greater bilingual ability of Afrikaans listeners. As a result of this tendency, one of the policies of Springbok's management was to try to counter the imbalance between English and Afrikaans programmes. In 1953 an acceptance department was established in the SABC to check advertisements for acceptability in accordance with SABC norms. In that year, sixty-two percent of programme time was sold as sponsored slots. In the 1970s the sale of sponsored programmes was abolished in favour of spots only, no doubt because this provided greater control of content by the SABC.

Programmes I: Drawing in the Black Audience

A brief programme of about half-an-hour per day had been transmitted on the medium-wave English and Afrikaans service from 1949, in the three main languages (Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho). At first, the cable service consisted of programmes taken from the English and Afrikaans services, but the proportion of programmes in the black languages gradually increased. Great stress was laid on traditional customs and rituals, although the music programming was chiefly American jazz, since that was the preferred style of the urban black elite who could afford the radio receivers and licences to listen to this service[76]. The total programme time on this service rose to 16 hours per day in 1952. The aims of the service, according to the 1952 Annual Report, were the provision of entertainment and education in the home, with a hoped-for reduction in crime.

Early in the period, legislation was passed which enabled the construction and operation of a programme service via cable to black

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audiences. Planning of this service had already begun when it was realised that transmission via cable was absent from the original definition of broadcasting in the 1936 Act. This omission was quickly rectified in Parliament, and indicated how quickly government could smooth the way for broadcasting when the two bodies were in agreement. The legislation did, however, vest the power in the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs to specify the conditions for such a service; whether this was interpreted to cover programming is not known at time of writing. Regarding finances, the amendment to the Act stated that the service would be conducted for a 'consideration'. If this is interpreted to mean a subsidy, grant or loan from the government to the SABC, no trace of this can be found in the Annual Reports.

Orlando Rediffusion, a local subsidiary of the British Rediffusion Company which operated similar systems in Britain and other parts of Africa, was formed with the SABC Director-General and one member of the SABC board on its board of directors. This company set up the distribution system which consisted of cables linking each home to the SABC's Johannesburg studios. A loudspeaker was hired out to every subscriber to the service, and installed in the home by the company. The SABC controlled the production and distribution of programmes to all subscribers. Initially, cables were installed only in Orlando, but over the next seven years, adjacent townships were also fitted[77]. After six months there were four thousand, three hundred subscribers, and the number increased to fourteen thousand by 1956. The following year, however, there was as decrease of nearly two thousand subscribers when, in the cryptic words of the SABC Annual Report, the "temporary shelters of Orlando were demolished and their inhabitants removed to new townships outside the present range of the service"[78]. The SABC intended extending the service to all black townships eventually, but were prevented by government decision, through the control vested in the amendment to the Act[79].

Possible causes for the government's decision were, first, that the installations were relatively expensive, and they tended to give an impression of permanence to urban black dwellings at a time when Nationalist government policy was that urban blacks were a temporary phenomenon, pending relocation to the homelands. Second was the clash between the Director-General of the SABC, Gideon Roos, and the Broederbond-dominated Board (and hence the government) over programme policy. A third possible cause was the anticipation of a technical breakthrough in the development of the necessary components for the FM system. In anticipation of a 'complete Bantu Service' on the FM network, the SABC extended its programmes aimed at

black listeners on the English and Afrikaans MW transmitters, bringing the total broadcast time to an hour per day. These programmes were included in the Rediffusion services, which were seen as a training ground for the SABC's 'Bantu programme staff', and as a preparation for the full-time operation of broadcasts on the coming FM system.

The SABC's programming policy with regard to music in the 1950s reflected the interests of the literate black middle classes: American jazz and swing, both imported and by South African groups, and choir music (many of the middle classes had been educated at the American Board Mission schools). These tastes were also reflected in the pages of DRUM magazine, which started in 1951 and was the major voice of the black middle classes of that decade. Aiming at the same market was Gallo (Pty) Ltd, a record company which began in 1926 by importing American records for the 'black' market, but later began recording black South African groups. The SABC reached the same group because those were the people who could afford either receivers or the Rediffusion subscriptions, and thus of necessity followed broadly the same musical policy. As a result of this orientation to the black middle class, all three of these media institutions ignored or excluded the emerging working class music: jive. The music critics writing for DRUM looked down on it as a working class music inferior to their own beloved jazz[80]. Gallo, although using talent scouts since the 1930s to find black popular music, had been trying to find a common style of black music to popularise:

> The strategy was now to attempt to impose a black music style on the middle classes in all regions, rather than drawing on various regional styles; it was understood that music with too regional a nature would have limited appeal, and that the most generally-accepted music would be that with clear references to Afro-American music[81].

In addition, Gallo was looking for a style of music that would appeal to white audiences as well as black, and so the company actively moulded and mediated the music at the production level in an attempt to find this combination. The result was a music which lost its black elements, and thus its appeal. It was only in the mid to late fifties that Gallo began recording working class jive musicians, whose music appealed to both urban and rural blacks[82]. The SABC's music policy changed only when Dr PJ Meyer took over power in the SABC and introduced the FM system, thereby reaching more black listeners than simply the urban elite reached by the Rediffusion and MW services.

Programmes II: The Chessboard of Power

The changes in legislation, finances, management, technology and programmes during the 1950s did not reveal any drastic departures from the preceding trends in broadcasting. Programming served the interests of the hegemonic bloc as a whole, but with increasing emphasis on the interests of the Nationalists. This caused resentment amongst the English fraction, who expressed their dissatisfaction with the most obvious change: the ideological level of programmes, particularly news. Under the new head of broadcasting, the news framework became South African oriented, although Roos attempted to be impartial between the political views of both Nationalists and Opposition.

The relaying of the BBC news had been stopped in 1950, and the SABC's own news section was created. Because of the combined opposition of the English and Afrikaans Press, the SABC were prevented from using material from SAPA and other news agencies[83]. It was only in 1957 that the commercial channel was able to run its own news service.

A regional news network was created once the studios became available in the smaller centres. The regional news programmes drew on a network of both full-time SABC staffers and a number of amateur part-time correspondents in the remoter areas. Through this service the rural communities and white farmers were catered for, since most regional news focussed on agricultural matters.

Talks had always been part of broadcasting, and fulfilled assumed needs for information and education. *Annual Reports* of the 1936–1948 period reveal that talks were usually given by 'experts' or authority figures drawn from the white community at large, on matters of general interest. They were not perceived as 'ideological' by the controllers of broadcasting, nor were they received as such by their English-speaking audience. The different political orientations of the predominantly Afrikaans management after 1948 were manifested in these talks, which became, to the English speakers, overtly political and identified with the government's policies. JJ Kruger, a former editor of *Die Transvaler*, was appointed cultural advisor to the SABC, and he gave a weekly talk entitled The South African Scene. This talk, plus the changed news framework, aroused strong feelings among the English sector, and two listeners' organisations were formed which protested to the SABC about this perceived bias. Roos defended the Kruger talks by saying that it was the SABC's duty to stand by the government in times of crisis (such as verbal attacks on

South Africa at the United Nations and other places). After 1959 he admitted that he had no power to censor the talks, as they had been sanctioned by Meyer.

The policy of inviting well-known 'experts' to give talks continued, and the changed nature and importance of programmes in the political sphere is evident in the number of programmes concerning the government's apartheid policy. An example of such a talk is *Ons Stedelike Naturellebevolking* (Our Urban Native Population) , given by Professor NJJ Olivier in 1959. It deals with the 'problem' of urban black labour and it attempts to answer the demands of white (Afrikaans) labour for the eviction of blacks from the cities to the homelands[84]. The sectional appeal of this particular talk was underlined by the fact that it was given only in Afrikaans.

In keeping with the general trend of public broadcasting institutions in other parts of the world, the SABC continued in its policy of stimulating and creating a/wide range of musical and verbal material, particularly for the Afrikaans service, which did not have the vast resources of the English culture industry to draw from. A new type of Afrikaans light music was created virtually from scratch through the commissioning of artists like Denis Bosman. In addition there was the creation of the SABC symphony orchestra in 1954, and the collection and eventual publication of traditional Afrikaans folk songs. At the same time, the policy of stimulating ethnic unity continued in the coverage of events such as the opening of the Voortrekker Monument, the annual Day of the Covenant ceremonies and Kruger Day. These linked the Afrikaner's religious and political traditions to his present[85]. In this way the SABC also counteracted the tendency for the regional and class divisions in Afrikanerdom to make themselves felt, in a time of rapid economic development.

Roos' emphasis on impartiality did not satisfy the Broederbond, which by then dominated the Board of the SABC[86]. A key address to Stellenbosch University revealed that Roos' concept of news and current affairs coverage allowed for a certain degree of debate in broadcasting. Roos viewed broadcasting in the liberal idealistic terms of the British democratic system. For him, broadcasting should not be used as the tool of any one group or section, since this would lead to the negation of democratic rights and the negation of civil liberties. He stressed that 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' were necessary in contentious areas ("sake van polemiese aard"), but the relativist nature of his position was made clear through his concession that in times of crisis and of war, the broadcasting institution must abandon its traditional impartiality. This contrasts with the subsequent period

when, under PJ Meyer, debate and reports on contentious issues were eliminated on the grounds that they were divisive, and the preceding period 1936–1948 under Caprara, when local politicians were not reported for the same reason[87].

At the end of this period, the appointment of two people to key positions laid the foundations for drastic changes in the SABC. Albert Hertzog became Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in 1958, in the same year that Hendrik Verwoerd became Prime Minister. Hertzog in turn appointed Piet Meyer to the chairmanship of the SABC board. Meyer was an old political associate of Hertzog's, and was appointed from a position of relative obscurity in the face of opposition from the rest of the cabinet[88]. For the moment, Roos remained Director-General.

Finances: What Went Wrong?

The financial crisis which the SABC experienced in this period is a case study in relations between government and broadcasters. The clash between Roos and the Nationalist government reduced government's support of broadcasting, and this was exacerbated by the ambitious programme of expansion on which the SABC had embarked. This clash had two related causes. Roos as Director-general clung to the Reithian ideal of the independence of broadcasting from the government of the day. In order to limit government influence over programmes, he tried to make the SABC as financially independent of government as possible. His conflict with the government also resulted from the fact that the cabinet contained eleven members who sat on the boards of the Afrikaans newspapers, which at that time were struggling for influence, readership and advertising income. The press and broadcasting have always been competitors in media systems based on the Anglo-American model. In South Africa at the time, this economic antagonism was exacerbated by the clash between Roos and the Broederbond.

Despite the recommendation of the Schoch Commission that the government subsidise the production of programmes for the black audience on the Rediffusion network, no record can be found of such payments. Although there was an increased income from the commercial channel, the SABC was forced to begin borrowing. A three-year programme of debentures was issued in 1949, and a second series in 1955. In 1956, however, this series was cancelled, since the SABC calculated that on its existing income it would not be able to repay the outstanding loans.

The SABC then approached government, and requested that licence fees be increased by ten shillings, and that it be permitted to introduce a second commercial service on short-wave, broadcasting chiefly music. (The SABC had begun to feel the competition from LM Radio, which had a similar type of programming.) The Minister of Posts and Telegraphs delayed his reply to this request, and as a result, the SABC had to re-budget for the following year, trimming expenditure on programmes, maintenance, development and research. When the reply was received there was no promise of additional finance, but merely a suggestion that a team of efficiency experts be appointed to investigate operations and finance; that a ten shilling levy on additional sets beyond the first one be introduced, and that advertising tariffs be increased.

A preliminary study revealed that a full scale efficiency study of the SABC would not be worth the cost. Regarding the commercial channel, the SABC was informed that while the government could not prevent the SABC from introducing such a channel, to do so would be regarded as an unfriendly act by the Press. In addition, Hertzog had a deep fear of 'foreign' culture influencing and debasing Afrikaner culture. Popular commercial music channels such as this were however introduced in the 60s.

The tariffs for advertisers were increased by between thirty and sixty percent, depending on the area. This increase was partly justified by the SABC in putting the commercial service on short-wave. However, it did result in an underselling of advertising time on Springbok in 1957, so whether there was a nett gain is uncertain[89]. A further amendment to the Broadcasting Act extended the licensing powers of the Post Office in an attempt to stamp out 'pirate' listening and so create more income. This legislation required a licence for the *possession* of receivers, not simply for their use, which had been difficult to prove. In addition, radio dealers were required to register as such, and were compelled to keep records of all transactions of radio receivers and components, as a means of tracking down owners of apparatus. Nevertheless, the SABC was having to borrow on overdraft for unexpected expenditure on Broadcast House and the large outlay on studio modifications. By 1959, the excess of income over expenditure had dropped to thirty-two and a half thousand pounds.

Resume: The Turning Point

The financial crisis was caused by the policies of management in the programme area clashing with the desires of the Nationalist govern-

ment. The SABC attempted to retain its financial independence in order to retain independence in programming. The expansion of the transmission network, and the provision of new programmes at the same time overstrained the economic base of the SABC. The government responded by refusing to expand the economic base to a sufficient degree. The shift in the following period (1959–1971) to more commercial channels, government loans and subsidies reveals the greater identity of opinion between the SABC and government.

Professionalisation and Polarisation: 1959–1971

The 1960s were boom times for the South African economy, surpassing even those of the 1950s. The expansion of the economy provided an opportunity for Afrikaner capital to move into the mining, financial, professional and construction areas of the economy[90]. This expansion of the economy in general required greater supplies of black labour in the urban areas. This brought Afrikaans capital interests into conflict with the interests of Afrikaans labour, despite the vastly increased application of apartheid's practical policies of labour control.

The movement in support of capital led eventually to a split in the National Party, between the labour fraction (which, under Albert Hertzog, formed the Herstigte Nasionale Party) and the capital fraction. A similar process lead to a split in the Opposition, resulting in the formation of the New Republican Party, which largely supported Nationalist government policy but from an ethnic base within the (traditionally anti-Afrikaner) group, and the Progressive Party, which maintained a critical rejection of government policies, but with (initially) very little parliamentary representation. The split in the National Party was accompanied by a split in the Broederbond, which eventually supported the Nationalists. HNP supporters were edged out and the departure of Hertzog from the cabinet was one of the conditions which opened the way for the introduction of television.

In the rest of Africa, the decade was marked by the gaining of independence by a large number of former colonies. By the end of the period, there was a ring of 'buffer states' which separated South Africa from the increasingly hostile states to the north. After the assassination of Verwoerd in 1966, the new Prime Minister, John Vorster, initiated a diplomatic offensive in the rest of Africa to try to defuse this hostility, which was expressed, among other ways,

through critical shortwave radio broadcasts directed at South Africa, and through critical reporting in foreign and domestic English press.

Dr PJ Meyer, as head of both broadcasting and of the Broederbond, wielded a great deal of power in this period. When the split in the party came in 1968, Meyer could easily have gone against Vorster. Strydom and Wilkins report that Vorster and Meyer were in constant contact, and that they must have negotiated power and policy between them: "That is the only explanation for Meyer's retention of power for so long and despite so many controversies"[91].

At the beginning of the period, the stage was set for a power struggle between Roos as Director-General and Meyer as chairman of the Board of Control. Roos soon left. By the end of the period, Meyer had created a number of top-level management posts as required by the SABC's vast expansion, filled these with Broederbonders promoted from below, and retained executive power for himself. The rest of the SABC also had a great number of Broederbonders at various levels, in addition to the general predominance of Afrikaners over English-speaking staff, particularly in non-production areas[92].

As an organisation, the SABC remained almost static in numbers of staff, but expanded enormously in number of channels, the extent of the transmitter network and the number of programme hours. The installation of the VHF/FM system permitted the creation of a flexible network of six high fidelity channels. The external service was also greatly expanded, and it eventually directed specially produced programmes in many languages to Africa and virtually all of the rest of the world. Expansion of this service continued late into the 1970s.

Despite the enormous expansion, running costs were kept down by the implementation of automation and efficient management methods, directed towards clearly defined goals (rather than the more neutral policy of Roos). The main characteristic of this period was an attempt by the SABC to define the 'national interest' or consensus from the point of view of the Nationalist government, and to bridge the gulf between English and Afrikaans. Correspondingly, it attempted to separate the interests of the black middle classes from those of the white middle classes, and to create separate ethnic identities for the several black language groups.

Legislation: The Granting of Carte Blanche?

The wide powers given to the SABC in the Broadcasting Amendment Act (no 49 of 1960) reveal the extent to which government and broadcasting began to serve each other's interests more directly. These

powers included the appointment of advisory councils and committees, and the Board was given a free hand to "do any such thing which, in the opinion of the board may be necessary or incidental to the attainment of its objects". This clause, although no doubt qualified by the Post Office Act of 1958 and the Radio Act of 1952, removed the time-consuming necessity of negotiating organisational innovations with the Minister. These new powers also included some of the functions traditionally exercised by the Post Office. The division of control between the Post Office and broadcasting was originally made in order for the government to be able to exert some form of control over broadcasters (as had happened in the 1950s), but the very close covert understanding between members of the Broederbond in the SABC and in government made this separation of powers unnecessary. The wider powers were chiefly in the areas of licensing, and were framed to stimulate maximum audience [93]. Further powers included more financial independence and flexibility, the provision for sales of programmes to outside bodies, and the provision of more fringe benefits to staff[94].

The 1960 amendment created an equal but separate structure for the administration of black programmes. Previously, production of programmes for blacks had been done within the existing organisational structure. The Bantu Programmes Control board was chaired by Meyer himself, but all other aspects of the Bantu programme structure were insulated from the existing SABC organisation. Within this structure, thirty-five white supervisory staff, all either speaking a black language or with a knowledge of National Party interpretations of anthropology, controlled the output of black announcers and programme compilers. During the 1950s, before the appointment of whites fluent in the black languages, black announcers had been making disparaging remarks about government policy during their programme presentations.

The Bantu Programmes Control Board had the right of approval over programmes for reception by black audiences, whether inside or outside South Africa. Expenditure on black programmes was limited to the income derived from licence fees paid by blacks, plus a government subsidy. It is not evident from the *Annual Reports* how this subsidy was calculated, nor whether it included any amount for use of the transmission network.

Finances: The Midas Touch
In 1960, Meyer's first full year of office, the SABC was in dire straits. The 1960 *Annual Report* indicated an increase in costs due to the purchase of land for the new SABC headquarters at Auckland Park; an increase in Bantu services without a corresponding increase in income, and an increase in salaries. The increase in salaries was offset by a sudden and considerable drop in staff numbers. The mass resignation was a result of the way in which Meyer made his intentions plain about the SABC's policy in the future. Many senior staff left.

Thereafter, the SABC's financial position soared. The government began payment of its subsidy for the production of programmes for blacks, and a series of loans for the construction of the FM system. Where Roos had been discouraged from introducing a second commercial channel broadcasting mainly music, Meyer had apparently no difficulty. These were introduced on a regional basis. All the new channels (for both blacks and whites) instituted via the FM system carried commercials, and as listenership for these channels rose, advertising rates were increased.

Meyer understood the benefits of advertising perfectly:
> The communications media of our time have expanded to mass media as a result of economic development, which has made mass production and consumption possible through extended and continuous advertising. Through paid advertising, mass circulation can be financed[95].

As Meyer phrased it, the ultimate aim of a commercial channel is maximizing the audience, (and not either profit or programme 'quality'), but the identity of interest between a mixed system such as the SABC had become and the marketing sector is obvious. This identity becomes closer in the case of the SABC's multiple FM channels, which allowed advertisers to reach more specialised markets, more often, than the single, national Springbok channel permitted. The income from licences was greater than that from advertising at the beginning of the period, but that relationship reversed in 1972.

What was more important for Meyer's purposes, SABC audience surveys showed that the new regional white channels were drawing new listeners to the SABC, and not drawing them away from the three older white services.

The vast increase in income over the period must, as with previous periods, be assessed against inflation. The anticipated cost of installing the FM system was twelve million pounds (or approximately twenty-five million rand). By 1972 the government had lent the SABC forty million rand, and it can be assumed that the full amount was allocated to the project. In that year the full amount was converted to permanent capital by the government, and no repayment was required, except for the annual interest of 6,5 percent.

Inflation, plus increased competition for staff from the private sector, led the SABC to increase salaries several times during the period and to introduce additional fringe benefits. In 1968, the implementation of automation permitted the retrenchment of a hundred and fifteen posts.

Management and Staff: The Centralisation of Power

Meyer's reorganisation of the SABC after 1959 showed a deep appreciation of the methods of control in corporate bureaucratic organisations. This ruthless efficiency derived from a concrete set of goals. Increased salaries and the streamlining of certain operations made greater productivity possible. Meyer introduced a number of changes: the accounts department was enlarged, and statistical analysis was employed; an internal listener research department extended the scope of audience information beyond those done for the commercial channels; a staff training scheme and a merit promotion system were introduced.

Such organisational structures made it easier for management to ensure loyalty to the SABC's aims. Activities or practices outside these aims were dealt with under the concepts of 'efficiency' or 'merit'. The division of operations into areas of specialised responsibility also made it easier to direct the activities of the whole from the top. This centralisation of power is evident from the remarks of Meyer to Collett, the chief engineer for the SABC, on first meeting him: "I and my board of control will determine the policy, and for that we accept responsibility. You and your technicians must carry it out, and for that you must take responsibility"[96].

Meyer's manipulation of power through division and definition of areas of responsibility is evident in the way he forced Roos out of the SABC. As Director-General, Roos had final say over all areas of operation. Meyer as chairman promoted to the same level as Roos several Broederbonders who had been immediately below him – Douglas Fuchs, Jan Swanepoel and Van der Walt – and gave them areas of responsibility which Roos had previously controlled. Roos was left with the commercial and external services to control, areas which were not then significant, since the FM system had not been implemented. These and other day-to-day manipulations reduced and compromised Roos's power, and lead him to resign on Republic Day, 1961[97]. The post of Director-General was then abolished, and all executive power was left in Meyer's hands.

The new policy for programmes immediately became apparent. In contrast to Roos's policy of limited discussion of differences between the two white groups, Meyer formed a policy of concealing such differences in order to more firmly cement the hegemonic alliance. To complement this, news and current affairs propounded the interests of the hegemonic alliance as being essentially those of white supremacy. This meant the maintenance of racial discrimination presented as "ethnic self-determination". This aroused resentment from the English sector, whose daily experiences seldom brought them into direct conflict or competition with black labour, and who were thus not able to make the direct connection between apartheid policy and the benefits it provided for them.

Meyer justified his new policy at length in the *Annual Reports* after he took over, and he exploited precisely the difference between impartiality and objectivity. Where Roos had maintained that broadcasting could only abandon its "objectivity and impartiality" during wartime and in times of crisis, Meyer simply shifted the definition of crisis and its causes onto a general hostility to the Republic on the part of black Africa and the rest of the world, and not only her racist policies. Meyer's policy was thus to abandon the impartial role and to adopt an interpretive and directive role. This, he stated, was being done in the 'national interest'[98].

The Minister of Posts and Telegraphs until 1968 was Albert Hertzog, who while actively supporting the SABC through his friendship with Meyer, also resisted pressures for the introduction of television. In 1970 the SABC was moved to the portfolio of the Minister of National Education, Van der Spuy. This move was probably intended to facilitate control over the programme level of broadcasting, and synchronise it with the Broederbond's concept and practice of Christian National education, since broadcasting's authority and influence had begun to challenge that of the educational system.

The introduction of the SABC's own audience research unit and the complementary use of a computer also assisted management in achieving their aims. This audience research unit functions separately from the independent AMPS (All Media Products Survey) which the advertising industry and the SABC use for setting the rates for advertising. The SABC unit provided more information than is necessary for those purposes, and served the needs of the SABC management as a feedback device about the audience. In comparison to the other feedback devices of local councils, this audience research unit enabled management to determine the parameters within which this feedback will take place. In other words, manage-

ment can establish the degree to which its goals are being achieved, rather than the audience. As in any large modern corporation, the day-to-day running of the organisation requires a certain degree of co-ordination. The relative flexibility or rigidity of this co-ordination indicates the relative centralisation or decentralisation of power and responsibility within the organisation. In the SABC, these internal rules and regulations are brought to the attention of the staff by means of a monthly internal publication, which all staff must read and sign. In 1962, all previous notices were consolidated and updated in a weighty volume, the *Standing Rules and Instructions*, which is updated every month.

In general, management practices in the SABC during this period reflected a common tendency among broadcasting institutions to regard themselves as subject to the same requirements of efficiency as corporations in the private sector. Programmes were regarded as 'products', or ends in themselves, and were judged according to 'professional' standards of 'intrinsic' or 'ideal' quality, rather than the audience's experience of them[99].

This is inevitable when the programme producers are insulated from the audience. The SABC had become very well insulated at various stages in its history. The chief mechanisms of this insulation are the lack of regular review by commissions of enquiry, the mixture of public service and commercial models, government subsidy, the apartheid system inside and outside broadcasting, the centralisation of the network, and the perversion of the democratic process by the Broederbond. It was thus easy for the highly autocratic SABC to change its programme policy dramatically when there was a simple change of leadership, from Roos to Meyer.

The presence of Broederbond members at management level had the additional effect of ensuring that other Broederbond members and sympathetic Afrikaners would be selected and promoted where possible. During this authors' period of employment at the SABC (1975–1978), it was noticeable that certain staff at various levels in the Corporation were promoted to supervisory positions despite their lack of experience or technical expertise. Quite often, at the production and operations levels, such staff were less competent than those they supervised.

Technology I: Bigger is Better

From the inception of the SABC, there had been a perceived need to disseminate the dominant ideology in selective 'discourses' through separate channels for various language groups. A system was required which could segregate the audience according to the categorisations of race, ethnic group and language which characterised the apartheid ideology. The International Telecommunications Union had, however, allocated an insufficient number of medium-wave and short-wave frequencies to South Africa for the implementation of such a system, at the levels of fidelity which were expected at the time. The eventual implementation of the VHF/FM system was, from the 1940s, anticipated as the solution to the problem[100].

The installation of the FM system was the main technical feature of this period, and the basis of expansion in all other areas. The system attracted great interest world-wide from the broadcasting industry because of the scale on which it was being implemented, as well as its novelty and because of the vast new market that was created for receivers and transmitters, among other things.

Experiments in FM transmission had begun in 1943, and in 1945 the *Annual Report* stated that post-war plans included the introduction of FM and of television. By the mid-1950s an FM system had become technically feasible, but was not regarded as economically feasible. The anticipated black audience would not have been able to afford FM receivers which used valves and consumed electricity faster than the medium-wave receivers. SABC engineers obviously anticipated the development of a transistor that would replace valves in radio receivers, and make them cheaper, portable, and more economical to run.

Receivers could run off small dry-cell batteries. The small portable sets which could then be marketed would suit the undeveloped, non-electrified nature of the designated black homeland areas and urban townships. The portability of receivers would also suit the particular characteristics of migrant labour, and the increasingly mobile nature of urban life in general.

The Nationalist policies of apartheid which were rapidly introduced in the early 1950s had been drawing increasingly hostile short-wave broadcasts from various parts of the world. The hegemonic alliance saw a need to isolate the black population from these broadcasts[101]. Since the introduction of the VHF/FM system would create an entirely new market for radio receivers, and since the cheapest form of receiver would be FM-only, market forces would tend to create a black audience which could listen only to FM channels. This complemented both Nationalist policies: that of 'separate development' and of isolating the black audience from foreign short-wave broadcasts. Transmitters which operate in the Very High Frequency (VHF) band propagate their signal only in line of sight, and not around the

curve of the earth. A transmitter can thus be placed to reach only a very local audience or, if linked by landlines into a flexible network, can reach local/regional/national audiences. The FM system would automatically tend to isolate most of the black population from foreign broadcasts, and, depending on channel/programme policy, would segregate the black audience by ethnic language roughly according to the government-designated homeland areas[102].

South Africa had been allocated a VHF/FM waveband of 87,5 to 108 Mhz. This could be divided into six channels, each one of which was wide enough to transmit almost perfect fidelity – the whole range of human hearing. These six channels were sufficient to transmit the three existing white channels, a new regional white channel at each of the three main urban centres, and two new black regional channels. The latter could accommodate all the main black ethnic languages, thus provided an apparent ethnic cultural base for political and economic segregation under apartheid.

All that was required was a transistor which would operate in the same VHF band which the ITU had allocated to South Africa. In one of the most remarkable coincidences, the discovery of this transistor was announced in May 1959, only two months before Piet Meyer was appointed to the chairmanship of the SABC board. In August, senior SABC officials were sent abroad to study the problems of implementing such a large system[103].

The Minister of Posts and Telegraphs announced the installation of the FM system in 1960, and in 1961 work was begun on the main FM transmitting tower at Brixton, Johannesburg. At the opening of the tower, representatives of the major foreign broadcasting institutions and manufacturers were present. After the government loan for the construction of the FM system was announced, programme exchange agreements were concluded with foreign broadcast institutions, and foreign manufacturers announced that local plants would be set up or expanded[104]. By 1963 the first locally manufactured FM receiver was marketed.

The hasty installation of the FM system was constantly stressed in the engineering sections of the *Annual Reports* until 1968. Demanded by management, this haste had resulted in the testing of only a sample of transmitter sites. Transmitters were taken into service before the usual commissioning tests had been done, and as a result there were a great number of programme hours lost due to faults in the years 1960 to 1965[105].

As the FM network was expanded, so the inclusion of black programmes on medium-wave services was phased out. When all the

black languages became available on FM, the Rediffusion system was closed down and dismantled. The studio expansion programme begun in the previous period was continued, and studios were built in or near the designated homelands. These studios were staffed by personnel of Radio Bantu, and became the nuclei of the present homeland stations.

Technology II: Automatic Entertainment

The operation of such a vast number of transmitters and studios would, under old methods of operation, have required a huge number of engineering staff. The SABC instead automated most of its transmitters, and introduced automatic studio operation as well. This reduced the manpower requirements, thus reducing salary costs as well as ensuring greater control by management[106]. The other area of automation was that of programme presentation. There had been a trend towards pre-recording since the beginning of broadcasting, since this enabled better control over content than live programming, as well as more economical and convenient use of studios, manpower and other facilities.

The insertion of advertising spots into and between programmes had always been a task requiring a high degree of expertise by a presentation assistant, because faulty, delayed or omitted advertisements cost the Corporation valuable income. The solution was a programme "automat", which consisted in essence of a number of audiotape players connected to a time-coded computer. The taped programmes, together with pre-recorded timechecks and advertisements, could then be assembled and checked well beforehand, played back and broadcast automatically. This method of control is more reliable than that by a presentation assistant, and cheaper in the long run. All the white regional programmes were automated in this way[107].

Technology III: Advertising South Africa

The transmission of the three white services to South West Africa continued from the Paradys site near Bloemfontein, while the nucleus of the present SWA Broadcasting Corporation was formed. In 1969 the local FM service was started from Windhoek on the same principle as in the Republic, i.e. segregated ethnic language channels. The white services continued to be relayed from Johannesburg, since the maintenance of SWA as a buffer state depended on the con-

tinued orientation of the white group there to the hegemonic alliance in the Republic.

While the expansion of the internal network depended primarily on the development of FM, external broadcasting needed good short-wave transmitters. With the support of the Prime Minister, Dr. HF Verwoerd (as well as government subsidy), separate division for the latter was begun. The transmitter centre was moved from Paradys to Bloemendal, near Meyerton. A large array of aerials and transmitters was built to give coverage to most parts of the world. At the time of installation the 250 Kw transmitter were amongst the most powerful in the world. The installation was done in such a way that most operations could be controlled from a central switching room, thus requiring a minimum of operations personnel.

Where previous external broadcasts on short-wave had simply been re-broadcasts of internal programmes, Verwoerd encouraged, and subsidised, the establishment of a separate programme division for Radio RSA, which produced programmes for foreign listeners in their home languages. The stated intention was to ". . . project South Africa and all her peoples, their progress and achievements in various fields, their way of life and their ideals to the outside world"[108].

In addition to the credibility that the Radio RSA news service enjoyed in the rest of Africa, due to its use of standard Western news techniques and sources, the 1966 *Annual Report* further states that the good progress of the external service is maintained by "personal and official contacts" with other broadcasting organisations[109].

Coordinated with these broadcasts was the free distribution of recorded programme material, via the Transcription Service, for use by foreign broadcasting stations. The external service thus used features of many other foreign broadcasting stations such as the Voice of America, to project its image internationally. The particular intention of the South African version was to conceal internal conflicts, and to present the South African 'way of life' as natural and accepted.

Programmes I: Attracting the Youth Market

Although the SABC had had to compete with Lourenço Marques Radio (LM) since the 1950s, the SABC suddenly announced that their audience surveys had identified severe competition from that station. Forty-five percent of radio listeners between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four named it as their favourite station. It is clear that as long as LM was able freely to continue to stimulate and exploit the craving for enslaving beat music, the programme services of the SABC had to

wage an uphill struggle in their endeavours to interest young listeners in programmes of better quality[110].

While the SABC did carry some popular music for young people, SABC management was concerned to eliminate the more extreme forms of rock music which expressed rebellion against the ideology of conformity, ambition and respect for authority which characterised parental culture. By some means not as yet established, South African interest obtained a controlling share in LM, and the music programming policy was changed. In the 1970s, after the popular uprising and change of government, LM was renamed Radio 5 and broadcast on the FM, medium-wave and short-wave networks of the SABC[111].

The widespread introduction of commercials on the new channels (both black and white) represented a change in the mixture of public service and commercial broadcasting models that had started with Springbok in the 1950s. Now, most of the SABC's channels carried commercials. In addition, the style of programming on the regional white channels was different to that of Springbok. The latter contained discrete programmes in the same manner as the older non-commercial channels, divided into categories such as drama, sport, news, etc. All these were genres derived from cultural forms outside broadcasting. Most programmes on Springbok were unilingual.

By contrast, the regional services introduced the all day music-news-advertisements format, interspersed with bilingual disc-jockey chatter (the music was selected in different ways: best-sellers, listener request programmes, DJ's favourites, etc.) The tone of one such channel, Port Natal, was introduced by the SABC in the following terms;

It is a service that will not be too high-minded. Its appeal will be broad in a particular way. We are going to try to give to those listeners who dislike too much of the spoken word, or who may not be in the mood to listen to plays or discussions programmes or talks . . . middle of the road music . . . plus news on the hour every hour[112].

In other words, this would be a channel that would not appear to be authoritarian and didactic, like the 'high culture' of the English and Afrikaans non-commercial channels, and would attract a great number of listeners. Programme ideology was in terms more familiar to the less educated white (and 'coloured') petty bourgeoisie. The bilingualism of the disc-jockeys signified the extent to which Afrikaner culture was thought to be on a par with English culture as regards the newly affluent Afrikaner urban youth.

The regional channels were of course modelled on the American commercial stations in more respects than simply the amount of music and the use of commercials, although that combination had been shown elsewhere (e.g LM Radio) to be a very profitable combination. The style is reminiscent of the very earliest ways in which audiences were attracted, before the institutionalisation of broadcasting and the introduction of notions like 'cultural upliftment' and 'public interest'. Extrovert individuals such as P.P. Eckersley (in Britain) or Toby Innes (South Africa)[113], whether private radio hams or engineers working for manufacurers and testing transmitters, could sit down in front of a microphone and extemporise, conducting a humorous monologue in a fashion similar to the stand-up comic or raconteur. This talent attracted the early 'listeners-in' who would scan the frequencies on home-made crystal sets for such interesting transmissions.

Today, broadcasters pass on the advice that successful microphone style is the ability to imagine that one is addressing *one* person, not a large group, as in the case of a public meeting. In effect, disc-jockey chatter is one half of a conversation; the speech is spontaneous and non-formal, and concerned with the trivialities of day-to day life. The phone-in programme that is typical of this type of channel is an attempt to re-create the conversational, two-way nature of radio, that existed before broadcasting was created as a one-way system.

The problem for the SABC was that such a programme style was totally foreign to their established methods of control – its unscripted nature prevented pre-broadcast checking of content. Pre-recording the disc-jockey's programme proved to be the answer, although this removed the element of spontaneity and reference to specifics (like the weather or the traffic) that make audiences identify their experience with that of the disc jockey and hence the channel. This blandness which is so typical of SABC channels should be compared with the much more personal and immediate presentation of the old LM station and the present (so-called) independent stations, Capital Radio and Channel 702. On the latter stations, youth group slang and references to recent events are more likely to be heard, as these stations try harder to identify the changes in youth subculture, and thus attract them as audience[114].

Programmes II: Redefining the National Interest

Together with the establishment of the FM network went the conscious attempt to establish the new SABC programming policy and organisation as representing 'the national interest'. This policy and the contradictions inherent in it are revealed not only in statements in the *Annual Reports*, but also in the published versions of talks by outside experts during the period, and in public addresses by Meyer and other SABC officials. In general these statements of ideology are those of the effects school of media theory, in which the assumptions and intentions of the broadcasters are assumed to be overt and to exist at one level of meaning only. Correspondingly, the audience is assumed to perceive the message at one level only; in accordance with the intentions of the broadcaster. Other factors which may affect decoding, such as the different social contexts within the audience, are ignored.

The main contradictions evident in the statements on broadcasting in the *Annual Report* concern the concepts of 'national culture' and 'national interest'. These terms cover, by implication, the policies and contents of all channels. Yet the statements made about separate channels reveal that the intention of the multi-channel policy is not to create a sense of a 'national' culture, but to maintain the divisions of culture, race and class in accordance with the Nationalist government's policy, thereby benefitting the hegemonic alliance as a whole. This is entirely different to Reith's view of radio. He believed that the benefit of radio rested on the fact of single channel, national distribution. This would prevent channel specialisation and thus segmentation of the audience. It did however, require a certain freedom and independence of the marketplace by the broadcasters. In this mode, Reith maintained, radio could act to "interlock governor and governed in a real ensemble"[115].

Reith's idealistic intention was of course limited by his own class position; but radio, in his view, should attempt to create an awareness of the variety of cultural forms and expressions within a vast and complex modern social formation. Meyer took Reith's version of radio a little further. With his experience of organising Afrikaans Christian National trade unions door-to-door with Hertzog in the 1940s, he realised that the greater shaping influence of broadcasting depended on the degree to which it connected with the ideological characteristics of the audience – seemed familiar and served their needs, as it were;

> Of all communications media ... the warm, human spoken word is and remains the most powerful and influential. Whatever is carried in the other media, and however these media do it, the influence and effect depends in the last instance on whether (the substance) is taken up in human conversation, and how it is passed, processed and spread in living conversation[116].

As had been the case in the previous period, the talks on the three white services continued to reflect government policy. This method of confronting and explaining the contradictions and conflicts which arose as a result of the expansion of capital, and the state's attempts to control and direct it, became very cumbersome. Daily talks for redefinition and explanation became necessary as conflicts became more serious and numerous. Experts from outside the SABC were not available regularly and at short notice, so a current affairs division was created. This division produced a daily short comment on the news or current topics.

The news policy was based on the same view of consensus as was apartheid at that time, that is, that segregation avoided conflict:

> Topics of national interest about which there are differences of opinion or policy in the party-political arena will be treated with the utmost circumspection, so that all aspects and the most important and responsible points of view are reflected. Everything which may disrupt the traditionally good relations between the various non-white population groups of our country, and between them and the white population groups willbe scrupulously avoided, as in all other programmes of the SABC[117].

The introduction of multiple channels and specialised programmes for each of those channels tends automatically to reinforce and insulate whatever differences there are between various class fragments, thus retaining overall control in the hands of the controllers of broadcasting in particular, and the hegemonic alliance in general. Statements concerning individual channels reveal the same segregationist intentions as the apartheid policy. With regard to Springbok and the regional services, culture has been defined as 'entertainment', and the success of the channel in catering to theparticular cultural group is judged in terms of the number of listeners[118].

In general, however, the policy for the new white bilingual regional channels revealed a step away from the didactic high culture policy of the original unilingual English and Afrikaans national channels. The intention was, in all white channels, to bring together the two white groups, but still to retain, in the music policy, an insulation from the wilder forms of popular music[119].

Programmes III: Reaching The Black Working Class

By contrast, the music policy of the black channels reflected none of the cultural paternalism of the white channels. The intention was simply to bring as many of the black population into the SABC audience as possible[120]. The SABC had no special interest in this or that kind of music. Anticipating a growth of listeners in the rural areas, it sent recording teams to the designated homeland areas to record the traditional music which the commercial music industry was not recording. It also brought black performers into SABC recording studios in Durban, Johannesburg and Grahamstown, building up in this way its own stock of "transcriptions" in each of the studios from which Radio Bantu was broadcast. But it was soon apparent that blacks in both urban and rural areas wanted to hear other types of music, and Radio Bantu did its best to offer music to all tastes[121].

In addition to traditional music, choir music was commonly played - as well as the old favourite, Afro-American jazz. This policy continued from 1959 until about 1961, when the phenomenal popularity of jive music among the urban working class as well as rural people was identified, and this type of music then appeared on the various channels of Radio Bantu.

Although music was the prime constituent of progamming on Radio Bantu (and anything which was in the appropriate language and not overtly political was thought suitable), the news programmes complemented the insulation of black from white, and of each ethnic group from the other[122]. The SABC appointed its own correspondents for news on the black channels, and commented that they had supplied:

> . . . such an extensive supply of news of mainly local interest that it left hardly any time for international news. In its endeavour to make Radio Bantu truly serve the purpose of interpreting Bantu thought and reflecting the daily life of the Bantu, the SABC regards it as a primary duty to make use of these news items sent in by correspondents[123].

