

IDEOLOGY AND MYTH IN SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SABC CHANNEL BRAND IDENTITIES

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that *Ideology and myth in South African television: a critical analysis of SABC television channel brand identities* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Ms W Botha

Date

“There are many different kinds of metaphors in which our thinking about cultural change takes place. These metaphors themselves change. Those which grip our imagination, and, for a time, govern our thinking about scenarios and possibilities of cultural transformation, give way to new metaphors, which make us think about these difficult questions in new terms” (Stuart Hall 1996f:287).

SUMMARY

Title: Ideology and myth in South African television: a critical analysis of SABC channel brand identities
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Summary:

This dissertation investigates the brand identities of the South African Broadcasting Corporation television channels SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 during the first decade of the 2000s (from 2000 to 2009). The study explores the manifestation and dissemination of dominant political ideologies and myths by the SABC television channels and their respective brand identities.

It is argued that SABC television channels are structured and organised according to specific brand ideologies that match dominant political ideologies prevalent in South Africa. This is evident from the manner in which these channels have been organised, defined and redefined over the past years, and also from the self-promotional visual imagery shown by the television channels. The visual brand identities of each channel create the elements that make up each channel's visual vocabulary, and each visual vocabulary in turn contributes to notions of 'South Africanness' and definitions of South African identity.

The study also explores the main concepts of ideology theory as a critical discursive practice to assist in a better understanding of the power relations in the SABC and its channel brands in particular. Some developments and changes in the SABC brand identities and the organisation of its television channels are studied from a historical perspective and correlated with ideology theory. In order to do this, the study also draws from semiotic theory.

The author notes the semiotic quality of a brand and argues that the process of branding, the process of semiosis and the process of the dissemination of political ideologies bear structural resemblance. Basic definitions and key concepts of branding and corporate identity contribute to an enhanced understanding of the visual brand identities of the SABC television channels. An exploration of the elements specific to television channel branding helps to determine the signs, codes and meanings in SABC television channel branding.

Key terms:

Branding; capitalist materialism; conspicuous leisure; corporate identity; corporate image; family; hegemony; idents; Ideological State Apparatus; myth; nationalism; political ideology; populism; rainbow nation; South African ideology; SABC1; SABC2; SABC3; television channel branding; youth resistance.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Ideology and myth in South African television: a critical analysis of SABC channel brand identities

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Opsomming:

Hierdie verhandeling ondersoek die handelsmerk identiteite van die South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) televisie kanale SABC1, SABC2 en SABC3 gedurende die eerste dekade van die jare 2000 (van 2000 tot 2009). Die studie verken die verskyning en verspreiding van dominante politieke ideologieë en mites deur die SABC televisie kanale en hul onderskeie handelsmerk identiteite.

Die verhandeling redeneer dat SABC televisiekanale saamgestel is en georganiseer is volgens spesifieke handelsmerk ideologieë wat ooreenstem met heersende dominante politieke ideologieë in Suid Afrika. Dit is duidelik volgens die manier waarop hierdie kanale georganiseer, gedefinieer en herdefinieer is in die verlede, asook die manier waarop visuele beeldspraak vertoon word op televisie vir die kanale se eie reklame doeleindes. Die visuele handelsmerk identiteite van elke kanaal skep die bestanddele waaruit elke kanaal se visuele woordeskat bestaan, en elke taalskat dra weer by tot 'n begrip van 'Suid-Afrikaansheid' en dra dus by tot definisies van Suid-Afrikaanse identiteit.

Hierdie studie verken ook die vernaamste idees van ideologieteorie as 'n kritiese diskoers om 'n bydrae te lewer tot insig in die magsverhoudings in die SABC en sy televisie kanaal handelsmerke in besonder. Sommige ontwikkelings en veranderinge in die SABC handelsmerk identiteite en die samestelling of indeling van die televisiekanale word besigtig vanuit 'n historiese uitgangspunt en wederkerig betrek tot ideologieteorie. Die studie maak ook gebruik van semiotiese kennisleer. Die outeur neem kennis van die semiotiese eienskap van 'n handelsmerk en redeneer ook dat die proses van han-

delsmerk toevoeging, die proses van semiose en die proses van politieke ideologie verspreiding strukturele ooreenkomste dra.

Basiese definisies en sleutelbegrippe van handelsmerk-toevoeging en korporatiewe identiteit dra by tot 'n verrykte begrip van die SABC visuele handelsmerk identiteite. Die verkenning van elemente spesifiek kenmerkend van handelsmerk toevoeging van televisie kanale verleen bystand om die tekens, kodes en betekenis in SABC televisiekanaal handelsmerk identiteite te bepaal.

