CHAPTER FOUR

IDEOLOGY AND MYTH IN SABC TELEVISION CHANNEL BRAND REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores aspects of the visual communication of ideology and myth in SABC television channel brand identities created during the first decade after 2000. It examines the manner in which brand identity is relayed by each channel and also explores the possible ways in which brand images may be received or interpreted by viewers. This chapter discusses the visual manifestation of each channel's brand identity as it appears on screen and explores some possible meanings within the channel idents,[1] television advertisements and websites. The meanings within the television channel brand identities are first explored on the levels of denotation and connotation, followed by a deeper exploration of meanings in terms of the myths and ideologies that the SABC channels possibly espouse. Before a visual analysis of SABC television channel brand representations is undertaken, it is necessary to consider the ideological implications of the authoritative narrating function of the television channel brand or institution.

4.2 The television channel as pedagogical narrator

Broadcast institutions or television channels function as narrators. According to Bignell (2004:16), a channel's trailers for forthcoming programmes have the following functions as narrators: "they inform the audience about what will be available to watch in the future; ... shape the viewer's expectations about what a future programme will be like; ... [and] offer suggestions why it may be interesting and enjoyable". From this description, it is clear that the television organisation, through its own communication, positions itself as an authoritative voice while constituting its viewers as subjects. The subjects or television viewers are invited to join the audience community, thereby

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[1] Chapter One stated that Bignell (2004:308) defines idents as "the symbols representing production companies, television channels, etc., often comprising graphics or animations". These symbols and graphics serve the purpose of television channel identification. For the purpose of visual analysis in this study, trailers of forthcoming attractions on the channel, programme announcements by presenters and other channel brand identifiers on the channel are included under the umbrella term *idents*.

buying into the audience position laid out for them by the television organisation (Bignell 2004:101).

The idents of the SABC television channels appear between programmes and television advertisements, and their logos are superimposed in the corner of the screen throughout. In this way, each channel functions as an overarching narrator providing the context for, and holding together, diverse types of programmes and advertisements as an entity (Bignell 2004:101). The juxtaposition of studio backdrops or graphic backgrounds and continuity presenters or off-screen announcers introducing programmes or events can also be considered as channel idents with distinct brand identities. Together, all the different types of idents play an important role in the narration by the television organisation. This narrating discourse is, according to Bignell (2004:101), "striking in the fact that it makes explicit the hailing function of television to call to an individual viewer to constitute him or herself as part of an audience ('join us') which is given its place by the address made to it". The viewer is invited to join the channel's community with its ideological values.

The idents and visual brand identity also contribute to the personification of the television channel or institution, or the creation of a "magnetic human-like aura around the actual product" (Meenaghan 1995:24). The brand identity of SABC1 *Ya mampela*, for example, personifies the channel as an activist or revolutionary leader. The brand identity of SABC2 *Feel at home*, on the other hand, personifies the channel as a loving patriarch or head of the family. In other words, the brand identity of the television channel functions as an authoritative voice, thereby endorsing certain programmes as appropriate for youthful programming, for example, or for family viewing. It can thus be argued that the channels' own idents and advertisements provide a context for their programming content, thereby adding the channels' own values to the television content. By watching a certain channel, viewers buy into the channel ideology. The television channel institution, with its own ideology, then functions as an endorser of certain programmes.

Visual codes or branding serve to identify television channels in a similar manner to the way in which people identify other people by paying attention to their hair colour, facial features and voices, for example. The following sections explore the manner in which the SABC channels identify themselves visually during the 2000 to 2009 period, and

explore the visual signs and codes of each SABC television channel brand. The following sections also postulate the meaning of such visual signs and codes used in each television channel's branding, and also speculate about the possible meanings, ideologies and myths that may potentially arise from the creation and interpretation of such television channel brand identities.

4.3 SABC1 Ya mampela and Mzansi fo sho

The SABC1 channel was re-branded twice since 2000 – once in 2003, and once again in 2007. The first took place during 2002 to 2003 and the resulting *Ya mampela* brand identity was unveiled on 18 August 2003.[2] Discarding its 1996 *Simunye, We are One* identity (Figure 17), the channel did "away with its glossy, metallic look and neon lights in favour of a more toned-down, earthy feel"[3] (De Jager 2003:1). Although the *Simunye* identity was successful in establishing a clear brand identity for the post-apartheid SABC1 channel, the brand values portrayed by its visual imagery of racial camaraderie, clinical metallic colours and neon lights created an image that was later perceived as contrived. Research revealed that viewers perceived the ideals of the *Simunye* identity[4] as a pipe dream, something far removed from the reality of contemporary South African society, and considered SABC1 as a proposer of such utopian forms (Lewis 2000:155-177; About SABC1 2008).

The *Simunye* identity was read in an oppositional manner, thus creating an aberrant brand image in viewers' minds and therefore deviating from the intended identity sent by the brand proprietor. A new brand identity was needed that would be closer to the reality of post-apartheid society and thus more authentic to its viewers.

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[2] Domingo (2004:[sp]) states that "SABC1 coughed up R50-million to rebrand itself as Ya Mampela."

[3] The new brand identity of SABC2, with its *Feel at home* slogan and rainbow nation ideals is closer in meaning to the 1996 *Simunye* identity, and clearer product differentiation, or a more distinct channel identity was thus needed.

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Figure 17: SABC1's Simunye brand identity on the channel website, 2002.
(SABC1 website 2002.)

4.3.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC1 brand identity

In response to a *Simunye* identity that can be described with various words such as artificial, contrived, idealistic, utopian, fake, false, manufactured, unnatural, synthetic, simulated, feigned, hollow, insincere, man-made, imagined and fictional, the next *Ya Mampela* identity aimed to portray the SABC1 brand as real, genuine, actual, authentic, realistic, factual, valid, true, natural, sincere, honest, truthful, earnest, straight, heartfelt, frank, open and legitimate. In stark contrast to the previous controlled look of the *Simunye* identity, the *Ya Mampela* brand identity appears more expressive, partly as a result of its rendition in warm colours and earthy tones. The bright warm colours also distinguish the SABC1 channel from its competing television channels, which all make use of blue to some extent. The difference in colour can be ascribed to what Olins (1990:67) describes as "breaking the generic".[5] By breaking away from the most preferred colours, SABC1 created a visual style that is distinct from competing channels, and perhaps also even oppositional to its *Simunye* predecessor.

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[5] Olins (1989:64) explains that an industry visual generic is created when organisations belonging to a certain industry start to emulate the visual style of the industry leader. However, when "an organisation within the industry has a strong personality and wants to demonstrate its individuality to those with whom it deals, there is no clearer, more powerful statement than that demonstrated by a strong, individual visual style. But this means breaking the generic" (Olins 1989:67).

Whereas the divergence in colour points to an agenda of channel differentiation, elements within the logo point to a similarity. Pavitt (2000:21) states that the "most recognisable feature of a brand is a name, logo, symbol or trademark that denotes a product's origin", and that this logo "is the point of entry to the brand". The SABC1 logo (Figure 18) seems similar in appearance to the other SABC logos. The SABC television channel logos all include the acronym *SABC* in an identical font (Helvetica Neue),[6] which is also identical to that of the SABC parent-brand.[7] In addition to the font similarity, the SABC acronyms in the logos are similarly followed by an encircled number. This contributes to the endorsed identity[8] of the SABC television channel brands and is also an example of "brand DNA" where each brand depends on the image of the parent brand, despite their individual character (Pavitt 2000:21). The television channel brands thus share certain features of the parent SABC brand image, but also have certain distinct features. The encircled number one in the SABC1 logo carries the connotation that it is the parent-brand, SABC's number one, or foremost channel.

The SABC1 logo (Figure 18) further includes the channel slogan or payoff line *Ya Mampela* executed in capital letters. *Ya Mampela* is a colloquial phrase denoting "how things really are", "the real thing", or "Mzansi fo sho" (SABC1 brand advert ... 2002), and refers to a youthful, democratic, and yet 'realistic' (as opposed to idealistic) South Africa. The style of the typography used for the payoff line and number one appears to be unique or custom made typography resembling a style often found in aerosol stencil graffiti. This spray-can and stencil graffiti typography carries connotations of activism, rebellion, freedom of speech and anarchism. The SABC1 logo aims to create a sense of rebellious, youthful, passionate and free creative expression with this execution of the slogan and encircled number one. At times the encircled number one is used on its own. Sometimes the combination of encircled number and either payoff line or SABC name is used; however, the constant element that remains in the logo application is the encircled number one.

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[6] The Helvetica Neue typeface is an ordinary, utilitarian font, and carries connotations of functionality, purity and simplicity.

[7] Dr Susan Tyler Eastman (2003:76) suggests that "management might consider downplaying the SABC name and logo in favour of branded channel identities or better yet, in favour of a slightly altered (non-broadcast) name". However, the SABC name and logo appears prominently in all channel branding, but with each channel's number and slogan fashioned to its unique brand identity.

[8] Olins (1989:99) states that an endorsed identity is where "an organization has a group of activities or companies which it endorses with the group name and identity".

Figure 18: SABC1 logo, 2003.

The encircled number one also appears as a dog in the corner of the screen, in the top left corner in this case (Figure 19). The dog is similar to a signature applied to an artwork by an artist, thereby indicating ownership or the intellectual property of a personified television channel. The colour and style of the dog applied during the *Ya Mampela* identity is particularly reminiscent of, on the one hand, the mark left by the hot iron stamp used in the marking or branding of cattle, and on the other, the 'tagging' of graffiti art. The visual style of the SABC1 logo and dog deliberately invoke associations to hip-hop spray-can graffiti art and its connotations of youth activism[9] and resistance art. In all these cases, namely that of artist signature, cattle branding, graffiti tagging and television channel dogs, the common denominator or function is that of identification.

Figure 19: SABC1 dog in the top left corner of the screen, 2004.
(Screen grab, photographed by author.)

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[9] See, for example, Sandra Klopper's (2000:178-196) article on hip-hop graffiti art.

The dog thus serves as a television channel identifier. An ident[10] has a similar function. Idents inform the viewer of the channel they are currently watching and serve as brand identifiers. However, television channel idents (also called stings and break-bumpers) have multiple functions that extend beyond television channel identification. SABC1 employs a particularly rich variety of different sets of idents for the *Ya Mampela* on-air look: idents that serve as hailing channel identification (for example, the ones stating "We'll be back"); idents indicating day-time, early prime, and prime-time viewing; idents depicting the South African landscapes; programme genre identifications and forthcoming attractions.

The idents that appear most frequently during junctions are the graphic logo animations with the text "We'll be back" (Figure 20). Two versions of this set of idents appear, namely a daytime and night time version. Daytime idents are mostly executed in a blood red on a yellow background, while the idents executed in a glowing yellow on a red background signify night time television. The logo and payoff line appear as if applied to a pavement or street surface with a stencil and spray paint, thus providing the ident with a street-style or graffiti aesthetic. The composition on screen also appears asymmetrical and the payoff line is written in a diagonal direction, thereby creating a sense of informality and movement. The impression of progression and dynamism is created by this vector.

Figure 20: SABC1 night-time and day-time idents, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

Another variation of this logo ident appears as a more sophisticated or refined version, and indicates daytime, early prime, prime and late prime time programming (Figure 21).

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[10] Idents as part of the on-air elements of television branding were discussed in Chapter Three.

The background and encircled number one appears more elegant and smooth, and it also appears more three-dimensional. Clear captions in capital letters indicate daytime, early prime, prime and late prime viewing and dispel ambiguities created by the perhaps illegible graffiti 'tags' of the same words indicating the time of day.

The classical or formal aspects of these refined logo idents are then balanced with an asymmetrical composition, as well as the freehand, graffiti 'tag' style animation of the same words used in the captions. Similar to the previous example, the ident backgrounds are yellow for daytime and red for night time television. The function of these idents is to create an expectation with the viewer of the type and quality of programming about to be aired, since the most popular programmes are usually aired during prime time at night.

Figure 21: SABC1 day-time, early prime, prime time and late prime time idents, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

SABC1 also employs another set of idents to indicate the genre of the upcoming programme. The genre idents (Figure 22) start with iconic images spray painted with red on an earthy, yellow background. The ident announcing the upcoming news genre, for example (Figure 22, row two), starts with the iconic signifier of red shapes on a yellow background signifying a world map. The meaning of the sign is further grounded by the graffiti-style caption *"news"*, and together these signifiers combine to create an indexical sign pointing to the commencement of a news programme.

Figure 22: SABC1 genre idents: education, news, 'soapies', religion, kids and variety, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

In this way, the whole animated sign becomes an index for the genre to follow. The idents then fade to red, with a genre caption that appears to be an animated three-dimensional tube of luminous yellow light, seen from the side and then from the front. Seen from the side the neon light looks like a moving shape, and its meaning only becomes clear once seen from the front, resembling a graffiti tag. A smaller caption of the same word in clear capital letters then appears below the neon tag, thereby anchoring the meaning of genre caption and dispersing the ambiguity of the luminous sign above it. Throughout these animated idents, the SABC1 logo, the encircled number one, appears on the screen.

The variety of iconic signs in these genre idents (Figure 22) include a young person in a graduation hat and toga for the education genre, the world map for the news genre, a woman's eye for the soap opera genre, a laughing face indicating the situation comedy genre, a dove for the religion genre, a child on a skateboard for children's programmes, a face profile indicating the variety genre, and a man in a suit and hat depicting the film genre (the last one not shown in Figure 22).

The illustrations for the genre idents (Figure 23) were created by design and branding company, The New Black (The New Black [sa]). The two-dimensional illustrations for the idents appear as if they were created by using red spray paint and stencils. This is a technique often used by culture jammers and graffiti artists, and it is also a visual style that is reminiscent of South African resistance posters (Images of defiance 2004).

Figure 23: Two-dimensional stencil illustrations created for the SABC1 idents, 2004.
(The New Black [sa].)

In addition to the genre idents or stings mentioned above, SABC1 employs another set of idents that serves as brand or channel identifiers. This set of brand endorsement idents (Figure 24) mainly show 'slice of life'[11] images depicting landscapes or people moving within and around the city landscape. The sun is usually directly in front of the camera, making it difficult to clearly define the figures moving in front of it, thereby generalising the people it depicts. The figures move in the scene, as if they are on their way to work. In this way the images seem to reflect a documentary style reminiscent of social realism with its depiction of working class activities as heroic. The images in this set of idents (Figure 24) appear to derive from the extended corporate identity designs rendered by Fever (Fever 2007:4).

Figure 24: SABC1 slice of life images depicting landscapes and cityscapes, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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[11] Cuddon (1998:836) explains that a 'slice of life suggests "that a work presents life 'in the raw', factual, visceral and unadulterated by art".

The style and visual brand identity is maintained in the forthcoming attractions idents (Figure 25). The viewing schedule consists of a red background, the graffiti-style *Ya Mampela* payoff line in yellow, and a programme schedule in white. Idents advertising specific programmes usually commence with a trailer clip which then fades to red, almost as if the screen is sprayed with spray paint. The programme name and date of airing then appears, as well as the logo and payoff line. The genre idents and forthcoming attractions serve as information carriers with luring effects, whereas the idents stating "we'll be back" and the 'slice-of-life' landscape idents serve mainly as brand endorsements or brand identifiers.
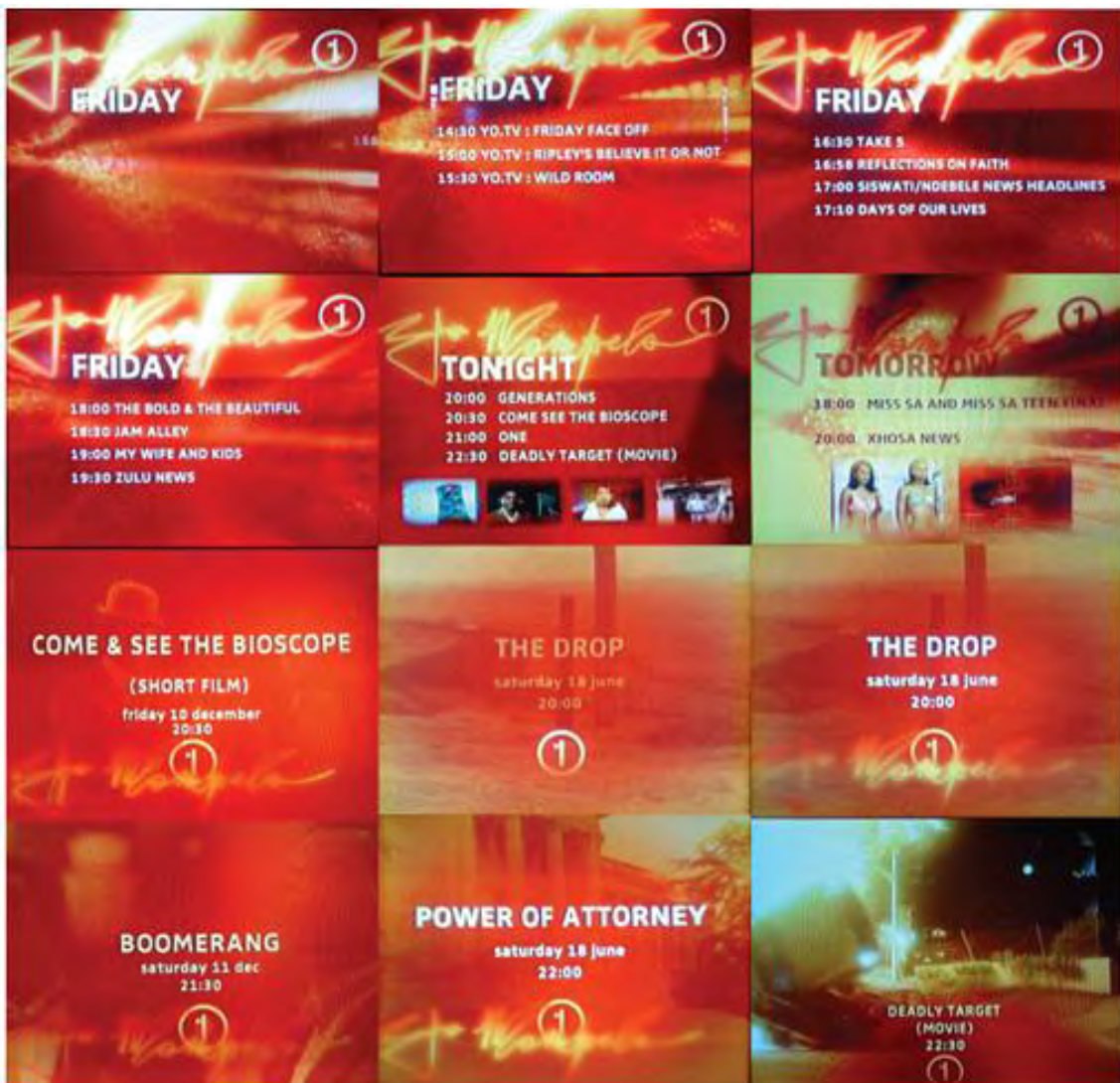

Figure 25: Forthcoming attractions and menu idents, SABC1 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The visual brand identity of SABC1 is also maintained through its sequences of continuity presenters (Figure 26) and news programmes (Figure 27). Continuity presenters can be seen as the channel's spokespersons and provide a human element to the channel's brand identity. In these sequences, the presenters are situated against a backdrop in the SABC1 studios. The background colours are consistent with that of the channel's visual brand identity and the presenters are usually dressed in such a way as not to diverge too much from those colours. The news programmes (created and branded as SABC News) are also 'dressed' or graphically introduced in the channel's unique visual brand elements, namely the channel colours, logo and style.

Figure 26: SABC1 continuity presenters, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

Figure 27: SABC1 news announcement sequence, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The visual brand identity of SABC1 remains consistent throughout all its applications on screen, and all the idents can be considered as the channel's main platform for expressing its brand identity. Another area in which SABC1 can express its brand identity is through its own television advertisement. The function of the television advertisement is not the same as the function of the ident. The advertisement is not created to identify the channel viewers are currently watching, but instead functions as a promotional or marketing tool for the channel in general and aims to inspire brand or channel loyalty. The purpose of the advertisement is to communicate the channel's values to potential stakeholders (viewers and advertisers) with the intention to increase viewership and thus to increase revenue from advertisers and other stakeholders. In this advertising process, differences in channel values may be intended, and personification of the television channel may occur.

The *PF Jones* advertisement (Figure 28) created by TBWA Hunt Lascaris for SABC1's *Ya Mampela* brand identity was aired on television between 2002 and 2004. The television advertisement[12] (SABC1 brand advert 2002) communicates values and ideologies that are significantly different to the ones expressed in the preceding *Simunye* brand identity. Whereas the *Simunye* identity attempted to emphasise equivalence, camaraderie and unity in diversity, the *Ya Mampela* identity indicates a radical departure from its predecessor by pointing out distinct cultural, social and economic differences. The presentation of the advertisement resembles a short, documentary film, depicting "a day in the life of a typical South African teenage boy" (Cohen 2004:63). It is a 'slice-of-South-African-life' illustrating the daily experiences and observations of *PF Jones*, the main character in the advertisement. The advertisement commences with *PF Jones* "getting out of bed in his township shack" (Gilfillan 2003:[sp]); he gets dressed, and as he leaves, puts on his *spotti*.[13] The character moves through Soweto towards the busy taxi rank while observing the landscape, people and the township tour bus along the way. The character then commutes to the city in a crowded taxi, and along the way observes the contrast between the township and the more wealthy suburban areas.

After arriving at the city taxi rank, the character moves through the Johannesburg streets, observing women having "their hair done at street-side vendors" (Cohen 2004:63). *PF Jones* is about to cross when a female driver of a luxury car exits what appears to be a parking garage, and locks her door when she sees him. Evening approaches and the character enters the shop of a petrol station to buy milk, only to discover that the shop owner has phoned the police in response to a 'wanted' poster.

When the police do not arrest *PF Jones*, the shop owner replies "you all look the same". The character leaves the shop in disgust without buying the milk, and bumps into familiar people outside. He gets into their car and tells them about the incident in the shop and the amused passengers respond in disbelief. His day ends when the people drop him off at his township home, and he goes to bed. The daily routine of the main character *PF Jones* seems to reflect a South African social reality, except that the teenage boy is white.

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[12] This advertisement can also be viewed on YouTube (Racial advert – South Africa, Soweto 2004).

[13] Sharlene Swartz (2003) explains that a *spotti* is a floppy sun hat, originally used as a cricket fielding hat, but appropriated and turned into an icon of kwaito street culture.

Figure 28: Still images from the SABC1 *PF Jones* advertisement, 2002.
(SABC1 brand advert … 2002; Racial advert … 2004.)

Director Laurence Hamburger of Egg Productions explains that the advertisement concept involves showing the life of township youth, but that people have seen it so many times that one of the most interesting things to do is to ask how one can make

people notice things that they have always known (SABC1 brand advert 2002). Creative Director Gary du Toit from TBWA Hunt Lascaris explains that a role reversal was implemented "where all black people are white people and all white people are black people" (SABC1 brand advert 2002). He explains that by reversing things, situations are highlighted in order to make people see things freshly. The advertisement reflects the channel's aims to reflect a "social realism that is more enthralling than fiction" and to "reflect the changing social reality in South Africa … with fresh eyes" (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:5-6).

This controversial advertisement received one of the most prestigious awards in the South African advertising industry, namely a Grand Prix at the Loerie award festival in 2004, but some members of the public were not equally enthusiastic about it. Cohen (2004:64) states that reactions varied from amusement to outrage. A couple of people complained to the Broadcasting Complaints Committee of South Africa (BCCSA), saying that the promotion worked against nation-building, and that the advertisement was offensive and antagonistic to the aim of achieving racial reconciliation (Gilfillan 2003:[sp]). Similarly, many "whites ... dismissed the ad for opening up old debates" (Cohen 2004:64). But it is not only white people who complained. In a letter to *The Herald*, Bathembu (2003:[sp]) complained that the advertisement encouraged stereotyping, and asks: "are all car-hijackers black? … Are black dudes always up to no good when they enter a shop wearing a hat and takkies?" In Bathebu's view, the advertisement negatively affects attitudes towards black people. The reactions to the advertisement indicate that the advertisement succeeded in engaging viewers in a negotiation of racism that is "still a part of the daily lives of South Africans" (Cohen 2004:64).

With regard to Stuart Hall's theory of preferred reading,[14] one can say that the comments of the first complainants can be described as an oppositional reading of the advertisement, while Bathembu's comments can be regarded as a negotiated interpretation of the advertisement.

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[14] Hall's theory of preferred meaning has been mentioned in Chapter Two section 2.3. To reiterate, Hall (1999:515-516) states that an oppositional position is taken when the viewer decodes the message in a contrary way. While viewers may understand the preferred reading, they may disagree with the message and take in a position of opposition to the message. A negotiated reading "contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements" and "accords the privileged position to the dominant positions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to 'local conditions'" (Hall 1999:516).