The insulating nature of the news correspondents' material is illustrated by the mention of such items of "vital interest to the Bantu" as decimalisation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, education, and Bantu officials.

There is of course a contradiction between the SABC's emphasis on the traditional culture and 'homelands' of the various ethnic groups of blacks in South Africa, and the simultaneous emphasis laid on Christianity in the form of church services, choirs, etc. This contradiction is also evident in the commercialisation of the black channels. Advertisements might be expected to stimulate consumer demand for products, while the wages necessary to purchase these were mainly available in the urban areas. Migrant labour was one of the

manifestations of this and other contradictions of the apartheid policy. In these ways, the SABC has simply absorbed existing trends in the international development of capitalism, and its effect on local cultures, and has developed and applied policies to manufacture and represent that culture which would help preserve the dominant position of the Afrikaner as the ruling fraction, and of whites as the dominant group. Meyer indicated this intention to dominate in a series of four talks entitled *The Spiritual Crisis of the West*, broadcast in 1966. The last programme contains the following:

> In the new Western world outside Europe, the Afrikaners and other associated white Western peoples of South Africa are in a favourable position of being able to show the whole Western world, for its encouragement and enrichment in all spheres of life, the positive and valuable content and vitality of a new world period. In so doing, South Africa will make a decisive contribution to the consolidation of the entire West as a white world united in its struggle against the joint forces of the yellow and black races of the earth[124].

The period 1961 to 1971 was marked by the closer alignment of broadcasting and the State. New technical possibilities such as the FM system and transistors were applied to buttress the racist policies used by the government to conceal the operation of capital in the interest of whites. Ironically, the greater capital accumulation of the State which helped to pay for this system also occurred at the expense of Afrikaner unity. Eventually, the growth of Afrikaner capital, and the transition of Afrikaner 'traditional' rural culture to an urban commoditised form, was achieved at the expense of the support of Afrikaans labour. This left the way open for the greater solidarity between both English and Afrikaans capitalist interests, and the greater antipathy of the urban black working class.

Conclusion

The development of broadcasting in South Africa has been marked by significant differences from the countries in which the practices, technology and organisational forms originated. These differences can be summarised as firstly, the heterogeneity of population in terms of language, culture and ethnicity; secondly, the distribution patterns of that population within the country; thirdly, the geographical and climatic conditions; and finally, the level of capitalist development.

Much research remains to be done, not only with regard to the areas described above, but the relative influence which broadcasting

has had on its audience in the recent history of South Africa. It is important to remember that the influence and effects of broadcasting on its audience do not necessarily correspond with the intentions of the broadcasters.

Lastly, it is hoped that this study has revealed some of the factors which will have to be considered if South African broadcasting is to be re-designed to be more responsive to the complex needs of the audiences it must serve.

Summary of Legislation Affecting Broadcasting in South Africa, 1910–1978

1. The Telegraph Act, no. 10 of 1911.
2. The Radio Act, no. 20 of 1926.
3. The Broadcasting Act, no. 22 of 1936.
4. Act no. 17 of 1938; amendment to the Broadcasting Act.
5. Act no. 14 of 1938; amendment to the Broadcasting Act.
6. Act no. 14 of 1949, amendment to the Radio Act.
7. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no. 34 of 1952.
8. The Radio Act, no. 3 of 1952.
9. The Post Office Act, no. 44 of 1958.
10. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no. 49 of 1960.
11. The Radio Amendment Act, no. 90 of 1963.
12. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no. 60 of 1969.
13. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no. 93 of 1969.
14. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no. 12 of 1972.
15. The General Law Amendment Act, no. 63 of 1975.
16. The Broadcasting Act, no. 73 of 1976 (repeals the 1936 Act).
17. The Radio Amendment Act, no. 2 of 1978.

Notes and References

1. H Adam, and H Giliomee, 1979; *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power*, David Philip, Cape Town; L Schlemmer, and E Webster, 1973; *Change, Reform and Economic Growth in South Africa*, Ravan, Johannesburg; D O'Meara, 1977; "The Afrikaner Broederbond, 1927–1948; Class Vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 3; J D Moodie, 1980; *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, UCLA Press, Los Angeles.
2. S W Head, 1974, *op cit*; E Katz and G Wedell, 1977, *op cit*; P Orlik, 1968, "The South African Broadcasting Corporation; an Historical Survey and Contemporary Analysis", unpublished PhD. thesis, Wayne State University; S K Hybels, *News and editorial Bias in the South African Broadcasting Corporation*, UMI microfilms, 1971.
3. E Rosenthal, *op cit* p25.
4. Ibid, p45.
5. Ibid, p43

6. T A F Rhodes, "Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created", unpublished paper, SABC, Johannesburg, 1956, p17.

7. Ibid, p28.

8. T A F Rhodes, *op cit*. pp39–43.

9. Ibid, p34.

10. A Briggs, 1961, vol 1, *op cit* p145ff. Given the close ties between Britain and South Africa, it could be assumed that the South African government was aware of the BBC's problems and how it had solved them, but that broadcasting had not become sufficiently popular with the audience, or an obvious means of political control, for it to warrant government's overt support. All of these measures were later implemented.

11. T A F Rhodes, *op cit* p36.

12. E Rosenthal, *op cit* p51.

13. "Broadcasting therefore either takes place on a territory of enforced neutrality which becomes intellectually meaningless or it becomes a tyranny. When it finds a level of taste at which it can successfully aggregate its audience it becomes culturally valueless; when it occupies a higher ground in a spirit of dedicated intellectual exclusiveness it fails in its purpose of serving the entire society". Smith, A *The Shadow in the Cave; a study of the relationship between the broadcaster, his audience and the state*, Allen & Unwin, London 1973; from the Introduction, no page number. This is a perfect statement of the contradictions in broadcasting which appear when it is viewed from the liberal-humanist viewpoint of the ruling class, and which a situation of more open class conflict, such as found in South Africa, exposes as merely different sets of tactics within its primary role as a weapon of class domination. See also Chapter 1 in Smith for further explorations of these liberal contradictions within the ruling class' ideology of communications. Compare with Mattelart, 1971, *op cit* and R Williams, "The Analysis of Culture" in *The Long Revolution*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1962, chapter 1.

14. G M Carter, *The Politics of Inequality*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1958, p28.

15. T A F Rhodes, *op cit* p47.

16. *Ibid.*

17. E Rosenthal, *op cit* p158.

18. *Ibid.* p159. The Broadcasting Act (no 22 of 1936) contains the following main points:
    (i) The Governor-General appointed the members of the Board of Control for terms as he decided, and appointed the chairman and vice-chairman;
    (ii) Television was to be introduced only with the consent of the Governor-General;
    (iii) The Corporation should frame and carry out its programmes with due regard to Afrikaans and English culture;
    (iv) The SABC would get both the licence fees and the fines imposed for pirate listening, while the Post Office would take 1% of licence fees for the cost of collection;
    (v) The Postmaster-General could take over the SABC's stations if so required by the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs;
    (vi) No other licence to broadcast would be given to any other body without the consent of the SABC.

19. R Williams, 1974, *op cit* p33.

20. J A Reith, *Report on Broadcasting Policy and Development*, Union of South Africa, Pretoria, 1934; page 2, para IV. While the BBC's ability to maintain consensus in times of crisis between classes and class fractions had been tested during the 1926 General Strike in the UK (which it had only just survived), the SABC's independence in time of crisis was yet to be established; South Africa's participation in World War II destroyed it. For a narrative account of the BBC's handling of the General Strike, see A Briggs, *op cit*, p360ff. For a more critical analysis, see S Hall, "The Structured Communication of Events", *op cit* ND.

21. H O Collett, "VHF/FM Sound Broadcasting in the RSA; Part I; General Considerations" in *EBU Review Part A; Technical* No 84, April 1964; p56.

22. H O Collett, "The Development of Broadcasting in the Union of South Africa", *Transactions of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers*, May 1951; p183.

23. Ibid, p185. The volume of records produced per annum rose from fewer than one thousand in 1937 to just under twelve thousand in 1948.

24. An applied example of the workings of the selective tradition. See R Williams, 1961, *op cit*.

25. H O Collett, 1951, *op cit* p185.

26. Ibid.

27. I Wilkins, and H Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1978. p97ff; T D Moodie, *op cit*.

28. SABC *Annual Report*, 1943, p6. In 1937, the ratio of English to Afrikaans listeners was estimated at 80:20.

29. SABC *Annual Report*, 1937, p31.

30. Again, the selective tradition; Williams, *op cit*, 1961. The creation of a national network would probably have been more to the advantage of the Afrikaans group, who had less cohesiveness than the English group, who were already oriented towards the British cultural tradition.

31. N L Filmer, ex-SABC director, in an interview with the author, 1982. Further links of this quality between transmitters and studios were established only in 1947. After official permission for the introduction of Springbok radio in 1948, the *Annual Report* noted that "The operation of a commercial channel will be difficult without (the additional links)". It seems obvious that the success of a commercial system relies on the ability of the broadcasters to provide the advertisers with a reliable and high quality means of transmission to the largest possible audience, as the rates for advertisements can thereby be maximised. In this context, the "largest possible audience" probably precedes the fragmentation of the audience into specialised target audiences by marketing techniques, inter alia the appropriate advertisement included in a programme whose sectional appeal (women, teenagers, businessmen, etc) has been established. Initially, this fragmentation would have occurred within a single, national channel, and then, as channels multiplied, and the programmes carried became more specialised according to local, regional or national characteristics of the channels, and the age, sex, linguistic and educational characteristics of the audience. Detailed research needs to be done on the development of radio advertising trends in the SABC after 1948, but the re-introduction of the American model into the existing BBC model after that date would probably have lead to the "public service" ideology concealing the interests of commercial capital.

32. H O Collett, 1951, *op cit* p185. See also J Hale, *Radio Power; Propaganda and International Broadcasting*, London, Paul Fleck, 1975.

33. Smuts had been so confident of winning the 1948 General Election that he had neglected to renew the terms of office (via the Governor-General) of the existing board. Since the terms of office of most of the board expired at about that time, the new Nationalist government appointed their members in short order. Gideon Roos, interview with the author, 1982.

34. SABC Annual Report, 1946, p6; G Roos, Broadcasting in South Africa, *Finance*

and Trade Review, vol 1, no 5, 1954, p38. For a comparison with the BBC, see Briggs, *op cit* pp229–230.

35. SABC *Annual Report*, 1937, pp13–14.

36. This policy should be compared with Reith's advice in his report, that *more* attention should be given in broadcasts to contentious issues (Reith, *op cit*.) Again, this was perhaps evidence of Reith's overestimation of the degree of national consensus among the white audience. Compare the SABC restriction with the "seven-day" rule, which had prevented the BBC from reporting matters discussed in the British Houses of Parliament within seven days.

37. Orlik, 1979, *op cit*, p83.

38. On this subject, compare Orlik, 1979, *op cit* pp87–88; SABC *Annual Report*, 1940, p10; A A Schoch, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Broadcasting Services, Union of South Africa*, UG 25/1948.

39. S. Maynard Page, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Operations of the SABC*, UG32/41. The report broadly reinforces the authority of the management in requiring production staff to broadcast material as requested, and without reference to their personal likes and dislikes. On the basis of this report, the SABC made some organisational changes, and required that its staff should sign a "loyalty oath" to the Corporation. Orlik, 1979, *op cit* p84; SABC *Annual Reports* 1940 and 1941.

40. SABC *Annual Report*, 1940, p13.

41. J Jooste, "Die Bydrae van die SAUK tot Kultuurontwikkeling in Suid-Afrika", in *Hertzog-Annale van die Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap and Kuns*, vol 8, no 14.

42. SABC *Annual Report*, 1940, p13.

43. SABC *Annual Report*, 1944, p18.

44. SABC *Annual Report*, 1945, p10.

45. The Act was amended to provide for cable in 1952. It must be assumed that the war-time operation was carried out under special war-time regulations, although no mention of such is made in the Annual Reports, except that the SABC was declared a "Public Institution". *Annual Report*, 1940.

46. SABC *Annual Report*, 1945, p10.

47. B Paulu, *British Broadcasting*, U Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1956; p31ff.

48. A A Schoch, 1948, *op cit* para. 164, p41; "We have therefore seriously considered the question of whether it would not be desirable to ban entirely all commercial broadcasting in the Union. There would be much to be said for such a course, if it were practicable." According to Roos, the SABC's evidence to the commission was pivotal in the change of direction (interview with the author, 1983). Unfortunately, this evidence has not been available in the writing of this chapter.

49. According to the *Report*, the initial reasons proposed in 1945 by the SABC were to forestall the introduction of commercials by private interests inside the Union or on its borders. Later, these additional reasons were advanced;
   ● additional income for expanding the network;
   ● an additional programme for listeners;
   ● more employment for radio artists;
   ● healthy and desirable competition for the English and Afrikaans programmes. See the *Report*, page 40.

50. *Report*, para. 125 p33.

51. *Report*, pp33–36.

52. Broadly speaking, the details contained in the *Report* seem to indicate that there was no substance to any of the SABC's reasons for introducing commercials, except the fear of foreign broadcasts reaching the South African audience.

53. *Report*, para. 34 p10; "It is desirable . . . that the board receive information . . . not only from the Director-general . . . but also from at least two other senior officers, who may not always see eye to eye with the Director-General, and who may, in some instances, be better qualified than the latter to enlighten or guide the board because of their more intimate knowledge of some particular subject . . ."

54. See footnote 13 above. Other basic characteristics of broadcasting which the commission failed to grasp were its continued growth; the SABC's assumption of a saturation of licences at 500 000 was accepted. Despite this, the Commission was very aware that when an FM system was installed, a very great number of channels would become avi_lable.

55. The South African broadcasting system therefore came to exhibit the same features which characterised the South African economy as a whole, namely 'state capitalism'. The distinction between the public and the private sector becomes blurred or disappears altogether, resulting in a centralisation of power greater than is possible either by the state or private enterprise separately. See E Mandel, *op cit* chapter 15, *The State in the Age of Late Capitalism*.

56. *Report*, pp47–49.

57. Ibid, p51.

58. Ibid, p59. Note the similarity between this rhetoric from a Smuts-appointed commission, and rhetoric on the same subject from the SABC Annual Reports, 1960–63, under the Nationalists.

59. N L Filmer, interview with the author, 1983.

60. *Report*, p52. In addition, the cost of an ordinary radio listeners' licence would be reduced to ten shillings for Black people who wished to listen to the programmes broadcast for white audiences.

61. Ibid, p59; "In view of the low average income of most Natives, few of them could afford to pay 2s. 6d. per week (in addition to a radio listeners' licence) for a rediffusion service in their homes, which is after all, not nearly as essential to their well-being as are some other things which they have to forgo for lack of means." It did not apparently occur to the Commission that provision of sufficient employment at adequate wages might have neutralised the susceptibility of the urban Black population to the "warped and dangerous doctrines assiduously propagated by agitators" (see footnote 56 above).

62. Wilkins & Strydom, *op cit* p126ff.

63. Adam & Giliomee, *op cit* pp164–165.

64. SABC *Annual Report*, 1950, p31; Collett, 1951, *op cit*, pp180–181.

65. The *Report* of the Schoch Commission had correctly pointed out that English and Afrikaans programmes would not be comprehensible to most of the population in Africa who could pick up this service. Further research is required to find out why this service was thought necessary despite this fact.

66. SABC *Annual Report* 1950 p5. See also footnote no 31, above; A Briggs, *op cit* p213ff; S W Head, (3rd ed), *op cit* pp116–121.

67. SABC *Annual Report*, 1950, p27. The service was introduced in the Northern region first because this was the densely populated Johannesburg-Pretoria-Vereeniging area, where the largest audience could be reached with the fewest transmitters, and thus advertising income would rise fastest.

68. SABC *Annual Report*, 1950, p11, p26.

69. Ibid, p27.

70. SABC *Annual Report*, 1957, p17.

71. SABC *Annual Report*, 1952, p42.

72. SABC *Annual Report*, 1954, p.16. As the Schoch Commission had expressed, it,

"no one should be a judge in a cause in which he has an interest" (Report, para. 168b p42). The Schoch Commission, in recommending the separation between the SABC and commercial stations, had recommended the establishment of a committee appointed by the Postmaster-General to assess the quality of programmes broadcast by such commercial stations, (Ibid, para. 171 p43). This Committee was no doubt modelled on the American body, the Federal Communications Commission, which had the power to revoke a station's licence if its programmes did not conform to the standards laid down in it. For the history of problems of regulating this system, see F J Kahn, *Documents of American Broadcasting*, Appleton Century Crofts, N.Y, 1972.

73. SABC *Annual Report*, 1964.

74. Ibid.

75. The SABC took active steps to reduce the proportion of imported programmes, and to support local programmes, in keeping with their policy of promoting South African English and Afrikaans culture. Gideon Roos, interview with the author, 1983.

76. SABC *Annual Reports*, 1971–1973.

77. Conversation with Prof Charles Hamm, Dept of Music, Hopkins Centre, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, who spent several months at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University in 1985, researching the subject of black South African music. I am indebted to him for material in this chapter on the SABC's music policy for black channels, contained in his seminar paper, "Msakazo and All That Jive", November 1985.

78. The expansion of the Rediffusion service in terms of townships and the number of households wired into the system is presented in the following table:

Year	New Area	Number of Houses
1952	Orlando	4 300
1953	Jabavu	5 650
1954	–	10 120
1955	Dube Mofolo	12 500
1956	–	14 000
1957	–	12 100
1958	Noordgesig	11 910
1959	Zondi	12 442

Source; SABC *Annual Reports* (running totals).

79. SABC *Annual Report*, 1957, p16.

80. Interview with ex-SABC employee, 1982.

81. Hamm, *op cit* pp8–13. Professor Hamm selected *DRUM* magazine, Gallo, (Pty), Ltd, and the SABC as the main mediators of black music, and compared their relative influences on the development of black music. "Though DRUM magazine courageously expressed the common political goals of most of the black population, and in this way can be taken as a voice of general black aspirations, at the same time it served as the expression of the aspiration of the black petit-bourgeoisie, aiding in the maintenance of its own elite culture . . . to reinforce, at the symbolic level, the social power of this particular minority" (Wolff; *The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, Cambridge University Press; p9).

82. Hamm, *op cit*, p11. This principle was the same which motivated the SABC (and Schlesinger's ABC before it) towards the establishment of a national network; if a single national distribution pattern could be achieved, production overheads were minimised, when compared to several regional distribution patterns.

83. Hamm, *op cit* p11–12.

84. The Press had anticipated the introduction of commercials, and had succeeded in entrenching clauses in the Post Office regulations regarding the telegram rate for news. The result was that it was prohibitively expensive for the SABC to use SAPA news, although it was quite free to do so (Gideon Roos, interview with the author, 1983).

85. The rapid urbanisation of the labour force in the 1940s and 1950s was outlined, while the structural causes of this movement were concealed. Olivier reassured white labour that blacks were necessary in the urban areas for a growing economy, and that they were "under control" for the benefit of both white and black.

86. Jooste, *op cit*.

87. Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit* p130–134.

88. See also G Roos, 1957. *Die Uitsaaiwese in Diens van ons Samelewing*, SABC, Johannesburg; SABC *Annual Reports*, 1960-63; Orlik, P, *op cit*. Roos's address at Stellenbosch is an extensive attempt to justify his broadcasting policy. It was delivered in 1957, the height of the SABC 's financial crisis.

89. Wilkins & Strydom, op.cit, pp130–125.

90. SABC *Annual Report*, 1957.

91. Adam and Giliomee, *op cit* p170.

92. Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit* p131.

93. Ibid, pp33–34. Note that this was the mirror opposite of the situation in 1947, when Afrikaans production staff complained to the Schoch Commission that there were too few Afrikaners in the SABC, especially in technical and engineering sections.

94. The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no 60 of 1969. For instance, provision was made for variable licence fees to persons of "various classes and categories" in different areas, and for variable licence fees for various receiver/aerial combinations in public places. Further, an installment plan for the payment of licence fees was introduced, obviously to provide for the smaller disposable incomes of the working class. Most importantly, the section in a previous amendment, regarding the maximum number of sets per licence that were allowed, was modified in order to make listening easier for those sections of the population who had most disposable income. Only the head of the house was required to have a licence, and all other sets were covered by this.

95. These were included in the following amendments: The Broadcasting Amendment Act, no 60 of 1969 and the Broadcasting Amendment Act, no 93 of 1969. Piracy was almost totally wiped out by the Radio Amendment Act, 1963. This prevented the sale of apparatus to those who did not have a valid radio listeners' licence. It was effective because of it coincided with the introduction of FM. The creation of a new market for FM forced listeners, even those who were previously pirate listeners, to buy licences. The introduction of this legislation was done only in 1963, after the *Annual Report* of the previous year had noted that sales of licences were being outstripped by set sales (in terms of Radio Act of 1952, the Post Office had been supplied with details of receiver sales by radio dealers).

96. P J Meyer, Address to a leaders' course, Stellenbosch, 1959. Unpublished paper, SABC.

97. H O Collett, 1966, "Some Problems Encountered in the Planning of a Comprehensive Broadcast Coverage Scheme," *Transactions of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineering*, vol 57; post script by Dr P J Meyer. This document clearly illustrates most of the ideological dimensions of VHF/FM.

98. This day marked the realisation of the Afrikaner Nationalists' dream, the final independence of South Africa from the Commonwealth. Wilkins & Strydom, *op cit* p135ff.

99. SABC *Annual Report*, 1959 & 1960. The definition of 'the public interests' has always been a changing one for politicians, broadcasters and any interest group. It rests on assumptions about what constitutes 'the nation' or 'the public' depending on which audience is being addressed at different times. The SABC, via its segregated multiple channels, could use this at times to promote sectional interests (particularly in the case of the black language groups) and at times to conceal them (maintaining the hegemonic alliance between English and Afrikaans).

100. M Gallagher, *op cit* especially p162ff.

101. Roos, 1954, *op cit* p46; SABC *Annual Reports* 1950 and 1951; Collett, 1951, *op cit* p180. The demand for higher fidelity is a universal characteristic of the development of broadcasting, since it not only had to provide a quality that was comparable with the original or 'live' performance, but with the other domestic sources of music, such as record players. This competition suited the large manufacturers, who sold both broadcasting and domestic equipment.

102. Collett, 1966, *op cit* p56; H O Collett & B J Stevens, 1964, "VHF/FM Sound Broadcasting in the RSA", in *EBU Review*, (Part A; technical), No 84, April 1964.

103. This isolation derives from the nature of very high frequency radio waves. Medium waves and short waves can be heard for a considerable distance around the curve of the earth from a single transmitter, while VHF waves travel in a virtually straight line to the horizon and then go off into space. The additional factors of foreign language, low technical quality and lack of printed programme advertisements made it unlikely that black audiences would listen to foreign short-wave broadcasts, should they buy sets capable of receiving them.

104. The variability of the South African terrain, and the large number of channels required, necessitated vast calculations, in the design of the network, and the final calculation was done by computer at the Institut fur Rundfunkteknik in Hamburg, Germany. Collett & Stevens, *op cit* p62.

105. SABC *Annual Report*, 1962.

106. SABC *Annual Reports*, 1961–65.

107. This automation was justified by the claim that "a more important aspect of automation than cost savings is that rare and highly specialised talents may be better exploited in future"; SABC *Annual Report*, 1968. See D Albury & Schwarz, *op cit* p39ff and, on the role of automation in maintaining mangement's control, p48; "Clearly, some level of overall coordination is necessary, but within capitalism, this need for coordination is distorted by the need for control in order for the system to extract the greatest labour from its workforce, keep its employees involved in tasks from which they are alienated, and prevent opposition, revolt and resistance".

108. SABC *Annual Report*, 1966. See also J Hale, 1975 *op cit* pp86–89.

109. Ibid, p7. The SABC was an associate member of the European Broadcasting Union, and has close links with the Asian Broadcasting Union, other African broadcasting organisations, international news agencies and multinational corporations in the electronics field.

110. Ibid.

111. M Anderson, 1981; *Music in the Mix*, Ravan, Johannesburg, p88.

112. SABC publicity brochure, 1966

113. A Briggs, *op cit* p70; E Rosenthal, *op cit* p19.

114. See S Frith, 1978; *Sociology of Rock*, Constable, London. Of course, as youth cul-
ture changes, so do the styles of the DJ's, the music, and the station policy. The competition that the new 'independent' channels gave the SABC made the latter redesign its music policy, and hire other disc-jockeys; in some cases, buying them from the former, which they could afford to do as they had a bigger distribution system and hence potential audience.

115. Rosenthal, *op cit* p133.

116. Meyer, 1959, *op cit*.

117. SABC *Annual Report*, 1964, p3.

118. SABC *Annual Report*, 1968, p32; "These stations are designed to provide continuous well-loved music with news ... and a channel for local identification ... These stations are building up a gratifyingly large audience."

119. SABC *Annual Report*, 1963, p5: "the SABC daily reflects in its programmes the increasing parity of thought, action and sentiment of these two equal cultural components ... of one white, Christian-westernised African nation, bound together by the same loyalty, outlook aims, ideals and aspirations in respect of their only fatherland, the Republic of South Africa".

120. Albert Hertzog, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs; ". . . the broadcasting service is something which you cannot force on anybody; you cannot force him to listen. What you can do, though, is to attract listeners to listen to you and it is *vitally important* that we should attract those Bantu to listen to those things which the Broadcasting Corporation offer for them." Senate Debates, 1960, 2447.

121. Hamm, *op cit* p15–16.

122. SABC *Annual Report*, 1967, p10: "During the past year, Radio Bantu has again helped to bring home to the Bantu population that separate development is, in the first place, self-development through the medium of their own language". See also remark by Hertzog, in Debates of the Senate of the Union of South Africa, Third Session, Twelfth Parliament, 1960, 2446–2447:

"The Bantu experts will tell you – and we all know it – that the taste of a white man is not the taste of a Bantu. We live in totally different spheres; you can almost say that we live in different civilisations."

123. SABC *Annual Report*, 1960, p20.

124. P J Meyer, *The Spiritual Crisis of the West*, SABC, 1966; part four.

Chapter 3

Between Policy and Practice in the SABC, 1970–1981

Keyan Tomaselli and Ruth Tomaselli

The ideological significance of the selection and presentation of material broadcast by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is an area which has been largely neglected. Such studies as have been done are clustered in the early 1970s and are mainly of a technicist nature. In contrast to those analyses, this chapter intends to place broadcasting within the context of the South African political economy from 1976 to 1981, to assess the gatekeeping operations, consensual discourse and associated signifying practices that govern reporting practice within the SABC, and to analyse the effects of such practices on the content and construction of SABC programmes.

Work done by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in co-operation with the SABC, together with the annual reports of the Corporation, provides a wealth of empirical data from which inferences can be drawn. This material is supported by interviews conducted by the authors during 1980 and 1981[1].

The Political Economy of Broadcasting

Television only came to South Africa in 1976, many years after it had been installed in other countries. This relative delay was partly due to the fear within certain right-wing sectors of the National Party that it would undermine the Afrikaner language and culture[2]. These fears were, however, allayed by the Meyer Commission, which argued that:

> In a world rapidly approaching a stage where direct reception of television transmissions from overseas sources via satellites

will become a reality, South Africa must have its own television service in order to nurture and strengthen its own spiritual roots, to foster respect and love for its own spiritual heritage and to protect and project the South African way of life as it has developed here in its historical context[3].

These conclusions are best understood with reference to the Commission's understanding of the communication process: "Communication between people is essentially a four-fold process embracing entertainment, information, enculturation, and creative enrichment of the mind in a wide variety of systems and forms"[4]. This extract suggests that communication is seen as a one-way process which allows for specified groups to be taught certain things, rather than giving people the opportunity to express their own views and values. Allied with this is the assumption that the centralisation of technology and administrative structures will best suit the 'needs' of the South African viewer.

Research carried out directly before and after the introduction of television on the behavioural patterns of Afrikaans-speaking school children has shown television to be a positive reinforcement of psychological responses leading specifically to enhanced group dependency, a greater measure of social adaptability and an increased tendency to co-operation. Television it is argued, offers adolescents an opportunity of identifying with the social roles portrayed, and thus has a reinforcing effect on the socialising process already in progress[5].

Preliminary studies have also shown the uses to which this medium consciously can be put in support of the 'national interest'. In his evidence to the second Steyn Commission, the Joint Director-General of the SABC, Dr Jan Schutte, stated that the SABC 'stood above' party politics, but always gave preference to 'State security and national interests'. He was, however, unable to elaborate on the content of 'national interests', saying that such a definition was beyond his power[6]. Some indication of what the SABC considers to be the 'national interest' is revealed in a series of different content analyses, all of which have indicated that broadcast time significantly favours the National Party (NP) over other political groupings[7]. Most of these studies were concerned with the SABC-TV's distribution of emphasis during the two general elections of 1977 and 1981. With regard to the first 'television election', the SABC reported that:

> Television News, with the challenge of handling its first general election, accepted as a starting point that a news medium of this nature would be expected to reflect the various policy view-

points without becoming involved in politicking. The election was regarded as a news event which had to be reported factually and objectively, purely on the grounds of newsworthiness . . .[8].

The quantitative evidence disproves this claim and indicates the Corporation's lack of autonomy in practice. With regard to the second general election, the SABC publicised how it would handle the campaign and claimed that different viewpoints would be reflected 'in a responsible manner'[9]. The Opposition's call for TV debates was accepted by the SABC *provided* that all parties agreed. Not unpredictably, the Prime Minister refused to participate, claiming that the idea was "unrealistic and impractical", and went on to say that "I and my colleagues . . . are satisfied to state our views from public platforms in Parliament and in Party publications"[10]. As *The Star* pointed out in a leader, which was published before the election itself:

> It is only partly through the circumstance of being the ruling party that NP views command such disproportionate time on radio and TV. When a Minister makes an announcement it may be legitimate news; when he is fawningly interviewed it verges on propaganda; when he is allowed to drone on about some pet Government hobby-horse, whether the President's Council or the dangers of liberalism, it is part of the 'total strategy' brainwash and a misuse of the medium[11].

After the election Ian Gray commented with hindsight that:

> While the SABC made a distinct effort to give generally fair coverage to all contesting parties in the pre-election period, there was, as may be expected, a somewhat cloudy line between outright electioneering and the outlining of national (not Nationalist) policy . . . the line taken was that if a politician – Minister or otherwise – was wearing a rosette he was electioneering. If not, in the case of a Minister, he was making news[12].

On a more general level, the determined effort of the SABC to maintain a facade of neutrality effectively has enabled it to avoid dealing with contentious issues. A query as to why the Corporation did not have a series of programmes in which leading personalities in various fields debated current controversies elicited a revealing response. Discussions on subjects such as apartheid, the immorality laws and so on were, it was claimed, 'political discussions'. It was further claimed that any programme dealing with such topics, whether on radio or television, would take 'you directly into party politics', and would therefore require the agreement of "the various parties represented in Parliament . . . regarding the desirability of such broadcasts and issues such as the allocation of the time to each party

etc"[13]. Thus, by defining social issues as falling into the ambit of politics – and more particularly of *party* politics – the SABC has absolved itself from airing debates (as opposed to Government policy) on these topics.

Party Political Favourites

Unlike other State-owned television services in western democratic countries, the SABC has no formal mechanisms for ensuring equal or even proportionate broadcasting time for all political parties. Although *ad hoc* arrangements were made to ensure non-partisan reporting in the 1981 election campaign, no account was taken of the 'hidden' publicity afforded the NP as a result of their being the party in power.

A study conducted by an English-speaking lobby group, the Fortypercenters, made several similar points with regard to English radio and television news and Springbok Radio news. The Fortypercenters concluded that news programmes in general showed a systematic bias towards the ruling NP:

- Undue emphasis is given to the views and reasoning of NP spokesmen, not necessarily related to their 'news value'.
- Opposition spokesmen, both on the left and right of the political spectrum, are often quoted only when what they say is favourable to the NP.
- The fact that an Opposition spokesman opposes some Government move is often reported without the reasons behind the rejection being mentioned. This type of reporting gives the impression that no sound reasons for an objection exist.
- If the Government makes a move which is seen in a positive light by academics, prominent blacks, foreign organisations, law societies, etc, these people are quoted at length. If the Government makes a move, however, which is almost universally condemned, the views of the above people are ignored . . . undue prominence is often given to the views of those academics who hold views favourable to the SA Government.
- News items unfavourable to the Government appear to be held back until the Government has had time (sometimes 2 to 3 days) to make a statement on the matter itself. Furthermore, news of vital importance to the nation, but which is of doubtful favour to the Government, is often not afforded its due prominence[14].
- The interests of South Africa are consequently equated with the interests of the NP[15].

- Government spokesmen are sometimes described as being 'skilful' or having 'annihilated opposition'. Such terms are never applied to Opposition spokesmen.
- News interviews with Government spokesmen are often marked by their obsequious manner[16].

The last point is borne out by an interview with an SABC employee who 'ran the Durban office' for a while:

They (the News Department) used to say, 'Can't you find someone to interview who will always be our sort of contact – he will have sympathetic views aligning himself with the Government.' This was something that was told to me all the time. I was the eyes and ears of the SABC in Natal. This directive would come from the Senior News Editor . . . He would try to get you to do things that would automatically make the person who is talking in favour of the policy of the day[17].

A survey reported in the *Sunday Tribune* found that Cabinet Ministers received ten times the amount of exposure of all the Opposition spokespersons combined. Furthermore, the policies of South Africa were made to seem more acceptable the way they were presented on the air. Among the techniques of bias identified by the *Sunday Tribune* were:

- The promotion of Government viewpoints . . . while generally not recording the views of its critics;
- This is particularly true of 'Government-recognised black spokesmen';
- Using material that discredits other critical governments; (particularly) violence, social discord, race problems and oppression while playing down similar problems here;
- Reporting on black-ruled countries in a way likely to create the impression black rule is synonymous with chaos, violence and impoverishment; and
- Using slanted reporting techniques – such as one-sided reports, soft interviews for Government Ministers and officials and biased selection[18].

The requirements of a soft interview became apparent when Dr Piet Koornhof, then Minister of Co-operation and Development, was alleged to have walked out of a *Midweek* programme on 16 August 1981 on the Nyanga Squatters 90 seconds before it was due to go on the air. The reason was apparently because he was not given a prepared list of questions prior to the interview[19]. One news interviewer claimed that "Cabinet Ministers often ask to see the questions first. I have never been given questions, but one Cabinet Minister did say to me, why don't you rather ask me about that?" Supporting this observation, a television producer stated:

There were people in the news department who were telephoned daily by the Prime Minister's office. It was actually quite a circus, because you might get three or four calls about how to do the same item. It seemed as though the Cabinet had *carte blanche* to phone up and say what they wanted to say, particularly Pik Botha, who lives just down the road.

Cabinet Ministers would come in and say, 'Look, I want you to interview me tonight and here are a list of the questions you must ask me.' This went to ridiculous levels, where people from ESCOM used to come in and do the same. The poor producer would be trying to do his job and behind him in the wings would be (the Controller of News) and Cliff Saunders just checking up that everything went smoothly. The producer didn't have a hope.

In a study conducted before the introduction of television, John Seiler analysed the content of radio news over a ten week period between October and December 1972. Seiler's chief finding with regard to news was the preponderance (seventy-three percent) of international news as opposed to domestic news. This, he speculated, was a result of the SABC's unwillingness to comment unfavourably on Government programmes, or on any discussion of "partisan political activity":

But, for the most part, domestic news is compounded of government announcements, non-probing interviews with government officials, sanguine reports on the progress of homeland political and economic development, and stories of accidents and fires. The political process simply does not exist outside of the parliamentary context[20].

The SABC and the Concept of Truth

In 1969, the Director General of the SABC, Douglas Fuchs, stated that the SABC's programme policy was "linked to national policy, based on recognition of the diversity of language groups"[21]. This philosophy was clearly articulated in the early 1960s when, after Piet Meyer's accession to the chairmanship of the board, the SABC tried to align its philosophy more closely with 'national interest' and Government policy.

During the five year study period, SABC radio broadcast in eleven separate languages, nine of them black vernaculars, each with its

own station in order to implement this philosophy[22]. The SABC's ideological position was unequivocal: "The SABC justifies its pro-government stance on the grounds that since very few English speakers read Afrikaans newspapers, it has a duty to preserve the balance in the national debate and give English listeners views they do not get in their newspapers"[23]. A consequence has been continuous vociferous criticism of the English press by the SABC (and vice versa). In contrast, the Afrikaans press is seldom as critical of the SABC, since it has established for itself a relative autonomy from the NP[24].

The second Steyn Commission developed this line of argument by acknowledging that black readers had limited access to Afrikaans newspapers. The Commission reported that both the Afrikaans press and the SABC have "failed to communicate adequately with blacks", a factor which has led to a "perceptual credibility gap", whereby the SABC is perceived as offering too positive an "image" of the South African reality.

The State's perception of reality can be gleaned from editorial comments in *The Citizen*, which have found parallel interpretations in the Steyn Report. According to this paper, the continual cries of Government officials that South Africa be shown 'objectively' and that the overseas media and local English press (excluding *The Citizen*) dabble in slander, "wilful misrepresentation and half-truths"[25], are a direct consequence of their belief that if only the world knew the truth, South Africa's critics would give apartheid a fair hearing. This belief forms the essence of the Steyn Commission, which implies that the existence of counter-ideologies is due to the English and black presses giving their readership a false construction of reality. Only one definition of what this truth should be is offered by Fuchs. He has defined truth (which he calls information) in terms of white survival: "News and information must be analysed and interpreted in such a way as to ensure that world opinion waters our roots, but does not wash them away"[26]. Fuchs explains further:

> During the first 24 years of its existence the radio in this country was purely a reflecting medium. It reflected what was going on in our country and in the world, but it had no point of view of its own. After Sharpeville in 1960, overseas pressure and international tension built up to dangerous proportions. In these circumstances South Africa's national broadcasting service had a clear duty to take an unequivocal stand. It could not passively reflect trends of world thought which were frequently at variance with the experience[27].

Between 1950, when the SABC created its own news departments, and the time of the Sharpeville riot of 1960, the emphasis in news reporting had largely been an unconscious reflection of the ruling ideology. Sharpeville acted as a catalyst in the SABC decision not to allow the possibility of news being interpreted from any other but the official viewpoint. Other events and processes influenced this decision. The incumbent Director General, Gideon Roos, who had tried to maintain a balanced and 'objective' service, was edged out and replaced by Broederbonder Piet Meyer. BBC news programmes which had previously been relayed on the SABC were replaced with locally produced news.

South Africans also had to be educated and innoculated against foreign 'bias'. Thus, according to Fuchs, the SABC began broadcasting talks "placing national and international affairs in perspective" during the 1950s. "The SABC became the champion of what was good in the existing order"[28]. Fifteen years later, in 1975, this point was underlined in a 'leaked' directive to staff by the Organiser of English Magazines and Childrens Television Programmes. Although the SABC disowned this memo at the time, it was stated in Parliament two years later that:

> Ministerial statements on state policy and ministerial explanations on legislative measures shall be regarded as factual news and dealt with as such . . .
>
> Comment in the form of statements or explanations may only be broadcast when it originates from a person of authority or an acknowledged expert in a given field . . .
>
> A political report shall be regarded as *prima facie* contentious and shall be broadcast only if, firstly, it is of a factual and/or authoritative nature; secondly, if it is a positive statement of policy by a political party in respect of any matter of dispute, provided the statement and/or broadcast does not draw comparison with comment on a declared policy of steps followed by any other South African political party[29].

Editorial Comment: 'the facts behind the facts'

The 'talks' providing the 'perspective' on the news gained notoriety under the title of *Current Affairs*, later to be re-named *Editorial Comment* (after the morning news) and *News Commentary* (after the evening news). The Commentary Department of the SABC also

compiled news commentaries for the Nguni and Sotho Services and background commentaries for the External Service as well as weekly programmes such as *Weekend Newsroom/Die Week in die Nuus*. The tentacles of this department have spread into all actuality and documentary programmes: *Monitor* and *Radio Today*.

The second part of Seiler's study referred to earlier is concerned with *Editorial Comment* and *News Commentary*, the two five-minute programmes which replaced *Current Affairs*. Two six-week periods were studied, the first from January to March and the second from April to June in 1972. These programmes illustrated the SABC's position at that time on a selection of news items and showed the same general pattern as news broadcasts, with seventy-six percent of the programmes dealing with international news topics as they impinged on South Africa. The precis of thematic content offered by Seiler shows a remarkable degree of similarity to contemporary radio comment during the study period:

> South Africa is faced with external and internal threats, for which it is well prepared . . . South Africa's interests in Southern Africa are peaceful and focussed on regional developments; and for the rest, South Africans deplore the warped perspective in black Africa and at the UN which force a context of instability onto what otherwise would be a peaceful, stable, and developing subcontinent. Despite these pressures, both South Africa and Rhodesia prosper (sic). South Africa expands its bilateral economic-political ties and hopes that its progress in multi-national sport will lead to its re-inclusion in international sport[30].

