Cinematographs, Crystal Valves and American Cultural Imperialism: the Role Played by IW Schlesinger's Media Organisations at the Genesis of South Africa's Film and Radio Industries, 1913-1937

By

Martin Coetzee

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Supervisor: Dr Gairoonisa Paleker

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This dissertation is dedicated to Morgainne, Ed, Lucia and Nisa.

Most of all, it is dedicated to the dust. May it gather in peace.

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to construct a corporate biography of Schlesinger with a view to establishing the extent to which he and his media empire gave effect to American cultural imperialism. In particular, the study will assess the extent to which this statement is true of his activities in the film and radio industries. American cultural imperialism had many proponents and unique forms around the world. This study is premised on the argument that Schlesinger may have been situated at the nexus of American cultural imperialism, mass media and South Africa. Enough is known about the man to begin assessing how and to what degree factors such as his citizenship, his continuous travels between South African and America or his reportedly Americanised values and personality may have manifested in either the business models of his media enterprises or in the content they produced.

List of Abbreviations

ATT:	African Theatres Trust
AFP:	African Film Productions
ACT:	African Consolidated Theatres
ABC:	African Broadcasting Company
ART:	African Realty Trust
SABC:	South African Broadcast Corporation
BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
AAT:	African Amalgamated Theatres
AFT:	African Films Trust
NRC:	Native Recruitment Council
MCCC:	Mines' Compound Cinema Circuit
MGM:	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
NAACP:	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NBC:	National Broadcasting Company
FCC:	Federal Communication Commission

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Introduction

I.W. Schlesinger had an undoubtedly impactful life. The American-born tycoon made his name and fortune in early 20th Century South Africa by exploiting his inarguably keen business instincts. Among his many successes Schlesinger has been acknowledged for bringing both the local film and radio industries in South Africa to commercial viability.[1] More importantly, he has been credited with facilitating the import of American values into South African daily life through his various businesses.[2] It therefore stands to reason that Schlesinger's business interests could have acted as a conduit through which American values could be imparted to a receptive South African public. It might even be argued that Schlesinger was destined to be a harbinger of such cultural change if one considers some relevant external factors that may have made this likely. Considering he never surrendered his American citizenship, routinely holidayed back home, and sent his son to university in America, it can be asserted that his American heritage was significant to the man. This significance was exemplified by Schlesinger's stationery, of all things. His pens were always inscribed 'I.W. Schlesinger, American Citizen.'[3]

The purpose of this study is to construct a corporate biography of Schlesinger with a view to establishing the extent to which he and his media empire gave effect to American cultural imperialism. In particular, the study will assess the extent to which this statement is true of his activities in the film and radio industries. American cultural imperialism had many proponents and unique forms around the world. This study is premised on the argument that Schlesinger may have been situated at the nexus of American cultural imperialism, mass media and South Africa. Enough is known about the man to begin assessing how and to what degree factors such as his citizenship, his continuous travels between South African and America or his reportedly Americanised values and personality may have manifested in either the business models of his media enterprises or in the content they produced. Throughout his life, Schlesinger travelled frequently between South Africa and America. According to at least one biographer, the purpose of

[1] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* Howard Timmins: Cape Town, 117 & 171.
[2] Kaplan, I. (1986), Mhlambi, T.M. (2015), Rosenthal, E. (1987) and Gutsche, T. (1972).
[3] Kaplan, I. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* C. Struik Publishers: Cape Town, 148.

his visits was merely to avoid inclement South African weather.[4] However, this back and forth between the two nations implies a cultural exchange. This certainly means that such an exchange may have flowed in both directions. As with all cultural exchanges, the reception of new cultural programming was faced with various limitations. This study will therefore discuss forces that pushed back against Schlesinger's particular cultural influence. By taking into account aspects like race and British imperialism as influences on Schlesinger's media empire, the study will also seek to address the limitations of the hypothesis that Schlesinger acted, at times, as a conduit of American Imperialism into South Africa.

Regardless of Schlesinger's intent on the matter, it must be acknowledged that his businesses introduced some South Africans to innovative new ways of doing many things. These included buying insurance, general goods and especially for the purposes of this study, accessing and consuming entertainment. This study will focus exclusively on Schlesinger's impact on the newly established mass media industries of radio and film in early 20th century South Africa. Since the advent of the printing press, mass media institutions have been fundamental in disseminating cultural norms and values to societies. At the beginning of the 20th century the emergence of the radio and film industries in South Africa greatly intensified the ability of mass media to preach its gospel, whatever that was, to new audiences across the Union. In their infancy, these industries were not saturated with competitors. It truly was a case of the 'first in' exerting the most influence and getting the most public exposure. As such, Schlesinger's intimate involvement in the establishment of these industries, and by extension his access to the eyes and ears of many in South Africa, is certainly worthy of investigation. This is especially necessary in order to make more conclusive assessments about the role of mass media and by extension cultural organisations in the historical expansion of American imperialism in South Africa.[5]

This study will draw links between American cultural imperialism, framed primarily as the exportation of its economic and cultural values, and the media empire of I.W. Schlesinger.

[4] Kaplan, I. 1986. *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* 147.
[5] Reynolds, G. 2003, 'Image and Empire: Anglo-American interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1921-1927,' in *South African Historical Journal,* vol. 40, 90-92.

In order to draw this connection, it will focus on two particular industries in which Schlesinger was active, being radio broadcasting and the film industry. In the narrative histories of these industries, or at the very least of their genesis, Schlesinger looms large. His involvement in them is described in brief below. This study will illustrate how in this instance, by design or not, Schlesinger had a disproportionate influence over two industries that were intimately related in their ability to diffuse information into the public. Rosenthal named Schlesinger 'the Great Communicator' in a chapter title of his book.[6] This descriptor is apt, because he truly was heard and seen, albeit indirectly, by many people.

Schlesinger's first foray into the entertainment and media industries came with his establishment of the African Theatres Trust Ltd (ATT) in 1913. This company first incorporated the bankrupt Empire Theatres Company under ATT in 1913. Soon after, ATT subsumed African Amalgamated Theatres into its organization. In doing this, ATT managed to create a very powerful monopoly over the film industry, leaving very few independent operators in business.[7] In 1915 Schlesinger added African Film Productions Ltd (AFP) to his organization. In doing this he expanded his business model to include not only the screening and distribution of films, but also their production. This vertically integrated business model in which all contingents of a business are contained in one organization was met with some hostility by both critics in the media and the public who were not partial to the unfettered powers associated with monopoly.[8] Under Schlesinger's often ruthless direction, ATT and AFP protected a fierce monopoly in the South African film industry up until 1926. In many ways his use of this business model informs the hypothesis that Schlesinger imported American systems into South Africa. These companies replicated, at least in terms of vertical integration and in their ability to monopolise broad swathes of the revenue potential of this industry, companies like the Motion Pictures Patent Company[9] in New York and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) and Paramount Pictures in Hollywood.[10] In 1930 ATT and AFP even warded off an attempt by

[6] Kaplan, I. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* 133.
[7] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* 114-118.
[8] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* 135.
[9] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America,* New York: Vintage Books, 33-35.
[10] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America,* 68.

MGM to begin distributing and showing films in South Africa by using what were described as 'questionable methods.'[11]This employment of 'questionable methods' meant that Schlesinger's companies acted much like the aforementioned American companies. Between 1926 and 1931, ATT and AFP faced immense competition from Kinemas, a newly emerged rival. This competition was a boon for audiences who benefited from higher production quality and lowered prices. In 1931 a merger, which ultimately favoured Schlesinger in many ways, resulted in the incorporation of African Consolidated Theatres Ltd (ACT) and the African Consolidated Films Ltd. This once again granted Schlesinger a temporal monopoly of the film industry. The economic value of his enterprises spoke for itself. More importantly, the cultural impact of the films shown was visceral enough to often evoke public condemnation, discussion and sometimes even fanaticism.[12]

The second narrative that underscores this study is that of early radio broadcasting in South Africa. After his success in consolidating the film industry and making it economically viable, Schlesinger was propositioned by stakeholders in the then failing radio broadcast industry in 1926 to finance and take over the administration of the failing 'JB' radio station.[13] The station, similar to those in Durban and Cape Town, suffered from a lack of revenue. Advertising certainly helped, but it was met with resistance by an often-indignant public.[14] License fee collection fell short as amateur radio enthusiasts tuned in without paying licensing fees. Furthermore, the authorities were not given the legal resources to locate listeners or to collect fees from them. Schlesinger had assisted the original stakeholders even before the inception of the JB in 1923, in his capacity as chairperson of African Theatres Trust Ltd. He had helped them solicit their first famous performers.[15] He agreed to work with them again in 1926, capitalizing their business despite the obvious flaw in revenue collection. This time he would be their chairperson rather than their booking agent. He sought the permission of the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, who was responsible for the issuing of broadcast licenses, to create the company. Permission was granted and he set about registering the African Broadcasting

[11] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* 194.
[12] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* 178-180.
[13] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening, the Early History of Radio in South Africa,* Purnell: Cape Town, 112.
[14] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening,* 66.
[15] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening,* 36.

Company (ABC), and resumed service of the defunct station in May 1927.[16] By June of that year, ABC had purchased the only other two stations in South Africa, being those which had been issued licenses in Durban and Cape Town.[17] He had been offered another media company, and turned it into a second media monopoly. The ABC was the sole licensed broadcaster in South Africa from 1927-1936. It is relevant to note that Schlesinger included two Americans on the board of his company.[18] Schlesinger, as a key player in the birth of this industry contributed much to both the business modeling of a nationwide South African broadcast company as well as to the nature of its programming. An example of a structural contribution to the industry was his solution to the problem of collecting license fees. He created the Blue Free Voucher Scheme. This provided for the collection of license fees from the retailers of radio receivers, which increased revenue collection. In terms of content, he was involved in curating programs and personally hiring performers. Ultimately, the ABC was subsumed and therefore replaced by the South African Broadcasting Company, which was established through government mandate in 1937.[19]

Both of the above narratives underscore the viability of Schlesinger as a unit of study when researching the nature of American cultural imperialism in early 20th century South Africa. Despite his centrality as a subject of this study, he can only be made relevant through researching the interactions his companies had with the public. Interactions took many forms, some active, some passive. Active interactions can be predominantly read into the reception of these media enterprises by white audiences which, in segregationist South Africa, were invariably the principal market for new technologies and entertainment industries. The audiences of ATT, AFP and ABC did however include both whites and Africans, yet their experiences of cinema were curated in different ways. Africans faced a different, nauseatingly paternalistic form of censorship compared to whites during that

[16] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening,* 112.
[17] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening,* 115.
[18] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening,* 112.
[19] Mhlambi, T. N. 2015, *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa: Culture, Modernity & Technology,* presented for the Degree D(Phil) in Music at UCT, 38-39.

era.[20] The fact of general censorship alone is enough to necessitate a discussion of Schlesinger's impact on Africans in South Africa considering the industry he monopolized.

Culture is pervasive. Therefore, its influence can be measured even where the source of its transmission at the first instance is not evident. Besides, the unbearably loud silence of Africans in the early history of mass media in South Africa actually serves to show just how much the presence of Africans influenced the thinking of men like Schlesinger. In South Africa mass media policies were shaped by the existence of Africans. Their absences and inclusions were calculated. These considerations which shaped Schlesinger's business practices and the content he produced were mitigating factors in the broader segregationist project. Although racial considerations existed at state level in America, South Africa's unique racial dynamic meant that the simple replication of American business models and programming could not necessarily take place.[21] This implies that the 'Americanisation of South Africa' was much more complex than mere mimicry. This research is in part an exploration of the 'indigenisation' of Americanism in South Africa.

For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to provide a definitional explanation of American cultural imperialism against which to assess the impact and nature of Schlesinger's media enterprises. Historically, other forms of cultural imperialism were received by peoples through the imposition of values facilitated by political, economic and military supremacy. Often this supremacy was accompanied by the occupation of territories in which this imposition took place.[22] American cultural imperialism is anomalous in comparison as it was not facilitated by traditional empire building. Instead, it is firmly rooted in global-reaching popular culture, transposed through mediums like Coca Cola, Hollywood, multi-national corporations, Disney and other iconic cultural monoliths.[23] Unlike preceding British and French cultural imperialism, it was not characterised by a distinct separation of 'high' and 'low' cultures. Instead it was normative insofar as it attempted to homogenise

[20] Paleker, G. 2009*, Creating a 'black film industry',* Unpublished PhD Thesis, UCT, 33-34.
[21] Paleker, G. 2009*, Creating a 'black film industry'.*
[22] Bowen, R.H. 1985, 'American Cultural Imperialism Revisited,' *Revue Francaise d'etudes Americanes,* 23, 24, 179-181.
[23] Bowen, R.H. 1985, 'American Cultural Imperialism Revisited,' 182.

the cultural experiences of all classes within the subsets of society.[24] American popular culture was characterised by accessibility. America itself was not beholden to overarching national religious or media prerogatives. In representing itself, heterogeneity was emphasised and embraced. In order to achieve this, the staples of cultural consumption were made accessible by relying on sensory experiences beyond verbose and inaccessible literature. Visual, oral and aural stimulation became a hallmark of American culture. This accessibility, based on the experience of it not being reliant on language competency, assisted in making American cultural imperialism distinctly pervasive on a global scale.[25] Finally, this new form of cultural imperialism experienced its ascendency at the same time as 20th century globalisation; therefore one of its principle characteristics was its bi-directionality. Through this trans-cultural flow of cultural programming, it was adapted in its various forms across the world to suite the preconditions in which it found itself.[26] In this way it was not subject to the rejection of European cultural imperialism championed by some previously subjugated nations. Instead, it found embrasure in many unlikely places.

From the above, a nuanced discussion of American cultural imperialism becomes very relevant to this study. Firstly, as a bi-directional entity that was often localised, it can be studied in programming that does not originate from America itself. Its manifestation may have resulted from indirect influence. Furthermore, as a product of mass media output, its study must take into account the nature of programming whether local or sourced from America. This nature can be dually read into its public reception and in analysis of the content itself. Finally, American cultural imperialism will be evidenced in an increase in accessibility to homogenizing cultural artifacts, often in the form of visceral new media, by audiences. Most importantly for this study, American cultural imperialism can also be read into the corporate culture of local entities. It can be read into the adoption of forms of corporate governance across the world. American capitalism in the early twentieth century was in itself a product, to be distributed to receptive nations. Through its

[24] Bowen, R.H. 1985, 'American Cultural Imperialism Revisited,' 183-184.
[25] Bowen, R.H. 1985, 'American Cultural Imperialism Revisited,' 190.
[26] Lenz, G.H. 199, 'Toward a Dialogic of International American Culture Studies,: Transnationality, Border Discourses and Public Cultures,' *Amerikastudien,* 44, 1, 17.

transposition, Americanisation took root in various places. This study will primarily elaborate on the corporate culture of Schlesinger's film and radio businesses in South Africa. The link between Schlesinger and American cultural imperialism will be most evident in this parallel.

Rationale

This study stems from the consensus among those who have produced biographical content on Schlesinger that he was responsible for the diffusion of American values into South African society.[27] This claim has broad implications, foremost being that such a result was consciously pursued, and therefore that Schlesinger's activities in these industries were subject to an agenda. This research will build on the works of authors like Mhlambi and Paleker[28], who sought to deconstruct Schlesinger's role in the radio and film industries respectively. In order to extend our understanding of Schlesinger's enterprises beyond what could arguably be described as the platitude of "He Americanised South Africa", these authors thoughtfully placed Schlesinger in broader discourses concerning Afrikaner-English relations[29] and race relations[30] amongst others. These discourses impact notions of Schlesinger operating purely as an agent of American Imperialism as they provide instruction on how he localized aspects of his business in order to achieve specific aims relevant to the South African context. This localisation meant that he too had to challenge American cultural imperialism at times when it threatened his success. One such moment was when his film enterprises were challenged by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1930.[31] Furthermore, the substantive claim that Schlesinger acted as a successful carrier of American Imperialism can neither be dismissed nor taken at face value. This study will be the first to investigate the above concepts with Schlesinger as the primary focus of an extensive study. In this way the study will contribute to a greater understanding of both the function and historical narrative of American Imperialism in South Africa by focusing on radio and film as two routes of diffusion into and consumption

[27]Kaplan, I. (1986), Mhlambi, T.M. (2015), Rosenthal, E. (1987) and Gutsche, T. (1972).
[28] Paleker, G. 2014, 'The State, Citizens and Control, Film and South African Audiences, 1910-1948,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* vol. 40, 2, 309-323.
[29] Mhlambi, T. N. 2015, *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa,* 54.
[30] Paleker, G. 2014, 'The State, Citizens and Control', 311-316.
[31] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,* 213.

by South African society. The period which this study will focus on, being 1913-1937 is based on the practical consideration of when Schlesinger had the greatest influence over these industries. This influence is judged on when his companies exercised monopolistic or near-monopolistic control over these industries. It is taken for granted that monopolisation results in an increased capacity to exert control over structural elements and programming in industries such as these.

Aims and Objectives

The principle aim of this study is to provide a nuanced argument for the extent to which I.W. Schlesinger, in his capacity as a mass media tycoon in South Africa, acted as an agent of American cultural Imperialism. In order to provide this nuanced argument, certain objectives need to be achieved.

The first objective is to provide an explanation of Schlesinger's role in both the radio broadcast and film industries in South Africa. This role will be examined by using a two-step process. The first step will look at his structural impact. This requires a thorough investigation into the administration of both his film and radio broadcast companies. This will certainly include information about the financing, staffing architecture and legal authorization by certain external authorities of the relevant companies. More importantly, it will examine Schlesinger's business practices in order to get a sense of the dominant business culture which he promoted through his companies at the time. This objective will be achieved through the study of relevant secondary materials concerning the company histories, as well as through the study of primary sources such as newspaper articles, legislative debates, court reports and company documents (Archives).

The second step will look at Schlesinger's substantive cultural impact in South Africa. This will be shown by examining some of the content of the programming his companies brought to the public. By focusing on actual content as well as public discourses around the reception of some of the programming he put forth, particularly in newspapers, it might be possible to make a reasonable assessment about his media companies' cultural impact in South Africa. In order to keep this assessment manageable, it is necessary to provide an overview of content produced, rather than depth studies of it, in order to

address the particular question of which cultural elements dominated the film industry.[32] For example, by categorizing films created by AFP according to theme, such as war nationalism or vaudeville comedy, one might be able to assert a particular cultural agenda or a preponderance of a particular theme over another. Therefore, this objective will likely be aided by a study of secondary materials on the subject of the nature of the films and radio programming under his organization. As far as primary sources are concerned, cultural impact is notarised by any society in a myriad of ways. As such, primary sources relevant to this aspect of the study will come in many forms. Amongst these, contemporaneous newspaper and academic articles, movie reviews and posters, radio programs and, if existing analysis thereof falls short, even the films themselves, would be of particular use.

It is impossible to say that Schlesinger was an agent of American cultural imperialism without first discussing what that would have entailed. The second objective will be to provide a concise overview of the prevailing themes in both the business cultures and the programming of the American film and radio industries at the beginning of the 20th century. This discussion will pay special attention to the concepts relevant to this study, namely the business administration and cultural zeitgeists of both industries.

Research Questions

This study will engage with the following research questions as derived from the abovementioned aims and objectives;

The primary research question asks to which extent Schlesinger, in his capacity as chairperson of various media organisations in early 20th century South Africa, acted as a conduit for the flow of American culture into the organisational structures of the companies that made up these industries as well as in the content they produced, as received by South African audiences?

Further questions include: how and to what extent did the genesis of the South African film industry reflect and mimic contemporaneous developments in the American film

[32] Eckhart, M. 2011, 'South African Film History vs the History of Motion Pictures in South Africa,' in *South African Theatre Journal,* vol. 25(1), 76.

industry? How and to what extent did the genesis of the South African radio broadcast industry reflect and mimic contemporaneous developments in the American radio broadcast industry? Furthermore, In which ways did American Imperialism manifest in Schlesinger's media operations?

Finally, to what extent, if at all, was the process of Americanisation in these South African mass media industries localized and adapted in order to operate effectively under South African conditions? If this was the case, what conditions compelled such adaptations?

Methodology

Various repositories were accessed for primary materials. Research was conducted at the national archive repositories in Pretoria and Cape Town. University archives, such as the University of Cape Town Library, the Wits Historical Research Papers Archive will also be visited. Finally, media archives at the South African National Library in Pretoria, the UNISA Library and the SABC library will also be used.

At the Wits Historical Research Papers Archive in Johannesburg company documents relating to AFP, ACT and the African Realty Trust (ART) was accessed. These documents, comprising mostly ledgers and minute books, were largely be concerned with the workings and machinations of Schlesinger's companies, in particular regarding the centrality of his property enterprises to his organization. This archive also provided miscellaneous documents concerning broadcast history, and specific information regarding the position of natives in the broadcasting industry during the relevant period. Finally, information concerning Schlesinger himself were found in documents such as the Klenerman papers.

The South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) Library in Johannesburg produced documents concerning the pre-history of the SABC, including the Reith Report. It also provided audio sources related to the ABC to SABC transition.

The National Archive repositories in Pretoria provided insight into the legal actions pursued by the highly litigious Schlesinger and his various companies. Opposed and *ex parte* applications by Schlesinger himself, as well as by the ART, AFP, ACT and ABC were sourced. This provided insight into the workings of Schlesinger's companies and

therefore informed the discussions on the form of his business models. Discussions concerning the broadcast and film industries in the relevant period within government circles were also be found.

Literature Review

Gairoonisa Paleker's article, *The State, Citizens and Control: Film and South African Audiences, 1910-1948,*[33]provides instruction on an essential aspect of this study. In order to draw valid conclusions about the function of American imperialism in South Africa, the African perspective cannot be ignored. Paleker creates a workable framework for the inclusion of African perspectives with regards to the relevant subject matter. This article discusses the nature of black reception of films, including the forces, such as censorship and imperial cultural objectives during the relevant time period. It convincingly argues that in their exclusion from the processes of production and exhibition of films, Africans exerted a passive but obvious influence on the industry. Their exclusion, being a considered and politicized act, is evidence of white preoccupation with developing and advancing racialised policy.[34] As such their absences and the causes of those absences, becomes an essential unit of study when looking at Schlesinger's impact in both the radio and film industries. Paleker's allusion to a broad nexus of American and British imperialism, South African nationalism and racial policy in the discourse of Schlesinger's business enterprises informs the approach that this study will take. The objectives of Paleker's and this study differ in that her primary focus was on the reception of films outside the strict purview of Schlesinger's organisations. Furthermore, her study looks inwards, assessing the dynamics of film screening in South Africa. This study will cast its net outwards as well, closely examining external influences on these productions. Finally, this study will expand on her perspective by discussing new mass media, being radio and film, as opposed to film only.

Thokozani N. Mhlambi's *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture Modernity and Technology*[35] is central to this study for two reasons, but its value is similar to that of

[33] Paleker, G. 2014, 'The State, Citizens and Control,' 309-323.
[34] Paleker, G. 2014, 'The State, Citizens and Control,' 310.
[35] Mhlambi, T. N. 2015, *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa.*

Paleker's article. The first reason relates to his discussion of the role played by the ABC in the formative years of broadcast radio in South Africa. Chapter 5, titled *The Role of Business in Broadcast Development*[36] provides a concise and technical discussion of issues ranging from the technology they utilised to the strategies ABC developed to overcome difficulties in generating revenue. The second and more valuable element of his study comes from his approach to the specific subject matter with which this study would overlap. His discussion of the critical reception of, and access to radio broadcasts by, black audiences from as early as 1942 is contemporaneous and relevant to my study.[37] Besides this essential inclusion, Mhlambi's critical discussions of broadcasting from inception until 1947 show how a thoughtful and inter-disciplinary approach might reveal this subject more fully. This study will attempt to complement Mhlambi's work by providing a more detailed analysis of a moment that, while within, was not central to his thesis. The dominant period in his study is one that starts with the birth of the SABC and racialised public broadcasting policies. This study will focus more exclusively on the pre-SABC period. Furthermore, it will expand the subject matter by examining new mass media, being the radio and film industries, as opposed to just the radio industry.

