# CHAPTER 1
# Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This dissertation examines public service announcements, hereafter referred to as PSAs, in the South African context, as 'fictionalised' representations of social issues highlighted in the media. It is argued that the television medium presents the viewer with images that 'fictionalise' the everyday reality on which it is based, often bringing what is regarded as public information or knowledge, into the private sphere of the viewer. Furthermore, television images and narratives are shown to combine fragments of reality and cinematic conventions to ultimately blur the boundaries mediated and authentic signs of the everyday. This is shown to be true of a variety of television formats, of which the public service announcement is one. Framing theory is applied as the basis of this examination. It is a method constructors of such messages can use as a guideline.

Framing elements based on an existing hypothetical model are identified, which can be applied by the constructor in the development of the public service announcement's narrative and structure. The public service message construction is regarded as being ultimately subordinate to the response the organisation for which the message is constructed, calls for from the viewer. The constructor of the message must therefore identify a strong key message that defines the problem faced by the public service organisation for which the televised message is created. Framing theory and framing elements are identified as being instructive in this process. The constructor must also take the specific narrative development and cinematic conventions of the television medium into consideration. That framing, framing elements and the structured application of cinematic conventions can guide the constructor, is identified as a valid approach in the analysis of a range of South African public service announcements analysed in this study, wherein a variety of social dilemmas are highlighted. The aim in these messages is to address a particular social issue in a way that must invoke reaction and action from the viewer.

*The Surgeon*, for example, a public service announcement created for Arrive Alive, appears to be a 'documentary' style narrative that ostensibly offers a simple explanation of the possible consequences of speeding on South African roads. Close inspection reveals the extent to which the 'documentary style' is a vehicle to authenticate the mediated nature of the message and steer the message towards a final, focussed call to action. Many constructors of PSAs do not make an attempt to apply cinematic conventions that appear to authenticate the fictionalised nature of the narrative, but rather rely more heavily on stylistic cinematic conventions. This does not, however, seem to reduce the convincing nature of the message, as the *Christmas Puppy*, *Tomato Sauce* and *Reach out and Give* examples analysed in this study show.

The frame in which the PSA is packaged, acts as a socially accepted model of authenticity (cf. Baudrillard 1994), and not a mirror of an external reality. This model is based on *cues* of authenticity, collectively created interpretive strategies (cf. Fish 1980) and collaborative expectations of what is regarded as everyday reality. From a viewer's perspective, actual experience of social issues such as smoking, drug abuse or rape should not be necessary in order to interpret and contextualise the message. The viewer holds certain assumptions about these issues that are often collectively accepted. The constructor of the PSA need not necessarily avoid applying existing and accepted frames of interpretation in the construction of the PSA. As will be investigated, framing the social issue in unfamiliar ways can serve to jolt the viewer out of complacency regarding the issue that is being addressed. While the Tuks Rag PSA and the South African National Blood Service[1] PSA affirm established framing, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals[2] PSA and the Arrive Alive PSA both successfully place the social dilemma in unexpected frames.

Although not analysed in detail, the controversial public service announcement created for the rape crisis centre, with Charlize Theron as spokesperson, is briefly investigated as a message that aims to reject established notions of rape and those responsible for its prevalence in South Africa. Constructors can therefore effectively manipulate the framing, the public service narrative and the stylistic conventions of the television

[1] Hereafter referred to as SANBS.
[2] Hereafter referred to as SPCA.

format, in service of the key message they aim to construct. However, an intuitive understanding of the organisation for which the message is created, and the ways in which the social issue is formally framed, can be instructive to the constructor. With this knowledge, the constructor can develop a narrative that forces the viewer to reassess the social issue dealt with.

In investigating the framing of the televised PSA, the constructor's approach to the framing of the narrative, and the form and style in which the narrative are presented, are explored as key concerns in this study. Metonymy and metaphor are investigated as symbolic modes that assist in cross-referencing (intertextuality), incorporation of new information into an existing frame, and adaptation of the message content to suit the needs of the organisation for which the message is created. Both metaphor and metonymy are therefore investigated as key elements in the construction of the PSA. In the analysis of existing PSAs, insight into the general background of the organisation for which the announcement is created, is instructive in understanding and identifying the key elements in the development of the narrative. The key message or official story (cf. Schank 1996) can be determined by taking these elements into consideration. In the examples analysed in this study, symbolic modes employed in the PSA serve to support the key message and often allow the viewer to make cross-references to other frames of interpretation, incorporated into the key message on a symbolic level.

Identifying the framing elements and symbolic modes found in existing PSAs, assisted in the development of the framing and narrative of a PSA created for Tuks Rag in 1998. In this case, personal involvement by the author in the creation of a televised public service announcement also allowed for the investigation of external factors in the development of the public service announcement. It is argued that this is an aspect that cannot be addressed in the analysis of existing PSAs, as the intentions of the constructor can only be speculated on.

## 1.2 Problem statement

Given the context outlined above, the following question can be asked: Can framing and framing elements, including symbolic modes, be applied as a basis for a structured approach to the creation of a televised PSA? In addressing this question, it is deemed necessary to identify and apply, in this study, both framing and symbolic modes in the analysis and development of televised PSAs.

## 1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to outline framing as a theoretical approach and identify certain framing elements that must be explored in the analysis and development of the televised PSA as a structured process. A hypothetical model forms the basis of the investigation of the narrative development of the televised PSA in general, which includes investigations of intuitive understanding, symbolic modes, formal framing and the call to action, as well as how framing is related to these aspects of construction. Symbolic modes are investigated as central elements in the framing process. Finally, the aim is to identify and apply a structured approach to the development of a public service message that takes various aspects related to the television medium, framing and symbolic modes into consideration.

## 1.4 Research objectives

- The identification of those general characteristics of the television medium that are particularly suited to the nature of the televised PSA
- The investigation of framing as a theoretical approach in the creation of televised public service messages
- The identification of framing elements that must be investigated as pertinent to PSA development as a structured process, particularly related to the needs of public service organisations and their messages
- The implementation of these elements in the analysis of televised PSAs
- The application of framing elements in the creation of televised PSA

## 1.5 Research methodology

A literature study was undertaken to identify a suitable theoretical mode for the investigation of televised South African PSAs. Based on the theoretical mode identified, certain assumptions were made and an in-depth analysis of a range of South African PSAs was undertaken. Close analysis of these PSAs was mainly based on own interpretation of the material, and personal interpretation also played a role in the documentation of the development of the PSA as a structured process.

## 1.6 Overview of chapters

The purpose of chapter two is firstly to show how television in general is closely aligned to the understanding and interpretation of events and occurrences in day-to-day life. This may be owing to the fact that television and technological innovations such as the Internet have accelerated access to information about a world viewers would otherwise have been denied access to, and returns reality to them in a mediated form. These technologies make information of the public sphere available in the private, and technology and the media inform the ways in which the information of the public domain is interpreted and understood, also arguably bringing with it a sense of social responsibility. A hypothetical framing model is adapted and applied as a means of identifying those elements that can be regarded as forming part of a framing structure. This hypothetical model forms the basis for the investigation of narrative development (that includes symbolic modes) and stylistic conventions of the television medium, based on the framing elements identified.

Chapter three examines symbolic modes as elements of the framing structure that can be employed by constructors of public service announcements to further simplify the interpretation of 'fictionalised' realities presented. Certain types of metaphors are identified that each form the basis of different theoretical approaches to the study of media and messages. Specific alternative theoretical approaches are highlighted here, particularly semiotics, an approach often followed in the analysis of televised messages. Certain assumptions held in this study, such as the evidence of framing cues, the importance of the style of the medium, and the use of metaphor and metonymy in the

creation of ideologically inflected imagery, are briefly touched on from both a framing and a semiotic perspective. It is argued that while semiotics is an influential approach to the analysis of televised material, framing as a theoretical approach brings other factors, particularly the adaptability of any interpretive approach, into play. In this chapter, metonymy and metaphor are framed as possibly being bodily based, with the embodied nature of these symbolic modes being one possible interpretation of the ways in which televised narratives are constructed and interpreted.

The objective of chapter four is to analyse PSAs for evidence of framing, narrative construction elements and symbolic modes as applied by the constructors of South African PSAs. Although the same criteria are applied to the analysis of all the PSAs, the same elements were not found consistently in all the examples analysed. Variations in the application of elements are noted, and possible reasons for the variations are discussed where relevant.

In chapter five, personal involvement by the author in the development of a PSA, from the identification of the frame and narrative development to application of symbolic modes and overall production, is outlined. Personal involvement in this PSA also allowed for the investigation of the external influences that needed to be taken into consideration, over and above the development of the frame, narrative construction and application of symbolic modes. The success of the previously identified framing elements as guiding principles for the constructor, is evaluated.

In conclusion, chapter six provides an overview of the key aspects explored in this study, and also highlights the ways in which the approach to framing and symbolic modes as investigated in this study can be regarded as instructive and significant. The shortcomings of the approach followed in this study are noted, and areas for further investigation are identified, related to the findings of this study.

# CHAPTER 2

## Framing and the televised PSA

### 2.1 Television technology and the everyday

Television technology has entered and become rooted as part of collective experience of everyday life[1] and is incorporated into our daily routines. The television medium, because of its socially extended nature, "gives us all, indifferent to time and place, a crash course in socialisation" (De Kerckhove 1996:3). The small screen and poor picture definition compared to cinema, makes the medium most suitable in bringing what is happening in the world around us into medium and close-up range. In this way, "television presents itself as a relay of what is happening" (Fiske 1987:22). According to Press "television may be unique among media in that its images are strongly positioned to be accepted unconsciously by viewers as presenting images of reality" (in d'Agostino & Tafler 1995:55). Attributes of the television medium that contribute to this occurrence, generally include references to its intimacy, size, immediacy, continuity and domesticity (Metallinos 1996; Press 1995; Silverstone 1994; Du Plooy 1989), that allow for the smooth integration of television and everyday life.

Buffree notes that one source of television's influence lies in "its capacity to communicate directly with large numbers of people in intimate, comfortable surroundings, provoking from its audience an immediate, personal, socially orientated response" (in Du Plooy 1989:4). Television as a medium has always had a close connection with the everyday and while "[m]any criticisms of television reject the medium because of its relentless everyday ordinariness" (Ellis 2000:3) one could regard this ordinariness, as Ellis (2000:4) does, "as one of television's founding strengths, which, future developments will, if anything, intensify".

---

[1] Silverstone (1994:20) provides a definition of the everyday as a structure of patterns in time and space, into which television is easily incorporated:

> The daily patterns of work and leisure, of getting up and going to bed, of housework and homework: the clock times, free and indentured, are themselves embedded in times of biography and the life-cycle … Everyday life is a product of all these temporalities … and time is secured in the equally differentiated and ordered spaces of everyday life: the public and the private spaces; the front-stages and the back-stages; the spaces of gender and generation, domesticity and community. Television is very much a part of the taken for granted seriality and spatiality of everyday life.

It could be argued that television is one of the older technical means developed for mass communication. Television's integration into the everyday, seems to have happened so long ago, that its impact can sometimes go unnoticed in the race to keep pace with newer and state-of-the-art means of global communication, such as the Internet. Yet, because of its almost seamless integration into our everyday lives, its influence and impact on a social and cultural level are all the more powerful. According to Graham and Davies (1997:28) this is indeed the case, as:

> Television provides not only the hard facts but also the fuzzy categories – the social, Ethnic, psychological, etc. concepts within which we must make sense of the world. It also supplies a set of fantasies, emotions and fictional images with which we construct our understanding (or misunderstanding) of all those parts of society beyond our immediate surroundings. It is therefore part not just of how we see ourselves in relation to the community, or communities, within which we are embedded, but also part of how we understand the community – indeed part of where the very idea of community arises and is given meaning.

Technology and the media exert influence on the spaces[2] they occupy. In turn, they influence the way in which we perceive ourselves in relation to others sharing our spaces. The attributes of the medium such as its size and domesticity, and the nature of its narratives and genres, contribute to television's success in putting a world before the viewer[3] that is made up of socially convincing and recognisable fragments of 'reality'. In this way, television as a medium can be said to be socially integrated, and a successful means of voicing and addressing everyday social concerns and dilemmas.

Media and technology have shrunk geographical borders and cluttered the spaces in which they exert an influence, turning the world into a 'global village' (McLuhan 1964:5; cf. Brooker & Brooker 1997; Gozzi 1996). Boundaries delineating the private and public sphere become 'fuzzy' or implode as technology and media become part of everyday existence. Television can be shown to not only keep pace with the vague boundaries between the public and the private, but also to influence the nature of the social dynamics within these previously distinct spaces. One example of this is "the

[2] Silber (1995:323) notes: "Within the last decade, specifically, sociological theory has been marked by the increasing currency of spatial (quasi-geographical) images and metaphors – such as, most commonly, 'fields', 'space', 'action-space', 'boundaries'". In defining the temporal and spatial place that television occupies in the everyday, reference to these and similar terms is inescapable. It is also an indication of the success of symbolic modes in defining what are often complex references.