Concerning tone of these reports, which at the time were prepared and read by Alexander Steward, Seiler notes: "There is assurance that things will continue to work out well and that the proper moral lessons are being drawn. Even when the commentary follows an external attack on the South African government, an attitude of pained indulgence at hypocrisy and cynicism is maintained"[31].

Although derisively dismissed by many listeners and critics, these commentary programmes fulfill three vital functions, in addition to the SABC's claim that they present "the truth about the facts behind the facts"[32]. Firstly, editorial programmes pick up foreign events and make spurious parallels to the South African situation. An example was the often repeated parallels between the presence of Russian troops in Afghanistan or Poland and the presence of Cuban troops in Angola. This argument is designed to link South Africa to both western and eastern countries who are the subject of the imperialist intentions of Soviet/communist/socialist/Marxist military/economic/psy-

chological incursions and attacks. This thinking was, of course, fuelled by the phobia of the 'total onslaught' which faced South Africa and against which all its inhabitants should be prepared.

Secondly, while alerting listeners to the necessity of preparedness on the one hand, the editorials provide assurance through what Herbert Gans calls "order restoration stories"[33] on the other. The stability of the State and its inhabitants is shown to be guaranteed by apparatuses like the Defence and Police Forces, as well as by timely reforms in the fields of education, sports, housing, labour and welfare.

Although the same editorial comment is broadcast on all 'white' SABC stations (excluding Radio 5), subtle changes in emphasis may be effected in the process of translation. An instance of this concerned comment on New Year's day which heralded 1981 as the 'Year of Implementation' of the reforms following the establishment of the President's Council. One observer noted that: 'While the Afrikaans version said that a better deal was in store for the "gekleurdes" — coloureds (note, mind you: only in the fields of manpower training, sports and recreation), the English version substituted the words 'the urban blacks!'[34]. It would appear that Afrikaans listeners would feel less threatened at the provision of urban residential rights for coloureds than blacks. English audiences, on the other hand, are presumed not to be as afraid of black urbanisation as are Afrikaners.

Thirdly, the authors of the editorial programmes seem to be in intimate contact with Government policy makers. Their commentaries are often the first public clues to forthcoming Government policy. This point is made by Seiler, who notes that "whether coincidentally or by intent, *Editorial Comment* most often not only echoes the government's position but moves suggestively ahead of it"[35]. It may be speculated that these indicators of the future serve a double purpose.

On the one hand, they act as a crude form of market research into the acceptability of proposed changes in government thinking. On the other, they work to make imminent legislation and political developments acceptable to political opponents on both the right and the left. In terms of unity, the NP consent from the right wing is considered of greater importance than that of the left.

It should not be thought, however, that the writers of these news commentaries have total autonomy within the SABC even though they do appear to have a direct link with government. Commented one ex-SABC organiser:

> The connections are right at the top with the Director of News and Controller who have contact with various people. They do have a problem among their commentary writers, however.

Some are more Verlig, some are too Verkramp: like Alexander Steward . . . He is an arch right-winger. They (the SABC) very often have to bring him back from the right-wing brink . . . Some of the announcers refused to read the commentaries. Others took the attitude that they were paid to read. Some are apolitical who don't care. Those who refuse are not pushed.

This section may convey the impression that the primary support for the dominant social arrangement is secured through a conspiratorial arrangement between the SABC and the NP. Though the very real links between these two institutions should not be underestimated, the primary effect of the SABC is to reinforce designated class positions within the South African social formation. This requires closer attention.

Black Broadcasting: Models for Class Behaviour

Volume I argued that Althusser's presentation of 'private' institutions – the Church, the family, schools and the media – as Ideological State Apparatuses is a crude categorisation, since it glosses over the important distinctions between direct State control and a less overt inculcation of values disseminated by these social institutions.

The SABC has, particularly since the early 1960s, played an active role in designating and providing models of class practice geared to safeguarding the interests of capital in general. In other words, the cultural meanings carried in the texts of radio and television broadcasts have brought social experiences into line with the discourse articulated by the dominant groups. This is apparent in such diverse offerings as quiz shows, soap operas and serials, variety, music, sport and so on[36].

The Engineering of Consent on Radio Bantu

Radio Bantu is the logical outcome of earlier attempts by the SABC to reach black audiences. As Chapter 1 of this volume notes, this station was originally cabled to the black townships. During the 1950s, the programmes were also relayed on medium wave as a temporary measure before the introduction of FM, when it was named Radio Bantu. Prior to this, it was called *Bantu Programme* and was broadcast for a couple of hours a day only.

It was discovered that some of the black announcers had been broadcasting anti-Government propaganda using the *Bantu Pro-*

gramme as a vehicle. Rigid control was instituted with the appointment of whites who could speak African languages to supervise. The Board was at the head of a totally separate division within the SABC. The only point of contact with the rest of the SABC was through Piet Meyer who was chairman of both boards[37].

The ideological orientation of this service was defined by Fuchs, who stated:

> Radio Bantu was introduced to serve the seven Bantu peoples of the country, according to the nature, needs and character of each, and, by encouraging language consciousness among each of the Bantu peoples, to strengthen national consciousness[38].

This statement must be seen against the background of apartheid policy which stresses not only the separation of whites and blacks, but also ethnic differences within the black community itself, hoping by this means to divide and rule. In 1972, for example, the SABC reported that: "This increased rate of (homeland) development has laid upon Radio Bantu the particularly important duty of providing information about the obligations and responsibilities that self-rule will involve"[39]. This message has been communicated through programmes on, for instance, the benefits of development for the independent national states, the timber industry in Gazankulu, a series on the role of Ciskei as a part of a 'Southern African States' concepts in the fight against communism, a series on development projects in KwaZulu and on the extra-mural University of KwaZulu in Umlazi[40]. A black programme supervisor at the SABC, Justice Tshungu, further stated that:

> Every nation needs its own mouthpiece – a mouthpiece to inform, to inspire and educate him. Our black people use these mouthpieces with pride, as a driving power in building up their community. The radio does far more: it serves as a vehicle for self-determination and encourages service towards their own community[41].

The logical conclusion of this argument has been the transfer of some of these stations to the various 'independent' homeland authorities, namely Radios Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. "Bilateral agreements" have been entered into which provide for the "exchange of news material"[42].

Despite their 'independence', the homelands have no autonomy in terms of broadcast frequencies because they are not recognised by The International Broadcasting Convention. The Bophuthatswana television service, for example, insisted on the right to broadcast material not vetted by 'Pretoria' when it started broadcasting in

1984. The South African Government retaliated by refusing BOP-TV the facilities to transmit their programmes to the whole of the Witwatersrand area. The SABC uses a directional aerial to beam BOP-TV to selected areas where Bophuthatswana 'Nationals' are known to reside. Thus almost all of the white residential areas which would provide BOP-TV with a more lucrative market for advertising revenue have been bypassed, preserving the SABC's monopoly on this area. Commenting on these developments, the *Sunday Express* noted that "South Africa has used its muscle to block BOP-TV from the site of politically sensitive white viewers, and keep its richest market to itself"[43].

Reinforcing Traditional Tribal Values

Most of the content of Radio Bantu is aimed at the maintenance and, in fact, the renaissance and redefinition of traditional tribal values and social institutions, especially in the homelands. This has a second dimension in that, by strengthening affiliations to tribal authorities, the State is able to exert control in a disguised manner. Tribal chiefs are paid functionaries of the State and are thereby incorporated into the State, while seemingly representing 'genuine' tribal values.

In a study of the exposure to the mass media of Ciskei residents, Switzer found that all but one of the members of the Ciskei Legislative Assembly listened regularly to the Xhosa service of the SABC. While a substantial number of black urbanites listened to 'white' services (Radio Good Hope, 41 percent; Springbok Radio, 40 percent, and the English Service 26 percent), neither the legislators nor the rural dwellers interviewed listened to these stations. Furthermore, exposure to print media by the latter group was also limited with a strong bias towards *Imvo Zabantsbantu*, rather than the English language *Daily Dispatch*[44]. Thus the potential impact of Radio Bantu on Ciskei legislators and rural dwellers was found to be substantial, since the information transmitted on this station was often the only formal mass media communication received. It is worth noting that in 1981 the Bantu Language Services received 5 530 000 letters from their listeners[45]. Switzer also found that Radio Bantu's credibility was extremely high among its listeners, since it reinforced the opinions expressed in the Xhosa language newspapers. *Daily Dispatch* readers, who were generally more interested in national and international news and who used Radio Bantu to supplement their information on the homeland areas, also displayed a high level of trust in Radio Bantu's news services. Notes Switzer: "Legislators, rural vil-

lagers and urbanites alike associated media credibility with 'positive news' as far as the Ciskei homeland was concerned" [46]. More than eighty-six percent of the rural interviewees who listened to Radio Bantu felt that while it was not critical of the Ciskei, they were satisfied with the 'homeland' news they received from this source.

Both apartheid (in its reformist and conservative variations) and liberal ideology lend support to economic domination based on racial division. Both discourses have the task of attempting to induce the working class to live their exploitation and repression in such a way that they do not identify their position as one in which they are exploited and oppressed. Or, as *News/Check* puts it: "The wonderment, enthusiasm, admiration and generally gee-by-golly feeling of Africans for Radio Bantu (is) compressed into their expressive Hau . . ."[47].

The Socialisation of 'Economically Dynamic' Subjects

In its promotion of apartheid the SABC has natural allies in the development corporations, administration boards, the Department of Community Development and the Department of Bantu Education[48]. This last body has a close association with Radio Bantu, which broadcasts special school programmes on FM receivers supplied by the SABC. These transmissions were initially supported with supplementary booklets and later with posters[49]. The aim of these educational services is to prepare black pupils for their roles in the South African political economy.

'Educational' programmes have been transmitted since 1965. Initially there were no supporting publications, but details of the programmes were published in the *Bantu Education Journal*. From 1964 a *Teacher's Guide* in English and Afrikaans and illustrated booklets in Nguni and Sotho for pupils were published every quarter. The service was seen as being:

> . . . an aid in formal and formative education, with the result that the initial programmes were not exclusively subject-directed, but covered many aspects of general interest. The aim was to extend the pupils' background knowledge and to make them aware of their identity by emphasising that they are members of a particular culture of which they should be proud[50].

In 1969 programmes with a more formal approach, aimed at particular standards and conveying set syllabi, were introduced. Nevertheless, the first ten minutes of the schools' broadcasts were devoted to 'news events' and 'background sketches'[51]. These provided models

for the pupils to emulate as well as clarifying the role of the teacher towards his or her pupils: "It was apparent that they (the teachers) did not realise that the ultimate aim which the teacher as adult should set himself in his actions in the interests of the child should be the achievement of adulthood by the child"[52].

The author of an extensive study on the schools service, G S Strydom, noted that the "Bantu child" finds himself faced with two 'diametrically opposed' cultures, a "Bantu World" and a "White World"[53]. In his research project for the HSRC on *The Establishment and Expansion of the School Radio Service of Radio Bantu*, Strydom discusses the socialisation of "Bantu" children into a dynamic industrial economy in the following terms:

> The cultures of the Whites and the Bantu in South Africa are on the whole almost diametrically opposed to each other. Acculturation is, for the Bantu, an actual 'conflict' between his traditional culture and modern western civilisation[54]. Moreover, western civilisation is characterised, inter alia, by the presence of tension — tension in the sense that a person, primarily the male, must earn his daily bread by performing labour; not only must he provide for today, but also for tomorrow and the next day and for the time when he may no longer be able to work. ... The culture of the traditional Bantu ... is characterised by a minimal degree of tension. Before whites came to South Africa, the Bantu existed practically from day to day, caring little about the future and making no provision for it. The absence of tension still exists to a considerable extent today, particularly in those residential areas where there is comparatively little knowledge of the numerous facets of white culture. The process of acculturation implies, inter alia, that the Bantu child should, as regards his education, be led away from passivity (absence of tension) to a dynamic mode of existence (in which effort is expended). He (the Bantu child) must consequently also move closer to the effort expected of a fully fledged adult, according to western norms[55]. However, it is generally accepted that the Bantu adult is *not* capable of this effort; both he and the child find it strange and he must first orient himself in this regard before he is able to lead the child in this direction. The Bantu child is, in accordance with Bantu culture, satisfied with what 'is' and he must be led by the traditional Bantu adult to arrive at 'what should be', according to the western norms. The Bantu adult, however, finds himself in almost the same situation as the child; he is satisfied with what he has and is not really worried about what 'should be'[56].

This unsubtle expression of the necessity of preparing and socialising black children for their future role within the economic system clearly reveals the thrust behind, not only Radio Bantu, but the whole of Bantu Education. The major aim of the Radio Bantu Schools Service then, is to instill the capitalist work ethic and to mould the black child to accept his place in the class structure. Not concerned with examinations per se, this service aims to equip the black pupil with a "theoretical knowledge" which should be applied "in the practical situation" and to "understand how this theory was formed in everyday life". The Department of Bantu Education, in conjunction with the SABC, aims to:

(i) make a contribution towards the appreciation, preservation and extension of the Bantu's own language and culture and to encourage self-activity and the rendering of service to their community;

(ii) convey the message of Christianity[57] since "a Christian-heathen philosophy of life ... cannot be conducive to the mouldings of the individual since it entails a combination of values and norms which are in direct opposition to each other"[58];

(iii) offer him a choice selection of western culture[59] to elicit an "economically dynamic person"[60] who displays the values of "diligence; thrift; reliability together with honesty; and a rational view of the world and philosophy of life"[61].

(iv) be an instrument at all times in promoting the correct attitude (ie social relations) between whites and the Bantu.

Lessons in history, for example:

> ... concentrated especially on the history of the ethnic groups of the Bantu in South Africa, specifically with regard to their origin, former and present national leaders and memorable events in the specific national development ... care was taken not to emphasise the clashes (wars) between white and black ... History was presented in order to assist pupils to take up a point of view with regard to the past and the future as well as with regard to world ideologies[62].

Needless to say, the history course starts with Van Riebeeck's arrival in the Cape in 1652.

The geography syllabus for senior primary students followed the premise that: "Not too much time should be devoted to the physical aspects ... The human side ... should always have preference and particularly the aspects related to economic life"[63]. The Citizenship course "implies Bantu citizenship", and deals with the "administra-

tion of various ethnic groups and the Bantu's own contribution thereto"[64]. Since 1975, the Venda and Tsonga services have broadcast "talks for 'educated' Bantu" with particular attention devoted "to a discussion covering the viability of the Homelands"[65].

Similar themes are explored in other programmes aimed at adolescents. The *1981 Annual Report* noted that:

> Subjects of special interest in the youth programmes were: education and training, the serious need for trained manpower, vocational information, the role of young people in developing a state, youth and agriculture, a sense of responsibility, obedience to authority and respectfulness, it is better to build than to destroy, freedom is obedience, and the right of possession[66].

The strategy implicit in these programmes follows the diffusionist model in which 'development' percolates from the top down to the recipient audience. In the actuality programmes, for instance, subjects covered included "education and training; labour; housing; health services; development in Southern African states; economic growth in Southern Africa; transport; sport; community councils". More revealing, however, is the list of contributors, most of whom are State functionaries, ranging from the Prime Minister, through various Cabinet Ministers, homeland leaders and military personnel[67].

The implicit and explicit values of Radio Bantu are not only apparent in the Schools Service, but extend to all facets of programming. Even radio plays have a 'moral' content. While the *Annual Report* refers to the plays and serials of all other 'white' services by name and author, in Radio Bantu, only the 'themes' are given: ". . . respect for other people's property, sympathy and understanding for the shortcomings of others, crime does not pay, faith beats the devil, nature conservation, the handicapped also have a place in society, and family spacing"[68]. As well as stressing ethnic division and homeland policy, Radio Bantu is very aware of the necessity of encouraging the skills and attitudes which are appropriate in the development of the black middle classes. Programmes covering such subjects as "the 99-year leasehold system; the utilisation of manpower; the need for a pension fund; compulsory education; trade with Africa . . . (and) . . . trade unions" are transmitted alongside those dealing with "a constellation of states . . . the Development Bank, and independence"[69]. Thus, Radio Bantu sets itself the task of inducing the majority of black South Africans to accept their 'homeland' status and to view it as independence and development, while at the same time socialising a smaller cadre of the urban population into a

work ethic through programmes stressing "the serious need for trained manpower".

Maintaining Equilibrium with the Apartheid Lexicon

The Bantu Education Department works closely with Language Services to ensure that all programmes, and particularly advertising, are linguistically pure. Where a term does not exist one will be manufactured. Most of these terms deal with the area of contact between 'traditional' and urban industrial society. They are, therefore, crucial to the successful socialisation of 'economically dynamic' subjects who will take up their places in the relations of production without question. In other words, the deliberately constructed vernacular mediates apartheid through traditional tribal imagery. No word, for example, exists in Zulu to describe the term 'guerilla'. The contrived word 'amaphekulazikhuni' is used for this purpose, but translates as 'trouble-maker'. In this regard, the SABC reports that Radio Bantu has 'made a valuable contribution to black languages' in that over 100 000 new words have been devised by the Language Service to date[70].

Radio Bantu also acts as a mechanism of equilibrium. With regard to the disturbances that rocked Soweto in 1976, Justice Tshungu commented:

> The recent disturbances have again shown us the great power that the radio has over the black people when, in the face of agitation and intimidation, a valuable communications medium, the radio, is mobilised as a unifying factor in the crisis period, and as an aid to the maintenance of law and order[71].

The SABC's conception of its role during this period is equally pertinent, for not only did it see these disturbances as a series of 'events', but it also played down the events themselves:

> Television News, in reflecting the sporadic unrest in various parts of the country, accepted from the start that its information function demanded precise reporting, but that coverage had to be sober and unemotional, in order to avoid the internationally recognised risk of television easily inciting violence and unrest[72].

The year 1979 saw a subtle change of policy in the co-optation of senior black announcers to assist in planning news commentaries broadcast on Radio Bantu. According to the SABC:

Their participation made it possible to identify talking points among black people with a greater certainty and to make commentaries more purposeful and relevant. Proceeding from the overall view that self-determination was fundamental, particular emphasis was placed during the year on race relations ... the material wellbeing of the black man, the necessity of consultation and co-operation and the need to create a fair dispensation for all our people[73].

In reading the above quotation, it should be borne in mind that 'consultation', 'co-operation', and 'self-determination' are all terms defined by the ruling party and imply a sham negotiation in which blacks are forced to accept what is offered.

Commentary is deemed particularly important on Radio Bantu. While commentaries on the English, Afrikaans and commercial services are essentially the same, those broadcast on Radio Bantu are different and were used to counteract the statements of popular black leaders such as Dr N Motlana, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Bishop Desmond Tutu. The SABC has suggested that black reporters are unable to contextualise individual news items, hence the need for commentaries. An undated document entitled The *SABC News Service* states: "Bantu correspondents are inclined to be satisfied with empirical observations in their reports. Implications do not interest the Bantu. He reports what he sees, and the causal association between two or more observations is seldom clearly stated"[74].

While on the one hand this statement appears to patronise and trivialise the efforts of black correspondents, at the same time it should be seen as indicating a clash of contexts. One need only recall that a number of black announcers defined their own context in the 1950s, communicating anti-Government propaganda on SABC-managed channels in the face of pressures to the contrary. However that may be, the need for correct contextualisation and comment is justified and normalised.

Radio Bantu and Ideology: A Resumé

We have argued that Radio Bantu, as an Ideological State Apparatus, fulfills a number of basic functions:
  (i) It mediates a coherent apartheid-based reality which underlines the importance of ethnic values through a linguistic system rooted in tribal imagery;
 (ii) Although listenership in the rural areas does not equal the intensity of urban exposure, country dwellers are rarely exposed

to competing media such as newspapers, television, or any sort of grassroots media. The communication of alternative viewpoints, even those falling within the consensus of apartheid, are thereby restricted and largely inaccessible. Even where alternative sources are accessible, Switzer has shown that Radio Bantu is able to sustain its credibility, particularly in the rural areas;
 (iii) Radio Bantu is sensitive to the needs of the economy and has, since South Africa's invasion of Angola in 1975, stressed more strongly the benefits of capitalism over competing politico-economic systems; and
 (iv) Radio Bantu is sensitive to the shifting class alliance and modifies its content accordingly.

The Maintenance of the White Ruling Class on Radio

Until the end of 1985, which forms the study period of this chapter, the SABC transmitted four nationwide services – the non-commercial English and Afrikaans stations, and the commercial Springbok Radio and Radio 5; and three regional services – Radio Highveld, Radio Good Hope and Radio Port Natal. Commenting on this distribution Fuchs sanguinely asserts that: "To enable the two white national languages and cultures to express themselves on the air, two nation-wide programme services were introduced: English and Afrikaans. Each must reflect the fine, the noble and the enduring in the spiritual heritage of the community it serves"[75].

What is noticeable here is Fuchs's stress on the reflection and preservation of "the fine, the noble, the enduring in the spiritual heritage of the community it serves". We have argued that Radio Bantu provides a model for subservience. In contrast, the radio services aimed at white audiences legitimise the ruling classes' dominance within the social formation.

The only programmes that had any overt ideological content were *Editorial Comment*, and to a lesser extent, the *News* and actuality programmes such as *Radio Today, Monitor* and *Audiomix*[76]. On the English and Afrikaans services, the majority of programmes were confined to light and serious classical music, jazz and a sprinkling of popular music, radio plays, sport and various magazine, comedy and specialist programmes[77].

The tone of most programmes was conservative, implying a neutral stance on socio-political questions. This means that they had a well camouflaged ideological agenda focusing on white petit-bourgeois

interests. The choice of subject matter included in magazine and specialist programmes, for instance, was situated firmly within the spectrum of these interests: *Let's Make it Legal, Talking of Nature, Womens' World* and *London Letter*.

In this section, two categories of programmes broadcast on the English service will be examined.

Religious Programmes: Displacing Social Anxiety

Religious programming is an excellent illustration of the way in which an apparently 'apolitical' and non-controversial treatment of subject matter encodes a definite ideological standpoint. This has occured as much through its structured absences as in the material which was included. In all, an average of eight hours per week, or six percent of broadcast time on both the English and Afrikaans services, have been devoted to religious topics[78]. The SABC describes this religious content as having a "Scripture-based conservative emphasis"[79].

Religious programming on the English and Afrikaans services started with a five-minute slot in *Radio Today/Monitor* at about 6.33am entitled *This New Day/Vroee Môreoordenking*. A fifteen-minute *Mid Morning Devotion/Oggendgodsdiens* followed at 10.30/10.45am. The latter programmes were inter-denominational studio broadcasts, and ministers of religion were invited by the Organisers of Religious Programmes to conduct these services. Explained one religious broadcaster in February 1981: "Ministers of religion are chosen on a personality basis. Therefore you will note that at the present time you are getting more of the kind of people who belong to the more right-wing kind of congregation."

The station closed about seventeen hours after commencement with a brief epilogue. Sundays, of course, had a significantly higher religious content: *Awake my Soul/Ontwaak my Siel* (15 minutes), *Morning Service/Erediens* (60 minutes), *Radio Chaplain* (15 minutes), magazine programmes, *Signpost/Wat Sê die Bybel* (30 minutes) and *Evening Service/Erediens* (60 minutes). The two church services were broadcast live.

In addition, there was a weekly programme of religious choral music. On Springbok Radio there was a daily meditation at 5am and *Cameos from the Holy Land*, a mini-documentary recorded in Israel. This was followed by *From the Bell Tower*, a selection of music described as 'warm, comforting and uplifting'.

Radio Chaplain, a weekly discussion programme chaired by the Organiser of Religious Programmes, was a particularly good example of the conservative presentation of seemingly neutral topics. The questions from listeners which were chosen for discussion were all of a highly abstract nature and were discussed solely in theological and dogmatic terms. Socially relevant topics were very seldom introduced into the discourse and there would appear to have been a general consent (overt or intuitive) not to raise matters of social application or conscience.

The denominational allocations to the church services (as opposed to studio broadcasts) were done according to census distributions of the number of whites belonging to particular churches. Although the English Service religious programmes had a substantial coloured listenership, coloured members of religious denominations were not included in the calculations determining broadcast frequency[80]. Despite the control exercised over broadcasts on the English Service, a greater degree of autonomy was allowed than with, for example, Radio Bantu. In the case of the latter, only studio broadcasts were permitted and these were tape recorded in advance; where the situation was deemed to warrant it, a pre-recorded programme on the English Service could be replaced by a live transmission. One such example occurred in 1975 when a crazed gunman occupied the Israeli Embassy in Fox Street, Johannesburg. The duty announcer called on a regular contributor at the last minute to substitute a revised epilogue to take account of the day's happenings.

On that momentous morning of June 17 1976, the tape recording scheduled for *This New Day* was shelved and Bernard Spong, a Congregationalist Minister, offered and subsequently broadcast a live edition within the context of the *6.30am News* which preceded him. Aware of the potentially inflammatory situation, Spong concentrated on the themes of reconciliation and co-operation:

> I talked about what Soweto was like, of the destruction that was going on, of the easy responses of anger and hatred and division and so on. I talked about the idea of trying to take hold of the situation in which people were trying to speak and say what they felt and trying to use it as a situation in which we hear one another rather than trying to destroy one another.

This anecdote highlights the juxtaposition of news and religious broadcasts: generally the one precedes or follows the other. It is our contention that this juxtaposition is not entirely fortuitous, since the two programmes have a symbiotic effect whereby the religious programme has a soothing and calming effect on the reception of the

news. This is also true of *Think on These Things*, a quasi-religious programme described by the SABC as "a short daily devotional programme reflecting the worship and thought which represent the mainstream of Christian tradition in the country"[81], which was broadcast just before the 7pm News. The content of *Think on These Things* was either quotations from literature, famous men or Scriptures, or it was a prose piece written for the occasion. It usually included a moral lesson or some consoling form of spiritual inspiration. Mournful in tone, it was extremely formal and often of a patronising nature. Said one religious broadcaster of this snippet:

> I think that they (the SABC) quite sincerely believe that *Think on These Things* before the *News* means that you will approach the news with the right frame of mind; that you will approach it in the right spirit and you will hear of what's happening with the realisation that God Almighty will still look after you even if 'they' are blowing up SASOL and police stations and so forth.

It would seem that the juxtaposition of news and religious programmes was intended to displace the actual context of conditions and to substitute a context defined in abstract terms by the SABC itself. A more concrete political context is described by Spong:

> I did not use the SABC to put over a dramatically radical point of view. What I tried to do was to look at the events like Soweto 1976, the Fox Street shooting and so forth, and look at these within the context of the whole society . . . For instance, on June 17, 1976 I was live, Pat Kerr (of Radio Today) was there reading the News. She shifted out of the chair and I moved into it and I had a live mike. So the SABC must have had some confidence that I wouldn't say 'Shoot the Prime Minister,' or whatever. Afterwards I received mostly supporting comments from a wide range . . .

Spong also pointed out that there were fewer controls on religious broadcasting on the SABC than, for example, the BBC. Nevertheless, there has been a sense of disillusionment among a number of religious broadcasters which is shared by their church office holders. Towards the end of 1979, a number of English language churches drew up a resolution on broadcasting in which they objected to certain facets of religious radio. The complaints arose out of a concern for the "bias and the amount of time given to conservative viewpoints", particularly "the undue publicity given through the SABC *Crossroads* programme to fringe organisations which do not reflect the views of the main churches". At the same time the churches expressed dissatisfaction with the narrow interpretation of the SABC guidelines, es-

pecially those on the 'political' content of sermons. These two issues together prompted an interchurch conference held in February 1980 which passed a resolution that: "Because the SABC is a vehicle for racist propaganda we ask the churches to consider not participating in SABC broadcasts and to investigate alternative broadcasting facilities which can also be used to counter racism"[82].

The resolutions reflected the conflicts which existed within the television service's religious programme department, supporting one of the more progressive staffers against the Organiser, whose intolerance and extreme right-wing views prevailed on television. If the churches were unable to counter the conservatism of the television service, radio proved more flexible, partly due to the live nature of the church broadcasts.

Despite the SABC's bias against the South African Council of Churches, particularly noticeable in *News Commentary*, during his presidency of that organisation the Rev Peter Storey was often heard on the English Service and once on *Microphone-In*. Very often his sermons were of an allegorical nature, indirectly criticising the repressive nature of the South African State. Like many drama scriptwriters, Storey had learnt that whereas direct discussion was impossible, many important points could be made through allegory and analogy.

Radio Today: An Island of Critical Expression

Radio Today was a two and a half hour weekday morning actuality programme made up of news, interviews, special reports, actuality reports directly from news stringers, music, comedy and so on. It was started in 1974, two years before the introduction of television. Its first producer was Geoff Sims, who carved a relative autonomy for the programme within a short while. It was not long before he was backed up by a team of critical staffers who reported mainly from a liberal-humanist perspective, excluding of course the news commentaries which followed the 7am News. *Radio Today* distanced itself from these editorials, describing them as "That was the SABC Comment", or simply, "That was Comment".

The programme has been described as "a token liberal gesture from the SABC to distract attention from all its other conservatism"[83]. This indeed does seem to be the rationale behind its initiation and format, or in the words of an ex-producer, "what *Radio Today* is all

about". Elaborating on this point, the producer explained:

> Almost daily someone would say to me, 'How do you get away with these things?' Or, even the guys working in another SABC department would ask, 'How can you do that but we can't?' But, of course, *Radio Today* is the SABC's safety valve. They use *Radio Today* because it has got a large audience but not a mass audience. They know that most of the people who listen to *Radio Today* are essentially thinking people at least. If any opposition person comes along to the SABC and complains about not getting sufficient air time, they simply trot out the *Radio Today* logs and say 'What are you talking about? There it all is.'

The limitations imposed on the producers were, as in the case of all news organisations, never formally or clearly articulated: "There is no book of rules," stated one announcer. "Other than a 'news style book' . . . you just develop a sense for . . . which people (sources) they regard as acceptable or unacceptable . . . and the kind of stories they don't like". The producers working on this programme saw it as "an island", as "different", because through *Radio Today's* relative autonomy they could "ignore that great bureaucracy (of the SABC)". Despite this, there was apparently "considerable animosity" between the News Department and *Radio Today*: "For a start, the post of Editor was not recognised by the rest of the SABC. The editor of *Radio Today* is a title recognised only within the English Service because the News Department object to him being called an Editor . . ." According to this informant, "controversial subjects are supposed to be referred to the Controller of News or a Commentary person".

Initially, at least, the producers and reporters staffing *Radio Today* attempted to test the limits of perceived SABC acceptability: "One is mischievous all of the time and always chancing it one step beyond the mark". One particular example of a broadcast interview which was 'beyond the mark' was with the touring black civil rights leader, the Reverend Jesse Jackson. The producer relates the following turn of events:

> The interview as it was done for *Special Report* didn't really need editing, we just cut down on time . . . the Head of English Radio came down shortly after that broadcast. He was absolutely white. He looked as if he had aged ten years on his way to work that morning obviously listening on his car radio. He said, 'We've gone too far this time.' I had a call to go upstairs to see (the Director General). He asked me why I didn't refer the interview to the News Department . . . I got into a bit of a rage and said that my judgement was as good as theirs and I don't see why

I should refer it to some kid on the other side of the room.

Since the early 1980s, the tone of *Radio Today* has become perceptibly more conservative. "*Radio today* isn't the exciting controversial mentor it was in the mid-1970s in the days of Geoff Sims, Will Bernard, Julian Potter and Gary Edwards," remarked a newspaper critic. "This type of actuality programme can only be as good as its contributors"[84].

Many of the contributions are now from foreign correspondents and bear little or no relationship to circumstances and situations within the South African context. The choice of correspondents is also notable for its emphasis on conservative viewpoints. As both local and foreign stringers in this country indicated, the *Radio Today* correspondents are:

> . . . generally . . . the sort of journalist who will fit in with a conservative approach. You get a fellow like Geoffrey Blythe in New York – he is the *London Daily Mail* correspondent – the rest of them are the sort of journalists who simply ask 'What's your angle. Ok, fine I'll go along with that,' because they earn quite a lot of money out of *Radio Today*. They (the SABC) did drop a couple of people though. Peter Sharp in Salisbury was dropped . . . They simply didn't like the line he was taking on Rhodesia at the time. He was coming through with too many stories of mass emigration and anti-Smith so they dropped him[85].

For all its apparent independence, *Radio Today* remained within the overall ideological stance taken by the SABC. Its coverage was narrowly cast to include news from the West, while largely ignoring news and sources from the rest of Africa, with the exception of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the station had no black correspondents and very few issues relating to blacks in South Africa were dealt with. Thus, while *Radio Today* was probably the most 'liberal' of the programmes broadcast on the English service, the news and opinions expressed were nevertheless circumscribed within the dominant consensus.

Television Broadcasting: What Rules Do We Play?

A second dimension of broadcasting was introduced in 1976 with the commencement of television services. Initially, only one channel was in operation for five hours an evening, equally divided between English and Afrikaans languages. The duration was subsequently extended; a second channel aimed at black viewers was opened in

1982, and split into two separate channels in 1983, with TV4 operating off the TV2/3 frequencies after those stations closed down at 9.30pm, and for an hour between 6pm and 7pm.

Shortly before the first television programme was transmitted in South Africa, the Director-General, Jan Swanepoel, claimed that: "We are an independent organisation. We are not dictated to by the government. We have never been asked, since I have been here, by anyone in the government to do programmes on this or that. The moment we allow ourselves to be talked into that we would be slipping"[86].

In line with this view of themselves as an independent organisation, the SABC-TV service has never committed itself to a written formulation of its policy concerning the specific content and ideological perspective of its programmes, whether radio or television. Rather it relies on the fact that, as stated by one TV producer, "We all knew exactly where the line was. We had lived in South Africa long enough to know exactly who we were working for".

The lack of a stated policy was a major cause of discontent among English-speaking producers where the treatment of controversial and socially relevant issues was concerned. One ex-producer, for example, comments: "There was no taboo subject at the SABC. You can, if you want, make a programme on Soweto. You can, if you want, deal with bloody Biko's death, but just make sure that the people you interview reflect the right point of view". This realisation led certain socially conscious producers to avoid contentious subjects altogether:

> We were very careful not to get ourselves into a situation where we would have to say something about a controversial issue and then have that something watered down and made to look like some third-rate problem when it was a priority issue. That's why I was surprised that Kevin Harris actually went into doing a programme on Soweto because we all knew at that time that you could never do what you had to do with Soweto and therefore you should leave it alone . . . As it turned out I was right because the only way Kevin could actually say anything was to disobey the rules and get fired.

Harris had tried to play the rules at face value:

> We were led to believe − through the Head of English Television . . . and the Organiser of the English Documentary department . . . that we could tackle any subject that we thought was socially relevant, as long as 'both sides of the story' were presented in the programme[87].

Clearly aware that 'both sides of the story' meant only one side, another producer summed up the reaction to the 1976 riots within the

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Documentary Department:

> I think that the issue that everyone is afraid to talk about is the fact of the June 1976 riots in Soweto. Certainly, we as documentary producers, found it was of very acute significance. My feeling was that as documentors of our time we should have responded to it in some manner. We should have put something down on film for later generations. The argument from the SABC's point of view was that the news service was quite capable of doing that without any help from us. My argument to them was that a news service could go and film peoples' houses burning and people crying which were superficial manifestations of the riots, but they could never ever get down to the nitty gritty of why it happened and what people were feeling, and get the personal human story behind it. That was clearly the job of the Documentary Department, not the news service. And I urged the Organiser of Documentaries to try and persuade management to aportion some money to let us go around and film aspects of the problems. We would look at the whole area, not just in terms of people throwing stones at buses, but the way Africans felt in many other areas, like the live-in servants in the suburbs − how do they feel about it, how do school teachers feel about it. We would cover the educational aspects of it, the spiritual and religious aspects of it − where does the urban African find himself. There were about six or seven subjects that we could delineate, and I suggested that it would make an absorbing series. In other words, we would be showing white South Africans black South Africans in a sense they had never seen them before. The Organiser, of course, jumped up and down with glee and said it was a terrific concept, patted us on the back, and said that he would get permission to do all this: went upstairs to management, and of course was dragged over the carpet, and came down, and said, 'Well, they love it, they think it is a great idea, but . . .' and then rattled off a long list of reasons why it shouldn't be done. We advanced the idea a bit further, and we eventually persuaded the Organiser that he should try management again. It was going to be a sympathetic human look at the way these events took place. The end result was that nothing came about. That was one clear example when we had shown our hand as such. We had said: 'Look this is what *we would like* to do, and why don't you give me some money and let us do it?' and management said, in the nicest possible way, 'Just keep your nose out of it, it's got nothing to do with you. We don't want that kind of television coverage.'

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Repeated requests by the Documentary Department's producers for a statement of policy proved fruitless. The only occasion on which policy was committed to paper was the 'leaked' directive mentioned earlier. When the SABC hierarchy became "aware of this document, it was immediately withdrawn ... because of the particular phrase 'government policy'"[88]. Comments another ex-producer: "Of course the SABC denied it ... but really (the author of the memo) had understood it (the policy) perfectly and was only passing it on like a good messenger".

The SABC tried to enforce its policy through 'osmosis'. One producer outlines the process:

You would come in and (the Head of English Television's) secretary would be pacing up and down and say 'The Doctor wants to see you'. Of course, the Doctor was Schutte. You would then have to go and fetch (the Head of English Television) and you would go and fetch (the director of Television Programmes) and we would all go upstairs to the Doctor who would shit all over you and say 'this' was totally unreasonable. I would then ask, 'What's your policy on this?' I can remember once asking about his policy, was it separate development like Cliff Saunders. I said that I was not going to do it. His answer would be that 'We are not asking you to do that'.

To understand the significance of this statement, one has to examine the way in which the architecture of the SABC complex signifies the social and bureaucratic hierarchy. At the top of the administrative tower, a twenty-seven-storey skyscraper, are the offices of upper management which are generally inaccessible to the ordinary staffers and middle management[89]. Instructions, suggestions and policy flow down the building to middle management, producers and administrators, before being passed on to an adjacent low-rise production centre about one hundred metres away. To be called 'upstairs' was an indication of a serious matter. One was generally only called up in the company of intermediate staffers. It is these informal and unwritten sanctions which delineate the boundaries of the policy and which this staffer, and many others in the Magazines and Documentary departments, refused to infer. Consequently, they tried to tie the SABC down to a written statement of policy to which the Corporation, like most other mass media organisations, was not prepared to commit itself.

The SABC further shielded the dominant discourse by protecting it from other discourses which were articulated outside the Corporation. Although it was intuitively known that certain people were *per-*

sona non grata with the SABC, management was not prepared to circulate 'a blacklist' of unwelcome sources. These are individuals whose stand against the government or Corporation, albeit in a limited way within the spectrum of South African politics, disqualified them for television appearances (though not necessarily radio). Asked how he knew who was on the 'list', one staffer responded: "You only find that out by trial and error." Recounting an incident when he was asked by the Head of English Radio why he had interviewed the editor of an English-language Sunday newspaper when "They don't like (him), don't you know that?", this radio journalist replied:

I said, 'How am I supposed to know that?' He said this was a problem that we all have. He said that he had made a mistake up there on the 27th floor by also asking 'How am I supposed to know?' I replied, 'Go back and ask them for a list'. And he did; he gets very naive sometimes. He came back and said that they wouldn't give him a list. I said, 'Of course they won't give you a list'.

Ensuring Suitability: The Selection and Control of Personnel and Programmes

The chief mechanism by which the ideological content of television is secured is through the appointment of individuals who are able to identify themselves as subjects of the dominant ideology. The above examples indicate, however, that there were a number of people within the SABC who were prepared to challenge the consensual discourse. The question then arises of how these people were recruited into the SABC in the first place.

As indicated in Chapter 1 of this Volume, the majority of upper management of the SABC hierarchy were reputed to be members of the Broederbond[90]. The importance of this connection is underscored when one takes cognizance of the overlap of membership between the Broederbond, the NGK, the Cabinet and educational bodies. All these institutions are of primary importance when considering the dissemination, and indeed, the active production of ideologically acceptable viewpoints.

From an examination of the qualifications of persons filling new television posts, it is clear that previous experience in television or even an academic knowledge of the medium was not a major criterion for appointment. During the tooling-up stages prior to commencement of broadcasting on 1 January 1976, SABC-TV had to take whoever was available to fill technical and production posts. Common among the first wave of employees was a lack of direct experience

able and say whatever you want them to say, but you know nothing will happen.

While it is clear that the Organisers do not actively promote a pro-Government standpoint, they act as a barrier preventing producers from recording ideologically sensitive material on the one hand, while absorbing consensual discourse from upper management on the other hand translating this into organisational practice. As Graham Hayman remarked:

> All of them worked on the assumption that they had some kind of meaningful function within the structure of the place. But because of the fact that accounting decisions were made elsewhere and overall programme policy decisions often overrode their own function, they have little power. The producers recognise them as having little power.

Organisers function as a safety valve for upper management who are absolved from directly confronting producers, the critical press and opposition politicians after the screening of a contentious programme. Kevin Harris commented:

> It becomes apparent that the appointments to the position of Head of English Television and Organiser of one or other of the Programming Departments in the English Television Service, are not made in the interests of good quality programmes or responsible television broadcasting . . . but that these appointments are made to safeguard and achieve the priorities of the Broederbond-Nationalist alliance[91].