A strong oppositional reading could occur if the advertisement is interpreted in a "full and straight" (Hall 2001:174) or most literal manner. In the case of such a literal interpretation, a viewer can interpret the advertisement as a speculation of future possibilities in South Africa, where the apartheid role and status of black and white people would be reversed, thereby promoting inverted racism. Since SABC1 is a public broadcast channel, it can also be interpreted that its advertisement reflects governing ruling class ideals. Interpreted in this manner, the advertisement may appear "antagonistic to the aim of achieving racial reconciliation" and would indeed result in a misinterpretation of TBWA Hunt Lascaris' intention to "promote mutual understanding among black and white South Africans" (Gilfillan 2003:[sp]).

But cultural texts are polysemic, and the *PF Jones* advertisement can thus have many possible meanings for the viewer. The dominant or most popular reading seems to be one that echoes the interpretation of Gilfillan (2003:[sp]), as an advertisement that

> is simultaneously poignant and funny, working on various subtle levels to arouse awareness and empathy with "the other". Its basic premise seems to be that putting oneself in the shoes of another (the racial "other" in this case) is a useful lesson in mutual understanding and tolerance. Along the way, it educates by focusing on various black cultural practices: street-dancing, hair-braiding[15] – and in each case the race roles are cleverly reversed for impact.

The soundtrack to the *PF Jones* advertisement, "Kleva", by Kwaito star Mapuputsi, received a Clio award for original music. Kwaito[16] elements are also visible in the website created for the *Ya Mampela* brand identity. The SABC1 website (Figures 29, 30) uses words in an eclectic manner and slang words in various languages are included, for example, *mzanzi*, *kwaai*, *waar*, *nca*, *cho* and *hana hana*. Eclecticism is a common characteristic of kwaito, and is also a common characteristic of the culture jamming aesthetic and postmodern visual strategies. Klein (2000:282) describes this

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[15] Gilfillan (2003:[sp]) makes a rather dubious statement here. The advertisement does not actually show the so-called black cultural practice of hair braiding, but instead depicts a white hairdresser blow-drying the blonde hair of her customer, and another woman with stylised curls keeping them company. These are hairstyles traditionally associated with white women rather than black women. Additionally, Gilfillan's statement implies that people "need" to be educated regarding black cultural practices. The statement also falsely implies that street dancing and hair braiding are exclusively practiced by black people.

[16] Kwaito is a South African music genre popularised by the youth, and is an eclectic style drawing on "musical genres such as ragga, hip hop, dancehall and R&B [… but] remains distinctly South African because of its use of various African languages and slang straight from the townships" (Della Donne 2004:78-80; Stephens 2000:256-273).

eclectic aesthetic or visual style as "a cutting and pasting of graffiti, modern art, do-it-yourself punk philosophy and age-old pranksterism".

The SABC1 *Ya Mampela* website (Figure 29) looks like a collage on a wall that is made up of newspaper clippings, photos, cut-and-paste typography, poems, black and white images, stencil typography, found objects and spray paint typography and artwork. The red background of the website looks like a wall and a door with an image of a screaming face rendered with a stencil and spray paint. The background remains the same and the various pages of the website open in new windows on top of this background. The SABC1 website with its punk-style letters, cut-outs, photographs and spray paint illustrates some of the iconography associated with resistance art, graffiti art and the culture jamming aesthetic.

Figure 29: SABC1 website background and home page, 2004.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

Figure 30: Windows from the SABC1 website, 2004.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

The visual brand elements in the SABC1 idents, advertisement and website, in particular, and the stylistic resemblance to a culture jamming aesthetic[17] is an example of the characteristic use of bricolage in postmodern visual strategies, where an image or design is created by combining various available materials to create something new. Chandler (1999) states that a *bricoleur*[18] appropriates existing materials in order to create improvised structures, and that

> [t]he bricoleur works with signs, constructing new arrangements by adopting existing signifieds as signifiers and 'speaking' 'through the meaning of thing' – by the choices made from 'limited possibilities'. ... 'The first aspect of bricolage is... to construct a system of paradigms with the fragments of syntagmatic chains', leading in turn to new syntagms.

In other words, the bricoleur selects existing items and material, arranges and reorders the material, thereby placing it with other items in a different context, and ultimately creating new signs that communicate new meaning (Chandler 1999; McGuigan 1992:97; Barker 2003:392). The visual style of the SABC1 website resembles the cutting and pasting, or bricolage techniques, employed by the punk subcultures that Dick Hebdige (1979:26) describes. Klein (2000:281-282) notes that culture jammers, ad busters or bricoleurs often make use of parody to highlight "the deeper truth hiding beneath the layers of advertising euphemisms" by copying and pasting the existing advertisements and adding satirical comments, aiming to expose the "lies" underlying such advertising campaigns. The *Ya Mampela* visual brand identity indeed appears to display such subversive characteristics often found in youth subcultures.

Visual elements or iconic signs that occur in the overall visual brand identity of SABC1 *Ya Mampela* include graffiti, the street, aerosol paint cans, adhesive tape, a camera, cityscapes, highways, taxi ranks, township environments, municipal lampposts, traffic lights, screaming faces, street dancers, *spotti* hats, *All Star* sneakers and moving transportation such as trains, buses, minibus taxis, a skateboard, a bicycle and cars, These iconic signs and the manner in which they have been represented visually in the SABC1 brand identity (Figure 31) resemble stylistic characteristics of hip-hop graffiti

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[17] Klein (2000:283) describes this culture jamming aesthetic as an eclectic one that "mixes art, media, parody and the outsider stance."

[18] Chandler (1999) refers to Lévi-Strauss' notion of the *bricoleur*, and cites from his work *The savage mind*, originally published in French in 1962 and translated into English in 1966. Chandler cites from pages 20, 21 and 150 from the 1974 edition published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

art, South African resistance posters and culture jamming (Figure 32). In this way it is a unique combination of specifically South African elements and commodities[19] associated with youth subcultures, and in all three instances, social and political ideas are communicated that often include criticisms of, and resistance to, the status quo.

Figure 31: Combination of various SABC1 brand elements, mostly from the *Ya Mampela* brand identity, 2004-2009.
(Author's representation.)

Figure 32: South African graffiti, resistance posters and cover of *Laugh it Off*
(Nurse 2003:80; Images of Defiance 2004:107, 95, 67.)

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[19] McGuigan (1992:97) states that youth cultures creatively appropriate commodities, and that the commodities are also cultural signs. Swartz (2003) notes how commodities, for example *All Star* sneakers, *spotti* hats and *kwaito* music have been appropriated by young black South Africans and organised into new codes of meaning.

Combined, the visual aspects of the *Ya Mampela* brand identity function as a unique sign system with its own rules, grammar, syntax or codes (Fourie 1996:45). The eclectic use of signs and symbols belonging to the visual codes of culture jamming, South African resistance art and graffiti creates a sense of identification with its implied subculture or youth resistance code. The use of graffiti, neon, spray-paint, cutting and pasting, collage, and red paint (as a sign of resistance or anarchy) all indicate that the channel aims to portray itself as revolutionary. The channel's use of the visual code of resistance indicates that it differentiates itself from the other channels by placing itself in opposition to its competitors whose images seem more refined, mainstream and glossy.

However, this revolutionary aspect of the SABC1 brand identity did not appeal to all the members of the channel's audience. Audience research conducted by the channel in 2005 indicated that the *Ya Mampela* positioning "gave the broader SABC1 target market feelings of alienation due to its 'youth' proposition and further feelings of alienation through the channel being seen as Jozi-centric (strong Gauteng influence)" (About SABC1 2008). The research indicated that although the brand was seen as "positively bold, fiery and straight-talking, it was however also seen as highly gritty and rebellious" (About SABC1 2008). A need to evolve its 'niched youth' positioning to one that was more inclusive of a broader and more diverse audience resulted in a "departure from trademark and transient rebellious branding" (About SABC1 2008).

Bellamy and Traudt (2000:129) note that such niche, over-specialised and extreme brand differentiation could be a 'kiss of death' to a traditional broadcast television channel. In contrast to satellite channels with highly specialised programming and dual income of advertising and subscription fees, brand knowledge is more difficult to define in the case of free-to-air broadcast channels. They state that channels "must walk a fine line between a) the need for differentiation in the multichannel era, and b) the need to maximise audiences in most time periods in order to attract advertisers to pay the total bill" (Bellamy & Traudt 2000:129). The brands of free-to-air or traditional broadcast television channels thus usually remain quite uniform, primarily because they need to appeal to large audiences (Bellamy & Traudt 2000:129).

The repositioning of SABC1 and its new brand identity can be considered as a move towards homogeneity to broaden audience appeal. The new SABC1 *Mzansi fo sho*

brand identity was launched on 4 April 2007, and was the channel's second re-branding process, taking place between 2000 and 2009. The refreshing of the brand (Figure 33) was executed by Espiál who rendered their services for the channel's concept design, strategy, logo design and corporate identity (Espiál SABC1 brand refresh:[sa]). The design of the new identity preserves the earthy red and yellow colours of the *Ya Mampela* brand identity, but the new design appears to be more refined, trendy and chic.

Figure33: SABC1 *Mzansi fo sho* rebranding by Espiál, 2007.
(Espiál SABC1 brand refresh:[sa].)

The new logo[20] (Figure 34) includes the SABC acronym, the new *Mzansi fo sho* payoff line and an encircled number one. The font used for the SABC acronym is the same as the one used for the renewed SABC parent brand, which is based on the Frutiger typeface (SABC visual identity standards [sa]). The corporate identity document of the SABC describes this typeface and its parallels to the SABC as "by no means ordinary, state-of-the-art but not artificially claiming to be new" (SABC visual identity standards [sa]). The new *Mzansi fo sho* payoff line has a very similar meaning to the payoff line used in the *Ya Mampela* brand identity. *Mzansi* means "the South" and originates from the Xhosa word for "south", umzantsi, and *Mzansi fo sho* is thus a colloquial phrase denoting a democratic youthful South Africa (About SABC1 2008). The SABC acronym and the slogan (or payoff line) of the channel are executed in a dark red. The encircled number one consists of the negative red space around a white number one, and a

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[20] Visual examples of the logo and other brand elements were kindly provided in an e-mail by the on-air manager of SABC1, Simone Berger (2008/07/16), and can also be viewed on the Espial website (Espial SABC1 brand refresh:[sa]).

yellow circle framing the number one. The style of the encircled number one is modern, but incorporates elements that are reminiscent of a 1970s retro style.

Figure 34: SABC1 *Mzansi fo sho* logo designed by Espiál, 2007.
(Berger 2008/07/16; Espiál SABC1 brand refresh:[sa].)

The *SABC* acronym and the encircled number one appear as the dog on the right of the screen (Figure 35). The new dog for the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity appears neater, smaller, brighter and more solid or opaque. The preceding dog used for the *Ya Mampela* brand identity seems more transparent,[21] but at the same time also more imposing owing to the slightly larger size and the rough edges of spray-paint around the encircled number one. Although the new dog is smaller than its predecessor, it appears to be clearer. The use of more conspicuous dogs is perhaps an indication that viewers have become desensitised to such clutter due to a general increase in on-air graphic elements, perhaps initiated by the multiple rolling banners, subtitles and headings on television news which increased sharply after September 11, 2001.
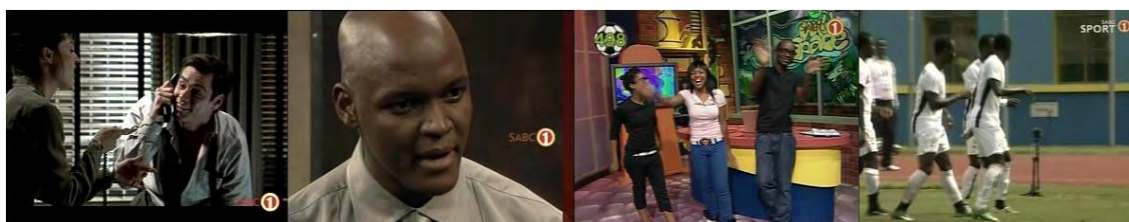

Figure 35: The SABC1 dog on the right of the screen, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

In addition to its dogs, SABC1 utilises aptly extensive 'brandcasting'.[22] The channel summoned the services of marketing agency partners Draftfcb and Eject Media to

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[21] Sometimes this dog is also known as a watermark because of its translucent appearance (Meech 1999a:40). The *Ya Mampela* dog, although more translucent than the *Mzansi fo sho* dog, still consist of an opaque and coloured spray-painted logo.

[22] Meech (1999b:293) explains that 'brandcasting' is the wide range of on-air corporate branding techniques. This is a very appropriate term which describes aptly what it is and what it does

create a new on-air look (Dicey 2007:39). The channel's general manager, Ray Nkwe, states that "music is tightly wound up in the lifestyles of the youthful audience targeted by SABC1" and the creation of a soundtrack that could be an audio mnemonic for the channel was thus paramount in the creation of the new on-air identity (Dicey 2007:39). Eject Media approached Brandon Jury[23] to compose the channel's signature tune, and Vinyl created the graphic animations accompanying this soundtrack.

This SABC1 anthem (Figure 36) functions as an advertisement or corporate campaign for the channel to promote all its brand values. The SABC1 anthem "is the primary driving force behind the on-air identity" (Vinyl [sa]) and many of the other station idents derive from this anthem. The SABC1 anthem created by Vinyl (Figure 36) appears to be a combination of videography and computer graphic animation executed in earthy, almost dusty colours. The montage sequence resembles a travelling shot, where the camera dollies across space and sets the scene where Mzansi 'stories' (or programmes) unfold, thus effectively positioning the channel as authentic Mzansi storyteller. It is a smooth video montage, as if the camera rapidly moves through diverse South African landscapes capturing various people and their interactions in these environments. This camera movement is perhaps suggestive of the channel's aim to "reflect a society that is currently in motion and progressive" (About SABC1 2008).

The people depicted in the SABC1 anthem are almost exclusively black, but seem to come from various social, age and class groups, and indicates the channel's aim to include older viewers and to extend "beyond the boundaries of Gauteng [to reflect a] broader and more diverse South Africa" (About SABC1 2008). In addition to a larger diversity of people, the anthem includes a variety of landscapes; for example a field with mountains in the background, a park, rural communities, urban cityscapes, suburban dwellings and environments, townships and soccer fields; and concludes with a "satellite" view of South Africa from space. It also depicts various modes of transport: a train, bus, minibus taxis, and a variety of cars ranging from ordinary to luxury cars. The inclusion of a large variety of people and environments in the idents points to the

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simultaneously, and perhaps this term is even preferable to the longer 'television channel branding'.

[23] Brandon Jury is a "musician with significant expertise in scoring cinematic and television productions" (Dicey 2007:39). Jury was tasked with creating a soundtrack for the channel that would extend beyond the *Ya Mampela* kwaito signature tune in order to appeal to a much wider South African audience.

aim of the channel to appeal to a larger audience and increase the channel's popularity.[24]

Figure 36: SABC1 anthem created by Vinyl in association with Eject Media, 2007.
(SABC1 elements … 2008; Vinyl [sa].)

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[24] The aim of this promotion was "to tap into a very wide audience without alienating anyone, and at the same time communicate that SABC1 is a young vibrant and quality entertainment channel" (Vinyl [sa]). The SABC1 anthem can be viewed on the Vinyl website (Vinyl [sa]).

Short snippets or sections of the anthem are also used as station idents and break-bumpers (Figure 37). The ident images appear to be created by using a combination of videography and computer graphic animation and are overlaid with the seemingly floating three-dimensional logo and text. The main purpose of these idents is to identify the SABC1 channel. Some of these idents also have a hailing function (saying 'we'll be back') while others indicate day-time, early prime and prime-time television slots (not shown in Figure 37, although similar in appearance).

Figure 37: SABC1 idents with floating logo, 2007.
(SABC1 elements … 2008.)

These idents commence with a snapshot of a South African environment and end with the large SABC1 logo and the payoff line "Mzansi fo sho". The connotations created by the images and text in these idents are that a new, youthful and democratic South Africa (Mzansi) comprises people relaxing in a park, enjoying stylish parties, strolling around in the township, celebrating special occasions like weddings, and socialising in the suburbs, thus suggesting occasions ranging from the everyday to the special, in locations ranging from glamorous to ordinary South African places. The images in the idents combined with the payoff line "Mzansi fo sho" indicate the channel's notion of what it means to live in a youthful and democratic South Africa, and also perhaps suggests what such a youthful and democratic South Africa *should* look like. The images in these idents (and the images in all the SABC television brands for that matter), add to the viewers' visual vocabulary of what it means to be South African. The images also create new visual codes and contribute to the creation of new national symbols.

The channel additionally employs another set of idents to function as station identification and break-bumpers (Figure 38). Idents in this set[25] commence with coloured vertical banners filling the screen and then reveals four "Mzansi" locations: a suburban area; a taxi rank; luxury cars in an urban setting; and a metropolitan location with skyscrapers in the background. Urban settings are often depicted in the SABC1 idents. They create a sense of development, progress, ambition, civilisation and sophistication that challenge older notions of South Africa as simple, rural and primitive.
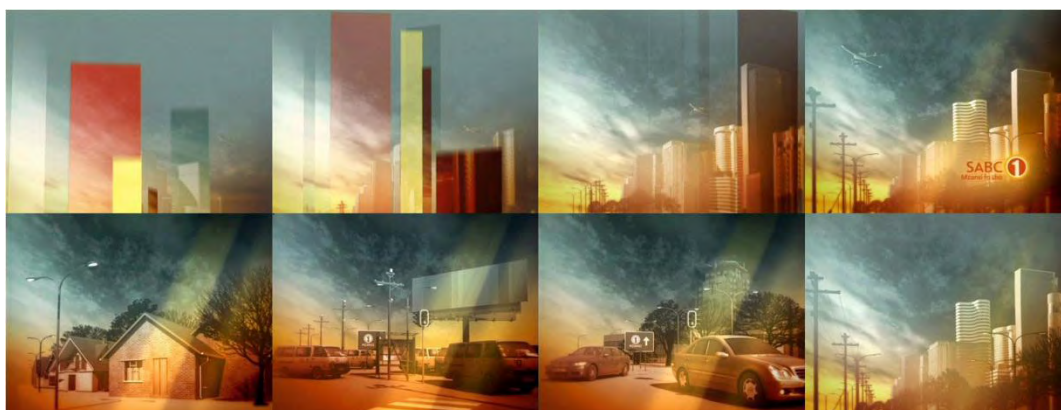

Figure 38: SABC1 idents and break-bumpers, 2007.
(SABC1 elements … 2008; Vinyl [sa].)

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[25] These sets of idents were created by Vinyl, and an example of these break-bumpers can be viewed on the Vinyl website (Vinyl [sa]).

The same images are also used in the forthcoming attraction and menu idents (Figure 39). The images remain in the background, while three vertical banners emerge with the times and titles of scheduled programmes (Figure 39, first two rows). Idents promoting forthcoming programmes show programme trailers, as well as a programme title and time banner with images of the cityscapes, cars and taxis which emerge on the right of the television screen. Other programme trailer or teaser idents appear without the images, and consist of a simple horizontal graphic banner at the bottom of the screen (Figure 39, bottom row).
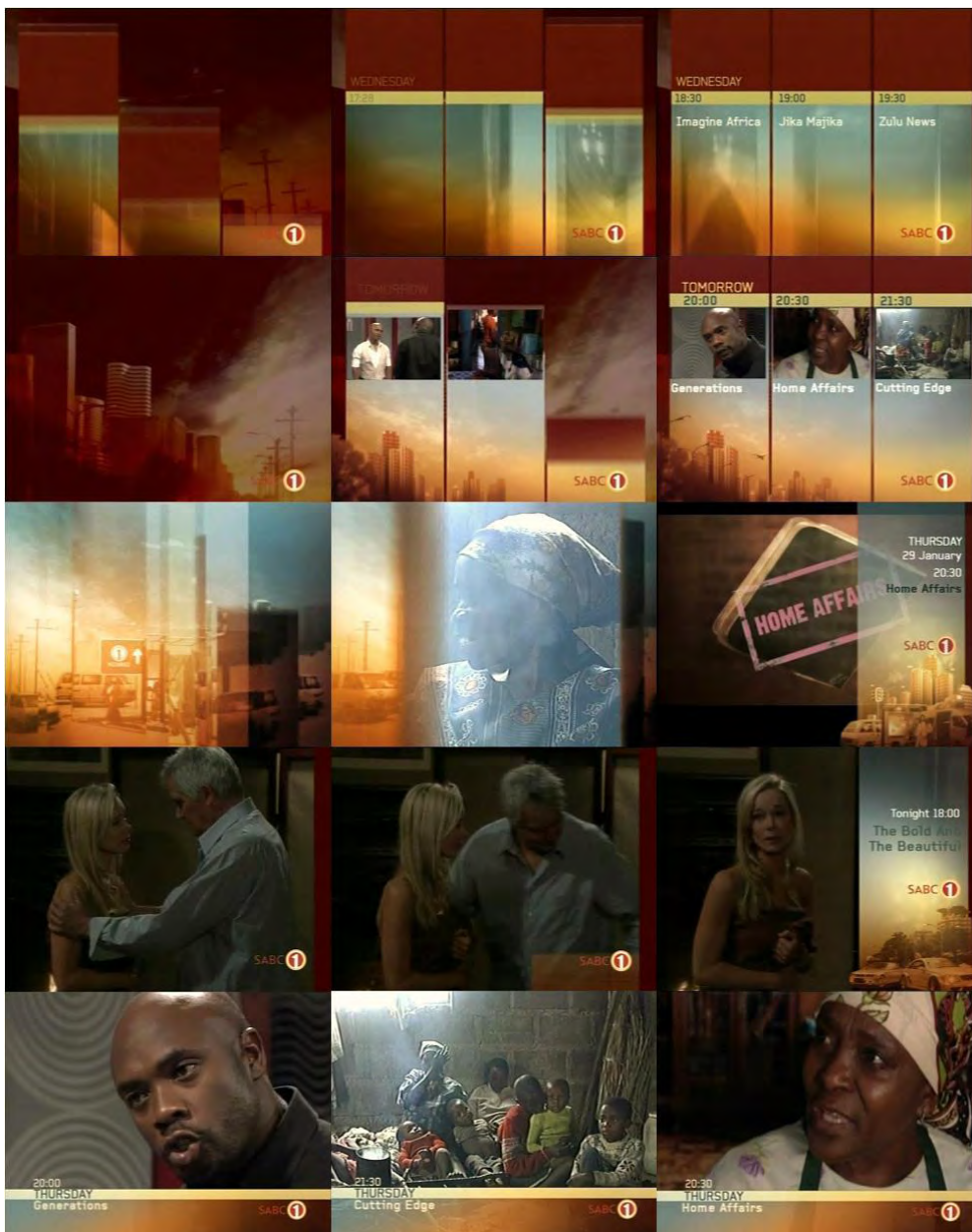
Figure 39: SABC1 forthcoming attractions and menu idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

SABC1 also uses other idents in addition to the ones mentioned above. Genre idents were used for the *Ya Mampela* brand identity and are used again for the *Mzansi fo sho* on-air look. Two sets of genre stings appear. The first set of genre idents indicates the type of programming to be aired, for example religion, news, education or children's programmes (Figure 40, 41). These idents are graphic animations resembling the view a person would have when travelling in a car on a multi-lane highway while observing the landscape flashing by.[26] In the foreground various modes of transport, for example cars, minibus taxis and "Golden Arrow" buses can be seen. Golden Arrow buses only operate in Cape Town, and the connotation created by the depiction of these buses is that SABC1 is a channel for the whole South Africa rather than just a Johannesburg oriented channel. The background shows clips from television material consistent with the type of programming the ident represents, for example cartoons in the background of the *Kids* ident created for children's programming. The middle ground is illustrated with various types of buildings and trees, and also large capital letters exclaiming the payoff line "Mzansi fo sho".

Figure 40: SABC1 "Kids" genre ident, 2007.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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[26] The use of such movement in the genre idents perhaps points to the channel's aim to portray itself in tune with the progression of the country, in harmony with a rapidly evolving "Mzansi", a country in motion.

Figure 41: Combination of SABC1 genre idents, 2007.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The other set of idents, created by Espiál, indicates specific genres such as current affairs, documentaries, drama, entertainment, movies and sport (Figure 42). The function of the 30-second genre line-up is to "relay information about relevant SABC1 programming" and aims to "communicate the exciting new visual aesthetic and fresh on-air style of SABC1" (Espiál television and motion graphics [sa]). The genre line-ups[27] are created with technologically sophisticated animations combined with television recordings.

Once again, various environments are illustrated in the idents, but in this case the locations are devoid of people. The only people depicted are the ones on the screens, photographs and magazines within the animations. The environments consist of computer graphic animations while the images pertaining to the genres shown on the screens, photographs and magazines in the animations consist of real television material. The environments illustrated in the animations include a newsroom for the current affairs genre, the interior of a home for the drama genre, a club and stage for the entertainment genre, a cinema for the film genre and a billboard in a city setting showing a game of soccer for the sport genre.