Sleutelbegrippe:

Aansienlike vryetydsbesteding; familie; handelsmerktoevoeging; hegemonie; idente; Ideologiese Staatsmasjien; jeugweestandsbeweging; kapitalistiese materialisme; korporatiewe identiteit; maatskappybeeld; mite; nasionalisme; politieke ideologie; populisme; reënboognasie; SABC1; SABC2; SABC3; Suid-Afrikaanse ideologie; televisiekanaal handelsmerke en identiteite.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMPS:	All Media and Products Survey
ANC:	African National Congress
BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEE:	Black Economic Empowerment
Bop-TV:	Bophuthatswana television
CCCS:	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (University of Birmingham)
CCV-TV:	Contemporary Community Values television
DStv:	Digital satellite television
DVD:	Digital Video Disk
IBA:	Independent Broadcast Authority
ICASA:	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ISA:	Ideological State Apparatus
LSM:	Living Standards Measure
M-Net:	Media Network television
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NNTV:	National Network Television
NP:	National Party
PVR:	Personal Video Recorder
RSA:	Repressive State Apparatus
SAARF:	South African Advertising Research Foundation
SABC:	South African Broadcasting Corporation
TAMS:	Television Audience Measurement Survey
TV:	Television
TSS:	Top Sport Surplus television channel

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa has witnessed tremendous changes in the years since the 1994 democratic elections. The changes in the so-called 'New South Africa' have included changes in political policies which ultimately resulted in changes as to how national identity is seen or expressed. The creation of a new South African reality and the attempts to establish a new national identity required new linguistic and visual vocabularies to construct the idea of a country significantly different to the former apartheid era. New discourse, language and visual language are necessary components in the construction of new realities and new "truths" (Gqola 2001:96). The public rehearsal and repetition of such new vocabularies (linguistic and visual) in the media ensures that the new discourses "capture the nation's imagination and are gradually accepted as 'truth'" (Gqola 2001:96).

The visual brand identities of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) television channels are examples of such a new discourse and new visual language. Television for a democratic South Africa meant that existing national television channels had to be restructured and reorganised, and as a result thereof SABC channels were re-launched in 1996. The existing CCV-TV channel (Contemporary Community Values) was re-launched as SABC1, TV1 as SABC2, and the NNTV channel (National Network Television) as SABC3. SABC1 and SABC2 are free-to-air public broadcast channels; in other words, viewers make no direct payment towards programming and the channels are "funded by government or by private supporters, rather than solely by advertising" (Bignell 2004:308, 313).

The programming on these two public service channels typically combines "programmes that inform, educate and entertain in ways that encourage the betterment of audiences and society in general" (Bignell 2004:312-313). SABC3, on the other hand, is a free-to-air commercial service television channel that is "funded by the sale of advertising time or sponsorship of programmes" (Bignell 2004:305). Each post-apartheid television channel soon established and broadcast its own identity and

promotional visual imagery, thus creating new visual vocabularies and constructing new 'truths'.

1.2 Background and aims of the study

In their infancy the slogans of post-apartheid television channels declared *Simunye*, *We Are One* and then *Simunye – One Time* for SABC1; *Made in Africa* and then *Come Alive with Us* for SABC2; while SABC3 proclaimed *Quality Shows* and *We're Simply The Best* (Gqola 2001:101, 105). The restructuring of South African national television and the resulting channels echo the sentiment of Monroe Edwin Price (1995:16-17) that “[g]overnment restructuring of broadcasting reflects many other aspects of government policy: attitudes towards minority cultures, towards religion ... and towards ideas of citizenship and participation”.

The SABC television channels and their earlier brand identities (between 1996 and 2002, before corporatisation) showed images of a variety of optimistic South Africans, perhaps rendered in a kind of idealism regarding a country unified in its diversity. In a new South African democracy concerned with unity, such aspects of solidarity in government policy and attitudes are unlikely to be established in an instant, and rather form part of a continuous refinement of such attitudes and ideas.

Kristin Orgeret (2004:156) argues that the restructuring of South African television follows imperatives contradictory to the national narrative of unity. In an article entitled *Unifying and dividing processes in the national media: the Janus face of South Africa* (2004), she argues that the restructuring of the three SABC national television channels into “distinctive social groups follow[s] a logic that may be working against the idea of a unified nation” (Orgeret 2004:156). She notes that SABC1 broadcasts in Nguni and English, addressing mainly the young, black audiences, while SABC2 reflects a family focus and broadcasts in Afrikaans, Sotho and English. Additionally, “SABC3 wants to be ‘much better’, ‘spirited’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ in its reach for the more up-market English-speaking audiences” (Orgeret 2004:156).