Harris further asserted that the persons filling these positions were "pliable, manipulable tools in the hands of upper management". It would appear that individuals appointed as Organisers, experienced some difficulty in identifying the parameters of their practice and tended not to take responsibility for refusal or approval of programming concerning socio-political subject-matter. It would seem that Corporation policy at that time could best be identified by an analysis of how the unspoken standpoints and 'ways of doing things' were enforced, both through formal and informal mechanisms.

Formal Gatekeeping Mechanisms: Magazines and Documentaries

Formal gatekeeping mechanisms affecting the pre-production stage were outlined in a directive of the English Documentary Department which stated that when a documentary concept is "likely to impinge on sensitive areas", for example, "Religion, Politics, Sex, Violence

(and) Racial Matters", specific procedures must be observed. The producer has the responsibility of drawing possible problem areas to the attention of the Organiser, who in turn will discuss them with the Head of Service and Director of Television Programmes. Once the concept and treatment have been approved, the producers must prepare a 'detailed script' which is again passed up the hierarchy. Production only proceeds after the final approval of this script by all concerned[92].

Completion of the production, even when the scrutinized script has been closely followed and the cutting copy approved, does not automatically ensure its transmission. The processes from submission to approval can be a long and tortuous one where 'sensitive' material is concerned. Harris offers the following experience:

> It was in the ensuing stages of programme production that management implemented their obstructive strategy by employing crippling 'delay tactics', whenever a programme of this nature was attempted. These 'delay tactics' made production planning and implementation such heavy-going for the producer concerned, that many programme concepts were abandoned at the research stage.
>
> Producers were required to submit detailed lists of names of people they intended to consult during the research period of the programme. The producer was not, however, permitted to make any contact with these prospective people until the list was approved by management.
>
> In addition, treatments were required outlining in detail the objectives of the programme. These were sometimes kept by management for months on end with no reaction being fed back to the producer.
>
> All this time, the producer was pressurized by deadlines, and the necessity of having to book equipment, crew and facilities for a specific and limited period, months in advance. Week after week, he was kept 'in limbo' by management, and when appealing to the Organiser for a definite directive, was instructed to effectively 'carry on, but do nothing'. Because of this, schedules were disrupted and many of these programmes were delayed indefinitely.
>
> In spite of management, a few documentaries dealing with social or political issues – through the perseverance and tenacity of the producer concerned – finally were produced. Once edited, these programmes were viewed by management.
>
> It must be pointed out that no programme could be shot before

management had approved the programme treatment and script, outlining in detail the structure and content of the programme to be produced. Although management had initially approved the submitted treatment and script, at this stage they now insisted on changes to the programme; sequences were removed, or additions were required to include more of the official point of view and in some cases the programme was placed on the shelf, where it remained indefinitely awaiting a decision from management.

Management's interference at this stage resulted in these programmes conveying a message contrary to the objectives outlined in the initial film treatment. Instead of 'presenting both sides of the story,' what was transmitted was an official 'white-wash' of the issue concerned.

This compromised the integrity of the producer, and also the credibility of those people who had been persuaded to appear in the programme, on the understanding that the programme objectives were those outlined in the initial programme treatment. Programmes which suffered this type of 'post production' interference included *A Sense of Destiny ... Under the Southern Cross, Black Education ... Vimba, The Miner ... Four South Africans ... Shelter ... The Band ...*[93].

Through this strategy of management, the output from the English Documentary department was confined to irrelevant mediocrity ...[94].

Occasionally, failure to broadcast a particular programme may have been the direct result of pressure originating from outside the SABC. A case in point was the SABC's refusal to screen an interview with the then Postmaster-General, Mr Louis Rive, on the telephone shortage. Personnel associated with this particular programme claimed that the Post Office public relations officer was concerned with the consequences of the interview on Mr Rive's image, although he himself was apparently satisfied[95]. The complaint was alleged to have gone directly to upper management, who ordered the interview to be cut out.

Pressure has also reportedly come directly from the Prime Minister's office. In one known case, this concerned the pre-publicity about a South African stripper, Glenda Kemp who was to appear in a panel programme. Strippers have long been under the Vice Squad's spotlight and were always being harassed. What made Glenda Kemp more notorious was that she performed her act with a snake, a large evil looking python. Her appearance was just what the political right-

wing needed to justify their claim that television was an immoral influence, and the accusation doing the rounds soon after the introduction of television was, 'I suppose that before long we'll be having Glenda Kemp on the box'. Commented the producer concerned: "The caller just wanted to know whether we were going to put Glenda on the box or not. So we were instructed by the SABC management to cancel the whole programme. The SABC didn't have to put any overt pressure on us because they knew we were more than intimidated."

Of a more political nature was the banning of a *Midweek* edition detailing opposition to the 20th anniversary of the Republic. Although it was passed by both the Documentary and Magazines Organisers, it was withdrawn only hours before its scheduled transmission by the Head of the English Service. A back-up programme was shown instead:

> Although it has screened numerous Republican Festival programmes, live and recorded, in the past month the SABC has steadfastly avoided recording any opposition. Protests and bombings were barely linked to the celebrations in news bulletins[96].

A dramatic incident occurred on 2 September 1981 when the visiting British ex-Prime Minister, Edward Heath, was interviewed for the topical magazine programme, *Midweek*. Mr Heath's views on the Nyanga squatter camp were excised from the programme by an SABC team which included the Senior Directors of English and Afrikaans Television Services and the Director of TV1. Neither the freelance interviewer nor the producer nor Mr Heath's staff were consulted on the cuts. The comedy programme, *WKRP*, which normally followed *Midweek* was substituted for the earlier time slot while last minute changes were made to *Midweek* during the time the programme was originally scheduled. The reason for the changeover was described as "trouble with a video machine", but sources within the SABC said that they felt "sure that Mr Heath's views were beyond the pale for the SABC"[97].

A most revealing example occurred in September of 1982 when the SABC was directly attacked by the Government from a party political platform and accused of bias towards the recently formed Conservative Party. Any illusion that the SABC had forged a relative autonomy for itself after the succession of Dr W Mouton to the chairmanship of the board in 1981 was seriously questioned by this incident.

The rebuke followed in the wake of two seemingly unconnected incidents: a hoax report on the *Radio Highveld News* of the 'assassination' of the leader of the Conservative Party, and the dismissal in the

following week of Dr Willem de Klerk, editor of *Die Transvaler*. A National Party spokesman, Dr Nak van der Merwe, told delegates at the National Party's Orange Free State congress that the 'shooting' of Dr Treurnicht was the most 'transparent propaganda' he had yet seen[98]. At the same congress, Mr Barend du Plessis, then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information, the Department under which the SABC then fell, strongly criticised the SABC for providing the opportunity for a Conservative Party MP, Mr Tom Langley, to comment on the resignation of Willem de Klerk and to suggest that his dismissal would ultimately lead to a greater Perskor support for the Conservative Party[99]. Noted the *Rand Daily Mail*: '... it was reliably learnt . . . that the government suspects that the Treurnicht shooting fiasco and the SABC platform given to Mr Langley were engineered by CP sympathisers inside the SABC to gain publicity for Dr Treurnicht's Party'[100].

The contradictions within the SABC that surfaced in the Mouton era were reflections of the wider political conflict amongst whites in South Africa. *The Rand Daily Mail* observed that:

> (Mouton's) attempt to introduce a measure of autonomy into a corporation with a history of heavy partisanship was interpreted as defiance of the party leadership and a refusal to drive out obstructionist elements of the verkrampte SABC administration of Dr Piet Meyer . . . led to the campaign waged through the columns of the Nationalist press last year (1981) to pressure him into resigning his position or becoming full time Chairman of the SABC Board[101].

The above example is the most overt example of outside interference into the workings of the SABC. The incidents outlined in this chapter are only a few of many similar attempts at preventing the broadcast of particular points of view. Other examples during the study period include programmes made on the health dangers of smoking, a Wool Board scandal, a containerisation interview, Eschel Rhoodie and the Information Department, the artificially high price of television sets, a programme on unemployment in Wentworth, a *Woman Today* edition on 'Maids and Madams' and Baragwanath Hospital[102]. This last programme was defiantly broadcast by its producer, Kevin Harris, and illustrates a rarely invoked and final gatekeeping mechanism: he was fired with 24 hours' notice.

Resistance to Consensus

Where staffers refuse to infer policy though the lived relations within the newsfirm, their behaviour will more than likely be regulated by transferring them to less contentious positions. This occurred not only with producers originally in the Documentary Department, but more particularly among those in the Magazine Department. While the documentary producers could be consistently stalled in the manner described by Harris, the Magazine Department, in contrast, was required to produce weekly or fortnightly programmes no matter what. In other words, these productions could not be indefinitely stalled. Realising this, some of the *Midweek* and *Spectrum* staffers deliberately set about undermining the signifying practices and gatekeeping mechanisms which ensured an ideologically palatable programme. These producers had identified these mechanisms and were successful in defeating them for a while.

Challenging the dominant discourse was a difficult affair, for the producer had to first gauge the continuously shifting attitudes of upper management as far as particular programmes were concerned. The producer of *Portfolio*, for example, identified particular Organisers as "conservative" and who would, therefore, "be more aware of how the wind was blowing in management at the time". Management's responses to particular treatments "would often depend on what was going on in the newspapers and other controversial programmes which had been on the air recently. They were very sensitive to . . . public opinion such as they could gauge it". All of our respondents remarked that this public opinion was primarily measured in terms of letters and phoned-in complaints, rather than adequately established opinion surveys.

The producer had to interpret and gauge subtle shifts in the dominant discourse and work out how to manipulate normal procedures in a manner which would not alert other less adventurous staffers to what was intended. Commented the *Portfolio* producer:

> When a particular subject was identified as contentious – such as the inclusion of blacks in more than just a background role – I would start by imagining the context and constructing rationalisations. One particular item concerned a phone call from someone in Soweto who was getting together a musical about a traditional theme of a marriage. We went out to Soweto, saw his dress rehearsal and interviewed him. I was due to go on leave and left the production secretary to organise a taped interview with the director of the musical. She brought him into the studio to be interviewed by Colin du Plessis. On screen, it was a disaster. The antipathy between the two was quite evident. They were both frozen into a non-communicative deadlock. In that kind of situation I would normally have found some outside

interviewer to do the interview so that it would not have been seen by either the Head of Magazines or du Plessis (Head of Drama) until the day of packaging the programme on video, which was the day before broadcast. So if he (Du Plessis) wanted to throw it out before then it would mean that he would have to censor it right there – not that he had the authority to do it – but if he wanted to make a noise about it and go sideways to the Head of Magazines . . . he would have had to help us make arrangements for another alternative video recording. He would have had to book extra studio time which was always very tight. He would have had to counter our arguments that we had nothing else to put in. So it was a kind of tactical preparation if you wanted to put in something like that.

Another producer talked about his experiences on *Midweek*:

We taped *Midweek* on a Wednesday for transmission in the early evening. We had the studio from about 4pm. I had a routine with the interviewer where we generally stuffed around for an hour. He would miss his autocue. We'd change the lighting: we would blow an hour in this way. This meant that we would start to record at about 5pm. And then I would shoot the programme backwards and do lots of assemble edits[103] so that we were always in the studio until at least half-past six. The programme went on the air at 7.10pm. At any stage we could have done it live without any hassle. We never booked enough editing time. That was a routine thing as well so that if anyone wanted to edit anything out it was a major schlep for them to find an editing machine, because those in use were lining up other programmes.

They (the SABC) never censured the interviewer. They hauled me up and told me that I was bad and what have you. Then they would see the interviewer. For the first time we worked the trick where he would blame me and I would say, 'well, you know what (the interviewer) is like, you can't really control him'. It worked, and from then on it became jointly and severally an agreement that we would blame each other. I would say that I told him, 'if it logically comes up, then ask him the question and don't push it'. He in turn would say, 'but (the producer) told me that he was giving me five minutes and you have got to get that answer out of him'. We would argue that there was obviously a misunderstanding.

The antics of these two staffers, both of whom were highly competent, should be seen against the background of their cultivated image of technical incompetence. This image was accepted, particularly by the technical staff employed under them who were unaware of the

strategy of resistance being enacted despite the universal praise these two staffers received from press critics. Their detractors consequently interpreted the apparent ineptitude of these two staffers within the bounds of the accepted 'way of doing things'. They were unable to identify the strategy of production being followed and interpreted it as amateurish. A second producer observed that crews were never taken into confidence: "Most of them were very young guys, often quite conservative, and had extremely naive ideas about their role in television. (The SABC) often promoted totally incompetent but right thinking people at the expense of skilled technicians."

While the technicians were unaware of how the consensual discourse was being manipulated, upper management was more perceptive. This resulted in the 'excommunication' of the said two staffers to other departments in which they had no experience whatsoever. This action on the part of the SABC was their counter-strategy to isolate and neutralise independently minded producers. As one producer commented on inter-departmental moves in general, "Quite often I think the producers were quite happy to move because they got tired of all the friction generated by the real or imagined pressure".

On the other hand, sometimes a producer was allowed leeway in the probability that she/he might hang him/herself in the process. The producer of *Pulse*, for example, stated:

Mine was a rather unique programme because I started off with management having the notion that the programme would never last very long. The argument was, 'give it to this guy that wasn't going to cope (I was assistant producer at the time) and don't give him any encouragement or any help and let's see him flounder and make a total disaster of the whole thing'. So I produced for six months and the programme was quite popular and it stayed on for a further two years. The situation was such that we had control because we had, from the start, been doing our own thing. Nobody told us what to do. Initially, they thought that because management was not there to help us, the programme would be a total disaster. As it turned out, the opposite was the case. There was never any love lost between ourselves and management because we would literally go to work, shut the door and do as we pleased. We just said, 'Look, this is the programme this week – accept it or not'. Other programmes had a lot more interference, like *Midweek*, for example, where the producer was literally called in and told what would be on the programme that week. That never happened to us. One of the reasons was that we were working so far ahead of schedule. If the SABC tried to interfere we would say 'We have already

scheduled ourselves for the next three months'. We deliberately built these fences around us.

Other producers frequently went into the Organisers and complained about having a hard time and asked for topics, etc. We never did that. We just went ahead on our own. In our case things developed to a situation where even if we did go to management they weren't very happy to suggest anything because they did not like the programme. The Head of English Television would have been delighted if he knew I was having a problem in the studio.

None of the above mentioned producers, presenters or organisers lasted for more than three or four years. Their transfer into non-contentious departments usually preceded the staffer's resignation from the SABC, although it has been known for some to move back into active fields of production. As Kevin Harris put it: "The socio-political battle has been lost by the English producers".

Covert Gatekeeping Mechanisms

Despite the architectural arrangement which isolates technicians, producers, administrators, organisers, middle and upper management, the studio floor is directly accessible to upper management via an in-house cable which relays the transmission/record output from all studios to monitors located in the administrative tower. This means that programmes both in production and completed can be viewed by upper management in their own offices. While this may not be unique to the SABC, in terms of the excessive number of considerations which the producer has to take into account, it can become an intimidatory mechanism. There are stories told of certain foolhardy producers who have locked cameras onto the studio clock and routed the sound through grams to prevent surveillance by upper management.

A producer recounts an occasion when this surveillance was used as a direct gatekeeping mechanism to censor out an ideologically unacceptable item when the programme was still in studio production:

There was very much a feeling that Big Brother was watching. Vorster called an election. He called it on a Tuesday afternoon. The interviewer did the first half of the programme with Willem Kleynhans (a political scientist). I was naive to think that we could get away with Kleynhans and John D'Oliviera from *The Star*. We taped a twelve-minute very tight item on what the reasons for calling an election at this particular time were and

what it would mean. It was a good background news item. It was very topical. We taped it on Tuesday to be broadcast on Wednesday. We were to be ahead of the *News* so we would get in before Cliff Saunders gave his reasons (for the election) – or we would have done. We recorded the thing and Schutte phoned and said that the item was unacceptable. I said, 'Sorry, I'll get the lighting man to talk to you'. (I had been bitching about the lighting.) He said, 'No, I don't want the programme'.

On other occasions, this producer, in order to minimise the risk of interference, did not do any rehearsing "through the cameras where they could see the output".

Crew Leaders: Surveillance by 'Subjects'

In addition to the electronic eye, producers were sometimes intimidated by 'crew-leaders', individuals who

... were supposed to ensure that the crew arrived on time, that all facilities requested were available and so on. For the ease of administration in the studio they would want to know in advance exactly what you were going to do so that they could have the facility ready, get finished and buzz off without having to wait around while the producer experimented or tried to innovate.

On one level then, the crew leader operated merely as a technical production aide, doing tasks necessary for the efficiency of a complex studio facility. Producers complained that even at this level, they felt pressurised as they were unable to maintain the flexibility needed for initiative.

At a second level, however, the presence and practice of the crew leader can be used as a means of ideological surveillance. Whereas the equivalent position of the crew-leader functions as an 'interfacing person' between technicians and management overseas, at the SABC they actually submit reports on the competence of the producer. Common to most of the studio producers we interviewed were negative crew reports. These were apparently used by management to terminate programmes and the producer function of specific individuals. One producer, for example, told us that after no less than two and a half years of producing a regular programme, the Head of Operations had him shifted because of 'negative reports'. Another was moved sideways because of 'incompetence' and a lack of programme direction. At no previous stage was any dissatisfaction with his performance communicated to him.

When this producer asked to see the studio reports and requested a conference of personnel involved, the Organiser 'backed down' and offered a compromise solution. Said a third producer, "the political outpourings of a frustrated producer, I would have thought, would have had nothing to do with a report of the technical boss". Responding to the question, 'Did the crew leader have an intimidatory effect on producers?' this staffer said:

> I am sure someone like . . . was scared shitless by them. If you didn't understand the technicalities of the thing they could really ride you. For example, we did a programme on guns. We had a PFP guy on the programme. The crew leader was very jerked off about this. He said, 'Why are you bringing politics into this?' (In the SABC nogal). What he meant was, 'Why did you bring in an Opposition representative?'

The connections between the crew leaders and middle management at the Organiser level entrenches management/producer divisions. This division is a hindrance to innovation. It is the first step in the internalisation of orthodox conventions and work roles, which are then seen together as part of 'professional practice', adherence to which guarantees promotion and higher wages. Both producers (usually university graduates) and technicians then find themselves in mutually exclusive fields of work[104]. This structure has been inculcated into the new staffer in the SABC training course, where the curriculum

> . . . tried to formalise relations between producers and operations staff to establish that authority barrier which is a separation of interests really. The SABC had very rigid and fixed orthodox ideas about what constituted television and TV styles. Emphasis was on planning, there was no room for experiments.

This fracturing of production and administration is not peculiar to the SABC, though often the results of it are more magnified than in television stations elsewhere. The practical results of this specialisation as manifested within the SABC are explored by one of our respondents:

> There is a division between programmers and the technical staff. For example, the Head of English Television did not have direct control over crew. He has to go two or three steps up the management ladder before he got to the person in charge of the technical side. He was treated with pretty scant respect on the studio side behind his back. So you could have had producers and operator level people having common cause and producing something. Very often their interests were artificially separated

by this management structure. The crew are very strictly controlled about the hours they could work and the conditions under which they could work requiring signatures, booking forms and so on. So even though they might wish to transcend some of the rules and regulations for producers about times spent in the studio, they were very often bound by very strict supervision. Often they had to protect themselves at the expense of producers.

In other words, the production process, instead of being an integral whole, was fractured into watertight compartments, each of which wascontrolled through separate, though interlinking hierarchies. This administrative structure consequently foreclosed the possibilities of alliance of producers and technicians in opposition to management. The lines of fracture were vertical and superimposed over the horizontal divisions between management positions. This structure rendered the organiser of a department impotent since he was dependent on other positions both higher and lower in the hierarchy to perform adequately.

It is at this point that further effective control is exercised through the finance and budgeting of productions.

Budgets: Financing Ideological Practice

In order to film or video a programme, the producer had to draw up a budget, which included a description of the programme content, and submit it to his or her departmental organiser. There was strong evidence to suggest that budgets were ultimately the final decision of the Personnel Department. Kevin Harris pointed out that:

> In addition to their more conventional role of 'hiring and firing', (the Personnel Department) is vested with the power to approve or disapprove television programmes if the allocation of money to a particular resource or facility within the total programme budget does not meet with their approval – even though this allocation may have been approved and motivated by the Organiser concerned and the Head of English Television[105].

The availability of resources is also an important determining factor in the content of programmes, especially topical items where an immediate reaction is called for. Explained Graham Hayman:

> One of the information controls . . . that militates against a very quick reaction to fast breaking news events was the very cumbersome administration for film shoot budgets or booking of

videovans (Outside Broadcast Units). Videovans were the extreme. You couldn't get them within two months notice. Film crews you could only get on specified days of the week. You could try to persuade other producers who had booked them to swop dates and times, etc.

The restriction on resources, according to William Hachten, tends to localise coverage of news items to Johannesburg and vicinity, thus reducing quick on-the-spot reporting from the rural areas[106]. One magazine producer commented:

> As soon as you start wanting to spend a night away from base, then you have got problems. Then your secretary has to do what is called the 'paper chase' which is to take your request forms around to about four departments spread over four floors for four signatures. These four signatures go through rather different sectors of the SABC hierarchy. For instance, the programme organiser will authorise it if he thinks it is a good idea. You then go down to budget control officers who are basically clerks. They seem to delegate themselves a lot more authority than their title would designate. They would be in touch with, or pull weight or pull rank via the accounting management down onto the programme organiser who didn't have an accounting management service. The budget control officers wouldn't know, for example, how far over or under each programme was from week to week or what sort of cost to footage ratio was considered appropriate.

Low shooting ratios, usually about 3:1, was another factor which limited experimentation. This ratio militated against retakes and cutaways: "You tend to go for one-take interviews, shots that you know will work".

With regard to time-tabling, scheduling and forward planning required to make a documentary production, one producer described the necessary administration as:

> . . . this absurd system that producers are supposed to be psychic and know exactly what their demands are going to be eighteen months in advance. I simply can't stare that far into the future and know exactly what I am going to do. One had to put in a requisition for one's crew, one's stock, one's editing facilities particularly. One had to book in advance for a year . . . it was just a shot in the dark . . . because you didn't know whether you would be shooting or researching, or what you would be doing. You just put in your request and they got shaken around in a big bag, and you were allocated time. The allocations seldom bore

any resemblance to the requests . . . (they were) always far less, about a quarter of what one wanted. At times one was allocated a film crew for six weeks . . . so you had to shoot two or three pictures back to back while you had the crew, and then start editing back to back because the editing time would come in one big lump as well. The whole system was completely unrealistic. To put it in a nutshell, we had to tailor our film-making to suit the system. The system controlled us. It wasn't us as producers of programmes that mattered, it was how well we fitted into the system[107].

Although administration is not usually considered as a formal gatekeeping mechanism, it nevertheless remains one of the most effective ways in which the ideological consistency of a media channel is maintained. It is always present and able to influence all stages of programming from the mooting of an idea through to research, pre-production, production, post-production and ultimately, transmission.

Though administration is common to all productive activities and similar constraints are evident in all television stations, what annoyed the English producers of the Documentary and Magazine Departments is the particular form these organisational controls took at the SABC. They alleged that they have assumed a unique character which reflects the English-Afrikaans divisions in the wider society. In other words, the balance of power within the SABC is clearly located with Afrikaner interests, and the English staffers were emasculated both in terms of the kind of person appointed to the powerless Organiser position, as well as in terms of how the system was stacked against the English producer[108].

The Status of 'Socially Relevant' English Television Programmes

The general consensus amongst our respondents was that the SABC did not want to see Afrikaans television overshadowed in quality by English programmes. Said one producer, "The English Department is purely a token thing. They didn't really want any programmes from the English Documentary Department. If the Head of English Television never got a programme he would have been quite happy because the one or two that he did get gave him problems".

Commenting on the general allegation that the Afrikaans Depart-

ment has a higher budget than its English counterpart, another producer stated:

> In some sense you can justify the fact that they had to have more money, because the SABC was transmitting to both English and Afrikaans viewers. However, English material can be bought overseas. Afrikaans material couldn't be bought overseas. One would spend less buying English (imported) material than making everything here. But, at the same time, looking at just the Documentary Department, quite apart from what we were buying and dubbing into Afrikaans, there were local productions. The Afrikaans side was churning the stuff out with bigger budgets and extraordinarily, they always seemed to have the best trained crews, the best equipment, and more editing time allocated to them. I mean, I personally would end up with four weeks of editing time and twelve programmes to make. It was just ridiculous. I've cut programmes for the SABC after hours, in my own time, using other people's editing rooms just to keep abreast of the work, and there was no recognition of that fact at all. I did it purely for my dedication to the film, and in order to get it finished; it would never have been finished otherwise.

Again, our respondents claimed that Afrikaans producers were given a higher ratio of film to work with. These discrepancies, however, did not apply when English producers offered to make programmes in support of the 'total strategy'. It appears that larger budgets were also being used as an inducement for producers not to challenge the system. An English Magazine producer remarked: "I would get all the support I needed if I produced a programme showing that Biko's death was all kosher – if I did it in such a way that seventy percent of those mindless idiot English-speaking South Africans out there believe me". Despite the extravagance of expression, this remark indicated the cynicism with which English producers in time came to regard the possibility of an in-depth investigation into pressing social issues.

Series, Dramas and Social Issues

That there is a complex interrelationship between the media and the society they serve is apparent in local televised dramas. Edgar Bold, the director of *Westgate* and *Story of an African Farm*, among other programmes, puts the situation this way: "One of the retarding problems in the local feature film and television industries is that script writers skirt the hard core issues because they know the market

they're writing for, and producers have to tread a careful political path if they want to get their money back"[109]. In other words, most local television scripts adopt a middle-of-the-road approach to socio-political questions. Such exceptions as there are stand out by virtue of their difference: selected episodes of *The Villagers, Oh George, Westgate* and the feature film, *The Honeybird.*

Commenting on one of *The Villagers* episodes, which dealt with black working conditions on the mines and which apparently caused a business backlash onto the SABC, scriptwriter John Cundill remarked:

> I seemed to be writing a drama series which wasn't accurately reflecting the scene in South Africa. It wasn't going to the extreme of *Net 'n Bietjie Liefde* where no black face is ever seen or mentioned, where everybody can go to bed at night with a nice cosy feeling that everything is fine and that there is not even the smallest cloud on the horizon. Although *The Villagers* is essentially an escapist soap opera aimed at entertaining the greatest number of people, I would like to inject a little social realism into it and make the programme more relevant and more meaningful to our country which is presently facing very real racial and social problems[110].

Asked how he approached the scriptwriting process in the development of a socially conscious soap opera, Cundill responded:

> I develop my ideas and themes by researching newspapers for relevant information. This particular episode was based on a report published in 1975 or 1976 which described how a group of black theological students masquerading as migrant workers had infiltrated the mining industry. Whether or not this had anything to do with the Moodie Report which caused quite a stir in 1977, I don't know. I then read in the *Financial Mail* that Gatsha Buthelezi had been given the red carpet treatment during a visit to a gold mine belonging to Anglo American. During this public relations exercise a film was made for screening in the homelands in an effort to improve the image of the mining industry and to attract more labour. These events formed the backdrop to this particular episode[111].

After the broadcast of the programme in the last week of October 1977, a number of telephone calls were apparently made to the SABC by viewers complaining that they did not want politics mixed with their entertainment. It seems that about seventy-five percent of the calls were from English-speaking South Africans connected with the mining industry who indicated that they were aware of the problems

and that there was no need to make a public issue of them.

According to Cundill, SABC-TV was discouraged by this reaction, particularly as the SABC seems to regard telephone calls generated by a programme as a significant measure of its social acceptability. Responding to this criticism, Cundill states: "This episode was a private indulgence on my part; I broke the rules altogether. In future the pill will have to be so heavily coated that the average viewer will hardly be aware of the real message. My message came thumping through – a mistake". This episode of *The Villagers* was more than just social realism. Cundill had unwittingly exposed a nerve of social conscience and so elevated an almost insignificant soap opera to a piece of social reporting[112]. *The Villagers*, which had achieved a high level of credibility among the South African mining community, in this episode communicated their attitudes to a larger audience and with much greater impact than any factual report could have done. The SABC in turn took refuge in accepted practice and toned down its portrayal of black miners, as is evidenced in subsequent episodes of *The Villagers* as well as in their later production, *Vimba, the Miner*.

Nearly all our respondents referred to their disillusionment at the responses of English-speaking audiences to their efforts. They felt that not only were they operating in a vacuum at the SABC, but that their efforts in the direction of 'good' television were not appreciated by the majority of their audience. Thus, when something 'different' was presented to them, something which threatened, or at any rate questioned the preconceived ideas of 'the way things should be', audience reaction was predictably hostile.

Winning Consent for the SADF

In 1976, a magazine programme producer was invited by a public relations officer of the South African Defence Force (SADF) to attend a 'top secret' meeting in Pretoria. At a time before it was common parlance, he was told by an unnamed Brigadier about the 'total war', and it was suggested that the producer "push this concept and . . . run little programmes that would point towards the total onslaught on an economic basis". It was also suggested that he consider "a little programme on why you want to become an infantry soldier" at a time when "the guys were standing on landmines for the first time". After deliberation, the producer suggested that, as most of the people who would be involved would be Afrikaans-speaking, the Afrikaans Magazine Department be asked to make the programmes – a suggestion that was firmly turned down, since according to our respondent, the

SADF felt that it was important to get the English people behind them. Since this producer was unwilling to make the films, the project was apparently shelved.

Two years later, in a meeting between SADF personnel and the Director of Television Services, the Head of English Television, the Organiser of English Documentaries and the Head of Afrikaans Television, the subject was once more raised. Following this meeting, the Organiser of the English Documentary Department informed his producers that they should drop the work with which they were presently engaged, and concentrate their efforts on a top priority documentary that would portray South Africa's military preparedness in the face of "events to the north . . . and which would restore confidence and build up the will of the people". A memorandum to this effect was sent to the producers of the department[113]. When challenged by the producers, who thought that the proposed documentary could be regarded as propaganda, the Organiser is reported to have said, 'Let's not be afraid to use the term propaganda – and let's not be ashamed of it'. At a second meeting he compared the project to the morale-boosting film series *Why We Fight* produced by an American, Frank Capra, during the Second World War. Faced with the refusal of all seven incumbent documentary producers, the SABC was compelled to sub-contract the programmes out to an independent company.

On the disclosure of the above events, a predictable denial of the 'propaganda' intention was issued by the Public Relations department of the SABC, who said that while it was "possibly true" it was perhaps not "completely true" and that it was "difficult to say" whether the producers' meeting had taken place[114]. The Director General of the SABC, Dr Jan Schutte, was more adamant: "We don't like using that word (propaganda)", he told an interviewer on television. Despite this denial, five of the seven producers initially present at the meeting reaffirmed both the fact of the meeting and the use of the term 'propaganda'[115].

During the next two years the SABC broadcast at least eight documentaries on different divisions of the armed forces. In addition, at least one drama series, *Opdrag*, set in an army barracks, was broadcast in Afrikaans, as was *Taakmag*, an 'anti-terrorist' police squad series.

In May 1980, SABC-TV producers were again instructed to make a series glamorising the SADF, to coincide with an announcement by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Mr PW Botha. Furthermore, a SADF document outlining plans to "nullify" the Opposition

attack on the Defence Force during the parliamentary debate on the defence budget specifically requested that the SABC be approached with a "requirement" to build up the "image of the competent and confident soldier"[116].

The importance of the continuing broadcast of SADF-orientated programmes and the increased militarisation of programme content should be seen as a strategy to engineer consent for Government policy, particularly among non-NP supporters, who need to be convinced of the necessity of a 'strong South Africa' in which the 'national interest' is paramount. Repeated often enough, these terms pick up their own momentum and become absorbed into the vocabulary, the 'common sense' of the media audience.

Reflections of Class and Class Restructuring

In line with the imagined reality of the SABC's audience as subjects of a white South Africa, the portrayal of blacks on television was initially excluded completely, the rationale being that they would have their 'own' channel at a later date. This was followed by a stage when, our respondents indicated, blacks could be shown provided they fulfilled their accepted roles in the division of labour; for example, as domestic servants, labourers or mine workers, and the occasional affluent individual. Noted one producer, "a Sam Motsuenyane yes – if you show a black man who can be introduced as a Soweto millionaire, that's super – somebody like Thebehali". The latter personality was even allowed to criticise the outlook of the previous Prime Minister, Mr BJ Vorster, and his Cabinet as being static and unrealistic on *Midweek*. On this particular edition, broadcast in October 1980, Mr Thebehali, the so-called 'Mayor' of Soweto[117], was shown describing a favourable image of Soweto's development prospects in the context of the shifting class structure which makes provision for an urban-based black middle class.

This overt criticism by a black interviewee was followed eleven months later by an implicit criticism in *Midweek*, when this magazine programme offered a 'Report on Casinos in the black States'. Interviewees included Chief Pilane, a founding member of the Boputhatswana Opposition Party, who has campaigned against the homelands' exclusion from South Africa, and President Lucas Mangope, a supporter of homeland 'independence' and a protege of the South African Government. Images of Pilane, simply dressed against the background of a humble setting, were juxtaposed with a formal Mangope sitting on his throne behind a large and opulent table, mut-

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tering vague generalisations. Discordant, brash and noisy cuts between poverty and symbols of wealth provided an implicit critique of the entire homeland system.

Black criticism of apartheid is not confined to the English Service alone. When ideological conditions warrant it, criticism was also offered on Afrikaans magazines like *Verslag*. In one instance, on 30 July 1981, a black academic and a black journalist working on *Beeld* were given the opportunity to make very forceful criticisms of apartheid, particularly with regard to hurtful discriminatory actions enforced by law.

As the State realised the need to foster a privileged black stratum, more black faces began to be seen on the television screen after 1979. They appeared not only in advertising, but also on talking head shows, local series and dramas like *Oh George, Westgate, The Honeybird* and so on, as well as American series such as *Archie Bunker's Place, Maude, Magnum, Starsky and Hutch* and *Today's FBI*.

Nearly all the series, serials and dramas containing black actors were found on the English Service. Some of our respondents argued that the purchase of these kinds of multi-racial programmes "is the one loophole in the Broederbond masterplan". This is a rather determinist argument since the values, attitudes, ideology and experience encoded in the series that were imported were not incompatible with the emerging 'tricameral' class structure. A brief analysis of some of these programmes will demonstrate how they interlock with the reformist ideology that has emerged through the restructuring of class alliances.

Liberal response to programmes like *Maude, All in the Family* and *Archie Bunker's Place* tends to ascribe their presence on SABC-TV to a more 'enlightened' or 'progressive' attitude on the part of the Corporation. More compelling reasons, however, lie in the way these programmes are perceived by viewers who hold less liberal ideologies. The best-researched programme in terms of audience interpretations is *All in the Family*, and its sequel, *Archie Bunker's Place*. American studies have shown that to 'unprejudiced' viewers, Archie Bunker is a bigot 'who only hurts himself', but that, by contrast, to 'prejudiced' viewers his son-in-law is the object of scorn and identified as 'the enemy'[118]. He is a 'long-haired, lazy, 'meat-head (Pollack)' who spouts liberal slogans, a 'commie pinko'.

Another liberal is Maude, who 'tends to assume guilt for social injustice'. The appearance of this programme on SABC-TV is a more difficult to explain. *Maude* appears to be a contradiction of the values espoused by the dominant American Conservative ideology: the programme suggests that women are assertive, individualistic and

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autonomous; that 'the nuclear family is not sacred or private' and that 'liberals have more fun'. Herein lies the ideological rider: 'liberals may be right but liberalism may be a rocky road'. She is criticised by her black maid, who accuses her of being a 'bleeding heart liberal', observing that 'Maude feels guilt'. Despite Maude's 'liberation', however, she works hard within the dominant social framework: she acts as a conciliator between Arthur and Vivienne and initiates actions to get them married. She is quite clear who will replace her black maid – her choice is determined by her 'liberal guilt'[119]. Her conflictual liberal values prevail, her contradictory personality and disjointed reasoning ultimately lead to the resolution of conflicts. She survives week after week and re-enacts the contradictions in new ways. *Maude* stands for the epitome of liberal confusion, of liberal hypocrisy and of ideological inconsistency. This programme could thus be seen as a vindication of the anti-liberal stance taken by the SABC. Unfortunately, no survey of audience response has been done on these programmes in South Africa and our observations, at this stage, must be regarded as speculative.

Maude's inconsistency and suspicion of the puritan ethic was counteracted in the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*. This character embodies the system of beliefs and experience upon which capitalist society is based: puritan morality is a viable system; achievement and success are important values; effort and optimism are always rewarded; sociability, external conformity, generosity and consideration for others are appropriate models of social interaction; and most important, 'patriotism is an essential spiritual value'[120], or, as Maude puts it, 'as Mary Tyler Moore goes, so does the nation.'

Patriotism is linked to police violence in *Starsky and Hutch*, where we see two smooth, hip, plainclothes policemen doing their job by legitimately roughing up suspects in the street. This naturalisation of police behaviour is rationalised through their job of ridding America of criminals and people who threaten the established order. Their boss, who is a black man, is part of the legitimation process, for he tacitly condones this behaviour. He also stands for the 'successful' petit bourgeois black who has 'made it' in terms of the attributes which govern the conduct of Mary Tyler Moore[121].

Afrikaans television transmitted a dubbed version of *The Waltons*. Like *Little House on the Prairie*, broadcast on the English Service, *The Waltons* reassures audiences of a continuity and predictability of community. It reaffirms the 'symbolic intimacies' of the besieged Afrikaner Volk. The Waltons are the ideal family and their sense of solidarity "scares away the evil spirits of loneliness, isolation, divorce, alcoholism, troubled children, abandoned elders . . ."[122]. The Waltons – the insiders – minister to visiting troubled outsiders, fractured and injured by the value system beyond this unperturbed rural community. The family is strong in God's care. It has a pastoral emphasis, and like early Afrikaans film, sets rural life against the evils of urban life. Large families and church-going are both essential to goodness and happiness.

Common values link the various series. *Mary Tyler Moore*, in her 1970s version, comes "close to the good old fashioned values we find in the Waltons"[123]; the patriotism of *Starsky and Hutch* moves through all the programmes in different forms, with the idealised portrayal of the police and maintainers of the law in *Cannon, Today's FBI, Colombo, MacMillan and Wife* and (which the South African Police hoped, but failed, to encode in their public relations exercises) *Big City Beat* and *Walk a Crooked Mile*. The technical and dramatic ineptness of the latter programmes, however, are more than compensated for by the American products.

These programmes were buttressed by the portrayal of idealized petit bourgeois lifestyles: *Ladies' Man, Bob Newhart, Op Die Plesierboot/The Love Boat* and *Bosveldhotel*. Bourgeois lifestyles which glorify wealth were found in *Hart to Hart, Dallas* and *Dynasty*. The only programmes which consistently worked against these values were, ironically, local series where black characters comment on white middle class lifestyles. The black characters in *The Villagers* and *Oh George*, particularly the latter, are crucial to Cundill's criticism of South African society. In *Oh George*, the black 'general factotum' acts as a satirical observer of the foibles of the residents of the Ponderosa housing complex. In various episodes he is assigned improbable roles, such as the general manager of Manny's Discount Enterprises, and proxy shareholder in the residents association meeting. He observes and is the prime source of sociological information for the Afrikaans housewife, Renate Muller, who was researching a thesis on community life with her English-speaking neighbours as the subject.

Cundill's location of *Westgate* in terms of social relations rather than geographical position subtly offered a critique of South African society. Cundill was able to offer not only social criticism, but an idealised view of what television 'should be'. A *Midweek* edition broadcast on 20 October 1982 on the 'Case for the Conservation of Sandy Bay,' for example, bore a striking resemblance to the approach taken by the character, Bonny Thornton, in her television defence against the development of Kosi Bay. The portrayal of the advertising and PR industries, though mainly white-orientated, bears a remarkable likeness to actual conditions, down to specific advertising campaigns. *Westgate* has simplistically been accused of lacking a "sense of recog-

nition and empathy", of having "familiarity" but modelling itself on American imports and values[124]. Although it does employ some of the techniques used in *Dallas*, it is misleading to categorise it as simply having a similar content, as many critics have done. *Westgate* is more sophisticated. It exposes the potential for deceit by 'philanthrophic' foundations, business double talk, the tug of war between commercial expedience and moral ethics, and the quest for financial power. The subtlety with which this critical 'message' is portrayed in the series should not be seen in terms of conventions only, but also against Cundill's earlier observation that social criticism has to be so heavily 'sugar-coated' to get through the consensual discourse of the SABC, that most critics have not remarked on the programmes' allegorical implications, or perhaps even noticed them.

We have argued that all television programming from news through magazines and documentaries to serials and dramas are effective in reinforcing the changing class structure. The argument that multi-racial series have been in opposition to the 'Broederbond masterplan' has been shown to be inadequate in view of the way these programmes work to legitimise the capitalist ethic and the stability of class structure. However, as has been argued throughout the chapter, this should not be taken as a hard-and-fast rule. As in any ideological practice, instances can be identified which run counter to the hegemonic ideology and may work against it. These exceptions do not, however, disprove the general trend identified in our initial thesis.