The general line-up ident that is part of the genre-line-up set of idents illustrates a broad "Mzansi" city environment with a car driving past two towers resembling the cooling towers at the Orlando electricity plant (Figure 42, bottom row). The car also drives through city streets with a SABC1 logo disc hanging from the rear view mirror of the car. The aim of this ident is to contextualise the new visual aesthetic and on-air

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[27] The SABC1 genre idents as shown in Figure 37 can also be viewed on the Espial website (Espial television and motion graphics [sa]).

style of SABC1. Ironically, the images in this set of idents, especially the animations depicting the cityscape and the two cooling towers, solidify the association of the channel as Johannesburg centred.

Figure 42: SABC1 genre line-up idents created by Espiál, 2008.
(From top to bottom, the genre idents represent current affairs, documentaries, drama, entertainment, movies, sport and a general line-up ident).
(Espiál television and motion graphics [sa].)

Longer on-air promotions for programme genres also occurred on SABC1 during 2008 and 2009 (Figure 43). The genre promotions depict key SABC1 entertainers and personalities, promoting the channel as South Africa's number one television brand. Espiál (Espiál [sa]) branding and design agency explain that the "images used relate directly to each genre, but do not cross the line between being easily associated and giving too much away or being show-and-tell".

The promotion for documentaries depicts a man thinking about the real life issues and events shown on SABC1. The drama promotion shows actresses and actors stating that drama is their life, and they also endorse the channel as their office and home. The entertainment promotion similarly shows personalities stating that SABC1 is their home, office and life. The generic on-air promotion in this set shows people doing street dancing and also shows two people applying the new SABC1 logo to a wall with spray paint like graffiti art. The street dancing and the graffiti create a sense of continuity with regard to the previous *Ya Mampela* identity, thus creating an air of familiarity to the viewers. Similar visual signs and codes to the ones used during the *Ya Mampela* period are used here, but they are used in a more refined and sophisticated way.
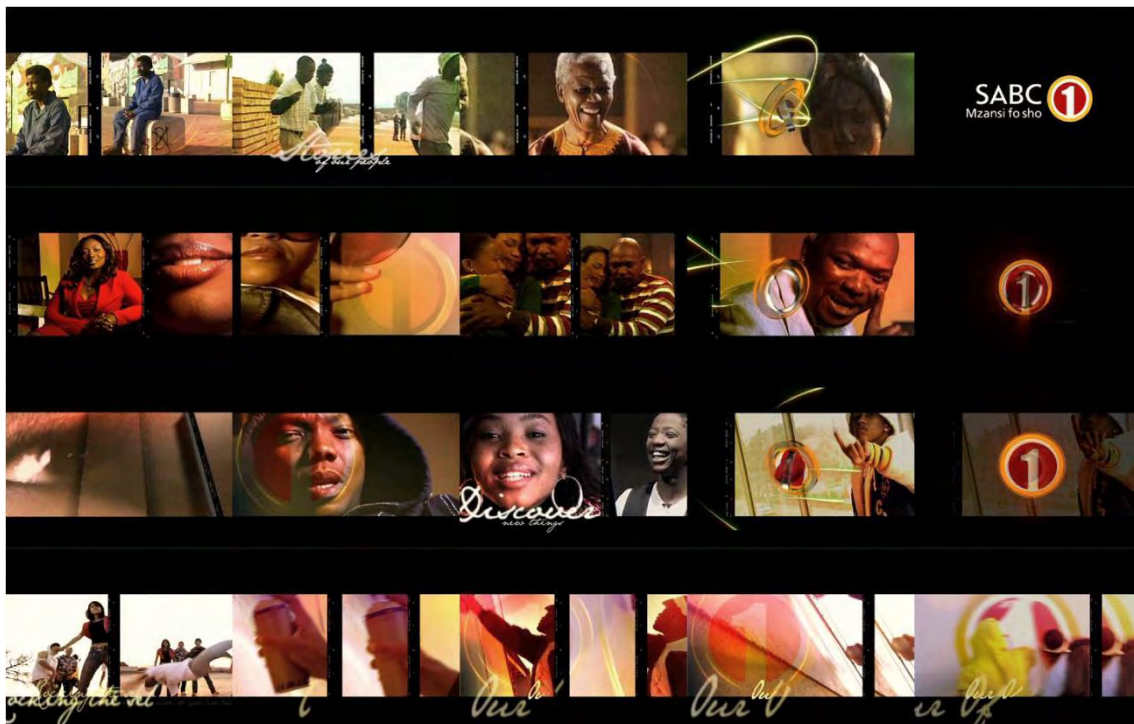

Figure 43: SABC1 on-air promos for documentaries, drama, entertainment and a generic promo created by Espiál, 2008.
(Espiál television and motion graphics [sa].)

In all the promotions that are part of this set of idents, the SABC1 logo is animated in a three-dimensional manner with the spinning of the red, yellow and white rings. Espiál states that the logo "animation used conveys the spirit and energy that SABC1 lends to its programming [and also] gives the brand a unique, technologically advanced look and feel." In general this set of promotional idents "portrays the distinctive properties of each genre as well as the image of SABC1 as a cutting-edge brand, while setting a

fresh new standard in television aesthetics" (Espiál television and motion graphics [sa]).

Another category of a channel's on-air promotion or clutter is specials (Meech 1999b:299). As mentioned in the previous chapter (in section 3.5), specials are formulated to promote short-term corporate campaigns or special projects (Meech 1999a:40, 1999b:299). For example, SABC1 promoted the films to be aired on the television channel in January, 2009. This special (Figure 44, top row) depicts fast moving clips from the films to be aired, a box gift wrapped in the channel colours and logo, and fireworks exploding from the box, thus suggestive of the New Year's celebrations[28] of the channel and its gift of good quality films to its viewers.
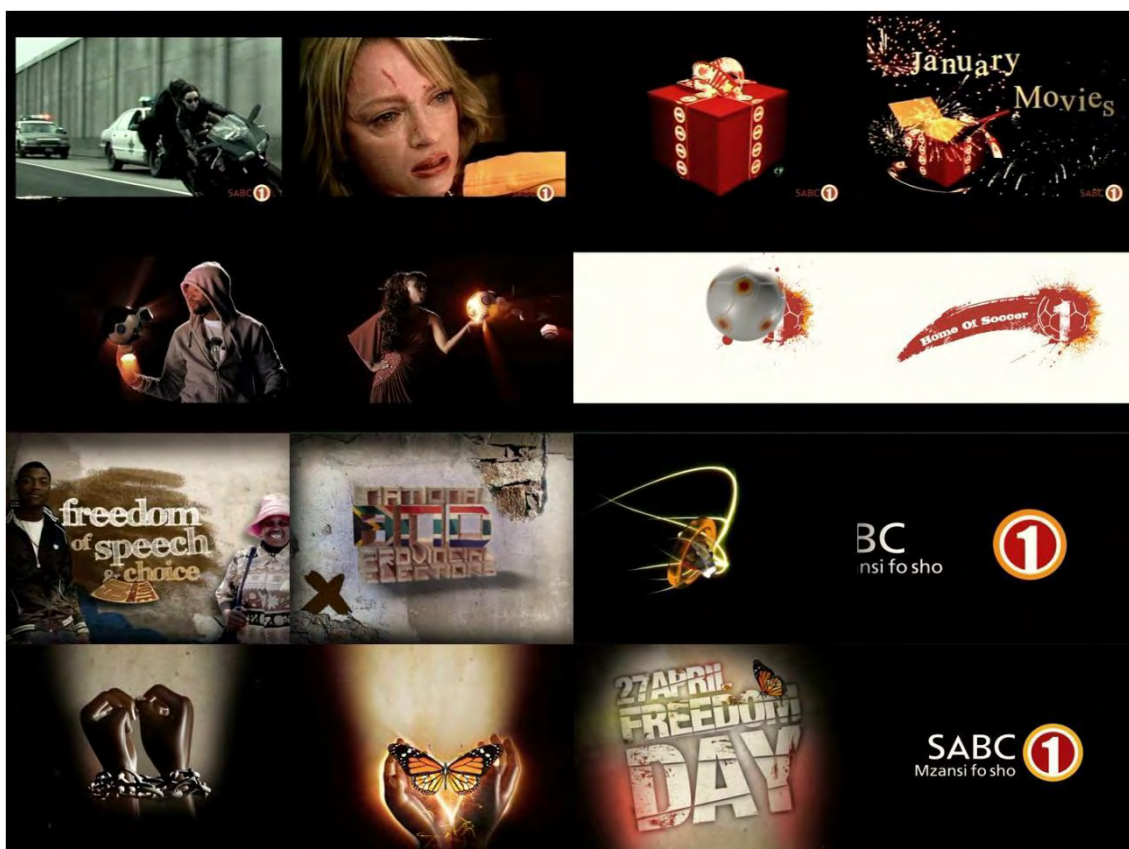

Figure 44: SABC1 specials, created by Espiál, 2009.
(Espiál television and motion graphics [sa].)

Espiál also created such special projects for SABC1 (Espiál television and motion graphics [sa]). The one promotes the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup (Figure 44,

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[28] The channel also made use of holiday season specials at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2009, These "Mzansi Festive" specials were created by Vinyl (Vinyl [sa]).

second row) while communicating the channel's support of the national soccer team Bafana Bafana. In another promotion the channel shows its support for the 2009 national and provincial elections (Figure 44, third row) thereby urging viewers to participate in the election. Specials are often created in accordance with special days and holidays. The special promoting Freedom Day of 2009 (Figure 44, fourth or bottom row) shows an animation of chained hands breaking free and a butterfly emerging from these hands. The image of chains typically symbolises captivity and an image of a butterfly is usually a symbol of freedom or transformation. These specials are branded with the animated rings' version of the SABC1 logo at the end of each special. The specials created for these national events indicate the SABC1's sense of social responsibility as a public service broadcast channel. It also points to the channel's role as custodian of South African values in line with the dominant ideologies of the day.

Another aspect previously branded with the channels on-air look is the news programme (Figure 27). News programmes have not been specifically branded for SABC1 since the 2007 launch of the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity. This is perhaps owing to the broadcaster's aim to strengthen the SABC News brand in general. News programmes aired on all the SABC television channels are introduced similarly and in a consistent manner to the SABC News brand. SABC1 does, however, include its branding in terms of introducing it with a *News* genre ident (as depicted in Figure 41, bottom row). Another aspect that has been discarded is the continuity presenters. Nyaba (2008:1) colourfully describes that SABC1 axed all its "talking heads" since the new *Mzansi fo sho* strategy and the restructuring of the channel required the airtime to promote new programmes. Consequently, the on-air graphic elements increased to promote the channel and its programmes.

In addition to the on-air communication of its brand identity, the channel expresses its brand values through another platform, the SABC1 website. In comparison to the *Ya Mampela* website, the new *Mzansi fo sho* website appears more sophisticated, conventional, optimistic, responsible and less rebellious. The SABC1 *Mzansi fo sho* website changed its looks twice between 2007 and 2009. The images and designs used for the earlier (2008) website (Figure 45) seem to derive from the corporate identity elements designed by Espiál (Figure 33), as well as the components of the idents and promotions created by Vinyl in association with Eject Media (Figure 34, 35 and 36). Banners, buttons and images fit together, and the style of the website is

consistent with its on-air identity, thereby indicating an integrated design strategy. The only aspect that appears on the website but not on television is the various fabrics used as the website's backgrounds.
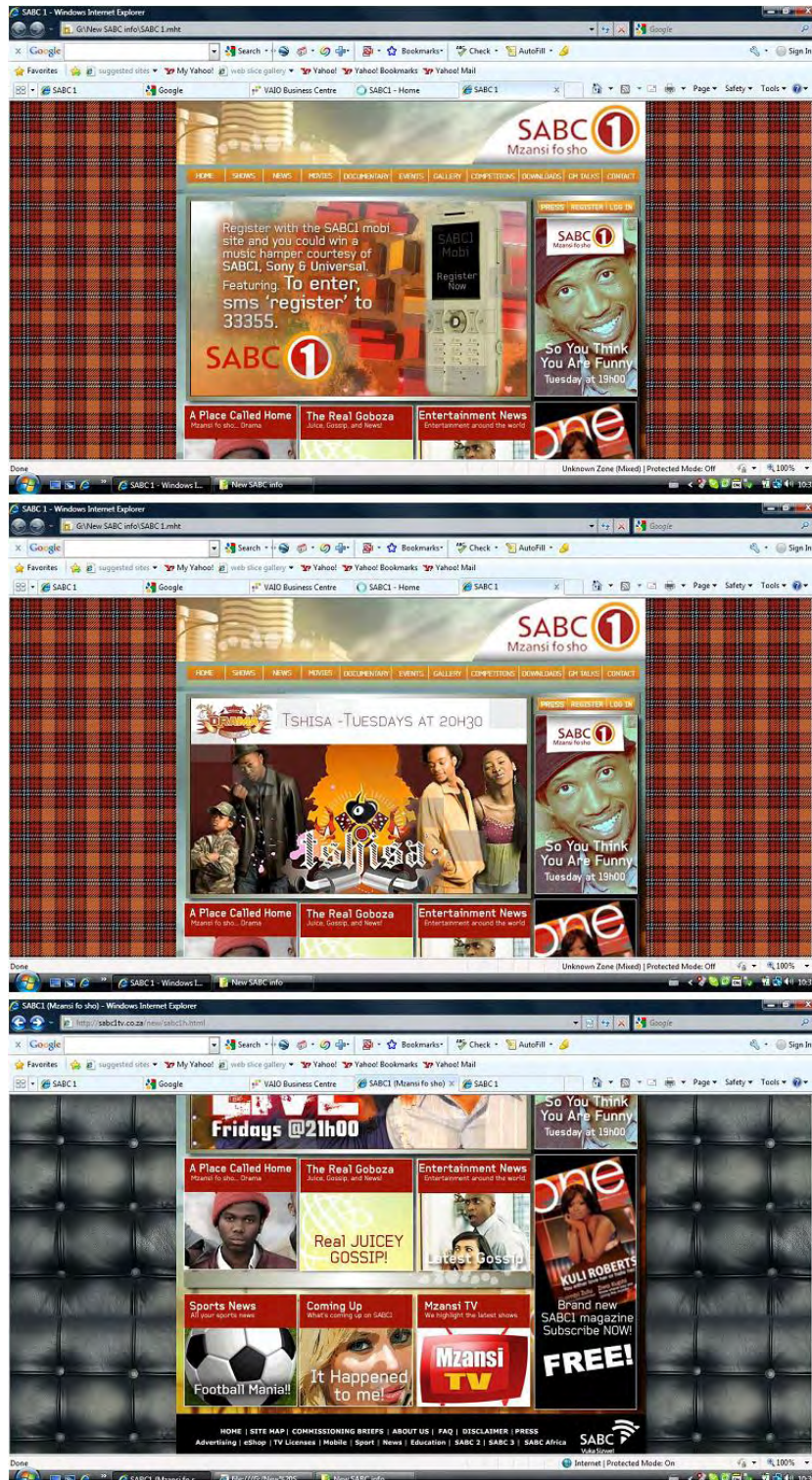

Figure 45: SABC1 website, 2008.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

The subsequent (2009) website (Figure 46) draws from the latest animations, idents and promos created by Espiál (Figures 42-44), and appears full of activity with three Flash animations appearing at the same time on the home page. The one animation in the top left corner of the website shows the spinning rings of the three-dimensional logo on top of a background satellite view of South Africa. Another one illustrates an animated top banner that resembles showing slides of the channel's featured programmes. An animation in the middle of the page similarly features slides and descriptions of new programmes on SABC1. Although the animations make the website seem more technologically advanced, the pages take longer to load, and at times and on some pages the website seems fragmented and cluttered. In comparison, the preceding website seemed more functional and tidy. In general, the website design and content of both websites appear integrated in terms of the channel's overall brand identity.
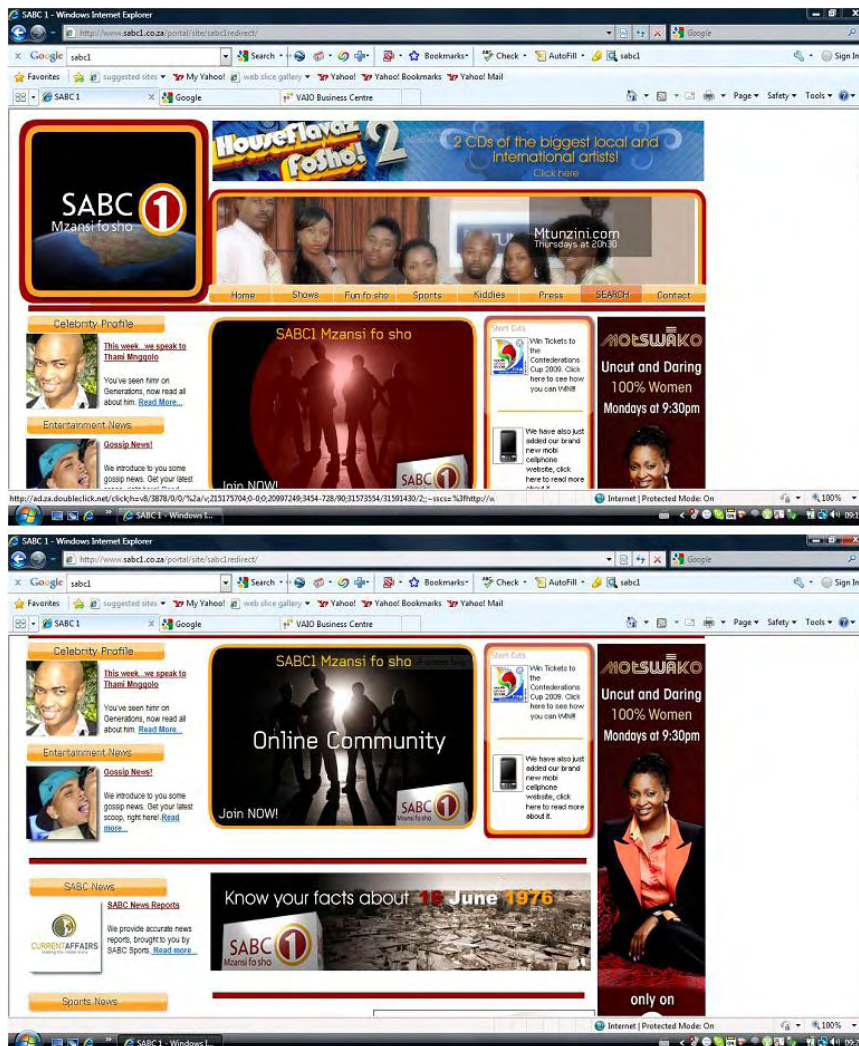

Figure 46: SABC1 website, 2009.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

Overall the visual manifestation of the *Mzansi fo sho* identity illustrates similar iconic signs to the *Ya Mampela* brand identity, but the visual vocabulary has been extended somewhat and now includes more glamour and entertainment aspects. Various locations are depicted including highways, cityscapes, suburban houses, taxi ranks, rural huts, parks, soccer fields, entertainment venues, townships, newsrooms and bus stops. Similarly, iconic images of various modes of transport are illustrated, for example ordinary and luxury cars, trains, Golden Arrow buses, minibus taxis and bicycles. Other iconic images include lampposts and telephone poles, electricity pylons, billboards, skyscrapers, music speakers, microphones, vinyl records, street dancers, cameras, soccer balls, a *vuvuzela*,[29] a spray can, graffiti walls, street signs, *spottis* and hooded sweatshirts (or hoodies for short). These signs and codes create maps of meaning (Hall 1999:513) that can be associated with the channel's brand identity, and adds to a visual vocabulary that contributes to establishing a South African 'identity'.

Brands, and television channels for that matter, are often personified. Keeping such personification in mind, an analogy can be made between the evolution of the SABC1 channel's brand identity and matching cycles in human development. Whereas the *Simunye* identity can be likened to a naive, optimistic primary school child, the *Ya Mampela* identity can be seen as a cynical, rebellious high school adolescent, and the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity associated with a more balanced and responsible young adult, but the bold, energetic and youthful aspect of the brand identity remains throughout all the identities.

Taken as a whole, the SABC1 *Mzansi fo sho* visual brand identity appears more neutral, less tongue-in-cheek, less rebellious, more mainstream, more popular and more refined in comparison with the previous *Ya Mampela* identity. It also seems more appealing to a wider audience in terms of age, class and location (but not race, as it continues to cater for almost exclusively black viewers). The *Mzansi fo sho* branding seems to be an upgrade visually and stylistically, but the underlying channel ideology, its vision and mission, is basically the same, albeit much more refined. The editorial line in the first half of the decade declared that SABC1 is "creating, reflecting and celebrating our youthful South African identity" (SABC1 programme 2003), and in the second half declared that the channel is "celebrating and shaping a youthful South African identity" (SABC requests 2008). With both these editorial lines the channel

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[29] A plastic trumpet made in various colours used at South African soccer matches.

proclaims itself as observer, participant, creator and custodian of South African youth culture.

Whereas this section explored the visual expressions of the SABC1 brand identity, the next section will explore the associations and connotations that may be observed by the interpreter. This section thus explored the first levels of meaning, while the following section will explore the deeper levels of meaning possibly underlying the SABC1 brand identity.

4.3.2 Myth and ideology in the SABC1 brand identity

Myth and ideology is located in the next level of meaning, operating at a second and third level (or perhaps a third and fourth level, depending on one's view of the level of meaning). Myth is a type of speech, a message, a system of communication (Barthes 1972:109) and is therefore located in discourse. It is argued that the SABC1 brand identity relies on myth which is located in discourse that is situated in a broader system of discourse. The notion of 'youth' in both the *Ya Mampela* and *Mzansi fo sho* manifestations of the SABC1 brand is a discursive construct organised around the representations of the youth around the double axis of 'trouble' and 'fun' (Hebdige 1988:8,19,30).

The *Ya Mampela* brand identity capitalises on the notion of the youth as 'trouble' and the associations of youth with rebellion, violence and delinquency (Hebdige 1988:27, 30; Barker 2003:377). It is argued that the *Ya Mampela* brand identity and its associations with trouble, rebellion and social activism are closely related to the myth of youth resistance.

The *Ya Mampela* brand identity of SABC1 deliberately creates a visual style that conjures up associations with hip-hop graffiti art, street art, kwaito aesthetics, culture jamming and a general 'youth resistance' style. By utilising such a rebellious branding strategy, the channel aims to tap into the growing sense of scepticism and nihilism amongst the channel's viewers (with the largest group of viewers consisting of young black people predominantly located in townships). The purpose of the rebellious branding strategy is to align the channel with the rhetoric of struggle and the rhetoric of youth resistance that has been prominent in South African discourse. Youth resistance

with a militant character has been a part of ANC discourse for some time, and was propelled to recognition by the Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976 when Hector Pietersen and other students were shot by the police during a protest. Subsequently, youth became a metaphor for social change.

It is argued that 'youth resistance' can become a political myth in the hands of the dominant ideological group. The media and its close ties with the current dominant ideological group often romanticise historical events such as the Soweto uprising, thereby simultaneously romanticising "the 'resistance' of disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed groups" such as the youth (McGuigan 1992:91). Henry Tudor (1972:138-139) notes that real political figures and events become mythologised. Real political events (such as the Soweto uprising) become fictionalised narratives, and the political figures involved in these events (Hector Pietersen and the police, for example) are transformed into heroes or villains, thereby mythologising real events and people while pretending to be factual depictions of the real world (Tudor 1972:138-139). Political myths claim to be 'the way things really are' even though they are ideologically inspired fictional representations (Tudor 172:139).

The SABC1's *Ya Mampela* brand identity claims to show 'the way things really are'. Romeo Kumalo (general manager of SABC1 at the time) states that SABC1 "celebrates South African youthfulness with entertaining social realism. SABC1 is about real people, real stories. We tell it like it is. We keep it honest. Ya mampela" (SABC request 2003). The slogan of the *Ya mampela* brand identity indicates that the channel claims to be honest and authentic, owing to its utilisation of a colloquial phrase which essentially means 'the real thing'. This slogan and its use as a payoff line, caption and voiceover is an example of 'anchoring' where the linguistic message solidifies the intended meaning of the depictions in the visual brand identity (Barthes 1977:38; Seiter 1992:44; Dyer 1982:130). The channel's claim to be the 'real thing' aims to set it apart from the previous *Simunye* identity, thereby suggesting that its depiction of racial camaraderie and unity is a fictional utopian ideal that should be disregarded while suggesting that cultural, social and economic differences should be included in debate rather than denying that such differences exist.