The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa[38]*,* by Thelma Gutsche provides a detailed examination of the context surrounding the film industry in South Africa during the ascendancy of the Schlesinger Organization. The detail with which Gutsche dealt with the subject may have come as a result of her proximity to the era and the industry. She collected the sources for her study in some of the decades during which the ACT was still active and ultimately ended up working for the organization for a time.[39] Gutsche's book is indispensable when constructing a narrative of Schlesinger's role in the film industry. An example of the benefit of this detail would be her inclusion of the curious and relevant detail of Schlesinger joining the board of British International Pictures Ltd in 1926 which clearly affects any hypothesis concerning American Imperialism. There are, however, significant limitations that Schlesinger and

[36] Mhlambi, T. N. 2015, *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa*, 34-40.
[37] Mhlambi, T. N. 2015, *Early Radio Broadcasting in South,* 88-94.
[38] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940.*
[39] Eckhart, M. 2004, 'A privileged access to the history of popular culture in South Africa - The Thelma Gutsche Papers' in *South African Theatrical Journal,* vol. 18, 251-252.

Gutsche's known relationship places on the value of analysis in the book. For example, the statement that ''[m]r Schlesinger was known to have become a director of British International Pictures and to be occupied with furthering South Africa in particular and the Empire in general''[40] could be described as fawning. Her representation of the Schlesinger Organisation is more complimentary than critical overall. This is understandable considering both her proximity to her subject as well as her being a product of an academic tradition in which such statements were perfectly acceptable. Despite any reservations concerning bias, her discussions of the content of certain films as well as the indexical value of her work serve an important purpose when analysing dominant themes in those relevant films.

Two books that are indispensable for their critical analyses of the films produced by Schlesinger's companies are Keyan Tomaselli's *Encountering Modernity, Twentieth Century South African Cinemas*[41] and Jacqueline Maingard's *South African National Cinema.*[42]Both books offer considerable insight into the nature of the relevant films. Maingard is particularly useful in her direct comparison between the nationalistic intentions of AFP films like *De Voortrekkers* (1916) and *The Symbol of Sacrifice* (1918) and Hollywood productions like *Birth of the Nation* (1915). Both of the abovementioned sources make overt reference to the role played by Schlesinger, with Maingard going so far as to include a two-page biography of the man, largely derived from Isaac Kaplan's book.

Isaac Kaplan's *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy*[43] serves a similar purpose to that of Gutsche. Its value lies in its biographical qualities. A chapter in the book, titled *Isadore William Schlesinger – the great communicator*[44]*,* represents the most holistic biography of Schlesinger found. It provides insight into details concerning how Schlesinger financed his enterprises, how his companies were related and on his physical condition (revealing how often he may have left the country). It provides a very well

[40] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940,*, 192.
[41] Tomaselli, K. 2006, *Encountering Modernity, Twentieth Century South African Cinemas,* Rozenberg: Amsterdam.
[42] Maingard, J. 2008, *South African National Cinema,* Routledge: New York.
[43] Kaplan, I. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy.*
[44] Kaplan, I. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy*, 133-149.

ordered narrative framework in which to operate. Similar to Gutsche, Kaplan cannot necessarily be counted on to give a critical account of Schlesinger. The title of the Schlesinger chapter belies nothing. That being said, there is a palpable intimacy in his writing. This is evidenced when Kaplan notes things like the inscription on Schlesinger's pen or his sleep routine. Kaplan discusses Schlesinger's personality as being substantively Americanised, which is foundational to this study, especially as he is positioned as a conduit of American values.

Eric Rosenthal's *You Have Been Listening, The Early History of Radio in South Africa*[45] provides the pre-1937 radio broadcasting narrative with much necessary detail. Rosenthal is particularly useful for his descriptions of radio programming during the era as well as for his thorough descriptions of both how the ABC came to monopolise the radio broadcast industry as well as how the company itself functioned. Once again, this work can be described as celebratory rather than critical. Likely this is because it was commissioned by the SABC. Despite this, he is cited prolifically by Mhlambi exactly because his is the only source that deals exclusively with pre-1937 radio broadcasting in South Africa.

Robert Sklar's *Movie-Made America: a Cultural History of American Movies*[46] will be this study's primary authority on the early history of Hollywood. The source is necessary in order to make salient comparisons between the American and South African film industries. Of particular importance are Sklar's detailed and critical examinations of the company histories of both the trusts that monopolized the industry[47] as well as the highly successful companies that followed.[48] Sklar makes reference to the moguls who were positioned similarly to Schlesinger. In this way, *Movie-Made America* is ideal for tracking both similarities and differences in business modeling in the respective industries. Furthermore, Sklar examines dominant trends in film production in Hollywood, which makes for an excellent point of comparison with dominant trends in South African film

[45] Rosenthal, E. 1987, *You Have Been Listening, The Early History of Radio in South Africa,* Purnell: Cape Town.
[46] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America,* New York: Vintage Books.
[47] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America,* 33-47.
[48] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America,* 161-174.

production. Discussions on silent, vaudeville and art-house films will be particularly useful to this study.

American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television[49] is indispensible to this study for a purpose similar to Sklar's. Due to its being a collection of primary sources, it provides comprehensive information concerning the radio broadcasting industry in America in the same period as this study; its biggest strength is the diversity of contributions, in terms of both time period and ideological persuasion, often concerning the same subject matter. What results are helpful primary source based explanations of subject matter concerning American radio broadcasting, that are essential for the purpose of comparison to this industry's South African equivalent. It does not contain Sklar's analytical value due to its being a source book, but it is helpful nonetheless. Below are some examples of sources in the book that serve as cogent explanations of relevant subject matter. In *Early History of Network Broadcasting*[50] a succinct explanation of the process by which individual stations expanded into broader networks is provided. *Should Radio be Used for Advertising*[51] an analogous dilemma, similar to that faced by South African radio broadcasters in 1923, is discussed. The title in *Who is to Pay for Broadcasting and How*[52] Refers to a question that, in the context of South African broadcasting, this study must also answer. In *the Content of Radio Programming*[53] and *the Nature of the Broadcast Receiver and its Market in the United States from 1922 to 1927*[54] the source book provides critical information regarding concepts that must be discussed in order to locate elements of cultural exchange between America and South Africa, namely that of programming and reception of early radio

[49] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York.
[50] National Broadcasting Company, 1941, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting (1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company, in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York, 166-174.
[51] Jackson, J.H. 1922, 'Should Radio be Used for Advertising, in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York, 204-206.
[52] Kellogg, H.D. 1924, 'Who is to Pay for Broadcasting and How?' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York, 208-209.
[53] Lundburg, G.A. 1928, 'the Content of Radio Programming,' in in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York, 322-324.
[54] Page, L.J. 1960, 'The Nature of the Broadcast Receiver and its Market in the United States, 1922 to 1927,' in in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. (eds), 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio and Television,* Hastings House: New York, 467-473.

broadcasts. The value of this source is by no means limited to the sources cited above. They are merely included as some of the best, most self-descriptive examples of the valuable sources necessary for the performance of the objectives of this study.

Finally, various repositories will be used to source primary sources for this study. The national archives in Pretoria will provide various documents relating to Schlesinger's business operations as well as evidence of his litigious nature. The Wits Historical Research Papers Archive will provide evidence used in the biography of Schlesinger. The UCT Special Collections Archive contains the Thelma Gutsche Papers, which will provide the primary sources related to Schlesinger's biography and film enterprises.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter will introduce the subject material, providing a rationale for the study. It will provide a literature review and a chapter outline in order to give the study form. The chapter will also provide a concise discussion on the nature of American cultural imperialism in the relevant period in order to contextualise the study.

The second chapter will provide a brief biography of Schlesinger. This, although not central to the thesis of the study, will provide insight into the history of the man. The chapter ensures that the study does not perform its function in the vacuum of a nameless protagonist.

The third chapter will give an overview of the early history of the radio industry in South Africa. It will look specifically at Schlesinger's role in the industry. It will discuss the nature of the content produced by his radio stations as well as the corporate culture of his radio businesses. Finally, it will assess the role of Africans in this industry.

The fourth chapter will give an overview of the early history of the film industry in South Africa. It will also discuss Schlesinger's central role in the industry. The chapter will discuss the nature of some of the content produced by AFP. It will also assess the corporate culture of Schlesinger's film companies. The chapter will also discuss the role of Africans in the industry.

The fifth chapter will discuss the early history of the film and radio industries in America. The purpose of this chapter will be to provide a point of comparison between comparable corporate cultures in South Africa and America. It will also discuss the role of African Americans in these industries.

The sixth and final chapter will conclude the study. It will make assertions about the central hypothesis of the study. Namely, whether or not Schlesinger's companies acted as conduits of American cultural imperialism into South Africa.

Isadore W. Schlesinger: A Short Biography

IW. Schlesinger was a towering figure in the business community in the early 20th century in South Africa. He owned influential businesses in the insurance, entertainment, property and farming industries, amongst others. He set up the Schlesinger Organisation. This Organisation oversaw the operations of his plethora of business interests. This chapter will serve as a biography of the man, taking note of his early life, his successes as a young man, his personality, his public profile and his preferred method of corporate governance. It will also consider some key statements made about him by authors who have discussed his life and his businesses.

Schlesinger was born in America. His family were immigrants from eastern Europe. The European Schlesingers came from the Patra mountains on the border of what would become Czecholovakia but what was at the time the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They owned a successful saw-mill there.[55] As a result of political turmoil, Abraham and Moritz Schlesinger emigrated to New York City in the second half of the 19th century. Josef Pulitzer was on the same ship. At first they took jobs splitting wood. Eventually, Abraham went into the cigar business. One of his first employees, Samuel Gompertz, founded the Cigar Workers Union, which Abraham joined. Gompertz would become one of the founders of the American Federation of Labour.[56]

Abraham proceeded to open a bank that catered to the specific needs of fellow immigrants. Together with his large family, Abraham lived in a house above the bank with his children: Samuel, Isadore William (IW), Jacom, Maurice, Albert, Esther, Max, Elizabeth and Nettie. IW was born in 1871 in the Bowery in East Side, New York.[57] All the boys in the family took turns helping Abraham in the bank, but the bank was named Schlesinger and Son. The 'son' in question referred to Samuel who was Abraham's favourite child.[58]

[55] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[56] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[57] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[58] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.

IW did not go to school, instead he became a door to door salesman with wares like sweets and hair clips. IW was reported as having felt overshadowed by Samuel. In order to remove himself from his brother's shadow he started his own business, selling soft goods, hardware and any other products he could get his hands on. IW was not, however, old enough to enter into legal contracts, so on the advice of Abraham, Samuel signed contracts on his behalf.[59] Schlesinger tried his hand at selling insurance, but his application to be an agent for New York Mutual was rejected. Later in his life, in what must have been a delightful coup, he bought out their offices in South Africa.[60]

Abraham became exasperated with IW's ''unruly spirit''.[61] He sent IW to South Africa to make his fortune, perhaps in order to get some critical distance from his less favoured son. Some sources claim he arrived in South Africa in 1897.[62] One source claims it was in 1894.[63] The myth of the ''rags to riches'' story was perpetuated by early biographers of Schlesinger, putting him in league with men like Barney Barnato. He is said to have come to South Africa in steerage. It has been written that he arrived with five shillings and one loaf of bread.[64] This is possibly true, but it seems unlikely considering that his family in New York was relatively wealthy.

The story of his ascendency in the South African business world begins with a tale about chewing gum. He approached some cycle dealers in Cape Town, requesting a sales job. He was ''cherubic'' in appearance, being short, round and youthful.[65] This endeared him to them, but they were not immediately sure of his potential. The dealers had landed a consignment of chewing gum. This was hard to sell to a market that was unsure of its purpose or necessity. They tested his sales acumen by giving him the gum to sell. He sold the entire consignment faster than was expected.[66] The dealers rewarded him with

[59] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[60] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[61] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[62] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[63] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* C. Struik: Cape Town, p133.
[64] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p134.
[65] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[66] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p134.

an introduction to a representative of the Equitable Insurance Company that had its headquarters in New York.[67]

Very soon he was employed by Equitable Life. He became one of the company's most successful travelling insurance sales representatives. He sold policies across the length and breadth of the country. He sold policies to ministers, attorneys, farmers, storekeepers, miners and chiefs. He is said to have even tried to sell a policy to Paul Kruger, who declined the offer.[68] He became somewhat of a legendary figure in the insurance world, with even the New York office taking notice.

He travelled to America in 1899, returning to Johannesburg in 1902 at the conclusion of the South African War. Schlesinger decided that he no longer wished to work for other people. He started two businesses in quick succession. The first was African Realty Trust, a property oriented business, started in 1902. He would buy Cook's farm to the North of Johannesburg. He developed the area into a suburb, Killarney. One of his first developments on the site, in which he would later live, was a block of flats which he named 'Whitehall', being a homage to his time spent in London during the South African War.[69] His enterprise was unique because he sold land in instalments. He got the idea for this from his brother, Max, who was selling property using a similar system in Manhattan.[70] The emerging middle class in Johannesburg jumped at this opportunity.

A second business he initiated would become the cash cow of his organisation. African Life Assurance Society was established in 1904. He sold 2274 policies in his first year of operations. His impact in the industry was immediate and pervasive. African Life Assurance would grow to dominate the insurance industry in South Africa, buying out many of its competitors in the region.[71]

Schlesinger would continue to grow his empire in various industries. This study will focus on his endeavors in the film and radio industries, in which he established African Theatres Trust, African Films Trust, African Film Productions, African Consolidated Theatres and

[67] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[68] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[69] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p135.
[70] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[71] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p138.

African Broadcasting Company. It should also be noted that he had interests in fields as diverse as farming, with Zebediela Citrus Farms, Aviation, with African Consolidated Aircraft Company, health insurance, with the Health and Insurance Company, amusement parks, with African Amusement Parks, as well as pharmaceuticals, catering, irrigation, travel, and many more. His companies were all organised under the Investment Corporation of Africa. He sat on the boards of most of his companies and was known to micro manage them.[72] The following schematic illustrates the distribution of some of the companies in his network.[73]

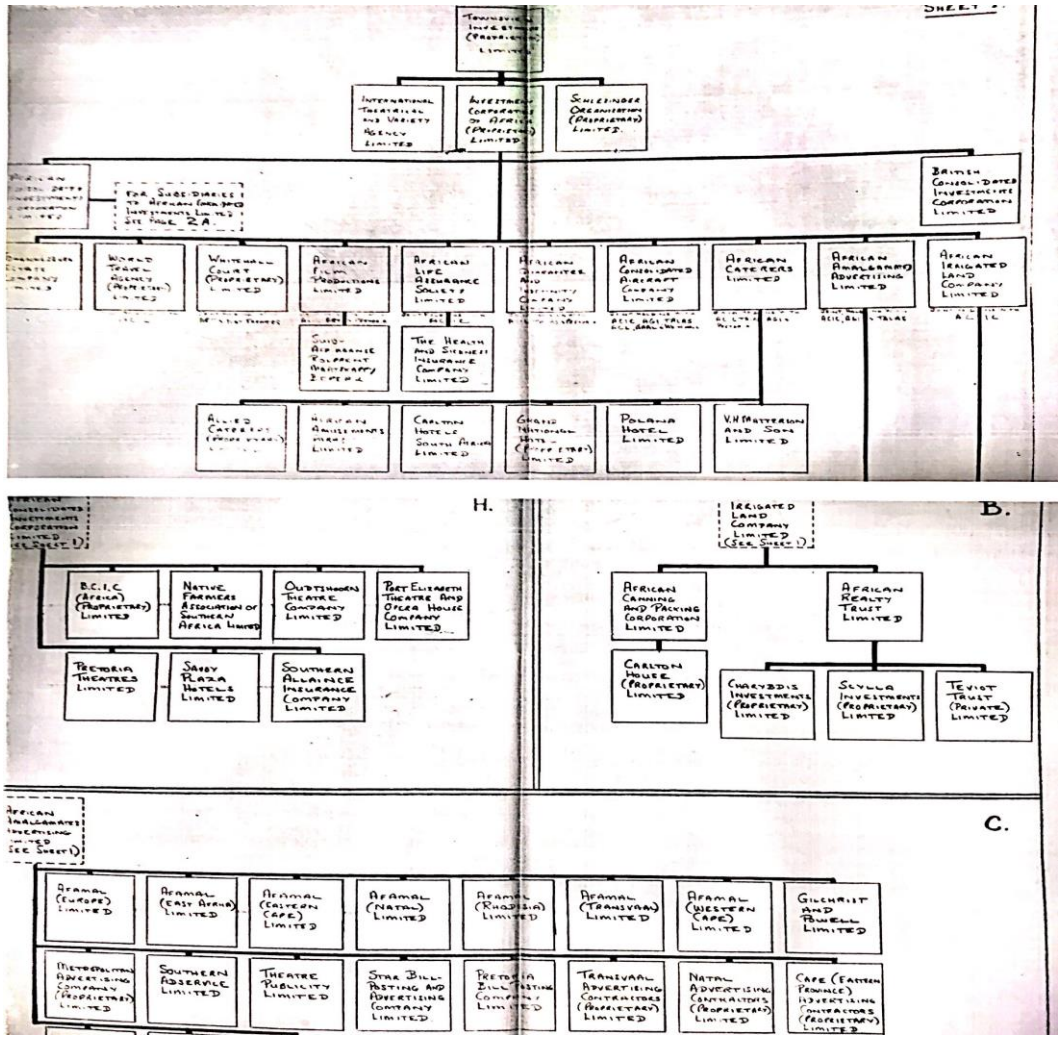

Illustration 1. Schlesinger Corporation Network

[72] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* pp134-148.
[73] Wits Historical Papers, A1724, Ebk1.

Suffice it to say, Schlesinger was a successful man. At his death in 1949, he owned fixed assets in excess of £10 million in his personal capacity, excluding equity owned in various companies. He left his wife and son with a vast fortune.[74]

Success usually invites some confrontation. His early success with African Life Assurance led to a whispering campaign by other operators against African Life. This would lead him on a path he followed for the rest of his life. Throughout his career Schlesinger would become prolifically litigious. In this case, he sued his competitors for libel and won.[75] Schlesinger built a close relationship with Richard Bowman who established Bowman Gilfillan. Bowman would go on to represent Schlesinger in many of the cases in which he was both plaintiff and defendant.[76]

Schlesinger would sue individuals, corporations and municipalities as a first recourse to any dispute. An example of this, early in his career, was when he directed African Realty Trust to sue the City of Johannesburg because they refused to expedite a clearance certificate for developments in Klipfontein in 1906.[77] In 1926 he would again sue the City of Johannesburg through African Film Productions because of opposition to by-laws Schlesinger insisted would have obstructed their film productions at Killarney.[78] He would threaten the City of Johannesburg with legal action again in 1936, protesting against tabled town planning restrictions in Killarney.[79] The combative relationship between the City Council and Schlesinger had lighter moments as well. The *Transvaal* reported in 1940 how grateful the mayor was for a charitable donation from Schlesinger to the Mayor's Fund.[80]

He also threatened legal action against individuals whom he found undesirable. One example was the 'legal' bullying conducted against Fanny Klenerman, the famed

[74] TAB, MHG 1612.49 Estate IW Schlesinger.
[75] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 16 May 1960.
[76] TAB TPD 5.211 87.1924 illiquid damages Pitt Priest, TAB TPD 5.124 97.1919 Illiquid Payment Wilkinson, TAB WLD 87.1908 Illiquid Payment Kenneth Wiley.
[77] TAB, WLD 5.86 689.1906 Opposed Application JHB Municipality.
[78] TAB, WLD 354.1926 Opposed Application JHB Municipality.
[79] Wits Historical Research Papers, A1724, FB1.
[80] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Transvaal,* 7 January 1940.

bookstore owner, film club member and nudist. In an attempt to get her to vacate one of his properties in Johannesburg, his lawyers invited her to a meeting and attempted to bribe her to leave, and threatened legal action if she stayed.[81] Another example of the type of legal action pursued by Schlesinger was his seeking a declaratory order to have Virginia De Sacremento's retrenchment from African Broadcasting Company legitimated.[82]

Schlesinger was not only litigious, he also invited legal action with his brash and insulting personality. What follows are a few of the cases in which Schlesinger was compelled to defend his actions or statements. One telling case, which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter, involved slanderous remarks made by Schlesinger, in front of his employees, about a director and a driver contracted by African Film Productions.[83] Schlesinger denied all the claims made by Shaw and Kimpton, the plaintiffs, and counter-sued them in order to put pressure on them to drop the case.[84]

In another case in which he was the defendant, Schlesinger ran afoul of a canvasser for African Life Assurance named Wilson. It is unclear what Schlesinger's dispute with him was. He sent a letter to Wilson's clients instructing them not to deal with him because he was a wanted fugitive. This was not true. Wilson sued Schlesinger for libel. Once again, Schlesinger denied wrongdoing and counter-sued.[85] Schlesinger would invite legal action in many other cases, including from William Pitt Priest,[86] F.E. Wilkinson,[87] Charles Young,[88] for cases involving his companies' short-changing of the applicants as well as for libel.

What is evident from these various cases was that he was a confrontational person. He never shied away from a fight. This undoubtedly led to many people having a low opinion about his character. Fanny Klenerman, who confronted him in a meeting with his lawyers,

[81] Wits Historical Research Papers, A2031, Book Three.
[82] TAB, WLD 832.1936 ABC vs Virginia de Sacremento.
[83] TAB, WLD 75.1918 Illiquid Damages Harlold Shaw v IW Schlesinger.
[84] TAB, WLD 150.1918 Opposed Application Harold Shaw.
[85] TAB, WLD 5.116 274.1908 Opposed Application Wilson. and TAB, WLD 150.1918 Opposed Application Ralph Kimpton.
[86] TAB, TPD 5.211 87.1924 illiquid damages Pitt Priest.
[87] TAB, TPD 5.124 97.1919 Illiquid Payment Wilkinson.
[88] TAB, TPD5.124 89.1919 Illiquid declaratory order Charles Young.

illustrates this best in her statement that ‘’Mr Schlesinger was by no means an appetizing person to look upon. In fact I found him rather repulsive. Short, swarthy, with an unpleasant, arrogant face. I had heard many reports of his bad treatment of human beings and his arrogance generally.’’[89] He was known for his fits of rage, and his micro-management of his employee’s habits. On one occasion he kicked an African employee who was carrying a tray of tea and coffee.[90] The balance of the evidence suggests he was not a particularly pleasant person.

Despite his uninspiring countenance and character, he earned the intrigue and obsequious respect of the press and the business community. The press would report on his comings and goings from South Africa, such as such as in 1942 when *The Star* published a small memo of sorts that merely stated, under the headline, ‘’Mr I.W. Schlesinger’’, that ‘’Mr I.W. Schlesinger has arrived in Washington. – Sapa-Reuters’’.[91] In 1939, *Ringhals,* ‘The Paper That Is Not Afraid’, published a feature article titled *Schlesinger’s Private Life* which discussed his wife, how he acquired his money and stated that ‘’I.W. Schlesinger is a public figure and, since he controls millions of invested monies, the public have a right to know all about him.’’[92]

This public interest in his personal life was rarer than the outright praise for Schlesinger and his business endevours that the press, at times, heaped on him. In an edition celebrating radio in South Africa, *the Star* in 1945 published a long article titled *the Great Part Played by Mr. I.W. Schlesinger,* in which the success of early broadcasting was attributed almost wholly to the man.*[93]* In 1953, to commemorate the golden jubilee year of the Schlesinger Organisation, *Sunday Times* published a detailed and, for the purpose of this study - instructive, biography of Schlesinger.[94] Notwithstanding the propagation of rags to riches myths and hyperbole about Schlesinger’s achievements, the article serves as one of the most complete personal biographies of Schlesinger in existence.

[89] Wits Historical Research Papers, A2031/A Book Three
[90]Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p145.
[91] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 23rd July 1942
[92] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Ringhals,* 1 December 1939.
[93] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star,* 4 July 1945.
[94] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Times,* 11 January 1953.