The Commercial Music Radio Stations

In 1935 the Radio Club of Lourenço Marques in Mozambique set up a 24-hour commercial service broadcasting popular music to South Africa. This station was described by Sydney Head as a "music top-40 station aimed at the young adult"[125]. An associate company based in Johannesburg was formed in 1946, and a 100kW transmitter was built to reach the whole of South Africa.

Lourenço Marques Radio, known as 'LM', sold out to the SABC in 1972. The rationale offered by Head for this transaction was "to ensure that the South African Government would prevail should any dispute over programming policies arise". The SABC countered by pointing out that the purchase was motivated by financial considerations only and supported their claim with the observation that the station did not have a news service.

LM Radio was later joined by Swazi Music Radio (SMR) which beamed in medium and short wave from Swaziland. Owned by an American firm, Intermedia, the station was later sold to a South African company, Commercial Radio Enterprises. It was, however, unable to compete for a target audience which was divided between LM and Springbok Radio, and closed within a few years. The studio facility of SMR in Johannesburg was bought out by Kirsch Industries which beamed Radio SR on the SMR signal from Swaziland to the Reef, mainly aiming at Soweto. Radio Truro, geared to Indian listeners, and Radio Parallelo, serving Portuguese listeners, also owned by Kirsch Industries, broadcast at specific times of the day only, and ceased operations in early 1986.

The fact that the homeland governments depend on the system of apartheid for their very maintenance militates against authentic broadcasting independence for the commercial stations. An analysis of their economic structure of ownership makes this clear.

Relatively 'Independent' Capital Radio

The two main shareholders of Capital Radio were initially the Transkei Development Corporation, which is used to channel South African capital into the Transkei, with fifty-one percent, and a syndicate of Cape Town businessmen. In March 1981, the station became wholly owned by the Transkei Government.

The original target of Capital Radio was to broadcast to the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area, but this was found to be technically impossible without an intermediate transmitter located outside the Transkei region. Discussing their options, a Capital Radio spokesman said: "That is a political decision which could take years"[126]. The majority of their present target audience are between the ages of 16 and 24, predominantly Asians located in Natal, supplemented by whites in that Province, and black audiences in Transkei, Ciskei and the Eastern Cape[127].

The format is that of a popular music station with a core of 'top 40' records which are rotated at a predetermined rate once every hour. Other musical fare is made up of rock, reggae, country music and contemporary jazz. Music is interspersed with extensive sports coverage and hourly three-minute news bulletins. The station models itself on the successful formula of the London station of the same name.

Most of the sports covered are those which are viewed as 'integrated'; for example, soccer, cricket, boxing and motor racing. Capital Radio was the only station to report on SACOS-affiliated sports[128] such as Federation soccer and table tennis. The emphasis on soccer has been ascribed to the fact that it is the most popular sport among

the majority of young South Africans, although a spokesman argued that soccer was chosen in preference to rugby because the station could not compete with the SABC's coverage of the latter. According to this spokesman, sport is the one hook through which listeners can be attracted. The other is the three-minute newscasts broadcast on the hour: listeners tune into the radio just before the news programme and tend to stay tuned thereafter. News is considered prime-time listening and is the one department in the station which consistently turns in a profit in terms of its advertising revenue. The radio executives are very aware that their news service provides the station with an 'identity': ". . . the area where (Capital's) independence is most formally expressed is the news bulletins. As such, the news becomes an essential affirmation of what the station is about."

In 1980, the news editor claimed that Capital Radio provided "the only politically independent news broadcast in Southern Africa". Even though the station is now wholly owned by the Transkei, the myth of independence remains strong among its staffers. It appears that this belief is based on the fact that the Transkei Government does not interfere with the music programming of the station. In terms of news, the situation is more ambiguous. In the first two and a half years of its life only two stories critical of the Transkei Government were relayed: one was later said to be factually inaccurate and was withdrawn, while the other, concerning an individual in the Transkei Government, elicited a request for the name of the informant. The absence of direct interference aside, funding by the Transkei Government is the single most important consideration in news selection, despite management's claims to the contrary. The news editor circumvented this problem by omitting all references to Transkeian news:

> We ignore Transkei news because it's tricky to cover it. Most people get themselves thrown out of the country or thrown into jail. All we ever report is basically what comes out on SAPA, of someone being detained, someone dying in prison. We don't tread much further than that.

Nevertheless, the station is subjected to State sanctions even if only in an indirect way. The *Financial Mail*, in an article written on Capital Radio in 1980, noted that: "Tales of stolen telexes and missing books may be merely symptomatic of an unhappy station but there is little doubt that Pretoria was less than impressed with Capital's news coverage – particularly of the Cape riots"[129].

Although denying self-censorship, the dearth of critical comment on the Transkei itself would seem to argue otherwise. The station

general manager does, however, acknowledge certain restraints: "The only way that we are tied is regarding news policy. The Transkei Government has made it clear to us that they do not want us to rock any boats – either theirs or Pretoria's".

Furthermore, although the news is broadcast from transmitters at Herschel and Umzimkulu in the Transkei, it is 'published' in the station's Johannesburg studio. This reveals the technical and legal contradictions of the station. In terms of South African legislation on radio broadcasting, and because the Transkei is not a member of the International Telecommunications Union, Capital Radio functions only at the discretion of the SABC and the SA Department of Posts and Telecommunications. Further, the landline link between the Transkei studios and the Johannesburg office is provided by the Department. This means that the newswriter is subject to both Transkei and South African legislation. Aware of its own ambiguous position, the station adopts a strict policy on the question of news relating to the homelands:

> ('Homelands' is a) contentious word as it's a government label. Try to explain what a homeland is when you use the word, as in: The squatters have been sent back to their government-designated homelands'. The same applies to the 'independent' states. Examples of dealing with: 'Ciskei was declared independent by South Africa in 1981'. 'South African government-proclaimed/government designated independent states.' Try to avoid 'so-called' . . . it's a construction much loved by the SABC, and it's better to offer some explanation[130].

The stated news policy is "the establishment of ideologically non-racial, non-sexist news", that is, "we are trying . . . to find ways of expressing what we say without overt tones of prejudice towards any one person, colour, creed, class, sex or group". The station regards this style to be "part of what 'objective' or 'free' news means when put into practice. 'Free' news means free from bias and partisanship"[131]. The then news editor, Mike Hannah, insisted on the necessity of contextualising news events. Capital PM, a half-hour actuality daily news programme, provided a suitable vehicle: "The function of a true news service is to say "these things happened, and this is why they happened according to various sources". A random sampling of topics included news on pass raids, trade unions, the British anti-apartheid movement, detainees, black protest against apartheid, rent and bread price increases, few of which were featured on the SABC. In nearly all cases, the newscaster called on stringers who in turn interviewed individuals connected with various topics. The range, sources, and subject area of this station consistently have emphasized

non-preferred correspondents and sources, many of whom have worked outside the dominant discourse.

The choice of attributive nouns used by the news editor is just as important in defining context. *The Capital Radio News Style Guide* comments, for example, that the word 'terrorist' is as much a loaded term as is 'freedom fighter'. The news-writer is told to "look at the content and to try to pick the best of guerilla, insurgent, dissident, rebel. When the SADF says SWAPO terrorists we usually say SWAPO members"[132]. This autonomy in linking attributive nouns to content is a practice not shared by the SABC or most English language newspapers.

A further dimension of contextualising news is to report it as *process* rather than in terms of isolated events. One way of doing this is to follow the development of a particular situation over a period of time, rather than simply reporting on its culmination. Comparing Capital's coverage of the 1982 Port Elizabeth motor plant strikes with that reported by the SABC, the general manager of the station commented:

> . . . labour issues . . . are important to everyone who lives in this country. There was a very interesting thing where the SABC two weeks ago headlined the Ford motor strikes on the 8pm TV News, not having touched a labour story for 3 months. Now, we have been following that particular issue from the beginning, seeing it just as another stage of what is happening in the labour situation. The fact that the SABC suddenly headlined that story on the 8 o'clock Saturday News – a peak hour news bulletin – people go into a state of panic: meanwhile (the conflict) has been a long process.

Commenting on Capital's coverage of the 1980 Putco bus strikes, the then news editor noted that the station interviewed both strikers and employer. This, he said, was in direct contradiction of SABC guidelines which insisted that only the 'people in control' were to be interviewed, since the workers case was to be played down by communicating their demands through intermediate authoritative sources. Capital Radio is, furthermore, conscious of how news style affects ideological interpretations. The station's news guide warns news-readers "to watch for loaded words or phrases", particularly those that signify workers as making 'demands', while management are usually described as 'making proposals'[133].

A more significant reason for maintaining stringers may be the importance placed by management on actuality as a device to attract listeners:

> Surveys have shown that the listener tends to place more reli-

ance on studies that come from source than are given to them by a disembodied voice from the newsroom. If there is a story that is coming from Durban it makes sense that the stringer tells you about it. The listener tends to accept the 'truth' of an item more from source.

The difference between Capital Radio on the one hand and the SABC and newspapers on the other is, according to the general manager, 'a question of gatekeeping'. 'Important news' is not selected on the basis of its appeal to particular race/age/income groups, but on "pure newsworthiness . . . determined as far as is possible by taking an objective look at the material". Although expressing reservations about the notion of objectivity, this commentator sees it "as a kind of honesty in what you feel is an important news item": this "rests very strongly on your own kind of inflows, what you receive in". An essential precondition for a 'wide frame of reference' of newsworthiness is a racially and sexually-mixed newsroom, in which different opinions are articulated. Although not independent in the strict sense of the word, Capital Radio is nevertheless one of the few mass media in South Africa trying to present an alternative voice to the highly controlled SABC.

Notes and References

1. During this time a total of twenty-one incumbent and ex-SABC staffers were interviewed. They included announcers, producers and freelance personnel. The television respondents were producers, presenters, camera persons, make-up artists, an organiser and a researcher. Extensive open-ended questions were asked. The average duration of each interview was 3 hours. A total of 64 hours of interviews was assembled. Follow-up interviews were conducted with some of our respondents and the way their responses have been integrated into various drafts of this chapter discussed with them. In some cases, up to three in-depth interviews were conducted. The total hours of interviews, then, by far exceeded the 64 hours of taped material. In all cases, the same questions were asked and the answers cross-referenced with each other. This information was used to supplement published material. These interviews spanned 12 SABC-TV departments with an emphasis on the Documentary and Magazine Departments. Individuals from two radio services were interviewed. Unless otherwise indicated, all unreferenced quotes are drawn from interviews conducted by the authors in 1980 and 1981.
2. See I Wilkins and H Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond.*
3. P Meyer, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Television,* RP34/1971, Pretoria, para. 144. Implicit and explicit in the Meyer Commission Report is the issue of control within the South African context. The Report continually stresses the dangers of the television service falling into the wrong

hands. It is, however, never clearly revealed to whom it is feared the control will fall. The Commission conveniently conflates the 'State' with 'society/community/people', and creates a gross category which neither analytically nor descriptively approaches an understanding of the essential legal, socio-economic and political divisions of South Africa. The word 'society', for example, seems to include three sub-categories: Afrikaner, English-speaker and 'Bantu'. Although lumped into a single category with the same goals, values and ideals, the Report jarrs with contradictions when it attempts to impute cultural differences as being the basis of segregation and separate development. See P Crankshaw, A Williams and G Hayman, 'To Educate, Entertain and Inform: The Meyer Commission in TV', *The SAFTTA Journal*, 1983.

4. Meyer, *op cit*, p8.
5. DP Van Vuuren, *The Effect of Television on some Personality Dimensions of a Group of Afrikaans Speaking Standard Eight Pupils*, HSRC COMM-16.
6. *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 February 1981.
7. See a *Daily Dispatch* study reported on 14 October 1977 which concluded that the pro-Nationalist 53 percent of white voters got 3 000 percent more time than opposition spokesmen to express their views; *The Star's* report of 12 June 1976 which found that in 24 newscasts cabinet ministers were featured 38 times for a total of 27 minutes, in comparison with the combined opposition which was allotted 10 appearances and 3 minutes. A study conducted by the Rhodes University Journalism Department during 1977 found that "the amount of political time on SABC-TV News broadcasts . . . was overwhelmingly weighted with news from or about representatives of the government or the National Party". Unpublished paper: Political Representation on SABC-TV: Content Analysis.

A survey conducted over a two-week period early in 1981 of the SABC's television coverage of the general election preparations by the Fortypercenters, an English-language lobby group, showed that the National Party received 1 200 percent more news coverage than the Progressive Federal Party during the same period. A further study between 11 and 14 March showed that the National Party, although fielding 42 percent of the candidates, received 66 percent of the time devoted to television news coverage of the campaign. The HNP with 23 percent of the candidates had 9 percent of TV time, the NRP with 11 percent of the candidates got 6 percent, while the PFP with 21 percent of the candidates received 19 percent of the television time. See *Sunday Express*, 22 February 1981 and 29 March 1981.

The most exhaustive comparative media study yet done was conducted by Stephen Finn of the UNISA Department of Communications: 'An Analysis of the Extent of and Bias in Mass Media Coverage of the 1981 South African General Election', Department of Communication, unpublished photostat. On p33 he states: "The SABC which could not be faulted regarding bias in its verbal presentation, covered election meetings comprehensively in its reviews. Although the election review on radio was remarkable for its political equitableness, the 23h00 radio news was extremely biased in favour of the NP, particularly when compared with the reporting in the review. This applied to number of mentions, time and order in both cases. The NP was favoured with regard to proportional time and order in the television election review, and also with the time of the video/film broadcasts of election meetings inserted in the news bulletins."

8. SABC *Annual Report*, 1977, p59.
9. *The Star*, 26 February 1981.
10. *The Star*, 4 February 1981.

11. *The Star*, 27 February 1981.
12. *The Star*, 2 June 1981.
13. The official reply states: "With regard to the question whether the SABC would consider introducing a special weekly discussion (other than *Verslag* or *Midweek*) on television where experts discuss current controversial subjects, the SABC attitude is that the SABC does not present controversy for its own sake. In terms of our broadcasting licence we are instructed to 'disseminate information, to entertain and to educate'. If there is controversy in this process – very well, but we do not follow a policy of initiating or presenting controversy for the sake of controversy." Reported in *The Star*, 6 November 1980.
14. The Fortypercenters offer the following example: "On 17th May (1980) the most important item on the local political scene was the Advocate General Bill. Yet, it was afforded only third place in the 18h00 English Service News Bulletin, behind items on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and a captured oil tanker. One suspects that such relatively unimportant items are often introduced as 'camouflage'."
15. The example offered with regard to *Current Affairs* is the total onslaught against S.A.: "Many people in this country would consider the 'total onslaught' to be against the National Party Government and its policies, not against 'South Africa' as such". Taken from a letter addressed to the Director of SABC News Services dated September 1979. The author of the letter is Douglas Alexander, who was National Chairman of Fortypercenters at the time.
16. In contrast, the Government complained that "SATV is far too good to the PFP", that the Corporation "is hopelessly too favourable to the PFP". These statements were made during a parliamentary debate on the Broadcasting Amendment Bill. See *Evening Post*, 5 March 1982.
17. Interview with authors on 3 February 1981.
18. *Sunday Tribune*, 21 August 1977.
19. *Sunday Times*, 6 September 1981.
20. J Seiler, 'The World Perspectives of South African Media', *Communications in Africa*, vol 1, no 5 (1974) p29.
21. D Fuchs, 'Die Radio en die Gesproke Woord', *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, vol 9 (1969) p241.
22 The nine stations which broadcast in African vernaculars were: Zulu, Xhosa, North Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, Ndebele and Swati.
23. CA Giffard, 'South African Attitudes Toward News Media', *Journalism Quarterly* (Winter 1976) p653.
24. The task of berating the English press is left to the Perskor owned, pro-Government *The Citizen*.
25. *The Citizen*, 13 December 1977.
26. Fuchs, *op cit*, p242.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, pp242–3.
29. Hansard, 17 may 1977, cols 7850–1. This is an embellished transposition of an SABC News Service Directive dated 1966.
30. Seiler, *op cit*, p31.
31. Ibid.
32. SABC *Annual Report*, 1980, p69. Fuchs, *op cit*, p243, commenting on *Current Affairs* maintains that freedom is the product of striking a fine balance between rights and duties. In contrast with the trends to discredit authority, *Current Affairs* submits that there can be no harmony or progress where authority abdicates . . . *Current Affairs* defends the rights of all communities to be themselves and

to develop in accordance with their own nature. A total of 791 000 adult whites –329 000 English-speaking, 462 000 Afrikaans-speaking – listen to this programme daily.

33. H Gans, *Deciding What's News*.

34. Letter by François Rautenbach in *Rand Daily Mail*, 5 January 1981.

35. Seiler, *op cit*, p31.

36. Ideology works through quiz shows such as *Test the Team*, in, for example, the phrasing of questions. Very often, a question may be asked which assumes the independence of the homelands, for example 'what is the capital of Transkei?' Variety programmes have an emphasis on the family as a cohesive unit conveying with it the seeds of petty-bourgeois ideology. The prizes associated with these programmes have a strong attraction for lower-middle-class listenership, whereas the English service merely posted out token amounts for listener contributions to, eg, *Calendar* and *Audiomix*. Choice of music on different stations is dictated by the class position of the perceived audience. On Springbok and three regional stations radio requests demanded light and popular music, whereas the English and Afrikaans services played classical and light music. Classical music tends to be the preference of the professional elements within the petit bourgeoisie, whereas pop and country music is preferred by youth and the lower middle classes. Sport, as Wilkins and Strydom have shown, has been co-opted by the Broederbond in the interests of the hegemonic bloc. This connection is never identified in sportscasts and the listener is persuaded that s/he is the receiver of a report on a seemingly apolitical activity. See I Wilkins and H Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond*.

37. JAS Hale, *Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting*: p87.

38. Fuchs, *op cit*. This line of thought is pursued to its logical extent in television, where Nguni-speaking staffers are not encouraged to work on Sotho language programmes, for example. A clash of cultures would affect the 'character' of a programme: "We are dealing with different ideas and different people – it is obvious that we will get different programmes" said a Mr Theuns van Heerden, a senior staffer at the SABC. See *The Star* (Tonight Supplement) 18 June 1981. In practice, however, this does not always work.

39. SABC *Annual Report*, 1972.

40. SABC *Annual Report*, 1981, p86.

41. Paper delivered at the RSA 2000 Conference organised by the HSRC in 1980: 'Die Radio en Kultuurbevordering, met Besondere Verwysing na Swart Kultuur'. It is significant that Mr Tsungu was the only black speaker at a conference which purported to deal with South Africa up to the year 2000. His presence at the conference clearly hinged on his passive and indeed, co-operative manner with regard to his alliance with SABC and its associated discursive practices. Extract translated from the Afrikaans.

42. SABC *Annual Report*, 1980, p67. See also *Annual Report*, 1981, p62.

43. *Sunday Express*, 10 July 1983. See also *The Star*, 4 July 1983.

44. L Switzer, *Politics and Communication in the Ciskei, an African Homeland in South Africa*.

45. SABC *Annual Report*, 1981, p83.

46. Switzer, *op cit*.

47. *News/Check*, 12 January 1968, p12.

48. The interpenetration of these sites of ideological production and reproduction ensures the orchestrated communication of the dominant ideology to South African blacks. This process is, however, not without its contradictions and crises.

49. See GS Strydom, *The Establishment and Expansion of the School Radio Service of Radio Bantu*.

50. Ibid, pv.

51. Ibid, pvi.

52. Ibid, p25.

53. Ibid.

54. See G Cronjé, *Kultuurbeinvloeding Tussen Blankes en Bantu in Suid-Afrika* (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1959) p54.

55. See WA Landman, *Leesboek vir die Christen-opvoeder* (Pretoria: NG Boekhandel, 1972) p15.

56. Strydom, *op cit*, pp25–6. This emphasis on 'labour' has its roots in the very rationale of Bantu Education. Dr Verwoerd, as Minister of Native Affairs, stated: "There is no place for him (the Black) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour". See Hansard, Union of Africa, Senate Debates, Second Session, 11th Parliament, 7–11 June 1954, cols 2 595–662.

57. Strydom, *op cit*, p39.

58. Ibid, p27.

59. Ibid, p38.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid, pp58–9.

63. SABC *Annual Report*, 1973, p22.

64. Strydom, *op cit*, p17.

65. Ibid, p93.

66. SABC *Annual Report*, 1981, p88.

67. Ibid, pp84–6. Among the State-employed contributors to be given airtime in 1981 were: Mr SP Botha, Minister of Manpower, Mr GJ Rousseau, Director General of the Department of Education and Training, Dr Lapa Munnik, Minister of Health, Welfare and Pensions, Dr CN Phatudi, Chief Minister of Lebowa, the Prime Minister, Mr PW Botha, Brigadier CS Sebe, Chief of staff in the Ciskei, Professor JP de Lange, Chairman of the HSRC Investigation into Education, Chief FN Jonilanga, Minister of Education in Ciskei, Mr H van der Watt, Chairman of Commission for Co-operation and Development.

68. Ibid, p86.

69. Ibid.

70. Tshungu, *op cit*.

71. Ibid.

72. SABC *Annual Report*, 1977, p59.

73. SABC *Annual Report*, 1979.

74. This document was published after 1961.

75. Fuchs *op cit*, p241. The common sense incorporated in Fuchs's statement is reminiscent of the dedication to a booklet outlining Christian National Education: ". . . to all the men and women who work with love and devotion for the education of the youth of our people and who wish to be true to the ideal of handling over unspoilt to the younger generation all that is good and pure and noble in our people's *past* and of helping to build on the foundation of our people's history the future of the Boer nation" (emphasis added). This example serves to illustrate the way in which elements of discourse are shielded through their repetition in various forms and circumstances to embed them into the preferred view of the social fabric. See Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies, *Christian-National Education Policy* (1949) p2.

76. Other programmes on Springbok Radio were: *Top Level* and *Deadline Thursday Night* (discontinued in 1982); English Service: *Microphone-In*, *Dr Livingstone I*

Presume (discontinued before the demise of the station) *Weekend Newsroom*; Afrikaans Service: *Spitstyd, Rekenskap, Die Week in die Nuus*.

77. This is in contrast to Springbok Radio, which had a middle class/working class profile. Springbok broadcast numerous soap operas in both English and Afrikaans which exemplified these class attitudes in a particularly coherent way.

78. The exact breakdowns were Afrikaans Service 10 hours (7,6 percent) and English Service 6,5 hours (5 percent).

79. SABC *Annual Report*, 1980, p81.

80. The churches represented on the Advisory Committee for English broadcasts are: The Church of the Province, the Church of England, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Congregational churches. On the Afrikaans Advisory Board, the NGK from all four provinces, the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk of Africa and the Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa are represented. Only churches represented on the Boards are permitted broadcast time: "Religious news from any other church, belief or denomination must not be accepted for broadcasting". See SABC News Service Directive (undated).

Multi-racial services have been broadcast on the English Service of SABC-TV. Both Indian and Coloured ministers have presented the epilogue, as well as broadcast (external) church services. On radio, there were no broadcasts from the NGK Sending Kerk (Mission Church) despite the *Annual Report's* acknowledgement of a large 'coloured' listenership.

81. SABC *Annual Report*, 1980, p81.

82. B Spong, The Churches and the SABC (Photostated paper for the consultation on communication, 1980).

83. Veronica Potter in *Sunday Times*.

84. Ibid.

85. This point was supported by a BBC stringer for Southern Africa, who pointed out that the SABC usually appoints the most conservative of radio stringers though more liberal and more credible ones are to be found in the same locations. Interview, July 1982.

86. Special Supplement to *Financial Mail*, 14 March 1975: 'All you ever wanted to know about TV but were afraid to ask . . .' p17.

87. K Harris, Testimony to the Commission of Enquiry into the Mass Media with specific reference to the investigation of the role played by the South African Broadcasting Corporation Radio and Television Services, in the Spectrum of 'Mass Media' in the Republic of South Africa. 1981, photocopy, p16.

88. Dr Jan Schutte, quoted in *Financial Mail*, 14 March 1975, p17.

89. For further details about the architecture of the Centre, see *Planning and Building Developments* (Supplement) No 19 1976.

90. For specific details see Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit*.

91. Harris, *op cit*, pp10–11.

92. This document, entitled 'Departmental Policy', was issued by Don Briscoe, Organiser, and dated 17 November 1977. The only other clear policy statement issued to documentary producers was drawn up by P de Bruin, Director of Television Programmes, and entitled 'Guidelines on Violence in Television Programmes'. It was sent to all producers in the Documentary Department. The inter-office memo was signed by Don Briscoe and dated 4 October 1978.

93. Harris, *op cit*, p18, offers the following synopses for the programmes he mentions: "*A Sense of Destiny* – a documentary on the Afrikaner, produced by Pat Rogers; *Under the Southern Cross*, a documentary on the Coloured community, produced by Adrian Herring; *Black Education* – an investigative documentary on the state of affairs of black education in South Africa. Produced by Adrian Herring, this

programme was placed on the shelf and has never been transmitted; *Vimba, The Miner* – a documentary produced by Francis Gerard on mining migrant labour. This programme relied heavily on 'voice over' from the principle character to convey its message. Once Gerard had resigned, this original 'voice over' sound track was removed, and a new sound track carrying a 'management-sanctioned' message was recorded and laid for transmission; *Four South Africans* – a programme comparing the respective lifestyles of a white, Black, Indian and Coloured employee, all working in a Johannesburg supermarket – produced by Francis Gerard. This programme has been shelved and never transmitted; *Shelter* – a programme on the housing situation of all race groups in South Africa. Produced by John Richards, this programme has never been broadcast; *The Band* – using a group of professional Coloured musicians as the vehicle, this documentary set out to communicate to a white viewing audience the aspirations and frustrations of the Coloured youth in South Africa". Produced by Harris, this latter programme was edited under management sanction after his departure from the SABC, and not in accordance with the initial script and treatment. The programme that was eventually broadcast achieved precisely the opposite effect to that intended. Stripped of all meaningful content, what resulted was a musical programme, showing a happy band of 'coloured' musicians, playing their 'coloured' music, to their 'coloured' fans, who were all contented and happy in their position as 'coloureds' living in South Africa.

94. Harris, ibid, pp16–19.

95. See *The Star*, 9 April 1976.

96. *The Star* (Tonight Supplement), 3 June 1981.

97. *Sunday Times*, 6 September 1981. This paper reports: "A source close to Mr Heath said . . . that . . . (Heath) had been asked by Mr Williers whether he thought the treatment of Nyanga squatters by Dr Koornhof's department negated reforms and change being brought about in this country. Mr Heath said he did not think so, but South Africa must never underestimate the huge impact the handling of the squatter situation has had on international opinion. He warned that the wholesale transfer of the squatters had clouded international perceptions, and the squatters have had a tremendously negative impact abroad and clouded developments said to be going on in this country". The SABC coverage of Mr Heath's visit would have made a fascinating study since he was given tremendous exposure on his arrival to South Africa, but once it was realised that his comments on this country were far from complementary the SABC immediately toned down his utterances by not reporting them at all. After a few days, the SABC again reported his opinions on the air but this time they were ready with counter opinions to blunt Heath's criticisms.

98. See *Rand Daily Mail*, 2 September 1982.

99. *Rand Daily Mail*, 3 September 1982. Also see chapter 3 in Volume 2 under the heading 'Politics and the Afrikaans Press'.

100. Ibid.

101. *Rand Daily Mail*, 4 September 1982.

102. Letter by Kevin Harris to the *Financial Mail*, 7 December 1979; Harris, *op cit*, p18, and interviews with ex-SABC staffers.

103. In the pre-recording of a programme for later broadcast, it is quicker to record all elements in a programme in real time sequence from start to finish. A more time consuming way is to record a single element at a time, to stop the recording process, rehearse and organise the following element, and then continue the recording process by means of an assemble edit.

104. See KG Tomaselli and G Hayman, 'View Two: Conflicting Paradigms and Ideolo-

gies', *Critical Arts*, vol 2, no 2 (1981) p82. This dichotomy between producer and technician is explored further in G Hayman, 'Television in Journalism: Problems, Aims and Solutions', *SAFTTA Journal*, vol 1, no 2 (1980) pp15–19.

105. Harris, *op cit*, p13.

106. W Hachten, 'Policies and Performance of South African Television', *Journal of Communication*, vol 19, no 3 (1979) pp66–72.

107. In a SABC Staff Opinion Survey conducted by MRA dated February 1981, 88 percent of staffers agreed with the statement that 'Management is not always aware of our problems'; 80 percent agreed that 'One can get into trouble if you really speak your mind'; and 78 percent agreed that 'There's too much red tape in this place'.

108. Some of our interpretations are supported by a document released to the press after completion of our field work. See ibid, p12. 60% of SABC staffers interviewed "felt that there was a fair amount or a great deal of favouritism in the SABC. This was more prominent amongst English speakers (71%), those in TV Programmes (69%) and TV Operations (71%), those who had been with the SABC for 6 – 9 years years (69%) and those with a post matric or university education (67%)." On p6, it is reported that 55% of the staffers agreed with the statement that 'It looks as if the powers that be at the SABC favour Afrikaans speakers'. It is not indicated what percentage of SABC employees are English-speaking. Furthermore, this last statement of dissatisfaction is difficult to assess in terms of radio or TV service because the percentage has been smoothed over by the agglomerative presentation of the data.

109. Quoted in *The Star* (Tonight Supplement), 3 September 1981.

110. Interview, 1978.

111. The synopsis is as follows: "A fictitious homeland chief has been invited to visit Village Reef – a public relations exercise to be covered on film. The Chief will be told the usual things: how wages and working conditions have improved, etc. In the meantime a report of conditions researched by black students has been published in the press. The story reveals callousness of men being treated as labour units, of receiving rough treatment from both blacks and whites, not being able to air their grievances: in short all the things which appeared in the actual newspaper report. McCrae, the General Manager, is shocked and organises a quick survey. The next day the chief is shown around the mine and is covered by the PR camera crew. Meanwhile McCrae learns that grievances do exist on his own mine. He is surprised since like many top executives, he assumes that he knows better that the workers what their grievances are. He always thought that these could be cured by improving recreational facilities, paying better wages and handing out the odd wad of tobacco. His prejudices are laid bare. Next thing the chief is trundled in for discussion which is to be filmed. The producer says, 'Will you say a few words and after that chief will you come in?' McCrae makes some bland statements welcoming the chief, about improving working conditions, better wages, etc. The producer says 'That's fine. Chief will you come in now'. The chief says, 'Thank you for the excellent dinner. But I wonder Mr McCrae if everything you have told me is in accordance with the facts. Because I read in the newspaper recently . . .' 'Cut, cut' says the producer, 'Exactly what we wanted. Now we'd just like the two of you to stand up and shake hands'. Very embarrassed they stand up and shake to the tunes of 'Times are changing, blacks are changing, we are changing'. 'OK – wrap up', shouts the film producer. When the film crew have gone McCrae acknowledges that there is truth in the report and that an enquiry will be instituted. McCrae said that he had telephoned the president of the Chamber of Mines about the report and the script simply repeated what the president actually said as reported in the newspaper". Cundill qualified his remarks by stating "I didn't know how this episode would be received. I was afraid that it might look a little paternal and condescending towards the blacks".

112. The Moodie Report, the black theological students submissions and this particular episode of *The Villagers* were a somewhat delayed manifestation of a report commissioned by the Chamber of Mines three years earlier, during 1974. The probing qualitative survey was tabled together with a wide range of recommendations for changes in the recruiting procedures and living conditions for black miners. The Chamber apparently rejected the results, but they were echoed later in the form of the Moodie Report and the other investigations. (The Villagers was rescreened in 1986.)

113. See *Sunday Express*, 30 March 1980.

114. Ibid. Also see Harris, *op cit*, pp24–22.

115. *Sunday Express*, 6 April 1981.

116. *Sunday Express*, 30 March 1981. In addition to these dramas are numerous romanticised documentaries and discussion programmes. The participants in the latter are heavily skewed towards the dominant discourse and not once was the structural reasons behind the 1982 call-up questioned. Emphasis was rather been on reassurance on the minimisation of the detrimental effects to business and the economy. These programmes were supported by numerous documentaries shot in the 'operational area' romanticising the role of the soldier on 'the border'. Al Venter, for instance, produced a number of 'personal appraisals' which, though personal, are hardly idiosyncratic. As John Michel, TV critic of the *Rand Daily Mail* notes: ". . . of course Mr Venter is working only to make others happy – like his accountant, military leaders and the Auckland Park policy makers". (*Rand Daily Mail*, 10 November 1982.) Similar imagery was found in the *Sunday Times*, thus indicating the unity of the media in their support of the cohesion of the nation as then constituted.

117. In a survey conducted by *The Star* Mr Thebehali obtained only 5 percent of a poll in a hypothetical 3-cornered context with Dr N Motlana, the Chairman of the self-styled Committee of Ten and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha movement.

118. See N Vidmar and M Rokeach, 'Archie Bunker's Bigotry: A Study in Selective Perception and Exposure', *Journal of Communication*, vol 24 (Winter 1974). See also J W Chesebro and C D Hamsher, 'Communication, Values, and Popular Television Series' in Television: *The Critical View*, edited by H Newcomb, pp6–25; and P Wander, 'Counters in the Social Drama: Some Notes on All in the Family', in Newcomb, *op cit*, pp35–42. South African advertising research into the likes and dislikes of urban black television set owners suggests that men dislike *All in the Family* 'because Archie Bunker was unintelligent and undignified, which they felt degraded his image as a man'. (*Greymatter*, October 1980, p2.)

119. Chesebro and Hamsher, *op cit*, p18.

120. Ibid, pp17–19.

121. Ibid, pp14–16.

122. A Roiphe, 'Ma and Pa and John Boy in Mythic America: The Waltons', in Newcomb, *op cit*, p67.

123. See Chesebro and Hamsher, *op cit*, p7.

124. G Garden, in 'Behind the Box', *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 October 1982. This critique builds from a muddled conception of 'culture'. This confusion is reinforced by a leader published on 9 October which emphasized the idea that 'English speakers have no culture'. See interview with Cundill in *The SAFTTA Journal*, vol 5, 1985.

125. SW Head, *Broadcasting in Africa*. This reference details the history of 'independent' broadcasting in South Africa.

126. The authors are heavily indebted to Robert Purdy for the empirical data on Capital Radio which forms much of this section. Purdy conducted a total of six hours of open-ended interviews during 1982. This material was supplemented by our own research, including interviews with 'independent' radio personnel.
127. *All Media and Products Survey*, 1981.
128. SACOS is the South African Council of Sports, a non-racial sports body opposed to officially sanctioned sports bodies which they see as part of the apartheid system. No SACOS-sponsored meetings are reported on the SABC. SACOS is objectified as an 'enemy' by the State and is subject to numerous tirades broadcast on *News Commentary*.
129. *Financial Mail*, 1 October 1980.
130. *Capital Radio News Guide*, p5.
131. Ibid, p8.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.

Chapter 4

Square Vision in Colour: How TV2/3 Negotiates Consent

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The year 1976 saw a radical change in South African leisure-time behaviour patterns. It also highlighted an awareness of what Ernest Mandel calls the 'third technological revolution'[1], one in which electronics industrial development becomes a prime motor of the post-industrial economies. In South Africa, the social and political effects of the revolution were anticipated by the Meyer Commission which was constituted by the State to report on the feasibility of a television service[2]. It is commonly thought that the eventual introduction of television so many years after its appearance in the rest of the world, was largely because that arch-recalcitrant, Albert Hertzog, who had opposed television, was banished to the political wilderness by the National Party. In fact, many more complex processes were at work and would have overshadowed Hertzog even if he had remained in the Cabinet[3].

The first factor influencing the introduction of television to South Africa was the revolution in electronics technology. The Meyer Commission stressed the looming era of satellite communication. The Commission realized that the simple erection of a small receiving dish in a backyard would enable television-starved South Africans to tune into satellite-transmitted material whether or not South Africa was formally locked into the world television grid. It therefore argued that the best way to counter this incursion of foreign material would be to meet it through institutionalizing the use of allotted television

frequencies in South Africa in a manner which would give the SABC total control.

The second factor was the changing basis of the South African political economy as it shifted from primary to secondary industry. This shift marked a critical period in the South African economy, which in turn forced a political break within the National Party. At the same time, due to the structural economic movement, the two traditionally separate strands of capital – English and Afrikaner – began to merge, not only in response to economic processes, but also to shore up the hegemonic bloc in its efforts to counter both internal and external pressure on the State.

Thirdly a concomitant of the growth of manufacturing was the emergence of information-based industries in South Africa which drew on electronics engineering. This technology derived from television and computer research[4]. Although this long wave of capitalist development began as early as 1940 in the United States[5], South Africa was able to resist its television applications until the seventies, chiefly for ideological reasons. Technological revolutions, which have always had multinational dimensions, have unavoidable repercussions on other sectors of the economy. It therefore became increasingly difficult for South Africa to isolate itself from this technological and industrial advance. As the use of electronics became common to an increasing range of commodities, particularly at the beginning of the 1970s, it may be speculated that the ultimate introduction of television to South Africa would have been inevitable, Hertzog or not. If it had not been introduced, whole sectors of productive technologies, ranging from armaments, through sophisticated computers to video games, would have progressively isolated South Africa from the global function of capital. In other words, international productive forces would have ensured the eventual introduction of television.

Thus the decision to establish a television service in the mid-1970s largely coincided with fundamental economic, industrial, political, social and ideological influences which were all bearing on South Africa at a particular historical conjuncture. A full understanding, therefore, of why TV2/3 was introduced in 1982 requires a detailed analysis of the South African class structure as it presented itself during this period.

TV2/3 is not simply a 'Radio Bantu with pictures'. Its *raison d'être* is far subtler than that of Radio Bantu, and this chapter will show that its content is directly related to the emerging class structure which was stimulated by the beginning of structural modifications within the political economy during the early 1970s. Radio Bantu,

however, remains important to the shaping of ideological perceptions of mainly rural and homeland dwellers. The following section briefly outlines the origin and development of the South African class structure in relation to the content of broadcasting media.

Permanent Urbanization and the Strategy of Co-optation

The rate of capital accumulation in the early period of capitalist development from 1870 until the 1930s depended on the maintenance of the pre-capitalist relations of production in the reserve economy which provided a portion of the means of reproduction of the migrant labour force[6]. Capital was thus able to pay the worker below the cost of his reproduction, a situation that was enforced through migrant labour, geographical and job segregation. This form of economic organization was legitimized by various ideological mechanisms, amongst which Radio Bantu had a high profile. The ideological discourse of this station is aimed at the maintenance and, in fact, the renaissance of traditional tribal values and social institutions and their implementation in the homelands[7]. In this way the service hoped to socialize 'economically dynamic' subjects to take their places in the relations of production and 'earn (their) daily bread by performing labour'[8].

In the latter half of this century the emphasis within capitalist development had shifted from mining and agriculture to manufacturing as well. Until the mid '70s, skilled employment in the latter provided jobs mainly for whites displaced from the land. The continued expansion of manufacturing, taken together with the constraints of the job colour bar, resulted in a shortage of skilled labour which inhibited the growth of manufacturing, particularly after the late 1960s. Although Radio Bantu was sensitive to the changing needs of the economy, its primary audience remained the rural and homeland-based audiences. It was necessary, therefore, that Radio Bantu continue to emphasize the benefits of the homelands, the need for an urban-based black middle class notwithstanding. Television, however, offered a channel tailor-made to reach the latter audience with a voice different from that of Radio Bantu. The distribution of transmitters ensures a mainly metropolitan reception, intercepting the living spaces of the new black middle classes which the state is attempting to co-opt into an alliance with capital[9]. An analysis of the content of TV2/3 cannot be divorced from an understanding of these underlying politico-economic processes.

One of the primary requirements for ensuring the conditions of capital's reproduction has been the provision of more extensive training facilities – hence the appointment of the De Lange Commission into education and the subsequent debate on the implementation of its proposals. As will become evident in our content analysis, a prime value in TV2/3 documentaries and magazine programmes is placed on education as a path to 'success'.

A second requirement has been the provision of better housing for urban-based workers, with the possibility of 'home ownership'. Adequate housing is one of the prerequisites of a stable workforce, and TV2/3 communicates a petty-bourgeois orientation which emphasizes the desirability of landscaped gardens, renovations, a pride in the home and the wholesale adoption of household appliances.

The economy has an urgent need for skilled labour to fill the service sectors, especially as teachers, nurses, administrators and bureaucrats. The recommendations of the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions and the resulting legislation intend to foster a limited pool of permanently urban-based, relatively highly paid skilled labour. The increased security of workers will, it is hoped, encourage higher levels of productivity and skills acquisition. This accords with the picture presented on TV2/3, which places inordinate emphasis on the technology of production, the positive role of trade unions in ensuring good labour relations, the possibility of class mobility, consumption and typically petty-bourgeois lifestyles. A stable and urbanized life is taken for granted in magazine and variety programmes. (Series, serials and plays, however, often allude to the less savoury aspects of township life.)