By claiming that the SABC1 channel and its brand are authentic, the channel suggests that the other channels are not. Barker (2003:392) states that youth subcultures often

claim to be original, pure and authentic. The 'deepness' and 'authenticity' of the members of such youth subcultures are often "constructed in relation to the claimed inauthenticity and shallowness of others [and a]uthenticity, then, is an accumulated social achievement" (Barker 2003:393). From the above description it becomes clear that two myths are prominent in the SABC1 brand identity: the myth of youth resistance and the myth of authenticity.

The myth of youth resistance is perpetuated in the *Ya Mampela* brand identity by creating a visual code that resembles the visual strategies employed by South African subversive subcultures, for example visual strategies that resemble those of hip-hop graffiti art (Klopper 2000:178-196), resistance posters (Images of defiance 2004) and culture jamming (Nurse 2003 and Spark 2004b). The *Ya Mampela* brand identity and its eclectic use of, for example, punk-style letters, cut-outs, stencil art and spray paint are examples of design strategies found in these expressions of South African subculture. The *Ya Mampela* website with its 'do-it-yourself' cutting and pasting, bricolage, graffiti and punk elements is exemplary of the manner in which the anti-corporate imagery of the culture jamming aesthetic has been absorbed by marketing strategies. Marketing strategies adopt and incorporate this 'cool' style or visual code of resistance and rebellion to sell other products and services, and the visual code of resistance ironically becomes "co-opted by the very market forces of capitalism it opposes" (Sandlin & Milam 2008:323; Klein 2000:448; Spark 2004b:66).

So whereas culture jamming aims to resist and re-create commercial culture in order to transform society (Sandlin & Milam 2008:323), commercial culture, in turn utilises culture jamming to further its own interests. Eventually the cutting and pasting, graffiti and punk aesthetic becomes pastiche – the signifiers emptied of their initial or intended signifieds. Frederic Jameson (1983:114) explains that pastiche

> is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humour.

The signifiers of resistance are thus emptied of their original meaning and new meanings attached; commodities as cultural signs are rearranged into new codes of

meaning (Barker 2003:381). This is an example where "myth is speech *stolen and restored*" (Barthes 1972:125). When the visual codes are stolen from its youth resistance context and brought into the context of branding, it is not put exactly in its place (Barthes 1972:125). In this case the visual codes and style of the SABC1 brand identity "is over inflated as resistance while resistance is reduced to questions of style" (Barker 2003:383).[30] Youth resistance thus becomes a stylistic ensemble: "a form of symbolic resistance forged on the terrain of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggle" (Barker 2003:382).

Even though the SABC1 channel appears as a site of resistance or an opportunity for social activism, it is not. Instead it becomes a symbolic resistance, a simulated resistance or simulacrum. The channel parades as a platform of youth resistance, a discourse of youth resistance located in the larger discourse of the struggle of the proletariat, the struggle against capitalist consumerism and the South African liberation struggle, but it is not. The SABC1's use of visual codes of youth resistance achieves the opposite, however; it "removes the possibility of resistance from artistic creations, through turning them into commodities" thereby indicating the "capacity of capitalism to commodify dissent" (Sandlin & Milam 2008:346).

Whereas the *Ya Mampela* brand identity was structured around the axis of 'trouble', the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity leans towards the perception of the youth as 'fun' where young people are "represented as playful consumers of fashion, style and a range of leisure activities" (Barker 2003:377). Writing about South African music, Raffaella Della-Donne (2004:80) observes that "young people explore, create, define, and redefine their individual identities while addressing the challenge confronting contemporary South African artists: to seek new modes of thought and perception no longer constrained by exclusively protest orientations".

The new *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity appears to exemplify such a move away from protest orientations. Dicey (2007:39) states that the channel's viewers have moved on since the *Ya Mampela* days of the channel, and that the channel and its brand strategy had to move on too if the channel wanted to retain its number one position. Although

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[30] Barker (2003:382) refers to Cohen's (1980) critique of sub-cultural theory and the CCCS's overstretched concept of resistance as written about in 'Symbols of trouble: an introduction to the new edition', in *Folks devils and moral panics: the creation of the Mods and Rockers* published in London by Martin Robertson.

the *Mzansi fo sho* channel branding does not emphasise the aspect of 'fun' in the textual messages, it does so with the visual messages by depicting people socialising, playing soccer, listening to music, having parties and street dancing, for example. All these activities and the environments that they occur in are "imbued with a distinctly South African flavour" (Dicey 2007:39). The channel's station manager, Ray Nkwe, states whether it is "fashion, music or a social trend – if it is hot and South African, you'll find it on SABC1" (Dicey 2007:39).

Even though the visual strategy of the channel branding has changed from an alternative, subversive one to a popular, mainstream one, the channel continues to describe itself as straight-talking, honest, true, straight forward, bold and authentic (SABC request ... 2008:17-18). The myth of authenticity remains. The channel's colloquial slogan *Mzansi fo sho* can almost be translated directly as "a hip, youthful democratic South Africa for sure", or "for real", thereby indicating that the channel aims to show what living in *Mzansi* is all about, and to be the story-teller of 'real', authentic South African stories (SABC request 2008:17-18).

This claim to be 'real' or 'authentic' is a myth. Authenticity is a conscious construction in terms of the overall SABC1 brand identity. It is a brand aspect specifically selected to characterise the channel, and it is thus a conscious fabrication. But the channel's portrayal of what it means to be authentic appears to have changed. Authenticity during the *Ya Mampela* branding was visually translated on screen as graffiti, street-dancing, and the daily activities of a character pessimistically observing the social inequalities between races and classes. Subsequently the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity expresses this authenticity in terms of 'real' South African environments and the daily, ordinary activities such as commuting, playing soccer, dancing and glamorous parties that occur in these environments. The manner in which the SABC1 channel defines what is "authentic" thus changed, and new symbols were chosen to represent what is 'real' and 'authentic'. Fiske and Hartley (1978:43) note that myth continuously evolves to suit the cultural environment in which they operate. The myth of the 'real' or the myth of 'authenticity' remained ingrained in the SABC1 channel branding even though the objects of signification changed (Barthes 1972:110). During the exchange of the objects which myth inhabits, the meaning of 'authenticity' also changed from a generally sullen notion to a sanguine view of authenticity.

Authenticity thus becomes a question of appearance. Barker (2003:392-393) states that authenticity no longer exists in postmodernism. Usually the concept of style in youth culture relies on "originality, purity and authenticity as the basis of its claim to be 'resistance'" (Barker 2003:392). However, in a postmodern era, style creatively recombines existing items thereby creating new meanings, and this bricolage occurs "without reference to the meanings of originals" (Barker 2003:392). In postmodernism, style is "the look and only the look" and it is pastiche rather than parody (Barker 2003:392). The visual brand identity of the SABC1 channel and the changes from the *Ya Mampela* to the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity appear to indicate the tendency of collapsing binaries in postmodern consumer capitalism so that "style is on the surface; culture is an industry; subcultures are mainstream; high culture is a subculture; the avant-garde is commercial pop art; [and] fashion is retro" (Barker 2003:393).

The collapse of the binary division between authenticity and falsity corresponds with a Lacanian disintegration of the 'real'. In a Lacanian sense, the 'real' is an impossible state to attain; it is sublime. There is no 'real' or 'authentic' experience of the world since it is always already mediated by the symbolic order, that is, by language. There is thus no neutral place from where 'authenticity' can be experienced (Lacan 1968; Žižek 1989, 1994, 2005). Baudrillard (1988) similarly states that reality is a mere simulation in a hyper-real word; in other words, reality does not exist. It is only hyper-reality which exists in a world of simulacra. It is possible to conceive the *Mzansi* that the SABC1 channel portrays as the 'real' South Africa as a simulated one that may be mediated by language and a strategically designed brand identity.

Linked to the myth of reality or authenticity is the channel's endorsement of social realism. In the channel statements SABC1 declares that it is "reflecting a society discovering itself – a social realism that is more enthralling than fiction ... an inspiration and guiding light for youthful people" (SABC requests ... 2003:13). SABC1 reflects the broad canvas of South Africa with a focus on "real people and real issues ... [providing] straight-talking honesty, a celebratory yet outspoken tone and responsible provoking of social action and dialogue" (SABC requests ... 2003:15; SABC requests ... 2008:17). SABC1 aims for popular programming that remains "true to the values of Total Citizen Empowerment" (SABC requests 2008:17).

The social realism that is connoted in these SABC1 channel statements is reminiscent of Bertolt Brecht and his notion of *popular art* and *realism*. Brecht (1977:499-500) writes:

> [i]t is in the interest of the people, of the broad working masses, to receive a faithful image of life from literature, and faithful images of life are actually of service to the people, the broad working masses, and must therefore be absolutely comprehensible and profitable to them – in other words, popular. ... Our concept of what is popular refers to a people who not only play a full part in historical development but actively usurp it, force its pace, determine its direction. We have a people in mind who make history, change the world, and change themselves. We have in mind a fighting people and therefore an aggressive concept of what is *popular*.

SABC1 claims to provide its audience with upliftment, comfort, pride and empowerment, thereby encouraging total citizen empowerment (SABC requests ... 2008:17). It does this by providing honest, responsible popular television that "offers information and entertainment that is in touch with [the viewer's] world" (SABC requests ... 2008:17). This type of 'honest' and 'popular' television resembles the social realism which Brecht (1977:501) describes as an artistic endeavour which discovers

> the causal complexes of society / unmasking the prevailing view of things as the view of those who are in power / writing from the standpoint of the class which offers the broadest solutions for the pressing difficulties in which human society is caught up / emphasizing the element of development / making possible the concrete, and making possible abstraction from it.

The *PF Jones* advertisement is one of these artistic endeavours exploring the real complexities within a multifarious country and the relations of power therein. Social realism aims to depict real situations to people who can actively change it.

Considering the channel's above mentioned affiliation with resistance, popular culture and social realism, it can be argued that at the third (or fourth) level of signification the SABC1 brand identity supports the ideology of populism. Andrew Heywood (2003:301) states that the term populism is used to describe "both distinctive political movements and a particular tradition of political thought". The term derives from the Latin word *populus* meaning "the people", and refers to any "political movement or rhetorical style that appeals to the interests of the common folk, the average man, as opposed to the aristocracy, the plutocracy, or any other elite [and] can be left wing or right wing"

(Goldwag 2007:51; Heywood 2003:301). Populism reflects the belief that "the instincts and wishes of the people provide the principle legitimate guide to political action" (Heywood 2003:301). Populist politicians claim to petition on behalf of the masses and to give a voice to "the common people in the face of 'corrupt' economic or political elites" (Heywood 2003:301).

The term 'populism' (or 'populist') is not used here as a term of abuse, but rather as a more neutral term that describes an appeal or address to the populace. The SABC1 brand identity, especially during the *Ya Mampela* years, is a rhetorical device that aims to speak to and on behalf of the masses, or 'the people', and invites the viewer to participate in active debate and social action. Such an appeal to the populace usually has mobilisation as its goal, and thus makes claims to advance the empowerment of the populace it addresses. The national or cultural populism which the SABC1 channel implies interpolates the viewer as a subject or 'comrade' within this group of people or masses. The channel addresses the viewer in a pedagogical, authoritarian manner. Heywood (2003:301) notes that populism is "often seen as implicitly authoritarian" even though it "may be linked to any cause or ideology". The *Ya Mampela* brand identity appears to be a counter-hegemonic message, a message contradictory to the seemingly hegemonic *Simunye* ideal of a 'rainbow nation'. The *Ya Mampela* branding appears to be a visual response in alignment with oppositional readings of the previous *Simunye* (SABC1) and current *Feel at home* (SABC2) brand identities.

The *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity, on the other hand, takes a more hegemonic stance. But both brand identities are examples of socially constructed cultural phenomena that depict illusory realities aimed at maintaining the status quo (Barthes 1972). With a brand identity that appeals to a predominantly young, black audience, the channel broadcasts messages about its viewers, thereby defining young, black South Africans as constituents of a 'people's *Mzansi'*.

McGuigan (1992:14) states that "populism is not necessarily socialist", and this rings true with its relation to the SABC1 brand identity. The populism that underlies the SABC1 brand is one that echoes the "race-conscious populism pulsat[ing] strongly within the ANC" (Halisi 1998:431) and is therefore a *nationalist* form of populism "which reduce[s] class differences to assertions of national, racial, multiracial, or even ethnic solidarity" (Halisi 1998:426). Populism here thus refers to "resurgent and ethnic

movements" (McGuigan 1992:15). A *socialist* populism, on the other hand, suggests that an end to racial and ethnic conflict would occur once capitalism is terminated (Halisi 1998:431). Both *nationalist* and *socialist* forms of populist ideology in South Africa developed from the racially divided working and bourgeois classes (Halisi 1998:426).

Halisi (1998:426) states that "South Africa boasts a rich populist tradition". But even though populism and its use of resistance and authenticity appear legitimate and self-evident in post-apartheid politics, it must be questioned since "the very naturalness and self-evident quality of myth's ideological messages have to be overcome" (Bignell 1997:27). It can be argued that populism and its continuous use of the myths of resistance and authenticity masks the real relations of power where the growing black elite utilises the notion of 'struggle' and 'the people' to advance its own strategy of securing wealth and power for this emergent black bourgeoisie. Populism thus functions ideologically by masking the real relations of power by harking on past notions and the rhetoric of 'struggle'. The idea of 'the people's struggle' is thus a mechanism that ensures the subordination of the people it is supposed to liberate.

The strategy behind the SABC1 television channel branding appears to be an integrated one that creates a distinct identity for the channel. As an economic entity the SABC1 brand appears to gain the loyalty of its targeted youth audience, and the *Mzansi* positioning expands this group, thereby securing its number one position in the South African broadcasting environment. The brand identity appears to communicate the channel's brand values in a consistent manner so that the brand identity sent by the proprietor is similar to the image received by the viewer. The design of the SABC1 brand identity seems visually appealing, with sophisticated and innovative design elements that appear to be distinctly South African. From a cultural perspective the SABC1 brand becomes a medium for strong social signals and a provider of identity.

Whereas the SABC1 brand identity appears to be revolutionary, new, liberal, youthful, innovative, free-thinking and subversive, the SABC2 brand identity explored in the next section appears to be the opposite; more conservative, traditional and reticent.

4.4 SABC2 Feel at home

SABC2 is the result of the restructuring and evolution of its predecessor TV1, a channel that was established in the apartheid era. With the restructuring of South African broadcasting for a post-apartheid era, the SABC2 channel took a back seat to the dominant SABC1 channel since it was repositioned as the second or 'other' channel. Perhaps this less dominant position is the underlying reason for a more timid branding strategy and perhaps also the reason for the appearance of a smaller budget[31] allocation to the branding and marketing of the SABC2 channel. On the other hand, it could just be a result of the channel's overall tendency towards responsibility and conservatism. Regardless of the reasons, the changes in the brand identities of SABC2 have not been as dramatic as those of SABC1, with changes occurring modestly and in smaller increments. Whereas the SABC1 brand identities, especially the controversial *PF Jones* advertisement, received some media and academic attention, the SABC2 brand identities and its changes went unnoticed.

The new brand positioning of the SABC2 channel with the slogan *Feel at Home* was launched on 18 November 2002, and thus replaced the *Come Alive with Us* brand identity that was established in 1996 (New look ... 2002). The on-air look of the channel changed in 2006 to accommodate the channel's celebration of its tenth anniversary, but changes in the brand identity was at a decorative and surface level. In 2007 SABC2 revamped its brand identity in accordance with a renewed focus on the attitudes of viewers. Throughout all three phases the essence of the brand identity remained the same with its focus on the family – referring at the same time to both the domestic family and the national family. The channel uses the same slogan throughout all three phases in the 2000 to 2009 decade, and changes in the logo are very slight.

4.4.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC2 brand identity

The colours for the SABC2 *Feel at Home* brand identity are similar to the colours of the former *Come Alive with Us* visual brand identity (Figure 47).[32] Orange, white and blue

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[31] Domingo (2004:[sp]) states that the cost of the SABC2 rebranding required no extra funds since it fell within the channel's annual marketing budget, while SABC1 paid R50-million for the *Ya Mampela* rebranding in the year before (2003).

[32] The *Come Alive with Us* visual brand identity of SABC2 illustrates design elements and typography that appears to be influenced by the designs of David Carson. Video clips of this

were used for the channel's brand identity and on-air look prior to 2002, and continued to be used for its new *Feel at Home* idents[33] in 2002 (Figure 48). It may be a coincidence that these colours are similar to the colours of the old South African flag, but it is also possible that the channel chose these colours to create a subconscious link for its viewers regarding programming and television content to minimise the alienation that former TV1 viewers might experience in the transition into a post-apartheid broadcast environment. The continued use of variations of orange, white and blue for the various SABC2 brand identities create a sense of continuity and familiarity for the channel's viewers. The *Feel at Home* idents in dark blue and white depict iconic images of happy family members interacting in their home environments, and show the new logo with a larger orange number two in a solid blue circle (Figure 50).

Figure 47: SABC2 "come alive with us" channel ident, 1996.
(SABC2 come alive 2008.)

Figure 48: SABC2 *Feel at home* ident, 2002.
(SABC2 jingle 2008.)

SABC2 subsequently refined the brand identity and unveiled the new look on 13 May 2004. The new on-air imaging aimed to neutralise its rival e.tv and boost SABC2 viewership (Domingo 2004). In an interview, General manager Aletta Alberts explained

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brand identity can be viewed on YouTube (see SABC2 come alive 2008; SABC2 continuity presenters 2008).
[33] A video clip of this ident can be viewed on YouTube (see SABC2 jingle 2002).

that the channel's "programme content already reflects the values of the South African family, and the new imaging is the final phase which wraps the content in imaging that enhances those values" (Domingo 2004).

Animated idents appear on-air depicting the logo together with a strelitzia (Figure 49), protea or baobab, depending on the programming being aired (Domingo 2004). The new imaging is "light and friendly" (Feeling right at home 2004:43) with lighter tones of blue and orange applied in a softer manner, and aims to be "fundamentally South African" (Domingo 2004). These iconic images in the channel idents, like the strelitzia for example, become national symbols.

Such symbols become instant signifiers of a new South African nation, signifying a new type of nationalism that includes all citizens in the new South African family, but doing so without the usual images of smiling people of various races. The visual brand identities of the SABC television channels thus become a platform for the renegotiation and articulation of South African symbols.

Figure 49: SABC2 *Feel at home* ident, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The logo remains in the new look but is refined slightly and appears lighter and less bulky. The logo (Figure 50) consists of an orange number two outlined in white on top of a solid blue circle, the blue SABC acronym in the Helvetica font (SABC corporate identity 2007:12), and the blue "feel at home" payoff line. The payoff line is written in lower capitals, which creates associations of informality, familiarity and friendliness. The logo is the most prevalent feature of the channel branding and appears on everything from the stationery (Figure 51) to the on-air idents and on-screen dogs.

Figure 50: SABC2 logo, 2004.

Figure 51: SABC2 extended corporate identity designed by Fever, 2007.
(Fever identity ... 2007:5.)

The frequent application of the logo on all on-air communications is an example of the "logomania" prominent on broadcast channels (Chan-Olmsted & Kim 2001:80). Logos in the form of dogs are often criticised by viewers as being irritating. However, many "network executives have argued that the value of branding through signature logo outweighs the possibility of viewers finding it annoying" (Chan-Olmsted & Kim 2001:80), and the frequent use of dogs since their inception ensured that viewers have become desensitised to them.

The aim of the new look and the revived logo was to strengthen the channel's positioning as the channel for the South African family. An on-air brand positioning anthem (Figure 52) was created by Tennant McKay to convey the family values held by

the channel. The sixty-second brand promotion depicts a variety of people in various 'home' locations. The groupings are meant to convey a sense of family, whether that is the members of the domestic family or the wider South African family. The channel states that the traditional Western picture of a nuclear family has never been the norm in South Africa; the effects of apartheid-driven migrant labour, HIV/AIDS, high divorce rates, single parent families and the freedom given to the gay community by the Constitution redefined family demographics (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:5). The channel recognises that "family in the physical sense means so many things to so many people [... but] that there are universally recognised values that resonate at the core of family life" (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:5). These values include love, respect, caring, sharing and acceptance, and it is these values that the channel aims to communicate to its viewers (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:5). Similarly, home means different things for different people, and the brand positioning anthem shows a variety of homes in the background.

The animated images in the SABC2 anthem (Figure 52) appear to be created by cutting, and then animating still photographs of the people and their homes.[34] This gives the images a three-dimensional appearance, and also creates a sense of depth. Blue and white are sometimes added to the backgrounds as well as images resembling those created by a paintbrush, thereby creating a sense of artistic expression. This is indicative of the channel's affiliation with art and its aim to "promote diversity in arts, culture and language" (Domingo 2004). The promotion concludes with animated blue brushstrokes coming together to form the symbolic image of the South African flag. A colour version of the South African flag and the SABC2 logo and payoff line appear at the bottom of the screen in the last frame. Speaking of British television, Meech (2001:191) gives a description of the corporate image trails, or promotions, of the BBC television channels that can be easily applied to the SABC2 (and also SABC1 and SABC3) promotions. Meech (2001:191) writes

> [i]f there is a common feature of these trails it is that they themselves embody an obvious striving for excellence. They are clear-sighted in their strategic intent, imaginative in concept, sophisticated in their production and appealing to the eye and ear. The serious message

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[34] The SABC2 anthem was available on the Tennant McKay website (see SABC2 anthem 2004) but has since been removed. The website (SABC2 anthem 2004) states that a series of photos were combined to create a montage of "moments of optimism from around South Africa, moments we can all relates to". The series of photos were taken by Stan Engelbrecht (SABC2 anthem 2004).

each item conveys is generally balanced by a touch of humour. All conclude with an end board consisting of the ... logo and a musical phrase. But, in particular they incorporate an on-screen, mute, direct appeal to the viewer: [for example, "Feel at home"]. In so doing, they give strong and consistent expressions to brand values.

Figure 52: SABC2 anthem created by Tennant McKay, 2004.
(SABC2 anthem 2004.)