[3] In this study, in accordance with Bordwell (1985:30), the term viewer is taken to refer to "a hypothetical entity executing the operations relevant to constructing a story out of the film's [or television's] representations ... [The viewer] is active; his or her experience is cued by the text, according to intersubjective protocols that may vary". Interpretive strategies from the viewer's perspective, although referred to, are beyond the scope of this study.

placement of television in public spaces such as restaurants, malls and airports, [which] changes the nature of the social interaction and, consequently, the way individuals experience themselves in relation to others" (Grodin & Lindlof 1996:4). Not only is television placed in new spaces,[4] but new spaces are entered by means of the medium. Often, these are public and private spheres we would have been denied access to in the past.

The much-debated Charlize Theron anti-rape PSA aired on South African television in 1999, is an example of how the natural integration of the public voice in the private space can become a tactic to confront viewers when and where they least expect it. In this example, a 'home-grown' international star addresses the viewer in a frank, direct manner, almost as if viewers are addressed personally, in their domestic, personal space. Many television genres reflect a similar vested interest in bringing the public mind into the private sphere. According to Press (in d'Agostino & Tafler 1995:55): "[a]s society becomes privatized, the images and ideas we consume in the privacy of our homes become increasingly numerous and influential, particularly with the growth of television as a medium that can bring the outside public world into the privacy of our homes". Television becomes "a crucial part of the social dynamics by which the social structure maintains itself in a constant process of production and reproduction: meanings, popular pleasures, and their circulation are therefore part and parcel of this social structure" (Fiske 1987:1).

Television becomes part of society and social spaces because of the nature of the medium that keeps pace with the social dynamics of production and reproduction of everyday messages and their meanings. That this is the case, is traceable particularly in the fact that technological and media terminology influence everyday language, infiltrate vocabulary and influence the articulation of concepts with which the everyday is navigated. The creation of collectively applied metaphors such as 'channel-hopping' and 'surfing the net' indicate the way in which complex technological concepts are

[4] The search for new and uncluttered spaces is nowhere more evident that in television advertising, and according to Goldman and Papson (1996:28): "There are already plans underway to beam ads into the space of the night time sky, where they will be reflected off orbiting satellites, as advertisers search for new and as-yet-uncluttered spaces". One of the PSAs analysed in this study makes use of an alternative advertising space, namely the petrol station forecourt television circuit, which has an effect on the nature of the construction of the message.

condensed into easily understood abstractions to keep up with a rapidly changing world.[5] According to Gozzi (1998b:438), "[p]eople encounter all technologies through a screen of metaphors which allow them to understand the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. These particular metaphors, however, hide some aspects of the new technology and its effects [and] may keep people from appreciating just how new/strange some new technologies are and may blind people to certain potentials they should be preparing for".

Infiltration of modern technology into the everyday, and the emergence of the 'global village' also have an influence on the nature of the fictional images with which we construct our perception of those parts of society beyond our immediate surroundings. This influence is particularly perceivable when investigating television and its narratives. Television is generally regarded as an "essentially realistic medium because of its ability to carry a socially convincing sense of the real" (Fiske 1987:21). Even if the amount of information we consume through the medium of television, with the advent of satellite television, and the spaces in which television is experienced are shifting, a sense of the real still permeates television as medium.

At the same time, the television medium has always promoted the packaging of 'real' social activity into contained narratives – for example in sitcoms or soap opera – or the packaging of narratives that emphasise the immediacy of information exchange – for example in news broadcasts (Press in d'Agostino & Tafler 1995; Du Plooy 1989). The rapid development of technology seems to have heightened these functions of the television medium and has influenced what is seen on television, and how it is shown.

---

[5] The following paragraph is a good example of how quickly and successfully technology infiltrates language and everyday life. Although consisting of computer jargon almost in its entirety, it is still intelligible to those who are computer literate:

> After a long day of number crunching, I go home to interface with the family in real time. Before I sign off at the office, I zap off an e-mail about my input for tomorrow's meeting … even when I'm finally playing with my kids, I'm multitasking, parallel processing, planning for tomorrow (O'Connell in McCune 1999:10).

This example might seem exaggerated, but McCune quotes Morse, president and publisher of the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, who notes that 25% of new words from the 1997 dictionary sprang from technology (Morse in McCune 1999:10).

Although it can be argued that the emergence of the global village brings with it a growing desire for images of 'reality', images are still packaged as contained 'stories' that make meaning out of what is shown. According to Nichols (1994:ix) there is "a hunger for news from the world around us [which we desire] in the form of narratives, stories that make meaning, however tenuous, dramatic, compelling, or paranoid they might be". It is argued here that television, in particular, has the ability to satisfy this new hunger for what could be regarded as 'fictionalised' images of reality.

Television narratives are therefore seemingly adapted in ways that convey an increasingly heightened awareness of immediacy and reality, while hiding the mediated nature of these narratives. This heightened awareness has an influence both on traditional genres, such as the documentary,[6] and newly emerging genres such as Reality Television, for example *Big Brother* or *Survivor*. In the Reality Television format participants are constantly 'watched' by the camera. The camera invades private space, influences its dynamics, and packages images of reality as a 'fictionalised' narrative. De Kerckhove (1996:4) refers to this phenomenon as the "collective eye"; an eye that allows viewers to watch a reality, but it is a reality that is pre-processed for them. These television narratives are blurring previously distinct boundaries between private and public, fact and fiction, and suspending history in an "ever-expanding present" (Nichols 1994:55).

In Reality Television, an attempt is made to show an event or series of events as it happens, specifically focussing on raw emotions, as a way of showing 'real people doing real things'. The "collective eye" also has the ability to maximise the voyeuristic possibilities of the television medium where seeing brings knowledge, and in turn, this knowledge brings power. Yet, the overwhelming amount of fictionalised images of reality available today brings with it visual evidence of human ills that we would have been denied access to in the past, which may be one of the "potentials" that Gozzi warns people are blinded to:

[6] According to Nichols (1994:1): "Traditionally, the word *documentary* has suggested fullness and completion, knowledge and fact, explanations of the social world and its motivating mechanisms. More recently, though, documentary has come to suggest incompleteness and uncertainty, recollection and impression, images of personal worlds and their subjective construction. A shift of epistemological proportions has occurred. Documentary and fiction, social actor and social other, knowledge and doubt, concept and experience share boundaries that inescapably blur".

> We know more and have seen more of this century than the generations of any previous century knew or saw of theirs. The acceleration of communications has brought us word of so many events, so many peoples, so many places. We live in an era of information, and photography, film and television have brought us visual evidence. We know about genocide; we know about the calculation of death in the millions. We know about famine and absolute poverty. We know because we have seen the images and heard the sounds which convey them (Ellis 2000:9-10).

What McLuhan named the global village, seems to bring with it the knowledge of responsibility:[7] "Electrically contracted, the globe is no more than a village. Electric speed in bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree" (McLuhan 1985:5).

In this section, the general characteristics of the television medium have been identified. Characteristics such as the socially extended nature of the television medium, the implosion of geographical as well as psychological boundaries, the packaging of 'fictionalised' narratives of reality, and the heightened awareness of human responsibility in the age of information have consequently been highlighted. In the following section these characteristics will be shown to be particularly beneficial to the constructor of the televised PSA as a socially orientated message. The PSA is a message that must elicit a public response, must package a narrative that is often not part of the viewer's everyday surroundings using fictionalised images of 'reality', and must invoke a heightened sense of awareness of human responsibility in viewers. The television medium allows the constructor to address these viewers in their private space.

### 2.1.1 Television and the public service announcement

Part of the success of the PSA lies in television's ability to bring what is outside the frame of the television screen, or outside an everyday frame of reference, into the private sphere. Viewers must respond or feel 'part of' events portrayed in the PSA, even though they are often distinctly, both physically and geographically, removed from what is shown. The blurring of boundaries between the private and the public, and the 'real' and the 'mediated', is therefore pertinent to the televised PSA format, in that a public

[7] In this study, McLuhan's (1964) notion of responsibility is understood as being related to the fact that the medium brings inescapable knowledge or awareness that calls for some form of involvement, reaction or action, as suggested by the Ellis quote above.

call to action must be taken into the domain of the private and must elicit a private response from viewers.

Televised PSAs in general must show that the myriad social dilemmas of the public space, such as rape or speeding, are 'real' threats to viewers in their private space. At the same time, any particular PSA message is a carefully reconstructed and mediated 'fictionalised' reality. The narrative construction of the PSA is ultimately subordinate to the response the organisation for whom the message is constructed, requires from the viewer. The PSA ultimately communicates that, what is seen on the television screen, is our problem, and it is our responsibility to feel, react or respond. We are sometimes implicated as part of the problem (see the *Real men don't rape* and *Christmas Puppy* examples). Therefore, we must do something (and not just anything: we must donate or call or respond) now. Why? Because there is the threat that what now lies precariously on the boundary between reproduced and real, can always threaten to spill over into our domain. So say no to drugs *now*, stop child abuse *now*, call the help line *now*, and so on.

As previously mentioned, the television medium has a tendency to keep pace with concerns of 'the present' and 'what is happening now'. Television narratives create a mediated world that is made up of authentic as well as invented interpretations of reality, and presents a packaged, 'fictionalised' reality in narrative form. In fact, television seems particularly adept at packaging and repackaging the ordinariness of the daily flux into narratives that sees "our reality returned to us in some kind of shape" (Wolmarans 2001:3). In this way,

> the world put before us lies between one not our own and one that very well might be, between a world we may recognize as a fragment of our own world and one that may seem fabricated from such fragments, between indexical (authentic) signs of reality and cinematic (invented) interpretations of this reality (Nichols 1994:ix).

In the PSA, the reality faced by a public service organisation is returned to viewers in a kind of shape that is recognisable as being part of their world, but the PSA also employs cinematic interpretations of reality to convey its message. The message could be said to be framed by both indexical and cinematic interpretations of reality. Just as a physical frame around a painting creates a demarcated space within the borders of which

interpretation is invited,[8] so the television screen creates a framed-in space which encapsulates the world outside that frame. However, as television production aims at projecting a 'sense of the real' and immediacy, the framed narratives of television can no longer remain fixed, but must be investigated as fluid and adaptable. As more and more images and ideas are created and consumed at an accelerated pace, the framed-in space of the television screen seems to have become porous and dynamic, always mutating in keeping with the concerns of 'the present', 'what is happening now' or 'the world of today'.

The implosion of boundaries between the 'real' and the mediated, the private and the public, as well as the packaging of fictionalised realities, have been shown to be key concerns in the exploration of the television medium, and are specifically relevant to the investigation of the PSA. These concerns demand an approach of analysing the medium and its genres that takes the fluidity and changeability of interpretive acts into account. One such approach, and the approach that will be followed in this study, is that of framing. Framing will be shown as a fluid and dynamic process of both sensegiving by the constructor of the message and sensemaking by those interpreting the constructed message (cf. Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1057).

It will be argued in this study that the constructor of the PSA must investigate possible ways in which the narrative can be packaged, must eliminate those approaches which are not suitable or practical for whatever reasons, and must apply a process of 'sensegiving' in structuring the narrative that will assist viewers in the process of 'sensemaking' or interpretation. This is not only to make sure that the message is an apt reflection of the aims or mission of the organisation for which it is created, but also apt as a guideline for the viewer of the desired interpretive outcome.

In this section, certain general characteristics of the television medium were shown to be pertinent to the televised PSA in particular. The PSA frames a social reality to the viewer in a kind of recognisable shape, applying indexical and cinematic interpretive

[8] In the study of painting, Derrida investigates the barriers between the *ergon* or work and *parergon* or by-work. The boundaries between the work itself and the ornamental extras in and around the painting are shown to be "porous". Both the *ergon* and the *parergon* are dependent upon and are collaborative to the frame, so that there is constant "play between outside and inside, subject and accessory, centre and periphery" (Andrews 1999:7; cf. Derrida 1987).

cues. In the section that follows, framing theory is investigated as an approach to the analysis and creation of televised PSAs. Framing as theoretical approach is outlined in general and the way in which a framing approach can be instructive is illustrated with reference to a much-debated and controversial South African PSA.

## 2.2 Framing and interpretation

Framing has variously been referred to as 'frames', 'social codes', 'schemas' or 'cognitive frameworks', 'scripts', 'narratives', and 'schemata' across various disciplines that investigate the storing and organising of everyday knowledge (cf. Baron & Byrne 1997; Maclachlan & Reid 1994; Tannen 1993; Arbib et al 1987; Fiske 1987; Bordwell 1985). Framing is generally regarded as an active and dynamic process of applying "knowledge structures" (Schank & Abelson 1977:10; cf. MacLachlan & Reid 1994) that fix the borders within which complex interpretation processes can take place. Ultimately, framing is a process of sensemaking and sensegiving (cf. Hill and Levenhagen 1995).