The incorporation into the ideals espoused by capital, however, includes only the small urban-based petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat proper. Rural blacks are consequently more effectively excluded from the mainstream of economic development. Nevertheless, as we shall show, particularly with regard to documentaries and magazines, there is an attempt to reassure the urbanized viewers of the well-being of their homeland counterparts[10]. Simultaneously, the urban dwellers are provided with models of behaviour to help them absorb a middle-class ideology with a clear emphasis on production and consumption. These television images delineate the imaginary relations between viewers and their world in such a way as to further the interests of capital, and the maintenance of white hegemony. Despite the crude functionalism of this statement, the analysis will show that TV2/3 is not a monolithic institution which has total control over its products. Contradictions do occur.

'Internal Shadows of Exclusion': The Intertextual Relations of TV2/3

The above analysis has identified four major themes that can be expected to manifest themselves in the texts of television programmes broadcast on TV2/3. These are:

(i) A sharp differentiation within the class structure, as identified above, between urban and rural dwellers;

(ii) an emphasis on education in relation to the ideological pre- eminence of production and, as a corollary of this, consumption. This is in turn related to:

(iii) the third technological revolution mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The extended market provided by the new black urban middle classes will lead to an increase in production, particularly of electrical and electronic goods, including TV sets (also because of coincidental electrification of black urban townships on a massive scale). Finally, there is

(iv) a greater need to obtain hegemony by consent rather than by overt force.

The material presented in this chapter is extracted from a much larger study which examines the common internal currents in the texts of magazines, variety shows, quiz games, series, serials, plays, sport and news[11]. For the purposes of this chapter we will examine three magazine/documentary programmes.

Since television displaces reality through a complex mediated relationship with its context, this content analysis will focus on the textual, that is, the significatory operations of the text, as well as its intertext[12]. The latter accounts for the programme's relationship to the broad historical weave of discourse and the way it responds to other texts, televisual or otherwise. In other words, television programmes echo a variety of dynamic discourses which exist beyond their immediate texts.

Texts do not directly reflect the mode of economic production and the attendant political and ideological systems within which they operate. The intertextual relations are far more complicated than the commonly assumed correspondence between 'reality' and 'media reality'[13]. Equally important is what the text cannot say. This study will examine what is said in the unsaid, and identify the *structured absences* that are necessary to the text's constitution. These 'internal shadows of exclusion', as Althusser calls them, identify the ideological tensions which occur at particular historical conjunctures. While exceptions do occur, the most obvious absence on TV2/3 during the

study period were the subjects of the dominant classes – whites. Sports programmes were an exception, however. Inclusion of whites into the texts of series, serials and plays would have the effect of pin-pointing the source of ideological tension. As Harriet Gavshon remarked with regard to films aimed at blacks, the "tension cannot be avoided and the absence of the ruling classes from the text highlights that there is a conflict, and that the only way to deal with it is to omit it"[14]. These absences are, of course, functional for 'willed' apartheid ideology, as they indicate that racial segregation is normal and natural, though integration is permissible under certain circumstances, as for example, in sport.

We now move to a detailed analysis of specific programmes. It should be pointed out that this study will not consider the content of TV2/3 in discrete categories which tend to fragment the overall flow of programmes. The categories are merely the basic starting point. The intertextual relations criss-cross the programming as a whole and ideas initiated in one programme are developed in others, reinforced in different categories and affirmed by the general ideological discourse of political rhetoric, news and commentary derived from the wider spectrum of media and from social life itself.

'Magazines': A Sort of Actuality-Narrative

We will examine three programmes which deal with the relationship between production and consumption by the skilled working class. The first introduces a trade unionist and emphasizes the need for productivity and stable work relations. The second establishes the relationship between production and consumption. A third alludes to the rewards of working within the system, in a programme on dancing and exercise as leisure-time activities.

The textual modifications found in these programmes are typical of TV2/3's programming, and differ from the currently accepted television conventions found on TV1 and overseas stations. The reason is partly because TV2/3 is characterized by a high degree of technical ineptitude, cost cutting and contempt for its audience, all of which has the effect of confusing styles, genres, conventions and other modes of address with each other. This muddle of signs, however, has a definite ideological function.

Izimbali Zesiwe (Flowers of the Nation) was directed by B B J Coetzee and H J Spring with a black crew and broadcast on 31 May 1982. In the title sequence a chessboard-style optical effect of sixteen frames depicts individual black women in work situations; switch-

board operators, theatre nurses, drivers, and consumers, all petty-bourgeois occupations. The central frame magnifies in turn each of the smaller frames which surround it. The speed with which the frame changes indicates a fast moving society, unlimited job opportunities, occupational mobility, an urban technological environment, contented workers, security and variety. Symbolically, it alludes to the 'freedom' of blacks to determine their occupations. The women are depicted in individual work situations, the accent being on their self-advancement or 'progress' as 'flowers of the nation'[15]. Significantly, the programme does not identify which 'nation' or 'nation state' is the focus. The use of a Zulu-speaking presenter hints that the nation in this case is Kwa-Zulu, a common sense category which links language to 'nation'.

The chessboard title sequence changes into a conventional shot of a magazine presenter. She is well dressed and addresses the camera directly. She speaks 'pure' Zulu, a 'homeland' language which cannot encompass the urban-technological setting presupposed by the title sequence. It will, however, be remembered from Chapter 3 that the SABC Language Advisory Board oversees the discursive 'purity' of vernacular languages and provides the requisite terms to account for technological discourse.

The presenter is relaxed, sitting in comfortable surroundings. The unconventionally long duration of this shot contrasts with the dynamic title sequence. Towards the middle of the shot the camera zooms slowly into a close-up, reinforcing the authoritativeness of the presenter. The contrast between the jazzy fragmented images of the opening and the composure of the presenter introduces the idea that sophistication is the solution to conflicts and the bewildering array of job choices available in an urban middle-class environment. The title sequence thus creates the context within which the presenter will conduct the interview that follows. The interviewer links her comments to the audience's view of life by using 'we' instead of 'you', and acts, through her direct address, as an imparter of common sense information which clearly identifies the interests of the medium with those of its audience.

In line with the idea of 'self-help' in the provision of housing which emerged in capitalist discourse immediately after the 1976 Soweto disturbances[16], this programme tries to legitimize the State's attempt to shift the costs of urban housing onto blacks themselves. The presenter states that women need to change their traditional roles by entering the workforce. This class is thus persuaded to take 'a stake in the system' and defuse those sites of the class struggle which man-

ifest themselves in rent strikes and the destruction of property. Responsibility for the production of surplus value is added to responsibility for the reproduction of the family and, ultimately, the workforce. In this broadcast women are told that they are not only required to maintain their households and care for their children, but also to earn additional income to supplement that of their breadwinners, thus contributing to greater consumption. Despite the disruptive effects of the Group Areas Act and the social disorganization caused by migrant labour, this programme presents the family unit as a normal and natural occurrence in black urban areas. There is no hint of the asymmetrical distribution of males/females and married/unmarried, and so on. The exhortation for women to work implies that the townships are a stable and secure place for children, even in the absence of the mother.

The presenter's argument is then legitimized by means of a lengthy interview with trade unionist Lucy Mvubelo. Mrs Mvubelo is a model of middle-class success who was made into a 'Known' by the English-language press. In Flowers of the Nation, she is introduced as a person with high international credibility. The presenter, in keeping with the common notion that blacks are not familiar with visual codes, emphasizes Mvubelo's academic and occupational achievements in a manner rarely seen or heard on TV1, where a brief introduction and identifying caption suffice. The objective is to identify Mvubelo as a responsible trade union leader who is committed to peace and the improvement of the quality of black lives by working within the system.

The camera cuts from the presenter to Mvubelo addressing women on a factory floor in the Orange Free State. She faces the camera, not the workers, who also face the camera. The reason for this strange configuration of speaker and audience within the frame can perhaps be explained in terms of the ideology of the camera crew. Common to nearly all magazine programmes and documentaries made by TV2/3 is an obvious simplification of conventions and codes. It would appear that the convention of cutting between Mvubelo and her audience would be confusing to the viewers. Thus the producer depicts Mvubelo's relationship to the factory workers by locating her in the same frame. In this way, he imagines that the conventional dislocations of televisual time and space will be eliminated. (It is also cheaper as it uses less film stock and editing time.)

Over the shot of Mvubelo addressing the workers the soundtrack superimposes a separate interview in which she discusses her life and how she made it to 'the top'. She tells the interviewer that she was a

typical working-class woman who started her career as a machinist and now lives in a posh house with her family. Juxtaposed with this voice-over interview are her statements to the factory workers on matters of wages and rent. She acknowledges that the rent problem does exist, but urges the workers to pay up, saying that she will look into the issue soon. Thus 'success' is linked to working within the system, and the payment of rents is presented as a necessary part of that upward mobility. The sound overlap between the two different scenes cements this link. Mvubelo advocates co-operation with management to ensure high productivity and profits, the benefits of which will spin-off onto the workers themselves. She supports foreign investment because she feels that this leads to greater job opportunities.

Where the first scene occurred in the television studio, the second in the factory, the third scene takes us to Mvubelo's home. She is interviewed in her lounge, tastefully decorated and furnished; in fact, very similar to the type of home found in white petty-bourgeois suburbs. Her 'success' as a 'responsible' trade unionist is indicated in the material rewards seen in her home. Mvubelo's two grandchildren are present. The essence of this scene is that 'getting to the top' requires not only hard work, but being a mother and wife as well. She talks about how she had to bring up children single-handed because her husband had been ill for a long time. Although she has become increasingly involved in community and leadership activities over the years, Mvubelo states that these have not interfered with her role as a housewife. Her advice to other women is to take full responsibility in striving for their families. They ought not to depend solely on their men – in fact they ought to help their husbands. In times of shortages of skilled labour, these exhortations cannot be underestimated, particularly as white married women, whose main function is to reproduce the family, are discouraged from working through tax penalties. Fulfilling the National Party's desire for a higher white birth rate by emphasizing the role of women as the sole child-rearer, the father/man/husband who is conspicuous by his absence is thus freed to do productive work. Flowers of the Nation substitutes an imagined relationship between individuals (women factory workers) and their real conditions of existence. By pushing the discourse of 'self-help' and productivity and encouraging women to join organizations so as to instill co-operation and unity in facing daily problems, the programme implies that the only reasons for failure to cope must lie with the women themselves. This displacement of causation from the structural to the personal ignores the very real economic, political,

legislative, educational and other constraints under which blacks continue to labour.

Points of tension are ignored and the elements present in the text serve to mask those that have been excluded. The suggestion made by the presenter that mothers leave their children with childcare facilities while working, for example, ignores the critical shortages of such facilities. It is not mentioned that the great majority of working women have to leave their young children in the care of other female workers or baby-minders, whose own domestic load is then intensified. Neither does the programme admit that excessive commuting distances leads to a truncated family life and very little time for leisure. Such stresses are absent from the programme, which prefers to show that 'success' is dependant on ambition and drive. That ambition, however, is best channelled in the direction of community work; the example is Mrs Mvubelo, who is involved with ideological apparatuses such as the South Africa Foundation and various liberal bodies working within the system, such as Women for Peace, Women's Legal Status Committee, Business and Professional Women.

Individual effort, however, is nevertheless shown to have a community base. The apartheid ideological discourse of 'own freedoms' and 'self-determination' are communicated through the structured absences of the text: 'freedom' is shown to be the result of individual effort which will be rewarded; 'self-determination'· is indicated through the success of individual blacks such as Mvubelo who have the 'community' at heart. Since no whites are shown at all, the community must be black and in control of its own destiny. Whites are abstracted and indicated on the sound track as 'management' or 'employers' through whom the 'benefits' of productivity are channelled.

There is a very brief return to the presenter at the end of the programme. In fact, there is no need to return because what started as a magazine programme – which overtly encodes the signs acknowledging mediation – has shifted into a documentary mode which appears to reveal *reality* rather than mediating it. By not reminding the viewers that they are watching and hearing the opinions of a panelist or opinion-former, the programme has the effect of persuading the viewer that *it is* reality that is being presented.

The muddle of signs and codes has a definite ideological function and is most clearly seen in *Izinto Zokudlala Nezingubo* (Toys and Clothing), broadcast on 2 June 1982.

Traditional music overlays a stylized graphic of oxen over which the title is superimposed. The graphic indicates a Western influence and tries to recreate the ox as a central symbol of the unspoilt, idealized view of rural life that is commonly presented in the dominant

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discourse. The title sequence is followed by a scene of picannins (small black children) on either side of a large donga (soil eroded gully) playing 'war' games with sticks and stones. The narrator claims that these games are the source of happiness of rural children. No mention is made of the conditions of existence of the 'noble savages in-the-making', or how the environmental erosion occurred: as presented, it is merely a functional part of their 'battlefield'.

Happy and contented bare-breasted girls playing a game outside a hut are viewed next. The narrator describes the making of toys as inventive: rural children make use of natural resources such as clay for modelling oxen pulling a plough and an inflated ox-bladder for a soccer ball. Through the carefully staged 'authenticity' of the timeless rural scene, the producer has established an idyllic and fragmented image of the homeland which excludes poverty, truncated families, overcrowding and resettlement.

The rural scene is juxtaposed against an urban environment with children racing wire cars down a gravel road. This is an individualistic competition performed for the camera, as opposed to the group competition of the rural scene. We are told that the toys made by the urban children are indicative of their environment, that school takes up most of their time which prevents them from making toys like those of their rural counterparts. Education is thus shown to correlate with urban life, the necessity of alienated labour and the need to consume.

The camera now takes us to Sada, a border industry area thirty kilometres outside Queenstown. The narrator does not mention that Sada is a resettlement camp. A brief and very indistinct shot of Sada precedes a mid-shot of black women walking to a toy factory. The central motif of the programme is that education coupled with productive labour will bring about a higher standard of living. As urban school children seldom have the time to make toys, the narrator says they should be bought with the money their parents earn at the factory. In this way, the producer legitimizes the exploitative relations of production by implying that the Sada workers' labour puts them in the position of the middle class for whom the toys are made.

Particular emphasis is given to the workers clocking-in and pushing their identification cards into the 'clickety-clack' machine[17]. The upbeat sound track conceals the machine's repetitive and irritating sound and blunts the connotation of the laborious production of the toys, the productive process per se, and alludes to the attainability of petty-bourgeois lifestyles through fashion. The connection is mystified through a visually compelling association. The bridging

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shot between the production of the toys and the manufacturing of fashionable clothes – in the same factory – is an upward tilt from a wide shot of a range of toys on display – teddy bears, cuddly rabbits, gollywogs – to a zoom into a life-size picture of a beautifully manicured, expensively coiffured (or wigged), supremely elegant young black woman who looks as if she has just stepped out of *Ebony*. The visual connection between production and petty-bourgeois lifestyles is cemented by the narrator's comment that "just as children select their own toys, mothers are also very selective in choosing their clothing. So it is natural again that the same factory manufactures clothes for mothers". Production is thereby connected to choice, which in turn implies consumption: the consumption of the family unit – mother and child. Significantly, as in many other documentaries, the father is absent[18].

Having established the link between production, the need to consume and class mobility through production and consumption, the camera now deals with the making of fashionable clothes and school uniforms in the same way as it did with the toys. The meshing of fashionable outfits with drab school uniforms retains the link between 'education' and 'success' through a metonymic relationship which equates 'fashion' with 'success' and 'school uniforms' with a production-line 'education'.

Towards the last third of the programme, the camera suddenly and unexpectedly cuts to a swish retail environment with fancy displays and neon lighting. The shop is not located, though it is clearly not at Sada. This discontinuous jump is the result of cutting from a shot of a black woman in the factory dressing a dummy, to the shop. The narrator smooths the transition by claiming that "When the garment is finished it is put on a display model to see if it is attractive and fits well". Only some time after the shop interior has been on the screen does the narrator refer to well-equipped shops serving customer needs: 'Fashions are most important in the world'.

The camera then tracks along a clothing rack to reveal a white model performing for the camera on a raised floor. Two black models then walk forwards in a swaggering gait as the camera tracks backwards between clothes racks. This penultimate scene begins to tie up the ideological themes referred to earlier: education, production, class mobility and consumption. Where previously the emphasis was on units of production, individuals-as-workers have now been redefined as individuals-as-consumers. This is signified particularly by the presentation of the people, what they wear and how they move, and by the operation of the camera. In the factory it was static, lacked

dynamism and was interminably repetitive. In the shop, however, it is dynamic: it tracks forwards and backwards and in a circular movement; it emphasises colour, the shots are short and succinct. The action is stylized and energetic, the models enthusiatic and mobile, individualistic, confident.

The motor for class aspiration appears to be hinged on the way whites are presented (or intrude): skilled, educated, innovative, creative, fashionable, a sort of 'You too, can be like me'. In this context whites are not a source of tension. Although technically the white model's presence appears to be an accident of editing, a discontinuity, she symbolizes the idea of equality. Her white flowing dress spreads as she pirouettes and her alluring glance at the camera as she passes out of frame suggests ephemerality. The camera then moves to the black models in the background. This scene, presented in a documentary style, is a muddle of codes and continuities. This recurrent semiotic confusion notwithstanding, the ideological discourse is clear. Not only does the white model take on the guise of a fairy godmother, she connotes both a transient equality and, at the same time, its inevitability. She stands for a standard to be strived for, but the standard appears to be offered on unequal terms: blacks must follow, imitate and be guided. This interpretation of the programme's symbolic signification accords with our class analysis, showing how the urban black middle classes are being co-opted into an uneasy and unequal alliance with capital.

The symbolic/ideological is inferred through the organization of the text. What started out as a documentary later shifted to a narrative mode of address. This is particularly evident in the final scene: a 'successful' middle-class mother is shown buying clothes in a trendy boutique. The use of fashion and the appearance of a teddy bear provide the mechanism for narrative and ideological closure. This is done as the mother-consumer leaves the shop and joins her child who is waiting outside. They walk away: she dressed fashionably, the child pushing a baby pram with a large teddy bear in it. It would seem that this is the major point of this otherwise confused programme. Its pretext is revisited, its ideology vindicated: the result of productivity, education and class mobility is the conspicuous consumption of manufactured goods. This final scene unites the imaginary and the symbolic and attempts to block perception of the exploitative relations of production. The quasi-narrative, which recurs across a range of documentary films and magazines, further functions in terms of identification and locks the viewer into an ideological discourse which naturalizes the inevitability of commodity-exchange

relations, where things are bought rather than home-made, as they are in the homelands.

The ideological discourse encoded into the programmes outlined above finds its logical resolution in variety and recreational programmes. One such broadcast was entitled *Sonke Singa ba Bahle* (We Can All be Beautiful).

This programme takes the form of a narrative about a young girl who is encouraged to pursue her ambition to be a dancer by her school teacher. In the first few scenes she is depicted in a sophisticated and well-equipped gymnasium where she goes through a jazz-disco routine with a number of other girls under the eye of a male instructor. This is followed by a scene of her jogging on a country road. She is expensively attired and her impeccable appearance belies the dirt road.

She is running alone: an achiever, confident, determined and individualistic. Her independence is underlined since very few black women participate in jogging, a male preserve. Women are generally overburdened with domestic chores when not out working, leaving very little time for leisure.

The two 'magazine-narrative' programmes discussed previously emphasized production and consumption as the way up the class ladder, and *We Can All be Beautiful*, with its emphasis on personal beauty and physical condition, extends the discourse. A leisured lifestyle, in which people act out their fantasies as individual consumers at times and places to suit themselves is seen as the pinnacle of achievement: the capitalist myth par excellence. In this particular programme there is an assumption that facilities like dancing lessons and teachers are normally available to black people. Gymnasiums of the type shown are atypical, but their portrayal symbolizes a typically middle-class leisure society and a content, well-served urban population whose members have the time, money, education and values to want to partake in dancing lessons and jogging. These, of course, are depicted within black social practice. While the programme can be criticized at the level of appearance for presenting an idealized view of sophisticated recreational facilities that are unattainable to the majority of (even urban) blacks, symbolically it is a glorification of a leisured lifestyle which may have had the effect of normatively shaping the social and personal aspirations of the present generation of young people, and women in particular.

As in other magazine programmes, males are largely missing, though in this case one is a dancing teacher. This recurring structured absence suggests that males are by and large contented with their lot (whatever that may be – it is defined by its absence), but that women need to set their sights higher. By suggesting that this leisured lifestyle is attainable through education, hard work, enthusiasm and individualism, women's status is raised not only in the programme itself, but as far as viewers are concerned. These programmes will shape the perceptions that men have about the practices of women, their place in the economy, the family, trade unionism and, most important, in terms of production and consumption. Men may be persuaded to accept women in these practices, as more assertive, individualistic and status-orientated in terms of possessions and recreational activities.

Programmes like *We Can All be Beautiful* have a dual effect. First, they legitimize the mobility aspirations of women in terms of capitalist values; and second, they persuade their men that this attitude is natural and inevitable.

Following on from the thread of discourse identified above are programmes like *Kunganme Ke*, which makes an array of housing appliances available to quiz contestants. Prizes range from vacuum cleaners to television sets. Qualifying for a prize involves answering questions or winning various contests like egg cooking. The prizes are flashed onto the screen in a most alluring way and the viewer watches ecstatically excited contestants performing in a luxurious studio.

The discourse of production and consumption is, of course, reinforced by advertising. Many commercials are identical to those seen on TV1, sometimes blacks substitute for whites, and locations may change. The underlying assumptions remain the same. The emphasis is on petty-bourgeois lifestyles, a coherent nuclear family unit and the happiness that consumption brings. The advertising discourse must therefore be seen as part of the overall flow of television programming. The two interlock and feed the viewer's expectations.

Thus far the only contradictions we have identified are those relating to style and technique. That most of the programmes in the above category have been directed by whites is evident both from their credits and the class assumptions they reflect. A number of technicians working on TV2/3 programmes indicated that there was a very marked self-censorship process by independent producers. One series on black writers, for example, identified 150 potential Xhosa contenders. The producer, however, fearing SABC rejection, eliminated all the political and contentious writers and focused solely on the 10 writers who just happened to be homeland officials writing textbooks for homeland schools.

By contrast, a radically-minded scriptwriter was deliberately employed by a producer of a documentary series to counteract his (ie the producer's) self-censorship and to negotiate points of perceived tension. The scriptwriter further commented that it was very difficult to successfully unveil contradictions in specific contexts through documentary:

> I don't think that you can take a subject like hospitals, for example, and go very easily beyond a certain level ... In the light of my experience, it seems that if you are doing a straight documentary, then you are seen to be asking questions. But if you fictionalize it ... You see, if they (the SABC) think it's a story, they're a lot happier, they're going to go with it a lot easier ... I think they're scared of the format of documentary, they're scared of certain key themes . . .

It will be recalled from Chapter 3 of this Volume that, despite the apparently monolithic spectre of SABC-TV gatekeeping mechanisms, socially critical material can and has been broadcast. With regard to TV2/3, the scriptwriter commented that the gatekeepers read scripts on a superficial level: "They're literal in the extreme, and that can't be difficult to get around". There are two mechanisms by which this can be done. The first is to locate the action in a "John-Coetzee-type nowhereland" which uses universal situations to make concrete points. The other is to deliberately trade on the literalness of the image, which assumes a direct correspondence between 'reality' and 'media reality'. This strategy is able to make use of hidden messages activated by the inverted deployment of conventional signs.

While magazine/documentary programmes on TV2/3 tend to concentrate on the self-development of the urban middle classes, serials and series have much in common with plays on Radio Bantu and the storylines of movies aimed at black audiences. Indeed, the latter films, many of which were made by front companies set up by the now defunct Department of Information, were later screened on TV2/3. Two basic categories of black films occur[19]. The first has been termed 'back to the homelands', and portrays blacks returning to their tribes after having worked in the 'white' cities. In their narrative structure these films reproduce a return to roots in terms of the conditions of racial capitalism.

The second category, 'conditional urban', contains two genres – gangster films and the fantasy-like disco movies. This genre, developed by more socially aware white film makers to extract their plots from the ugliness of everyday black urban life, is rarely seen on TV2/3.

Either of these categories can be 'co-opted' when black film makers are financed and controlled by Nationalist capital. Films in this category locate their action in urban areas and invest their characters with a high degree of capitalist practice while reflecting the confusion and disorientation experienced by township dwellers. All the series, serials and plays made by the SABC would fall into this category, as they are financed directly by Nationalist capital.

Television Narrative: Contradictions Within Dominant Discourse

An example of a television serial in which the themes and characters have been adopted from Radio Bantu is *Unsenzekile* (The Story of Senzekile). The serial is written by Mduduzi Hlophe, who became popular as a Radio Bantu announcer through programmes he presented as well as radio plays he has written, for example, *Ngibuyela KwaBakithi* (I Will Return to My Homeland) and *Hlelani Imindeni* (Plan Families). In the following paragraphs, short synopses of these plays are provided.

In the 'back to the homelands' category is *Ngibuyela Kwabakithi*. This radio play depicts the experiences of a rural man who lived in the township whilst employed as a factory worker. The man dreamt of winning a lot of money from betting on horse races, after which he would return to his rural home. Motivated by this, but much to his wife's chagrin, he lost a lot of money through his gambling. At last luck came his way when he won a substantial sum on the jackpot. Now it was time to make his dream a reality by going back to his rural reserve home. In spite of much opposition from his wife, who preferred living in the township, he went back home and established himself as a small land owner, or *umnumzane*.

In the 'conditional urban' category is *Hlelani Imindeni* (Plan Families). Like its predecessor, *I Will Return to My Homeland*, this play is set in an urban township, as well as a peri-urban squatter camps. 'Emjondole', has been coined to refer to the squalid shanties in the play. The plot concerns a family who refused to use the freely available family planning service and had many children. Later, the big family could not be accommodated in their four-roomed house. The large number of children could not be adequately provided for in terms of nutrition, education or clothing. Their circumstances were made worse by the fact that the father was work-shy. When their house rent was in arrears they were evicted, and forced to move to the squatter area. As the story progresses, every family member becomes

involved in the evils and problems common to squatters because the parents did not practice family planning after marriage.

The 'conditional urban' *Usenzekile* (The Story of Senzekile) was Hlope's first television series. It builds from the previously broadcast radio soap opera, *Hlelani Imindeni*, with the same characters. In this series, a Malawian widower has a successful business in Johannesburg. He employs two young female shop assistants: first a township girl, Grace, who is one of the daughters featured in *Hlelani Imindeni*, and later a country girl. The latter proves to be a more efficient and honest worker. Although the town girl has business acumen, she is very dishonest, stealing food items from the employer's shop to support her family. Her father is a work-shy man who drinks heavily and often mercilessly beats his wife. This is typical of what happened in the radio play, in which the family head is unable to prevent the disintegration of his family. *Usenzekile* singles out township life as a producer of socially and morally unstable human beings. In the television series all the characters of urban origin display an undependable character. For instance, Grace, the shop assistant, not only steals, but also has a hand in the destruction of her employer's shop by fire.

Part 2 of *Usenzekile*, which at the time of writing was still being screened, continues the theme of hollow township character and morals. Rural people who are assimilated into the township lifestyle end up being destroyed by it. This is what seems to be the fate of this business man and his wife, the country-born shop assistant whom he ultimately married.

Disintegration/Integration[20] – From Rural to Urban Values

Hlophe's radio soap operas reflect unambiguously traditionalist values and are strongly critical of urban lifestyles. *I Will Return to My Homeland* has a narrative structure that is consistent with racial capitalism. *Plan Families*, however, is more complex and mystifies cause-effect relations through its emphasis on individual hindsight. The problem of urban squatting, for example, is explained in terms of a high birth-rate. The consequent housing shortage, the narrative tells us, could have easily been combatted by family planning. The structural conditions which cause the 'housing shortage' and which are beyond the control of the individual are ignored. The narrative blames this predicament on the individuals who 'created' it: 'You have nobody to blame for your situation.' After all, each population group has the 'right to self-determination and private initiative'.

Despite the admonitory tone of the serial, the scriptwriter has trivialized the seriousness of squatting through semantic engineering. He coined a Zulu-derived term, 'Mjondole', to describe a shanty house. Through the way that this word is employed in the dialogue, over time, it has taken on a pejorative connotation. This occurred through the Malawian character who could neither pronounce the word correctly or use it in its proper sense. His ludicrous accent and malapropisms transformed the original word into 'Umjondolo', which has a tragi-comic romanticizing effect on the description of shanty houses. The romanticism of shanty life seen in *Plan Families* was reinforced by a spurt of 'easy-go' musical records about Mjondole released during and after the time the play was on the air.

While *Plan Families* falls into the conditional-urban genre, it also has elements of disintegration/integration which comes about when the worker is separated from his primary rural community. That the same characters tend to appear in Hlope's different radio and television serials suggests a flow and progression in the characters' relation to their urban environment. The Malawian character, for example, uses the same linguistic devices in the television drama, *Usenzekile*. The visual dimension adds a strong impact, for now viewers both hear his ludicrous grammatical errors and accent, and see his gesticulations and grimaces.

Unlike the magazines, documentaries and variety programmes, in which the fruits of urban living are lauded, in these serials a stable moral character is a very rare attribute among township people. Conversely, social and moral order is characteristic of the more settled rural communities. In *I Will Return to My Homeland*, for example, the man who returns home after winning on the horses is shown to be acting on principle. He retains what is good in him by avoiding undue contamination. Even the musical prelude to *Usenzekile* Part 1 implies that returning to the homelands is natural and inevitable. It is a woeful song about Senzekile who leaves her rural home for Johannesburg. The singer of the prelude, probably her mother, regrets the departure of Senzekile because she will never make it in the large city. It is as if things could have developed better if she had remained in her rural home. Who knows, she might even end up in a plight similar to that of the family in *Plan Families*. At the time of writing events were already taking a bitter turn for Senzekile and her husband. Perhaps the problem is that they ought to have transferred to their homelands as soon as their business prospered, as happened in *I Will Return to My Homeland*. By remaining in the city they can only

tempt fate. Already they have been trapped into accepting capital from crooks posing as financiers. The viewer already knows that these crooks will destroy Senzekile's husband.

Another typical serial is *Incutshe* (Superstar), written by V Borjana and directed by Simon Sabela. Sabela had previously worked for Heyns Films, which was used as a front by the Department of Information. While in their employ he directed a number of films aimed at black audiences. All are 'co-opted', and fall into the 'conditional urban' category, while a few manifest elements of disintegration/integration. His films, even though supervised by a white 'anthropologist', reflect the confusions of urban living and the results of impermanence, but none suggest that return to the homelands is inevitable.

Incutshe portrays the involvement of organized crime in soccer. It highlights the insecurities and 'violent' life of the black townships or 'locations'. A young, talented soccer star has attracted the attention of the leader of a crime syndicate, who is interested in exploiting his talents to make money. When he refuses an offer to be managed by the leader of the syndicate, the soccer player's life is threatened. Central to the plot is the battle of wits between two rival camps, that of the soccer star and his manager, some other players, and the boss of the syndicate and his henchmen.

Unlike the numerous TV2/3 documentaries, magazines and variety programmes that substitute a petty-bourgeois environment for actual conditions in the townships, dramatic serials set the story-line against the background not only of violence but also, as in the case of *Incutshe*, of the visible poverty and cramped conditions of township life. While the background and 'props' are real, the plot itself highlights the insecurities, the violence and the corruption found in black towns. This becomes particularly clear during a chase sequence in which the hero eludes the gangsters. He has to negotiate very high fences protecting individual homesteads; barbed wire and high walls. The chase takes the viewer through junk-laden backyards, scrap motor cars, shanties made of corrugated iron, rusting forty-four-gallon drums and colourless matchbox houses sited cheek by jowl.

Unlike conventional chase sequences in which the characters cover vast distances down main roads, over open lots, down long alleyways, here the action is confined to a constricted space. The gangsters chase in their motor car, but not very far. While it might be argued that the chase is constricted because of budgetary problems, it is also true that it reflects the physical restrictions of township life. It is not stylized as in genre films or as extravagant as in conventional soap operas or series.

The simplicity of the narrative, the economy of the characters and the use of actual, recognizable locations add to the feeling of authenticity. The opposition of good and evil is equally simple. That sport equals 'good' and gangsterism equals 'bad' is clear, but less overt are the signs that contribute to these identifications. Although the sinister boss wears sunglasses, is chauffeured in a large black American car and wields his walking stick as a fearsome weapon, he wears a white suit. By contrast, the 'good' soccer player wears dark, casual clothes. This unconventional reversal of achromatic signs is remarkable, given the simplicity of the narrative and its reliance on basic gangster film conventions. By dressing the gangster in a white suit, while retaining the other conventional signs – dark glasses, cane, the well dressed fat character and the black limousine – the director has encoded into the television text the contradictions of the South African urban environment. The differences between good and evil, legitimate and illegitimate, crime and honesty are obscured, for entire practices considered normal behaviour by whites are legislated as criminal activities among blacks. Sabela has resisted the temptation to portray blacks living happily in posh houses with all the paraphernalia of petty-bourgeois life, as so often seen in other programmes transmitted by TV2/3.

The above inferences cannot necessarily be drawn from an analysis of *Incutshe* alone, for it is seldom that the text ever proceeds to a symbolic level. By comparing this serial with earlier films directed by Sabela, however, certain recurring themes can be identified. The first of these is the use of actual, recognizable locations. Sabela's action is not situated in a nowhere-land or in fantasy. The second recurring element concerns the confusion of urban living, and the third is the lack of visible motivation of the characters.

The characters are themselves part of their context. Sabela is the interpreter of that context and is much closer to it than a white producer would be. It would not be unreasonable, then, to hypothesize that he has consciously (if not deliberately) superimposed a more sophisticated use of symbolic signs – such as the black-white reverse – over a very simple storyline. Because SABC-TV gatekeepers tend not to see things beyond the level of appearances, the very literal treatment used by Sabela would mask its hidden symbolism. As has been pointed out in Chapter 3, scriptwriters and producers have in the past been able to exploit the medium to make critical social statements on South African society. These criticisms have, however, not always been identified by audiences or even press critics.

Incutshe also works at another level, which would coincide with the interpretation we offered on the serials written by Hlope, particu-

larly with regard to people who are not permanently domiciled in the urban areas. *Incutshe* would reinforce the myths of urban violence, social disorganization and immorality to rural dwellers who might see the programme (migrant labourers, for example). The characters appear to have no roots, are highly individualistic and competitive and live outside normal family or community relationships. Thus even contradictions may work to the benefit of the dominant ideology, depending on interpretation.

Conclusion

The content of programmes broadcast on TV2/3 has belied the initial expectations of many who expected the SABC's television broadcasts to be identical in ideological content to Radio Bantu. Prior to the commencement of transmission, advertising research identified a very definite hostility and suspicion to the proposed television service, particularly amongst young urban black consumers: 'Black TV will be run exactly as Radio Bantu – to keep a black permanently down.' This 'con' group also argued that 'only illiterates, children, and old people would watch'[21].

The difference in tone between Radio Bantu and TV2/3, as identified in this chapter, can be ascribed to the predominently different class membership of the target audiences. Whereas Radio Bantu aims its messages of traditionalism at the lower-income, less urbanized and rural dwellers in an attempt to draw them into the economy on a migrant basis, TV2/3 focuses on the growing but numerically limited black middle classes domiciled in the 'white' urban areas. It is not surprising, therefore, that TV2/3 is more sophisticated, and less crudely propagandistic than Radio Bantu.

The muddle of codes, the assumption that black viewers will not understand time-worn conventions that signify time and space, and the exceptionally long duration of the shots which characterize TV2/3 documentary, magazine and variety programmes might well be due to inexperience and cost-cutting. However, once they are studied in relation to their political and economic contexts, the confused signification takes on an ideological coherence. This occurs partly because the white producers have encoded their petty-bourgeois class determinations into the text, for the programmes studied in the larger project all reflect the contradictions of this class. There is a recurring emphasis on certain ideological nodes: a trust in a conservative trade unionism; on the family, which is portrayed as the basic unit of consumption, and on the need to retain an ethnic identity through in-

volvement with the black community. These themes intercept the emergent ideology of the new black middle classes and give it direction. TV2/3 is thus aimed at producing the *context* in which blacks will live their ideology as subjects of their class membership.

Like the film on the toy and clothing factory, *Incutshe* contains the seeds of its own criticisms of the society that helped produce it. Perhaps they remain latent and unactivated, but the important conclusion here is that the SABC is not quite as much in control of the images and hidden messages contained in its programmes as it would like. To argue that "what the White organizers consider to be appropriate to Black culture(s) ... must (determine the content of programmes)" is highly mechanistic. Our broader analysis has shown that even programmes "written, produced and directed mainly by Whites"[22] are often confusing and counter-productive as far as the dominant ideology is concerned. Scholars who believe in the monolithic nature of TV2/3 as a means of manufacturing a mass culture are clearly unaware of the contradictions operating within the medium and of the fact that even the people involved in the 'manufacturing' are themselves, at times, undermining the process of negotiating consent because of a lack of knowledge about the textual codifications that govern the medium.

Ultimately, the obtaining of consent of the new black middle classes will depend on parallel movements in the class structure, when actual conditions of existence appear to be concretely related to the mediated reality screened on television and seen in other media.

Notes and References

1   E Mandel, *Late Capitalism*. (London: Verso, 1978).
2   Republic of South Africa. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to Television*, RP37/1971.
3   The five-year delay between the publication of the Meyer Report and the introduction of television occurred because of the Commission's recommendation of a national network, in colour, from the start, instead of a localized operation spreading to a national one later. The insistence on national networks parallels and reinforces the National Party's desire for a tool to bind the hegemonic alliance. This intention was also evident in the development of radio since the early 1940s. See chapter 11.
4   The Meyer Commission recommended the introduction of television because of the impetus it would give to the local electronics industry, with definite spin-offs for the growing armaments industry.
5   Mandel, *op cit*, p 121.
6   C Bundy, 'The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry', *African Affairs*, no 71 (1972).

7   KG Tomaselli and RE Tomaselli, 'Culture/Ideology/Hegemony and Mass Media in South Africa: A Literature Survey', *Critical Arts*, vol 2, no 1 (1981) pp 1–26.

8   GS Strydom, *The Establishment and Expansion of the School Radio Service of Radio Bantu*, HSRC Report No. 0-53, 1976 especially pp 24–8.

9   In a sense, TV2/3 and the new black middle classes were made for each other. Locating the transmitters (R1 million each) mainly in the densely populated areas allowed the SABC to offset installation costs through advertising and licence fees more quickly than if the network was nation-wide.

10 There are variable links between homeland and urban blacks. Second and third generation urbanites would probably have more contact with rural people than fourth and later generations. Urbanites would, therefore, be more hostile to this kind of message. This is borne out by advertising research. See, for example, *Shades of Grey*, August 1980 and October 1980.

11 This is part of a much larger study of TV2/3 which has been funded by a Rhodes University Council Research Grant for 1982/83.

12 This approach was developed in cinema from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin by R Johnson and R Stam, *Brazilian Cinema* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1982) pp 117 ff. It is used here in a similar sense.

13 See, for example, P Fourie, 'Interkulturele Probleme in Beeldkommunikasie,' *Communicare*, vol 3, no 1 (1982). Fourie talks about a film being a 'model' of reality and thereby makes a direct connection between 'reality' and the 'image of reality'.

14 H Gavshon, Ideology and Film: An Examination of Films Made for Black Audiences in South Africa. (Fourth year project, School of Dramatic Art, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980.)

15 Males have also appeared on this programme, which presented them in the same way as it did Mrs Mvubelo. An interview with Mr Kunene, editor of *Ilanga lase Natal*, showed him as a person who had 'made good', who had a big house and happy children. Like Mvubelo he had also grown up in a slum. Almost any black person appearing on *Flowers of the Nation* will qualify for this treatment as they will all have been co-opted into an alliance with capital during the short period which marks the shifting class structure whereby more skilled black labour has been required to fill positions in manufacturing.

16 See chapter 7 of Volume One.

17 The hatred of the clock machine has been identified in studies of foundry life. See KG Tomaselli, 'The Semiotics of Alternative Theatre in South Africa', *Critical Arts*, vol 2, no 1 (1981) p 25.

18 The Surplus Peoples Project, 1983, points out that over 70 per cent of the males from the Sada area are migrant labourers.

19 See KG Tomaselli, 'Class and Ideology: Reflections in South African Cinema', *Critical Arts*, vol 1, no 1 (1980).

20 These terms are taken from CB Flora and JL Flora, 'The Photonovella as a Tool for Class and Cultural Domination', *Latin American Perspectives*, vol 16, no 1 (1978). In this category of South American photonovellas, these authors stress the shift in values which separates the worker from his primary group or community. In South Africa, the separation is never total, the links being maintained through enforced homeland links.

21 See *Shades of Grey*, op cit.

22 J van Zyl, 'Competence in Popular Culture: the Deep Structure of Mass Communication', *Communicatio*, vol 8, no 1 (1982) p 54.

Chapter 5
Trauma by Installment: Springbok Radio Soap Operas

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Tuning in to the SABC's Springbok Radio between 9h10 and 16h00 on a weekday, one was likely to hear an episode of a serialized drama. These dramas formed an integral part of this commercial station's programming since 1950[1]. There were several different stories during these hours, continuing from day to day, week in and week out for months on end, every Monday to Friday. By their time-slot one can deduce that they were intended for a home-based audience[2] – mostly housewives involved in creating homes for their husbands and children. The soap operas followed a clearly identifiable format of continuous narrative fiction presented in quarter or half-hour parts, and were liberally punctuated with advertisements for household commodities. This chapter will explore four radio dramas, namely *Die Vrou van Shangetti*, *From Chrystal with Love*, *Andrew Mansfield* and *Dr Louisa Maritz*, in an attempt to demonstrate how entertainment in the form of soap operas becomes an ideological tool in perpetuating women's subordination in South Africa within the wider context of racial capitalism.