In addition to the on-air brand promotion (or anthem), SABC2 utilised stars from local shows in sets of genre idents to reinforce the new imaging (Domingo 2004). Images of the television personalities appear on screen in a similar way to the images in the anthem, appearing to be cut and then animated from photographic material in a style resembling paint effects. In addition to the iconic images of the people, blue brush strokes appear on screen – as splashes in the comedy genre ident, and as smears in the children's genre. The comedy genre ident (Figure 53) concludes with the splashes, footprints and handprints made by what seems to be an invisible character, together with the text "comedy on 2" and the logo with the payoff line. The children's programme ident (Figure 54) similarly ends with brushstrokes and the text "kids on 2" together with the logo and payoff line.
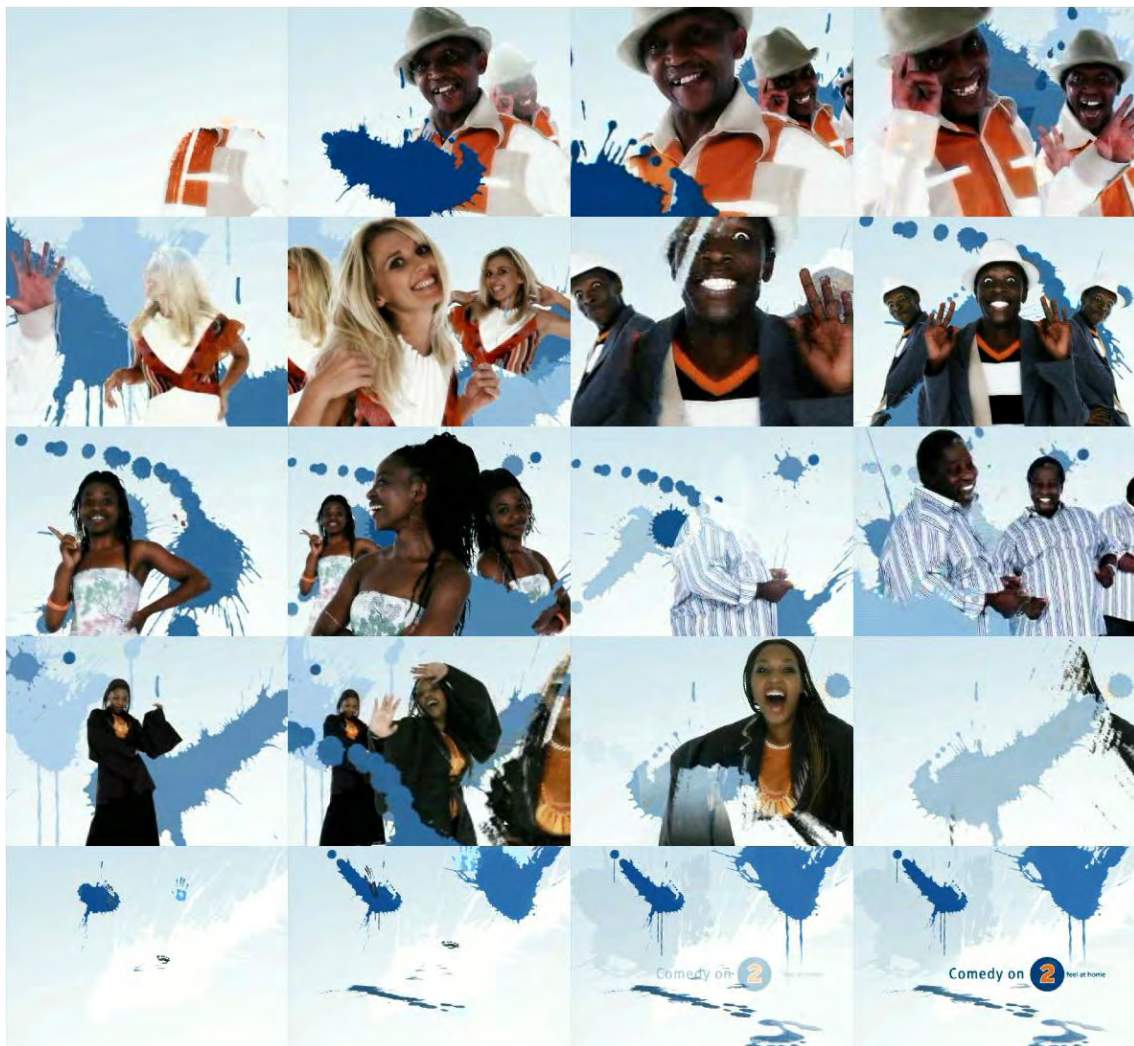

Figure 53: SABC2 comedy promotion ident created by Vinyl.
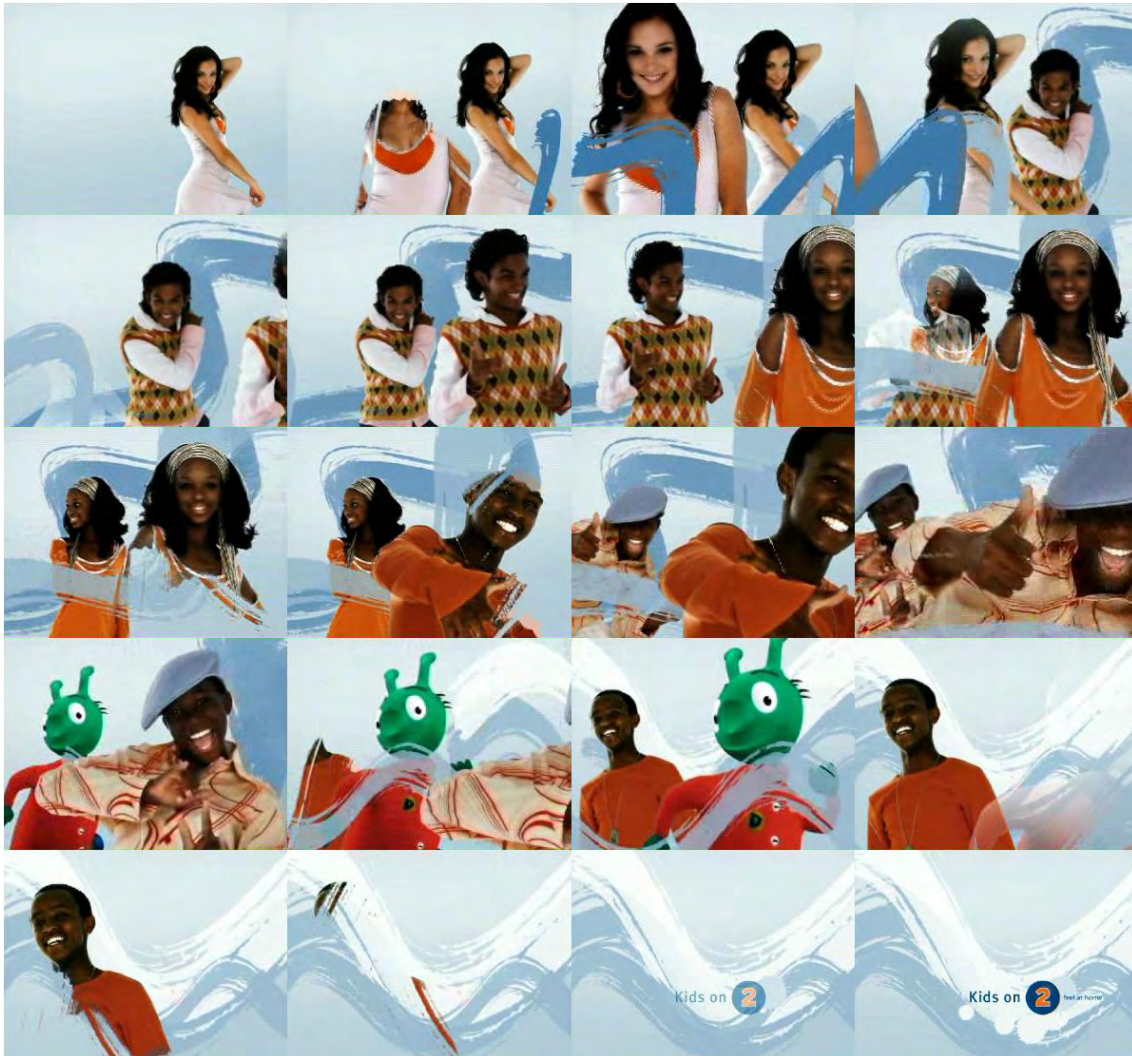(Vinyl [sa].)

Figure 54: SABC2 promotion ident for children's programmes, created by Vinyl.
(Vinyl [sa].)

Another set of genre idents were specifically created for SABC2 by Vinyl for the genres of films (Figure 55). Vinyl explains that the "brush stroke was interpreted in various ways to communicate the essence of each particular genre" (Vinyl [sa]). The genre ident for action film (Figure 55, top row) illustrates "a typical cityscape and car-chase scene" (Vinyl [sa]), but only by means of blue, abstract, moving brush strokes. Any ambiguity of the visual signs and their meanings is clarified with the accompanying audio signifiers signifying a helicopter and a siren. The ident for comedy film (Figure 55, second row) shows the blue footprints, handprints and splashes left by a bouncing, invisible character,[35] and the images are accompanied by laughter and 'boing' sounds (signifying the bouncing of the figure). The visual and audio signs are indexical signs

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[35] Vinyl ([sa]) explains this as "a comedian running and dodging a rain of paint, the reaction for an unforgiving audience."

that point to the commencing of a comedy film. The "Home Sounds sequence uses playful circular brushstrokes as a mnemonic device to portray LP's and CD's" (Vinyl [sa]). The blue brushstroke is used again in the ident for the romance genre (Figure 55, bottom row) and illustrates "an elaborate flower in full bloom" (Vinyl [sa]). The idents for the action, comedy and romance genres end with the brushstrokes depicting a moving film strip, and the SABC2 logo is illustrated in the right corner of the screen throughout all of them.
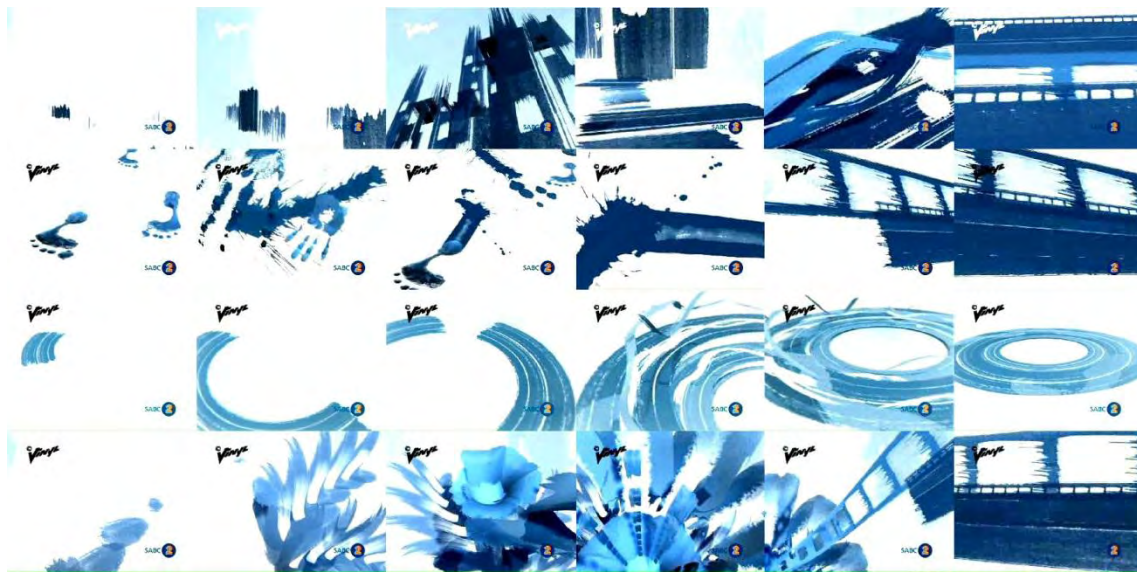
Figure 55: SABC2 film genre idents (action, comedy, home sounds and romance) created by Vinyl
(Vinyl [sa].)

The motif of the brushstroke is also used for the channel's website that utilises a simple design with a blue background, a white foreground and animations of orange and blue brushstrokes (Figure 56). The top banner with the animated brushstrokes also illustrates the names and times of popular SABC2 programmes together with iconic images of the television personalities from the corresponding programme. The channel's information is presented on the website in a clear and unassuming manner.
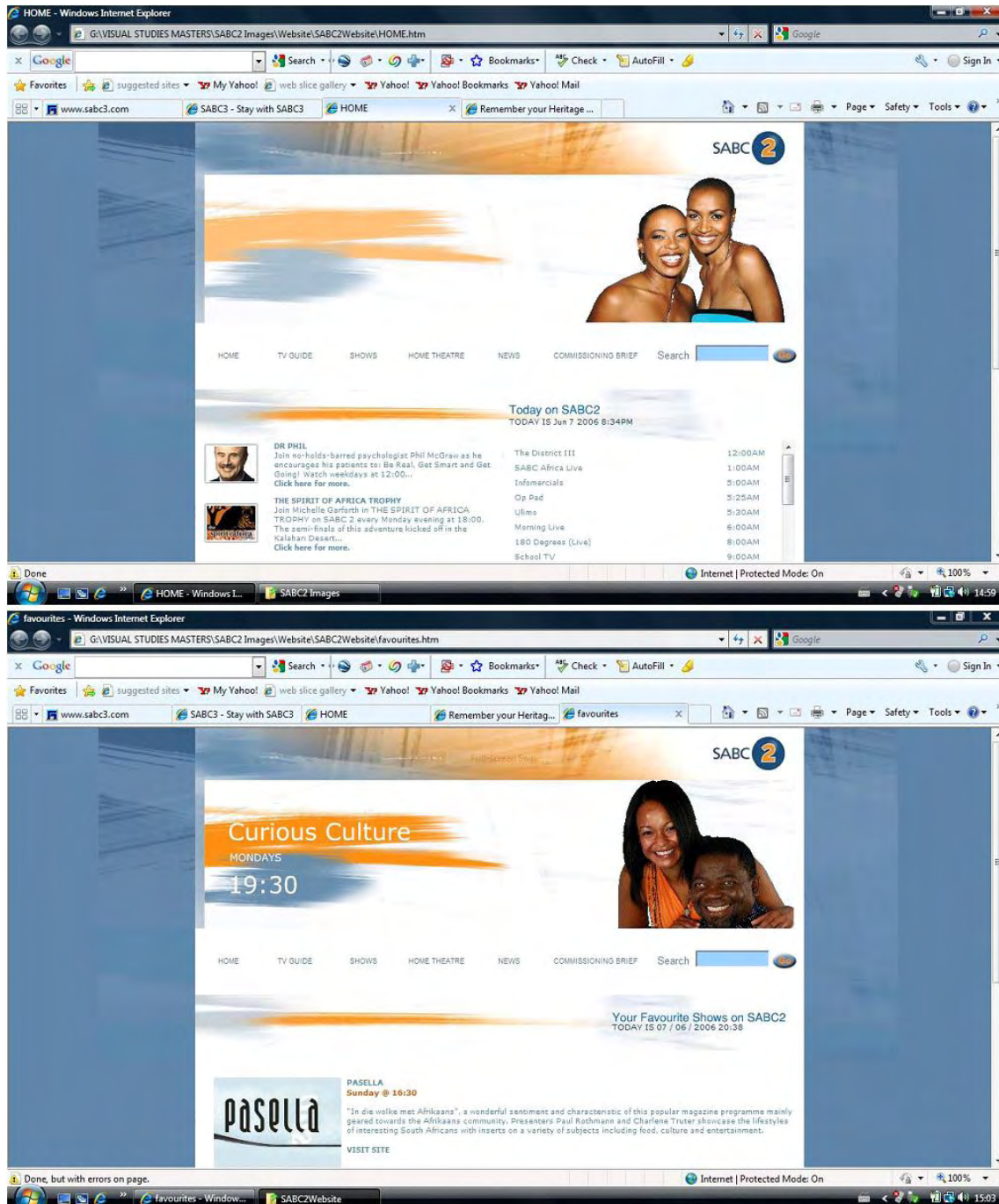
Figure 56: SABC2 website, 2006.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

As mentioned previously, television channels often utilise sets of idents based on a
central theme or branding element, and frequently create variants for special events
and holidays (called specials). SABC2 changed the appearance of their on-air look and

idents to accommodate the channel's tenth anniversary in 2006[36] (Figure 57). The colours of this brand identity predominantly remained the same as the one before, yet include more colours to create a festive impression. Animated balloons, beads and *rondavels* are added to the channel's collection of iconic South African symbols. These objects move on screen, where after one object remains still to resemble the zero of the number ten, indicating its tenth birthday celebrations. The final frames of these idents show the channel's logo (without payoff line) on the left of the screen, together with a blue, painted number one and the circular image of the beads, *rondavels* and balloons forming the zero of the number 10.
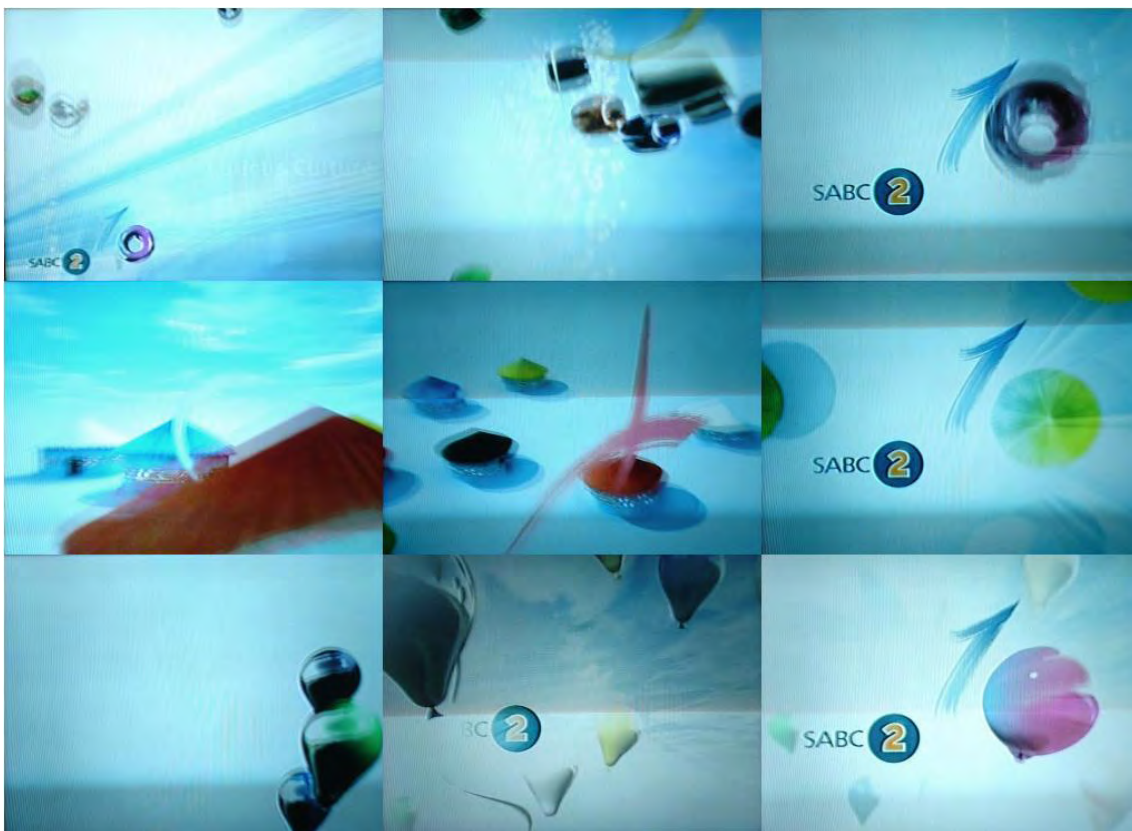

Figure 57: SABC2 10 year celebration idents, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

In addition to the idents, SABC2 also aired a promotion to celebrate the channel's tenth birthday (Figure 58). The promotional special illustrates a reflective view of earlier branding elements and also presents a nostalgic view of the highlights and prominent

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[36] Chapter Two (section 2.3) discussed the inauguration of the channel in 1996 together with SABC1 and SABC3 as part of the post-apartheid restructuring of the organisation, but the other two SABC channels did not broadcast any ten year celebration idents or specials in 2006.

SABC2 television personalities of the past ten years (for example Riaan Cruywagen, Freek Robinson, Tumi Makgabo and Prim Reddy). These television personalities make a vital contribution to the brand identity of the channel. Meech (1999b:297-298) states that

> [p]resenters of programmes – newsreaders in particular – are the most readily identifiable human face of a television station [...and that] they have developed over the years into the small-screen equivalent of Hollywood stars, each with a distinctive style, accent, audience appeal and earning potential. Their looks, mannerisms and speech contribute conspicuously to a channel's personality.

Figure 58: SABC2 promotion created for the tenth anniversary celebrations, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The television personalities thus become an extension of the television programme or television channel brand. The visual appearance of the tenth anniversary promotion is made to appear old, with the edges of the screen looking like worn out brown pages. The caption "unforgettable" appears at the top, and "memorable memories" at the bottom. The promotion ends with the question *Waar was jy?* (Where were you?), and together these aspects aim to create a sense of nostalgia in the viewer. The last frames of the promotion depict the new celebration designs with a floating balloon and a number one brushstroke. In general, the promotion seems out of place compared with the rest of SABC2's tenth anniversary brand elements. The old look of the worn pages and the brown captions in capital letters appear to belong to a 'Western' or

'cowboy' theme, rather than belonging to a channel aiming to create a South African national identity.

Other brand applications during the tenth anniversary celebrations show a better adherence to the SABC2 brand identity (Figure 59). Forthcoming attractions and continuity idents are illustrated with the animated objects (beads, *rondavels* and balloons) and paintbrush effects. The title of the programme, together with the word "next" and an arrow indicates the start of a programme. The ident with the "home made" label appears frequently between programmes, instilling a sense of national pride regarding South African productions. The forthcoming attraction idents promoting future films are presented as iconic images of the film stars and film titles together with blue brushstrokes mimicking the appearance of a film strip. The caption "Home Theatre" together with the channel's logo appears at the top, and the date and time the film is to be aired appears at the bottom. The age restriction of the film is also indicated in the corner.

The frequent addition of age restrictions increases the possibility of the channel being perceived as "dignified, tasteful, warm, safe, responsible and honourable" (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:7), and thus appropriate for family viewing. The news at the time (2006) was also branded with the SABC2 elements. A live view of the newsreader with the SABC2 studio and logos in the background was shown. The SABC2 logo also appeared at the bottom of the screen next to the word SABC *Ditaba* (News), thereby dressing the SABC news broadcast in the channel's own brand elements.

Figure 59: SABC2 brand applications 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The year following the tenth anniversary celebration was marked with a new look for the channel in 2007. Again the logo and payoff line remained the same, except for the change into a sharply pointed A in the SABC acronym and the slogan's position to the right of the encircled number two (Figure 60). The dog also remained unchanged and continued to appear in the top right of the screen (Figure 61).

Figure 60: SABC2 logo, 2007.

Figure 61: SABC2 dog, 2009.
(Screen grab, photographed by author.)

The major changes in the channel's visual brand identity occurred with its on-air idents. The previous SABC2 on-air look appeared outdated in comparison with the other SABC channels, and was in dire need of an improvement on its visual appeal. The new

SABC2 channel idents appear more contemporary, more interesting than the previous idents, and also more tasteful. Elements used in previous branding were integrated into the new look, for example the paint brushstroke and the protea. The orange, white and blue colours of the previous brand identities have also been incorporated (especially for the daytime idents) but applied in a lighter, fresh manner.

The SABC2 idents depict South African landscapes in various shades of orange, white and blue. The channel has embraced the idea (also used by SABC1) of using varying idents for different parts of the day. The daytime ident (Figure 62, top row) is suggestive of a landscape similar to that of the Karoo, with cloudy blue skies, a mountain range and flying birds in the distance, and a wind pump in the orange foreground. The night time ident suggests a starry night sky (Figure 62, bottom row). In both the day and night ident the landscape and sky are filled with animated brushstrokes in dark blue and in white, and end with the SABC2 logo and payoff line. The jingle accompanying these idents is a light melody and female vocals singing "our home, your home, our home ... it's my home".

Figure 62: SABC2 day and night idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

Longer day and night idents are also included in the SABC2 on-air repertoire. The daytime ident (Figure 63) includes iconic images of a vintage bicycle, laughing, smiling faces, skyscrapers in the distance, two people playing with a rainbow coloured kite in a countryside landscape, with a blue sky, a pole fence and a field of yellow flowers.[37]

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[37] The yellow flowers look like rapeseed flowers, a plant usually cultivated to produce vegetable oil, animal food and biodiesel. Rapeseed crops are mostly produced in Canada, China and European countries. Large patches of bright yellow rapeseed flowers can be observed from

Swirling orange and white brushstrokes appear on screen and the ident ends with the SABC2 logo and payoff line on top of the brushstroke in the middle of the screen.

Figure 63: SABC2 daytime ident, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The night time ident (Figure 64) also depicts smiling faces, but shows a cityscape instead of a more rural landscape. The ident starts with the illustration of a streetlamp, the smiling faces, a woman in a dress and the cityscape of Johannesburg at night with the Vodacom tower and Hillbrow (Telkom) tower as landmarks. The animated and illuminated white and orange brushstrokes move to the right of the screen. A highway with moving cars are also illustrated, and to the right a more rural landscape with trees is shown. The vivid colours in the idents and the glowing paintbrush strokes create a sense of enchantment, thereby suggesting that the television channel and the nation depicted on it are charming.

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an aeroplane in the beginning of the European summer. It is thus associated more with European landscapes than African ones.

Figure 64: SABC2 night ident, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The daytime and night time idents form extended sets. In addition to the ones already mentioned, the channel also uses "Home Made" and "Home Theatre" idents (Figure 65). The "Home Made" ident illustrates a rural landscape with a wind pump in the foreground, a pole fence and trees in the middle, and mountains and cloudy sky in the background. The previous brand identity often used an ident with a "Home Made" label (Figure 59) to stimulate a sense of national pride. The function of the newer ident is the same, and indicates that the channel and the programmes it airs are locally produced. The "Home Theatre" ident illustrates a landscape with a pole fence, trees, a water tank and a starry night sky, and is an indexical sign pointing to the commencement of a film. On the one hand the "Home Theatre" can refer to South African films, and on the other hand can create the connotation that the SABC2 channel is a theatre in the viewers' homes. Both idents show rural landscapes, thereby urging rural communities and farmers to feel at home with the SABC2 channel and to be part of the South African family.

Figure 65: SABC2 Home Made and Home Theatre idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The forthcoming attractions idents and menu idents continue the day and night theme. The idents promoting forthcoming attractions (Figure 66, top row) start with television material of the programme overlaid with a white brushstroke in the bottom right corner indicating the title, day and time of the programme to be aired. The brushstroke and the night sky then appear to sweep across the screen, and ends with an iconic image of the key television personalities from the programme together with the night sky in the background, the title, day and time of the programme written in white at the top, and a white brushstroke with the SABC2 logo in the bottom right hand corner.

The menu idents (Figure 66, middle row) similarly show the night sky and animated white brushstroke sweeping across the screen, and then pause to reveal a list of programmes and their times to be aired. Other channel announcements and forthcoming attractions (Figure 66, bottom row) are illustrated with an ident showing a starry night sky with the profile of a cityscape in the distance and the light from the city. The text (for example "Tonight on SABC2" and "Next") appear at the top of the screen and the white brushstroke and SABC2 logo appear at the bottom of the screen. These forthcoming attraction idents are usually accompanied by a voiceover informing viewers of programmes to be aired, thereby reminding and enticing them to watch SABC2 in future and keeping them interested in the channel.