Framing as a term attempts to capture the dynamic and changeable nature of interpretive acts (Browne & Yule in Maclachlan & Reid 1994:2) that cannot be inferred from the terms listed above. It is a useful tool to be able to process information and confine it to the borders within existing knowledge. This existing knowledge can easily be recalled and acted upon when faced with the interpretation of unknown information. In examining framing as the process of 'sensemaking' and 'sensegiving' that cannot be seen in isolation, but as a dynamic process, it is necessary to investigate related aspects that have an influence on this process. These include activities outside the borders of a frame of the message, and border vulnerability. These aspects are always pertinent to the investigation of the frame, although particular elements in the process of framing will be investigated in more depth. The *Real men don't rape* PSA, with Charlize Theron as spokesperson, serves to illustrate how activities outside the borders of the main message frame and border vulnerability have an influence on the socially orientated message.

In *Real men don't rape*, the framing of the narrative causes friction by at once being enticing and repelling. Basckin (1999:40) implicitly refers to this dissonance between the initial 'harmless' introduction ("People often ask me what the men are like in South Africa…") and the stinging final reproach:

> You look at her and you just can't believe it. She's so beautiful, so international, so much the supermodel. The face is a background to eyes and mouth, the hair a statement of intent, the expression, well, I've already said supermodel, haven't I? She speaks and the excitement at meeting her, the illusion of desire, the I'm-gonna-get-lucky urgings of testosterone crash and burn…

South African men's dismissive attitude toward rape as a social dilemma is seen as an exacerbating factor to the high rape statistics in South Africa, and therefore the majority of South African men are implicated as being part of the problem. According to this PSA, 'Real men' would not hold what seems to be a dismissive attitude towards rape, and would become actively involved in addressing the problem, which, as the high rape statistics show, seems not to be the case. After a complaint was lodged with the Advertising Standards Authority by 'a group of concerned men' and one woman, the PSA was banned.[9] However, to supporters of this PSA, this move only served to "prove the power of its message" (Basckin 1999:42). This duality in the way in which the message is interpreted, serves as an indication of the border vulnerability involved in the framing of any message, and a socially orientated message in particular.

The domestic nature of the television medium plays a role in the border vulnerability of this particular PSA. Charlize Theron addresses viewers in a frank, direct manner, almost as if they are addressed personally, in their own domestic, personal space. The bare stage, is devoid of the glitz and glamour normally associated with stardom, supports this candid, up-front delivery of the message (no lights, camera, action here), and supports the blurring of boundaries between public and private. Finally, the medium upholds the friction at the borders by airing a statement that begs a response, but leaves the addressed with no means to react, respond, or counter the argument made.

[9] The banned message content reads as follows: "People often ask me what the men are like in South Africa. Well, consider that more women are raped in South Africa than in any other country in the world. That 1 out of 3 women will be raped in their lifetime…and that the rest of the men in South Africa seem to think rape isn't their problem. It's not easy to say what men in South Africa are like because there are so few of them out there". Note that the PSA included on the CD-Rom accompanying this study, shows a subsequent announcement, aired after the banning of the first version. The banned version of the announcement could not be obtained.

Or almost no way, except by lodging a complaint to have the 'offending' message removed.

The mediated reconstruction of reality is here created by a constructor who must be aware of the degree of congruency between 'the real' and its mediated reproduction in order to manipulate it. The stage set-up in the Charlize Theron PSA could be an attempt to signal that the message contains only bare facts about rape in South Africa and nothing more. Many PSAs similarly tend to keep the distinction between the real and mediated worlds blurred in an attempt to keep manipulation of the message hidden from view.

In the *Real men don't rape* PSA, activities that take place outside the borders of the main activity act as a source of interpretive framing information (Goffman 1974:201; Maclachlan & Reid 1994:51). The blonde, sex symbol image associated with Theron outside the frame of this particular message, was adapted. Constructors of the message reinvent Theron here as the serious, short-cropped brunette, the hair colour simultaneously bringing with it the associations of solemnity, and instantaneously toning down the blonde vamp image. This could be seen as an attempt by the interpretive community or constructors of the message, to assign new collaborative meanings to Theron as an anti-rape spokesperson. Previously established associations and expectations regarding Theron allows the viewer to question these meanings. This is one example of how the impact of 'out-of-frame' activities can have an influence on the meanings assigned to a message. The Theron PSA is also an indication of how 'out-of-frame' activity, such as the Hollywood star status and sex symbol iconography associated with Charlize Theron, could at least be partly responsible for the misframing, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the true frame of the message, an act that Goffman defines as "frame-ups" (Goffman 1974:302-324; Maclachlan & Reid 1994:56-58). It is argued, however, that in this case, there is a deliberate attempt at blurring the boundaries between the framing of Theron as the desirable sex symbol and Theron as the voice of the conscience.

'Out-of frame' activities can perhaps be best contextualised by means of an example in theatre of an actor 'corpsing'[10] during a performance. An activity that counters the core frame directly would constitute a break in the frame. 'Frame breaking' (Goffman 1974:347; Maclachlan & Reid 1994:52) would be to expose camera equipment for the viewer within the visual frame of the television. This could, however, be an intentional action by which to heighten awareness of the frame itself. In Brechtian[11] theatre practice, for example, breaking the frame occurs intentionally in order to influence audience interpretation. This seems equally to be the case in Reality Television shows such as *Big Brother* where "the reality is not entirely unmediated. In fact, the processes of fiction are visible" (Wolmarans 2001:3). It is argued here that these processes of fiction must be visible to heighten awareness of the key concern of the show: the ability to watch. The cameras, not the 'real people', seem to be the stars of the show. Terms such as out-of frame activity and frame breaking ultimately serve to indicate the innate vulnerability and fluidity of framing structure and framing action.

Goffman's approach serves as basis for much of the outline of framing notions and terms given above. It must be noted that Goffman's approach focuses on framing applied by the individual, and in this study serves merely as background information. The fact that framing can be collectively applied is of central importance in this study, owing to the necessarily socially orientated nature of the PSA. It is argued in this study that collectively understood processes of 'sensegiving' (construction) and 'sensemaking' (interpretation) are not generated by the individual in isolation, but are collectively created, and that such processes could be related to what Fish (1980:14)

[10] Corpsing is a theatre term referring to "a situation when an actor loses the façade of his/her character onstage. Whether it be by forgetting lines, laughing, or otherwise, they have caused the audience's willing suspension of disbelief to grind to a halt. Suddenly, rather than *being* someone else, the person is *playing* someone else" (Brian 2001:sp, emphasis added).

[11] Brechtian theatre explores man as depersonalised entity, whose main function is as part of the collective whole. Man is shown to be controlled by external forces and not internal motivators or will. The Brechtian theatre practice is an attempt to present an objective view of man in society. The external principles fundamental to the theatre experience are exposed, such as plot-structures, lighting and stage equipment to show the external workings that creates the social experience. "Brecht suggests that ... [s]ociology, that is the scientific investigation of human behaviour, should replace the make-believe of art and the illusion that our actions are determined by character alone" (Bartram & Waine 1982:49-50).

refers to as the "interpretive community"[12]. This is the case particularly when investigating interpretive strategies for the creation of messages with social relevance. In this approach, framing of messages can vary depending on distinct collaborative meanings generated by any one group of people that agrees upon and subcribes to the same framing cues[13] for the 'sensegiving' process. The interpretive community and the viewer bring collaborative meanings to bear on the process of interpretation by means of "expectations and hypotheses, born of schemata [interpretive frames], those in turn being derived from everyday experience" (Bordwell 1985:32).

The above applies to the Theron PSA. A complex social issue is simplified in order to make a general statement about rape in South Africa. By quoting statistics, this message and its spokesperson are framed as merely delivering the facts. Yet the central dilemma in this PSA is related to collectively understood interpretations of the content. Dissonance between what the message 'actually says' and what it 'means to say', sparked off endless debate. It is here that the framing of interpretation is shown to be highly flexible, and dependent on collaborative meanings generated by an interpretive community and on the viewer who brings certain expectations and hypotheses to the interpretation of what is shown. Although the core message is based on statistics, the message ultimately frames the shockingly high rape statistics[14] in South Africa as an indication that there are few 'real men' in the country, and that rape is a social issue that needs to be addressed by the community as a whole.

---

[12] According to Fish (1994:14), interpretive communities are made up of those who "share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties ... [S]ince the thought an individual can think and the mental operations he can perform have their source in some or other interpretive community, he is as much a product of that community (acting as an extension of it) as the meanings it enables him to produce." It is argued in this study that the interpretive community creates a frame or frames within which information is to be understood and interpreted, and the individual is encouraged to analyse or read a text within the boundaries established by that community. Fish applies this term specifically to the field of literary criticism and the reading or interpreting and creation of strategies to analyse the written text. In this study, the argument is held that any input or information, be it written, spoken, visual or in any other form, necessitates interpretation, no matter on how basic or complex a level, and such information indeed invites interpretation in the same way as a written text can.

[13] Framing cues act as indicators to show what information must be attended to in the analysis of the meaning of experience, behaviour or events.

[14] According to Hawthorne (1999:18), "the official annual figure is nearly 50,000, but rape-crisis researchers say only 1 in 35 is reported. That means that there are more that 1.6 million rapes a year – the highest incidence in the world, according to Interpol."

Indicative to framing as a construct, therefore, is the acknowledgement that meaning is always subjective and alterable, depending on situational factors that surround the appropriation of framing structures to any given situation involving interpretation (MacLachlan & Reid 1994:1-18). In addition, because no definitive frames of interpretation exist, framing structures, and the framing cues that operate within them, are interdependent, and form part of a complex process of interpreting meaning collectively, in an ever-adaptable referencing network. (In the interpretation of the moving images of film and television,[15] this is always the case. The images that precede, have an influence on the images that follow, and framing of the unfolding visual narrative must always be alterable and adaptable, depending on new information put to the viewer). Ultimately, the frame that constructors create for the interpretation of their message, forms delineated boundaries of interpretation, yet are still dynamic enough to prevent strict control over how the message is finally interpreted by the viewer. While this approach could allow misinterpretation of the message, creating boundaries within which interpretation is invited is advantageous in that it is flexible and can be collectively applied.

A general outline of framing as a theoretical approach indicates the ways in which this approach can be instructive, particularly in the analysis and creation of the televised PSA. In investigating the framing of the PSA in this study, attention must also be given to the possible framing elements available to the constructor of the message. In order to trace the development of the construction of a PSA as a structured approach, an example of a linear framing model is investigated. This framing model serves as an illustration of the elements the constructor of the message is likely to employ in the development of the PSA as an innovative process of sensegiving (construction) and

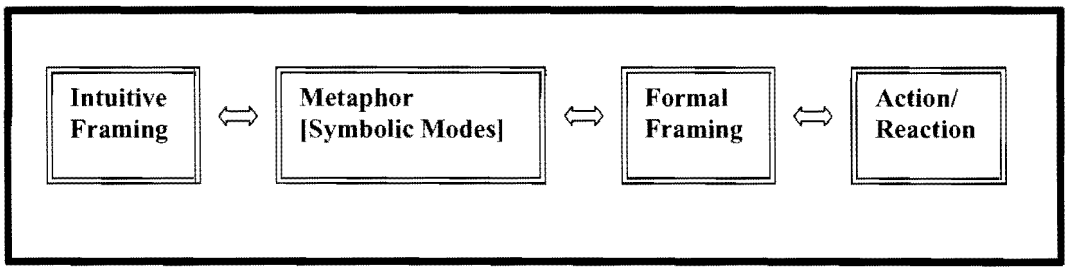
[15] The correlation indicated here between film and television refers to the general similarities in application of stylistic methods in constructing the narrative, namely the use of the camera, camera angles and shots. McLuhan (1964) makes a clear distinction between film and television media. Film is regarded as a hot medium of high definition that allows for little or no participation on the part of the viewer, as most of the information needed for interpretation, is already supplied. Television, on the other hand, is regarded as a cool medium of low definition, where less visual information is supplied, thus requiring more participation from the viewer for the completion of information in order to frame interpretation (McLuhan 1964:22-32). It is argued in this study that the higher level of participation required by the viewer in interpretation of television is beneficial to the televised PSA format, a format that requires more participation.

sensemaking (interpretation). Development will be shown to progress from the intuitive understanding of the material on which the PSA is based, to the formal framing of the message and the action or reaction this message aims to elicit. It is argued in this study that symbolic modes remain central to this process, particularly in relation to the collective nature of framing.

Framing elements are pertinent to the development of the PSA as a structured process particularly related to the needs of the public service organisation. Particular framing elements that form part of a linear development process are identified in the following section. These elements can assist the constructor of the message to "establish images … and an understanding of how things fit together [and to] articulate what is important and unimportant depending on underlying values, shared interests and common understandings" (Kiesler & Sproull in Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1058).

### 2.2.1 Linear development of the frame

The model below indicates how the development of mental models or frames can assist in "sense making and sense giving in innovative and entrepreneurial activities" (Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1057). In this way, the framing elements employed by the constructor of the message to 'give sense' are related or similar to the elements that the viewer will arguably employ to 'make sense' of the message. Ellis states: (2000:3): "[a]ny contemporary citizen in the developed or developing world will have access to far more information that can possibly be crammed into an explanatory framework", and including this representation here is not an attempt to dispute this. The representation is regarded merely as a (mediated) very general guide to elements within the framing structure.