Other actors in the business community also expressed their appreciation of Schlesinger through the press. 20th Century Fox took out a full page advertisement in the same edition as the biographical article, in which it ‘’extend[ed] sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Schlesinger Organisation on the occasion of their Golden Jubilee’’.[95] Again, in the same edition, the J. Arthur Rank Organisation of Great Britain, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, Universal Studios and many other companies took out full page advertisements congratulating the organisation.[96]

Such expressions of congratulations were also published in 1938 when African Consolidated Theatres celebrated its silver jubilee. On that occasion, the Health Ice Cream company, General Film Distributors and General Elelectric Company of England all bought advertisements that congratulated either African Consolidated Theatres or Schlesinger himself, for his service to the film industry.[97]

As has been mentioned before, Schlesinger was active on the boards of most of his companies. Furthermore, he was prone to deploying loyal associates onto the boards of his companies. He would micro-manage them. He had a vicious work ethic that saw him work from dawn to evening every day. Schlesinger acquired a bad case of arthritis in 1928 which, would eventually kill him. This did not stop him from knowing ‘’exactly what was going on in the more than 80 companies which he eventually controlled’’.[98] But in 1949 he succumbed to his illness after being left virtually paralysed.

A pertinent question for the purpose of this study, is to what extent he embodied his Americanisms into his business practices. In this chapter the extent of this is discussed relative to some biographical information. However, reference must first be made to the work of Van Onselen, who made a rigorous study of Americanisation in South Africa in *Cowboy Capitalist.*[99] Van Onselen relates how the Americanisation of South Africa was an ongoing and paradoxical endeavor from the mid-19th Century. It was initiated through business ventures in the mining industry. Ironically, Americans who took part in this

[95] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Times,* 11 January 1953.
[96] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Times,* 11 January 1953.
[97] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Express,* 18 December 1938.
[98] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p147.
[99] Van Onselen, C. 2017, *The Cowboy Capitalist,* Jonathon Ball: Johannesburg.

process adopted colonial dispositions, seeking to live like the British aristocracy rather than as rich Americans.[100] Schlesinger was an archetype of this assertion. This study indicates the ways in which he took on the colonial mode of behaviour, while still acting as American business tycoons acted in the realm of big business.

Schlesinger traveled back to America frequently, and his businesses had subsidiaries there, which were run by his brother Max.[101] He spent as much as six months a year in America, avoiding the South African winter during his twilight years.[102] He sent his son to study in America, where he joined the US Army during World War Two.[103] He imported American-styled business practices, such as chain store pharmacies and grocers, instalment land purchases, and buffet dining.[104]

These facts are low-hanging fruits for academics, including myself, picked for the purpose of stating that he, in part, Americanised South African society. Mhlambi stated that ‘’he introduced American methods of selling insurance and marketing products and rejected Edwardian sensibilities. In fact, legend has it that he was mostly responsible for promoting the ’American way of life in this country’.[105]

Kaplan states that:

> ‘’His activities caused most South Africans to regard all things American more appealing than all things British. The American influence, promoted mainly through the vast chain of Schlesinger cinemas and associated publicity that his African Theatres churned out, changed fashions, the attitude towards make-up (which became the norm, possibly the attitude towards morals, interior decoration…and even eating and drinking habits.’’[106]

These statements reflect a dominant perception about the role of Schlesinger regarding the Americanisation of South Africa. This study will examine this assertion, specifically in the entertainment industry, in more detail. It will focus not only on the content of the

[100] Van Onselen, C. 2017, *The Cowboy Capitalist,* p48.
[101] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Times,* 11 January 1953.
[102] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p147.
[103] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p133.
[104] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* pp133-145.
[105] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology,* Thesis Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Cape Town. P34.
[106] Kaplan, M. 1986, *Jewish Roots in the South African Economy,* p134.

programming Schlesinger introduced, but will also compare the business practices in the relevant industries in both America and South Africa.

Schlesinger, the man, will always remain somewhat of an enigma for historians. For somebody as accomplished as he was, the historical record remains sparse about his life. The cause of this might have to do with his perception of the role of power. He did not leave much for posterity, instead choosing to live his life in as much of the shadows as his profile would allow. In studying the man, the historian is accosted by myth, legend and speculation. His motivations are unknown. It can be speculated that he was driven by greed, an urge to please his father, or nationalism. This study will attempt to unpack these motivations by looking very specifically at the evidence that is on record. There is no dominant biography to rely on in this exercise. Instead, the study focuses on his business dealings, particularly in the film and radio industries.

The History of Radio in South Africa, from Amateurs to the ABC

The Amateur Days

Experimentation with radio technology in South Africa emerged concurrently with the same practice in Britain. The first public broadcast in Britain took place on 15 June 1920.[107] Similarly, starting in the 1920s, home-made radios making use of crystal valves made their appearance in the Union. At first broadcasts were rare, and conducted almost solely by the South African Railways and Harbours. These broadcasts were exhibitions with radios and speakers being set up in public spaces where people had the chance to marvel at the new technology.[108] On one such occasion, in 1923, a speech by General Smuts was broadcast to audiences at the main train stations in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The audience's reception was positive, though broadcast conditions were less than ideal. A musician who was not acquainted with the sensitivity of the equipment had to be told to keep quiet while on air. Yet Smuts' words were discernable despite being described as ''high-pitched'' and ''squeaky.'' Those who were tuned in on home-made crystal valve radios had to make use of headphones to hear the broadcast as these sets did not have the amplifiers necessary to emit sound from speakers.[109]

By 1922 the practice of making home-made radio sets had proliferated to the extent that the Postmaster-General thought regulation was necessary.[110] By 1923, when Smuts' speech was broadcast, legislation, namely an amendment to Act No.10 of 1911, existed to that effect.[111] This legislation emerged as the industry progressed from amateur to professional. The Wireless Agency Limited, an agent of the great Marconi Company from Italy, began its own commercial exhibitions at this time. Furthermore, experimenting amateurs began their own broadcasts. The Postmaster-General, in line with the legislation, requested all broadcasters to obtain a license for the practice. Up until then only ships, airplanes and trains used this technology. Authorities could not let the public

[107] Crisell, A. 2002. *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting,* Routledge: New York. P14.
[108] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology,* Thesis Presentd for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Cape Town. PP 11-15.
[109] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology.* PP 12-13.
[110] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology.* P20.
[111] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* Submitted to the Chairman of the SABC. SABC Library, Johannesburg. P2.

use radios without regulation, as up until then their use had been the limited to these state entities.[112]

The regulations mentioned had various implications. One was that upon issuance of a license, they had to set up, at their own expense, a radio station that used the latest technologies available that were able to transmit in the full area designated by their license. They were required to broadcast ‘’regular services lasting in total for a period described in the license, consisting of music, entertainment, instruction, public announcements, or other matter which had been approved by the Postmaster General.’’[113] They were also required to dedicate three hours every week to broadcasts for public purposes, such as public service announcements. Licensed broadcasters were required to keep fine track of their accounts and expenses and these were subjected to spot checks by authorities. They were also forbidden from broadcasting news that was not local unless they had explicit permission from the newspapers that originally published such news. Listener fees were also designated, with private residences being required to pay two pounds, boarding houses three pounds, cafes and restaurants three pounds and liquor licensed hotels four pounds per year for the service.[114]

Soon official broadcasters obtained the necessary licenses and began to set up commercial broadcasting stations. *The Scientific and Technical Club* operating as *A.S. & T Broadcasting Company Ltd,* in Johannesburg was the first to begin broadcasting as ‘the JB’. Their designated area was within a 100-mile radius from the station. They commenced operations on 1 July 1924. The *Cape Peninsula Publicity Broadcasting Association Ltd* set up the second station in Cape Town on 15 September 1924. It transmitted from Knysna in the East to Kimberly in the North. The Durban Municipality soon followed with its own station, with broadcasting beginning on 10 December 1924 with a radius of 200 miles. Facing similar challenges, these stations soon formed the South African Broadcasting Council, holding their first conference in November 1924

[112] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology*. P21.
[113] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P2.
[114] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P4.

(before Durban had even begun broadcasting).[115] The public lauded this cooperation, with the *Cape Times* stating:

> ''In a huge country like ours it would have been impossible to carry on without loyal cooperation between broadcasters. Any malice, opposition or antagonism would have doomed any radio project. It is therefore extremely gratifying to see that at this early stage all the heads have come together and agreed to work as one for the interest of the whole.''[116]

In a sense these early stations functioned as a cooperative, with all but financing and programming falling under the regulation of the council which was staffed by representatives of each station. An example of cooperation between these stations would be the agreement that if Grahamstown did not set up a fully operational station within six months of the setting up of the council, the stations in Cape Town and Durban would be allowed to transmit in what is now the Eastern Cape. They would then have an equal share in any profits made from broadcasts to this region.[117] This came to fruition, as Grahamstown was unable to finance the setting up of a station.

Programming at the JB was simple. They aired three sessions a day, from 12:30-14:00, 16:30-18:00 and from 19:00-23:00. They played mostly classical music, performed live from the studio as well as from gramophone records for symphonic pieces. There were regular updates on the market and share reports. At times they aired guest lectures on topics like Egyptology and South African History. There was one Afrikaans programme, being ''a selection of Afrikaans recitations and readings.'' They did not air any African language programme at all.[118]

The greatest challenge facing these fledgling companies was the securing of revenue. Fee collection mechanisms were flawed as they were unable to prosecute non-compliant listeners. This was because it was necessary to prove usage and not merely ownership of a radio set, which was impossible. At first the annual licensing fee was payable directly to the broadcaster. The Broadcasting Council found this burdensome, and lobbied to

[115] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* PP 5-6.
[116] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P 7.
[117] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P 7-8.
[118] Mhlambi, T.N. 2015. *Early Radio Broadcasting in South Africa, Culture, Modernity and Technology*. PP 23-24.

make these fees payable to post offices. This became the mode of revenue collection in January 1925 on the condition that there was a reduction in fees.[119] The problem however lay with the proliferation of radio pirates. These were individuals with home-made radio sets who listened to broadcasts without paying licensing fees. By 1926 the JB had begun facing monumental financial difficulties. They were servicing a public that largely ignored licensing arrangements. In February 1926, the Chairman of the board of the JB informed the Postmaster General of the impending closure of his station due to an inability to meet expenditure requirement.

The JB board implored the Postmaster General to introduce legislation stipulating harsher penalties for piracy. This led to the promulgation of the Radio Act of 1926. This act introduced harsh fines and confiscation of radios as tools to aid in the collection of licensing fees. This did not, however, convince pirates that were using home-made radios to make their way to post offices to pay licensing fees.[120] As a result of the failure of the new legislation to secure revenue, the JB went to the press in an attempt to guilt offenders into paying up. On 24 November 1926 the *Rand Daily Mail* published an article titled *JB Threatens to Close Down* in which they threatened their listeners with closure if they did not make payments, in arrears, within two months.[121] They requested a bailout from the Johannesburg Town Council in order to remain operational within this period. This quote from the Director's Statement that was submitted to the Town Council illustrates the wrath and sincerity that accompanied his threat:

> ''If the public who profit by the entertainment are not prepared to pay, then there is only one course for the directors to pursue, and that is to close down. The directors have already expended about £2000 of private capital and they surely cannot be expected to incur further losses.''[122]

This was no idle threat. Despite attempts by the Johannesburg City Council to assist and subsidise the JB, the station ceased operations on 31 January 1927. There was

[119] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* p 8.
[120] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P 15.
[121] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* PP 15-16.
[122] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P16.

considerable talk about broadcasting being in the public interest, but this did not affect the behaviour of radio pirates who continued tuning in despite not paying listening fees.[123]

The ABC and the Commercialisation and Centralisation of Radio.

It should be noted that in 1923 the promulgation of the, 'Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' Act laid the foundation for the eventual formation of the ABC. The act stipulated that ''Any person may apply to the Postmaster-General for a license to establish a service of broadcasting wireless telephony. The Postmaster-General may in his discretion issue a license on such terms and subject to such conditions as he may decide.''[124] It continued by adding that ''the broadcaster shall establish, at his own expense, as soon after his licence is granted as possible, a broadcasting station with machinery of the latest approved type, powerful enough to transmit easily over a distance to be specified in the licence. No other broadcasting licence shall be issued within such distance during the currency of such licence.''[125] The regulations further applied to the length of the issuance of the license, the fact that regular broadcasting was necessary, that the Postmaster-General was allowed to make use of a station's infrastructure for governmental purposes and that the stations were allowed to contract with listeners.[126] The regulation allowed for advertising as a source of revenue, as long as it adhered to certain conditions related to the relative quantity of advertisements being broadcast.[127]

What this regulation did was create the platform for an industry monopoly. By requiring large capital outlays, rigid territorial supremacy and by giving sole discretion to the Postmaster-General with regards to the issuing of licenses, it was made possible for a single, capital rich company to gain supremacy and eliminate competition. In particular, the stipulation regarding exclusion of new licenses in existing territories, meant that if one

[123] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936*
[124] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923, Part 1 Section 1.
[125] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923, Part 1 Section 2.
[126] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923, Part 1 Sections 3-7
[127] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923, Part 1 Section 9.

company was issued a license for all major urban centres, no new company would be able to encroach on their markets. Furthermore, as will be shown with the example of the Public Address Company, the Postmaster-General's full discretion in issuing a license meant that he could act as a gatekeeper against any possible encroachment on such a company's markets.

The three stations that existed between 1924 and 1927 did not make full use of these statutory opportunities. They operated as a cooperative insofar as they established the South African Broadcasting Council, but they did not act as a monopoly, being organised as different companies with separate operational expenses. These operational expenses, coupled with their inability to secure licensing revenue, led to their downfall. Through careful lobbying on the part of the Postmaster-General, I W Schlesinger was then brought into the fold of the radio industry.

The process by which Schlesinger obtained the assets of these stations was not a simple one. At first the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, Mr Walter Madeley, was greatly opposed to approaching a private for-profit organisation for assistance with saving these radio stations. He much preferred the model of the British Broadcasting Corporation. He believed that broadcasting was in the public interest and that a public body should have been responsible for its rescue. When questioned, he stated that if the State would not provide for such a body, then municipalities should undertake the project.[128]

Madeley quickly conceded that such an undertaking by the State would prove unfeasible. The BBC boasted a listenership of 2 263 894 people by 1927. The combined listenership in South Africa was roughly 15 000 in the same year. The use of State funds to support broadcasting could not be justified for so few listeners.[129] Furthermore, the previous attempts by the Johannesburg City Council to subsidise the JB had been met with fierce condemnation by rate payers. This outrage was leveled at an inadequate subsidy of only £900. This sum was less than 1% of what would have been needed to cover the operational expenses of a nationwide radio station at the time. This certainly dissuaded

[128] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* PP20-21.
[129] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P21.

Madeley from attempting to burden municipalities with this task.[130] In a conversation with a colleague, Madeley conceded that a private company with sufficient resources and a firm footing in the entertainment industry might be allowed to form a nationwide company. He also stated that the provision of such a license should be accompanied by the caveat that after ten years the State should be given the option to take over operations of the broadcaster.[131]

Despite his misgivings about Municipalities funding broadcasting operations, Madeley's first instinct prevailed and he entered into negotiations with the Johannesburg City Council to that effect. The Council was not prepared to fund this project from its revenue alone. They made it clear that they would only undertake such a venture if the scheme was funded by all Transvaal municipalities as well as by newspapers like the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Times*, which at a time had indicated that they were prepared to assist in the funding of a public broadcaster.[132] Seemingly uninspired by these conditions, Madeley arranged an interview with Schlesinger with the purpose of discovering any possibility of his organisation establishing a national broadcaster. In describing his decision to do this, he stated that ''the Schlesinger Organisation was the only one which could afford immediate assistance with the talent and resources at its control and could start broadcasting at the earliest possible date.''[133]

The interview revealed that Schlesinger would be partial to taking control of the scheme only under certain conditions.[134] These were that:

> ''the licenses should be for ten years, as a shorter period would be uneconomic from a broadcaster's point of view. That [Schlesinger] should be assured if Johannesburg and Cape Town were prepared to surrender their licenses these would be transferred to the African Broadcasting Co. which he would form. That if the Government required a

[130] It should be noted that the Cape Town and Durban Municipalities were indirectly and directly funding broadcasters in their cities. At the time they too were facing financial difficulties, but had not yet articulated their distress the JB had, having had more liquidity than .
[131] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P.
[132] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P.
[133] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P
[134] UCT Special Collection Library, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, The Star, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.

> guarantee of good faith, he was prepared to give his personal guarantee for the sum required.''[135]

Initially representatives of the City Council and its preferred contractor for the scheme, the Publicity Company, felt jilted by the perceived lack of good faith on Madeley's part[136]. Perhaps the Council sensed the opportunity of continued broadcasts without a substantial contribution from their funds. Representatives of both the Publicity Company and the Council soon changed their tone to one of public support for Schlesinger's establishing a broadcaster in Johannesburg. In an article in the *Star* newspaper, the mayor, Law Palmer, stated that ''Schlesinger's scheme will turn out thoroughly satisfactory.''[137] In an apparent olive branch to Madeley, he also added that ''we ought to be big enough to think that the Minister has acted for the best, and at any rate the new company, if found suitable by the government, will be a public one.''[138] The Chairman of the Publicity Company, C.H. Leake, in the same issue, added that:

> ''We could not have asked the Council to put up anything like the capital Mr. Schlesinger can advance. And if he comes to terms with the Government, he will be prepared, I understand, to proceed with a super-power plant in Johannesburg. After all Mr. Schlesinger will be able to provide far better programmes than any other body we hope to find. He has splendid resources and the satisfaction of the listeners is, in the long run, all that counts.''[139]

The latter declaration of Schlesinger's ''splendid'' access to entertainment resources can be explained by the fame he attained and business connections he fostered in the film industry. Despite initial misgivings, Schlesinger accepted the responsibility.

Schlesinger bore this responsibility on the condition that he ''should take over, simultaneously with the JB, the small stations that were being run by the publicity associations of the Cape Peninsula and Durban.'' Another condition was that ''he should

[135] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P25.
[136] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P26.
[137] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P27.
[138] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P27.
[139] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P27.

be given a license for ten years for those stations and any other he might erect."[140] Madeley soon made a written offer to Schlesinger outlying his own conditions.

This is a summary of the offer made to Schlesinger. The ABC was to be a public company, with the public being able to purchase shares. Schlesinger was to underwrite the full amount necessary for the formation of the ABC that was not secured through the public listing. The ABC was allowed to sell its own radio sets. Ten percent of profits from the company's activities were to be disbursed to shareholders. The remaining profits were to be given to the company, the State and to listeners, who were to receive their share in the form of a reduction in licensing fees. The Postmaster-General was given leave to expropriate the company after the licensing period, but it was stipulated that they would compensate ABC upon doing so. The Government was also given the right to nominate two members to the board of directors.[141] The ABC was to begin broadcasts within three weeks of accepting offer. No other broadcaster was allowed to relay broadcasts from other stations without the express permission of the ABC. Madeley confirmed that the State would react favourably if the broadcasting licenses of Cape Town and Durban were to be transferred to the ABC. It was also stated that the legislation necessitating the purchase of a license when purchasing a radio set would have been considered.[142]

Schlesinger agreed to these conditions. The result was satisfactory to the authorities. The JB ceased broadcasts on 31 May 1927, the ABC commenced its services on 1 April 1927, the very next day. The initial capital outlay was of £50 000, a considerable amount at the time.[143] In total £7000 was public funds, secured through the public listing. £3000 was provided by the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. Having promised to underwrite the deficit needed to begin the company, Schlesinger contributed £40 000. Schlesinger was the Chairman of the Board. Joining him were many of his business associates, such as

[140] UCT Special Collection Library, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.
[141] While the Government never terminated this right, it suspended any appointments of its own indefinitely, never nominating anyone to the board of the ABC.
[142] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* PP28-31.
[143] UCT Special Collection Library, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.

H.L. Adler, W.O. Bullock, J.A. Macrae and Julian Schlesinger who all sat on the boards of other companies in the Schlesinger Organisation.[144]

Within a few months ABC had acquired the licenses of the Cape Town and Durban stations. Madeley and the Ministry of Post and Telegraphs certainly facilitated this. The Cape Town station was sold for £6000, while the amount paid for the Durban station is unclear, but was likely sold for a similar amount.[145] Schlesinger immediately set about installing new equipment in places like Maraisburg, substantially increasing the broadcast distance of the JB. He had successfully established a centralised national radio broadcasting company. During this initial stage broadcasts were limited to in-studio classical performances as well as records. At times news bulletins were broadcast, as well as topical talks.[146] No consideration was given to African audiences, who at the time were not considered when placing relay stations, or when producing content. Afrikaans broadcasts did not commence until 1931, when a few topical talks and an Afrikaans children's hour was introduced.[147]

Schlesinger's venture did not find initial success. In his first two years of operations, he only managed to increase his listenership by 2000 people. Furthermore, he faced the same challenges with licensing fee collection as his predecessors. The financial crisis of 1929 exposed the fragility of the ABC. They were operating with a yearly deficit of £15 000.[148] By August the financial position of the ABC was untenable. In a meeting with the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, a deputation from the company made the following proposals:

> (a) That the Government should provide the fill amount required to give broadcasting service, and recoup themselves as far as possible by the imposition of a tax upon wireless apparatus imported into the Union. (b) That the Government should collect and retain as

[144] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* PP28-31.
[145] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P32.
[146] UCT Special Collection Library, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.
[147] UCT Special Collection Library, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.
[148] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P33.

part of its revenue the full amount of listening-in fees, and provide the full amount required for the performance of broadcasting service.[149]

In a sense this was an attempt on Schlesinger's part to recreate the financial model of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). In 1927 the BBC became a centralised and virtually monopolistic public broadcaster. It had been a private company from 1923. It was established by royal charter, and was thus funded by licensing fees collected through government agencies.[150] The BBC was not allowed to generate a revenue through advertising.[151] Unlike the BBC, Schlesinger's ABC did not benefit from such direct financial support from the Government. Inversely, the ABC was allowed to generate income from advertising. This attempt by Schlesinger did not bear fruit. The Government did not respond. It was unwilling to contribute a subsidy or assist with fee collection. It has been speculated that this was because the ABC's listenership did not comprise more than 1% of the white population at the time.[152]

Being a rather innovative capitalist, Schlesinger devised a plan to increase revenues from licensing fees without the help of the Government. It occurred to him and his board that if they could secure licensing fees from all new listeners they could evade the effects of piracy. To this effect they developed the Blue Free Voucher Scheme.[153] The word 'free' was used rather ironically. The premise of the scheme was that dealers of wireless sets were to include the licensing fee in the cost of the product. In this way they were to act as the fee collectors, in place of the broadcasting company. Wireless dealers were willing to embark on this venture for two reasons. The first was that they and the ABC shared a mutual interest in securing revenue for, and developing the broadcast industry. The ABC needed more secure revenue in order to continue operating and to improve its services. The wireless dealers needed the ABC to do the same things in order for their markets to grow and for their products not to become redundant. A second reason was that Schlesinger agreed to desist from selling wireless sets. The ABC would only have

[149] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P34.
[150] Crissel, A. 2002. *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting,* Routledge: New York. P28.
[151] Crissel, A. 2002. *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting.* P29.
[152] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P45.
[153] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P35.

generated its revenue from licensing fees and advertising, and would not encroach on the dealers' markets.[154]

The ABC entered into agreements with the wireless dealers, ensuring its capture of revenue from new listeners. This arrangement proved very advantageous for the ABC. The following table indicates the rapid growth of the ABC paying market.

Year	Licenses	Increase
1927	15 509	
1928	16 380	871
1929	17 225	845
1930	25 121	7 896[155]
1931	39 689	14 568
1932	50 644	10 955
1933	66 611	15 967
1934	98 562	31 951
1935	132 283	33 721
1936	152 000	19 717

Table 1: Growing Listener Numbers - ABC[156]

The rapid growth in license fee-paying listeners following 1930 can be attributed to the efficiency of the Blue Free Voucher Scheme. The ABC settled into a comfortable financial position. They were able to cover their expenses and reinvest their profits into the business, purchasing new technologies and extending the range of the service.

[154] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P35.
[155] Commencement of the Blue Free Voucher Scheme occurred in this year.
[156] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P37.

Broadcasting for the Empire and the Government.