Figure 66: SABC2 forthcoming attractions and menu idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The forthcoming attractions idents for the daytime idents (Figure 67, top two rows) are structured very similarly to the night time idents. The idents commence with the television material, the yellow flower landscape then sweeps across the screen, and ends with the image of the television personalities associated with the programme, together with the title and times of the programme to be aired and the SABC2 logo.

Figure 67: SABC2 forthcoming attractions and announcement idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The idents promoting future films to be aired on SABC2 looks slightly different (Figure 67, third row). It starts with the trailer of the film combined with an image resembling a film strip and an orange brushstroke at the bottom of the screen. Text on top of this film strip and brushstroke informs the viewer of the title and time of the film. The orange foreground and blue sky used in other idents (for example, Figure 62) moves across the screen and an animated film strip is revealed. The ident ends with the title, day and time of the film to be aired joined with a poster-like image representing the film on top of a film strip. The SABC2 logo appears in the bottom right corner, with the white brushstroke behind the logo to increase its visibility.

Other channel announcements are communicated using a similar background with the blue sky, the mountains, and orange foreground with a moving wind pump. The white brushstroke and SABC2 logo appear at the bottom of the screen while any other text is shown in the middle of the screen. These idents are accompanied by music and a voiceover addressing viewers.

SABC2 does not make use of continuity presenters and the idents and voiceover fulfil this function. Meech (1999b:298) states that continuity presenters are "primarily employed to ensure a smooth transition between programmes" but "nowadays normally supply live links between programmes by voice alone." News programmes were not branded with the SABC2 brand elements during the 2007 to 2009 period, since it would deviate from what appeared to be an aim to present SABC News bulletins on all the television channels in a unified, consistent manner bearing the branding of SABC News only. SABC2 does indicate the commencement of the news with a clock counting off the seconds before the news starts. The clock ident (Figure 68) shown before the news depicts a telephone pole and lamppost to the left of the screen, the clock to the right of the screen, and the dark blue and orange colours of the channel's night time idents in the background.

Figure 68: SABC2 clock ident preceding the evening news, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

SABC2 also broadcasts promotions that are slightly different from the ones discussed previously. SABC2 aired a commercial promoting the key or signature programmes of the channel at the beginning of 2009 (Figure 69). Iconic images or sections from these programmes were accompanied by the white brushstroke and SABC2 logo without the payoff line at the bottom of the screen. The promotion ends with the encircled number two on a background denoting a starry night sky, together with the animated text stating "SABC 2009, SABC 2000 and shine", thus suggesting that the channel has star quality programming lined up for 2009.

Figure 69: SABC2 signature programme's promotion for the 2009 New Year.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

Specials are often created according to specific marketing objectives specific to the programmes and events they promote. For example, Masters and Savant created a promotion for SABC2 in celebration of Women's Day in 2008 (What makes ... [sa]).[38] The promotion (Figure 70, row one) shows "words describing the roles of women ... brought together to create a woman" (What makes ... [sa]). It is an animation of typography creating the image of an African woman in "rich African colours" (What makes ... [sa]). The special ends with the text "celebrating all that makes a woman" together with the SABC2 logo, the payoff line and a woman's hand made up from typography.

Another example is the special created by Wicked Pixels in celebration of Heritage day in 2006 (Figure 70, row two). A set of idents informs the viewer of certain cultural aspects of South Africa's past based on a theme of awareness around musical influences (Remember your heritage ... 2006). Black and white iconic images of people are shown together with designs resembling the colourful patterns traditionally used to decorate Ndebele dwellings. The black and white images of the people stimulate connotations of old or historical events, thus connoting South African cultural history. Both idents reiterate the channel's close association with culture and the creation of a national identity through shared events and cultural experiences.

Figure 70: SABC2's special promotions for Woman's day 2008 and Heritage day 2006. (What makes ... [sa]; Remember your heritage ... 2006).

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[38] The Woman's day special (What makes ... [sa]) appeared on the Masters and Savant website, but has since been removed. An article with images of the campaign can also be viewed on the Bizcommunity website (What makes ... 2008).

SABC2 launched a new brand campaign in May 2008 to ingrain the channel as the "Station for the Nation" (Figure 71). The television commercial follows a small boy as he enthusiastically tells stories to various South African people he encounters in his daily life (SABC2 launches ... 2008). "Everyone he meets understands the context of the enthusiastic stories he tells, because they all saw it on SABC2 the night before, suggesting they all found a national home through SABC2" (SABC2 launches ... 2008).

Figure 71: SABC2 *It's better together* campaign created by Draft FCB, 2008.
(SABC2 launches ... 2008).

SABC2's marketing manager Mathe Mosito explains that "SABC2 is the Channel for the Nation and a place where all South Africans belong and can feel comfortable; establishing a sense of national family, as opposed to the traditional family unit. ... This is where all South Africans can see a reflection of themselves" (SABC2 launches ... 2008). The colours, locations and settings of the advertisement give the impression that it is an older advertisement, thereby contributing to a sense of a television channel with traditional values.

The SABC2 website is another platform for the interaction between the television channel and its viewers, and another area where the channel's brand identity and values are communicated to its stakeholders. Espiál created the SABC2 website (Figure 72) which "delivered a fresh look for the channel and showcased its television properties at their best" (Espiál [sa]). It is a functional and visually appealing website showing iconic images of the television personalities of the channel's signature programmes. The design and appearance of the website suits the idents used on television and together these indicate an integrated design strategy across all platforms.

Certain SABC2 brand elements are repeated across the various platforms, which create a sense of continuity and point to a unified visual brand identity strategy. The images used as the banners and backgrounds of the SABC2 website (Figures 73 and 74) are also used for the idents and other "brandcasting" that occurs on the television channel. The banners and backgrounds of the SABC2 website offer dense accounts of the brand elements used to create the SABC2 brand identity. These elements include various types of brushstrokes, often applied in a swirling motion with watercolour washes, cityscapes and landscapes, smiling faces of various races, protea flowers, thorn trees and baobab trees, vintage bicycles, film strips, telephone poles and wind pumps. The brushstroke is an element that has been incorporated with the channel branding since the beginning and the motif of the hut also appears frequently in manifestations of the visual brand identity (see Figures 53, 57, 62 and 73).these elements combine to create the visual vocabulary that makes up the language of the SABC2 brand identity.

Figure 72: Pages from the SABC2 website created by Espiál, 2009.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

Figure 73: SABC2 website banners created by Espiál, 2009.
(SABC2 website 2009.)

Figure 74: SABC2 website backgrounds created by Espiál, 2009.
(SABC2 website 2009.)

Late in 2009 an additional set of idents appeared and seems to be designed by the in-house designer rather than an outside design company. This set of idents (of which Figure 75 is an example) continues the theme of various landscapes and the brushstrokes. The landscapes consist of various photographs of different locations and landscapes, overlaid with the white brushstroke, the title and times of the forthcoming attractions and the SABC2 logo (Figure 75). The variety of landscapes extends beyond the Karoo and farm landscapes that were used before, thereby broadening the channel's appeal.

Figure 75: SABC2 landscape ident 2009
(Screen grab photographed by author.)

4.4.2 Myth and ideology in the SABC2 brand identity

Whereas the SABC1 brand identity utilises rhetoric of struggle, the SABC2 brand identity utilises discourse of peace. There is a certain undertone of exaggerated optimism and harmony underlying the SABC2 brand identity in comparison with the other SABC channels. Smiling faces of various races abound; the channel reflects a certain amount of idealism suggesting that it (and the national family) is always a happy family in a happy home. The meanings within the visual manifestations of the SABC2

brand identity bear a resemblance to the meaning in the previous *Simunye* brand identity of SABC1 where a sense of national unity persist despite diversity. It is argued here that the SABC2 channel and its brand identity influence and create maps of meaning in terms of what it means to be part of this new South African family.

The diversity of people depicted in the brand identity of the SABC2 appears to be happy, optimistic, and get along with each other and other members of the national family. In this manner the channel positions itself as the television "channel that truly reflects the multifaceted nature of the South African family" (SABC annual report 2004:62). The channel tasks itself with nation building and the creation of shared experiences and shared national identity (SABC requests 2008; SABC annual report 2006:74).

With its brand identity, the SABC2 creates connotations and maps of meaning regarding the 'new' reality of the 'national family' by indirectly making use of the 'rainbow nation' metaphor as a rhetorical form. It is indirect since the word 'rainbow' or 'rainbow nation' is used nowhere in the SABC2 channel branding or channel statements, but is connoted or implied by textual references such as 'national family', 'multi-faceted', 'broad spectrum', 'all inclusive', 'unity in diversity', 'shared experience' and 'South African identity'; and visual references such as smiling people of various races, various dwellings or homes, enchanting landscapes and cityscapes, a rainbow coloured kite, and also national symbols such as the flag and the protea (Feeling right at home 2004:43; SABC request ... 2008:19; Modikwe 2008).

It can be argued that the SABC2 *Feel at home* brand identity communicates the myth of the 'rainbow nation'. The idea of the 'rainbow nation' is a metaphor often used in post-apartheid discourse to describe a post-apartheid South African society. This metaphor of the 'rainbow nation'[39] was coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. As a leader of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Desmond Tutu utilised a biblical symbol of peace – the rainbow – to symbolise the reconciliation and unity that followed after the

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[39] Archbishop Desmond Tutu is widely credited with coining the phrase 'the rainbow nation' (Baines 1998; Gqola 2001:98; Habib 1996). Helga Dickow and Valerie Møller (2002:180) states that the rainbow symbol was first used by Tutu in 1989 during a march to the Parliament in Cape Town by church leaders, and was used again in 1993 at ANC leader Chris Hani's funeral. The use of the rainbow symbol gained momentum in 1994 after Tutu used the rainbow symbol in a thanksgiving service in honour of the peaceful democratic elections (Dickow & Møller 2002:180).

liberation struggle and the first democratic elections (Dickow & Møller 2002:180). In its positive sense the metaphor of the rainbow nation "signifies the hope and the assurance of a bright future ... [that] informs and reinforces the vision of nation building" (Baines 1998). In addition to its signification of hope, the rainbow metaphor signifies the diverse spectrum of South Africans originating from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, geographical and class groups and the ability to co-exist peacefully in spite of differences (Baines 1998; Gqola 2001:99).

In its negative sense, however, the metaphor of the rainbow connotes a fantastic illusion. Phumla Gqola (2001:99) alternatively describes the rainbow as "a reflection, a spectacular visual illusion ... fantasy ... transitory, fleeting and perpetually out of reach". In a similar vein, Melissa Myambo (2010:94) points to the illusory nature of a multicultural and technicolour country, by stating that "Technicolor refers to the original patented process created to colour black and white film, a process that does not change the original format but changes how we see it". For Myambo, it is only the representation that changed, and not that what is represented. In this way it is a problematic metaphor that "stifles rigorous discussions of power differentials [and] superficially emphasise difference but prevents its discussion" (Gqola 2001:98-99).

The SABC2 brand identity cheerfully represents the positive side of the rainbow nation rhetoric. With its painterly approach, the channel's brand identity alludes to the broad canvas of South Africa and its family members by painting a pretty picture of its family members and the home they live in, the various races and cultures, and the rural and urban landscapes. Writing about Scottish television, Meech (1996:72) notes that terrestrial channels often select suitable symbolic representations of a nation that "appeals to a sense of belonging that transcends their audiences' demographic differences, their urban or rural location, and linguistic community". In this way it appears that the channel draws from available cultural and national symbols, but also creates new ones.

Through its appeal to the viewer to make him or herself at home, the channel invites the viewer to join in the imagined community it creates – a family to come home to in terms of the domestic situation, the cultural community and a national community. Through its branding, the SABC2 unifies cultural diversity by narrating the stories, images, symbols and rituals, and thereby presents a shared meaning of nationhood

and what national identity means (Bhabha 1990:1-4). The idea of the imagined community is defined by Benedict Anderson (1991:6-7) as a concept constructed from the representations of the media. The media constructs a national identity or this sense of a 'nation' by creating symbols and rituals that "'fixes' a vernacular language as the national language, thereby enabling a new imagined national community" (Barker 2003:254).

Anderson (1991:6-7) further clarifies his concept of the imagined community in the following manner:

> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of all their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the images of their communion. ... The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living beings, has finite, elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordered, hierarchical dynastic realm. ... Finally, it is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

The SABC2 and its brand identity thus create a notion of a shared comradeship of this 'rainbow nation'. For Barker, "[n]ations are not simply political formations but systems of cultural representation by which national identity is continually reproduced through discursive action. ... The symbolic and discursive dimensions of national identity narrate and create the idea of origins, continuity and tradition". The SABC2 brand thus contributes to the symbolic dimension of meaning and create social maps of meaning that are discursively formed. The idea of the rainbow is an artful type of speech or rhetorical form that shapes the reality of a new South Africa; a verbal technique that persuades people to become proud members of this imagined community (Chandler 1999; Dyer 1982:158).

Barker (2003:253) aptly notes that representations of national identity "are snapshots of the symbols and practices that have been foregrounded at specific historical conjunctures ... for particular purposes by distinctive groups of people" (Barker

2003:253). The creation of the rainbow nation identity "is a way of unifying cultural diversity ... [so that] deep internal divisions and differences" are pushed to the background in favour of narratives of unity (Barker 2003:253; Hall 1992b:297).

Myths are important in the creation of a country's national identity (Price 1995:40). The myth of the rainbow nation and the myth of an imagined community are ideas and narratives that are constantly circulated by the dominant group in order to keep their position of power. The myths of an imagined community and the 'rainbow nation' are fictional constructs that function as collective symbols to reinforce cohesion within a culture. While social realism characterises the myth of youth resistance in the SABC1 brand identity, the myth of the 'rainbow nation' in the SABC2 includes an element of fantasy.

The myth of the 'rainbow nation' is a mechanism that naturalises the specific kind of nationalism disseminated by the dominant group. The myth of the 'rainbow nation' and the ideology of nationalism serve the ANC as the dominant ideological group in their quest to attain hegemonic consent for the acquisition and maintenance of its dominant position of power. It is also the specific version or definition of nationalism as defined by the state. Andrew Heywood (2003:159) states that the "basic belief of nationalism is that the nation is, or should be, the central principle of political organisation". The myth of the 'rainbow nation' is a "narrative of national progress, the narcissism of self-generation, [and] the primeval present of the Volk", and its specific idea of a nation is one "whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as symbolic force" (Bhabha 1990:1).

The 'rainbow nation' myth additionally defines the spiritual principle and soul of the South African nation. Renan (1990:19) states that two things constitute this soul of a nation: "[o]ne is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of heritage that one has received in an undivided form". The previous section indicated that the SABC2, through its use of specials, reiterate the common legacy of memories.

The SABC2 relies on the myth of the 'rainbow nation' to disseminate the channel's values of community and the ideology of nationalism. But the SABC2 channel also has a particular role as State Ideological Apparatus. It broadcasts in Afrikaans, Sesotho,

Setswana, Sepedi, xiTsonga, tshiVenda and English, thus it broadcasts to a large variety of cultures and people other than the dominant Xhosa and Zulu groups. The SABC2 caters for the groups that may be in opposition to the changes brought in by the ANC. This combination of viewers in an early post-apartheid South Africa may thus have presented a need to convince these more marginal groups to be part of the national family, in spite of the more marginalised position laid out for them by the state and also the SABC2 channel. The SABC2 brand identity can thus be seen as an attempt to secure hegemonic consent for the ruling class imperatives.

Whereas the SABC1 appears to support a populist democracy, SABC2 appears to support a pluralist one. Heywood (2003:37) states that pluralism "is a belief in or commitment to diversity or multiplicity ... and may denote the existence of party competition (*political* pluralism), a multiplicity of ethical values (*moral* or *value* pluralism), a variety of cultural beliefs (*cultural* pluralism) and so on". Pluralism also suggests that "diversity is healthy and desirable, usually because it safeguards individual liberty and promotes debate, argument and understanding" (Heywood 2003:37).

The SABC2 brand representations and their illustrations of optimism, diversity, multiple cultural and ethical beliefs create a utopian sense of national identity. It is a diversion that artificially prioritises the importance of racial diversity to mask power and wealth, and mask the aim of the ANC to secure wealth and power for the emerging black elite. The 'rainbow nation' metaphor thus ignores issues of wealth and class and presents a 'pretty picture' of the new South African family instead, so that the national identity presented by the SABC2 brand becomes "a form of identification with the symbols and discourses of the nation-state" (Barker 2003:252).

Habib (1996:[sp]), however, believes that the true result of the politics of the 'rainbow nation' that lies in the future is authoritarianism, since the "politics of the rainbow nation is unlikely to realise the consolidation of democracy". He maintains that the belief in a consolidation of democracy "is perhaps the biggest myth of the South African transition" (Habib 1996:[sp]).

4.5 SABC3 Much better and Stay with 3

SABC3 emerged in 1996 with the slogan *Quality shows*, an identity that evolved from its predecessors TSS (1990) and NNTV (1994) (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131; Mersham 1998:212-213). With its rebranding in line with the corporatisation of the SABC in 2002-2003, the SABC3 channel was re-launched with the slogan *Much Better*, the first of three endeavours to re-brand the channel in the 2000 to 2009 decade. All three versions of the channel's brand identity in this decade retain their undertone of class and superiority fashioned by the previous *Quality Shows* branding. The channel continues to describe itself as "a full-spectrum channel broadcasting in English, and delivering compelling, diverse entertainment, information, and insight to progressive and inspirational South Africans with a sense of style [... and reflects] a careful balance between local and global views, as well as between niche and broad appeal content" (SABC annual report 2008:46).

4.5.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC3 brand identity

In the previous decade, the SABC3 *Quality Shows* brand made use of a logo that resembled a gold disk or coin embossed with the number three in relief, and the whole disk appeared to have a gold halo (see SABC3 in appendix 1). The 2002 to 2004 brand identity continued to use the golden disk in its logo, but the disk appeared slightly tilted to the side and included royal blue in its colour scheme (Figure 76).

Figure 76: SABC3 logo, 2003.

In contrast to the SABC1's expressive, warm, red colouring, the predominantly cool, blue colour of the SABC3 brand identity created associations with rationality, stability and order, and thus appeared more formal than its SABC1 counterpart. Similar to the other channels, the SABC acronym appeared in the Helvetica Neue font, connoting

simplicity and functionality. The acronym appeared in a blue on a light background, and in yellow against a dark background.

The main colours of the channel during this time were a royal blue and yellow (or gold). In addition to the blue and yellow, the channel also made use of red in its branding. The slogan *Much Better* was often added to the branding of the channel in the early years of the 2000 to 2009 decade, thereby preserving its connotation of a channel with a superior sense of quality. The visual branding of the channel was carried over to its website (Figure 77) with is royal blue background and blue, yellow and red background graphics based on the number three used in its logo. The website was presented in a clear and plain manner with buttons and frames that fitted with the overall brand identity of the channel.
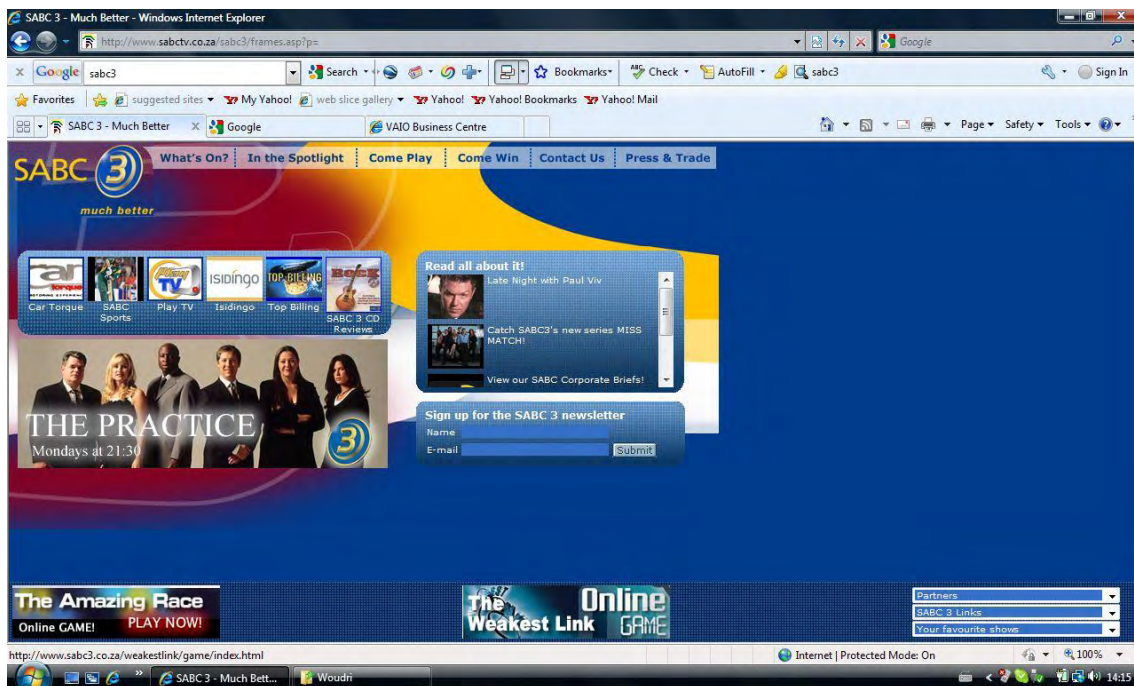

Figure 77: SABC3 website, 2003.
(Web grab, photographed by author.)

In 2005 the SABC3 changed its on-air look by rebranding it with a new platinum logo (Figure 78) and slightly different colouring of its brand identity, accompanied by new idents and a new website. The strategic reason for the change in brand identity is unclear, and perhaps it was renewed to give it an identity that would be more

190

distinguishable from the SABC2 channel that also made use of blue[40] in its designs. On the other hand, it may have been refurbished to provide the channel with a more contemporary, sophisticated appearance in order to increase its visual appeal. Either way, the gold disk used for the previous identity was replaced by a platinum logo in which the number three melded in with the circular ring to create a combined shape almost resembling the badge of a luxury car. This circular disk also appeared on-screen as the channel's dog. The SABC acronym in the Helvetica Neue font, was rendered in white on a dark background, and in grey on a white background. The new logo connoted luxury, affluence and status.

Figure 78: The SABC3 logo, 2005.

During its interim phase of its branding from 2005 to 2007 the SABC3 brand appeared to go without a slogan. The SABC3 website of 2006 mentioned that "[w]e may not say it anymore but we really are much better!" (SABC3 website 2006, also see bottom row of Figure 82). Perhaps this is the reason that the channel went without a payoff line or a slogan at this time.

The general appearance of the SABC3 brand identity during this time seems sophisticated with its platinum, metallic logo and its velvet black backgrounds. The dark blue in the idents appear to be reflections on a metallic surface, as if it forms part of the shades between the metallic platinum and the black. Various animations of an enlarged, geometric and tilted number three make up the idents of the channel (Figures 79 and 80).

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[40] The colours of the brand identities, especially the SABC3 idents, could not be reproduced accurately. In the dissertation the blue in the images appear more prominent, while in reality it appeared slightly darker so that the black in the brand identity and its appearance are more prominent than the blue. One can almost say that platinum is the SABC3 brand's primary colour, followed by black as the secondary colour, and blue as the tertiary colour.

Genre idents (Figure 79, top two rows) depict the large animated three together with the genre names, so that the repetition of the words "documentaries", "movies", "drama", and "comedy" seemingly float across the screen, and the last frame shows the whole logo including its acronym. Other brand identification idents (Figure 79, third row) similarly show the large number three, combined with horizontal top and bottom banners and the channel logo in a slightly off-centre manner, thereby balancing the starkness of its technical appearance with a bit of unevenness. For the news ident (Figure 79, bottom row) the large platinum logo appears to float and tilt in the air and recedes to the background. The title "News in 60 seconds" appears together with the words next, and the background resembles a floating piece of fabric. In all the idents, a sense of luxury, status, affluence and technical sophistication is connoted, but it also comes across as cold and clinical.

Figure 79: SABC3 genre and brand identification idents, 2005.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The menu and forthcoming attraction idents (Figure 80) appear slightly warmer with the inclusion of warm colours in the banners and the addition of photographic material depicting the key personalities of programmes and snippets from upcoming programmes. In some cases the genre of the forthcoming programme is indicated in a caption together with the title and time of the programme in the bottom banner (Figure 80, top two rows). The images of the key personalities of the programmes usually appear to the left of the screen, and include a banner at the bottom with the title and time of the programme and the logo at the top right of the banner. The menu idents are similar to the brand identification idents and list the names and times of forthcoming programmes to the left of the screen, while the word "tonight" or "tomorrow" appears in the centre of the bottom banner.