A model of the development of framing structures that assist in sensemaking and sensegiving in innovative activities (adapted from Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1060).

This representation of the framing structure or mental model presented by Hill and Levenhagen (1995:1058-1060) indicates the development of a frame from initial intuitive framing, followed by the articulation of suitable symbolic modes with which to more clearly define interpretation, while at the same time keeping interpretation open-ended, fluid and adaptable. This leads to the final incorporation of metaphors and ultimately formal framing, which guide individual and social behaviour and action. The term 'mental model' applied by Hill and Levenhagen is replaced in this study with the term framing model, to indicate its implied dynamic nature. The elements present in the construction of the frame will be investigated. Each of these units of meaning are interdependent, but at the same time act as progressive building blocks from intuitive framing, to the application of symbolic modes of expression and representation, to formal framing constructs.

Intuitive framing includes consciously and sub-consciously perceived information, gathered by means of slowly accumulated social perceptions and experience. This stage of framing development is largely open-ended, in that it encompasses vaguely held beliefs by the individuals and society in which the framing structure is operative. This phase of framing is often however, not clearly defined enough to have developed to the stage of verbal articulation. Intuitive framing is restricted in its use because of various constraints: "Not only are these intuitive models or belief systems selectively constructed by perceivers, they are also constrained by the capacity of the language, culture and context within which they reside … Thus rich cognition may be generated but with comparatively few adequate words by which to describe them … To cope with the lack of appropriate language require[s] the use of metaphors" (Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1059).

According to Cohen and Stewart (1995:10), in order to generate rich cognition in the everyday, it is necessary to simplify a complex world by applying the power of metaphor, or the ability to categorise similar objects or experiences together. In this way, metaphor is a powerful tool with which information can be understood as a unit in relation to other units of meaning. Metaphor could, however, be regarded as only one mental tool that gives the perceiver this power. According to Jakobson (in Rivkin & Ryan 1998:92): "The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of

romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called 'realistic trend'". As the application of metonymy and metaphor is explored as modes of symbolic expression in the visual medium of television, this facet of these modes gains major significance in this study.

Formal framing begins once symbolical concepts are gradually developed and refined and symbolic modes used to articulate intuitive framing concepts, make way for formal framing of interpretation. Possible ambiguities contained in symbolic modes of expression and representation are replaced by direct, context-specific language (Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1063). Formal frames can come to be regarded as objective and stable descriptions of social events, actions and behaviour.[16] This is also where the danger in formal framing lies. Left unchallenged, formal framing can hamper cognition and the incorporation of new information in the process of interpretation (Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1063). Finally, formal framing is less emotionally driven than symbolic framing, and requires "definitive specification of assumptions and objectives that delineate the framing process, thus narrowing the range of problem solving situations" in which it can be applied (Hill & Levenhagen 1995:1063).

Framing as a process ultimately stimulates some form of action or reaction, based on guiding principles contained within the operating framing model. The action can already be stimulated in the intuitive phases of framing, by ambiguous symbolic framing or formal framing models. Action leads to observable results that can serve to perpetuate existing models or lead to restructuring of the framing process. In the following section, correlation between the linear framing model identified here, and the development of the PSA narrative, are highlighted. These connections between the linear development of the frame and the development of the public service narrative will form the basis on which South African televised PSAs are analysed. The identification of a general narrative pattern that could be linked to the intuitive framing phase, are briefly explored. Identification of an umbrella message is investigated as a guiding principle in the

[16] Although formal frames are regarded as stable constructions, the frame remains dynamic. The formal frame could therefore be seen as a process where the status quo is accepted regarding the dominant ideology expressed by the formal frame, both on a cultural level as the bearer of meaning, and on a social level as struggles for power, linking it to Gramsci's notion of hegemony (Fiske 1987:40-41).

development of an intuitive understanding of the organisation for which the message is created. Out of what is referred to in this study as the umbrella message (cf. Radtke 1998), can develop an even more focussed narrative in the form of a key message. The key message is related to the symbolic phase in the linear model, as complex social issues must be simplified in order to be articulated. Finally, the framing of one of the key elements of the PSA, namely the call to action, is investigated, and is linked to the framing phase that involves some form of action or reaction.

The framing model outlined above will be applied as a guideline according to which the construction of the PSA can be investigated as an innovative activity, with particular attention being paid to the framing process employed by the constructor of the message. Intuitive framing is regarded as the first step in the development of the PSA. Once an intuitive understanding of the social issue and non-profit organisation is established, the application of symbolic modes in the narrative can begin. By employing novel approaches to symbolic modes applied, the constructor can frame the message effectively and still avoid the negative implications of formal framing as discussed above. Finally, the PSA must be constructed in such as way that it leads to reaction or action in the viewer.

#### 2.2.1.1 Intuitive understanding and the development of the PSA narrative

In linear development of the televised PSA narrative, the constructor of the message must reach an intuitive understanding of the organisation and the message needed to be conveyed by the PSA. The constructor must accumulate knowledge of the public service organisation for which the announcement will be created. This knowledge accumulation can be based on gathered information and general perceptions about the organisation for which the message is created. Initial approaches to the social issue highlighted in the televised public service message are largely open-ended, and at this stage the constructor can still choose how the final message will be framed. In creating a narrative for a PSA on speeding, for example, there are various perspectives the constructor can choose to frame the message in, such as the perspective of law-enforcers

or of the families of those who died in motor accidents.[17] A general narrative 'pattern', 'imaginary construct' or 'story' (Bordwell 1985) then begins to emerge, based on an intuitive understanding of the organisation.[18]

It is argued in this study that, in order for the constructor to choose an appropriate frame for the narrative, a general understanding of the possible varying viewpoints from which the message can be approached, must be explored. In the case of the PSA, the constructor of the message must gain a general understanding of the organisation for which the message will be created. Once this understanding of the organisation is gained, the constructor can begin to shape the narrative pattern in more particular ways. In this study, this structuring of the narrative pattern is based on elements of the 'umbrella message' (Radtke 1998:67).

2.2.1.2 The umbrella message as guideline in intuitive understanding

While the identification of a narrative pattern refers to a general understanding of the background out of which the constructor wishes to create a message, Radtke (1998) identifies certain narrative elements that are important to the development of the PSA in particular. These elements form part of what Radtke (1998:67) refers to as the message triangle, and begin the process of focussing the narrative to specifically serve the purposes of the organisation for which the message is created. This triangle consists of the three elements that, according to Radtke, form part of the construction of any effective public service message. These elements include:

- identifying the objective of the organisation for which the message is created
- the reasons why support for this particular organisation is important
- what request will be made that the viewer must respond to.

[17] In the Arrive Alive PSA, the constructors chose what could be regarded as an innovative approach to the perspective of the unfolding narrative. The story is told from the point of view of a trauma unit surgeon who must try and save the lives of those involved in motor accidents.
[18] This general 'story' that emerges is also referred to as the *fabula* (Bordwell 1985), which can be regarded as the general perspective the constructor applies in the narrative. The plot or *syuzhet* is based on the *fabula*.

The umbrella message, based on the elements outlined above, forms the basis for the universal message the public service organisation wants to convey, and is closely linked to the organisation's aims or mission (Radtke 1998:67). The umbrella message steers the narrative in a focussed single-minded direction, where the solutions offered by the message are necessarily limited and in line with the organisation's aims and objectives. Yet the identification of an official story (Schank 1995:32) or key message, supported by the application of symbolic modes, further defines the possible solutions to the problems posed and presents solutions as a packaged, 'fictionalised' reality.

2.2.1.3 Symbolic modes and the development of the key message

To further define the narrative beyond the intuitive understanding of the organisation and its message, the constructor must develop a strong core message that defines the problem or problems addressed by the public service organisation in a particular way. In this way, the constructor must begin to articulate a particular approach to the social issue highlighted that is directly relevant to the public service organisation, and develop an official story or what is referred to in this study as the key message. No longer merely general understanding based on a narrative pattern, official stories simplify complexities and frame social issues in such a way as to make this simplified version of the facts public. The narrative must be focussed, key elements must be highlighted and a central narrative must be articulated, and as is shown in the linear framing model, symbolic modes are often effective in these processes.

According to Schank (1995:32) the "overall intention of an official story is to make complex issues seem clearer than they otherwise might appear. When we don't have answers official stories give us those answers". One example referred to is that of a billboard showing a skeleton crawling into a body bag with the headline: "AIDS – It's a Hop in the Sack" (Schank 1995:32). In this example, AIDS as a complex social dilemma is simplified by means of symbolic modes that allow the transference of meaning. The word 'sack' is a metaphor for both a bed or a body bag. It serves as a striking reminder of the threat that AIDS holds. At the same time, 'hop in the sack' is an expression used to denote casual sex, and this framing cue would arguably be interpreted as such by the community at which the message is aimed. In the official

story, emotive and vivid symbolic language or symbolic modes are therefore employed to express the key message the organisation wants to get across, powerfully.

It is argued in this study that symbolic modes support the simplification of the underlying complexities of social dilemmas and can also act as linkages to the community addressed by the public service message. This is a major benefit of the application of symbolic modes in framing processes. Ultimately, however, there are cases where symbolic modes fail to resonate with the community to which the message applies. In these cases the community may have constructed alternate meanings or interpretations of the official public story. This may be the case in the South African example of the official story or key message regarding speeding, namely, 'speed kills'. This is a simplification of a complex issue for which many road users have alternate viewpoints, which they regard to be more believable. In such a case, people could tend to question the validity of this simplified message.[19] Constructors of PSAs must therefore be aware that applying different interpretive approaches to the narrative can lead to different interpretive outcomes, which can confirm, reframe or refute the existing official story or key message.

When framing and symbolic modes do find resonance within a community, the results can be powerful and startling, as in the example investigated by Nichols (1994), namely the beating of Rodney King in March 1991. The beating and the subsequent trial of officers in the Los Angeles Police Department, is an example of different interpretive frames colliding, and leading to different interpretive outcomes regarding the unfolding narrative. It is also an indication of the power of symbolic modes as linkages with a community outside the framed-in space of the television set.

[19] According to Crewe (1999), while there is a cultural shift occurring in South Africa regarding drinking and driving, with people designating drivers or staying over after parties, the same cannot be said of speeding. "Many otherwise responsible people, who are quite clear on the drinking and driving issue, still look for reasons and excuses to justify speeding". Crewe goes on to refer to ex-magistrate J Slabbert's views that the Arrive Alive focus on speeding is simplistic and diverts attention from more complex problems such as vehicle fitness, road rage, carelessness and drunken or inattentive pedestrian behaviour. Crewe also notes that "too many people when they think of speed, imagine the straight, empty, open freeway. Then they say: 'Hey, I'm not a cowboy. I'm in control. I can judge circumstances. 140km/h (or 160km/h? or 180 km/h??) is OK, so long as you know what you're doing … [but] the faster you go the less reaction time you have measured in milliseconds which can mean the difference between life and death. In other words, absolute speeding is a problem" (Crewe 1999).

Regarding the framing of the Rodney King beating, for the prosecution the raw video material became "raw evidence … an incontrovertible answer to a carefully formulated and often debated question: When are the police out of control? Answer: when they beat an errant motorist with metal clubs more than fifty times" (Nichols 1994:22). The defence, however, strove to place the video footage into a larger context that would negate the prosecution's operating interpretive frame in totality. They argued that there were certain mitigating events that took place before the videotaping of the beating began, and that "[t]hese events could be interpreted to portray Mr. King as a dangerous suspect who required felony arrest. The video then demonstrates the determined, casebook efforts by well-schooled cops to arrest a potentially violent man without resorting to deadly force (chokeholds and the gun)" (Nichols 1994:23). Nichols shows the subsequent trials (the first of which resulted in a verdict of innocent), to be a struggle between these two frames for interpretive dominance.

According to Watson (1998:211), the Los Angeles Riots remained, for a vast majority of Americans, "a mediated experience in which ironically, the visceral imagery and voices of reason were part of a conceptual frame that … primarily connotes amusement and entertainment". Yet, for some "[w]hat the insulated world of television could not contain was Rodney King's metonymic linkage to a far greater community. What was done to him had been done to others like him. Tele-atonement and grounded sensation could not contain the excess this metonymy invoked" (Nichols 1994:24). The Nichols example indicates the influence of metonymy on the framing of the circumstances surrounding the King case, in a way that allowed the mediated experience to lead to reaction and action. This example indicates that while the umbrella message guides the identification of the message content, symbolic modes such as metonymy can guide the framing perspective the viewer brings to the interpretation of the message that ultimately leads to action. In the televised PSA, symbolic modes can be visually expressed by applying the cinematic signs that are specific to the style of the medium. If the constructor can identify symbolic linkages that make the message relative to the greater community, the narrative can extend beyond the insulated domain of the framed-in space, to become socially relevant, as the Nichols example shows.