Although Schlesinger's venture was a commercial one, the ABC cooperated with the Government and the BBC on many occasions. In 1923 the BBC had paid for eight transmitters to be installed in the Union, licensed by the postmaster general, for the purposes of transmitting news to the territory. The ABC made use of these installations when reporting news from Britain. This arrangement was made through the Prime Minister's office.[157] A further example of this cooperation was when, in 1933, it was again arranged through the Prime Minister's office for the ABC to broadcast speeches, relayed from the BBC, from the Monetary and Economic Conference in London.[158]

An example of cooperation between the ABC and the Government related a protracted effort between government bodies and the ABC to conduct research relating to, and to provide for, educational broadcasts to schools. Schlesinger was personally involved in this process. In the minutes of the second meeting of the Department of Education Provincial Consultative Committee held on the 21st and 22nd October 1935, it was indicated that Schlesinger was personally thanked for an annual contribution of £120 to each province towards the general expenditure related to broadcasting to schools.[159] In the same minutes, experiments relating to school broadcasts in each province were discussed.

In 1935, preliminary trials, consisting of daily broadcasts to eight schools, were conducted in the Transvaal. It was concluded by the relevant committee that ''radio as a significant force in school education should be officially recognized and supported by the Transvaal province through its education department.''[160] Similar experiments with similar outcomes were conducted in the other provinces during the same period. This would have been a boon to Schlesinger's broadcasting operations as it would have required education

[157] SAB GG 1401 43.737 Telegraphy Wireless,
[158] SAB BLO 252 P12/6/3 Monetary and Economic Conference Broadcasting Arrangements.
[159] SAB BNS 1.1.516 10.2.85 Provincial Consultative Committee. Broadcasting to Schools, Minutes Second Provincial Consultative Committee.
[160] SAB BNS 1.1.516 10.2.85 Provincial Consultative Committee. Broadcasting to Schools, Minutes Second Provincial Consultative Committee.

departments to purchase both radios and licenses for the purposes of providing these services.

In the same committee meeting, it was decided to purchase films for educational purposes as part of the same project. It was decided to purchase over £6760 worth of educational films from African Consolidated Theatres, another of Schlesinger's companies.[161] The nature of these educational radio broadcasts were discussed. They were to focus on language content, were not to emulate the structure of textbooks, but were rather to ''illumine, broaden and deepen'' conventional teaching practices.[162] Furthermore, it was decided that the roles of the Department of Education and the African Broadcasting Company were to be clearly defined in terms of payments to broadcasters, including travel expenses. The ABC was clear that it would not foot the bill for this project, but would provide the facilities to conduct such broadcasts. Furthermore, it was decided that representatives from the ABC were to be included in the controlling body of the programme along with administrative officers of the Education Department and representatives of the various Teachers' Associations.[163]

The close relationship between government officials and the ABC even manifested in public statements. The Governor-General, in a broadcast celebrating the opening of a new transmitting station in the Cape, stated that:

> ''[Broadcasting's] growth was slow but continuous until June 1927, when the Cape Town Broadcasting Station was acquired by the African Broadcasting Company Limited. Growth, since then, has been rapid, culminating with the erection at Milnerton, of the most modern transmitter procurable… and with the construction of up to date studios especially for this purpose.''[164]

Schlesinger, in turn, expressed that:

[161] SAB BNS 1.1.516 10.2.85 Provincial Consultative Committee. Broadcasting to Schools, Minutes Second Provincial Consultative Committee.
[162] SAB BNS 1.1.516 10.2.85, Provincial Consultative Committee. Broadcasting to Schools, Minutes First Provincial Consultative Committee 24 and 25 June 1935.
[163] SAB BNS 1.1.516 10.2.85 Provincial Consultative Committee. Broadcasting to Schools, Minutes Second Provincial Consultative Committee.
[164] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P38.

‘’of the many high offices which [the Governor-General] has filled with notable success, by no means the least of which was his chairmanship of the British Broadcasting Corporation. With this past experience, he will view in a critical light what he has seen tonight, and I can only hope that the standard of efficiency we have so far achieved will not suffer too severely by comparison with what he insisted upon elsewhere.’’[165]

This expression of symbiosis between state and private parties is representative of a larger trend identified in this study. Schlesinger could boast of true intimacy with power. Those who wielded it were the beneficiaries of his services, philanthropy and goodwill. In turn they were often the harbingers of his opportunities and profit. The examples above serve to illustrate the extent to which the boundaries between public and private were in flux. Although a private company, state entities had interacted with the ABC as if it were the representative of a nationalised industry. Apart from broadcasting ordinary news, the ABC used its facilities, in conjunction with the BBC, to broadcast empire service news and special events to South Africans. The ABC laid a solid foundation for the creation of a state-owned broadcasting corporation.

Broadcasting and Africans

It is necessary to address Schlesinger’s indifference towards Africans. His direct and indirect influence on the rejection of Africans from radio can be inferred from the following case studies. In 1932 an application was made to the Native Affairs Department for the creation of an African language radio station. This application included a very detailed prospectus. It started by stating assertively: ‘’We will broadcast in nothing but the native languages. we will have our own announcers etc. It will be operated by ourselves. We will be the owners.’’[166] The station was supposed to be offered for free to the Native Affairs Department to do with as they would. It was recommended that they use it for propaganda purposes. The applicants, ‘the Public Address Company’ headed by a Mr. Ballenden, was to generate its revenue through advertising on the station. The Public Address Company intended to retail radios themselves as well as to handle the administration of licensing these radios. The prospectus also included a detailed description of the fee structure

[165] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P38.
[166] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From the Public Address Company to the Native Affairs Department.

related to licensing which would have been imposed on Africans, and how the revenue from this would have been distributed among stakeholders. Seemingly due to the necessity of using the ABC's infrastructure, the company was to receive 2/7ths of the revenue. It also promised not to interrupt the broadcasting of the ''JB, Pta, Dbn or C.T.''[167] meaning all the stations affiliated with the ABC.

In a rare show of inclusivity, the prospectus included provisions foreseeing the inclusion of Africans as broadcasters, apprentice engineers, and as members of the governing body of the station. The station's content was to include African music, church services, ceremonies, lectures and addresses by traditional leaders. It was promised that an ''interpreter, sufficiently educated in these matters [who] holds a responsible position'' would have ensured that ''nothing is broadcast that would cause question.''[168] The immediate response of the Native Affairs Department was to relay the request, with the inclusion of the prospectus, to the Postmaster-General's office, who was responsible for licensing stations. The letter stated that the sender, the secretary for Native Affairs, would ''be glad to be advised as to the attitude which [the Postmaster-General's Office] would adopt toward the proposal.''[169]

The response took twenty days to consider. It was terse, stating; ''I have to advise you that the proposal to establish a Broadcasting Station for purely native interests has been afforded careful consideration, and it is regretted that this Department is unable to concede a license for this service.''[170] The Public Address Company was promptly informed by the Secretary for Native Affairs that he was ''unable to assist in the matter'' due to the decision of the Postmaster-General.[171] The extent of Schlesinger's involvement in this rejection is merely speculative. There could have been many causes for this

[167] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From the Public Address Company to the Native Affairs Department.
[168] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From the Public Address Company to the Native Affairs Department.
[169] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From Secretary of Native Affairs to Postmaster-General's Office, 9 July 1932.
[170] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From Postmaster-General's Office to Secretary for Native Affairs. 29 July 1932.
[171] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From Secretary of Native Affairs to the Public Address Company, 3 August 1932.

rejection. It could not have been due to financial considerations as the Public Address Company intended to finance the station on its own.

It would also unlikely have been caused by racial policy at the Postmaster-General's office, because if this was the case they would have deferred judgement on the matter to the Native Affairs Department. What is certain is that the new station would have challenged the monopoly of the ABC. Africans were not expressly precluded from obtaining licenses to listen to ABC channels (although they made up a seemingly negligible portion of listeners). It might therefore be inferred that the Postmaster-General's Office, which was responsible for the solicitation of Schlesinger into the radio business and which was essential to securing his monopoly on licensed broadcasting stations, might have been protecting his interests.

There are reasons why they might have been incentivised to do this beyond the stipulation in the relevant regulation that stations were not allowed to encroach on each other's territories. The prospectus clearly stated it would operate at a lower frequency than the ABC, and would not in any way interrupt the ABC's broadcasts. The ABC was not a particularly profitable company. In 1936 the renewal of the ABC's license was to be reviewed. It might have been the intention of the Postmaster-General's Office to protect the ABC in the hopes that if necessary, it would entertain(?) negotiations for the renewal favourably, having protected ABC from competition. Regardless of the reasons for the rejection of this proposal, no broadcasting station with the intention of broadcasting to Africans was set up. The ABC certainly did not initiate such a project, and its continued monopolistic ownership of the industry may have factored into the decision by the Postmaster-General not to issue a license for such a project.

Some things are evident when studying Schlesinger's business acumen. He was driven by the profit motive, and he acted decisively in eliminating competition. This might explain the phenomenon of the lack of broadcasting to Africans by either ABC or any other body. African's did not make up a substantial market, as at the time they could not afford the high costs of purchasing radios for home use, or for licensing them. Therefore, the ABC would have been wary of providing services for African audiences. Yet Schlesinger's

aversion to competition might have resulted in others not attempting to provide such services either.

Another example of Schlesinger's indifference towards Africans is found in his approach, or lack thereof, towards training Africans as skilled operators. Schlesinger appeared never to have allowed Africans to be employed in the technical departments of his film or radio stations. This is evidenced by an application made in 1949 by a Mr Mazibuko to the Witwatersrand Technical College for training in that field. Correspondence indicates that there was no history of such training, in theory or apprenticeships, being provided to Africans in South Africa.[172] Through the Institute for Race Relations, Mr Mazibuko then attempted to source funding for such studies in the USA. This attempt was so unique it was advertised in the *Star* newspaper.[173] This was unsuccessful. Ultimately, all the Institute could do for Mr Mazibuko was to find him employment as a driver in Northern Rhodesia where he would simultaneously have been given the opportunity to apprentice at the country's radio broadcaster.[174] This request would suggest that there was no history of Africans being employed in this capacity in South Africa, certainly prior to this, as well as immediately after this. It can be safely assumed that Schlesinger made no attempt during the period of this study to train or hire Africans for technical work at his radio stations.

In summarising this chapter, the following assertions can be made. Schlesinger's business model shared some commonalities with its American counterparts. The emphasis on local news was one such commonality. Another was the practice of securing revenue through advertising. There were similar anxieties in South Africa and America concerning the impact of commercialisation of what was considered an entity that acted in the public interest.

It should be emphasised that the ABC shared more in common with the BBC than with its American counterparts. In America hundreds of independent and state funded stations

[172] Wits Historical Research Papers, AD1947/11.4, 'Broadcasting, Wireless Training.' From Director Witwatersrand Technical College, to Director SA Institute for Race Relations, 23 July 1943.
[173] Wits Historical Research Papers, AD1947/11.4, 'Broadcasting, Wireless Training.' The Star, 6 August 1949.
[174] Wits Historical Research Papers, AD1947/11.4, 'Broadcasting, Wireless Training.' From Broadcasting Engineer, Northern Rhodesia, to Mr Walter Mazibuko, 23 November 1949.

emerged during this period. By 1927 the BBC had a monopolised hold on the industry in the UK. Similarly, the ABC was a centralised broadcaster with a virtual monopoly on the industry in South Africa. Schlesinger even petitioned the government, prior to the establishment of the Blue Free Voucher Scheme, to establish similar funding mechanisms to the BBC in South Africa.

In terms of the contents of broadcasts, the ABC also showed a closer affinity to the BBC than to American stations. The priority of classical music performances was one such example. More convincingly, the broadcasting of empire news and events shows the close relationship between the BBC and the ABC.

These conclusions challenge the dominant thesis that Schlesinger was a conduit of American cultural imperialism. Instead, it can be asserted that there were many imperial concerns that affected his business model. He did not look to America for inspiration, but rather towards Britain and the BBC. Furthermore, Schlesinger's indifference towards African audiences and employees was indicative of the South African context. In America, jazz and African artists were sometimes showcased in radio broadcasts. In South Africa no such attempt was made.

From ABC to SABC

The end of the ABC was ushered in by the publication of the Reith Report in 1937. Sir JCW Reith was previously the chairperson of the BBC. He was commissioned by the South African government to conduct an investigation into the viability and necessity of public broadcasting in South Africa. Reith was at pains not to be insulting in his report, stating that ''the present company, particularly in view of the difficulties under which it operates, has done well and will/can? do still better; but that neither the maximum benefits, nor even a considerable increase in benefit, can be secured under any commercial system; that this is no reflection whatever on the company.''[175] Reith even made grand overtures to Schlesinger himself, stating that he was impressed by the works of the ABC, that the government should be generous in compensating for the expropriation of ABC and that it would be ''advantageous to the development of

[175] SABC Library, Reith Report, 1937, Section 1, II.

broadcasting in the Union'' if Schlesinger were given a seat on the board of the SABC.[176] Reith's main argument for the conversion of ABC into a state entity was that commercial interests limited the ability of the Company to broadcast universally and to provide the essential services necessary of a broadcasting company, dealing with education and wide reaching demand and supply incentives. The courts decided on the amount to be paid to Schlesinger by the government for the company's assets. In the end, he made less than he ever invested in the company.

[176] SABC Library, Reith Report, 1937, Section 1, II

Schlesinger and Film in South Africa

This chapter discusses the conditions in which Schlesinger found the film industry in 1913. It focuses on the process by which Schlesinger consolidated the industry by 1917. It will outline, briefly, the types of films produced and imported for domestic consumption. It will describe the various ways in which Schlesinger's film companies interacted with governmental and imperial authorities. The chapter will also assess the mode in which Schlesinger ran his film businesses by discussing his management style and his interaction with employees. Finally, the chapter will also account for Schlesinger's business' interactions with African audiences and actors.

Early Film Practices in South Africa

Prior to the success of film exhibition in South Africa, a dominant form of entertainment that preceded it were the play, musical performance and the circus. Various theatres were built for this purpose in South Africa at the end of the 19th century.[177] The invention of the motion picture was claimed by various inventors, such as the Lumiere brothers. South Africa has no claim to this invention. The first machine that could exhibit moving pictures in South Africa belonged to the tradition of Thomas Edison's motion picture inventions.[178] It was the Kinetoscope which introduced South African audiences to the idea of moving pictures. While it enabled single viewers to witness this phenomenon, the machine did not allow for exhibition to larger audiences. It arrived in Johannesburg in 1895, brought over by an astute salesman, looking for new markets for these inventions.[179]

The first films exhibited that were capable of being projected to larger audiences made their debut in South Africa in 1896 at the Empire Palace of Varieties in Johannesburg. Edgar Hyman was central to the inception of a film viewing culture. He exhibited American and British short films in this manner from 1896-1899.[180] Hyman was very much moved

[177] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* Howard Timmons: Cape Town, p2
[178] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p4.
[179] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p5.
[180] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* Intellect: Bristol, p21.

by the process of filmmaking. He ordered the equipment necessary to make his own films from London in 1896.[181] He proceeded to make short films, under the Warwick Trading Company of London, in Johannesburg. These films were exhibited in South Africa and abroad. They mostly consisted of images of Johannesburg filmed from a tram, or a moving image of Paul Kruger leaving his house. During the South African war, (1899-1902) Hyman served as the official war correspondent for the Warwick Trading Company, producing clips of the war.[182] This was the birth of film production in South Africa.

A variety of film exhibitors emerged from 1902-1910. These included 'The Royal Vi-scenery', 'Royaliste Biograph', 'Marconi Bioscope,' 'Olympic Bioscope,' and at least nine other small companies.[183] These companies all toured throughout South Africa and screened a variety of foreign and locally produced, mostly non-fiction films at local venues. A favourite genre among South African audiences was the 'topical film.' These included films about subjects like the Russo-Japanese war, the San Francisco disaster, the 1905 Russian revolution and the Olympics.[184] Other genres screened included humourous films, dramatic films and documentaries.

The first permanent cinemas in South Africa were erected in 1909. Among those that found commercial success were the 'Electric Theatres' in Durban and Port Elizabeth, the 'Empire Theatre' and the 'Alhambra Theatre' in Cape Town, and the 'Royal Arcade' in Johannesburg.[185] The first feature film shot in South Africa was *The Great Kimberly Diamond Robbery*. It was on location in South Africa, in 1910 by a foreign company.[186]

Between the years 1910-1913 this fledgling industry faced a massive financial crisis. Exhibitors in particular were fiscally unsound. Their business model was flawed. They were constantly behind in payments to distributors, and many theatres closed down and reopened under new management.[187] African Amalgamated Theatres (AAT) was formed in 1911 in order to streamline the distribution model in this industry. AAT secured

[181] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p14.
[182] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* p21.
[183] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p65.
[184] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p73.
[185] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* pp97-98.
[186] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* p22.
[187] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p112.

'exclusive rights' to foreign produced feature films and distributed them across vast circuits in both permanent theatres as well as in halls in smaller towns.[188] The Empire Theatre Company also consolidated the industry somewhat, purchasing various permanent theatres, as well as distributing films across its and other companies' circuits.[189] As a result of brutal domestic competition, these companies could not be salvaged. There were too many companies operating at the same time. By 1913, both companies went into provisional liquidation.[190]

Schlesinger's Beginnings in the Industry, AFP, ACT

As with many of his investments, such as his development of Killarney and his start in the radio industry, Schlesinger's establishment in the film industry was founded on somebody else's misfortune. The Empire Theatre Company, which operated theatres in Johannesburg and Cape Town, went into liquidation in 1913. Schlesinger saw an opportunity to buy and build up a corporate asset cheaply, so he took it.[191]

The state of affairs of the film industry was dire in 1913. Soon after the Empire Theatres Company became insolvent, African Amalgamated Theatres followed suit.[192] Sensing the moment had come to consolidate his venture, Schlesinger approached Barclay's Bank for a £60 000 loan in order to capitalise the new business venture.[193] He did this by adding African Amalgamated Theatres' assets to his businesses, the newly formed African Theatres Trust (ATT) on 26 May 1913[194] and African Films Trust (AFT) on 25 July 1913.[195]

In order to maximise his influence in the industry, Schlesinger set up a meeting with all major independent theatres and production companies in South Africa in which he asked them to join his centralised distribution and production company. In this way, ATT and AFT become a kind of cooperative around which the broader film industry players rallied

[188] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* pp112-113.
[189] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p115.
[190] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p116.
[191] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, BC 703, C17, ''Research Material.''
[192] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, BC 703, C17, ''Research Material.''
[193] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, The Star, 16th May 1960.
[194] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, BC 703, C17, ''Research Material.
[195] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p185.

in their time of difficulty. Schlesinger became the man with the solution for a failing industry, their mantra; 'stick together and survive'.

Most of the minor companies agreed to this arrangement. Some, considering the newfound liquidity in the industry, opted to sell their assets to Schlesinger instead of entering into this agreement.[196] Of those that sold out to Schlesinger, many were production companies. Using their assets as well as capital derived from his loan, Schlesinger formed African Film Productions (AFP) towards the end of 1913. It specialised in film production rather than distribution.[197] AFP was a remarkable company. In time it would establish a near monopoly on film production in South Africa. It also produced a newsreel, the *African Mirror*, which became the longest running newsreel in the World, running from 1913 to 1987.[198]

Very soon, Schlesinger set about buying out his competitors who were ostensibly serviced by ATT. ATT, AFT and AFP were not the only companies formed by Schlesinger that operated in this industry. Although little information concerning their function can be sourced, it is known that Die SA Rolprent Maatskappy, Parker Talkie Tours, Religious Films of SA, Theatre Publicity, African Amusement Parks, and African Caterers were created. Die SA Rolprent Maatskappy and Religious Films of South Africa played a part in niche film productions. Theatre Publicity marketed AFP. African Caterers was responsible for the very American practice of serving fizzy coldrinks and popcorn in movie theatres. Through the establishment of these associated companies, Schlesinger was able to establish a monopoly in the early South African film industry.[199]

Schlesinger's start in this industry was not without some controversy. Many in the press were weary of monopolies. Sensing the emergence of a new media monopoly, many publications approached Schlesinger's new project with skepticism[200] Furthermore, at the launch of their operations, ATT and AFT had to contend with large-scale strikes in areas, like the West Rand of Johannesburg, that were traditionally profitable for theatres. This

[196] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 16th May 1960.
[197] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 16th May 1960.
[198] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* p23.
[199] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940, p127.*
[200] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p134.

impeded revenue collection, resulting in a slow start for Schlesinger's business.[201] None of these factors severely impeded Schlesinger's strategy to grow the business and to secure the industry. But coupled with the outbreak of World War One in 1914, it should be marveled at that these external barriers to growth did not nip his operations in the bud.

One reason that Schlesinger succeeded was due to the efficient integration of his various business interests with his film companies. As discussed before, some companies were set up with the sole aim of servicing his film companies. These include Theatre Publicity and African Caterers. Schlesinger's property oriented businesses were also involved with his film companies. They were always on each other's ledgers. One example of this included the close relationship between African Film Productions and the African Realty Trust (ART). ART was AFP's landlord with respect to some of its studios in Killarney which they did not own outright.[202] ART also financed the filming of promotional material, to be included in the *African Mirror*, for other Schlesinger assets, like the Zebediela citrus farm. In this case 'the chairman', being Schlesinger, instructed the secretary of AFP to issue the invoice for this service.[203]

Whatever barriers to growth existed, Schlesinger managed to grow his business and begin production on various films. Furthermore, he managed to consolidate the industry successfully. He was now the chief distributor and producer of films in South Africa. By 1917 there was effectively one successful private exhibitor of films left in South Africa. Schlesinger had bought out the rest.[204]

In 1931, after years of operations, Schlesinger eliminated competition that had emerged in 1927, Kinemas, by buying them out, and merging it with ATT and AFT to form African Consolidated Theatres Ltd (ACT).

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[201] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p136.
[202] Wits Historical Research Papers, A1724, FB1, ART:African Film Productions 1925-1964.
[203] Wits Historical Research Papers, A1724, FB1, ART:African Film Productions 1925-1964. From Secretary AFP, to Secretary ART, 13 December 1939.
[204] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p152.

Films

The following table gives a small sampling of the types of films Schlesinger's companies produced and imported. It should be noted that Schlesinger imported substantially more films than he produced, although that is not reflected in this table.

Year	Title	Genre	Produced/Imported
1914	The Girl at the Lunch Counter	Romance	Imported
1915	Two Women	Romance	Imported
1916	De Voortrekkers	Nationalist Epic	Produced
1916	The Sins of the Mothers	Moral Drama	Imported
1918	King Solomon's Mines	Epic	Produced
1918	Maternity	Moral Drama	Imported
1918	Symbol of Sacrifice	Epic	Produced
1919	Allan Quartermain	Epic	Produced
1920	Salome	Romance	Imported
1920	The Bing Boys on Broadway	Vaudeville Play	Produced
1921	Panthea	Moral Drama	Imported
1921	Chu Chin Chow	Vaudeville Play	Produced
1921	The Easiest Way	Moral Drama	Imported
1923	Potash and Pelmutter	Musical Comedy	Produced
1923	The End of the Road	Propaganda	Imported
1923	Orphans of the Storm	Drama	Imported
1923	The Blue Lagoon	Drama	Produced
1924	The Hunchback of Notre Damme	Drama	Imported
1931	Sarie Marie	Propaganda Drama	Produced
1931	Moedertjie	Propaganda Drama	Produced
1938	They Built a Nation	Propaganda Drama	Produced

Table 2: Sample of Films Produced and Imported by Schlesinger [205]

[205] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* pp162-240.

Overall, by 1925 Schlesinger's AFP had produced over 40 films.[206] They simultaneously produced various musicals and plays performed in ACT theatres.

There are certain discernable trends in the types of films and productions produced and imported by Schlesinger's companies. In terms of films imported, films chosen were either chosen for their commercial value or for their topical interest. The emergence of romance films and moral dramas, described by Gutsche as being 'frivolous'[207] and 'suggestive'[208] was in keeping with American film-going trends.