Figure 80: Menu and forthcoming attraction idents, 2005.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

SABC3 also made use of continuity presenters. The presenter is shown against the dark blue background, together with a banner indicating the costume sponsor and the platinum disk. Since 2005 is also became common practice to include the status of the electricity situation of the country in order to motivate viewer's to use electricity sparingly. This was in the light of the frequent power outages experienced at the time. Such notices made by onscreen graphics and also continuity presenters indicate the influential effects of the channel as a pedagogical narrator and its ability to bring people together.

Figure 81: SABC3 continuity presenter, 2005.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The SABC3 website (Figure 82) continues the theme used for its on-air identity, with a black and dark blue background. The platinum logo appears in a black rectangle at the top left of the screen, and buttons and layout are standard and subtle. On the left of the screen a large square appears in perspective, and states announcements regarding prominent programmes. The website proclaims the channel as "the most stylish channel in South Africa"[41] (SABC3 website 2006).

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[41] These comments were made on the SABC3 website in an announcement regarding the 56th Annual Emmy Awards. The article on the website aimed to indicate that the channel airs many of the award winning programmes thereby "outstrip[ing] its competitors" (SABC3 website 2006:[sp]).
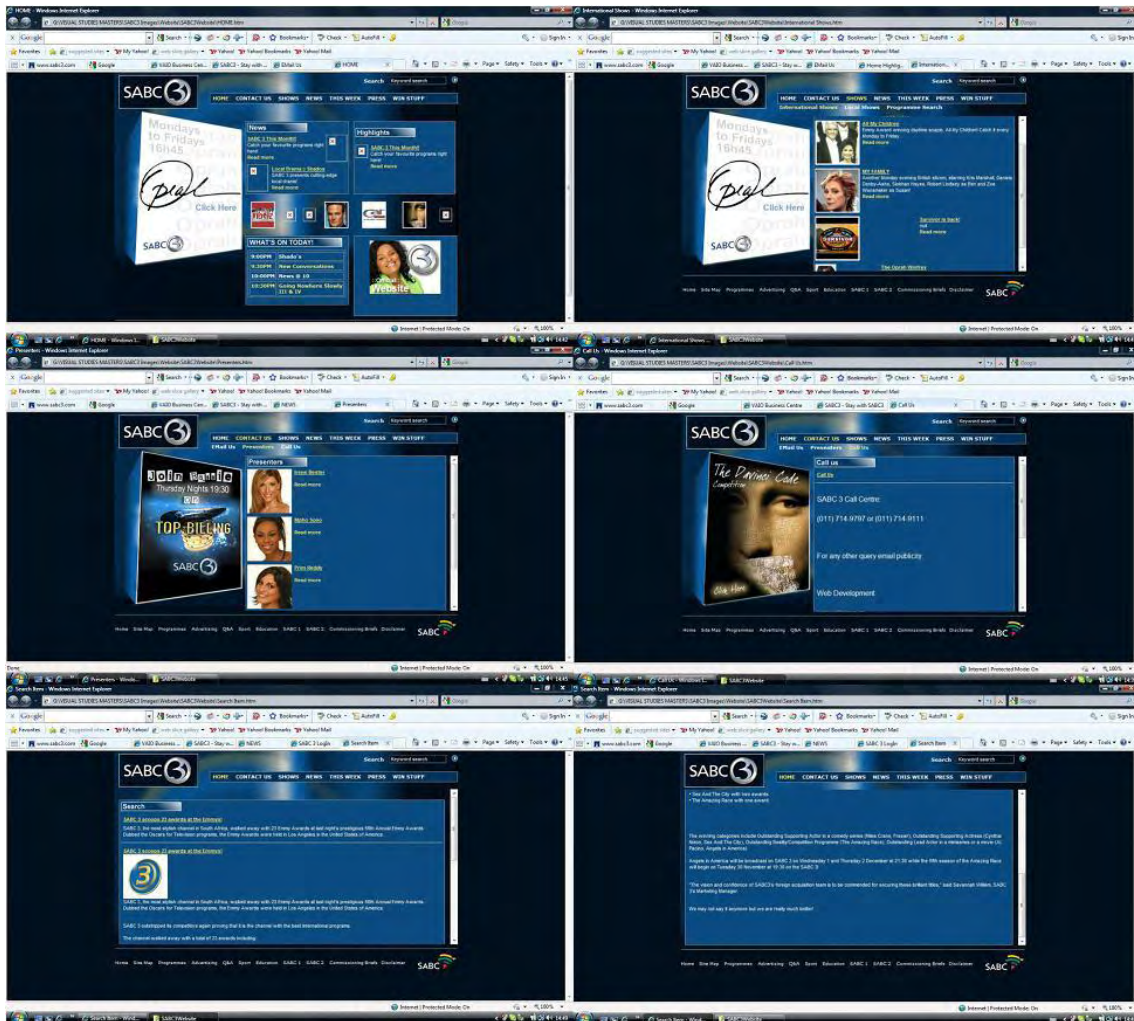
Figure 82: SABC3 website, 2005.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

In 2007 the SABC3 channel was re-launched with a refurbished brand identity and a new tagline, *Stay with 3*. This was the third venture to re-brand the channel during the 2000 to 2009 decade. The brand was re-launched at a glamorous event held at Constitution Hill on 26 July 2007, and the event, along with a programme showcasing the SABC3 branding, was aired on Top Billing on 30 July. The SABC3 website states that it took more than eighteen months to research and re-assess the SABC3 brand, and the channel's brand strategy was revised and the brand repositioned in a manner that placed the viewer or the consumer at the centre of all its activities (SABC3 website 2007; SABC3 defines ... 2007).

It was in accordance with the revised brand strategy that the English SABC3 channel started broadcasting some Afrikaans programmes, despite the fact that the SABC2 traditionally accommodated Afrikaans programmes. The rebranding of the SABC3

coincided with a general strategy on the part of the SABC to refine its understanding of its audiences and to adjust communication, programming and scheduling according to the needs of the audience groups as indicated by the SAARF audience attitudes (SAARF attitudes 2008) and the SABC's audience segmentation model (Introducing ... 2008:[sp]). The SABC's strategy to position the viewer at the centre of all activities is captured with the corporation's slogan "broadcasting for total citizen empowerment".

The new look of the channel visually translates the visions and values of the SABC3 in a successful manner. The channel's new branding appears lighter, more casual and more informal than the preceding brand identities. The corporate identity was redesigned by a leading strategic branding agency, Espiál, (Figure 83) who rendered their services for the "concept design, strategy, logo design and corporate identity" of the new SABC3 brand (Espiál SABC3 brand refresh:[sa]). The channel preserves the cool, blue colours previously associated with the brand, but the new designs incorporate more contemporary blues such as a Prussian blue and a Cerulean blue which come across as more cheerful, rejuvenating, relaxing and refreshing.

Figure 83: The SABC3 corporate identity designed by Espiál, 2007.
(Espiál SABC3 brand refresh [sa]).

The new SABC3 logo (Figure 84) consists of the SABC acronym in the Frutiger font, but with an A that is sharply pointed at the top. On a light background, the acronym is executed in the dark Prussian blue while the acronym appears in white on darker backgrounds. The SABC acronym is followed by an encircled number three in which the number is executed in white and placed on two seemingly overlapping circles, one

executed in a dark Prussian blue, and the other larger circle rendered in a Cerulean blue. The blue circles are framed with white rings and are placed on top of each other in an asymmetrical manner, thus creating a sense of movement. The manner in which the white in the logo is shaded suggests a reflective surface similar to the platinum logo used in 2005 to 2007, and thus creates a link with the luxury connoted by the previous brand identity.

Figure 84: SABC3 logo, 2007.

The logo also appears as a dog in the bottom right corner of the screen, sometimes as a still or flat version (Figure 85, top row), and other times in a more three dimensional animated form (Figure 85, bottom row). The animated logo resembles two halves of a spherical shell revolving around the number three and ultimately opens up so that the number is exposed.

Figure 85: The SABC3 dog in still form and animated form, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The new brand identity of SABC3 also includes a new slogan that aims to keep viewers captivated. The new slogan *Stay with 3* is varied, so that sometimes it will appear as "stay with SABC3" while other times it is shown on screen urging viewers to "stay captivated", to "stay intrigued" or to "stay in touch", but the word "stay" appears in all variations.

It seems that Espiál was responsible for the corporate identity of the SABC3 channel, while United Senses, in association with Eject Media, was responsible for the design of the channel's on-air look. The new on-air look embraced the idea of a triptych-like "three split ... connecting the different South African communities rather than separating them" (United Senses ... [sa]). The new on-air appearance of the channel incorporates three panels of different hues of blue and three panels depicting different environments with three different scenes. Movement occurs between the panels so that it appears as if characters or items move from one scene to the next, thereby connecting three seemingly different environments and the people within those scenes.
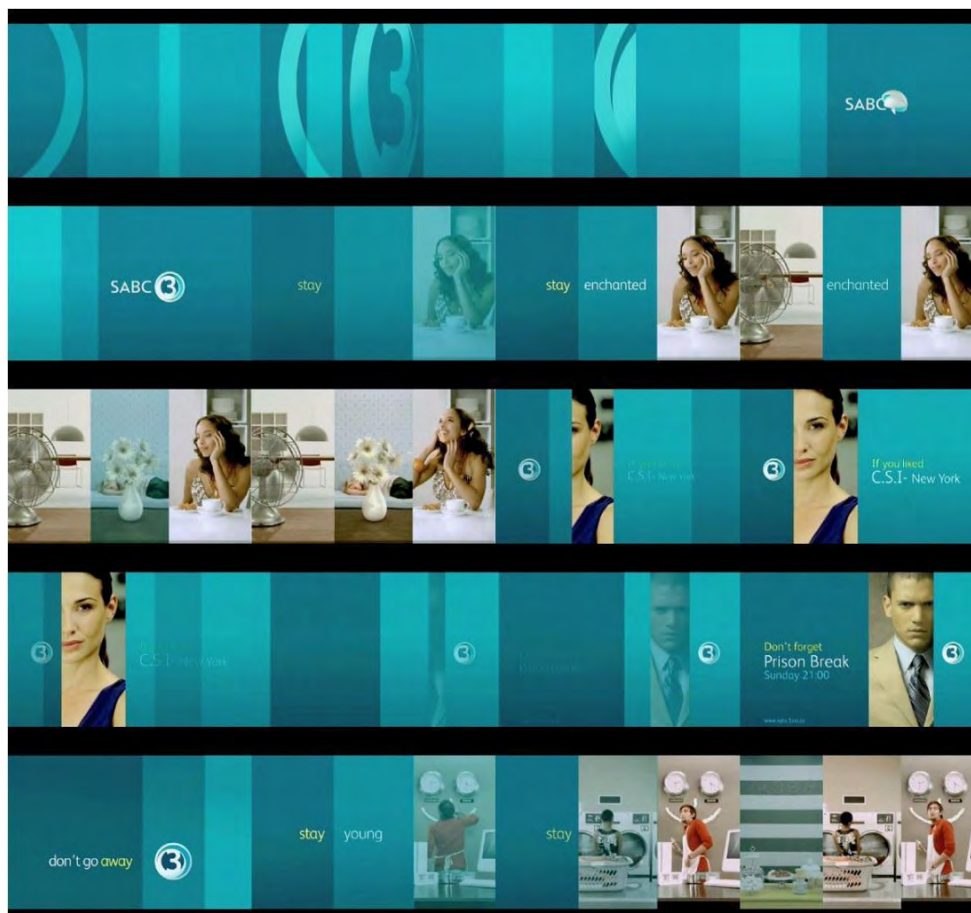

Figure 86: The SABC3 on air-identity designed by United Senses and Eject Media, 2007-2008. (United Senses [sa].)

The designs for the idents and on-air identity were altered slightly so that the teal and tiffany hues of blue colour were adjusted in favour of deeper hues of cobalt, cerulean and midnight blue[42] (Figure 86). The three panels depicting various scenes have also been altered slightly so that they move across the screen in a different manner. The triptych idents depict different locations and scenes, for example, a fan (left panel) blows flower petals (middle) towards a woman having tea (right panel), and in another example, a woman walks from a beach (left) onto a catwalk (middle) and onto a diving platform (right), then dives into a lake. The figures depicted in the triptych location idents (Figure 87) thus move across the scene, thereby connecting people from the different places in the three panels. This set of idents functions mainly as brand endorsement idents.

Figure 87: SABC3 triptych idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

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[42] It must be noted that the colours of the channel branding could not be accurately reproduced in this dissertation, and although most of the colours here closely resembles the manner in which they appear on television, the triptych idents with three-split panels appear darker in print than they do on screen.

Another set of idents functions as station identification and break-bumpers (Figure 88), and lures the viewer to continue watching SABC3 and discourages channel switching. This set of idents continues the three panel theme. The middle panel shows iconic signs with photographic images (portraits and close-ups) of people, and both the panels on the side of the images are blue. The panel on the left has the word "stay" written on it, while variations of a word appears on an often patterned right panel, including the words "talking", "laughing", "intrigued", "in touch" and "captivated", for example.
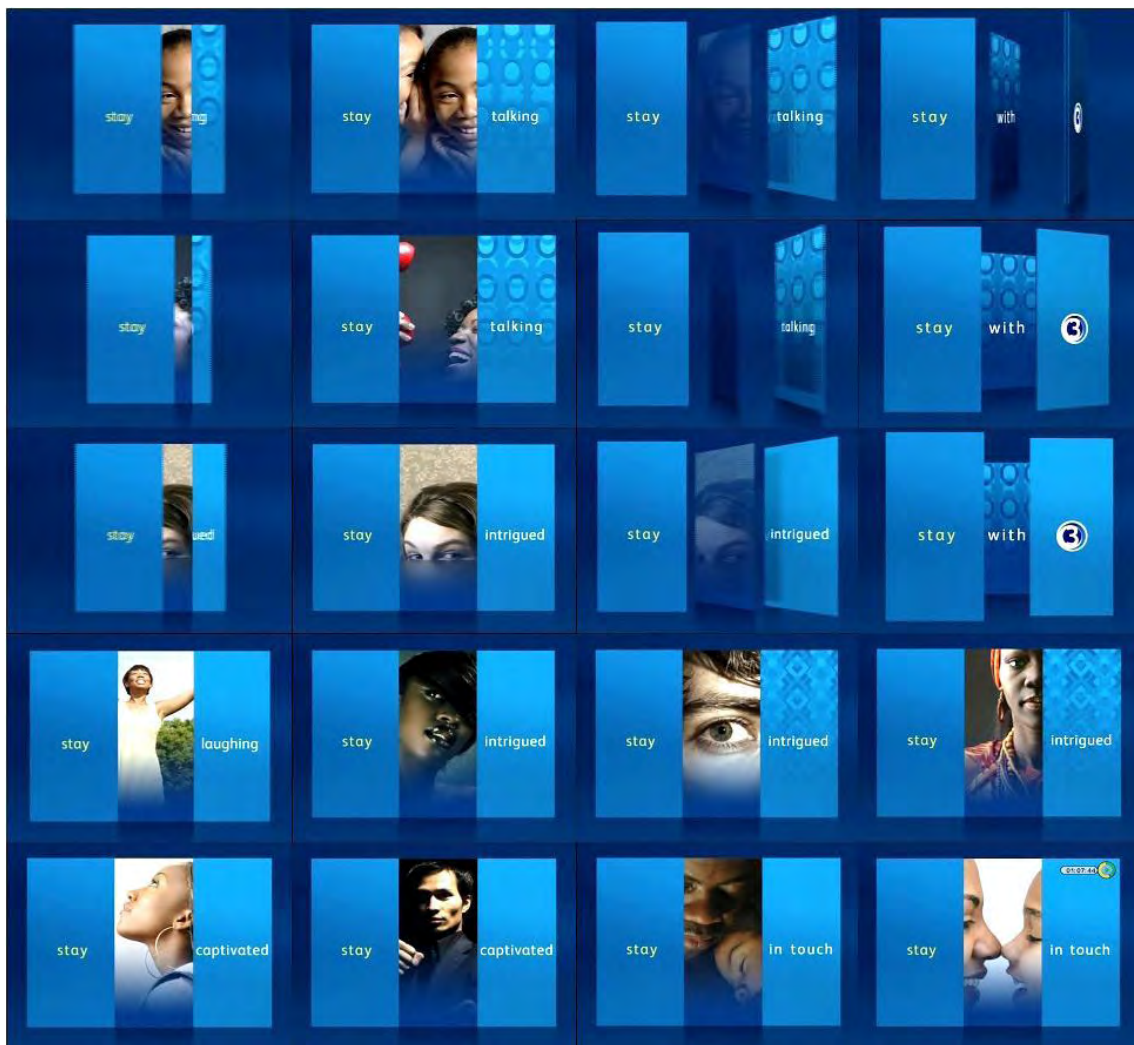

Figure 88: SABC3 Idents with a three panel theme, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

The three-split is a prominent feature in the SABC3 branding since 2007, and the theme is carried over consistently with the forthcoming attraction and menu idents (Figure 89). The three panels move across the screen in a horizontal, sliding manner,

and in some cases the idents panels flip over sideways. The middle panel contains photographic material from the programmes they promote and usually includes a close-up of the programme's key television personalities. One panel on the side shows only the SABC3 logo, while the other panel shows textual signs that include the title and times of the programmes together with comments such as "stay tuned", "what to watch", "next", "then" and "must see".
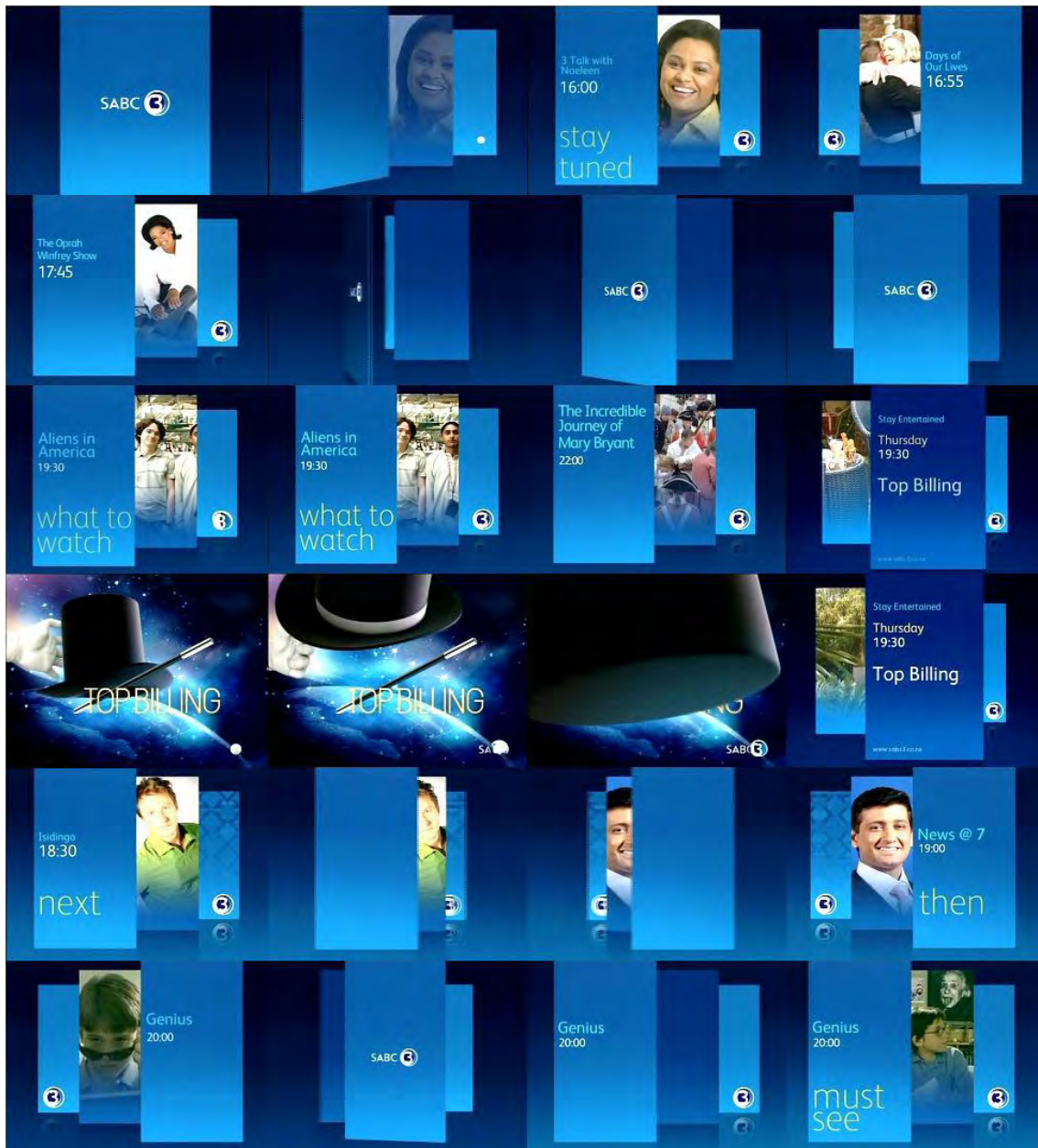

Figure 89: SABC3 Forthcoming attractions and menu idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

The SABC3 channel does not make use of daytime and night time idents, and neither does it use genre idents like the SABC1 and SABC2, but similar to the SABC2 the SABC3 uses idents to indicate the commencing of films, local productions and popular shows (Figure 90). The ident that points to the start of a film shows graphic numeric signs counting down from five to three to indicate the start of a film, and appears together with the caption "movies on 3". The ident that indicates locally produced programmes includes a section of the South African flag on one panel together with the logo on another panel, and the caption "home made" on the third panel. The ident that indicates the start of popular programmes depicts the logo and a resemblance of two moving spotlights combined with the caption "world's best shows".

Figure 90: SABC3 "movies", "home made" and "world's best shows" idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

One of the key signature programmes of the SABC3 channel has also been 'dressed' in the channel's branding. The ident created for *Three Talk with Noeleen* (Figure 91, top three rows) illustrates the animated three panels, animated logo and also an animated ribbon in the same brand colours of the SABC3 brand, but on a lighter background. This creates a strong link between the identity of the channel and the programme, thus allowing the programme to contribute strongly to the brand identity of the SABC3. The identity of the channel and the television programme therefore appear inseparable. The sophisticated manner in which the design and animation of the Three

Talk programme ident has been executed contributes positively to influence the perception of a sophisticated and classy SABC3 brand image.

Figure 91: SABC3 idents for the branded Three Talk programme, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

A special promotional[43] ident has also been created for the broadcast of a live open heart surgery programme aired on Three Talk as part of a heart awareness campaign (Figure 91, bottom three rows). The ident depicts a graphic animation of a heart,

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[43] No advertisements or longer promotions were detected on the designated recording days of the SABC3 television channel brand identities, and neither has advertisements for the channel been observed by the author on other days.

photographic material, a programme title banner, and the SABC3 and Three Talk brand elements. All the elements in this special ident contribute to the notion of the SABC3 channel as innovative and technologically sophisticated. The quality and sophistication of this promotion is an indication of Meech's (1999b:299) observation that "promos are developing into a television genre in their own right".

In addition to the idents, SABC3 also makes use of continuity presenters to provide narration and to ensure a smooth flow between programmes (Figure 92). The textual messages relayed by the presenters thus contextualise the programmes and their schedules within the larger flow of the television channel. The presenter is shown with a branded banner that notes the name of the presenter and the sponsor of the wardrobe. SABC3 was the last channel that used continuity presenters, but this practice was discontinued on 31 March 2009 in order to replace the presenters with "voiceovers, screen crawlers (announcements that 'crawl' across the bottom of the screen) and show specific characters" (Continuity presenters canned ... 2009).

Figure 92: SABC3 continuity presenters, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

This is an indication of a general increase in graphic signs in the "clutter" between television programmes. The increase in graphic elements can perhaps be ascribed to the improvement of, and increase in, design tools and software; for example Adobe After Effects, Maya and 3D Studio Effects that enables the creation of complex motion graphics suitable for broadcasting. Non-programme editorial items traditionally assigned to in-house promotions departments increasingly benefit "from a greater emphasis on creativity assisted by developments in computer graphics and editing technology (Meech 1999b:299).

In comparison with the SABC1 and SABC2 brand identities, the images in the SABC3 branding appear more abstract and graphic as opposed to representational, symbolic and iconic. The brand identity of the SABC3 includes a few carefully selected photographs that portray the channel's values in a subtle manner. The SABC3 channel thus avoids the use of generic and stereotypical representations and does not show national symbols and vernacular representations in the same manner as the two public broadcast channels.

The SABC3 website (Figure 93) depicts some of the few iconic signs in the channel's branding. The website design is based on the brand elements and corporate identity designed by Espiál (Figure 83). In the top banner, extreme close-ups depict images of a woman sunbathing, a swimming pool toy, a woman eating sushi, a goldfish, a hand holding a starfish and a woman looking through the hole of a doughnut. These images create associations of leisure activities and a leisured lifestyle. The appearance and layout of the website is consistent with the channel's other brand elements, and provide relevant information in columns and panels of various hues of blue.