With reference to the televised PSA in particular, the constructor necessarily highlights a limited mediated representation of a social reality, narrowing the range of possible solutions to the problem highlighted in a focussed call to action. According to Radtke (1998:71), it is important to approach the construction of the PSA in innovative ways, and to "get rid of words that have been overused or that have no emotional punch, words that we have come to rely on too much". This warning can be regarded as an admonition to generally avoid accepted approaches or formal framing of the public service narrative, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the message.

Framing of the call to action is investigated in the following section, as most, if not all PSAs, convey some call to action to the viewer. The constructor controls the framing of this call to action by packaging the narrative in a particular way and offering a particular solution to the problems posed. This aspect of the narrative construction is related to the action or reaction that is elicited by the frame, as indicated in the linear framing model.

#### 2.2.1.4 Framing the call to action

The televised PSA mostly requires some form of action from the viewer, whether it be in the form of voluntary support, donations or other contributions to a cause. Sometimes the announcement merely requests the viewer's urgent attention to the issue highlighted, as is the case in the SPCA announcement, where the viewer is requested to "give a thought before you give a pet". At other times, a more specific request is discernible, as in the Arrive Alive PSA, where viewers are requested not to endanger their lives by speeding.

The constructor has a high degree of control over the element of sensegiving in the narrative, in choosing which units of meaning to show and in which way to portray them. By implication, a certain degree of congruency[20] must exist between the reproduction of the 'real' and the reality it portrays. Particularly in the case of the PSA, the constructor of the message must identify a strong message that defines the problem

[20] The degree of congruency between the mediation and the real can be divided into different phases, from reflection of reality to complete simulation, according to Baudrillard's four successive phases of the image: the image as reflection of a profound reality, a masking of a profound reality, a masking of the absence of a profound reality or the image can bear no resemblance to reality whatsoever and becomes a pure simulacrum (Baudrillard 1994:6).

faced by the public service organisation. The initial framing of the message will dictate the solution suggested by the message. The framing of the message remains flexible, however, as approaches to public service issues change over time. The issue of smoking is a good example. Health risks associated with smoking and secondary smoke inhalation have come under social scrutiny only fairly recently. Yet although there is currently general public consensus that smoking does carry major health risks, various organisations that focus on this social issue, can frame their key message taking different aspects into consideration. According to Radtke (1998:60-61):

> some people cast [or frame] cigarette smoking as a habit that is under the control of the individual – a health problem that only the individual can solve and for which the individual is responsible. Others make the point that cigarette smoking is a public health problem that should be looked at as the purview of policy makers – when cigarettes are taxed at a higher rate, people (especially teenagers) stop smoking because it is too expensive. A third way to look at the issue is that it is a problem that society must deal with by weeding it out of the popular culture as something attractive and sophisticated. This could be done by convincing businesspeople and artists who control popular culture to alter the portrayal of cigarette smoking.

Each of these messages frames the issue in a very particular way, and indicates specifically focussed solutions.

Finally, in developing a narrative specifically for the television format, the constructor must take into consideration the ways in which the narrative will be presented applying techniques specific to the format. The aspect of narrative framing as discussed above, is applicable to any medium, although the focus of this study is on the PSA narrative. The PSA narrative can be presented in a style[21] that lends itself specifically to the television format. Although Radtke devotes time to the investigation of different vehicles for the portrayal of the message, what is of particular importance in this study is the framing of the PSA in the television format. As the constructor of the message chooses this particular format, it is important to take note of the specifically cinematic nature of the unfolding narrative of the televised PSA. Possible approaches to metonymy and metaphor as part of the television format will also come under attention, as important aspects of the framing of authentic and invented interpretations of 'reality'.

[21] Bordwell (1985:50) notes that, although there are alternative uses for the term style, in the context of narration in film in particular, the term style simply refers to "the film's systematic use of cinematic devices".

In developing the umbrella message and the key message, the television format requires the narrative to be expressed as a sequence of moving images. This sequence is compiled using specific cinematic devices such as the camera, actors, lighting and angles that, in terms of the television narrative, and the televised PSA narrative, are combined to create invented interpretations of social realities.

2.2.1.5 The style of the medium

In the televised PSA, style refers to the application of cinematic devices (cf. Bordwell 1985) such as camera angles and editing that form an important part of framing a televised narrative. In the narratives of moving images, "nearly every composed shot contains movement, and is quickly superseded by another shot and another in a mobile sequence" (Maclachlan & Reid 1994:37), so that the narrative is constantly in the process of unfolding before the viewer. The framing that guides the interpretation of the narrative is constantly cued and constrained by the images that preceded. In media that employ moving images, the viewer cannot "skip a dull spot or linger on a rich one [or] jump back to an earlier passage" (Bordwell 1985:74) as would be possible in the reading of a novel, for example. The constructor can therefore effectively manipulate time in a narrative unfolding as moving images. The constructor has control over the order in which these images are shown, the duration of different images on the screen, as well as the frequency with which the same images are shown, and has various cinematic techniques available for this purpose.

Images can be presented in chronological order, or by means of flashback or flash forward. The constructor can control the length of time or duration that each image is shown in a sequence, thereby controlling the pace of the unfolding narrative by means of editing, and indicating ways in which the narrative should be interpreted. A quick succession of images could indicate the building up of tension, for example. Events can be shown to happen simultaneously, by means of split-screen, an off-screen sound or overlap of images. In the application of cross-dissolves or cross-fades that imply a metaphoric link between the images shown, the order in which the images appear, is also of importance, as the properties of the image that precede are transposed to the image that follows.

Finally, while the duration of airtime for the televised PSA is rarely more than 60 seconds, and most frequently 30 seconds, the constructor can signal time lapses in the narrative in various ways. The general information showing the story or *fabula* perspective, as well as the condensed, arranged plot or *syuzhet* that is based on the *fabula*, can unfold simultaneously, or within different time frames. This would mean that while the plot must unfold within a maximum of a 60 second time lapse allowed by the format time frame of the PSA, it could be based on a story that spans either mere seconds, or several hours, years or even generations. In a hypothetical example, the constructor could show a car racing down the street and a child stepping in front of a car, as if the event is unfolding in real time. The constructor can expand aspects of the unfolding story, so that its screen time takes longer than it would in real time, for example in a slow-motion shot. Often, however, especially in a format with such a short time frame as the PSA, the constructor must condense the action by employing ellipses. Actual story time is effectively reduced by means of editing, fast motion or cut-aways, leaving gaps in the actual story narrative, but remaining structured by the plot, in order to fit the format time frame. To drive home salient information regarding the narrative, the constructor can increase the frequency that certain images are shown, or specific objects are focussed on. The constructors of the Arrive Alive PSA, for example, use the frequency and duration of images on screen highly effectively.

In media that employ moving images, not only the temporal, but also the spatial dimension is of importance. In the framing perspective, various 'cues' exist regarding objects, depth and continuity in the spatial frame. These cues are coded in terms of a specific medium. Bordwell (1985:103) notes that film, and by implication media employing moving images, applies more spatial cues than is possible in other media and allows the medium to appear more 'realistic' in nature. Other than painting, for example, media employing moving images have not only the spatial *positioning* of objects and perspective at their disposal as narrative cues, but also the *movement* within space. In analysing the spatial dimension of film, Bordwell (1985:113) investigates the shot space, the editing space and the off-screen space that make up "the imaginary space of fiction". The shot space involves the arrangement of objects in the depth of the visual field. Certain objects occupy the foreground, midground or background of the shot space at any given time. Objects perceived as nearest to the viewer are referred to as

figure objects, while objects arranged to appear further from the viewer are referred to as ground objects.

What appears as figure objects or ground objects can be controlled by means of texture, atmospheric perspective, size, light and shade, colour, figure movement or camera movement. Textured surfaces come forward on screen, while smooth textures recede. Based on prototype frames for the sizes of people and objects, the smaller the object is in relation to its actual size, the further away it appears to be. Lighting reinforces figure/ground relations by suggesting surface texture and highlighting different planes; for example, distinct backlighting draws attention to this perspective plane. Regarding colour, intense, light colours appear to be closer than deeper, less saturated colours. Figure movement indicates the concrete layout of the space in which the narrative unfolds, while camera movement can modify this layout; for example, a panning shot can indicate the relation of an object to a wider spatial field.

The editing space allows the constructor the ability to control the continuity of the unfolding narrative. Images are normally edited to adhere to general continuity in the unfolding narrative. If, for example, a man leaves a room via a door to his left, the next shot must show the man entering the following shot from the left as well, in order to control the continuity from one shot to the next. Sound can operate spatially as well, with speech appearing to occupy the figure or foreground, while general noise occupies the ground. Muffled sounds becoming clearer indicates that whatever is producing the sound, is coming closer. The source of high-pitched sounds seems to be closer that lower pitched tones.

Finally, the off-screen space can be arbitrary and outside the imaginary world of the narrative (Bordwell 1985:99-130). Yet, when the off-screen space is included in the imaginary world of the unfolding narrative, it can be a key symbolic element, for example in horror films where the villain lurks just off-camera. There are various techniques available to the constructor to bring off-screen space into play, for example, the use of off screen sounds. In *The Surgeon,* sounds of off-screen monitors and background noise of the emergency room, authenticate the space in which the narrative unfolds. On a symbolic level, it could be argued that the off-screen space is employed to

signal the danger to the self as represented by the surgeon, whose face slips into the off-screen space at the end of the Arrive Alive message. These aspects will be elaborated on in the analysis of the message later in this study (see 4.3).

Framing social dilemmas, and posing possible solutions or interventions, is a mediated process. By selecting a frame in which the problem is shown, the creator of the message is necessarily highlighting the solution to the problem, if not completely eliminating other possible 'ways of seeing'. It is argued here that framing of the mediated reality is simultaneously metonymic and metaphoric in nature, in that the constructor of the message can only select 'part' of the whole 'reality' on which the packaged narrative is based. To achieve this, the constructor of the message can employ symbolic references that extend those narratological principles that are pertinent to the message and compress those which are not.

However, it is argued in this study that the packaged narrative of reality presented by the constructor, is always mediated, and therefore not a mirror of an objective reality. Rather, elements of reality and elements of fiction are mapped, in order for blurring of boundaries to occur. This approach is outlined briefly in the next section.

## 2.3 The integration of television narratives and the everyday: mirroring or mapping?

The term 'mirror' conveys the objectivist notion that "the human mind makes use of internal representations of external reality, the mind is a mirror of nature, and correct reason mirrors the logic of the external world" (Lakoff 1990:xii). The construction of conceptual categories has for a long time been regarded as one of the main ways in which we make sense of experience. Traditionally, meaning and rationality, and the categories employed to reason and ascribe meaning, are regarded as independent of and transcendent beyond the organism that conceptualises and reasons. Traditionally, this process is also regarded as literal, and therefore devoid of imaginative symbolic modes.
In this study, both 'the real' and 'the mediated' are regarded as constructed and reconstructed. Lakoff (1990:xiii-xiv) states that "thought [is regarded as] imaginative, in that those concepts which are not directly grounded in experience employ metaphor,

metonymy and mental imagery – all of which go beyond literal mirroring, or representation of external reality. It is this imaginative capacity that allows for abstract thought and takes the mind beyond what we can see and feel". It is argued here that constructors of the mediated frame of the PSA can employ framing as process, narratological principles (and style in particular), and symbolic modes that negotiate the blurred boundaries between real and mediated, and between public and private.

The term 'mapping'[22] also implies that there is a conceptual source from which information is taken, which is then projected onto a target. In this sense, the 'reality' of social dilemmas faced by public service organisations, can be regarded as the source of cues for interpretation of the target, namely the mediated reproduction.

Possible elements in framing the indexical signs of reality as narratives, have been explored in an effort to understand the interweaving of television and the everyday. It is important to investigate how these framing elements are applied to the packaging of narratives in media with moving images, such as film and television, because

> [i]t is only in our capacity to unpick the seams, and to understand the process of that incorporation – the interweaving of television and everyday – that we can begin to think critically about it. It is all very well … to talk of the complexity of those relationships. The complex, like the seamless, returns the problem to where it began: it consigns it to the invisible (Silverstone 1994:160).[23]

The televised PSA in particular is an example of a television format where the world the constructor puts before us must be recognised as a fragment of our own world, but employs cinematic interpretations of this reality in the approach to its narrative. By investigating a specific cinematic style, one can begin to identify the ways in which constructors of the televised PSA apply cinematic devices as a means of interpreting the reality that they wish to place before us. At the same time, it can be shown that cinematic interpretations can still be framed as fragments of a world that we

[22] Baudrillard (1994:1) regards the map as a metaphor for the final phase of congruency, where the landscape represented by the map "is no longer that of a territory, a referencial being, or a substance. It is a generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal". While this aspect of mediated representation is touched on in chapter 3, it is not regarded as the main focus of this study.

[23] Terms such as 'interweaving' and 'seamless' as applied by Silverstone, indicate the notion of the frame as related to 'fabric'. This interpretation of the term frame correlates more directly with notions of fluidity and malleability with which it is associated in this study.

recognise as part of our own reality. In the next chapter, metonymy and metaphor will be indicated as symbolic modes that can be applied successfully as indexical and cinematic framing cues.