By 1919 captions of American films had become increasingly anglicized in order for them to be understandable to South African audiences. However, with the emergence of 'talkies' this became unnecessary as South Africans became increasingly comfortable with Americanised speech and idioms.[209] Schlesinger's import choices were largely responsible for this 'Americanisation' of speech. This is especially true as there were not many other ways for an average South African audience member to actively hear an American speak apart from in a film.

When looking at the films Schlesinger produced, we see a more obvious trend. Schlesinger's South African made films were often nationalistic and could be described as propagandistic. Films like *De Voortrekker, Sarie Marie*, and *Moedertjie* all fit into the category of filmic expression of Afrikaner nationalism. Other films, like 'Alan Quartermain,' 'King Solomon's Mines,' and 'Symbol of Sacrifice' were epic dramas. Their purpose was to be commercially successful, but they fell into the same genres as commercially successful films across the Atlantic. The plays that Schlesinger put on were in keeping with the mood of the population at the time. Vaudeville and musical comedies were popular, especially during the war years, because of their distractive quality.

Schlesinger's imported films served to immerse South African audiences in American culture. They were advertised as being successes in America, which drew in South

[206] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* p23.
[207] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p183.
[208] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p187.
[209] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p177.

African audiences.[210] It should be noted that there was general opposition to the Americanisation of South Africans through film. Gutsche noted that by 1921:

> ''the disrepute of American films was accentuated by widely spread rumours that the 'vamps', 'sheiks', 'dope addicts', etc of the screen were not merely figments of the imagination but existed in actual life. Hollywood in fact was a haunt of libertines and a sink of iniquity from which no right-minded person would draw his entertainment.''[211]

In order to counter this perception, AFT and ATT imported increasing numbers of British films in the 1920s. There was, however, also anxiety about the dismal production value of these films.[212] South African audiences continued to bemoan the import of American films, but submitted themselves to these films for a lack of an alternative. Some South Africans even accused Schlesinger's companies of intentionally withholding British films.[213]

Schlesinger was deeply attuned to public discourses on this matter. In 1926 Schlesinger joined the board of British International Pictures Ltd. He attended the Imperial Economic Conference in the same year, where the dominance of American films at the expense of British films was discussed.[214] He was in support of the bolstering of the British film industry and committed to importing more British films. This promise bore fruit beginning in 1927 when AFP began importing a much wider variety of British films, to the glee of South African audiences, disillusioned with the liberal, pornographic offerings from Hollywood.[215]

Schlesinger's locally produced films, on the other hand, served two purposes. Some, such as the plays and the epics intended to gratify audiences and were meant to be commercial successes. By some accounts, the epic films failed at this, only finding some commercial

[210] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p154.
[211] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p178.
[212] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p179.
[213] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p188.
[214] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p179.
[215] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p180.

success outside of South Africa.[216] A second purpose was to bolster South African nationalism, through offerings like *De Voortrekkers.*

Competition

Schlesinger dealt with competition to his ventures systematically, ruthlessly and authoritatively. As discussed above, in the 1910s Schlesinger effectively consumed any opposition to his businesses through shrewd maneuvering and purchases of smaller exhibitors and distributors. Opposition to his distribution network emerged sporadically in the years that followed. Some include Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Theatres Ltd and Citizens Amusement Ltd. None of these companies could enter the market successfully as it was saturated with AFT and ATT films and cinemas. The dominance of Ster Kinekor and Nu Metro in South Africa today is analogous with this dominance. What follows is one notable exception that did manage to threaten the preeminence of AFT and ATT.

Kinemas SA Ltd began operations in 1927. Its strategy was to purchase a variety of films from Britain and America and to exhibit them in town halls. It started doing this in Johannesburg Town Hall with the film 'The Chinese Bungalow.'[217] Its initial success emboldened the company, which proceeded to purchase cinema sites and a variety of films to showcase in both these sites and town halls.[218]

ATT reacted immediately. Similar to its reaction to opposition that had emerged before 1927, ATT set out on a campaign to undermine the efforts of Kinemas. Kinemas advertised for the screening of a film titled 'Daughter of Israel.' ATT promptly screened a film with the exact same title. Kinemas was forced to issue a statement informing their audiences that these were not the same films.[219]

This behaviour did little to stem the growth of Kinemas into a successful film company. It successfully contracted with various town halls for their use in film exhibitions. It had a

[216] Botha, M. 2012, *South African Cinema 1896-2010,* p23.
[217] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p199.
[218] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p200.
[219] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p200.

decent stock of films to exhibit, and audiences, tired of the 14-year monopoly that the trusts had in the industry, flocked to view these films.[220]

AFT and ATT's reaction to this newfound competition was to enhance its operations so as to remain in step with the developments that Kinemas had to offer. Both companies set about buying theatres and expanding operations. They emphasised the importation of quality films. They also deployed capable staff to key positions in each organisation in order to maximise their footprint in the market.[221] Kinemas in particular grew at an astounding pace. They soon had operations in Rhodesia and Kampala, and were the owners of prize theatres throughout the Union.[222]

The unparalleled growth in this industry was unsustainable for various reasons. Firstly, it occurred during the Great Depression, when expendable income did not support frivolous activities like visiting the cinema. Secondly, overseas distributors began to exploit the competition between the two companies. Bidding wars for popular films resulted in heightened prices.[223] Soon, both companies came to accept that their competition was hitting them where it counted, in their pockets.

In 1931, to the complete surprise of the public, and without any explanation of the circumstances that lead to the arrangement, Kinemas, ATT, and AFT merged. What emerged from the ashes of their competition was African Consolidated Theatres and African Consolidated Films. Once again, Schlesinger had effected a massive consolidation of the industry. He once again secured his monopoly on film distribution and exhibition.[224]

Schlesinger's competition was not limited to outside threats. Sometimes his competition came from within his own ranks. Examples of his combative approach towards employees will be discussed below.

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[220] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p201
[221] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p201.
[222] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p206.
[223] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p213.
[224] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* pp214.

Running a Business

Although this section will almost exclusively focus on financial decisions taken by Schlesinger, it is worth noting here how he settled interpersonal disputes with staff in this industry. One such example was in his dispute with Harold Shaw, the director of 'De Voortrekkers.' It is not certain what prompted Schlesinger's cruel treatment of Shaw. In 1917 the two had a significant altercation. Schlesinger slandered Shaw in front of other employees. He stated:

> ''Mr Shaw and Mr Kimpton get damned well half drunk and bloody well don't know what they are doing. They take bloody whores to Craighall for joy rides and charge it up to the Company's expense. I am bloody well not going to pay for them. Shaw is good enough: he will pay you. I have lost thousands of pounds through bloody joy-riding and I am damned well not going to do it again. The next time you drive anyone for [the Company] you must either get an order before you start or the people you take must pay you themselves. There has been too much of this game going on.''[225]

Schlesinger's libelous accusations prompted Shaw's civil claim for damages. He petitioned the court for £5000 and the costs of the suit.[226] Schlesinger was a prolific litigant. His litigiousness is profoundly evident in the sheer variety of court cases documented in the National Archives in which he is the plaintiff. In this case he was the defendant.

Owing to this incident, whatever difference Shaw and Schlesinger had resulted in Shaw (and Kimpton) resigning from African Film Productions. This was the nature of Schlesinger's handling of his employees. He would slander an employee if he had a dispute with them, and would face litigation with denial and counter-suits.[227]

It is evident that Schlesinger was financially perceptive in this sector. He would readily effect financial decisions that had a negative impact on his employees and would then use various tactics to avoid taking part in conciliation processes that naturally followed. In 1932, ostensibly due to the financial crisis, African Consolidated Theatres reduced all

[225] TAB, WLD 75.1918 Illiquid Damages Harlold Shaw v IW Schlesinger.
[226] TAB, WLD 75.1918 Illiquid Damages Harlold Shaw v IW Schlesinger.
[227] TAB, WLD 75.1918 Illiquid Damages Harlold Shaw v IW Schlesinger.

non-union employees' salaries by 10%, targeting projectionists in specific.[228] This resulted in these employees challenging his decision by applying to the minister of labour, in terms of Section 10 of Act no. 11, 1924, for the appointment of the conciliation board to amend this reduction. Twenty-three employees were signatories to the original petition.[229]

In a letter to J.H Stodel, the Cape Town branch manager of African Consolidated Theatres, the divisional inspector of the department of labour indicated that the reduction was in contravention of the abovementioned act, insofar as it did not adhere to the statutory notice period assigned to alterations of employment contracts. The inspector noted that the employees' wages were to be restored.[230]

This type of behavior is indicative of Schlesinger's cutthroat but utilitarian business style. In a letter from the divisional inspector to the inspector of labour, it was indicated that Schlesinger strategically targeted employees that were in the process of unionising.[231] In a further letter from the divisional inspector to the secretary of labour, a phone call from ACT to the divisional inspector was discussed, in which ACT claimed that those affected by the reduction were chosen because they had salaries in excess of the fixed rates determined for their occupation by an industrial agreement with unionised workers.

It was further claimed by ACT that they had a choice between affecting the reduction or ''closing about 50 shows,''[232] These wage cuts, as well as ACT's attempts to side-step the conciliation board, were part and parcel of Schlesinger's handling of his film enterprises. On 30 May 1932, the *Cape Times* issued an article subtly condemning ACT and supporting the actions of the Union leaders in trying to protect these workers.[233] The

[228] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, ''Conciliation Board, African Consolidated Theatres and Union Theatres'', 9 May 1932.
[229] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, ''Conciliation Board, African Consolidated Theatres and Union Theatres'', 9 May 1932.
[230] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From divisional inspector department of labour to branch manager of African Consolidated Theatres, 18 May 1932.
[231] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From divisional inspector department of labour to secretary of department of labour, 21 May 1932.
[232] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From divisional inspector department of labour to secretary of department of labour, 21 May 1932.
[233] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, The Cape Times, 30 May 1932.

matter was resolved in favour of ACT, after many affected employees signed an agreement with ACT consenting to the reduction.

In a letter to the Secretary of Labour from the divisional inspector, it is stated that the signing of this agreement may have occurred under duress, with employees being told that if they did not sign, ‘’their services would be dispensed with’’[234]. The management of ACT denied these claims, and all original signees to the petition interviewed by the inspector ‘’Declined to give [their reasons] merely repeating that they wished to withdraw [their application].’’[235]

What resulted from this episode was that the wage reduction was maintained, but ACT consented to the department of labour presiding over a process in which an industry wide employment agreement was negotiated.[236] It was made clear by ACT that they ‘’were not in a receptive mood to consider any proposals that will result in increased expenditure on [their] part.’’ And that any increase in expenditure would have resulted in ‘’some equivalent retrenchment among employees concerned’’[237]

This tactic of forcing employees to sign agreements detrimental to their financial wellbeing was repeated at least once and was referred to the conciliation board in 1944. In that instance members of orchestras performing for ACT were asked to sign agreements under a ‘’veiled threat of penalties.’’[238] ACT repeatedly showed an unwillingness to work with Unions, preferring to deal directly with employees. Despite attempts to get them to negotiate in good faith, they responded negatively to any attempts to petition them to provide higher wages.[239] Their attitude can be summed up in this statement in a letter from the company to the department of labour;

[234] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From divisional inspector department of labour to secretary of department of labour, 1 June 1932.
[235] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From divisional inspector department of labour to secretary of department of labour, 1 June 1932.
[236] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, from Secretary of Labour to Divisional Inspector of Labour, 23 July 1932.
[237] SAB, ARB 1331, 1052/105, From Branch Manager ACT to Secretary of Labour, 17 October 1932.
[238] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musical Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. 6 July 1944.
[239] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musical Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. From President of CMA to branch Manager of ACT, 21 February 1944.

> ‘’This company has pointed out to representatives of the Musicians’ Association in Cape Town that the employment of the orchestra in Cape Town is not a necessity, and that the services of the musicians could be dispensed with without detriment to the Company’s interests, but we have kept the orchestra mainly in the desire to keep the musicians employed.’’[240]

The veiled threat of dismissal was eventually carried out. ACT dismissed the Del Monico Orchestra as they refused to sign ACT’s proffered agreement. A new orchestra that agreed to ACT’s terms was promptly hired.[241] The department of labour was unable to protect the fired orchestra members as they had not signed an agreement with ACT, and the new orchestra had already been hired.[242]

The State

Schlesinger was never shy to use political connections in the film industry. It is possible to say that his warm relationship with political authorities was one of the defining characteristics of his business model.

In one case, he applied directly, in prescriptive terms, to the Agent for the Union of South Africa in Lorenzo Marques to use his ‘’influence to assist in respect’’ of a rebate for an elephant shooting in 1918. This was done in conjunction with a film about early settlers in Lorenzo Marques. The rebate was for a fee charged by the Portuguese authorities.[243] The agent ostensibly used his influence for this purpose.

These attempts to get government bodies to furnish information and assistance to Schlesinger’s companies did not always bear fruit. On 11 March 1918 a representative of AFP sent a letter to the governor-general of St. Helena asking for information concerning a long flight of steps on the island, for use in the film *Allan Quatermain*. The addressee,

[240] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musical Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. From Branch Manager ACT to Divisional Inspector of Department of Labour, 18 July 1944.
[241] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musicial Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. From President of CMA to Secretary of Labour, 9 October 1932.
[242] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musicial Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. From President of CMA to Secretary of Labour, 9 October 1932.
[243] SAB, BAL, 29 A4698, AFP Elephant Shooting Licence.

the producer of the film, started the letter with; ‘’Mr Schlesinger informed me that you have a very long flight of steps on the island somewhere.’’[244] The letter continues by asking the Governor-General to give a general description of the steps, including their width, how high they go up, a sketch plan of the steps, information regarding buildings alongside the steps and how many white people might be available to act as extras in the film.

The Governor-General of St. Helena was seemingly displeased by the request. He promptly relayed his misgivings about providing AFP with such information to the Governor-General in the Union. He claimed to ‘’know nothing of the company sending the letter or the Mr Schlesinger mentioned in it.’’ He also stated that he had ‘’no faith in’’ the addressee. He also enquired if AFP was ‘’reliable and without pro German tendencies.’’[245] The reputation of AFP did not extend into the Atlantic Ocean as Schlesinger might have hoped. It is unclear if the Governor-General of the Union cleared up the matter and solicited the information for AFP, but this incident was a telling example of how Schlesinger believed his influence in official channels allowed him to make bold requests of officials elsewhere in the Empire.

In some cases, the government lobbied on behalf of AFP in order to get it specific contracts. One such example was in 1923 when AFP requested the assistance from the Prime Minister’s office to receive the contract to act as official cinematographers of the Prince of Wales’s state visit. The Prime Minister contacted the Governor-General in this regard, stating that ‘’the African Film Productions Limited is the only film producing company in Africa which can be relied on to produce good work, and the minister would be glad if the application could be brought to the notice of the organisers of the tour.’’[246]

This request was subsequently relayed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Britain[247] and was finally acceded to by that office at the beginning of 1924.[248] This

[244] SAB, GG, 2381 6.789, St. Helena. From Producer, AFP to Governor General of St. Helena, 11 March 1918.
[245] SAB, GG, 2381 6.789, St. Helena, From Governor-General St. Helena to Governor-General Union, 23 April 1918.
[246] SAB, GG, 2183 75.6, Application AFP of official Cinematographers to Prince of Wales 1926, From Prime Minister’s Office to the Office of the Governor-General, 10 October 1923.
[247] SAB, GG, 2183 75.6, Application AFP of official Cinematographers to Prince of Wales 1926,, From Governor General to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 December 1923.
[248] SAB, GG, 2183 75.6, Application AFP of official Cinematographers to Prince of Wales 1926,, From Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor-General, 4 January 1924.

process exemplifies the way in which the Schlesinger Organisation's media operations used government influence to attain permissions for projects. It also indicates the extent to which their public profile influenced the decision making of government officials. Following this permission, AFP communicated directly with the organisers of the tour regarding various aspects. These included the travel arrangements of their operators (first class train tickets were secured)[249], rules regarding the circulation of photographs[250] as well as arrangements concerning the use of images of the Prince of Wales in the *African Mirror* newsreel.[251]

AFP also stood to gain a lot from governmental experiments in providing educational films. In 1929 the League of Nations body, The International Cinematographic Institute, moved to increase the production of educational films across the world. South African education authorities were eager to be included in this project, particularly with regards to films that could assist with vocational training. The Secretary for Education solicited information from the institute regarding their programs and their efficacy in other countries in 1929.[252] Furthermore, the Department of Education sent questionnaires to various principals regarding the project. One question in particular is very instructive to this study. It was asked if there were any known companies that could have been trusted to produce educational films. Many school principals named African Film Productions.[253]

In some cases, government officials were called upon to add credibility to the ACT brand. In 1938 a message was sent by Arthur Barlow of the *Sunday Express* to the Governor-General of the Union requesting that he supply the newspaper with a personal message of congratulations to Mr Schlesinger concerning the Silver Jubilee of African Consolidated

[249] SAB GG 2248 7.43 African Film Productions Ltd, From General Manager AFP to Government House, 24 March 1924.
[250] SAB GG 2248 7.43 African Film Productions Ltd, from General Manager AFP to Government House, 18 March 1924.
[251]SAB GG 2248 7.43 African Film Productions Ltd, From General Manager AFP to Government House, 12 March 1924.
[252] SAB UOD 1871 E136 Vol. 1 Cinematograph, From Secretary of Education to The International Cinematographic Institute.
[253] SAB UOD 1871 E136 Vol.1 Cinematograph, From Principal Wolmeranstad Government Trade School to Secretary of Education.

Theatres to be published in his paper. The impression given by the tone of the letter suggests that Barlow was acting on behalf of ACT.

The letter was prescriptive and contained an attachment that outlined many of the achievements of the organization.[254] The reply from the Governor-General was that his office had a specific policy of not sending messages to the press. Yet in the reply, the Governor-General asked that a private message of congratulations to ACT be conveyed to the organization.[255]

The ACT did more than just request assistance from politicians. It also contributed to their political efforts. In one case ACT donated £2718 to the Mayor's Fund in 1940. Mr Huddle, who received the cheque, ''[made] special mention of Mr Schlesinger, who for a great number of years in Johannesburg had shown in every possible way his great interest in public matters.'' Stating furthermore that ''the many ventures he has under his control have been responsible for giving Johannesburg a great deal of pleasure, a matter for which everyone is grateful to him. In addition, however, he has never been unmindful of the charities of our city, and over a very long period of years he has paid his splendid tributes in the best practical manner to the work that is being done.''[256]

The issuance of such statements might seem ironic considering some of the previous conflicts between Schlesinger and the Johannesburg Municipality, particularly concerning his AFP and ART assets in Killarney. In 1936 Schlesinger's legal representatives sent a scathing letter to the Johannesburg Town Clerk protesting vehemently against some proposed business right restrictions in Killarney. The letter insisted that such restrictions would have limited the ability of AFP to sell its properties.[257] It should be noted that ART,

[254] SAB, GG, 2045, 64/2206, Request for a message from Sir Patrick Duncan conveying his congratulations to African Consolidated Theatres on their Silver Jubilee. From G. Barlow to Secretary to the Governor-General, 28 October 1938.
[255] SAB, GG, 2045, 64/2206, Request for a message from Sir Patrick Duncan conveying his congratulations to African Consolidated Theatres on their Silver Jubilee, From Secretary of the Governor-General to G. Barlow. 31 October 1938.
[256] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *Sunday Times,* 7 January 1940.
[257] Wits Historical Research Papers, A1724, FB1 Group 2, From Mr Gilfillan to the Town Clerk, City of Johannesburg, 13 July 1936.

on whose behalf the letter was not sent, was in the process of developing commercial and residential properties in Killarney.

In another example of charitable donations from ACT, in June 1941 Mrs Schlesinger gave a £5000 cheque to Mrs Smuts' South African Gifts and Comforts Fund on behalf of African Consolidated theatres. Funds were raised by showing newsreels during the lunch hours at cinemas throughout South Africa. Here is evidence of more shoulder rubbing between ACT and government elites. AE Harmel, of the ACT board, was there with Deneys Reitz, the prominent lawyer and ex-boer soldier's wife.[258] Mrs Schlesinger arranged the lunch-hour newsreel films from 1940 onwards to raise the abovementioned funds. [259]

Government officials and the press were often complimentary, verging on obsequious, towards Schlesinger and his operations. Schlesinger's film companies were not the independent films studios associated with the same period in American film history. Instead, they were entwined in government projects and policy aims. Apart from all the ways described above, this was particularly true in the realm of propaganda.

Schlesinger and Africans

Discourses about early film productions in South Africa for African audiences centres on themes of propaganda, censorship and representation.

With regards to propaganda, AFP was intimately involved with a man named Henry Taberer. Taberer was an adviser to the Native Recruitment Corporation (NRC) and was largely responsible for the production of films circulated in Reverend Ray Philips' Mines' Compound Cinema Circuit (MCCC).[260]

In 1925, the NRC contracted with AFP to copyright 'Native Life in the Cape Province' under the new name 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation.'[261] The purpose of the film was twofold. Firstly, it intended to idealise tribal life in a way that fostered an appreciation for

[258] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers ,*The Star,* 24 June 1941.
[259] UCT Special Collection Libraries, A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, Sunday Times, 1 September 1940.
[260] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 33, 1, March 2007, pp134-135.
[261] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p135.

that lifestyle. The reason for this was that the NRC did not want to encourage 'drift' of peoples from rural areas into urban areas. A second purpose was to show the benefits of working on the mines. This was to encourage migrant labour.[262] The film was unique in that it depicted Africans from rural areas conducting traditional ceremonies that they did not readily invite whites to witness. Notwithstanding this inclusion in representation, the project was deeply paternalistic and racist in its narrative. Reynolds states that 'ultimately then, the film's message is that, while traditional African Communities offer a critical space for nurture, they fail to provide an adequate context for social progress.'[263]

A major lacuna in the film were scenes of repatriation of migrant labourers back to rural areas. The idea of 'social progress' being attained on the mines was mythical when one considered the inevitable return of migrant labourers to their rural homesteads, sans all but the bare minimum of income attainable on the mines.[264] True 'social progress' as envisaged by authorities was reserved in a myriad of ways for whites.

AFP went on to produce various films for the purpose of recruitment to the mines. Some of these include: *From Kraal to Mine*, *Industrialisation of the African*, *the WNLA in Portuguese East Africa* and *Peeps into Basutoland*.[265] All of these films were paternalistic, patronising and served not to entertain (as other AFP projects often did) but rather to further the agenda of the authorities at the Native Recruitment Corporation. All of these films attempted to strike a balance between portraying idyllic rural life as something that could be enhanced by activity in the labour markets on the Witwatersrand. It was decided by the chairperson of the Corporation that representations of 'favourable remuneration' rather than 'tribal life' was more effective at stimulating migration.[266] In this regard, AFP's recruitment films came to emphasise this aspect above visions of idyllic rural life.

[262] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p136.
[263] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p137.
[264] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p137.
[265] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p139.
[266] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p142.

A final AFP-NRC project worth discussing was the production of *the Kernel* shot between 1931 and 1937. This project was unique in that it consisted of seven different pictures with the same narrative. Shots of life on the mines were filmed as a generic ending for all seven films. This ending was to be spliced onto tailor-made depictions of rural life in Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Zululand and Natal, Transkei and Pondoland, Portuguese East Africa, and Northern Transvaal.[267] Interestingly, as a way to foster 'good faith' to film these communities, AFP screened films for Africans in these areas during filming. There is seemingly no record of what films were screened other than the fact that they were cartoons.[268] In this way, AFP showed how infantile they believed African audiences to be.

The films took six years to complete. Five films were completed as early as 1935, and were added to the NRC circuit. The rest were completed by 1937. The films were screened to tens of thousands of Africans in reserves and rural areas. The films were praised in white media for their success in catalysing Africans on the path to the Witwatersrand. One journalist stated that 'great interest is being taken in the show by natives of all walks of life and in spite of some very cold evenings there have been excellent attendances.''[269] The films seemingly fulfilled their propagandistic purpose effectively. Although the lack of regular film exhibitions in these areas might account for the high turnout.