The 2007 SABC3 website (Figure 93) also explains the channel's visions and values in the following manner; "[t]o consistently deliver the soul and the substance that makes great TV, therefore broadcasting for total citizen empowerment; dynamic, adaptive, innovative, in touch, in tune, ahead of the curve, forward thinking, future focused; pursuing excellence in quality and talent, rewarding achievement and authentic style, celebrating success, influencing life positively and passionately; inspirational, energetic, courageous, alive, a dreamer and a doer" (SABC3 website 2007). The manner in which the visual brand identity is presented across all platforms clearly

creates the associations and connotations that the SABC3 is a channel with an authentic style that pursues excellence in quality and talent.
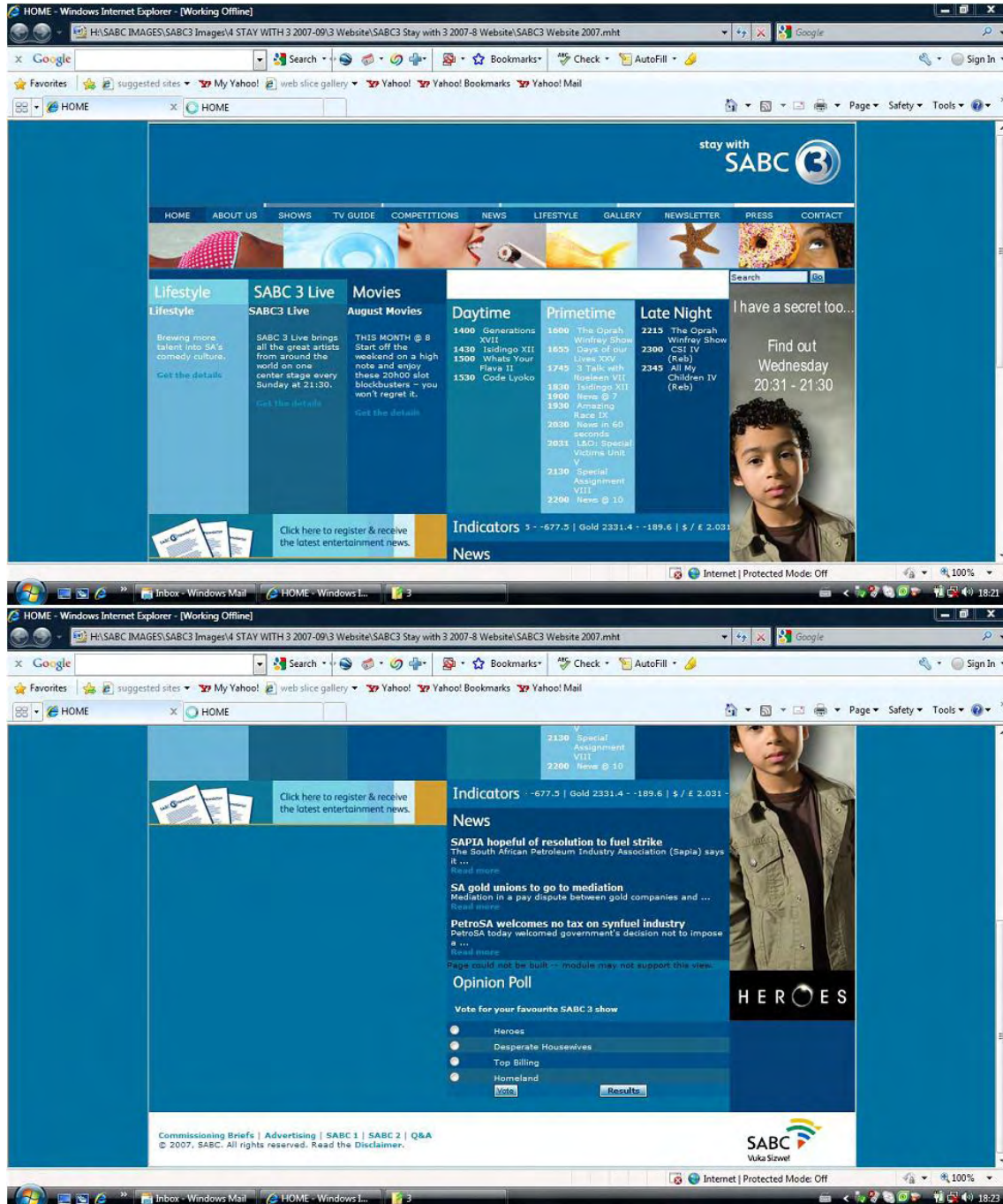

Figure 93: SABC3 website, 2007.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

The visual appearance of the SABC3 brand was slightly altered again at the end of 2009 when idents and brand elements appeared lighter and more luminous (Figure 94). The refurbishments to the website included a new layout, a new top banner and

the addition of the colour green in the buttons, for example. The iconic symbols related to leisure activities were removed in the website in favour of a more abstract appearance. The top banner includes circular shapes resembling the reflection of light seen in a lens, and creates a lighter, more luminous appearance. The flat hues of the blue coloured panels have also been exchanged for a shaded background with various shades of blue. These changes create a sense of depth, rejuvenation and vivacity.
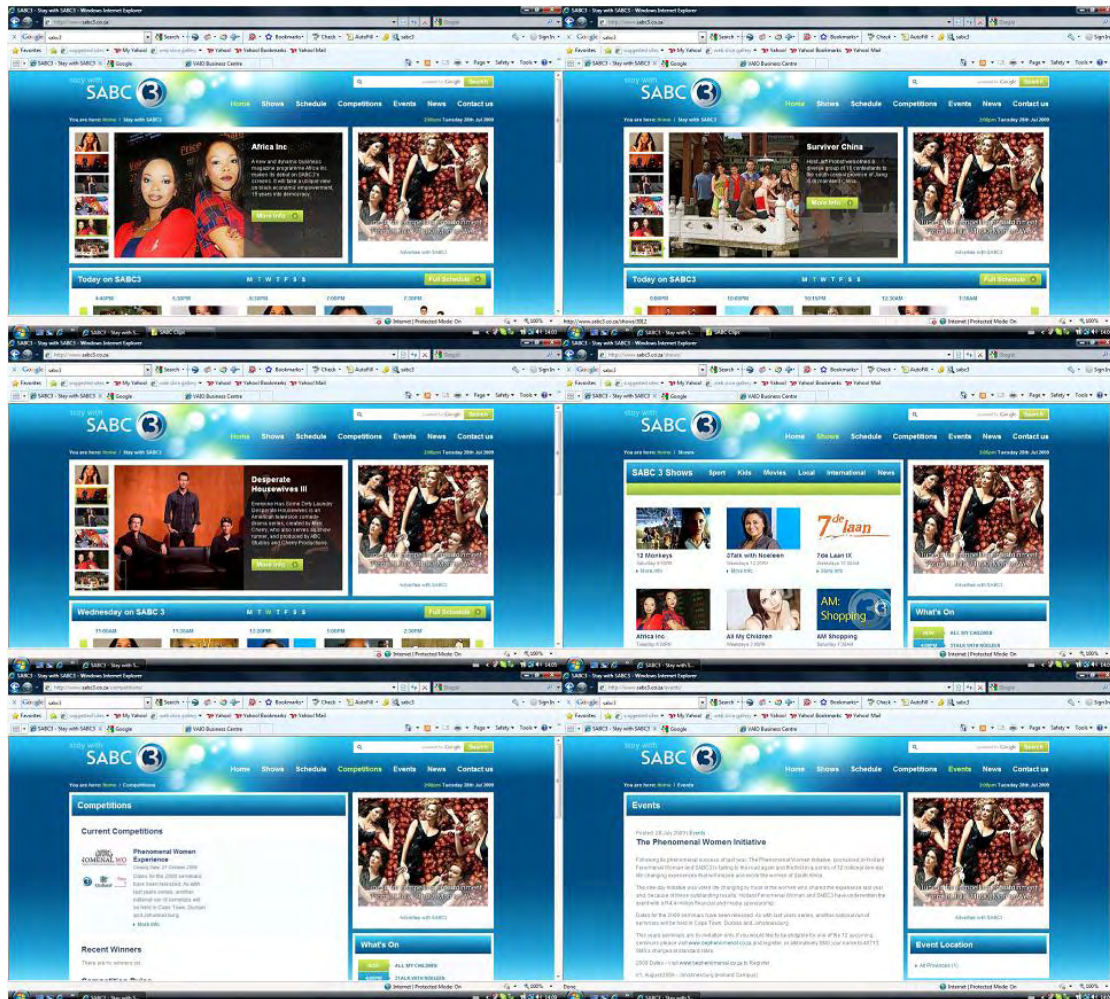

Figure 94: SABC3 website, 2009.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

Similar changes were made in the triptych idents (Figure 95). After the refurbishment, the three panels appear more translucent and lighter, almost as if they are made of glass, and the background is more shaded, thereby creating a sense of depth in the idents. Animated white specks and circular shapes move across the screen resembling orbs of light and light reflections in a lens, and create a sense of luminosity and enchantment.
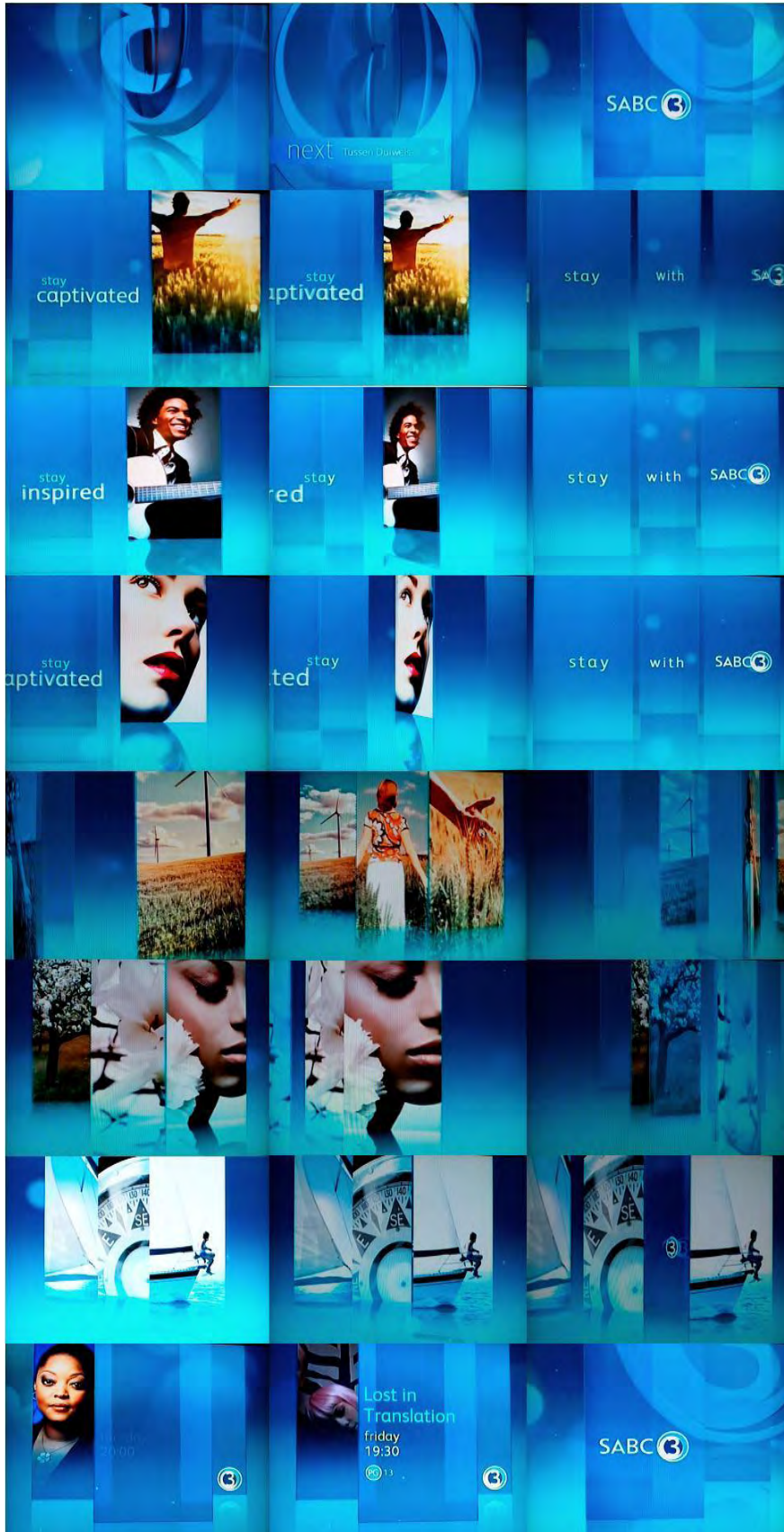
Figure 95: SABC3 renewed idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The changes in the SABC3 brand identity appear to indicate a trend to create inspirational brand identities with an increased focus on the self-actualisation of viewers as opposed to the focus on a company's physical attributes (Maslow 1943:382; Maio 1992:14). Overall, the SABC3 brand identity of the channel sets it apart as a commercial public television channel, and successfully communicates the channel's aim and brand strategy to be commercially successful and to provide quality, top-notch, inspirational and innovative programming.

4.5.2 Ideology and myth in the SABC3 brand identity

Luxury, class, style and sophistication are connoted by the SABC3 brand identity and it appears that the channel caters for middle class and bourgeois taste. The SABC3 brand capitalises on the trend to sell lifestyles and promote leisure activities in addition to the tendency of capitalism to promote conspicuous consumption. Norton (2003:21) notes a shift in focus from the accumulation of things to the accumulation of experiences, and also observes the need in consumers for 'quality time' spent with family and friends. The branding of the SABC3 appears to appeal to a need for experiences rather than things.

The brand identity of the SABC3 channel connotes a sense of hedonism, focusing less on education and information than its public service counterparts SABC1 and SABC2, and instead focuses more on entertainment and the pleasures of life rather than its social issues. But it is a more responsible, controlled hedonism that focuses on seeking pleasures that are conscious of the environment, thus not a mere irresponsible overindulgence in substances. The latest idents depict people in nature who are connecting with nature in a responsible manner (Figure 95, the fourth, third and second rows from the bottom). The leisure activities suggested in the idents thereby cater for the 'established' section of the audience (see appendix 3).

It can be argued that the SABC brand identity can be linked to Thorstein Veblen's (1912) concepts of conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption. For Veblen (1912:43) the term "leisure" connotes "non-productive consumption of time". He states that leisure is the manner in which time is consumed unproductively with the notion that productive work is unworthy and berated (Veblen 1912:43). Furthermore, leisure is the "evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness". A leisured lifestyle thus

indicates status. Veblen (1912:65-66) further notes that the leisure class has many "social duties" and the time and effort of members of this class are

> required to be ostensibly all spent in a performance of conspicuous leisure, in the way of calls, drives, clubs, sewing circles, sports, charity organisations, and other like social functions. Those persons whose time and energy are employed in these matters privately avow that these observances, as well as the incidental attention to dress and other conspicuous consumption, are very irksome but altogether unavoidable. Under the requirement of conspicuous consumption of goods, the apparatus of living has grown so elaborate and cumbrous, in the way of dwellings, furniture, bric-a-brac, wardrobe and meals, that the consumers of these things cannot make way with them in the required manner without help.

The key characteristic of leisure is the manner in which people spend their free time and their money. An increased focus on leisure and "lifestyle living" can be observed in the South African media from the multiple advertisements that promote such a lifestyle. It appears that people spend a lot of money and time on these leisure activities in addition to the money already spent on material possessions. In addition to consuming products people also consume experiences. Veblen (1912:73) also notes that the gentleman of leisure's consumption "undergoes a specialisation as regards the quality of the goods consumed. He consumes freely and of the best, in food, drink, narcotics, shelter, services, ornaments, apparel, weapons and accoutrements, amusements, amulets, and idols or divinities". In other words, the leisure class consumes high quality products and goods, as well as high quality experiences that are supposedly meaningful.

The SABC3 and its brand identity communicate the myth of a leisured lifestyle. The media communicates the desirability of a leisured lifestyle and the associated status that may be gained by living such a leisured lifestyle. By promoting it as an ideal that is desirable to attain, the media further encourages consumer participation in conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. But this leisured lifestyle is a myth. Instead of the freedom that is connoted by leisure time and relaxation, the opposite occurs. Instead of having free time for relaxation, time is taken up to keep up appearances and it becomes mere duty that 'must' be tended to in order to maintain the privileged position it indicates. It thus ensures enslavement to the system that demands continuous participation by members.

The idea of a leisured lifestyle is a socially constructed situation that appears natural and desirable. It prompts potential members to 'keep up with the Joneses' even when they cannot really afford it. Not only is it enough to own a certain car, wear expensive clothes and stay in a big house, but in order to have status, people are prompted to go on expensive and exotic holidays, treat themselves at beauty spas, frequently have their hair and nails done, and go for expensive lunches with their friends, for example. It prompts people to participate in such leisure activities, even when they do not have the means to do so, thus enslaving them to a continuous system of debt repayment. The contemporary notion of success is about the image of class and wealth rather than the reality of a large sum of money in one's bank account.

The idea of a leisured life is a reality that eludes the vast majority of South Africans. In the current economic situation, jobs appear to be scarce, and jobs that pay enough to enable one to participate in such leisure activities are even scarcer. The idea of a leisured life thus creates a mostly unrealistic and counterproductive notion of success. It creates tension between those who can afford leisure lifestyles and those who cannot, thereby creating a separation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' and fuelling tension and resentment from those in more subordinate classes. The conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure, and the ostentation it implies, become myths that ensure the continuation and enslavement to the status quo.

The ideas of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure are results of the ideology of capitalism. Apartheid has been regarded as an outgrowth of capitalism (Williams 1989:125), and the liberation struggle has largely been regarded as a struggle against the inequalities of capitalism. The national democratic revolution has originally been "theorized as the precursor to socialism", but the ANC has embraced capitalism and adopted policies that are clearly capitalist (Southall 2004:313-314).

Capitalism – with its free enterprise and free markets – refers "to a system where people hold private property rights to goods and services" (Williams 1989:125). Socialism, on the other hand, is a system where "there is extensive government ownership and/or control over the means of production [and t]he right of individuals to exchange property privately on mutually agreeable terms is severely limited by the state" (Williams 1989:127). Walter Williams (1989:127) further notes that there are no purely socialistic or capitalistic societies in the world and instead, societies can be

placed on a continuum that connects the opposites of socialism and capitalism. He further notes that "socialism – along with its extensive government control over economic transactions – has been and continues to be a major feature of South African economic life", but that it masks itself as nationalism (Williams 1989:127). The ANC and its approach to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is becoming increasingly focused and assertive and the overall aim is to create a "prosperity and prosperity-making black capitalist class capable of working in close harmony with a 'developmental state'" (Southall 2004:313).

The aim of creating a black capitalist class and the results of an increase in wealth of the black bourgeois class may contribute to even larger divisions between rich and poor, which will probably result in the large scale dissent of the working class. President Jacob Zuma was elected as president on 6 May 2009 (and sworn in on 9 May 2009) on the basis of his promise to confront extreme poverty and material inequality; an issue many South Africans felt that a more elitist Mbeki ignored. A year into Zuma's presidency his populist rhetoric can be questioned as he has failed to create genuine pro-poor policies to date. Zuma's presidency and the political shift to the left has not yet delivered any relief or improvements on extreme poverty and material inequality, and one can argue that, similar to Mbeki, Zuma is pursuing the creation of a black capitalist class at the expense of the working class.

It is especially those members of the working class that suffer most in a society that encourages conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure, and where there is such a large division between classes and wealth. Capitalism then serves the interests of those in positions of wealth and power while exploiting the subordinate classes.

The myths and ideologies of the SABC1 and SABC2 channels are the result of the new policies and discourse of the ANC as leaders of the dominant ideological group. The capitalist ideologies and myths perpetuated by SABC3, however, are not only confined to South Africa, but are indicative of a larger international trend of globalisation that emphasises leisured lifestyles.

4.6 Conclusion

The visual brand identities of the SABC channels have become increasingly sophisticated. The amount of on-air brand elements or 'brandcasting' has increased notably. The large variety of brand elements used by the channels, especially the SABC1 brand elements from 2007 onwards, are examples of the proliferation of such extensive 'brandcasting' on South African television, and the sophistication thereof.

Television channel brands are pedagogical narrators that address their particular segment of audience members in a particular way, and communicate specific myths and ideologies to those audience members. The manner in which the channel communicates to the audience by means of its branding contributes to the personification of the channel. The channel thereby constructs its own identity, and with its creation of specific messages aimed at specific audiences, the channels also construct and define their audiences.

SABC1 has been personified by its brand identity as a charismatic, authentic, socially aware, popular and revolutionary leader of the people. But the chapter also indicated that youth resistance and authenticity are carefully constructed discourses or myths that support the ideology of populism. In its deliberate construction, the meaning of the messages it communicates collapses on itself so that the authenticity and resistance becomes mere simulation, a simulacra that seems more real than the real, and youth resistance and authenticity become mechanisms by which the status quo is maintained.

The SABC2, on the other hand, has been personified as a responsible, optimistic, loving patriarch that loves each of its children equally, no matter how different they are. The chapter also argued that the metaphor of the 'rainbow nation' is a powerful one that functions as a mechanism of cohesion and of unity in diversity. The myth of the 'rainbow nation' is the mechanism whereby a sense of community is constructed that will ensure the maintenance of the status quo by winning consent. The myth of the 'rainbow nation' thus provokes hegemonic consent by the subordinate classes of the ruling class imperative.

The SABC3 was personified as a smart, sophisticated, stylish, classy, upmarket achiever. Essentially the brand identity of the SABC3 sells a certain lifestyle to its viewers. In comparison with its public service counterparts, the SABC3 connotes slight elitist tendencies and a notion of exclusivity and superiority.

The brand identity of each channel and the ideologies and myth that underlie the SABC brand identities can also be correlated with an example of each channel's signature programme. For example, SABC1 and its social realism, youth activism and populism is communicated with the programme *Zola 7*, while SABC2 and the idea of an optimistic, happy family is enacted by the soap opera *7de Laan*. SABC3's notion of lifestyle living and conspicuous leisure is further ingrained with the *Top Billing* programme.

A similar analogy can also be made between the brand identities with their myths and ideologies and the three post-apartheid presidents to date. Jacob Zuma, the current president, can be associated with the rhetoric of struggle, the myth of authenticity and youth resistance, and the ideology of populism. Nelson Mandela, on the other hand, can be associated with the rhetoric of the 'rainbow nation', a country unified in its diversity and focused on creating a strong and unified nation, and himself as a loving patriarch that equally loves all the children of the 'rainbow nation' and its imagined community. Thabo Mbeki, on the other hand, with his neoliberal politics and his association as ANC royalty or educated elite may be an example of the manner in which the ANC has embraced capitalism.

Even though the visual manifestations of the SABC television channel brands have changed from their inception in 1996, they retain some of their original meanings. The television channel brands keep the associations and connotations of earlier brand identities. The SABC1 brand identity retains its association as the popular people's channel, while SABC2 and its association with the national family remains intact. The superior quality of the SABC3 brand identity has been followed since its *Quality Shows* days. It is important to create a sense of familiarity and continuity for the viewers, who may be experiencing disorientation due to the high increase of additional channels in the current multi-channel environment.

Richard Elen (2003:[sp]) cautions against the premature change and lack of enduring brand identities of television channels, and instead reiterates the value of repetition, familiarity, and similarity to establish a notable brand identity that inspires brand loyalty. Elen (2003:[sp]) bemoans the instability of the visual identities of broadcasters that are partly due to the frequent change of channel managers. He notes that new channel heads all "want to leave their particular mark on the station (and erase their predecessor's) with a new look that is all their own ... a look as different as possible to the identity that the previous incumbent commissioned" (Elen 2003:[sp]). He defends the design agencies that are often "left scrabbling to find some element of continuity" between the old and the new and who are simply doing what they are told by their clients (Elen 2003:[sp]).

He further notes that clients often want to use the latest video technology for the idents "despite the fact that everyone else will be using it too and that it will look passé in a few months" (Elen 2003:[sp]). He suggests that a more conservative approach is called for regarding the changes of brand identities, and a less conservative approach when it comes to ideas (Elen 2003:[sp]). It seems from Elen's (2003:[sp]) experience that it should be the overall brand strategy that dictates changes in its visual manifestations, and not the whims of brand managers and on-air managers.

It seems that more changes in the SABC brand identities are looming on the horizon with the election of a new board, the integrations of policies made by a new South African president, the world cup, and the possibility of more terrestrial free-to-air television channels (SABC4 and SABC5). The SABC has made great strides in an attempt to engage viewers without reducing audience members to income, class, language or culture, and the improved audience attitudes segmentation tool has been a great aid in this regard. Future improvements may result in attempts to define and structure audiences in new ways that transcend the apartheid logic of dividing people according to their race, language, cultures, ethnicity and class.