# CHAPTER 3

## Symbolic modes and their function in framing the televised PSA

In this chapter, it is argued that metonymy and metaphor as symbolic modes can be successfully applied by the constructor of the televised PSA in the navigation of the blurred boundaries between the private and the public and between the real and the mediated. Metonymically, the mediated reconstruction of the real is always based on the principle that the part must stand for the whole. Metaphorically, mediated reconstruction must extend or embellish certain aspects in the narrative that are pertinent to the message, but must also condense those elements that are not particularly relevant. These mappings are not only applicable on the level of narrational 'story' or *syuzhet* construction, but can also be traced as being embedded within cinematic style or form, as embodied framing elements.

Both metonymy and metaphor imply a process of matching or mapping – either a part of a concept is matched to a whole, or similarities between otherwise disparate concepts are matched. Ultimately, symbolic modes help to simplify the complex world we must try and comprehend and make sense of. In general terms, analogy, where one thing is understood in terms of another, creates the foundation for a rich network of cognition linked to the understanding of the frame as a knowledge structure (cf. Holyoak & Thagard 1995). Metonymy and metaphor have been extensively investigated as modes for transference of meaning that extend beyond their linguistic application.[1] Cognitive linguistic research, for example, has shown both metonymy and metaphor to act as links between basic physiological conditions and actions, and their manifestation as basic emotions, ranging from fear to joy, and anger to sadness (Ungerer 2000:322).

[1] This approach to figurative devices can be regarded as "constructivist" in nature as opposed to "non-constructivist". These two approaches hold markedly different opinions regarding the importance of figurative language in general, and the metaphor in particular. "The constructivist approach seems to entail an important role for metaphors in both language and thought ... [b]y contrast, the nonconstructivist position has metaphors as rather unimportant, deviant, and parasitic on 'normal usage'" (Ortony 1979:2). In keeping with the constructivist view, framing theory supports the notion of a constructed reality (in opposition with the "non-constructivist" view that reality is objectively describable in clear and literal terms), and therefore the metaphor is regarded as a mental device that is of key importance (Ortony 1979:1-2).

In this way, both metonymy and metaphor are shown to extend beyond their linguistic functions and become crucial elements in the process of cognition. It is argued in this study that, as framing elements, these symbolic modes allow the constructor, as well as the viewer, the flexibility needed to generate rich cognition or abstract thought.

As noted previously, the myriad examples of metaphors that are created with the arrival of new technologies and communication media gives some indication of how symbolic modes can be instructive in the articulation of unfamiliar concepts. According to Madsen (1994:57), "metaphors are frequently used in computer communications to express operations in terms that are familiar to human users. The processes are described by giving them characteristics usually found in other objects, whether animate, inanimate, human, or animal". The use of symbolic modes, such as metonymy and metaphor, satisfies the need to articulate rich cognition, even in cases where existing knowledge or experience is lacking, as is the case when confronting new communication media.

It is this particular aspect of symbolic modes that is of importance in the investigation of the televised message. Although television is not a new communication medium, the televised message is necessarily mediated, so that direct experience is often lacking regarding that which is shown. The televised message is also primarily visual. It is argued in this study that both metonymy and metaphor can extend beyond their verbal functions as figures of speech, to be instructive in the interpretation of non-verbal acts as well (cf. Holyoak & Thagard 1995:213).

Symbolic modes allow the constructors of predominantly visual mediated messages the opportunity to articulate the key message in terms of imagery and symbolic modes familiar to the viewer. Holyoak and Thagard (1995:226) give an example of an American televised PSA where a metaphor was illustrated visually to articulate the negative impact of illegal drug use. A picture of an egg with the caption: 'This is your brain', was followed by a picture of an egg frying in a pan, with the caption 'This is your brain on drugs'.

As this example illustrates:

> [s]ymbolic representation … can be a powerful source of meaning in texts of all kinds … [and] are very useful to advertisers. Rather than the possible variations in meaning being a problem, they produce a useful fluidity. Loose associations are much more effective than watertight definitions. At the same time, symbols can be relied on to have predictable associations for particular groups, giving … a sense of belonging and recognition (Goddard 1998:114-115).

Ultimately, symbolic modes make methods available for interpretation of the world around us in clarified and simplified terms (Meyrowitz 1999:44; cf. Cohen & Stewart 1994). In the next section, the role of symbolic modes is shown to assist the constructor in the promotion of interaction *in* and *with* the narrative. This interaction may lead to reaction or action, often based on indirect requests made in the commercial in general, and in the PSA in particular. Finally, symbolic modes can assist the constructor of the PSA in overcoming certain obstacles related to the television narrative.

### 3.1 Symbolic modes and the televised PSA narrative

In exploring the link between the function of symbolic modes and narration in general, it is important to note how Schank (1995:24) relates this narration or storytelling to a process of mapping. Stories are not told at random, but are selected by those who tell them. The gist of any story is expressed in ways that can leave out certain points and embellish others. The words chosen (or the method of narration) may depend on the audience to whom the story is told, and the ideas expressed may depend on "reinterpretation of past events in light of events that have occurred since the story being told took place" (Schank 1995:25). As already suggested, in television, the creation of stories often relies on a process of taking existing stories from one domain and using them in another. The stories in the domain of the everyday, become the material for the news broadcast, the talk show and the advertisement (Schank 1995:25).

Furthermore, all narratives can be regarded as fictions to one extent or another. According to Schank (1995:194-195), these fictions are, however, "based on real experiences and are our only avenue to those experiences. We interpret reality through our stories and open our realities to others when we tell our stories". Stories, therefore, create strong bond between people who tell stories, and people to whom the stories are

told. Yet, "the fact that millions of people watch the same show at the same time [on television] is not lost on individual viewers. They can discuss what they saw with friends and co-workers the next day", so that this strong bond can be replicated, even if it is not a person, but a technological medium doing the storytelling.

The selection of elements of the narrative, reinterpretation, and the shifting domains of narration referred to above, are all elements related to the functions of symbolic modes. That example above shows the collective process of interpretation, often supported by the application of communally understood symbolism. In applying symbolic modes, the constructor of the televised narrative selects the images that are to be associated with the message, even if these images are mediated or fictionalised packages of reality. As televised images move, there is a constant process of reinterpretation involved. Symbolic modes can also be shown to facilitate interaction *in* the narrative – for example, between written text and symbols in print advertisements – and promote interaction *with* the narrative – for example, by the viewer of the television show relating the narrative to others.

Symbolic modes of representation are not only important in the construction of televised images in general, but in the commercial in particular. The egg as metaphor in the anti-drugs campaign, is a good example of the way in which the symbolic mode encourages interpretation, not only in the narrative, but with it. The egg that stands for the brain forms the basis of the key message of the PSA, and allows interaction *in* the narrative. Once this metaphor (your brain is an egg) is established as the guiding principle, it can be embellished to incorporate new narrative elements that still employ the same base metaphor (on drugs your brain is a fried egg). How can the metaphor employed here promote interaction with the narrative?

Holyoak and Thagard (1995:226) note that, following the campaign against illegal drugs described above, a poster was put up with a picture of an egg frying in a pan with bacon, with the caption 'This is your brain with a side of bacon'. In this example, the base metaphor prompted interaction with the narrative, with humorous results for those familiar with the initial frame as applied in the original PSA. This function forms part of the dynamic nature of symbolic modes that invites more open-ended interpretation.

As the example above indicates, in creating the PSA in particular, metonymy and metaphor can facilitate cross-referencing and the incorporation of new information into an existing frame both *in* the narrative itself, and *with* the narrative. Metonymy and metaphor aid the construction of any public service message and its persuasiveness,[2] and make it important enough to react to, respond to or at least acknowledge as a social dilemma that must be addressed by the constructor. According to Ungerer (2000:321):

> There are several reasons why advertisements are particularly suitable for analysis in terms of metonymy and metaphor. Products advertised are never really present in the advert; a picture or a brand name represents them, which metonymically stand for the item in question. Similarly, the act of buying, which is the ultimate goal of consumer advertising, is never executed in the advert, but is at best approached by requests like Buy X. Go get X right away. More sophisticated adverts take pains not to address the act of buying … and do not verbalize how desirable the purchase of the advertised item should be for the addressee. Yet there can be no doubt that this indirect kind of advertising works, indeed it is often more effective than the cruder more straightforward variants.

Just as the product is never present in the consumer commercial, so the 'reality' on which the PSA bases its message is never present in the public service message, but is used as a source for the narrative. The PSA does not necessarily show the act of supporting the organisation, but refers to indirect positive outcomes (of which the Tuks Rag PSA is an example), or avoidance of negative outcomes (of which the Arrive Alive PSA is an example).

It is argued in this study that metonymy and metaphor have the capacity to elicit a response in a viewer – who often gains experience of the PSA and the social issue it focuses on only vicariously (through the media). The application of symbolic modes can be powerful enough to overcome this obstacle. The increasing vicarious nature of our experience of the world is, however, not the only obstacle the constructor of the televised PSA is faced with. In any television commercial, obstacles in the construction of the televised narrative can often be overcome by the use of symbolic modes. Some of the obstacles faced by the constructor include:

[2] Rhetoric and rhetorical tropes or figures of speech such as metaphor and metonymy are regarded by "[m]ost contemporary semioticians … as falling within the domain of semiotics. The study of what Saussure called 'the role of signs as part of social life' could not exclude the art of persuasion" (Chandler 1994:sp).

1. Time constraints: (televised commercials are normally 30, 45 and 60 seconds in length). Symbolic modes such as metonymy, metaphor and mental imagery allow the efficient transference of meaning between successive images, even if the images follow up at a highly accelerated pace (the Arrive Alive advertisement serves as one example).

2. Viewer constraints: it is argued here that the average television viewer does not pay specific attention to the commercial or the PSA, and therefore the commercial must be powerful enough on an emotive and sensory level to claim the attention of the viewer. It is argued in this study that the application of symbolic modes makes a richer narrative content that makes the message more engaging to the viewer (cf. Radtke 1998).

In this section, the ways in which symbolic modes are instructive in the construction of the PSA narrative have been shown. The narrative as a process of mapping has been outlined, with specific reference to the televised message. The application of symbolic modes have been shown to promote interaction *in* and *with* the narrative with specific reference to the televised PSA. Finally, symbolic modes can assist the constructor in overcoming obstacles related to the televised messages. In the next section, a brief outline of the role of metonymy and metaphor is given. In investigating metonymy, the main focus is on the relation between this symbolic mode and the nature of the television medium, with specific reference to the PSA. Metaphor as symbolic mode is explored with specific reference to ways in which metaphor allows the articulation of various approaches to the analysis of the television medium, including the framing of symbolic meanings as embodied in nature.

### 3.1.1 Metonymy and the nature of the television medium

Metonymy is regarded in this study as "an umbrella term for indexical links, as well as having a narrower meaning of its own (as distinct from synecdoche)" (Chandler 1994:sp). According to Barcelona (2000:4), "metonymy has received less attention from cognitive linguists than metaphor, although it is probably even more basic to language and cognition". In this study, however, metonymy is regarded as ancillary to metaphor, as, other than in metaphor, only elements that are in some way associated, can substitute for one another (cf. Holyoak & Thagard 1995:213). Metonymy and the connection of elements by means of certain salient properties could also be regarded as the simplest form of metaphor where "metonymy often serves to create a kind of associative aura around a poetic metaphor" (Holyoak & Thagard 1995:213).

In accordance with Langacker (in Barcelona 2000:4), Barcelona regards metonymy as a "special case of activation. The metonymic mapping causes the mental activation of the target domain". One aspect of a complex cognition stands as reference to the whole. In the sentence: 'He loves the bottle' the word bottle refers not only to alcohol, but also to the more complex cognition of drinking alcohol excessively. The metonymy that activates this cognition makes up only a part of the whole (the bottle, generally only the container of alcoholic drinks, stands here for alcohol and refers indirectly to the even more complex cognition of alcoholism as well). Yet the reference remains directly and rationally linked to the whole (or within the same experiential domain).

When making use of metonymy, the constructor of the message utilises a direct link, connection or association that exists between the part and the whole. This indexical relationship can be based either on "substitution by adjuncts (things that are found together) or on functional relationships", connecting the part and the whole (Chandler 1994:sp). More specifically, "[i]n film study, metonymy means association of one object with another so that the meaning is transferred. The association can also be between an object and an action … films [and television] have to rely on the external to reveal the internal. Metonymy, using connotation … is a powerful mechanism for that" (Rudicell 1992:78).

The nature of the medium of television restricts the constructor in that only 'part of the whole' can be shown. Yet, because metonymy acts as a conceptual projection, where partially indicated units of meaning can activate cognition of the whole frame of reference, metonymy becomes a powerful tool at the disposal of the constructor. As is illustrated by the concept of framing in cognitive structures, there is always tension at the borders, attesting to the fact that what is left out of the frame, is equally instructive when deriving meaning, precisely because of its exclusion. Even the parts of the whole the constructor excludes from the message, are important in the conceptualisation of the message.