AFP's involvement in this project speaks to the thesis of this paper. In keeping with the expectations of the time, Schlesinger's companies did not actively view Africans as a credible commercial market for their films. As will be discussed, Africans were exoticised and depicted as inferior, dangerous and uncivilised if they were depicted at all. Yet as an audience for their productions, AFP did not entirely exclude Africans. AFP assisted the labour intensive mining industry in securing migrant labour. It did this by creating effective propaganda that pandered towards tribalism and emphasised the material benefits of

[267] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p143.
[268] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940, 'p143.
[269] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p144.

going to the mines. AFP's role in the broader racial politics of the time makes it unique compared to its American and British counterparts. This was the largest production company in South Africa with monopolistic tendencies. Yet they served the authorities in the NRC, and by extension, the interests of white capital, by making these films. This speaks to their unique role in South Africa. They would not have undertaken this role in either America or Britain.

A second sphere in which Schlesinger related to African audiences was in the realm of censorship. Censorship was a common practice in South African cinema for all audiences from its inception. This discussion centers on the role of ACT and AFP with regards to censorship practices in South Africa.

There were two main motivations for censorship of African audiences. One was to only exhibit films to Africans that could educate them about subjects as diverse (and patronising) as agricultural methods, saving money, soil erosion, agricultural credit, hygiene and engendering loyalty to authorities.[270] A second outcome of censorship was to ''protect'' Africans from '' 'the corrosive influence' of foreign films which were bound to show the 'least ennobling aspects of western culture.' ''[271] In this regard, chief among the concerns of whites was the possibility of exposing Africans to white feminine sexuality. Their concern was that such exposure would lead to African men sexually assaulting white women.[272]

Censorship took up many guises in this period, particularly before 1930 when a centralised censorship law came into force. This meant that prior to 1930 individual territories in the Union formulated their own censorship boards and practices. In 1913 the Bioscope Advisory Committee was established in the Cape. Also in 1913, the promulgation of the Religious Performances Prevention Ordinance brought censorship

[270] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, UCT, 2009. p30.
[271] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p31.
[272] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p31.

into the government regulatory fold.[273] Finally, in 1917 in the Cape, the Cinematograph Film Ordinance was passed, providing for the creation of a board of inspectors that could certify films as appropriate for viewing.[274] Chief among the considerations of this board were questions of race and age.[275]

In the Transvaal, boards did not conduct censorship prior to 1930. Instead, the police were responsible for certifying films as suitable for consumption. In many cases they were stricter than their counterparts in the Cape.[276] Unlike in the Cape, where mixed race audiences were sometimes permitted, in the Transvaal this was strictly forbidden. ACT had signed an agreement with the Transvaal Government stating that under no circumstances would they permit Africans to view films at the same time as whites.[277]

In Natal censorship prior to 1930 was less effective. Although a body, appointed by the town council of Pietermaritzburg, exercised this function, no such body existed in Durban. Cinemas were effectively segregated in the region.[278]

The question emerges, what was ATT's role in censorship bodies? Firstly, they were complicit in the arrangement of censorship practices. Secondly, they (in conjunction with AFP) actively produced films specifically for Africans with the intention of achieving the aim of 'educating' Africans, and more specifically, propagating conceptions of the inherent value of engaging in migrant labour. ATT also actively contributed to discussions with government on the nature of a centralised censorship act in 1930.[279] In the realm of 'educational' film (read propaganda) ATT did exhibit films to African audiences. Yet they

[273] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p32.
[274]Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p33.
[275] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p37.
[276] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p38.
[277] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p38.
[278] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p37.
[279] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p39.

were not permitted to exhibit films to them for commercial purposes, in keeping with the intention of censorship practices.[280]

A final realm of interaction between Schlesinger's film companies and Africans was as they were depicted in AFP productions. The telling case study of 'De Voortrekkers' has been reviewed by various academics as an example of early film depiction of Africans in South African cinema.

'De Voortrekkers' was an archetypal Afrikaner nationalist depiction of the great trek and the battle of Blood River. The premise of the film itself is problematic. Its intended purpose was to glorify the exploits of early Afrikaners. Essential to this depiction was the binary comparison to the 'savagery' of the Zulu hordes with whom they had conflict.[281]

Schlesinger used Africans in the production of this film. In particular, they were used in the dramatic scenes of the battle of Blood River. Initially, 3000 African 'actors' were employed in reconstructing the scene. In a telling occurrence, the African cast essentially altered the prevailing narrative of those events by overcoming the white cast. Instead of submitting to the direction of Harold Shaw, they entered the laager from which the Afrikaners were 'shooting' at them and came to blows with the actors.[282] Reynolds notes that:

> ''This event throws into stark relief the way in which artistic production not only 'reproduces' reality through image dissemination, but has the potential to redefine and contest that very reality itself. Clearly, for the actors in 'De Voortrekkers,' both black and white, the very physicality of the filmmaking process extended far beyond a narrow academic exercise in critical textual analysis.''[283]

The shooting of this scene gave the African cast an opportunity to challenge the prevailing historical narrative of this battle. In so doing, they effectively negated the hegemonic purpose of the retelling of this story. This victory was, however, short-lived. The skirmish

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[280] Paleker, G. *Creating a 'black film industry': State intervention and films for African audiences in South Africa, 1956-1990*, p44.
[281] Paleker, G. 'The State, Citizens and Control: Film and African Audiences in South Africa, 1910-1948,' *Journal of Southern African* Studies, 2, 40, 02 May 2014, p310.
[282] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p314.
[283] Reynolds, G. 'Africa Joins the World: The Missionary Imagination and the Africa Motion Picture Project in Central Africa, 1937-9,' *Journal of Social History,* 44, 2, 2010, p460.

was broken up by mounted police.[284] Subsequently, the scene was re-shot using heightened security and a diminished contingent of African actors from the mines, under the supervision of their compound managers.[285] This assumption that Africans were controllable if they were familiar with their 'handlers' has been described as a significant example of how whites viewed the relationship between themselves and Africans. Specifically, conflict arising from the shared history of violence between them emerged from the anonymity that characterised the circumstances in which the conflict occurred. Such violence could be negated by introducing intimacy between African and white actors.[286]

The takeaway from this incident, and this section of this chapter was that agency was not necessarily given to Africans in films that depicted them, nor in the industry in general. They were depicted as 'raw, undisciplined and semi-savage.'[287] To filmmakers they were as a malleable tool, to be used in the broader project of enhancing white supremacy. This did not, however, mean that they were completely unrepresented. Paleker states that ''the necessity for intervention through censorship and control of production and exhibition of film defies a negation of Africans.''[288] In essence, the film industry in South Africa was deeply concerned with how it related to Africans. Whether in the realms of propaganda, censorship or representation, Africans factored into the equations of early filmmakers. By no means were they granted some of the opportunities for inclusion and participation that African Americans were afforded in Hollywood. It can be said that race relations and film in South Africa had its own unique bearing.

[284] Reynolds, G. 'Africa Joins the World: The Missionary Imagination and the Africa Motion Picture Project in Central Africa, 1937-9,' p460.
[285] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p315.
[286] Paleker, G. 'The State, Citizens and Control: Film and African Audiences in South Africa, 1910-1948,' *Journal of Southern African* Studies, 2, 40, 02 May 2014, p311
[287] Paleker, G. 'The State, Citizens and Control: Film and African Audiences in South Africa, 1910-1948,' p312.
[288] Paleker, G. 'The State, Citizens and Control: Film and African Audiences in South Africa, 1910-1948,' p312.

An Overview of the Film and Radio Industries in the USA

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the film and radio industries in America. The purpose of the chapter is to provide a point of comparison with which to compare the South African film and radio industries. This is necessary in order to achieve the objective of showing to which extent Schlesinger acted as a conduit of American cultural imperialism.

Film in America

This section will delve into the history of the American film industry, from the time before Hollywood's ascendency up until 1937. Although the types of content produced will be touched on, the dominant focus will be placed on elements of corporate governance that characterised this industry. It will discuss the monopoly that existed until 1912, and how that monopoly was busted through competition and the federal courts. The section will also discuss race relations in the American film industry. The purpose of this chapter is to outline parallels between Schlesinger's operations and the relevant American industries. This is necessary in order to make assertions about Schlesinger's role in the Americanisation of South Africa's film and radio industries.

The American film industry has at its roots in a noteworthy figure. Thomas Edison invented the Kinetoscope, one of the first devices that could effectively project moving images.[289] Edison sold these machines to the owners of vaudeville theatres, whose customers delighted themselves at the opportunity of viewing prerecorded moving imagery.[290] Around 1900, exhibitors of films began touring towns in America, projecting these short segments, ranging from a minute to ten minutes long, to larger audiences.[291]

The growth in popularity of watching these films has been linked to the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that took place in America at the time. It was through exposure to the working classes of America that films became a popular pastime,[292] with film theatres quickly becoming sites of unprecedented communication and cultural

[289] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* Vintage Books: New York, p11.
[290] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p13.
[291] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies*, p14.
[292] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p15.

diffusion. They were places in which immigrants and the working classes could engage with each other with ease.[293] This was especially true at nickelodeons. These were storefront exhibition venues that were cheap to own and operate. The term nickelodeon derived from the merging of the word for theatre in Greek and the name for a five-cent coin.[294] At this time, the media reported that the public displayed 'nickel madness,' referring to these venues and oftentimes, the price of a viewing, as well as the hysteria surrounding this pastime.[295]

At the turn of the century, there were only two companies that had the capacity to both produce and distribute films. These were the Edison Company and the Biograph Company.[296] The films that they made were all short, and had extremely simplistic narratives. Films like *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots* merely showed an execution scene.[297] *Raising Old Glory Over Moro Castle* only depicted a flag-raising scene.[298] War themed shorts were accompanied by lewd offerings as well. For example, *What Happened on 23rd Street, NYC* depicted wind blowing up women's skirts.[299]

In the period 1900-1910 competition to the Edison Company and Biograph Company emerged. Amongst new, successful participants in the industry were Vitagraph and the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company.[300] With the express aim of elbowing these companies out of the market and creating a virtual monopoly, Edison created the Motion Pictures Patent Company.[301] This company would attempt to monopolise the industry using various methods. One method was to force competing production companies to use his patented camera equipment. Another method was to only distribute his films to exhibitors that used his patented projectors. These people would all pay licensing fees to the Patent Company. He would harass his competitors with ceaseless lawsuits if they used his equipment (certainly the most reliable on the market) without paying his licensing

[293] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p18.
[294] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p21.
[295] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p19.
[296] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p19.
[297] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p21.
[298] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p22.
[299] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p23.
[300] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p33.
[301] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* pp34-35.

fees. Finally, he attempted to patent every aspect of his inventions, from springs to lenses. This made it nearly impossible for others to invent new equipment that borrowed certain technological developments from Edison's inventions. It also made it near impossible to make films without paying licensing fees to the Patent Company.[302]

In 1908, Edison negotiated with his competitors, from a considerable position of strength, to pool their patents under the Motion Pictures Patent Company. He effectively consumed his competitors, and formed what would be a short-lived monopoly of the industry.[303] The monopoly functioned well because of the rules of production and distribution that girded participants in the industry. These included that: Eastman Kodak, the only producer of raw film stock, could only sell film to licensed producers. Producers could only rent films to distributors (called exchanges) that solely handled licensed films. Exchanges could only supply films to licensed theatres that committed to only exhibiting licensed films. Everybody in the system who was 'licensed' paid that licensing fee to the Patents Company.[304] Edison's system was effective. By 1909, the company was earning a profit of over $1 million a year. In public discourses, the company came to be known as a 'trust.' A demeaning title in the progressive era.[305]

The Patent Company's monopoly did not last very long. There were two pervasive and effective threats to its ascendency. First were the politicians and courts that opposed their domination of the industry. The second was competition, emerging from the un-serviced margins of the sector.

Nineteen Twelve was an election year in America. Woodrow Wilson's Democratic Party levied criticism against the ruling Republicans for being soft on big business. In order to prove the opposite, the Republicans picked the low hanging fruit that was the Patents Company.[306] Not only was it clearly a monopoly, it also serviced the working and middle classes, making it less dear to Republican donors. Republicans filed a restraint of trade motion in the federal courts against the company for having violated the 1890 Sherman

[302] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p35.
[303] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p35.
[304] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p36.
[305] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p36.
[306] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.

Anti-Trust Act. The case took three years to finalise. The outcome: the Patents Company was declared an ‘’illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade.’’[307]

By the time this ruling occurred, significant opposition to the Trust had already emerged from the fringes of the industry in the form of immigrant managers of nickelodeons in urban areas like New York City.[308] Whereas in 1908 the Patent Company controlled virtually all film production and distribution in America, by 1912 it was only responsible for half, with independent producers and distributors making up the difference.[309]

A significant reason for the Trust's loss of control of the industry was its own failings. They failed to corner the market when they decided to only license 2/3 of the theatres capable of exhibiting films. Their belief was that the unlicensed theatres would simply fail. Their services were also unpractical and unprofessional. They were prone to late deliveries of films, delivered the same films to theatres that were adjacent to each other, and attempted to provide for a single theatre's showing of 27 films a week.[310] However, it was the maneuvering of the independents that truly undid the Trust's supremacy.

Initially, the significant impediment for independents was securing raw film stock on which to make films. This was overcome in 1909 when Lumiére began to export their film stock into America.[311] This met with fierce opposition from the Trust, who lobbied congress to impose higher tariffs on this import. Instead, at the behest of emerging opponents of the Trust, it lowered tariffs.[312] This led to the proliferation of independent production companies, including the Independent Moving Picture Company, New York Motion Picture Company, Defender, Rex, and Nestor.[313]

A second impediment concerned the use of equipment patented by the Trust. This was unavoidable due to the pervasiveness of the patents owned by the Trust. When

[307] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.

[308] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.
[309] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.
[310] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.
[311] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p38.
[312] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.
[313] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.

independent producers did use such equipment, they faced a plethora of injunctions and civil suits, in the mode of Edison, who had always fiercely protected the patents of his inventions. Apart from the legal route, the Trust also engaged in clandestine methods of disruption to stop the operations of independents. In order to film in peace, away from the eyes of the Trust spies and scabs prevalent in New York, these independents fled to places like Florida, Cuba, Arizona, and very importantly, California.[314]

A final hurdle was the impossibility of exhibiting independent films at theatres licensed by the Trust.[315] In this regard, nickelodeons came to the rescue of independent production companies. The Trust was elitist, insofar as it did not wish to service theatres or storefront exhibitors in less affluent areas. As early as 1908, it is estimated that there were between 2000-5000 nickelodeons, usually to be found in less affluent areas. These serviced as many as 26 million people.[316] Nickelodeons and their predominantly immigrant managers proved to be lucrative consumers of independent films.

In light of these developments, independent film producers began to flourish. An example of this was in the case of Carl Laemmle. He was a German-Jewish immigrant who set up a nickelodeon in Chicago. He went on to expand his operations into a distribution empire. He purchased and distributed foreign films, unlicensed in America, to other nickelodeons. When Lumiére began selling its film stock in America, he set up his own production company, the Independent Moving Picture Company.[317]

Laemmle won the significant scorn of the Patents Company. He faced 289 separate legal actions from the Trust for a wide variety of infractions. In 1910, he, along with various other independent producers, set up the Motion Pictures Distributing and Sales Company, which streamlined the distribution of independent films.[318] Soon, they began offering up to 27 films a week to their exhibitors, matching the Trust in terms of output, except that their films were generally longer with narratives that were more complex. Soon they

[314] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.
[315] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p37.
[316] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p21. And Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p38.
[317] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p38.
[318] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.

began to entice licensed exhibitors away from the Trust.[319] In time, a merger with other producers led to the advent of Universal Pictures.[320] It was this company that developed the 'star' system. This entailed the marketing of films based on the involvement of actors that the public favoured.[321]

Laemmle was the forerunner in independent film production. What emerged in his wake were what were to be goliaths of the industry, which still operate to this day. Two instrumental figures were William Fox and Adolph Zukor. Both were Hungarian-Jewish immigrants. Both owned nickelodeon theatres in New York. Both initially cooperated with the Trust. That is, until it became combative towards them.[322] Fox built the company, Fox. Zukor created the Famous Players Film Company.

Fox was a pioneer in the industry in terms of corporate governance. He was the first to introduce a vertical integration model into the industry. Fox produced, distributed and exhibited its own films. It, amongst other, utilised the star system, and was responsible for increasing amounts of feature films.[323] Fox was financed by wealthy investors from New York, and was a privately owned company.[324]

Zukor's Famous Player's Film Company created new methods of distribution and marketing. He introduced a type of 'state's rights' system, in which exchanges were responsible for the marketing of new films.[325] More so than Fox, Zukor's company truly emphasised the feature film. His success with these films was a litmus test to which other independent producers were attuned. They followed suit. Zukor would amalgamate his company with other producers, to form Paramount Pictures. It would become a market leader in the 1910s.[326] Paramount was funded with a combination of debt and equity. An

[319] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.
[320] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p35.
[321] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p39.
[322] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p41.
[323] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p42.
[324] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p34.
[325] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p44.
[326] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p35.

initial offering of $10 million in shares on the New York Stock Exchange gave the company the liquidity necessary to embark on ambitious feature film projects.[327]

Other significant companies to emerge at the time include Warner Brothers and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Wealthy Jewish Immigrants who at some time had invested in nickelodeons started both.[328] The tactics of Paramount, Universal, Fox, MGM and Warner Brothers were very effective. In particular, they realised that higher production costs led to greater returns on investment. On average, films with higher production costs fetched revenues up to 67% more than short films.[329] Their distribution networks were more complex than the Trust's in that they shared exhibition venues, and in so doing, each accessed an equitable portion of the market. The trust never adapted to these changes in the industry. It went bankrupt by 1917.[330]

In the 1910s and early 1920s, film production moved *en masse* to Southern California. In particular, Hollywood, in Los Angeles, became a hub of activity in the industry. Increasingly, studio bosses became aware of the impact of high salary costs on profit margins. Studios outbid each other for stars who were earning substantial salaries. The necessity of set-builders, scriptwriters and cinematographers for the production of feature films, increased the wage bill in the industry substantially. ''Much attention was devoted to limiting, or at least controlling, [the wage bills'] growth.''[331]

The period from 1913-1937 was characterised by the ascendency of these companies. Significant to the growth of the industry was the competition between studios, uninhibited by contracts that tied exhibitors to specific producers (with the exception of vertically integrated cinemas). Feature films became the norm, because they fetched higher revenues than the shorts that characterised the period from 1900-1910. Working conditions in Hollywood were tough, with crews and actors working 14-hour days. However, at least in the 1920s, Hollywood became an egalitarian work environment. Far

[327] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p34.

[328] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p35.
[329] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p33.
[330] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p36.
[331] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p51

from the studio bosses in their offices in New York, casts and crews intermingled and formed strong bonds.[332]

From 1921 to 1929, the industry saw a growth from 127 to 142 production companies. Approximately 70% of industry output came from California, with 21% coming from New York State. Salaries and wages combined accounted for 46% of the expenses in the industry. Over 92% of the films produced by 1929 were 'talkies' with only the remaining 8% being silent films.[333] Organisational structures of larger companies were dense. This example of the structure of Paramount Pictures' organisational structure illustrates this density.

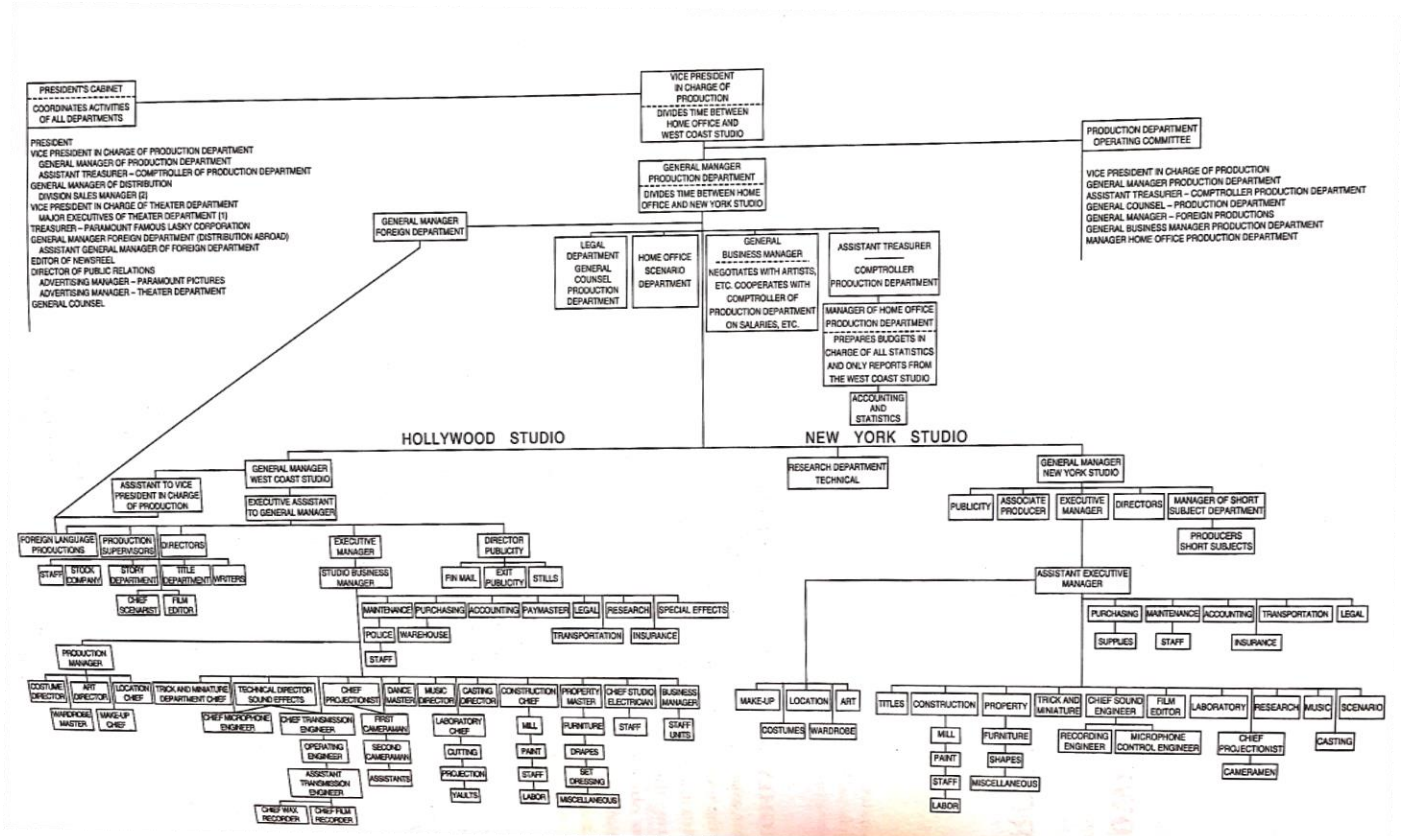

Illustration 2: Paramount Pictures Production Departments

[332] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p69.
[333] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p147.

It is evident that Paramount, and other large production companies, exhibited a corporate structure akin to big businesses in other sectors, like retail, manufacturing and energy. They were large-scale employers, and their profit margins could justify the expansion of departments to include a wide variety of role-players.

These businesses were not subjected to a *laisses faire* treatment by the federal government. Apart from the federal government's overt attempts at breaking the Trust, they were involved with the industry in the realms of censorship, taxation, regulation, and labour relations.[334]

Censorship in Hollywood was a contentious issue. Cultural and economic elites in America were at odds about the treatment of Hollywood. Some argued for that the regulation of film by ''custodians of conservative morality''[335] was a necessary task. Some believed that films staked a claim to the rights of the free market, and were to be left untouched by regulatory measures. Others believed films served the purpose of dictating morality and for providing education.[336]

Consumers had their own conceptions of the purpose and significance of Hollywood. Some merely thought of films as entertainment, and did not give stock to the idea that they fulfilled a higher purpose. Others believed that the industry held no claim to moral legitimacy in that they did not speak to the conditions of being American at the time.[337] There were some who vociferously defended Hollywood as a powerful tool in the search for greater civil and sexual liberty.[338] The reality was that film served a variety of purposes. The inherent purpose of film lies in the intent of the producer and equally, in the interpretation of the consumer. Artistic production cannot be reduced to a single purpose. Regulatory and censorship bodies did not, of course, recognise this variety of purpose, and attempted in various ways to shape offerings into a form suitable, in their minds, for the general public.