The restructuring of the SABC channels and their new brand identities thus seem to continue the old vocabularies and truths of apartheid logic by dividing the audience into groups based on race, language and class. Orgeret (2004:156) thus believes that the

three SABC channels are structured according to segregated and racially structured markets that “work against the idea of a unified nation”, and instead, support a dividing process that hinders cultural transformation. She indicates a need for “qualitative content studies of how the stories which the national broadcaster narrates to the nation deals with questions of inclusion and exclusion” and nation building (Orgeret 2004:149, 157).

This study therefore engages in critical analyses of the SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 television channels. The study explores how these three channels have been organised, structured, and redefined over the years, and the consequences of such structuring on the creation and definition of certain audience groups or target markets. The main purpose is to explore the manifestation and dissemination of dominant political ideologies and myths by the SABC television channels and their respective brand identities. The assumption is made that such ideologies can influence the construction of South African identities. Desiree Lewis (2000:157) confirms this assumption by stating that South African television “forms a dense and compelling arena for viewers to define and explore their subjectivities and [the] transforming political environment – not merely through the subject matter of [... television content], but through a dynamic interaction with their forms and codes”.

This study argues that the visual identities of SABC television channels and their respective forms and codes illustrate the important role of the media as a source of cultural pedagogy in the process of identity construction. Identity construction and its relation to cultural politics is one of the most central concerns within contemporary discourse of South African Cultural Studies (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003; Nuttall & Michael 2000). Sean Jacobs (2003:29) argues that debates about mass media in South Africa are at the same time debates about identity construction, cultural transformation and social change. Undoubtedly the media play a pivotal role in such processes. In this regard, the following statement of Douglas Kellner (2001:1) is particularly relevant to the role of the media in South African culture:

[P]roducts of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of ‘us’ and ‘them’. ... Media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which

we insert ourselves into this culture. ... The media contribute to educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire – and what not to.

It is therefore important to study the products of media culture when addressing issues of cultural transformation and identity construction.

In South Africa, television plays an important part in media culture since the total adult television viewing population consists of 19.6 million people¹ (*Encyclopaedia of brands ...* 2004:288; SABC TV channels 2009). Given that television is quite an accessible medium in a South African nation-state, it is important to study it as a main source and medium for the transmission of ideology (Tomaselli, Tomaselli & Muller 1989:1). The prominent television studies theorist, Jonathan Bignell (2004:62), states that television institutions (for example, the SABC) “both embody and transmit ideological ‘messages’ which are the result of their ownership, their relationship to national broadcasting regulations and their adoption of particular cultural values”. The SABC television channels, as part of the SABC institution, can therefore be described as media that transmit ideological messages.

In South Africa, such consequences of ideological representations have been central to concepts of resistance, opposition and politics (Nuttall & Michael 2000). Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael (2000:20) quote Okwui Enwezor, who explains that cultural transformation, and “the ability of the post-apartheid nation to imagine a new identity has to do with ... ideological battle”. The question of who is included and who is excluded often forms the nucleus of intellectual debates regarding ideology. Nuttall and Michael (2000:13) state that it is “largely under the rubric of ‘inclusiveness’, [...and] an agenda to include that which has been marginalized” that cultural studies emerged in South Africa. Sixteen years have passed since the inauguration of a democratic South Africa, and it is interesting to explore the manner in which South Africans are grouped, organised and addressed by the national broadcaster. It is also interesting to see which ideological messages are aimed at which audiences, and to explore some of the myths that support and perpetuate the ideological messages disseminated by the SABC television channels.

¹ The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) AMPS 2004 results revealed that 71,2 percent of the population have access to television (www.saarf.co.za).

The purpose of this study is to engage critically with the visual landscape and to explore some of the ideologies and myths in South African television by focusing on SABC television channel branding. The dissertation puts forward the argument that these channels and their brand identities broadcast a new visual language aligned with the ideologies held by a post-apartheid nation. Price (1995:3) states “[t]he millions of images that float through the public mind help determine the very nature of national allegiances, attitudes towards place, family, government, and state”, and it seems logical that the government, and a parastatal organisation such as the SABC, would aim to control those images; at least to some extent.