During the study period the following soap operas were presented:

9h15   *Andrew Mansfield*
12h15 *From Chrystal With Love*
2h00   *Wolwedans* changed to *Nag van die Strandloper*
2h15   *Basis Bravo*
3h00   *Eendag Miskien* changed to *Die Vrou van Shangetti*
3h30   *Dr Louisa Maritz* changed to *Die Mannheim Saga*

Within the time-slot of the two Afrikaans programmes that were studied (two half-hour slots), a random spot-check showed that advertising occupied approximately four minutes (thirteen percent) of a total of just over thirty minutes. The rest of the first programme consisted of the 'personality' host chatting to the listeners for just under two and à half minutes (eight percent); the story, consisting of twenty one and a half minutes of dialogue (seventy one percent) and two and a half minutes of music, introduction and conclusion (eight percent). In the second programme, approximately five minutes were allocated to newsflashes sponsored by various manufacturers, leaving about a total of three minutes for the news items.

Soap operas are 'packaged' and 'sold' to consumers as an essential part of the economic viability of the medium as they attract advertisers who contribute to the financial survival of the SABC. They also serve to perpetuate the dominant ideology in the guise of fiction, thereby distorting real social relations. By operating as myths – historically constituted representations which presuppose a 'signifying consciousness'[3] – soap operas deny the connections between the social relations they portray and reality[4]. Yet the 'fantasy' presented cannot account, on its own, for the picture finally digested by the listener. Representations in cultural products are governed by common cultural codes of meaning – signifying practices – which are linked to historically constituted real social relations. It is therefore necessary to see cultural products – in this case soap operas – not merely as representations of life that are capable of producing meanings, but as products and practices related to material conditions of existence. Consequently they have to be examined within a historical context[5].

In this chapter, a feminist framework is used to analyse the representation of women in soap operas. A notion of the intimacy of women's subordination is developed through Gramsci's formulations of 'hegemony' and 'consent'. Theories of ideology are employed to discuss how this representation of women assists in maintaining the system of their domination. To illustrate the specificity of women's oppression, the development of feminist theory through radical feminism and Marxist feminism to a synthesis in socialist feminism is traced. A scheme for a materialist analysis of texts is employed to elucidate the complex interrelationships between soap operas, both as cultural products and as ideological discourses. Finally an attempt is made to isolate some conventions of signification which aid an understanding of how the identification of subjects (in this case women) in ideology occurs.

Theories of Feminism

In the 1960s diverse investigations started focusing on an area that had hitherto remained largely peripheral in historical and sociological studies: feminists who addressed themselves to the gender-divisions in education and jobs all had one goal in common – the identification of the oppression of women in all spheres of life, regardless of their class position in the social formation[6]. Initially little attempt was made to provide a systematic analysis of the situations described, but gradually 'women's studies' groups formed, borrowing from existing theories. Attempts were made to fill the gap in these theories by either adding to them, or trying to transform them to include the 'woman question'.

By the late sixties the women's movement had gained a substantial following which polarized according to the society from which it emerged. In the United States, the radical feminist movement, which saw the catagories of gender as being fundamental, found its roots in the Women's Liberation Movement. In England, feminists came predominantly from the new left where Marxism had an important influence. For the latter theorists, class was always dominant over gender. Today, there are many complications and contradictions in both views which point to the necessity of a re-evaluation of feminist theories[7]. The Marxist view is criticized for being overly economistic, while the radical feminists are accused of being trans-historical. Both are perceived to be simplistically functionalist: the latter for describing the perpetuation of male domination without developing practical strategies for change; the former for seeing women as a secondary group in the oppression of classes, and for the way in which they perceive that capital has appropriated sexism for the continued domination of the bourgeoisie, without an apparent understanding that the domination of women transcends a simple class analysis. From these has emerged the socialist feminist view, which tries to incorporate elements of both theories to provide a more comprehensive analysis of women's subordination. This new trend is aided by Antonio Gramsci's development of the concepts of 'hegemony' and 'consent' and Louis Althusser's theory of ideology[8].

We will employ socialist feminism in an attempt to explore the relationship between society at large and radio and its audience for selected programmes.

Hegemonic Struggle and Consent

Gramsci argues that supremacy of one group over another is manifest in two forms: 'domination' which is secured through the coercive institutions in society, and the 'intellectual and moral' leadership which is exercised through institutions in 'civil society'[9]. These institutions function within an implicit assumption of what is 'normal' and 'natural'; the idea that it is 'common sense' to live with those assumptions. The commanding position of the 'ruling ideas' falls within the construction of 'hegemony'. The way in which these ideas are taken as 'common sense' works through the 'consent' given by the subordinate classes to their own oppression, and the degree to which these ideas are consented to is the degree to which the ruling class exercises 'hegemony'.

Women 'consent' not necessarily because they agree with their oppression or are even unable to perceive it, but because the ruling ideas do not incorporate the conceptual tools with which the oppressed classes can articulate radical alternatives: ". . . all the institutional mechanisms through which perception is shaped – the schools, the Church, the conventional political parties, the mass media, even the trade unions – in one way and another play into the hands of the ruling groups"[10]. The ruling ideas become internalized in all the civil institutions because they are perceived, albeit uneasily, as the only viable ones. In this context Gramsci introduces the notion of 'organic intellectuals', who are able to understand the contradictions between the ruling ideas and the structures of oppression. By being able to appropriate (at least to some extent) the mechanisms by which the dominant ideology wins acceptance – religion, the mass media, schools, rituals and ceremonies, the prevailing linguistic structure and the political system – the 'organic intellectuals' are able to start a process of consciousness-raising and subversion of the status quo.

Historically women have been relegated to inferior positions in the social formation and consequently have not had the tools for the expression of their subordination. As the educational institutions became accessible to them, organic intellectuals were able to articulate their aspirations, thereby raising the consciousness of others. In the nineteenth century, for example, this led to the formation of the suffragette movement which secured the vote for women in the late 1920s. The raising of consciousness also enabled the dominant group to be alerted to a counter-ideology. When the ruling ideas are challenged and entrenched power is threatened, the limits of hegemonic

consent are signalled and it becomes necessary for the ruling group to introduce mechanisms of coercion and repression to contain the dissent and maintain the status quo.

Repression and Counter-ideology

Although Althusser's formulation of Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)[11] is overly simplified and agglomerative[12], nonetheless the distinction he makes is analytically useful in a description of how, through the intermediation of specific discourses, certain coercive institutions gain acceptance as necessary structures in the social formation. The ISAs could be perceived as nodal points around which the discursive practices are organized. The unity of the ideological apparatuses such as the family and media are secured by the ideology of the dominant classes[13]. The gender division in society is accordingly legitimized through ideology. When the dominant ideology is threatened by an emergent counter-ideology, both the repressive and ideological apparatuses become more repressive in order to meet the looming crisis to the hegemonic bloc. Ideological discourse consequently becomes a mechanism of recuperation[14] for the hegemonic principle, *normalizing* the right of existence of the repressive institutions in society. Discourses such as soap operas would then fall within the terrain of hegemonic struggles.

This recuperative intervention can be clearly perceived in the way in which the ideology of militarism is filtering into radio soap operas. In *Die Vrou van Shangetti* – "die storie van 'n vrou se liefde, haat en vergelding"[15] – the introductory phrase is misleading, or as Barthes would term it, deliberately distorts the way in which the story ought to be received[16]. Over the study period March to October 1982 the narrative gradually made more and more frequent references to "die kommunisme"[17], to the point when the romantic crises are woven around power alliances with "terroristiese organisasies/Marxiste" or "'n wêreldswye organisasie wat die Weste van kommunisme wil bevry/organisasie 'Afrika 85'"[18]. In this way the 'common-sense' assumption of the necessity of support for the State is diffused into the ideological production of the programming of the SABC, and, at the level of consumption, the housewives who listen to these programmes.

Of the groups who are constituted as subordinate within the social

formation, women form one of the largest groups. They have given (and the majority still give) their consent to their subordination[19]. What then is the significance of women's subordination in particular, and what is the relationship (if any) to other forms of subordination in society. We need to look at the insights that have been gained in feminist theory, and examine whether one can usefully apply them in analysing other forms of subordination, and subordination in general.

Gender or Class?

Radical feminism and Marxist feminism were the primary formulations in an attempt to derive some theoretical perspective for the study of gender divisions in society. For the latter, the historicism of Marxist theory was important in understanding the way in which women's consciousness has emerged and also to understand the social relations which perpetuated their domination. However, Marxism "could not directly address the gender of the exploiters and those whose labour is appropriated"[20]. The primary contradiction between labour and capital can be termed 'sex-blind', whereas feminism emphasizes precisely the relations of gender, primarily the oppression of women by men. By contrast, radical feminism is based on the assumption that the sexual division in society precedes and transcends any class division. However, neither of these labels have remained static or watertight, and both trends have contributed insights to the theory we shall use.

How are we then to develop an integrated view? We need a theory that is able to explain the gender division of society in its social and historical context. In this chapter we will focus on the oppression of women in South Africa, with an emphasis on how capitalist relations of production operate when seen in the light of the gender divisions in society which preceded the transition to capitalism, and which, as far as can be established, will not be erased by a socialist revolution[21]. We therefore need to look at the structures in society which have contributed to women's subordination in the social formation; that is, the household structure, definitions of sexuality, and the position of women in the labour process. Before we do that it is necessary to define some fundamental concepts that have been central in specifying the nature of women's oppression: patriarchy, reproduction and ideology, representation and interpellation. These concepts have been used differently over time in various formulations of feminist theories.

Patriarchy

'Patriarchy'[22] is used in radical feminist theory to distinguish the gender division of society as analytically separate from any class division. Women's economic dependence on men makes their class positions temporary; they may be forced to change through marriage, divorce or death[23]. When the term is used together with a Marxist analysis, capitalist society is identified as a patriarchal one[24].

Many arguments attempt to reveal how domestic labour serves capitalism, but fail to adequately integrate the two concepts. It has been argued that an adequate Marxist feminist analysis must see 'patriarchy' as operating at a dual level: ". . . first, the control of women's fertility and sexuality in monogamous marriage and, second, the economic subordination of women through the sexual division of labour (and property)"[25]. An elaboration of this theme is aided by materialist theories of subjectivity which view the formation of sexed subjects as occurring in the patriarchal family[26]. The family consequently becomes the crucial site of oppression for women – that of being bound in a definition of both psychological and property relations:

> . . . the family may be defined exactly as property relations between husbands and wives and those property relations in action. The family so defined provides the terms for psychic relations, for the production of sexed and class subjects for representations of relations of patriarchy and capital, that is, for the constitution of subjects in ideology[27].

Although this definition of patriarchy does not necessarily explain the position of women in a capitalist society, it provides an important focus on one of the major oppressive structures for women. It also links feminist theories to theories of ideology and introduces the family as one of the structures which reproduces the dominant relations of production[28].

Reproduction and Ideology of Gender

Since 'reproduction' has been used generally to describe various processes, it is important here to define exactly what is meant by the term in the present context[29]. Theorists have attempted to differentiate between social reproduction, the maintenance of the social conditions of existence (relations of production), reproduction of the labour force to secure the existant modes of production, and biological reproduction (procreation of the species)[30]. Significantly, the site for all these reproductive processes is the family.

Althusser defines ideology as the lived relation, the way in which people imagine their social relations. Most socialist feminist accounts of women's oppression have been located primarily in the ideology of women's position; the construction of male and female subjects, and the relation of the gender divisions of labour to capitalist production. This has led to the development of two major areas of focus for socialist feminists: familial relations and the development of male and female subjectivity, and the analysis of gender differences in cultural production[31]. The entrenched nature of women's oppression can only be understood in terms of the cultural processes by which people are represented differently, created and recreated as men and women.

Representation of Reality

Since ideology refers mainly to processes which have to do with consciousness it can best be located in the category of meaning – hence defining the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced or transformed. Since meaning is primarily negotiated through the means of communication and signification, it is perfectly feasible to suggest that cultural production provides an important site for the construction of ideological practices. This does not mean, however, either that ideology is theoretically indistinguishable from material practices, or that it bears any direct relationship to them: "What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live"[32].

Whilst cultural products play an important role in the gender division of society, we need to have a prior knowledge of these relations to be able to see how they may be reproduced or subverted. From cultural production one may learn about the ways in which meaning is constructed in a particular historical period, but that knowledge will not add up to a general knowledge of the social formation, because "meaning is carried both by what is present as well as through the absences in a text"[33]. To grasp these absences, we need to look at the relations underlying the economic and ideological processes of women's oppression without separating them. Economic categories cannot explain relations of production that are based on ideological divisions of labour; nor can the entrenched nature of this oppression be understood without a consideration of the cultural processes by which gender is reproduced.

Interpellation: Sex and Society

Althusser's formulation sees ideology as a practice of representation, informing the way in which individuals live out their roles in the social totality[34]. Ideology then participates in the construction of the individual through interpellation, and succeeds in making the existing power relationships in society acceptable and 'natural' to the individual.

In an examination of the ideology of gender it is essential firstly to determine how the structure of the family contributes to the reproduction of the relations of production, and secondly how the ideology of the family is made to signify in social discourses. Discourses are clustered around forms of real social institutions, and ideology permeates all the material practices of these institutions. Through interpellation, individuals believe 'spontaneously' in certain ideas according to which they act[25]. These practices are also inscribed in the rituals which exist in the dominant ideology. The sexual (biological) differences in human beings have defined an ideology of different gender roles (socially constructed) for men and women in society. This is predicated upon the idea that women, as bearers of children, should therefore automatically be responsible for the home. If the woman stays at home while her husband participates outside the home in the production process, she becomes economically dependent on him and consequently subordinate to him. The complex institution of a heterosexual monogamous marriage, resulting in a nuclear family, with the woman economically dependent on the man and responsible for running the house, can be identified as the ideology of domesticity. In order to perpetuate this social institution, it is necessary for a woman to attract a man in order to get married to him. To achieve this she must participate in the rituals of courting and pairing that show her to have been successfully interpellated by the ideology operating in discourses of femininity, masculinity and sexual practice. If she does not obtain this state, then she is regarded as 'deviant'. She is exposed to negative social sanctions – reviled and deconstituted as a human subject through a process of objectification[36].

Within the narrative tradition of the soap opera, 'evil' or 'bad' female characters are 'punished' either by not being able to have children or by losing them at an early age. Once a woman has 'achieved' her feminine status through the convention of marriage, she is expected to practice her socially defined domestic role as mother and housewife. The majority of women fulfil this role regardless of

whether they also participate in the relations of production outside the home. Women accept their position in the household as natural and spontaneous, the 'common-sense' way of keeping the household together[37]. The manner in which ideology obscures the real relations of women's oppression is articulated through the dominant discursive practices in society. Amongst these are soap operas, which serve as representations of imagined conditions of existence and which interpellate women as subordinate to men.

The Manufacture of Discourses

It is insufficient to state that cultural products like soap operas become instruments in the production of ideology. It is also necessary to analyse the forces and relations of production which underlie their manufacture. In order to make a thorough examination of the discourses through which the ideology of women's subordination operates, we need to examine the historical context within which the text is articulated. Previous work in the analysis of gender divisions in society has concentrated disproportionately on the *images* of gender that have been presented, but it is necessary to examine more than just the text or discourse within which such representations exist. Eagleton proposes the following scheme through which a materialist analysis of the text can be undertaken[38].

(i) *general mode of production* – describes the unity of certain forces and relations of material production;
(ii) *literary mode of production* – the presentation of distinct modes of cultural discourses (the literary modes of production are substructures of the general modes of production);
(iii) *general ideology* – the dominant set of discourses operating at any time in a particular society;
(iv) *authorial ideology* – the author's 'common-sense' assumptions of society;
(v) *aesthetic ideology* – the framework of cultural production within which a particular form of discourse is presented (eg. genre), and
(vi) *text* – the material form in which a particular discourse operates.

Eagleton's categories are all inextricably linked by the final representation in the text, but it is only through an understanding of the historical context of any cultural product that one is able to 'read' the absences which are structured into the text[39].

General Mode of Production: General Ideology and the Text.

Soap operas are a part of the ideological discourses which are locked into the South African political and economic system. However, an extensive survey of the dominant relations of production and the general ideological discourses in South Africa fall beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, it remains necessary briefly to tie them into a feminist perspective.

The discourse that women are dependent on men for economic survival maintains the capitalist forces of exploitation and appropriation by giving women a particular place in the relations of production. Consequently women occupy positions which allow wages to be kept down. In the case of working-class women wages are sometimes at a level below that of even being able to sustain their own labour reproduction. Most of the housewives listening to soap operas are economically dependent on a man. Some of them might have part-time jobs to supplement the family income, but it is unlikely that many of them will be totally self-supporting.

In *Die Vrou van Shangetti* the main female character, Ruby, has not earned the fortune which is being used to develop the capitalist venture in Central Africa, but inherited the money from her father[40]. By contrast, the men have to 'prove' themselves as worthy by generating their own income: in the case of the hero of the story, Alec, there are numerous references to his impecunious state – he will not marry the woman he loves until he can support her economically. The ability to support a wife, regardless of her own earning capacity, therefore becomes a sign of his masculinity, which in turn would reflect on the expectations that women have to be supported. Women are therefore not represented as breadwinners: they form a reserve army of labour to be included or excluded from the forces of production according to market determinants[41].

Other arguments focus on the 'dual shift' that women work, both as wage labourers and housewives[42]. Since the second shift is considered to be unpaid labour, it allows capital to pay only for the labour of the man in the production process. Feminists have argued that the struggle for a family wage has only entrenched women's position even further by the implication that she can now stay at home while her husband supports her. The Beveridge report in Britain[43] proposed two main elements to include in the maintenance of this system: National Insurance and Family Allowances. Underlying these recommendations is the ideology of domesticity and maternity as cru-

cial to all three levels of reproduction of the labour force[44].

The general ideology of women's subordination exists in the representation of femininity, masculinity and sexual practice as necessary supports of the ideology of domesticity. In a study on the culture of femininity amongst working class girls, Angela McRobbie[45] found that they actively participate in the processes of interpellation as female subjects. Besides partaking in gender-defined roles in the family in preparation for one of their own, they indulge in fantasies of romance, jealousy and sexual problems as represented to them in the cultural products which they consume. The most important point she makes is that:

> ... most of them realised that for them marriage would be an economical necessity. They saw clearly that the wages they would get would be insufficient to keep them, for example, in a flat. Instead they would have to strike up a good deal with 'Mum', and hope that she would take as little from them for their 'keep' as possible. The rest of their wages would go on the consumer goods considered necessary to attract a 'steady' (make-up, clothes, drinks, discos, magazines, etc.) ... they would simply move, when the time came, from one man's house (their father's) to another's (their husband's)[46].

The ways in which these girls experience sexual relationships stems directly from this goal, and are conducted according to the prevailing stereotypes[47]. The danger of getting a 'reputation' as a 'whore' or a 'tart' is clearly recognised by them, and they acutely experience the ambiguities inherent in gender ideology. Boys are encouraged to 'sow their wild oats' while girls who allow them to gain this experience are denounced as 'easy lays'. In this situation the girls always have to deal with problems of sexual exploitation in their relationships with boys. The way in which they have to conduct their lived relationships is according to an ideology of femininity; they spend the major portion of their adolescent life making themselves beautiful to attract a man whom they will eventually marry[48]. A woman must take control of her appearance, managing her presence through gestures, clothes, expression, voice and opinion[49]. Appearance for a woman becomes an expression of her ego: she works at beauty to "take possession of her person as she takes possession of her home through housework; her ego then seems chosen and recreated by herself"[50]. She voluntarily turns herself into a sex object to be consumed by men, thereby conspiring to her own oppression.

In a capitalist society she is also required to appear as a representation of her husband's position in the class structure. She is regarded as an object in his possession, a person who will reflect his wealth and power. In *Die Vrou van Shangetti* Ruby is a beautiful red-haired woman and listeners frequently hear the men around her comment on her beauty. "Ek is 'n gelukkige ou om so 'n pragtige vrou te hê ..."[51]. In a flash-back, her ex-fiancé says "Jy's die mooiste vrou wat ek nog ooit gesien het"[52]. Even the women comment on her beauty, albeit to voice reservations about her character: "Ruby is 'n mooi vrou, maar partymaal dink ek dis 'n vloek om so mooi te wees. Sy maak met die mans net wat sy wil"[53]. The woman with the most power in the state of Shangetti has more than financial power, she also has sexual power – something which it is assumed all women would like to have.

By working at beauty, women also place themselves in a position of envy. They compete with each other for men, seek to have themselves loved as objects. In this process they consume commodities which through advertising promise love, romance and ultimately a husband. If one does not partake in this race, one is implicitly choosing a life without love – a life where the pinnacle of womanhood, being a mother, is denied one. Interspersed between the sections of any particular episode, advertisements of cosmetics, fashions, household products and so on promise ways of becoming better wives and mothers. Thus, through advertising, women also collude in their own oppression by turning themselves into objects to be consumed by women. While the adverts address themselves directly to the real problems of keeping within gender role definitions of femininity and domesticity, these are articulated in a much subtler way in the stories. There is a tension of apparent ambiguity operating between advertising, continuity[54] and episodes during an afternoon's broadcast. The themes in the soap operas converge on the ideology of domesticity and maternity through discourses related to sexual practices[55]; these ideologies remain unarticulated, structural absences which reside at the level of symbolic representations of the sociocultural context. The story inevitably ends when they become explicit: they are the 'natural' resolutions of romantic intrigues – emotional commitment transformed into permanent marriage. Once the goal has been achieved it is unnecessary to perpetuate the sequel to romance – the woman gives herself into the keeping of 'her' man. In plots where motherhood is introduced during the course of the serial, it is used as a device to generate complications in existing emotional liaisons. The child remains outside the story, either living with a relative as a marginal character, or being a participant in a situation of crisis, notably the death of the child.

A predominant motif for the consolidation of romance is the omnipresence of the 'other' woman. During the progression of the plot in *Die Vrou van Shangetti*, the liaisons between the characters continually fluctuate and reverse. This is a technique whereby the listener is lured to listen to yet another episode the following day. The plot must remain unpredictable, and one of the ways in which to sustain the suspense is in changing the identity of the 'other' woman. Since several romantic liaisons are usually in progress at any particular time in the serial's presentation, an almost incestuous 'swapping' of partners occurs. Depending on the particular characters' moral integrity, the competitive relationships between the women may be concluded, often temporarily, by jealous rivalry, selfless abdication or helpless acceptance. In *Die Vrou van Shangetti* there are three main male and four main female characters. (They are also incidentally characters who are marriageable and in a position to enter into romantic relationships).

Over the study period the following liaisons occurred: Jessica, the doctor in the mission hospital flees to Shangetti after being jilted by Robert, who comes to Shangetti later ostensibly as the representative of the organization 'Afrika 85'.[56] He tries to make a comeback with Jessica, but she has already secretly fallen in love with Alec, the chief structural engineer. He was once engaged to Ruby, the rich man's daughter who controls all the finances for the venture of building a casino and extracting diamonds from the nearby lake. She has an illegitimate child of whom she claims he is the father. He has rejected her and does not accept paternity of the child. She uses the child as emotional blackmail to eradicate the possibility of Jessica and Alec having a relationship. Jessica, still sensitive after being jilted, remains coldly aloof, and Alec turns to a famous novelist, Lisa, who is gathering material for a novel set in the African jungle. Shortly after their engagement, Lisa is paralysed in an aeroplane accident which leads to the breakdown of the relationship. He discovers a letter written to her from her ex-fiancé, Robert, who is also the man who jilted Jessica. Alec's immature young assistant, Charles, has loved Jessica since he has first met her, but she rejects him too. After Alec and Lisa break their engagement, Charles befriends Jessica and there is a slight hint that they may form a romantic relationship, until she is hit by a bullet in the fighting between the 'terrorists' and 'Afrika 85', and Alec risks his life to save her. All the while Ruby is plotting jealously to get Alec back, even though she is married to Alec's enemy Patrick O'Reilly. Patrick apparently is the leader of the terrorist group which is attempting to take over the state of Shangetti. He des-

perately wants a son from Ruby, and is infuriated when she has an accident while riding to Alec's camp. Jessica is forced to do an abortion on Ruby and tells O'Reilly that Ruby will not have any more children. Within the moral framework of punishment for the bad and reward for the good, it seems appropriate that Ruby will not be able to give O'Reilly a child. These values are prevalent in society at large and endorsed in the soaps, making them appear 'natural' and hence 'right', and in turn legitimizing the social practices related to them.

Nearly every major issue that confronts a family or a community in contemporary society is used as a *plot* and solved according to traditional ideal solutions. In *Andrew Mansfield* the protagonist is a reputable psychiatrist with a large, solid practice. He and his wife Peggy have a nineteen-year-old daughter, Veronica, who is a student at Wits University. Andrew's practice brings him into contact with a broad spectrum of people and their problems. In his own words, his sessions involve a "menopausal depressive and her husband; a fervent 'The world ends tomorrow' merchant; a brilliant twenty-three year old student who doesn't know why she has attempted suicide three times; a gentleman who has consulted his doctor two hundred times in the past seven years although he has nothing at all organically wrong"... ad valium.

Andrew also has his share of problems at home – anyone with a nineteen-year-old daughter must have problems. In this story the protagonist is the ideal mediator for the dominant ideology: the specialist in solving personal problems, the one who helps individuals slot into their social environment. Nevertheless he remains humanly fallible, because as the blurb of the programme proclaims, he is a man who 'in striving to give meaning to the lives of others, almost destroyed his own'.

The woman at home listening to all this is also responsible for inculcating the values of society in her family. She must be shown the resolution of general problem areas in society within a framework of good and bad, right or wrong. For example, any conflict or indecision that the housewife may feel about staying at home is resolved for her in the soap opera, which reduces it to a binary opposition of family/career, right/wrong. The presentation of a career woman's role can be seen in *From Chrystal with Love*. It could be said that Chrystal Benedict is the fantasy image that the listener/housewife has, but on closer investigation this does not always hold true. Despite her wealth and professional success, Chrystal's life is beset with problems, most notably from her son and ex-husband. Her material wealth and power was obtained at the expense of her personal, famil-

ial fulfilment. She herself makes reference to her failure in the socially accepted female roles. The underlying message to the housewife is that she will find happiness if she stays at home and cares for her family, and that she will suffer guilt and unhappiness if she pursues her career.

The soaps show the consequences of going against accepted social practices. Adultery is invariably punished and divorce tears the children apart. Warren Benedict's waywardness and rebellion is the albatross that his mother, Chrystal, must bear as a result of the breakup of her marriage and the dissolution of family life. Values are never threatened, challenged or undermined. The media dramas present the backbone of organic ideology. This support of the accepted practices of society accounts to a large extent for the popularity of the programmes. Similar conclusions are drawn by Dorothy Hobson:

> It is in the 'living out' of problem areas that much of the appeal of the series is located. However, the resolution of areas of conflict, contradiction or confusion within a dramatic situation is double-edged . . . It is in the forms that the resolutions are made within the programmes that the ideological basis of consensual femininity is *reproduced* and *reinforced* for women. . . . The outcome remains the same. The resolutions within . . . the soap opera series . . . are not revolutionary; what emerges is the reinforcement of the fatality of the situation, without the need to change it[57].

Reinforcement of common-sense values is achieved by presenting material that will not contradict the dominant consensus. If a drama were to publicly challenge a hegemonic principle (for instance if it were to show that hard work is futile and never rewarded), it would challenge the very fabric that holds capitalist society together. However, because the programmes always embody the key elements of the dominant ideology, the listener is not offended and will continue to listen to the soap opera, and the advertiser has a ready audience.

The Literary Mode of Production: General Ideology

In the literary mode of production, the SABC is the intitutionalized producer in control of whether, when, by whom and for whom the programmes will be broadcast. Joy Lehman makes the following observation about women's magazines:

> As media products women's magazines are part of an ideological apparatus presenting a view of the world which is at most points locked into the economic and political interests of the capitalist system.

At control and production levels the apparatus consists of layers of editors, advertising managers, company directors, newspaper owners, financial backers of various kinds, government advisors and ministers, who tend to share a common view, not only of how society in general should be organised, but in particular of the place of women in it. This interlock of financial interests, State control, and media producers might be difficult to demonstrate as a 'power elite', and unnecessary to expose as a conscious conspiracy[58].

This statement could be generalized and applied equally well to radio. It therefore becomes impossible to isolate the text or discourse from the wider social and economic arrangements in which it is situated. The general ideology in South Africa will permeate into the soaps through the *modus operandi* of the SABC as well as through the constraints of the technology of broadcasting. An important factor is the ideological significance of the language used. The Afrikaans language has historically been one of the crucial issues in the political development of the Afrikaner nation. It is no coincidence that Afrikaans developed hand in hand with the National Party, being one of the central factors of identification with the 'volk'. In South Africa, Afrikaans is the language of the apartheid engineers and it could be argued that its use symbolizes particularly repressive living conditions for blacks. One of the main issues during the uprising of black schoolchildren in 1976 centred around the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction[59].

The Afrikaans programmes are structured for users of this language – who fall almost automatically into the group of oppressors – and the general ethnic ideology of the Afrikaners will prevail in these programmes. Although *Die Vrou van Shangetti* is situated in Central Africa with only a handful of whites in a black-ruled country, during the study period only one black had been given a name. For the rest of the time, blacks were referred to as 'die werkers' or 'die regering'[60]. O'Reilly has so much power that he can virtually dictate to the head of state, usually called the 'hoofman' (chief)[61]. A complex discursive matrix represents white superiority and exclusivity. Apart from appearing as the odd speechless messenger (in a subordinate position), blacks appear as distanced third persons in the discourse. They are used as devices to illuminate the personalities of the main (white) characters. After an act of sabotage on the construction site, a worker loses a leg. Although the listeners are aware that Alec is not responsible for the accident, he nevertheless repeatedly expresses his concern for "daai arme werker en sy gesin"[62], and vows to care for the man's family. This situation reveals the gruff hero's paternalistic hu-

manism. O'Reilly's inordinate influence over the chief emphasizes the ineptness of blacks in self-government without the patronizing hand of a white in the background, and the conspicuous absence of blacks as main characters in the stories reveals the permeation of apartheid ideology in the discourse. These structural absences endorse the 'common-sense' view of blacks as marginal to 'white' reality.

Because of the organizational connections between the SABC and the National Party, as well as the bilingualism policy on Springbok radio, both the Afrikaans and English soap operas presented exactly the same fundamental view of the status quo. Consequently the same structured absences signify apartheid ideology in *From Chrystal with Love* and *Andrew Mansfield*. Structured absences are distinguishing ideological features in any discourse. In this respect Christine Belsey notes:

> Ideology obscures the real conditions of existence by presenting partial truths. It is a set of omissions, gaps rather than lies, smoothing over contradictions, appearing to provide answers to questions which in reality it evades, and masquerading as coherence in the interests of the social relations generated by and necessary to the reproduction of the existing modes of production[63].

Generally speaking, the significance of what is present is only revealed when seen against what is rare, or even absent. The analytical concern is then to identify the rare and absent items and understand why such a situation exists. In the English sample studied, there were no black characters amongst the thirty-five parts. The absence of blacks in radio soap operas corresponds to the 'willed' ideology of apartheid which, through the application of the homelands policy, attempts to portray the 'ideal' South Africa as a land without blacks.

Clearly then, Government policy makes itself felt in the media and the world picture in the media is not entirely unrelated to real life. As Barthes noted: "However paradoxical it may seem, myth hides nothing: its function is to distort"[64]. The manifest actuality of our society may not be presented (for example, that fact that there are blacks within South Africa who are vociferous about their subjugation), but the values and relationships that underlie it are symbolically represented.

It can be seen that the dominance of whites (as one example) in radio soap operas is not so much a misrepresentation of existing social relations, but a symbolic representation of clearly interpellated subjects who embody the dominant ideology without question. Any discrepancy between real social relations and those represented points to the way in which the subjects construe their positions within these social relations. Most of the characters in the serials are petty-bourgeois. The concentration upon the petty bourgeoisie facilitates the emphasis on capitalist values. As a rule, soap operas do not deal with the problems of people trying to support themselves and their families, but focus on the attainment of wealth, status, security and romance. By omitting all allusions to working-class existence, the soaps give currency to the notion of an easy, wealthy lifestyle. The illusion of social mobility presented as a real possibility to the audience (although it is in fact a dream) is an important means of persuading people to work hard and produce. Whilst the incentive to work may be upward social mobility, the reality is one of social stasis, for individuals generally cannot escape their class determinations. Only middle-class and upper middle-class characters are portrayed to reinforce the work ethic associated with upward mobility. The ideology thus allows for dramas which ignore the concerns of society (racism, poverty and oppression, for example) and deflect attention away from a realization and recognition of actual conditions of existence.

The Literary Mode of Production: Authorial Ideology and Production

When dealing with soap operas, a conceptual limitation in the application of the term 'authorial ideology' needs to be considered: because of the way in which a soap opera is presented, a number of individuals are ultimately responsible for the final representation. Personnel and technical procedures (the relations of production) in the SABC need to be mentioned: an author submits a script for approval – the producer who will be responsible for the final product will make any changes deemed necessary to the script. Once it is approved in terms of the consensual discourse, actresses/actors are engaged. In the Afrikaans soaps they are most likely to be drawn from a petty-bourgeois Afrikaans cultural group, since the successful casting of characters for radio drama depends on accurate vocal intonation in Afrikaans[65]. They will be selected according to their articulation of the parts as interpreted by both the author and the producer. The same criteria will apply in casting for English soaps. Suitably qualified technicians, in ideology as well as around technology, will contribute to the total ideological discourse which makes up the final presentation of the soap opera. Since the SABC as an institution in 'civil society' has the final say in what is produced, one can make the rather crude as-

sumption that although the author's ideology may not be entirely congruent with that of the SABC, there will be a sufficient area of overlap with that of the Corporation for it not to warrant a detailed analysis for the purposes of this chapter[66].

Images of War

In a country where the only broadcasting corporation is incorporated through an Act of Parliament and directly controlled by the party in power through the organizational structure, it is inevitable that the programming policy will fall squarely within the hegemonic discourse. It is therefore not presumptuous to suppose that the soap operas that are broadcast will serve to reinforce the dominant ideology. In the present state of military crisis in South Africa, one would expect to hear programmes which allude to threats to the system, and one does. The slot just before *Die Vrou van Shangetti* started a story set in a military camp. In both *Dr Louisa Maritz* and *Die Vrou van Shangetti* frequent references are made to the ideological conflict. In the latter, more and more references to communism as an evil force which needs to be eradicated were included in the story. In the former, one of the auxiliary characters gets killed in military engagement, presumably in Angola (we are just told that they were outside the South African border), though the details of the attack were never revealed to the listener. The descriptions merely emphasise the horror experienced by the person who returned. Other characters leave for and return from 'the border'[67] – it is seldom named more specifically – punctuating the story with military heroism. When a country experiences a challenge of this nature, the dominant ideology will be expressed more forcefully in order to challenge any counter-ideology. Thus the authorial ideology (that of the SABC) becomes almost transparent in the presentation of Afrikaans soap operas. The reason it is tolerated is that the genre of soap operas falls within the category of entertainment and fiction, and therefore cannot be said to relate to real events.[68]

The overt content of these programmes convinces one that they are definitely not free of ideology, as is presupposed within the SABC's self-proclaimed functionalist framework. Their popularity makes one realise that it is imperative for them to be used as ideological tools of recuperation in the struggle for consent to the hegemonic principle. During the Second World War, soap operas in the United States of America dealt with the situations of those who had been left at 'home' while the others fought[69]. Characters could be found making patriotic speeches in the narrative. Only five out of twenty pro-

grammes with contemporary settings made no reference to the war.

Of the programmes broadcast on Springbok Radio between 2 and 4pm on weekdays, salient or direct references to the military situation have been made in four of the stories with contemporary settings. *Basis Bravo* deals with romances and personal crises centred in an army camp. A major episode of spy intrigue developed when Russian documents were noticed on the sergeant-major's desk. Any association with Russia is by 'common-sense' assumption traitorous. The SABC could accordingly be said to present a relatively undiluted form of the general ideology to its listeners in the soap operas.

The Literary Mode of Production: Consumption

The categorization of serialized fiction drama (soaps) is historically linked to the production and distribution of cultural products in a capitalist society. Their roots lie in the serializing of stories in magazines, to ensure that readers would buy the following edition[70]. The same method was followed by the early film industry to bring the audiences back to the cinema the following week[71]. Serials were thus initially prompted by commercial interests: they were cheap to produce and popular amongst the exhibitors for bringing the audience back for more. On 15 February 1932 the first daytime serial made its appearance on the NBC radio network in the USA. In a country where broadcasting was commercialized it was essential to attract sponsors, and serialized dramas provided the answer, both to advertisers and the medium. The first programme was sponsored by Colgate, setting the trend which gave these dramas the name of 'soap operas'. In South Africa, commercial broadcasting was introduced with Springbok Radio on 1 May 1950. Daily serials (soaps) first appeared in 1950 in English, and in 1953 in Afrikaans[72]. They immediately became immensely popular amongst Afrikaans-speaking audiences. In North America radio serials were replaced by television dramas with the advent of television. Since South African television transmission began only at 4pm, soaps were still broadcast on radio[73].

Since their introduction on Springbok Radio in November 1953 the popularity of Afrikaans soap operas was repeatedly mentioned in the SABC annual reports[74]. Per quarter-hour average, more housewives listened to Springbok Radio during 'soap' time than in the early morning six to eight-thirty slot, which had the same overall listenership as the afternoon slot[75]. The importance for advertising is clear: women do approximately seventy percent of the household commodity buying. In 1968 the station achieved almost complete satura-

tion of potential listeners during the time-slot of *Die Geheim van Nantes*[76]. The price of a thirty-second spot advertisement in the slot between two and four-fifteen also ranked highest in cost compared to the other spots available on Springbok Radio[77]. They were an important source of revenue for the Corporation, which gets more than fifty percent of its income from advertising. The SABC defined the role of the commercial station as follows: "Springbok Radio's specific role is to be the service which provides popular entertainment to the widest possible audience. If it is successful in its task, it also meets the requirements of the advertisers who find it to be a potent advertising medium"[78].

Springbok Radio was broadcast nationally, alternating between English and Afrikaans. In the morning the stories were in English and during the afternoon in Afrikaans; consequently any person who could understand Afrikaans, English, or both had access to a receiving set, and was able to listen during this time was a potential listener[79]. The people who most obviously fall into this category are the unemployed housewives, schoolchildren and pensioners in white and so-called coloured communities. The ideology of gender which separates the labour roles of men to the labour market outside the home, and women to domestic labour in the household has defined the position of isolation that women experience while being at home. (In soap operas of course the isolation is never apparent since the characters conduct their romances outside the home.) The world as the listeners experience it therefore consists of the immediate relations that they have in the environment of the home – relationships with their immediate family and close friends – and the 'outside' world as presented to them through the media. The radio is an intimate medium which provides company and entertainment to listeners throughout their day.

Text: Narrative Structure, Genre

Since housewives make up the largest proportion of the soap opera audience, the narratives deal with themes that are perceived to be 'feminine': romance which emphasizes the importance of individual psychology revolving around personal sexual relationships. The relation of the text to the 'real' world outside the home – the 'man's world' – forms the backcloth to these dramas. By the insertion of recognizable elements of life as it is experienced by the listeners the text takes on a sense of realism, and consequently the presentation becomes perceived as realistic and hence understandable. Once something has been understood, there would seem to be no need for an explanation, and the whole text will be accepted as an accurate 'reflection' of the real world. However, structuralists have long been engaged in showing that one's understanding of anything is never complete: "Television does not manifest the actuality of our society, but rather reflects symbolically, the structure of values and relationships beneath the surface"[80]. If this statement is taken in the context of the structuralist claim that we "invent the world which we inhabit"[81], then an objective reality cannot exist – each person will experience their world in their own unique way. When an author sets about creating a cultural product, there is not only a singular meaning which can be applied to the text: it will be modified in accordance with the experience of the listener.

In the media, codes are constructed by the reformulation of elements from the world into dramas, news, or advertisements, and the audience accept them as views of a world which are natural and hence right since they appear to be 'true to life'. Because the signs in the discourse of soap operas are constructs[82] they cannot represent the real world, but rely on cultural codes which reinforce existing social values. Thus soap opera is a discursive practice through which language articulates the 'real', an interpretation which will favour the dominant or preferred meanings within a cultural order[83]. In the soap operas personal psychological traumas surrounding romantic sexual liaisons form the focus of the stories and sustain the plot and characters. Each problem is no sooner resolved than it is followed by another, thwarting any resolution of the personal conflict which is endemic to the genre.

The reliance on plot – and particularly on a prolonged one – is a manifestation of what Barthes calls the 'hermeneutic code'. These are the narrative units which propel the story progressively forwards towards its end. They are elements ". . . whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer: or even constitute an enigma and lead to its solution"[84].