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[334] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p332.
[335] Couvares, F.G. 'Hollywood, Censorship and American Culture,' *American Quarterly,* 4, 44, December 1992, p510.
[336] Couvares, F.G. 'Hollywood, Censorship and American Culture,' p510.
[337] Couvares, F.G. 'Hollywood, Censorship and American Culture,' p510.
[338] Couvares, F.G. 'Hollywood, Censorship and American Culture,' p511.

Similar to in South Africa, centralised censorship practices did not come into force until 1930 (and was not implemented until 1934). Censorship was, however, conducted at state level from 1907 onwards. Chief among the concerns of the early viewing public was the effects of film representation on adolescents. It was feared that women would learn promiscuous behaviour and that young men would be steered towards criminality.[339] The first censorship ordinance was enacted in Illinois in 1907. In 1915 the Supreme Court declared that censorship was a constitutional and necessary practice. By 1921, seven other states had enacted censorship ordinances. The police operated these censorship boards, with varying degrees of intensity.[340]

Censorship in this form did not address what was being produced in Hollywood; rather, it regulated what was appropriate for consumption in specific areas. An informal code of conduct for Hollywood itself was formulated as early as 1909 in the form of the Standards of the National Board of Review. This was expanded on in 1927 with a list of 'don't and be careful.'[341] The codified regulation of Hollywood itself only came to fruition through the self-regulation model, introduced in 1930. The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) was the body that achieved this. In 1930, Father Daniel Lord wrote a censorship code that producers would come to abide by.[342] This code was a modified version of the 'don'ts and be careful' list.

The implications of censorship were vast. It has been argued that hegemonic preservation had at its roots the censorship project. Couvares argues that:

> ''Representation of sex, crime, religion, ethnicity and other controversial matters on the movie screen were real struggles fought among sometimes bewilderingly fluid and multiple coalitions that employed a variety of political devices to gain advantage. Much was at stake – enormous sums of money, social status and prestige, cultural authority, institutional power, and even principles of free expression and artistic integrity.''[343]

[339] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p238
[340] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p238.
[341] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p239.
[342] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p173.
[343] Couvares, F.G. 'Hollywood, Censorship and American Culture,' p514.

An example of this display of power relations is evident in the treatment of miscegenation in Hollywood. Following *Birth of a Nation*, which dictated a system of treatment of race in American film,[344] it became a norm in Hollywood to exclude imagery or insinuation of interracial sexual relations. Censorship bodies in America enforced this, in part.[345] However, this was inconsistent insofar as depictions of miscegenation were permitted in specific types of films. Films like *So This is Africa, Congorilla* and *Virgins of Bali,* all produced in the early 1930s, depicted not only semi-naked women of colour, but at times, their sexual relations with white men.[346] Producers circumnavigated censors by billing these films as 'travelogues' or 'documentaries.'[347] The mores of the viewing public was evident in films like *Birth of a Nation* and other films that denigrated people of colour, as well as in the censorship practices at the time. This did not, however, preclude the exoticisation and sexualisation of African women in all forms. There was room in Hollywood for this practice despite the unanimity of censorship boards on this matter.[348]

Another realm of government involvement in the industry was with the complex mix of regulation and deregulation. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt won the presidential election. He systematically introduced measures, known as the 'new deal', to counteract the effects of the great depression. Amongst these measures was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in 1933.[349] NIRA would promote the recovery of the economy through deregulation of monopoly practices. In this regard, studios were then given ''government sanction for the trade practices that the majors had spent ten years developing through informal collusion.''[350] The industry codified its own corporate governance rules, which included the rights to practice block booking and blind bidding for films.[351] NIRA also altered the nature of labour relations in the industry. Emerging with the establishment of the National Labour Relations Board came the practice of collective bargaining and

[344] Pines, J. 1975, *Blacks in Film, a Survey of Racial Themes and Images in American Film*, Studio Vista: Norwich, p7.
[345] Couvares, F.G. 'So This is Censorship: Race, Sex and Censorship in Movies of the 1920s and 1930s,' *Journal of American Studies,* 3, 45, August 2011, p581.
[346] Couvares, F.G. 'So This is Censorship: Race, Sex and Censorship in Movies of the 1920s and 1930s,' pp583-585.
[347] Couvares, F.G. 'So This is Censorship: Race, Sex and Censorship in Movies of the 1920s and 1930s,' p585, p587.
[348] Couvares, F.G. 'So This is Censorship: Race, Sex and Censorship in Movies of the 1920s and 1930s,' p587.
[349] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p168.
[350] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p168.
[351] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p168.

unionisation.[352] This did not deter the ascendency of the big five in this period.[353] Largely because of these measures, they would come to corner the market by 1939 through the practice of collusion in the realm of film distribution and cinema ownership.[354]

The treatment of race is an important consideration when studying a subject like film in a country as diverse as America. From its inception, the film industry depicted African Americans in various forms. As early as 1896, examples of 'black-face' and films of African Americans emerged. The Biograph Company filmed 'minstrels' (whites in blackface) and exhibited the film to viewers in Baltimore.[355] Also in 1896, and produced by Biograph, was the short, *Hard Wash (The Pickaninny's Bath)* depicting an African American mother washing her infant child. The premise that the mother could not wash the child hard enough to change her race amused white audiences.[356] Early films of African Americans invariably mimicked them or mocked them for either perceived stereotypes or racist jokes, such as with the bath. Their competency was questioned and they were dehumanised in the name of comedy.[357]

This treatment of African Americans remained consistent until 1915 with D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation.* Depictions of African Americans took on a new, vicious characteristic. *Birth of a Nation* depicted the reconstruction era in American history from the perspective of reactionary, racist white southerners. He utilised ''every bigoted syndrome of characterization and imagery that had been popularised throughout [previous films], only he did so more obsessively, with outstanding sophistication and venomous conviction.''[358] He set the tone that Hollywood would adopt towards depictions of African Americans for a substantially long time. Diawara writes that the film:

> ''constitutes a grammar book for Hollywood's representation of Black manhood and womanhood, its obsession with miscegenation, and its fixing of Black people within certain spaces, such as kitchens, and into certain supporting roles, such as criminals, on screen.

[352] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p169.
[353] Paramount, Universal, MGM, Fox and Warner Brothers.
[354] Neale, S. 2012, *The Classic Hollywood Reader,* Routledge: New York, p169.
[355] Berger, M.A. *Sight Unseen, Whiteness and American Visual Culture,* University of California Press: Los Angeles, p124.
[356] Berger, M.A. *Sight Unseen, Whiteness and American Visual Culture,* p124.
[357] Berger, M.A. *Sight Unseen, Whiteness and American Visual Culture,* p133.
[358] Pines, J. 1975, *Blacks in Film, a Survey of Racial Themes and Images in American Film,* p12.

> White people must occupy the centre, leaving black people with only one choice – to exist in relation to Whiteness.''[359]

Birth of a Nation was not met without opposition. African Americans, organised under the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) staged a variety of protests. Most were ineffectual. In some places, the NAACP succeeded in stopping the film from being exhibited. This occurred not as a moral stand against the film, but rather as a way of averting a race riot.[360]

What did emerge from this episode was the increasing consciousness of the necessity of black filmmakers telling their own stories. One such filmmaker was Oscar Micheaux. Micheaux's career was productive. He produced over 30 independent films from 1918 onwards. His work was characterised by poor production quality, a result of the economic conditions and his own lack of equity at the time.[361] Micheaux used his platform to tell stories that challenged the dominant representations of African Americans in Hollywood. Films like *Within Our Gates* (1919) depicted lynching as a social ill, and offered sympathetic portrayals of African Americans in the South.[362] In the film, he sheds light on the evilest form of miscegenation, the rape of African American women.[363]

Micheaux was able to use his platform to make films for both African American and liberal whites that could significantly alter perceptions of hegemonic perpetuity. His films too met with protest. Attempts to screen *Within Our Gates* in Chicago were met with opposition from white and African American groups.[364] This reaction signifies the emotive nature of his films. Reactions like this did not deter him from using film as a discursive tool and for treating subjects as sensitive as the drive for cultural preservation in the face of overwhelming assimilation.[365] Being such a voice was not enough to result in him being well received by all members of the African American community. The African American

[359] Diawara, M. 'Black American Cinema: the New Realism,' in Diawara, M. 1993, *Black American Cinema,* Routledge: New York, p3.
[360] Gaines, J. 'Race, Melodrama and Oscar Micheaux,' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p50.
[361] Green, J.R. ' ''Twoness'' in the style of Oscar Michaeux' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p26.
[362] Gaines, J. 'Race, Melodrama and Oscar Micheaux,' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p53.
[363] Gaines, J. 'Race, Melodrama and Oscar Micheaux,' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p55.
[364] Gaines, J. 'Race, Melodrama and Oscar Micheaux,' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p49.
[365] Green, J.R. ' ''Twoness'' in the style of Oscar Michaeux' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p29.

bourgeoisie in New York, for example, expressed their distaste for his films both in their lack of support in cinemas as well as in their press.[366]

This is not to say that Hollywood's Griffiths-esque approach to racial depiction did not remain dominant. It certainly did. What is important to note is that African Americans produced films on the fringes that challenged these notions. Furthermore, in 1942 the NAACP signed an agreement with major film studios in which the studios committed to realigning their depictions of African Americans.[367] Once again, this did not consistently bear fruit, but it illustrates that African Americans had a seat (albeit not from a position of considerable strength) at the negotiating table. They had a voice when it came to how they were depicted. In this regard, they were ahead of most Africans, whose voices in film would only materialise alongside the fall of colonialism.

The American Radio Broadcasting Industry

This section will outline the prehistory of radio broadcasting in America by looking at the technological developments that underscored developments in the industry. It will discuss early radio stations and their immense proliferation as well as the advent of network broadcasting. The section will discuss corporate governance and finance models in the industry. It will also show how the industry was regulated. Finally, the section will discuss the intersection of this industry and race relations.

Prior to 1876, the primary means of rapid conveyance of information was in the form of the telegraph. This changed by the turn of the century because of wireless technology. In 1874, Elisha Gray began conducting experiments in 'electroharmonic' broadcasting. These were not dissimilar from Alexander Graham Bell's telephone technology, relying on wired infrastructure for its success.[368] It was unique in that its intent was to broadcast to multiple receivers.

[366] Green, J.R. ' ''Twoness'' in the style of Oscar Michaeux' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p32.
[367] Green, J.R. ' ''Twoness'' in the style of Oscar Michaeux' in Diawara, M. *Black American Cinema,* p27.
[368] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p 17.

Wireless technology had at its roots the technology patented by William Henry Ward in 1872. Ward patented a 'telegraphic tower' that could transmit wireless signals.[369] Ward's technology was not an immediate success. Mahlon Loomis developed his innovations further. He created the Loomis-Ward aerial conduction telegraph in 1877 that could successfully transmit wireless signals over short distances.[370] This technology was still meant to be a point-to-point method of broadcasting.[371]

Commercial development in the industry was limited to point-to-point transmission until 1902 when Nathan Stubblefield innovated new means of multi-point transmission from a centralised distributing station. Unfortunately for him, his venture was not commercially successful because the market for such technology was limited to naval operations that only sought out point-to-point technology. Besides, his technology could not transmit at high enough frequencies to limit distortion in his broadcasts. This made it unpractical.[372]

Reginald Fassenden achieved a breakthrough in this regard, with the development of technology that could transmit multi-point broadcasts at high enough frequencies to limit voice distortion.[373] He tested his technology in a Christmas variety show, broadcast to ships stationed around Massachusetts. He achieved broadcasts in a 180-mile (290 kilometer) radius.[374]

Lee DeForest identified the commercial potential of this technology. In 1910, he created the DeForest Radio and Telephone Company. His customers were primarily ship-owners and the US Navy.[375] The American Telephone and Technology Company (AT&T) also emerged at this time. DeForest was the first to identify the entertainment value of this technology when he broadcast an opera in late 1910.[376] He continued to broadcast sporadically, even broadcasting the returns of the 1916 Hughes-Wilson election, where he erroneously declared Hughes the winner.[377] Another company in this tradition was the

[369] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p18.
[370] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p19.
[371] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p20.
[372] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p21.
[373] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p23.
[374] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p24.
[375] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p25.
[376] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p27.
[377] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p28.

Poulsen Wireless Telegraph and Telephone Company operating out of California. It also made technological advances, increasing broadcasting distances.[378]

All of the abovementioned companies focused on the development of successful radio transmitters. However, their audiences were limited to ship-owners and the navy who had access to receivers. This changed in 1915 when the American Marconi Company created the 'radio music box'. Although unaffordable, it gave the public the option to tune into broadcasts.[379]

Four main issues stopped commercial expansion of the broadcasting industry in this period. The first was that the commercial viability of these enterprises was not recognised. Although the technology for broadcasting existed, operators did not appreciate that it could become a mass media enterprise. Secondly, there were patent conflicts that reduced the capacity for technological development that could make broadcasting more accessible.[380] Another problem, mentioned before, was the absence of an affordable receiver for the general public to access broadcasts. A final issue was the outbreak of World War One. During the War, (1917-1918 for America) all commercial and amateur stations were ordered to shut down for national security reasons.[381]

At the end of the War, the American Marconi Company sold its enterprise to the US Navy for $789 500. This, along with agreements between other companies, settled the patent disputes. It spurred on the development of affordable receivers and commercial broadcasters.[382]

It is not easy to ascertain which radio station was the first commercial broadcaster in America. The problem lies in the definition of a commercial broadcaster. Franklin Smith attempted to define a commercial broadcaster using the following criteria. It must have

[378] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p29.
[379] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p30.
[380] Sinowitch, E.N. 'A Technological Survey of Broadcasting's Prehistory, 1876-1920', p31.
[381] Mayes, T. 'History of the American Marconi Company', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p14.
[382] Mayes, T. 'History of the American Marconi Company', p15.

conducted wireless transmission, conducted public broadcasts and continual service and finally the federal government must have provided it with a broadcasting license.[383]

Using this definition, four contenders for the first broadcaster emerges. The antecedent stations of WHA, WWJ, KCBS and, perhaps more significantly, KDKA all achieved some of these criteria simultaneously or before each other.[384] These stations had different forms of ownership. KDKA was owned by the Westinghouse Corporation, WWJ by Detroit News and KCBS by an individual, Charles Herrold.[385]

KDKA perhaps has the strongest claim to being the first broadcasting station. It received its federal license first in 1920, months before it began operations.[386] It was also the first to conduct scheduled broadcasts, also in 1920. It broadcast church services, baseball, football and boxing scores and commentating and market reports.[387] It also broadcast the returns of the 1920 election in partnership with the Pittsburgh Post (where it did not declare an incorrect winner).[388]

KDKA was also the first station to contract an advertiser. It ran out of records to play to its audiences. It contracted Hamilton Music Store to provide records in exchange for their telling their audiences that the records being played were from the store.[389] KDKA also broadcast live musical performances. This led to some humourous occurrences. On one occasion, a dog ran into the studio and disrupted a live performance. On another occasion, a tenor, upon inhaling before a solo, swallowed a bug. In his shock, he swore on the radio, providing perhaps one of the first public radio indiscretions.[390] Perhaps one of the greatest influences was Westinghouse's sale of more affordable wireless receivers to the public. It was called the Aeriola Grand and sold for $60.

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[383] Smith, R.F. 'Oldest Station in the Nation', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, pp114-116.
[384] Smith, R.F. 'Oldest Station in the Nation', p116.
[385] Smith, R.F. 'Oldest Station in the Nation', p117.
[386] Public Relations Dept. Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, 'History of Broadcasting and KDKA Radio', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p103.
[387] Public Relations Dept. Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, 'History of Broadcasting and KDKA Radio', p102.
[388] Public Relations Dept. Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, 'History of Broadcasting and KDKA Radio', p103.
[389] Public Relations Dept. Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, 'History of Broadcasting and KDKA Radio', p105.
[390] Public Relations Dept. Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, 'History of Broadcasting and KDKA Radio', p107.

The 1920s witnessed the rapid proliferation of private radio stations. In 1922 there were only 30 broadcasting stations. By 1925 the number had grown to 571. By 1935, despite the Great Depression, it had risen to 685.[391] This growth can largely be attributed to the increase in sales of receivers. In 1922 only 0.2% of American households owned radio sets, with only 100 000 having been sold. By 1925 this had grown to 10% with 2 000 000 having been sold. In 1930 the percentage had grown to 46% with 3 827 000 sets sold. In 1935 67% of American households owned radio sets with 6 026 800 having been sold.[392] Popular programming at the time included news reports, sport reporting, live music and especially talk radio. The highest rated programs included *Amos n' Andy, Eddie Cantor, Rudi Vallee* and *The Maxwell House Showboat.* Another top rated program was the scheduled performances of the *Metropolitan Opera.*[393]

The emergence of network broadcasting was an important development in the industry. As has been shown, a substantial number of privately owned broadcasters established themselves in the industry. This is not to say that the content being produced at every station was of a high caliber. Jennie Mix wrote in 1925 that ''the majority of these stations are far below any commendable standard so far as their programs and the manner in which they are presented are concerned.''[394] This comment was included in an article discussing the importance of having strong, well-funded national broadcasters.

The solution to this problem came in the form of network broadcasting. This refers to the practice of centralised broadcasters producing programming that is relayed, along telephone wires, to local stations for broadcasting. The first network broadcaster was AT&T's WEAF in 1922. It began as a 'toll' station that could be hired by content producers for distribution of their programming. It contracted with Western Electric for the sole rights to the national telephone wired network for this purpose. It also held the sole rights in

[391] Pepper, R. 'The Pre-Freeze Television Stations,' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p148.
[392] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'A College Community Views the Fourth 'Great Debate'', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p521.
[393] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'A College Community Views the Fourth 'Great Debate'', p524.
[394] Mix, J.I. 'Good National Radio Programs Prove What the Public Wants.' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p165.

America for 'selling' airtime to producers.[395] It contracted with companies like KDKA's Westinghouse for the provision of relayed content for local broadcasting. It began broadcasts in 1923, providing content to WNAC, KYW, WGY, KDKA and WCAP. By 1924, the network had expanded to include 23 local stations.[396] In the same year, it successfully broadcast a speech by Calvin Coolidge to over 18 Million people.[397]

A second network broadcaster emerged at the same time, but was less successful. RCA was established in 1923. At its zenith, it only contracted with five local stations. The reason for its sluggish growth was that it did not have access to national telephonic infrastructure and had to use inferior networks for its distribution. It also did not have the rights to 'sell' airtime to content producers. RCA overcame this in 1926 when it bought AT&T's shares in WEAF. It would proceed to buy out Westinghouse's shares as well. It combined the assets of these companies with its own and formed the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).[398] NBC grew rapidly from 1926-1938. In 1926 it distributed to 19 stations. In 1928 its network grew to 48 stations. By 1938 it had reached 154 stations which amounted to approximately a quarter of the stations operating in America.[399] NBC's assets were not comparable to other major companies at the time, only amounting to approximately $100 million in 1938. It was a 'management corporation', meaning that it was not owned by any individual. In fact, it had over 250 000 stockholders, with no single stockholder owning more than 1% of the company. Its management has been described as being ''subject to little restraint, other than self-imposed''.[400] In this environment, it grew to dominate the industry. However, it cannot be described as a

[395] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p166.
[396] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p167.
[397] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p169.
[398] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p170.
[399] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p172.
[400] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p174.

monopoly. Rather, it can be described as being disproportionately active and successful in the market.

Government regulation in the broadcast industry was necessary from the age in which point-to-point transmissions came into common use. In this regards, the Radio Act of 1912 served the needs of the industry sufficiently. However, this act did not anticipate the growth of the market following 1920, nor the types of conflicts that would arise.[401] Recognising this deficiency, three successive congresses introduced a total of 51 bills, seeking to regulate the industry from 1921-1927. Only one bill proceeded through both congress and the senate.

The Radio Act of 1927 achieved a satisfactory regulatory framework for the industry.[402] The Act was drafted with input from the industry itself, especially from RCA and WEAF, with four radio conferences having been held for this purpose.[403] During the drafting process, the Department of Commerce was responsible for regulating the industry. Although it was successful at licensing stations, it struggled to limit broadcast interference between stations. This put this issue at the forefront of the discussions at the conferences.

The Radio Act of 1927 performed the following functions. It classified radio stations and prescribed their services. It assigned them frequencies and cleared broadcast bands. It regulated and tested broadcasting apparatuses. It established broadcasting zones. It designated enforceable penalties for frequency interference. It advocated for freedom from censorship. It described what was meant by 'public interest, convenience and necessity'.[404] Finally, it specified the role of the Federal Radio Commission.[405] The Federal Radio Commission's primary role was in regulation enforcement and mediation.

[401] Bensman, M.R. 'Regulation of Broadcasting by the Department of Commerce, 1921-1927', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p544.
[402] Bensman, M.R. 'Regulation of Broadcasting by the Department of Commerce, 1921-1927', p545.
[403] Sarno, E.F. 'The National Radio Conferences' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, pp524-543.
[404] This related to the nature of the content stations were prescribed to produce.
[405] Bensman, M.R. 'Regulation of Broadcasting by the Department of Commerce, 1921-1927', p555.

An example of its actions would be its suit against KWKA for exceeding its broadcast zone. It fined them $20 000.[406]

The financing of early radio stations proved to be a dilemma for their owners. This is evident when one looks at the types of owners of these stations. By 1925 a quarter of these stations were owned by businesses who used them as in-house advertising mechanisms. Businesses, hotels, retailers and manufacturers sponsored their own programming and marketed their products and services exclusively.[407] This also explains some of the call signs of these stations. An example is WLS, which signified 'World's Largest Store', owned by Sears Roebuck.[408] Financing of these stations came out of the marketing budgets of these businesses.

Stores that sold and repaired radios owned another quarter of these stations. They derived their revenue from their services and ran the stations in order to stimulate purchasing. Around 40% of the stations were owned by civic organisations like churches, educational facilities, government and the military.[409] They derived revenue from government allocated budgets or from their membership fees or contributions. Only 30 radio stations were 'commercial' stations.[410]

An early idea for income generation for such stations, secured from a member of the public in a much-publicised competition, included a taxation on radio sets and government distribution of funds collected in this way. This was met with fierce opposition by government and radio stations who viewed this as impracticable.[411]

It was WEAF that innovated a commercial model for radio stations. It introduced advertising as a means of generating revenue in 1922. Businesses would 'purchase' radio segments. In the course of the programming, advertisements of their products and services would be read out. It was slow going. By 1923, they had only contracted 30

[406] Radio Broadcast, 'Action from the Radio Commission', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p557.
[407] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p195.
[408] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p196.
[409] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p195.
[410] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p195.
[411] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p197.

advertisers.[412] It appears that businesses were slow to recognise the influence and scope of this mass media.