The visual brand identities of SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 appearing between 2000 and 2009 are investigated in this study. Major changes to the channel brand identities occur twice during this time. The first changes coincided with the corporatisation of the SABC during 2002 and 2003, and the second major changes occurred in 2007 and again in 2009. The visual examples of the SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 brand identities are therefore explored critically in order to determine some of the meanings attached to the brand identities, and to identify key ideologies and myths possibly propagated in this manner by the national broadcaster.

It must also be noted that the visual brand identity of SABC Africa can be explored in the same manner. Due to the restriction of space, a decision was made to omit the full discussion of the visual brand identity of SABC Africa. The choice to exclude this channel is additionally based on the dissolution of the SABC Africa channel in August 2008 (Mochiko 2008). SABC Africa is also a pay television channel, available to satellite television subscribers only. Given its short existence (2003-2008) and its inaccessibility to the majority of South African viewers, it has been excluded from Chapter Four of the study. An exploration of the visual brand identity of SABC Africa is valuable, however, since it may contribute to a clearer idea of the total array of ideologies and myths transmitted by the national broadcaster. In an effort to preserve some of the aspects, a few examples of the SABC Africa brand identity are used in Chapter Two and Three to illustrate theoretical points. In these two chapters the possible signs, codes, meanings, myth and ideology of the SABC Africa are used as examples in an attempt to preserve interpretations of SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 and their brand identities for the interpretation in Chapter Four.

1.3 Theoretical framework and literature review

This study is situated within a visual culture and cultural studies theoretical paradigm. The visuality of the SABC television channel brand identities is central to this dissertation. Television channel brand identities include two major visual aspects, the first of which is television. Television also includes audio aspects, but in this regard Nicholas Mirzoeff (1999:10) states that television is predominantly visual rather than textual, because “[w]e watch television, not listen to it”. It is the rapid succession and proliferation of visual images that characterise television. Mirzoeff (1999:1) notes the importance of television in society when he states that “[m]odern life takes place onscreen. ... Human experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before ... For most people ..., life is mediated through television”.

The second visual component is visual brand identity. Observing the media landscape and television in particular, it is evident that brands and branding have become important features of contemporary popular culture. Brands are everywhere. They appear on the streets, in shopping malls, on buildings, in magazines, on the internet and television. A visual brand identity is a combination of names, logos, symbols graphics, colours and designs that create a brand’s visual code. It is not the *only* aspect of a corporate brand identity, but it is an important aspect of corporate branding because it communicates an organisation’s values in a concise manner. Visual brand identity is palpable, visible and designed (Olins 1989:7). But brand identities are visual entities beyond their designed elements and often function as “metapictures” (Mitchell 1995). In other words brand identities function as powerful metaphors that allow complex theories to be communicated at a glance. Thus a large part of the brand image held by viewers or consumers is not a ‘real’ picture, and their visuality is only metaphoric (Mitchell 1995). This is an example of “the growing tendency to visualise things that are not in themselves visual” as a key characteristic of the new visual culture (Mirzoeff 1999:5).

The two visual aspects, namely television and brand identity, come together in this study to form the primary area of investigation for this dissertation. These visual aspects firmly place the study in Visual Culture and Visual Studies. Mitchell (2002:87) maintains that it is useful to “distinguish between ‘visual studies’ and ‘visual culture’ as, respectively, the field of study and the object or target of study. Visual Studies is the

study of visual culture”. Visual Studies is the process of understanding, interpreting and explaining visual images in people’s lives (Barnard 2001:5) such as television channel brand identities. The study of visual culture often aims to “overcome the veil of familiarity and self-evidence that surrounds the experience of seeing, and [... turns] it into a problem for analysis, a mystery to be unravelled” (Mitchell 2002:86).

The study is also situated within a cultural studies theoretical paradigm. John Walker and Sarah Chaplin (1997:47) state that the field of Cultural Studies includes a larger variety of cultures that are not only restricted to the visual sense and include, for example, literature and music. They also note that academics of Cultural Studies “often come from a sociological rather than an arts/humanities background” (Walker & Chaplin 1997:47). Ideology is situated as a central concept in cultural studies (Storey 1996:3) and forms the major theoretical framework of this study. In this regard it bears similarities to Media Studies and its concern with the theoretical concepts of ideology and hegemony and its relationship to issues regarding media ownership and institutions. Media Studies explores a field beyond the aesthetic and design aspects of the media (Walker & Chaplin 1997:44). The study is thus interdisciplinary and includes, for example, theory of ideology, Cultural Studies, South African television, Media Studies, semiotics, branding, corporate identity and design.