Metonymy is important to the constructor of the public service message as an organising element. The constructor of the message must select the parts that will evoke the whole, when choosing elements placed within the visual field or frame. Not all elements that could have bearing on the visual message can be included. In fact, any attempt at representing a social reality, must involve a process of selection, and therefore must involve some form of indexical or metonymic representation (Chandler 1994:sp). The constructor must identify key parts of the whole message that will aid conceptualisation and interpretation by the viewer of the commercial. In news broadcast, for example, only one or two scenes of destruction in a country at war, become indicators of a reality that the country at war is faced with.[3] Each element in the frame must be directly related to the message. These elements must be arranged within fixed borders of the television frame and the frame of interpretation chosen by the constructor. The border around the frame is simultaneously restrictive and helpful to the constructor of the televised PSA.

Metonymy has been shown to be related to the nature of the television medium. Metaphor, however, is regarded in this study as one of the key symbolic modes that facilitate the cognition of rich imagery. Metaphor can be identified as a conceptual filter for the simplification of complex mental concepts and ideas. It has been noted that symbolic modes, metaphor in particular, allow the articulation of complex concepts in

[3] This example shows the danger inherent in metonymic substitution, or what is referred to as the 'metonymic fallacy', "whereby the represented part is taken as an accurate reflection of the whole of that which it is taken as standing for" (Chandler 1994:sp).

simplified terms. The concept of 'the media' is one such complex concept related to this study, where the focus is on the television medium in particular. In the next section, metaphor as related to the analysis of communication media in general is investigated.

### 3.1.2 Metaphor and approaches to the analysis of communications media

The fact that metaphors can be applied in answer to the question: "What is media?" (Meyrowitz 1999:44) indicates the success of the metaphor as a tool for the simplification of abstract ideas. Three 'images of media' or metaphors identified by Meyrowitz (1999:44) are regarded to have an underlying influence on all current studies of communication technologies. The aim of an outline of these metaphors in this study, is twofold: it gives an indication of the different interpretive approaches to media, but it also highlights the key function of metaphor as a means of articulating rich cognition.

The first metaphor identified by Meyrowitz, "medium-as-vessel/conduit" highlights content analysis of media messages. The second, "medium-as-language", highlights the application of structural codes and manipulation of elements in the creation of a medium-specific message. Finally, "medium-as-environment" focuses on the study of the environment in which the specific medium of communication operates. Meyrowitz (1999:47-48) notes that these metaphors can be successfully integrated to form an understanding of communications technology. Each of these will now be discussed as indicators of possible metaphoric interpretations of the media as it is has come to be understood and interpreted in everyday life.

#### 3.1.2.1 The medium-as-vessel metaphor

The medium-as-vessel/conduit metaphor forms the foundation of studies that examine any content related topics. This metaphor implies that media hold and send information that can be studied and analysed. Topics relevant to the medium-as-vessel metaphor could include the study of the way in which different media influence the message in different ways, studies of genre content, the identification of latent content structures such as ideology that inform message content, how media content is shaped by forces within the industry, and political or economical impetus shaping media content.

Message content guides individuals' social and natural responses to the media message. The first step in basic content analysis seems to be a general evaluation of whether the message is 'good or bad', or positive or negative. This is regarded as a primitive or intuitive response on which fast and accurate assessments depend. For the constructor of the PSA, the positive or negative framing of the message content is of particular importance, as it influences the way in which the viewer will perceive and react to the information in the message. Many studies specifically investigate the effect of negatively and positively framed messages on viewers of the PSA (cf. Levin & Geath 1988; Meyerowitz & Chaiken 1987). According to Reeves and Nass (1996:127), "negativity, mediated or not, is powerful, riveting, and memorable. And these effects are automatic, so important to survival that they don't require much thought or analysis". Most of the PSAs analysed in this study rely on negative framing to make the message powerful, riveting and memorable. *The Surgeon* is possibly the best example of the effect of negative framing, where the message targets the viewers automatic responses to negativity in order to promote 'survival on the road'.

3.1.2.2 The medium-as-language metaphor

The second metaphor identified by Meyrowitz (1999:45) is the medium-as-language metaphor. The focus in this metaphor is on the "grammatical" structure of media, or a structuralist[4] approach to media analysis. The message is explored as a structure constructed in the same way as a sentence would be structured grammatically. Changing the units of signification in a sentence would lead to altering meanings in linguistic messages. Similarly, changing units of signification in the visual message (in the television medium, for example) will influence the meaning of the visual message. 'Grammatical' variables can include elements such as camera angles, editing elements,

[4] Semiotics as a branch of the structuralist approach involves the study of signs and sign systems in communication. Framing of the message as a "grammatical" construct makes it possible to identify the independent "grammar" of different art forms such as photography and cinema. This approach makes it possible to analyse each form of communication based on its own structures of signification. In terms of film, or by implication television:

> semiologists believe that the shot – the traditional unit of construction in film [and television] – is too general and inclusive … The symbolic sign, they argue, is the more precise unit of signification. Every cinematic [or televisual] shot consists of dozens of signifying codes that are hierarchically structured … semiologists decode cinematic [and televisual] discourse by first establishing what the dominant signs are, then analysing subsidiary codes (Gianetti 1999:459).

such as dissolves from one image to a following image, actors chosen to portray the roles of characters, or sound effects. Manipulation of these elements forms the central focus of the media-as-language metaphor.

Historically, the written word gained precedence over the visual (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:18). Records of transactions formerly took on iconic form, for example, each notch in a stick representing objects traded and owned. Visual symbols developed that 'stood for' objects, and these symbols eventually became absorbed as letters of the alphabet. This illustrates the link that exists between the spoken word, visual image, and later the written word. Yet the written word gained precedence over other forms of representation in certain cultures and societies, with the result that verbal and visual representation gradually lost the potential as independent forms of representation. In these cultures, the image came to represent an "uncoded replica of reality" (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:18), gradually weakening the independence of the image as a means of representation, so that today no commonly applied theoretical framework exists for the analysis of visual communication (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:18).

Three main schools of thought influenced the development of semiotic theory: firstly the Prague School developed from work by the Russian Formalists, defining and applying systems of signs that could fulfil the same communicative functions across various communications disciplines ranging from linguistics to the study of art, theatre and cinema. Secondly, the Paris School incorporated terminology that defines semiotic structure. Semiotic terminology is easily recognisable to any student of media studies, with terms such as "signifier" and "signified", "icons", "indexes" and "symbols" that are widely applied as one approach to media and communications analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:5). Thirdly, in the study of social semiotics, although individual framing processes may influence personal signification, interpretation or appropriation of meaning has a fundamentally 'social base'. In this study, visual communication is similarly regarded as an independently constructed form of communication that is always coded (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:11-17). Social semioticians do not regard visual signification as unbounded, as a "message without a code" that needs the support of structures such as the linguistic message to fix the meaning of the image within linguistically analysable boundaries (Barthes 1977:17).

Although semiotics developed from the theories of different schools of thought, the central element in the study of semiotics is the 'sign' as a key element of analysis. In any given text[5] there are certain signs that can be interpreted by means of an established sign system for the discipline in which the message is communicated. In keeping with the social semiotic approach, Carter (1990:67) regards semiotics as a means to illustrate the characteristic of human social life that requires the ability to communicate with the help of signs. Carter (1990:67) notes that this "general level of communication implies that human beings are able to lead an inter-subjective existence by being able to transmit information via the various languages available in a given culture … [T]o communicate we do not simply engage in thought transference … [I]t is the existence of codes and their material manifestation in signs, which enables the process of transmission to take place. Thus codes are, by their very nature, shared processes". Carter also points out an important aspect of the semiotic theory, namely the collective nature of communication in general and the transmission of codes and signs in particular. In this study, the communal nature of interpretive processes is highlighted in its connections with the collective application of symbolic modes.

Social semiotics investigates visual communication or any "visual component of a text [as] an independently organized and structured message - connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it" (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:17). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) mention the fact that metaphor is mostly perceptible in its linguistic application. Therefore the metaphor does not only influence the way in which the individual and society communicate, but also influences behaviour patterns and daily cognition of experience. In this way, the metaphor extends its linguistic boundaries. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:156), linguistic metaphors "have entailments through which they highlight and make coherent certain aspects of our experience. A given metaphor may be the only way to highlight and coherently organize exactly those aspects of our experience".

This is perhaps one of the main reasons why framing as theoretical approach often uses references to linguistic and semiotic terms and constructs to explain its workings. The

[5] The term text refers in this sense not only to written texts but to any "representations and communicative acts that cohere into [a] meaningful whole" (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996:14).

act of framing is widely applicable in any communicative process involving signification and interpretation of meaning, such as verbal communicative exchanges or visual signs (cf. Maclachlan & Reid 1994; Lehrer & Kittay 1992; Tannen 1994; Arbib 1987). According to Lehrer and Kittay (1992:4), frames are "either created by or reflected in the language". The disciplines of framing and "interpretation [are, however] clearly more than just an application of the linguistic knowledge necessary to decode words and to make connections between them and the sentences in which they are imbedded" (Maclachlan & Reid 1994:3). Framing is linked to semiotics and language studies and the study of meaning in the context of communication and communicative exchanges. The association between linguistics and approaches to analysis of media, could be linked to "a sea-change in academic discourse [in general], which has been visible in many disciplines, has been dubbed 'the rhetorical turn' or 'the discursive turn'. The central proposition of this contemporary trend is that rhetorical forms are deeply and unavoidably involved in shaping of realities" (Chandler 1994:sp). Finally, the identification of a "grammar" of visual images implies that the visual message can be read as a written text is read.

Nonetheless, Gozzi (1998a:351) points out several reasons why the metaphor that defines television content as 'text' is "arguably flawed". According to Gozzi it is preferable to avoid the correlation between the reading of conventional text and the analysis of television content, because the metaphor hides a wide range of differences between the act of reading a written text and the act of watching television. The printed text is silent and requires the restructuring of the authorial voice as well as appropriate imagery in the mind of the reader (Ong in Gozzi 1998a:351). Television is an audio-visual medium that does not involve reconstruction either of narration or imagery. Written text "stands still" (Gozzi 1998a:351), while the television message is dynamic and moves on regardless of whether the message is followed by the audience or not. Reading is regarded as an acquired skill, whereas television does not require a great amount of learning in order to follow it. Finally, reading text requires greater levels of concentration (Gozzi 1998a:352). This assumption is confirmed by a study undertaken by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990:135) where adults evaluated various randomly assigned activities that formed part of their daily routines, over a two-week period. The results indicated that "reading is significantly more demanding cognitively: it is more

active and involves more alertness, more concentration, more challenges, and more skills than television viewing" (cf. Gozzi 1998a:352). Bordwell (1985:33), however, questions the assumption that reading is a more intricate achievement than, for example, the comprehension of images that move: "[i]t would be surprising if a film [or television programme], with its mixture of visual, auditory, and verbal stimuli, did not demand active and complex construction" on the part of the viewer. In this study, the viewer is regarded as an active participant in the complex construction of meaning in the televisual message.

3.2.1.3 The medium-as-environment metaphor

The medium-as-environment metaphor encompasses the analysis of how the application of a specific medium to portray a message, influences the meaning on a micro- and macro-level. On micro-level, environment influences the nature of the message; consequently, conveying a message through the medium of radio will have a different meaning than the same message on television. On macro-level, environment has far-reaching social implications. According to Meyrowitz (1999:46): "Television – in spite of its often conservative and reactionary content, perhaps even more so because of it – has made many people less willing to stay in their old places – physical and social". The blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private sphere seems therefore to be related to the medium-as-environment metaphor.

The three metaphors identified by Meyrowitz serve as background to understanding how the cognition of the media is currently structured and simplified in order to facilitate analyses of the various media. In this way, metaphor is treated

> as central to the task of accounting for our perspectives on the world: how we think about things, make sense of reality, and set problems we later try to solve. In this … sense, 'metaphor' refers both to a certain kind of product – a perspective or frame, a way of looking at things – and a certain kind of process – a process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence (Schön in Ortony 1979:254).

The previous section gave an indication of how metaphor can be instructive in articulating various perspectives on communications media and the ways in which the media generate meanings that are analysable within the context of guiding metaphors. There is, however, another approach to media images and metaphor not touched on by Meyrowitz, which warrants investigation as it relates to the framing of meaning in particular, and could be explored in relation to the generation of meaning in the television message.

According to Johnson (1987:124), "[t]he fact of our physical embodiment gives a very definite character to our perceptual experience. Our world radiates out from our bodies as perceptual centres from which we see, hear, touch, taste and smell our world ... from our central vantage point we focus our attention on one object or perceptual field after another as we scan our world". In this sense all meaning, imagination and reason have a distinct bodily basis. Metaphor in particular, and metonymy to a lesser degree, can be shown to be embodied expressions of bodily movements and perceptual interactions.[6] In the following section, an approach to the style of the television medium, by framing of the mediated as based on embodied metaphors, is investigated.