This did not stop this system from taking root in the industry. By 1926, advertising in radio began to be ubiquitous at commercial stations. The Great Depression soon made it apparent that the futures of radio stations were in fact dependent on advertising. Old models were no longer working. In particular, business which sold and repaired radio sets suffered after 1929.[413] In the 1930s radio advertising became a norm amongst almost all radio stations. Standards were established, including 60-second limits on advertisements.[414] The networks in particular made sizable profits from the proceeds of advertising.[415]

Advertising as a means of revenue generation met with some opposition. Writing in the publication *Radio Broadcast* in 1922, Joseph Jackson stated that ''the very thought of [advertising] growing to be common practice is sufficient to give any true radio enthusiast the cold shakes.''[416] These misgiving soon abated when it became apparent that increased revenues had a positive effect on production quality. Writing in the *New York Times* in 1928, Merlin Aylesworth stated that the ''dispensers of woe, who foretold the death of broadcasting when stations began selling time, have been met with ever improving programs, not in spite of time-selling, but because of it.''[417]

This section has discussed the technological developments that underscored early American broadcasting as well as the nature of business practices and regulation in the industry. It will now discuss the intersection of race and broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s. It can be stated from the outset that African Americans did not own broadcasting stations in this period. African American ownership of stations, and with it, broadcasting

[412] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p197.
[413] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p198.
[414] Hettinger, H.S. 'Some Fundamental Aspects of Radio Broadcasting Economics', in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p231.
[415] Hettinger, H.S. 'Some Fundamental Aspects of Radio Broadcasting Economics', p234.
[416] Jackson, J.H. 'Should Radio Be Used For Advertising?' in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p204.
[417] Spalding, J.W. '1928: Radio Becomes a Mass Advertising Medium', in in Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 1975, *American Broadcasting, a Source Book on the History of Radio an Television,* Hastings House: New York, p226.

that expressed African American interests emerged in the 1940s and 1950s when the civil rights movement was gaining momentum. WDIA, operating out of Memphis Tennessee, was the forerunner of these stations.[418] It broadcast representations of African American culture that helped to define that culture. It challenged prevailing stereotypes and popularised its music, oral traditions, and drama. It also reported on news that concerned African Americans, as well as put out public service announcements that were of particular interest to African Americans. Finally, it showcased national and local icons in the community, including athletes, civil rights leaders and celebrities.[419]

Even though it was a station operated by African Americans for an African American audience, it was still owned by whites. John Pepper and Bert Ferguson decided to capitalise on Memphis' growing African American community, and did so by giving members of that community the mandate to produce content according to their own values and needs. The station was part and parcel of the community. It was involved with local charities and it:

> ''announced lost relatives, children and pets, advertised jobs, paid hospital bills for needy listeners, raised funds for scholarships, donated money to orphanages and purchased baseball uniforms and equipment for hundreds of young athletes. WDIA was even known to locate a stray mule or two''.[420]

Although WDIA is an excellent example of the power of African American radio, this chapter is concerned with the period preceding its establishment. Even in places outside the purview of Jim Crowe, such as in Chicago, which had a sizable African American community, members of the community were barred from entering the broadcast control room before 1928, after which their function was strictly technical. Immigrant communities in Chicago benefited from broadcast representation and were able to express their culture effectively through the medium, but African Americans were systematically excluded from

[418] Jenkins, E. 'the Voice of Memphis: WDIA, Nat D. Williams, and Black Radio Culture in the early Civil Rights Era', in *Tennessee Historical Quarterly,* 3, 65, 2006, p255.
[419] Jenkins, E. 'the Voice of Memphis: WDIA, Nat D. Williams, and Black Radio Culture in the early Civil Rights Era', p255.
[420] Jenkins, E. 'the Voice of Memphis: WDIA, Nat D. Williams, and Black Radio Culture in the early Civil Rights Era', p256.

enjoying the same benefits.[421] The issue was that the ‘’self-appointed middle class stewards of Chicago’s public life’’ were whites with particular conceptions of whiteness as a dominant precept of Americanism.[422] That is not to say that representations of African American culture were excluded from broadcasts. As in the film industry, the musical equivalent of whites in blackface found receptive audiences in urban areas. Unlike other immigrants in the area, African Americans lacked the agency to shape representations of their culture on air.[423]

One way in which African Americans were able to represent themselves was through jazz music. Musicians like Earl Hines, Dave Payton, Albertine Pickens, Ernestine Lyle and Duke Ellington were given airtime to perform live music. It has been argued that their inclusion on the airwaves enhanced multiracial interaction in urban areas. It allowed white listeners to sample African American culture without leaving their homes. Vaillant points out that ‘’live broadcasts coming from jazz halls permitted listeners to arrive at their own firsthand conclusions about the music’s merit and pleasures, if not about the black bodies generating it.’’[424]

This was not only true for Chicago stations. Duke Ellington in particular penetrated America’s music industry successfully because of radio exposure. He broke the mold for African Americans performing their own music on the radio in 1927 when various stations in the fledgling CBS network began broadcasting his live performances from the Cotton Club.[425] To a large extent, he provided white America with its first exposure to African American music, performed by African Americans themselves, on the radio.[426] It must be noted that broadcasts of jazz music facilitated the process of cultural appropriation by whites. By giving them airtime, but withholding the opportunity to direct content at African

[421] Vaillant, D.W. ‘Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago. 1921-1935’, *American Quarterly,* 1, 54, 2002, p26.
[422] Vaillant, D.W. ‘Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago. 1921-1935’, p27.
[423] Vaillant, D.W. ‘Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago. 1921-1935’, p26.
[424] Vaillant, D.W. ‘Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago. 1921-1935.’ P35.
[425] Cohen, H.G. The Marketing of Duke Ellington: Setting the Strategy for an African American Maestro’, *Journal of African American History,* 4, 89, 2004, p294.
[426] Cohen, H.G. The Marketing of Duke Ellington: Setting the Strategy for an African American Maestro’, p298.

American audiences, whites exerted cultural dominance in the industry. It used black bodies and black voices as tools for entertainment. It did not grant them agency.

Notwithstanding some representation on the radio in the form of musical performances, African Americans did not have a real voice in broadcasting. The situation was dire enough to necessitate intervention by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in the late 1960s in the form of preference programs.[427] These programs essentially included tax benefits and expedited hearings for license applications for African American broadcasters.[428] The FCC conceded that the obvious lack of market penetration by African American owners was the result of institutionalised discrimination in the industry.[429] This institutionalised discrimination was the hallmark of African American participation in the industry in this study's period.

[427] Evans, A.B. 'Are Minority Preferences Necessary? Another Look at the Radio Broadcasting Industry', *Yale Law & Policy Review,* 2, 8, 1990, p381.
[428] Evans, A.B. 'Are Minority Preferences Necessary? Another Look at the Radio Broadcasting Industry', p382.
[429] Evans, A.B. 'Are Minority Preferences Necessary? Another Look at the Radio Broadcasting Industry', p384.

Conclusion

In concluding this study, this chapter will address the core aims and objectives indicated in the introduction. Firstly, the chapter will summarise the roles played by Schlesinger in the film and radio industries. Secondly, it will discuss similarities between these industries and their American counterparts. Thirdly, the chapter will discuss factors that led to these industries being unique, and thus different, from their American counterparts. Finally, the hypothesis that Schlesinger was a conduit of American cultural imperialism into South Africa will be assessed. In concluding this paper, it will be shown how the ABC resembled the BBC far more than American radio stations. It will also be shown how there are cogent arguments that support this hypothesis with regards to the film industry, including with regards to monopolisation, and the media content produced by Schlesinger, as well as in certain elements of the corporate culture espoused by Schlesinger. Conversely, it will be shown that racial considerations in the film industry made Schlesinger's operation uniquely South African.

Schlesinger and the Radio Industry

The radio industry, prior to Schlesinger's takeover, was experimental, rudimentary and unprofitable. The title of this paper makes reference to crystal valves. This term refers to this period, in which radio users were unused to regular programming and largely built their own radios. Stations like the JB were in dire straits by 1927 due to their fiscal vulnerability.[430] After taking advantage of their condition, and buying them up with a mandate from the government, Schlesinger revolutionised this industry in a multitude of ways. He constructed a corporate model that was commercially viable. His radio studios produced content that was distributed nationally. Consumers were exposed to regular programming that was both entertaining, and which served public purposes, such as news and stock market reports. His stations were responsible for the transmission of speeches by government officials, even from abroad.

Schlesinger's ability to monopolise the radio industry was largely premised on legal developments that allowed for such a corporate structure. The Regulation for Wireless

[430] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P16.

Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation Act of 1923 laid the foundation for Schlesinger's ascendency.[431] This act should be viewed as governmental approval for the creation of a monopoly. The singular involvement of the office of the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, under the leadership of Walter Madeley, in lobbying for Schlesinger's takeover of the industry speaks to the intent of the authorities to lay the foundation for a public broadcaster. The intent is therefore similar to that of the authorities in Britain, where the BBC was first established as a private company, whose corporate structure could be imported wholescale into the future construction of a public broadcaster.[432] The ABC and the BBC (prior to becoming a public enterprise) shared many similarities. The Reith Report made clear that the ABC was essentially in the position in which the BBC was in 1927. It held a virtual monopoly, and the state would have benefited from appropriating it for the public benefit. One difference between the ABC and the BBC (after becoming a state enterprise) was that the ABC was allowed to generate an income from advertising. The funding model of the ABC was therefore a conglomerate of those of American radio stations, which generated their income from advertising, and the British model, which generated its income from a mix of public funding and licensing programs.[433]

One assertion that can be made confidently, is that Schlesinger was very successful in growing the listenership of the ABC. In nine years, he grew his licensed audience from 15 509 to 152 000.[434] He did this through his praised licensing scheme, but also through the considerate curation of the content being produced. Like the BBC, he favoured live musical performances, punctuated by news, sports results and market reports.[435] In his acclaimed report, Reith praised Schlesinger and the ABC. He noted that the ABC was profitable, and was ready for state appropriation with compensation commensurate with the capital and effort Schlesinger put into the business.

It should be noted that Schlesinger's attitude towards Africans in the radio industry can be described as dismissive. This can be read into the fact that there is evidence to suggest

[431] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923.
[432] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P45.
[433] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P46.
[434] Rhodes, T.A.F. 1956. *Report on Broadcasting Before the SABC was Created, 1924-1936.* P37.
[435] A1724, Thelma Gutsche Papers, *The Star*, 4 July 1945, UCT Archives.

that Africans were only first allowed to conduct technical training in the sector in 1943, years after the ABC had been appropriated by the state.[436] Furthermore, there was a systemic exclusion of Africans from representation in broadcasting, as evidenced by the rejection of the application for an African broadcaster by the Public Address Company.[437] Although the connection between Schlesinger and this rejection is speculative, earlier developments in the sector show how Schlesinger's company was favoured and given institutionalised support from the Postmaster-General's office. Even if there is no clear evidence to suggest he participated in the dialogue concerning the Public Address Company's application, it can be asserted that he benefited from the decision to exclude Africans from the sector.

Schlesinger and the Film Industry

Schlesinger was responsible for the consolidation of the struggling film industry in South Africa in 1913. Through the construction of various trusts which acted as cooperative ventures, Schlesinger soon coopted various small companies in the sector and set up the goliaths that were the AFP, ATT and AFT and eventually, the ACT. These companies came to dominate the sector, being the central producers, importers, distributers, and exhibitors in the sector. Schlesinger took advantage of the financial hardships that his companies' predecessors found themselves in. In so doing he illustrated his business acumen. In eradicating substantial competition, Schlesinger illustrated the lengths to which he would go in order to dominate an industry in which he was active. Schlesinger dealt with competition ruthlessly. Under the guise of operating a cooperative venture, he bought out all of his substantial competitors between 1910 and 1917. Facing monumental opposition from Kinemas in 1931, Schlesinger used his vast personal wealth to buy them out as well.[438] He displayed the same utilitarianism when dealing with his employees. This paper demonstrated this behaviour in the studies of his labour disputes. Schlesinger

[436] Wits Historical Research Papers, AD1947/11.4, 'Broadcasting, Wireless Training.' From Director Witwatersrand Technical College, to Director SA Institute for Race Relations, 23 July 1943.
[437] SAB, NTS 9572 252/400 Establishment of a Broadcasting Station, Native Programme, From Postmaster-General's Office to Secretary for Native Affairs. 29 July 1932.
[438] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p214.

undermined unions, fired whole orchestras and coerced employees into signing prejudicial contracts.[439]

Schlesinger produced and imported a wide variety of films. In many ways, the content of his productions mirrored trends evident in America. This was particularly true in the first years of his operations. *De Voortrekkers* was in many ways a localised version of *Birth of a Nation.* The production of an epic for nation-building purposes shows the correlation between the American and South African film industries. The fact that both films contained and glorified white-supremacy further bolsters this link. Schlesinger, like his American counterparts, was driven by the profit motive. Therefore, he imported and produced epics, romance films and moral dramas, which were in vogue at the time in America. Many of his American films were responsible for importing Americanised speech into the lexicon of South African audiences.[440] The South African public was discerning in their tastes and values. They rejected complete Americanisation, and voiced their anxiety over the moral value of the films being imported. As such, Schlesinger was also responsible for importing more British films from 1927 onwards, which South African audiences found more palatable.[441]

Schlesinger was also partial to using his connections in government to garner favours. He relied on the reputation of his company in order to achieve this. He managed to have AFP contracted to the role of official cinematographer of the Prince of Wales while on a state visit to South Africa.[442] He also partnered with the Department of Education in a speculative project to produce films for educational purposes.[443]

Finally, Schlesinger's film companies played a specific role relative to African audiences in terms of both the production of propaganda as well as in terms of censorship. Schlesinger collaborated with the government through AFP's intimate involvement in the

[439] SAB ARB 1392, 105/411, conciliation board, Cape-Musical Association African Consolidated Theatres ltd, From President of Cape-Musical Association to Secretary of Labour. 6 July 1944.
[440] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p177.
[441] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p180.
[442] SAB GG 2248 7.43 African Film Productions Ltd, from General Manager AFP to Government House, 18 March 1924.
[443] SAB UOD 1871 E136 Vol.1 Cinematograph, From Principal Wolmeranstad Government Trade School to Secretary of Education.

work of the NRC and the MCCC in enticing migrant labour to urban industrial centers.[444] AFP was responsible for the production of films such as *The Kernel,* which illustrated how African audiences were theorised into the values and machinations of Schlesinger's operations.[445] AFP was in effect a propaganda arm of the NRC. African audiences existed to be drawn into the labour sector. They were not meant to be entertained for any other purpose. Any profit to be gained from producing films for Africans was to be collected from organisations like the NRC, not from Africans themselves. As such, representations of Africans in productions were modeled on stereotypes and the agenda of whites, rather than on the expectations of Africans themselves. Furthermore, Schlesinger's companies were complicit in the censorship projects of the time. An overt goal of censorship was to prohibit African audiences from being 'exposed' to white female sexuality or the lude behaviour of whites that might have undermined their authority. As a producer and exhibitor of film content, Schlesinger acted in conjunction with censorship boards as a gatekeeper, whose role it was to protect the image and authority of whites.

Comparing American and South African Industries

The essence of this study is the comparison between the South African radio and film industries with their American counterparts. It must be deduced to what extent the corporate culture of, and content produced by Schlesinger's companies mirrored American alternatives. Factors that made Schlesinger's companies unique and localised must also be located and dissected. As was discussed in the introduction, American cultural imperialism can be read into instances of the transposition of modes of corporate governance as well as in cultural programming, such as films or radio broadcasts. Therefore a discussion on the similarities and differences between South Africa and America's industries serves to illustrate the extent to which the chief hypothesis of this study might be true. Namely, that Schlesinger's company acted as a conduit of American

[444] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 33, 1, March 2007, pp134-135.
[445] Reynolds, G. 'From Red Blanket to Civilisation: Propaganda and Recruitment Films for South Africa's Gold Mines, 1920-1940,' p143.

cultural imperialism, but also that there were factors that resisted the complete americanisation of his corporate culture as well as the programming that he produced.

The first part of this discussion will compare the early radio industries of each nation. Similarities that will be discussed include the funding of stations through advertising and the correlation between national broadcasting companies in America and the centralised distribution model of the ABC. Differences that will be discussed include: elements of the distribution model of the ABC, attitudes towards representation of Africans and African Americans, as well as public funding and support for these institutions.

In terms of the radio industry, the discernable correlation between the American and South African industries lies in the inclusion of advertising as a mode of revenue collection. This is in contrast to the BBC, which was wholly funded through public funds and which was prohibited from drawing a revenue from advertising.[446] Unlike in the UK, the chief regulatory framework on which the South African radio industry was built allowed for advertising as a means of revenue collection.[447] In America the situation was vastly different from the UK. By 1922, WEAF had modeled a revenue system centered on advertising.[448] Of all the ways in which the ABC resembled the BBC, this particular factor speaks to an Americanisation of the industry. Advertising is an integral aspect of American capitalism. As such, its presence in South African radio, despite the misgivings of much of its audience, illustrates the import of American values into a South African system, and as such, the presence of American cultural imperialism is inferred.

It is also possible to draw correlations between ABC and national broadcasters in America such as NBC. NBC began its national broadcasts in 1928, roughly at the same time as ABC.[449] The infrastructural similarities between ABC and NBC are noteworthy. They both produced broadcasts from a centralised distribution point. However, where the NBC distributed to independent stations that were contracted to the mother body, the ABC

[446] Crissel, A. 2002. *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting.* P29.
[447] SAB URU 1923 2838 Regulation for Wireless Broadcasting and Amateur Wireless Experimentation' 1923, Part 1 Section 9.
[448] Lichty, L.W. & Topping, M.C. 'Economics', p197.
[449] Report on Chain Broadcasting, 'Early History of Network Broadcasting(1923-1926) and the National Broadcasting Company', p172.

distributed to stations within its own network. Therefore, this correlation is slightly tenuous. On this occasion it is possible to say that the ABC might have modeled its distribution network on aspects of developments in the American radio industry. However, the mode of distribution to stations dependent on the principle station is more in keeping with the BBC's business model. The distribution model of the ABC is thus representative of both the NBC as well as the BBC. This correlation errs on the side of the BBC, and as such does not act as a proof of the presence of American cultural imperialism.

The first major factor that distinguishes American radio from South African radio during this period is how race was treated in each industry. American radio was not homogenous in its policy towards race. It is safe to say that not all radio stations broadcast programming that included African American music. However, there is ample evidence that some radio stations broadcast jazz music recorded by African American artists such as Duke Ellington during the period in which ABC operated.[450] The ABC treatment of race reflected the broader racial themes that dominated South Africa during this period. Namely, Africans were not viewed as an audience, and their art was not welcome on the airwaves. Africans were distinctly excluded from the South African radio industry, as technicians, artists or as an audience. This is not to say that American radio was not steeped in racial prejudice. The FCC only addressed this prejudice in 1960.[451] This paragraph merely makes the argument that the prejudice experienced in the South African radio industry was far more pervasive than in its American counterpart. If evidence could have been found suggesting that Schlesinger broadcast jazz or African music, this argument would not exist. No evidence like this could be found.

A final, and most significant difference between American and South African radio, lies in the extent to which public institutions supported the ABC. In America, radio stations were privately owned enterprises, often created as advertising mechanisms for companies. In South Africa, the office of the Postmaster-General itself was responsible for enticing Schlesinger to run the ABC. South African authorities were intent on using Schlesinger's private capital to build radio network that could be converted into a public broadcaster in

[450] Vaillant, D.W. 'Sounds of Whiteness: Local Radio, Racial Formation, and Public Culture in Chicago. 1921-1935.' P35.
[451] Evans, A.B. 'Are Minority Preferences Necessary? Another Look at the Radio Broadcasting Industry', p382.

the mode of the BBC. Therefore, as seen in the application by the Public Address Company, the state itself opposed any competition to the ABC. Furthermore, the state used the ABC to broadcast speeches and news that was in the public interest. South African radio, from inception, was tied up in the business of government much more wholly than its American counterpart.

From the above, it is evident that Schlesinger's radio enterprise cannot be assumed to be a conduit of American cultural imperialism. While there are some similarities between the American and South African radio industries, particularly with regards to advertising, the ABC resembled the BBC far more than its American counterparts. It was in effect a public broadcaster from the beginning, despite being funded by Schlesinger's private capital. It mirrored South African attitudes towards race, and British attitudes towards corporate governance and programming.

The discussion will now evolve into the film industries. Similarities that will be discussed include the content being produced, the existence of monopolies (although not congruent in time), certain representations of race, as well as in the demographic make-up of the industry. Differences that will be discussed include the tastes of their respective audiences and, very importantly, the attitude of the industries with regards to their roles in race relations in their respective countries.

The first, most glaring similarity between the American and South African film industries lies in the content being exhibited in both countries. Perhaps because of the sheer quantity of films being produced in America at the time, most of the films exhibited in South Africa were American-made. Schlesinger imported films from the major production companies in America *en masse.* Perhaps because of his own palate, Schlesinger's taste for what was commercially viable to produce also resembled that of American production houses. This is evident in films like *De Voortrekkers* and the many others that AFP produced for white audiences.

Another similarity lies in the monopolisation of the industry in South Africa. Schlesinger's effective amalgamation of all competition strongly resembles that of the Edison Company at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is particularly true of AFP. Although there were theatre companies in South Africa prior to 1913, the AFP was the first major producer of

films in the country, just as the Edison Company was the first major production house in the America. What is more, Schlesinger mimicked the Edison Company in another fundamental way. He was also highly litigious.[452] One distinction between Schlesinger's enterprise and The Edison Company, was that the latter fell afoul of authorities who mistrusted monopolies. Schlesinger, on the other hand, benefited from support from authorities, being used to produce propaganda, film a royal visit and to assist with a project to create educational films. AFP and ACT were not treated the way the Edison Company was treated. Rather, they were endorsed, despite being a monopoly. In the same period as the formation of Schlesinger's film companies, goliath film producers like Fox and MGM emerged. Schlesinger, through the creation of various companies fulfilling different roles, utilised the same vertical integration business method as these companies. He too produced, distributed and exhibited films. His film enterprises truly resembled those of MGM and Fox.[453]

Another key similarity lies in representations of race in key productions like *De Voortrekkers* and *Birth of a Nation*. Africans were depicted as 'savages' and mere props in the narrative of the development of a white nation in South Africa in *De Voortrekkers.* Similarly, in *Birth of a Nation,* African Americans were depicted as uncouth impediments to the growth and glory of white America. Both films were exceedingly popular amongst white audiences in both countries. Both served the same, racially motivated nation building, propagandistic purpose.

Another similarity between the development of these industries was the demographics of their financiers. Just as with MGM and Fox in America, these South African companies were founded and financed by a Jewish businessman. Furthermore, the vast majority of the technical, corporate and acting jobs were taken by whites in both industry.

One factor that made the film industry in South Africa unique from its American counterparts was the tastes of its audience, and how Schlesinger reacted to that. At inception, Schlesinger preferred to import American films. Elements of the South African

[452] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p35.
[453] Sklar, R. 1994, *Movie-Made America, a Cultural History of American Movies,* p42.

audience were ill-pleased with the debauchery these films depicted. They yearned for British films, which they believed would be more classy and in line with conservative values. Schlesinger reacted to this by joining the board of British International Pictures 1926, and endeavoring to import more British films, which came to fruition in 1927, when he actualised this pledge.[454]

The final, and most important distinction between the American and South African film industries is the role they played in race relations. American film studios were content to parody African Americans through the use of black face in comedies. There was certainly high level prejudice in their depictions of African Americans. There treatment of African Americans was not, however, as perverse as the treatment of Africans by AFP. In fact, filmmakers like Micheaux gave African Americans a voice in cinema.

AFP on the other hand, embarked on a project to produce propaganda that would entice Africans the undertake the long and cruel journey to the cities to work in the mines. Working in conjunction with the NRC, AFP produced films that glorified an experience that fell firmly into the realms of white South Africa's broader racial project, namely the subjugation of Africans for the purpose of their labour. All of the ills of migrant labour need not be discussed in this study, but suffice it to say that Schlesinger's company was highly complicit in its execution.

Final Word

In concluding this study, it can be said that there is an element of truth to the hypothesis espoused by authors like Kaplan, Mhlambi and Rosenthal. Schlesinger certainly did act as a conduit of American values into South Africa. This is particularly true in the film industry which saw him incorporate the American business model into the South African setting. He also imported American films into South Africa, and acclimated South African audiences to American speech, thought and values. There were some cogent similarities between the treatment of race in these industries, although in South Africa, evidence suggests that the racism in the film and radio industries was more pervasive and nefarious.

[454] Gutsche, T. 1972, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940,* p179

What must also be acknowledged was the Schlesinger was by no means the wholesale imported of American values and corporate culture into South Africa. In fact, the case study of the ABC proves that imperial considerations at times dominated his thought. The ABC was constructed in flattery of the BBC, not its American counterparts. Furthermore, in South Africa the demands of authorities with regards to race relations meant that Schlesinger's film companies played a much more active role in the broader racial project of the time. In these ways it is clear that the hypothesis that Schlesinger imported American values and systems is challenged. Local considerations affected his motivations and strategies.

What must be remembered is that American cultural imperialism does not take a homogenous form. Wherever it is distributed, it is localised. That is what makes it so pervasive and nondescript. The existence of evidence that there were similarities and differences between these South African and American industries proves this quality of American cultural imperialism. It was localised in this instance. And Schlesinger was a conduit for its distribution into South Africa.

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