In serialized dramas the hermeneutic code predominates. While the classic drama can be seen as a linear progression, serial drama follows the pattern of a fission reaction. For example, in *From Chrystal with Love*, the arrival of Warren Benedict sets into motion a number of plot lines (his involvement with Anna Schmidt, his association with Gulliver and his confrontation with his mother). A chain reaction follows: Anna provides the spark which sets off the conflagration between Rosie and Reggie Harris; their marital arguments affect those around them, and Chrystal and Will are reminded of their own separation. In *Andrew Mansfield* each new patient sets up a new

reaction and invariably there will be connections which draw the characters together. When Andrew treats a nineteen-year-old patient there is a paralleling of concerns experienced by Dr and Mrs Mansfield about their daughter, Veronica. Problems such as careers, drugs and pre-marital sex become the focus of attention until they are overtaken by other issues. In *Die Vrou van Shangetti* there is the strange coincidence of Robert's involvement with both the women whom Alec likes. These examples illustrate how sub-plots are used to thematically link up the central issues by interweaving the various themes made explicit in the serial. They multiply and provide the listeners with shifting points of view so that they become involved in a complex range of destinies. Thus the audience is asked to tune in again the following day, not so that they can find the answers, but to witness further crises and complications which face the characters. Before a dilemma is resolved, a new one is introduced. As Tania Modleski observes, the narrative of the soap opera functions

> ... by placing ever more complex obstacles between desire and its fulfilment (and) makes anticipation of an end, an end in itself. Soap operas invest exquisite pleasure in the central condition of a woman's life: waiting – whether for the phone to ring, for the baby to take its nap, or for the family to be re-united shortly after the day's final soap opera has left its family still struggling against dissolution[85].

Finally, when the conclusion is in sight, it will be the ubiquity of 'true love' which wins over. The only world of any relevance for women is perceived to be in the private sphere of the home. In *Dr Louisa Maritz* the world of the medical profession is confessed, even by the leading character, not to be a place for a woman.

All the narrative elements are motifs that have been structured around reductions and simplifications of concepts that appear to transcend history. Characters are not seen to be trying to overcome broad social issues like education or human rights, but work in conflict with other characters who interfere with their lives. The glossing over of contentious issues is a characteristic of soap operas, as it is of popular culture in general in a capitalist society which, according to Lùkăcs, does its best to hide contradictions and smooth over the dialectical structures of society. He says of modern writers:

> The development of capitalism inevitably alienates writers from popular life, they find it more and more difficult to see into the inner active forces of capitalist society ... and of all the factors which determine the complex content of life only the immediate causal connection between two related spatial-

temporal phenomena is recognised ... this alienation ... leads modern writers to overrate immediate causation, which they generally and invariably see in terms of biographical-psychological causation, and so too acquire their preference for the biographical form[86].

Soap operas are rich in biographical-psychological data, almost to the exclusion of all else. Problems and more problems resulting from conflicts are the essence of the programmes. The tribulations that sustain the plot and characters are highlighted while the *mise-en-scene* will unobtrusively interlace these into the socio-historical context. Thus it would appear that the kinds of problems manifest in the serials pertain to the individual[87]. Very few issues are shown to threaten the community as a whole, and even problems like 'economic', 'professional' and 'crime' are the types of dilemmas which affect the individual person.

In *From Chrystal with Love*, a dispute arises over industrial pollution from Chrystal Benedict's medical laboratory. However, the focus of attention is not environmental pollution in general, its economic origins or ecological ramifications, but rather the jealous and vindictive Samuel Gulliver who deliberately put chemicals in the water so that Chrystal would be forced to close her laboratory. This would provide him with the opportunity to pillory her in his paper. Attention is consequently deflected away from social and economic causation and responsibility onto the idiosyncratic individual; the problems that are highlighted are on the whole isolated from the mainstream of actual structural conditions. Major issues such as war, national security, politics, poverty and unemployment – in fact any contentious conditions – merely provide settings for interpersonal conflicts in which causation is attributed to biographical-psychological impulses. In *Andrew Mansfield* it would at first appear that wider social issues are explored, but the frequent references to the threat of communism, the encroachment of industrialization, demonstrations against the Springboks in New Zealand, hunger strikers in Northern Ireland and IRA bombings are merely passing ones. They act as 'givens', anchors which do nothing to advance the main story-line.

The focus on the biographical-psychological acts as an anaesthetizing agent which numbs the contradictions and problems within capitalist society. Problems like pollution or tensions within the work environment are caused then solved by the people themselves. There is a displacement away from the site of socio-economic relations to the discourse of individualism. Listeners are drawn away from a realization and recognition of their actual conditions of existence and an

imaginary set of relations is substituted. The disorders from which Andrew Mansfield's patients suffer, for example, are characterized as cases of mental illness, but on examination they are found to be psychological stresses caused by individuals. Their difficulties are not inherited mental disorders over which they have no control, but convenient neuroses that will respond to a psychiatrist's therapy. Many of the patients complain that they are unable to cope with the pressures of modern society, yet 'society' is not ever seen as the root cause of their situations. To overcome this failure, Andrew Mansfield has a formula for survival for these people. He says, "we live in the world we know, and retaining the values we *know* (our italics) to be good, we try to exist side by side with these other values", thereby emphasizing and redeeming the powerlessness of isolated individuals. Thus interpersonal tensions and disturbances form the dominant themes of the soap operas, and these are carried by motifs like 'the other woman', history itself[88], a man's need to continue the family line, a woman's position as mother and wife and even a woman's position in the professional field, all revolving around the search for enduring personal happiness.

Morality is inserted through resolution of conflicts based on the 'correctness' of heterosexual relationships: 'true' romantic love versus a marriage of convenience, or 'love' versus 'money', marriage versus independence, 'desirable sexual elements' versus 'forbidden' ones. All these elements are treated within the milieu of personal emotional experiences which negate the real historical social relations. The invisibility of the domestic sphere emphasizes the "unacknowledged domestic labour involved in day-to-day and generational reproduction"[89]. Nevertheless the drive towards marriage as the 'only and proper' place for women in the relations of production stems from the 'naturalized' position of women in the centre of the family.

The form of the soaps effectively supports the negotiations and resolutions of elements in the narrative. Every episode throws up new emotional problems which are solved piecemeal through the application of 'common sense'. Through their interpellation via the narrative, the listeners recognize ideas that they identify with their own. In the resolution of discord through 'popular morality' the 'bad' will be punished and the 'good' rewarded. Ruby's illegitimate child (bad) dies (punishment) when she brings him back to Shangetti to live with her.

Characterization forms another important facet of soaps, and is used to lend credibility to certain moral resolutions. Characters can either be portrayed as manifestly 'bad' or as 'good'; but though 'bad' characters can be vindictive, selfish or even spiteful it would appear that "these defects do not spring from an evil nature, but are weaknesses resulting from bad experiences or lack of control. It is suggested that they may eventually be brought back to their better selves"[90]. Although it might at first glance be thought that Ruby is the archetypal femme fatale, according to Arnheim's definition she is merely a weak character. However, that factor does not absolve her from the consequences of her vindictive acts: if she is to become better she must suffer before she can eventually gain her reward.

There will always be troublemakers in the broadcast dramas. Plans and intrigues will be allowed to develop, but not to be fulfilled. In *From Chrystal with Love*, Gulliver may go to great lengths to plant chemicals in the river so that Chrystal's laboratory will be blamed for the pollution. The authorities very nearly force it to close, but at the eleventh hour Gulliver's plan is discovered. He also tries to get Chrystal's son Warren to reveal family secrets, but Warren sees through Gulliver's malicious intentions before he commits any indiscretions. Characters who create trouble, but who are basically weak, can be pardoned because they are capable of reform. This is the case with many of Dr Mansfield's patients; a young boy, who threatened his father with a gun was labelled 'delinquent', until it was revealed under analysis that he was only insecure and sought attention from his parents. So problems are solved easily when they are centred in the individual and the audience is always assured that justice, in whatever form, will ultimately be seen to be done. Consequently the soaps operate on a paradigm of 'good' and 'bad', and listeners know what is right or wrong. All actions are resolved within the dominant moral and ideological framework, thereby delineating the nature of the society from which they stem by giving positive emphasis to what is 'good' and 'correct' in that society, and by never impugning it.

The form of the dramas has no progression except in a linear temporal frame; the characters enact scenes in a continuous narrative explosion which shows no development of either characters or even the plot. In fact, with the matrix of plot-lines and the ramifications of interpersonal relationships open to the scriptwriter, a serial need never end. Continually shifting points of view can involve the listener in a whole range of destinies, which might end suddenly or lead to an endless procrastination of resolution. The genre therefore is one which is entirely sympathetic to the whole literary mode of production in terms of production, distribution, exchange and consumption.

Processes of Interpellation

The processes of representation of women in cultural products have distinctive categories which secure the dominant relations of production – in this case the subordination of women. Barrett identifies the following processes: stereotyping, compensation, collusion and recuperation[91].

Stereotypes work at a far more complex level of signification than is immediately perceived. They appear to be relatively rigid representations of the relations of production, whereby a general concept is reduced to a single sign. It is precisely this process of simplification which endows the sign with its complex connotative meaning. At this second level of signification stereotypes exhibit the underlying ideology through the meaning generated as a result of what is present as well as that which has been omitted[92]. Stereotypes depend on a complex understanding of society which is based in 'common-sense' assumptions about that society. Structured absences in a text reveal this implicit understanding: it is assumed that they need no explanation – that everybody within that society will automatically know and understand that which is not included. In the representations of women in cultural products like soaps, there is an unquestioned assumption that all women want and should want to be housewives and mothers. If they do not fulfill these roles, they are portrayed as unhappy until they succeed in achieving a romantic liaison which leads to marriage.

In *Dr Louisa Maritz* "die storie van 'n vrou wat alles vir haar professie sou opgee, behalwe die reg om lief te hê"[93], the introductory line already spells out the passage of the plot and the conclusion. Louisa is the superintendent of an elite hospital, Silwerboom, in Cape Town. As the heroine of the story she is efficient, competent and just. She is professional in all aspects of her work, as well as displaying the stereotyped feminine characteristics of compassion and sympathy. The male doctor, Hannes, is a rival opposite who nevertheless respects her. As a scrupulous professional he is presented as hard and unyielding – a man totally dedicated to his work and who does not allow emotions to enter the workplace. Louisa falls hopelessly in love with a doctor from a rival hospital. Unfortunately he is already married, but his wife is in an institution in Zimbabwe. He moves into her apartment, and in the eyes of the hospital board 'morality' becomes more important than her work. They give her an ultimatum: either she resigns from her post or she tells her lover, Myburg, to leave. Ultimately the decision is hers (based on 'common-sense' morality). She must choose between 'true love' and dedication to her job, and opts for

'love' – totally within the framework of common sense assumptions of femininity. Another colleague who is in love with her and whom she has previously promised to marry (a marriage of convenience), unselfishly acquires divorce papers signed by Myburg's wife and hands them to Louisa and Myburg after she has resigned. He is the medical representative on the hospital board and assures her that if she made an appeal to stay she would be able to retain her position. Having packed up her office and mentally prepared herself for leaving, she declines the offer, assuring everybody that her rival, Hannes, is the perfect person for the job – one which he has wanted for a long time. In a friendly wrangle he assures her that she is '. . . die beste superintendent wat die hospitaal nog ooit gehad het . . .'[94] admitting to a misjudgement when she was first appointed: Louisa: 'Jy't gesê dis nie werk vir 'n vrou nie, jy was reg.' Hannes: 'Ek hou daarvan as ek reg is . . . maar ek was nie'[95]. In this episode all the processes mentioned by Barrett operate quite openly: the stereotyping of women's roles and ambitions are epitomized when Louisa refuses to return to her post, stating that her future is in her life with Myburg. "Myburg is nou my toekoms, hy kom eerste – . . . ek is bereid om by hom te bly op enige manier wat ek hom kan kry"[96]. In this manner she fulfills the prophecy of the introductory phrase that precedes the presentation of every episode. She is not forced to do this, but does so 'freely'. Ironically enough marriage plans between her and Myburg are never mentioned explicitly. This structured absence will draw on the listeners' 'common-sense' knowledge of the dominant heterosexual practice: that is, 'true love' leads to 'happy marriage'. Alternatively it is possible that the producers understand this as a suitable ending, but may need to revive the story at a later stage. 'Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip' could still occur, and Louisa's happiness be thwarted in some obscure manner in a revived presentation of the serial. In 1981, the popular English serial on Springbok Radio, *From Chrystal with Love*, appeared again after an absence of thirteen years[97], with many of the original cast in the same roles[98].

When Louisa is told that she is the best superintendent that the hospital has ever had, it is a process of compensation whereby the woman is elevated into a position of near idolatry – a celebration of the 'moral worth' of femininity[99]. It is not necessary in the dialogue to emphasize the reason why a woman should be a better doctor and administrator. The meaning of this is contained in the 'commonsense' association of femininity and compassion – the idea that women are better at caring for people than men are, as well as the implication that this caring occurs at the level of individual caring. In a conver-

sation with her secretary (naturally also female), who ironically enough is leaving to get married, she says: ". . . 'n hospitaal is 'n snaakse ding . . . dit kan jou lewe wees, totdat jy besef dat mense belangriker as 'n inrigting is"[100].

The secretary does not know that Louisa has just been presented with the ultimatum and that she too plans to leave, having chosen her lover in lieu of her career. Compensation works at the level of elevating the moral worth of stereotyped feminine characteristics and thereby ensuring that women will 'consent' to their position of subordination in the distorted belief that they are somehow better than men in the things that matter most in life – caring for individuals as mothers and wives. At the second (mythical) level of signification, this distortion 'naturalizes' women's predestined position in the social structure, and reinforces the necessity for them to remain in the home to raise children and care for their husbands, thereby also recreating the dominant relations of production. Women are consequently interpellated into the ideology of domesticity and femininity as the 'natural order' of things[101].

The way in which collusion works is demonstrated in the choice Louisa makes to leave her job and care for her lover/future husband. After they have both seen the divorce papers from his previous wife, which would allow her to return to her post, she still declines and says: "Ek wil gaan, dis reg so . . ." Needless to say, she does not elaborate on why it is considered 'reg so'[102]. This is based on the assumption that a woman's place is beside her husband. The ultimatum, now no longer applicable, places the choice entirely in Louisa's hands. According to the dominant ideology and her position as heroine, she 'naturally' makes the choice. She has been an independent career woman up to this point, and must relinquish her career in order to take her correct place in the social formation.

The process of recuperation tells us how the dominant ideology co-opts any counter-ideology and uses it to benefit its own ends. The SABC presents stories of professional women in accordance with the real entrance of women into the professional labour market. Yet throughout the narrative the idea of gender differences is emphasized through stereotyping: another woman doctor becomes emotionally involved with one of her patients, and while this crisis is being played out in Hannes's section of the hospital, Louisa has an altercation with Myburg. Hannes comes to speak to her about the other doctor's behaviour when he runs into Myburg who is noticeably upset about something. Myburg rushes out of the hospital with no explanation given to Hannes's request about the problem. He finds

Louisa in tears in her office. His first statement is "G'n wonder dissipline bestaan nie meer in die hospitaal nie . . . Myburg wat van beter behoort te weet hardloop hier uit en jy sit en grens . . ."[103]. She then reminds him that she is in the privacy of her own office but he continues "Jy weet hoe voel ek omtrent emosionele uitbarstings in werktyd . . ."[104]. The implication here is that he is strictly professional and that Louisa is trangressing his (and presumably all professional men's) ideas about ethics in the workplace. He eventually leaves her with the parting comment: "Partymaal dink ek jy is net so onlogies en emosioneel soos alle vroue"[105]. When one examines this part of the text, it is difficult to know why he considers her to be illogical. Myburg exhibited the same emotional upset and dealt with it in a stereotyped male way. When Louisa deals with it in a stereotyped female way, she is criticized for being unprofessional and illogical.

Throughout the story, the ability of women to become professionals is emphasized, but through the process of recuperation gender role stereotyping obscures their actual practices as professionals. In spite of being seen as an excellent superintendent, Louisa ultimately chooses to dedicate herself to a man. In this way the discourse which perpetuates the dominant ideology includes images of real changes in the relations of production, but presents them as insufficient and inadequate for women; happiness for a woman resides in maternity and caring for the home.

Processes of signification

In order to understand how the processes of signification generate ideological discourses, we have to see how they succeed in distorting real social relations. We will now apply Barthes's three levels of signification[106]. Stereotypes at the first level (denotation) mean the observed real characteristics of a material referent as constituted in the mind of the user. However, by the generalization and universality of a particular term, all like referents are endowed with the same characteristics. This then becomes the second level of signification, the connotative level. When these characteristics become culturally internalized, and 'naturally' accepted by society at large, they operate at the level of 'myths'. Sometimes these terms are applied pejoratively to referents who are not normally included in the classification ". . . Myburg wat van beter behoort te weet . . ."[107]. If Louisa is accused of illogicality, as a feminine characteristic, it seems as though Myburg should 'know better' because he is a man. He is judged

according to his maleness for showing 'female' emotion. Another common instance is the use of the phrase 'he's an old woman', as a pejorative use of gender stereotype transposed to refer to a man. It is in this transposition that the connotations of the concept become apparent. Gender stereotypes reflect an ideology of particular characteristics applied to specific genders. Through their relations with the whole of womanhood, they imbue the terms with meanings that extend beyond the primary level of signification. They are construed myths about a particular gender, and as representations gain acceptance by being used in situations where meaning is engineered in such a manner that the denotative meaning cannot be disputed, but that the connotative meaning signifies a general level which is not strictly applicable to that particular situation. In the scene where Louisa is crying, it is hard to dispute that she is being emotional, so at the denotative level the accusation is perfectly correct; that she is a woman can also not be disputed, but this situation provides the perfect opportunity for a man to invoke the stereotype of women as emotional creatures, thereby including all women in this category. He calls Louisa ". . . net so onlogies en emosioneel soos alle vroue"[108], even adding the stereotype of illogicality.

Compensation works mainly through structured absences. Aspects of femininity are reified in order to obscure the real relations of production. In the soaps motherhood is represented as the pinnacle of achievement. Yet children remain significantly out of the plots, thereby obscuring the real drudgery and concern which is intimately associated with rearing children. All the children that are present are old enough to have their own problems. In *Andrew Mansfield* the youngest character portrayed is nineteen-year-old Veronica Mansfield who is the listeners' reminder of the problems associated with entering the adult world – independence, romantic attachments and even pre-marital sex. She and her young student friends invite comparison by the audience between her growing up and the maturation of their own experiences. In *Die Vrou van Shangetti*, Ruby has an illegitimate child. The child does not live with his mother in the jungle, but stays with his grandfather in Johannesburg. When Ruby returns to Johannesburg for a short while she decides to take the child back to Shangetti with her, mostly motivated by wanting to blackmail Alec into marrying her. On the way back to Shangetti, the child is killed in an aeroplane accident. The removal of the child from the story has several important results for the narrative as well as for the listeners. The author is exonerated from describing the conditions of child-rearing (incidentally he is a man), which are quite often the real living

conditions for most of the listeners. Ruby, who has up to this point been the villainess of the story, is now in a position to elicit sympathy from the listeners in her bereavement. She has also lost the emotional weapon she could possibly have had to regain Alec's interest in her.

Motherhood is given a status which reflects on the character and similarly gives her social esteem. Jessica, the doctor from the mission hospital, who is not exceedingly fond of Ruby, in this episode even changes her way of addressing and perceiving Ruby. In the aeroplane before the accident happens, she says of the child: "Ag dis 'n pragtige dingetjie Ruby, ek sou wat wou gee as ek ook 'n kind kon gehad het"[109]. Jessica speaks on behalf of all women in this episode; the desire to be a mother is the 'natural' role for a woman, regardless of what work she has been trained to do. Her reverence for Ruby's motherhood allows Ruby to use this situation to her best advantage – as she is wont to do – Ruby impresses on Jessica the folly of her attraction to Alec:

> Jessica, ek weet hoe jy oor Alec voel, en ek kan jou regtig nie kwalik neem nie maar ek gaan nogtans 'n beroep op jou doen. Ek gaan jou vra om nie vir Alec van my af te probeer wegneem nie; ek en hy en hierdie bondeltjie mens is 'n gesin. Jy wil tog seker nie 'n gesinnetjie opbreek nie, wil jy?[110]

The expected answer is, of course, "Nee, natuurlik nie . . . ek sal nooit tussen jou en Alec probeer kom nie Ruby"[111]. Ruby's grief is vociferously expressed when she comes out of a coma after the accident and starts crying hysterically for her child. Listeners can now identify with the bereaved mother, while the author can continue with romantic intrigues uncomplicated by child-rearing.

In soaps then, motherhood is lauded without having to bring the problems of being one into the plot. This shows how compensation works to mystify the reality of motherhood through structured absences; by never addressing the real problems of child-rearing, nor describing the lack of freedom inherent in a situation of domesticity, women's subordination in the home is suitably obscured.

Collusion is a prime example of how women 'consent' to their own subordination. The fact that women choose to be dominated is enlisted in support of the dominant ideology. At the mythical level of signification a peculiar logic operates to generate the required meaning within the dominant framework: 'if women do not want to be subordinated, or if they perceive themselves as being oppressed, why do so many women willingly and actively participate (read: give their consent) in the existing relations of production. They want to get

married and stay at home to have children – ask any woman . . .' are statements which justify for both men and women the appropriateness of women's position as housewives and mother! The connotative meaning here is that within the liberal framework of 'free choice', women choose from a universe, whereas the choices are in actual fact limited by ideological interpellations as well as the real relations of production. It is only with an understanding of how ideology operates in interpellating subjects that one can become aware of the contradictions between what is perceived in representation as the correct or 'common-sense' way of living in society, and the real relations where women are increasingly feeling the pressure of their situation[112]. Betty Friedan appropriately calls it the 'problem without a name'. Feminists are beginning to understand the problem and have named it 'oppression', but for the most part women have not yet become aware of the real conditions of their existence. It is partly this inability to name something and thereby represent it which assists the dominant ideology in perpetuating the conditions of subordination[113]. In *Dr Louisa Maritz*, Louisa negates all the years in which she had worked for the hospital by saying: "dis nie werk vir 'n vrou nie"[114]. At the second level of signification, that which is absent contains the implicit assumptions about how society works – in that the job can only be done by a man. In this context a highly respected doctor who also happens to be a woman negates her own life up to that point and opts for what must be (also implicit) work that is appropriate for a woman. It is here that the story ends. The way in which she fulfills the role of wife and mother is left to the listeners' imagination. They have direct experience of the role and are able to supply the story in their own terms. It is here too that the connection between fiction and reality would cease to be mythical; it could no longer succeed in distorting the real conditions of existence for the housewife.

Recuperation is apparent in both the stories: the main female characters are active outside the home. Since cultural products are not merely representations that produce meanings, but are based in practices which relate to material conditions of existence[115], it is necessary to include known points of reference for the listeners. The material practice of women as doctors is incorporated in the story to provide a link with the 'real world' outside the story[116]. The most important factor in the narrative is that although it uses these representations, it remains essential for the ideology of gender to retain its integrity. The grand finale in *Dr Louisa Maritz* sports no less than six marriages and one childbirth; the resolution of all the romantic intrigues which had sustained the plot. In the reversion to stereotyped

gender identifications, the dominant ideology reasserts and justifies itself for the listeners.

Conclusion

The media in modern society have become part of the texture of our lives: we rely on them consciously or unconsciously for information relating to the world we live in, often taking the presentation of news or 'realistic' dramas as the indisputable truth. However, these messages are constructs which intervene in our responses to the economic, social and political order, and operate as 'myths': 'conventions of seeing and knowing, the *a priori* assumptions about the nature of reality which most of the time a culture is content to leave unstated and unchallenged'[117]. The final form that these constructs will assume will be determined by a complex interrelationship of discursive matrices involving considerations which stem from society at large, the medium and its organizational structure, and also the genre chosen to embody a particular discourse. In the case of soap operas the general ideology of femininity, domesticity and maternity will prevail as a logical consequence of a number of historical factors: the material practice of women staying at home to look after the interests of their husbands and children, the availability of radio receivers among the potential audience, a society which has a sophisticated broadcasting system in operation and a station which depends for its survival on advertising revenue.

What then is the relationship between the audience and the cultural myths propounded in the soap operas? The discourse originates in a multi-faceted environment which places certain determinants within the potential structures of meaning; equally the myths are consumed within the same complex operation. Through processes of simultaneous and consecutive interpellations, women recognize and respond to codes which are experienced in their everyday living conditions, and while the conventions hold, most practices will confirm them. One could accordingly perceive these discourses acting in a variety of ways through their audiences, confirming and justifying the existing social order through a number of mechanisms:

(a) To incorporate members of a particular social formation into the dominant value system. (Problems will be solved according to dominant ideological and ethical standards of society, where the ethical criteria cannot be taken as constants but are presented as such. In serialized dramas the solutions to problems follow an

ideal type rule of perfect justice where the good are rewarded and the bad are punished or thwarted, but no explanation is given as to how this 'natural' justice is ensured.)

(b) To legitimize for the members of a culture the appropriateness of existing practices in the real world. (The broadcast media generate a set of codes which create 'realism' – the net effect of which is to be lifelike – and these codes of signification legitimize the social practices they depict.)

(c) To reassert for the listeners the cultural consensus on the nature of reality. (The 'obvious' and 'natural' are not given, but produced in a certain society by the ways in which that society talks and thinks about itself and its experience; the lived relationship through which ideology manifests itself.)

(d) To endorse the membership of individuals in a particular community by providing a feeling of security and involvement. (The displaced base of reality, myth, from which dramas are constructed, belies the fact that they are constructs. People are given recognizable names and occupations and events are placed in familiar settings. Place names and topical references act as 'hooks' which attach the dramas to the credible world. Members of the audience are able to match up the events in their lives to those in the characters' lives, thereby confirming their relationship with society.)

(e) To provide a platform of support for the representatives of the culture. (By selecting certain points of view, events, characters and plots and omitting others, a presentation which favours the dominant consensus in society is held up to the viewers as the 'correct' version, thereby eliciting the listeners' loyalties in support of it.)

Soap operas incorporate women into a view of society emphasizing a personal psychological orientation to life and relying on preconditioned stereotypes of femininity which become self-fulfilling. While the housewife is engaged in her domestic chores she can indulge in fantasies of romance which will reaffirm her position at the centre of the family as the only 'proper' goal, since the plots in the stories will culminate in a successful marriage for the heroine and hero.

The final subordination of women in marriage; the processes of stereotyping, compensation, collusion and recuperation; the 'naturalizing' of myths; the preponderance of 'common sense' solutions to problems; the 'real-world' background and the structured absences all indicate that soap operas are far from being mere entertainment, that they are suffused with the ideological discourse of a particular

social formation. Women who are interpellated into the ideologies of femininity and domesticity as represented through soaps are consenting to their own subordination.

Notes and References

1. SABC Annual Report, 1950, p16. The first English daily serials started with the inception of Springbok Radio, and the link was firmly established between these serials and their operations from a commerical base. The first Afrikaans daily serial, *Liefdeslied*, only appeared in November, 1953 (SABC Annual Report, 1953, p38).

2. T Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, p49. Eagleton asserts that certain structural conditions like affluence, leisure, privacy, etc, are necessary for the production and consumption of literature. In soaps, privacy, relative environmental silence and a different form of leisure are required. It is one of the characteristics of the radio medium that one can engage in routine manual tasks while concentrating mentally on what is being broadcast. This latter quality makes it possible for serials also to be incorporated into the routine of factory workers.

3. R Barthes, *Mythologies*, p109.

4. Eagleton, *op cit*, p70.

5. Ibid, p33.

6. Editorial Group, 'Women's Studies Group: trying to do feminist intellectual work', in *Women Take Issue* (London: Hutchinson, 1978) p10.

7. A Kuhn and A Wolpe, *Feminism and Materialism* (London Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) p1.

8. M Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today* (London: Verso, 1980) p93.

9. J Femia, 'Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci', *Political Studies*, vol 23, no 1 (March 1975) p30.

10. Ibid, p33.

11. L Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, p142.

12. The use of the word 'apparatuses' makes these institutions seem both determined and determining. Gramsci's formulation of 'institutions' seems more relevant in describing organically constituted units which are capable of historical transformation.

13. Althusser, *op cit*, p142.

14. Recuperation in this sense is a discursive process whereby the ruling classes coopt the historic outcome of hegemonic struggles and use them to normalize and further entrench their own dominant position.

15. Translation: "The Woman of Shangetti – the story of a woman's love, hate and reprisals".

16. Barthes, *op cit*.

17. Translation: "*The* communism." The use of a definite article as a prefix endows the term 'communism' with a singular, determined meaning particular to Afrikaner ideology.

18. Translation: "Terrorist organizations/Marxists or a worldwide organization that wants to liberate the West from communism /Organization 'Africa 85'." These two

organizations represent the major ideological poles prevalent in South African discourses at present.

19. Barrett, *op cit*, p47.
20. Ibid, p8.
21. Ibid, p9.
22. 'Patriarchy' was originally used to describe a particular form of household organization in which the father dominated the household and the extended kinship system, and controlled the economic production of the household. In feminism it began to mean 'the rule of the father'. See Kuhn and Wolpe, *op cit*, p65, for a more detailed discussion. Feminists adopted this term, but extended it to include the general domination of men over women.
23. Other theorists like Shulamith Fireston *The Dialectic of Sex*, in E E Malos (ed), *The Politics of Housework* (London Allison and Busby, 1980) p158), claim that conflict of classes in society is predicated on the mode of organization of the biological family unit, insisting on the analytical primacy of the gender division in society. All other structures (economic and superstructural) can be explained by the sexual reproductive organization of society. In an overview of 'patriarchy' Michèle Barrett criticizes these uses because "they invoke a universal and trans-historical categorisation of male dominance . . . (and) . . . ground this dominance in the supposed logic of biological reproduction" (Barrett, *op cit*, p12). If this is a naturally given state, then it does not fall in the category of 'common sense', and there is little hope of changing it. It also does not account for the 'distinction between sex as a biological category and gender as a social one' (Barrett, *op cit*, p13) and could lead to a glorification of supposed female characteristics, thereby emphasising different spheres of activity for women and men. Later developments explain 'patriarchy' through gender rather than biological roles, claiming that woman's class position derives from a marriage-labour contract (Ibid, p14). Though these start investigating a materialist account of patriarchy, they do not consider the relations between class determinations and patriarchy.
24. Barrett, *op cit*, p16.
25. R McDonough and R Harrison, 'Patriarchy and Relations of Production', in Kuhn and Wolpe, *op cit*, p40.
26. A Kuhn, 'Structures of Patriarchy and Capital in the Family', in Kuhn and Wolpe, *op cit*, p42.
27. Ibid, p65.
28. Althusser, *op cit*, p138, cites the family as one of the ISAs.
29. Early Marxists used it as a single concept: "According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing, shelter and the tools necessary for production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, procreation of the species" (Engels, quoted in Kuhn and Wolpe, *op cit*, p7). 'Reproduction' in this instance related "women's oppression to the organization of production in society" (Barrett, *op cit*, p19). The problem here is that it conflates the biological reproduction of the species and the need for any social formation to reproduce its own conditions of production (Ibid, p20).
30. F Edholm *et al*, 'Conceptualising Women', *Critique of Anthropology*, vol 3, nos 9 and 10, double issue (1977).
31. Barrett, *op cit*, p33.
32. Althusser, *op cit*, p155.
33. Macherey quoted by Barrett, *op cit*, p98.
34. See Chapter 2 of Volume 1 for a discussion of the interpellation of subjects.

35. Ibid, especially on the 'osmosis' of news policy.
36. G Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology*, p28. Therborn notes that these ideologies are not necessarily sexist, but male-chauvinist sexist ideology is contained in an ideology of maleness, and femaleness is an alter-ideology which forms part of the ideology of the dominated.
37. Because of this 'double shift' women do regardless of their class positions or the nature of the dominant mode of production in society, feminists have severely criticized, and many rejected, a pure Marxist analysis of women's oppression.
38. Eagleton, *op cit*, p48.
39. Ibid, pp44ff.
40. She is building a resort and casino for wealthy holidaymakers. She is also the employer of all the people on the site. Casinos are prohibited in South Africa, mainly on the insistence of the Afrikaans churches, and considered 'immoral'. The South African Government's tolerance of casinos in the 'independent' homelands appears to legitimize their 'autonomy', as well as maintaining the Christian National basis of the South African legislation.
41. V Beechey, 'Women and production: A Critical Analysis of Some Sociological Theories of Women's Work', in Kuhn and Wolpe, *op cit*, p15.
42. See the Introduction to E Malos, *The Politics of Housework* (London: Allison and Busby, 1980) p7.
43. Streeland *et al*, 'Sexuality and Reproduction: Three 'Official' Instances', in *Ideology and Cultural Production*, edited by M Barrett *et al*, p86.
44. Refer back to the discccussion of reproduction in this chapter.
45. A McRobbie, 'Working Class Girls and the Culture of Femininity', in *Women Take Issue*, *op cit*, p96.
46. Ibid, p107.
47. See the discussion of stereotypes in this chapter.
48. S de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1922) p543.
49. J Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p46.
50. De Beauvoir, *op cit*, p543.
51. Translation: "I'm a lucky fellow to have such a beautiful wife".
52. Translation: "You are the most beautiful woman I've ever met".
53. Translation: "Ruby is a beautiful woman, but sometimes I think it's a curse to be so good-looking. She twists men around her little finger".
54. Louise Naude drew my attention to the differences between the soap opera and advertising discourse.
55. The English Studies Group 1978–9, 'Recent Developments in English Studies at the Centre', in S Hall *et al* (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, p259.
56. Translation: "Africa '85".
57. D Hobson, 'Housewives and the Mass Media', in Hall *et al* (eds), *op cit*, p259.
58. J Lehman, "The Advice of Real Friends": Codes of Intimacy and Oppression in Women's Magazines 1937–1955', *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, vol 3, no 1 (1979) p63.
59. J Kane-Berman, *Soweto – Black Revolt, White Reaction* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1978).
60. Translation: "The workers" or "the government".
61. This person is the Head of State, but the use of this word 'hoofman' has connotations of tribalism. This supports the view that blacks belong to different ethnic groups.
62. Translation: "That poor worker and his family".
63. G Belsey, *Critical Practice*, p57.
64. R Barthes, *op cit*, p121.

65. The names of actresses and actors are mostly Afrikaans, indicating a strong possibility that they come from Afrikaans backgrounds.
66. See Chapter 1 of Volume 1.
67. The war in Namibia has already become such a familiar phenomenon to white South Africans that it is unnecessary to be more specific about the exact location. In addition, a complex process of distortion operates through this term. On the assumption that a country has the right to defend her borders against any invaders, the presence of the South African army in Namibia is legitimized by inverting the logic – 'if a country is defending the border, it must be her own'. As a result, the debate surrounding South Africa's occupation of the territory is suitably disguised.
68. Eagleton, *op cit*, p78, discusses in detail the relationship between the historically 'real' and the literary forms of fictive discourse.
69. R Stedman, *The Serials: Suspense and Drama by Installment*, p334.
70. Dickens's novels were serialized.
71. Stedman, *op cit*.
72. *SABC Annual Report*, 1950 and 1953.
73. In the *SABC Annual Report* of 1962 the Afrikaans serials were said to be as popular as the news. In 1974 the largest audience reported for the year was for the Afrikaans serials.
74. *SABC Annual Report*, 1961, p34: "Independent research . . . established two of the Afrikaans serials occupied the seventh position of all programmes broadcast by Springbok Radio". In the *Annual Reports* of 1953, and 1956 to 1958 it is claimed that the Afrikaans serials were the most popular *daytime* programmes.
75. South African Advertising Research Foundation: *All Media and Products Survey* (AMPS) (Market Research Africa, 1982) col ix.
76. *SABC Annual Report*, 1968, p29. In 1973, 1974 and 1976 it is also mentioned that the Afrikaans serials drew Springbok Radio's largest listenership.
77. In 1978 it cost R252 for a thirty-second advertisement between 2pm and 4.15pm. It also comes to the lowest cost per thousand at 81c.
78. *SABC Annual Report*, 1973, p41. This changed dramatically, particularly in the evening ratings, with the introduction of television.
79. Many people (especially Afrikaners) are bilingual because of the high proportion of English popular culture in this country. Consequently it is quite possible that a person would listen to both English and Afrikaans soap operas during the course of the day.
80. J Fiske and J Hartley, *Reading Television*, p24.
81. T Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, p107.
82. See Chapter 5 in volume one: Structuring South African Realities, for the nature of a media construct.
83. S Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', in Hall *et al* (eds), *op cit*, p134.
84. R Barthes, S/Z, p17.
85. T Modleski, 'The search for Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas', *Film Quarterly,* vol 33 (Fall 1979) p12.
86. G Lùkăcs, *The Historical Novel* (London, np, 1962).
87. A content analysis of the two English serials studied revealed the following distribution of problems (Table 1) and the causes of the problems (Table 2):

Table 1
Distribution of kinds of problems

Kind of Problems	Andrew Mansfield	From Chrystal	Total
Personal relations			
Courtship...............	3	3	6
Marriage.................	4	6	10
Family	2	3	5
Economic and Professional	2	3	5
Crime	3	2	5
Illness, accidents	4	2	6
Public affairs	1	2	3
Violence	1	1	—

Table 2
Causes of the different kinds of problems

Kind Of Problems	Themselves	People Other	Personal Forces	Total
Personal relations				
Courtship	6	—	—	6
Marriage	7	3	10	21
Family..............	5	—	—	5
Economic and Professional..	2	2	1	5
Crime	2	3	—	5
Illness and Accident	5	1	6	20
Public Affairs...	1	2	—	3
Violence	1	—	—	1
Total	27	10	2	41

88. *Die Mannheim Saga* replaced *Dr Louisa Maritz* and is an historical serial dealing with a young girl's fight for her family during the Witwatersrand gold rush.
89. The English Studies Group 1978–79, *op cit*, p262.
90. R Arnheim, 'The World of the Daytime Serial', in *Mass Communications*, edited by W Schramm.
91. Barrett, *op cit*, pp103 ff.
92. TE Perkins, 'Rethinking Stereotypes', in M Barrett *et al* (eds), *op cit*.
93. Translation: "Dr Louisa Maritz, the tale of a woman who was prepared to sacrifice everything for her profession, except the right to love".
94. Translation: ". . . the best superintendent that the hospital has ever had".
95. Translation: Louisa: "You said it wasn't the job for a woman, you were right". Hannes: "I like it when I'm right . . . but I wasn't".
96. Translation: "Myburg is my future, he comes first . . . I am prepared to stay with him under any circumstances".
97. *SABC Annual Report*, 1981.
98. The return of the programme found Chrystal Benedict in her early fifties. Though she is no longer active in her publishing empire, she has many other interests,

foremost of which is the medical research laboratory bearing her name. Her son, Warren, returns home after five years of travelling abroad. He is employed by Samuel Gulliver, the editor of a daily newspaper, known for its exposé's of the rich and famous. Gulliver has always resented Chrystal's success and he is determined to investigate her life in the hope that he can discover some indiscretion with which he can pillory her in his paper. He even goes as far as planting chemicals in the river so that it would appear that the Benedict Factory is polluting the environment. He causes the family more heartache when he entices Warren's fiancé Anna Schmidt away from him. Other major characters are Rose Harris (Chrystal's secretary) and her husband Reggie. Tara is the old friend of the family who reads horoscopes and William Lawler, Chrystal's estranged husband, complicates issues as well.

99. Barrett, *op cit*, p109.
100. Translation: "A hospital is a funny place . . . it can be your whole life until you suddenly realize that people are more important than an institution".
101. Barthes, *op cit*, p131.
102. Translation: "I want to go, it is right that I should".
103. Translation: "No wonder there's no more discipline in this hospital . . . Myburg, who ought to know better, runs out of here, and you're sitting here howling"
104. Translation: "You know how I feel about emotional outbursts during office hours".
105. Translation: "Sometimes I think you are as illogical and emotional as all women".
106. M Heck, 'The Ideological Dimension of Media Messages' in Hall *et al* (eds) *op cit*.
107. Translation: ". . . Myburg, who ought to know better . . ."
108. Translation: ". . . just as illogical and emotional as all women . . ."
109. Translation: "Oh, it's such a pretty little thing Ruby, I'd give anything also to have a child".
110. Translation: "Jessica, I know you feel about Alec, and I can't say I blame you, but I am nevertheless going to ask you a favour. I am going to ask you not to try to take Alec away from me; he and I and this little bundle of flesh are a family. You don't want to break up a family, do you?"
111. Translation: "No, of course not, I will never come between you and Alec".
112. Understandably, questions relating to why there is a growing awareness amongst women about the contradictions they experience in their lives, high divorce rates and a high incidence of mental breakdowns among women, are hardly ever mentioned.
113. Hence the preoccupation among feminists with words or modes of address like 'Ms' – a term which, at the denotative level at least, has no sexual prejudice built into it. In *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol 3, nos 2 and 3 (1980), Maiji Blaubergs provides 'An analysis of classic arguments against changing sexist language', which she then sets out systematically to refute.
114. Translation: "It's not a job for a woman".
115. Barrett, *op cit*, p101.
116. Fiske and Hartly, *op cit*, p87.
117. Belsey, *op cit*, p143.

Acknowledgement

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