Television channel brand identities are situated in the environment of mass media and broadcasting. Tomaselli *et al* (1989:2) note that “there is a degree of uncertainty about how the various components of broadcasting can be analysed for their ideological characteristics”. Therefore they suggest an analysis of four components or four levels of ideology: the level of programmes; the level of channels; broadcasting institutions; and the level of legislation in broadcasting (Tomaselli *et al* 1989:2-4). Although this study explores the levels of ideology in programmes, broadcast institutions and legislation, it is mainly concerned with the second component above, namely the level of ideology in *channels*. Tomaselli *et al* (1989:3) maintain that programmes are segregated into different channels whose signals reach “a particular and intended local, regional, national or international geographic area”. On these channels, the programmes’ “style and content are different to those on other frequencies” (Tomaselli *et al* 1989:3). At this level, ideology seems even less imposed, since the audience has a choice between channels, and therefore a choice between the ideologies that the different channels reflect (Tomaselli *et al* 1989:3).

Bignell (2004:2) has a similar argument to Tomaselli *et al* (1989) in terms of the objects of study in television. He explains that approaches to Television Studies “are not a set of tools, but more like a group of different languages [which] do not translate neatly one into another, and each defines its world in rather different ways”. Bignell (2004:2) also states that courses of study tend to focus on one of the following areas of television: programmes as texts, institution and its production practices, sociological study of audiences, and television history and developments in broadcast policy.

This study uses a “multi-perspectival approach” as described by Bignell (2004:2) and Kellner (2001). Kellner (2001:4-5) describes this approach as a “three-fold project ... that a) discusses production and political economy, b) engages in textual analysis, and c) studies the reception and use of cultural texts”. Kellner (2001:5) maintains that such an approach provides comprehensive critical and political perspectives “that enable individuals to dissect the meanings, messages, and effects of dominant cultural forms” and opens up a theoretical space for engaging in a “struggle for a better society and a better life”.

For the first part of the three-fold project that Kellner (2001:4) suggests, this study explores the production and political economy that provides a context for understanding the SABC branded channels. Kellner (2001:16) clarifies that *political economy* “calls attention to the fact that the production and distribution of culture takes place within a specific economic system, constituted by relations between the state and the economy”. In this way, the study explores issues regarding the relations between the SABC and the South African economic system, and the relation between the SABC and the state. These relations can assist in “determining the limits and range of political and ideological discourses and effects” (Kellner 2001:5) and could indicate the formulas and conventions of production (e.g. public versus commercial broadcasting) within such a system. A literature study of recent annual reports, SABC documents and government documents is useful to determine the production and political economy that relates to the SABC.

The second part – textual analyses – can be qualitative or quantitative and can assist in a better understanding of “various forms of discourses, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image construction, and effects” (Kellner 2001:6). In this study, such textual analysis are qualitative rather than quantitative in order to apply “various

critical theories to unpack the meanings of the texts [... and to examine] how texts function to produce meaning” (Kellner 2001:6). Kellner (2001:6-7) states that in cultural studies, textual analysis “combines formalist [formalist in the sense of branding and semiotics] analysis with critique of how cultural meanings convey specific ideologies of ... race, class, ... nation and other ideological dimensions”. For this study, a semiotic analysis of the SABC channels, specifically their visual brand identities, is used to discover the specific ideologies that they reflect.

Audience reception studies, as the third part of the project described by Kellner (2001:4, 9), “illuminate why diverse audiences interpret texts in various, sometimes conflicting, ways”. This study does not, however, engage in interviews to determine how television audiences interpret texts, but rather explores audience reception theories, based on literature reviews, and then speculates to determine possible polysemic readings of the SABC brands. The theoretical work of David Morley (1980; 1992) and Stuart Hall (2001) are helpful in this regard. This is done to indicate the important role of the media and of branding in the construction of identities, and to explore possible affects that specific SABC brands can have on identity construction in South Africa.

The textual analyses of the SABC television channel brand identities comprise an exploration of the respective forms and codes of the SABC channel brands as they manifest on screen. The reason for this selection of visual examples of SABC channel identities is that the screen forms the main point of contact between a channel and its viewers. In other words, the screen is the platform where channel identities are most visible – through their channel ‘idents’² and their own television advertisements.