3.2 Meaning based on embodied metaphors, and the style of the television medium

Bordwell (1985) shows that particularly when analysing a film narrative, the viewer brings to the act of interpretation certain schemata or frames according to which that which is interpreted, is arranged. The schemata or frame forms a "recurrent pattern" (Johnson 1987:29) on which the viewer bases inferences regarding the narrative. Johnson refers to this recurrent pattern as 'embodied' or 'image' schema.

In Johnson's (1987:29) view, schema (or frames) form patterns of rich images or mental pictures and operate on a level of generality above that of concrete images. To illustrate this point, Johnson gives the following example: if one is asked to remember a specific

[6] While Johnson's (1987:30) approach also regards schema (or in the context of this study, frames) as "malleable, so that it can be modified to fit many similar, but different, situations that manifest a recurring underlying structure" and rejects the notion that schemas can be static, he regards the underlying structure as an embodied or image schema. Johnson (1987:19) specifically notes that this approach does not regard the schema (or for the purposes of this study, the frame) as a cluster of knowledge that provides a skeleton structure on which the elaboration of concepts are based. Instead he focuses on the embodied nature of experiential inferences of the world around us.

person's face, a *mental image* will form in the mind based on specific, detailed facial features. The image schema or frame operates on the more general level of basic facial features: lines for eyes and the nose, the general curve of the face, and so on. This image schema can be applied in a variety of contexts to identify a variety of faces. Johnson identifies a range of experiential image schema, patterns or in the terms of the study, the frames. What emerges is that these structures often seem to be kinesthetic in nature, thus related to movement, manipulation and interactions in space (Johnson 1987:29).

In order to show how embodiment relates to the media, and the television medium in particular, it is argued here that image schema or frames with an embodied basis for the interpretation of meaning, could also guide the interpretation of meaning in a mediated context. In this way mediated images could be regarded as being *embodied* with the body as centre and key basis of the experiential meaning, even if the meaning is inferred based on experience gained vicariously.

The body can act as "agent in its own world construction" (Lyon & Barbalet in Csordas 1994:48). In this way, the body forms the basis of interpretation of meaning in the everyday world. The body as basis for interpretation of the everyday operates both on metonymic and metaphoric levels. Metonymy is shown as referential in nature in that one entity can stand for another, for example: "we need good heads on this project" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:36). A body part (the head) stands for a whole (a person), in this case, an intelligent one. Yet, it is not only the referential function of metonymy that guides the way we interpret meaning in the everyday. What is of importance is that one particular *embodied* characteristic of the individual, in the case of the example, intelligence, is associated with the head. Metonymy becomes a 'gestalt perception' related to the sense that the body is a whole with parts that carry different associations that goes beyond the literal (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980). It is illustrated in this study that embodied part-whole schemas or frames are equally applicable to interpretation of everyday 'reality' and interpretation of mediated reconstruction of the 'real'.

Whereas metonymy is referential, metaphor functions on the principle that one entity is understood in terms of another entity, for example *time is (understood in terms of) money*. Metaphor can also allow the organisation of a whole system of concepts with

respect to another whole system. Lakoff and Johnson (cf. 1980) refer to these metaphors as orientational, with important emphasis on spatial orientation. The movement, orientation and function of the physical body in space as a system can act as a basis for interpretation of experience.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:17) this is indeed the case, as "most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors". It is suggested in this study that embodied spatialisation metaphors are equally applicable in the interpretation of the everyday and in the interpretation of a mediated reconstruction of the everyday. On a literal level, a waving hand on the television screen is still regarded as part of a body, even if it is a mediated representation. The constructor of the mediated reality can employ part-whole schemas or frames figuratively as well. A character with a wine bottle in his hand becomes one element in an unfolding narrative. If a character is shown in a restaurant with friends, the wine bottle could stand for festivity and celebration. If a character is shown lying on a pavement with the same wine bottle in his hand, the bottle could come to stand for the dangers of excessive drinking or alcoholism.

The camera becomes the point-of-view of the constructor of the narrative, the eye of an "ideal observer". If the perspective shown is the eyes of an ideal observer, the camera movements "could be compared to bodily mobility: a pan or a tilt represented a turning of the head, a tracking shot corresponded to striding forward or travelling back" (Bordwell 1985:10). Essentially, the camera mimics or mirrors the actions of negotiating everyday life with corresponding moving images. In this way, one could regard the television frame as the periphery of the television screen itself. In the same way that the frame of a painting demarcates the picture plane from the periphery and the proscenium frames the stage, the camera becomes the device that fixes a perspective or 'a point of view' that is confined to its allocated frame, whether it be television or film.

These examples show that in media that employ moving images, different elements within the image can stand for whole concepts. In addition, the image that precedes is linked to images that follow it. Not only the images themselves, but the ways in which these images are linked, are instructive to the understanding of how they connect on an

interpretive level. An image sequence of a drunken man lying on the pavement, for example, could slowly fade into an image sequence of a young boy running in a vineyard. The slow fade would most likely indicate that the drunken man is dreaming or having a flashback to his youth, and that the young boy stands for the drunken man. If, however, the image sequence of the drunken man is cross-cut with an image sequence of a boy on the telephone, enquiring about his father's whereabouts, we might assume that the man on the phone is the drunken man's son. The relational link between images also has a narrational element, and links depend on the nature of the 'story' the constructor wants to tell.

Lakoff and Johnson (cf. 1980) identify the following orientational metaphors that indicate an embodied approach to spatial orientation:

- "in-out" orientational metaphors (containment)
- "central-peripheral" orientational metaphors (centrality)
- "up-down" orientational metaphors (verticality)
- "near-far" orientational metaphors (depth perception).

According to Johnson (1987:21):

> Our encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of our bodily experience. We are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers ... If we look for common structure in our many experiences of being in something, or for locating something within another thing, we find recurring organisation of structures: the experiential basis for in-out orientation is that of spatial boundedness. The most salient sense of boundedness seems to be that of three-dimensional containment (i.e., being limited or held within some three-dimensional enclosure, such as a womb, a crib, or a room). If we eliminate one or two of these dimensions, we get equally important two- and one dimensional containment.

Bodily orientation in space becomes the source domain from which inferences are drawn about certain target domains. The movement of the camera within space can be shown to have implications as metaphoric meta-message, which is linked to the embodied nature of metaphor as based on spatial orientation.

The film or television frame defines the contained space that makes up the 'world' in which the moving images convey a narrative. The frame is a method of selecting and

delimiting the subject and editing out irrelevancies, presenting only a part-of-the-whole. The frame combines the materials it encloses and imposes order on them. The frame is essentially a technique that allows the constructor to confer special attention on those elements important to the visually unfolding narrative. The film or television frame can become a metaphor for other enclosures as well (Gianetti 1999:46). It is thus argued in this study that a correlation exists between embodied orientational schemas of the everyday, and the framing and spatial orientation of moving images within the television and film frame.

In keeping with the spatial metaphors identified above, central-peripheral spatial metaphors indicate centrality as an intrinsic centre of interest, for example, *Bill was the centre of attention.* According to Johnson (1987:124), "[i]n my 'world' some things, events, and persons are more important than others – they loom larger and are more central to my interactions. Others are relatively peripheral at a given point in time".

Each of the major sections of the film or television frame can act as a meta-message that can be investigated as being derived from embodied spatial orientation. In this way, the centre of the frame is often reserved for those objects or characters that are central to the narrative of the constructor of the message. Objects placed on the left or right edges of the frame are the furthest removed from the central action and can suggest insignificance (Gianetti 1999:51). Spatial metaphors based on verticality indicate that 'up' is 'good' and 'down' is 'bad'. This vertical orientation has an embodied basis. In the example *'I am feeling down'*, a drooping physical posture is associated with depression; similarly, the orientational metaphor '*things are looking up*' has its embodied basis in that the physically erect posture indicates happiness and health. Once again, the spatial arrangement of elements in the film or television frame follows this approach. According to Gianetti (1999:50), the placement of an object at the top of the frame can carry positive connotations such as power, authority and aspiration, while placement of an object at the bottom of the frame can carry negative associations such as vulnerability, or powerlessness.

Embodied schemas or frames indicate the notion that basic concepts for the understanding of the everyday emanate from the physical (or phenomenological) experience of 'being in the world', and can also be metonymically and metaphorically extended to communicate abstract meanings in mediated messages. A connection between the orientation of the camera within the frame and its metaphoric extensions of the everyday indicates the possibility that the camera does not merely mimic bodily movements. A link between orientational schemas of the everyday and orientational schemas applied to mediated images could indicate the possibility that the constructor of the mediated message is in effect applying framing techniques that become an extension of physical experience.

In this chapter, it was argued that we interpret reality through television's stories and that television opens up new realities when it tells its stories. Furthermore, the selection, reinterpretation and interaction with these stories are related to the functions of symbolic modes. Television can also become an extension of our bodies: it collects stories from places where we cannot be or cannot go, bringing its public stories into our personal space, thereby blurring the boundaries between the public and the private. De Kerckhove (1996:4) notes how this medium has influenced and changed the nature of private space: "If books (especially the reading of novels) fostered and sustained the development of private minds in public space, television has done the exact reverse, namely to bring a public mind into private spaces. TV screens are collective extensions of our individual minds". This is in keeping with McLuhan's (1964:3) notion that "[d]uring the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electronic technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned. Rapidly we approach the final phase of the extensions of man – technological simulation of consciousness".

The blurring of the distinction between the mediated and the everyday, between the public and the private, is in evidence in the investigation of various media in this image-saturated age. In the television commercial in particular, 'reality' has become a sign in itself, and advertisers purposefully modify these signs of 'reality' technically, in order to draw attention to the codes of media realism as a form of signification.

Reference has already been made to the role of the constructor in the choosing of elements that indicate an unmediated reality. In investigating this technical modification of the everyday, it is necessary to note that contemporary theorists regard this vulnerability as ultimately indicating a fusion into a state of hyperreality (cf. Baudrillard 1994), where what is real and what is mediated become indistinguishable. The heightened realism of hyperreality is not an attempt at authenticating the mediated reality in any way. Both the creators and participants in the hyperreal domain are fully aware of its constructed nature, leading to a

> self-conscious [awareness] of its artificiality [that] opens numerous possibilities. Hyperreality is a place (or area, domain, field, etc.) where all the paradoxes meet and co-exist, side by side. The paradoxes are made obvious (apparent) through the media … The media input enables people to see (and become aware of) themselves as others. The nature of contemporary technology (Netscape, film, TV, video) makes this imagery extremely widespread (especially in the "West"). It also makes all the paradoxes more apparent (Boskovik 1999: 3-4).

The awareness of the artificiality of media imagery that Boskovik refers to, does not necessarily negate the possibility that these media images can highlight social dilemmas or involve viewers to such an extent that it brings about action and reaction in them. Even obviously artificially created computer-generated imagery could act as technological extensions of man that could enter the sphere of social relevance and commentary. This possibility is well illustrated by means of the virtual character, Cassie Fenwick, who appeared on South African television in 2001. A fully animated and interactive character created as a promotional hostess for corporate events, she also featured as a presenter of the show *Cassie Live,* in which topics related to sexuality were discussed on a weekly basis (Lilje 2002). It is in this capacity that the virtual star is arguably best remembered. According to Lilje (2002), one of the developers of the technology behind the virtual character's creation, various matters hampered the success of the television show such as mixed reactions regarding the show's contentious subject matter and budget constraints.

More importantly however, Lilje (2002) notes that "from a guest point of view we found that Cassie was extremely easy to talk to. People do not seem afraid to bare their soul to a virtual character … perhaps because they can be switched off!" The possibility of employing the virtual character in social intervention cases has been mooted: "There

are plans to use characters like Cassie in juvenile interrogation, e.g. in a child abuse case. Kids have no problem talking to something [sic] that can't hurt them" (Lilje 2002).

The social nature of the public service message is well suited to the medium of television. The communicator must create a 'zone' or frame that is fabricated from fragments of a recognisable world and fragments of cinematic invention, aided by many unique *instruments*, such as the camera and set, *material* and *techniques* (Tarroni in Metallinos 1996:167) that can be manipulated, to produce the desired message orientation. The creation of a frame that is grounded in the recognisable world, aids the blurring of boundaries between television technology and the everyday, which in turn blurs the boundaries between the public and the private, the real and the mediated. Finally, the application of symbolic modes is often employed to highlight certain everyday associations made between the message and its meaning, and hide those everyday associations that are not particularly relevant to the core message. In the following chapter, a general outline of each organisation for which the PSA under discussion was created, is given.

Three elements of the umbrella message are identified, which enables the investigation of the organisation's aims and objectives. This information could be regarded as necessary for gaining an intuitive understanding of the organisation and its needs, the core around which the umbrella message revolves. The structure of the key message and the identification of symbolic modes within the narrative structure that support the key message, can then be identified and discussed. In most cases, the PSAs analysed contain examples of what could be regarded as embodied metonymies and metaphors that are linked to an analysis of the style in which the narrative is portrayed (in the case of the televised message, this style is based on cinematic cues). Each PSA is analysed applying these criteria. The final PSA discussed, *Reach Out and Give* (see 5.1) is analysed from the perspective of personal involvement by the author of this dissertation in the construction of a televised PSA.