In addition to analyses of visual channel identification and advertisements, the author also explores the websites of the three channels, since they offer a densely coded and encapsulating account of the respective channel brand identities reflected by both their on-air channel identification and advertisements. Together, these visual examples of each SABC channel can provide insight into some of the political ideologies apparent in South African television. The underlying ideologies of the SABC channels seem to indicate that SABC television is structured according to disparate markets and

² Bignell (2004:308) defines channel idents as “the symbols representing production companies, television channels, etc., often comprising graphics or animation”.

identities where segregation of race, language and class still play a large role in the structures of the television channels and the messages they relay.

1.4 Methodology

The first half of the dissertation consists of a literature study (Chapters 2-3) while the second half (Chapter 4) incorporates the author's visual analysis of the SABC television channel brands and the exploration of political ideologies that may be embedded in the channel branding.

As a part of the literature study, the dissertation explores television as a communications channel that transmits certain ideologies and myths. Theories of ideology are investigated in conjunction with a historical perspective of South African television and the evolution of the SABC television channels. The literature study in the first part also explores brands as mythical carriers of meaning, and the two theoretical fields of semiotics and branding are explored in combination to gain clarity regarding the signs, codes and meanings of television channel brands.

The second part of the dissertation (Chapter 4) consists of the application of these theoretical principles in an analysis of visual applications of the SABC brand identities. Visual examples have been gathered through Digital Video Disk (DVD) recordings of the SABC television channel brand identities. The earlier brand identities (before 2007) were recorded on DVD for a full day per channel per year. The brand elements of each channel were extracted by taking still photographs of the on-screen³ idents and advertisements. Technological advances made it possible to record the later brand identities on Personal Video Recorder (PVR) to transfer the brand elements, idents and advertisements to a DVD recorder, and capture still images by playing the DVD on computer and utilising the snap tool to capture still frames. The still frames of the SABC1, 2 and 3 brand identities were sorted into groups and types of on-air brand elements, and the illustrations in the dissertation were made by combining these still frames in a storyboard manner. The author believes that the multiple still images portrayed in a combined, storyboard manner offer a better impression of the overall brand identity than singular still frames when presented in a text or print document.

³ In the captions of the images or Figures, the still photographs or snaps from the channel websites (and computer screen) are referred to as web grabs, while the still frames of the branding on the television channels (television screen) are referred to as screen grabs.

The images of the brand identities of the SABC television channels were thus recorded as motion pictures⁴ and then photographed as still images by the author, unless otherwise indicated beneath each image in the dissertation. In some cases the quality of images was better on the online portfolios of the design companies and advertising agencies and these have been included. Variations in brand identities also occurred sporadically, but they have not necessarily been captured on the designated recording days. Similarly, some advertisements were not aired during the recording of the on-air brand elements. In these cases, the images have been supplemented with images obtained from the brand managers and on-air managers⁵ of the television channels, and also from images posted on the internet by the design companies.

It must be noted that the discussion of the SABC1 brand identity is the longest, since the channel had the most variations and changes to its visual brand identity, while changes on SABC2 and SABC3 were less dramatic and occurred less often. Another reason for its longer length is that SABC1's *Ya Mampela* brand identity is more controversial in nature, and thus received more academic attention and more criticism and discussion, especially regarding the *PF Jones* advertisement for SABC1. The SABC1 channel is also discussed first and unpacks and employs many of the definitions and terms of television branding that are used throughout the study.

1.5 Overview of chapters

The first chapter has placed the dissertation within the context of visual cultural studies. It also provided the background of this study and highlighted the aims, theoretical framework and methodology.

The second chapter explores the concepts, characteristics and modes of operation of ideology. The manner in which ideology operates is examined by looking at the historical and theoretical development of the concept of ideology. Key terms in ideology theory; for example, base and superstructure, false consciousness, hegemony and

⁴ The author may be contacted regarding a compilation of such video clip recordings.

⁵ It was difficult, if not impossible to organise appointments with the brand managers of the SABC television channels to discuss the brand identities. Repeated endeavours to arrange meetings were turned down due to a lack of time on the part of the brand managers and channel managers. Special thanks to Ndomiso Ngobese (brand manager SABC1 2004) and Simone Berger (on-air manager SABC1 2007) who provided tapes with visual material and other documents pertaining to the brand identities of SABC1.

myth, are explored, and the changing notions of ideology are then discussed alongside relevant moments in South African television history. By examining these concepts of ideology, the modes of operation of ideology and myth within the SABC as an institution become clearer.

The third chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of semiotics and branding. This chapter argues that the communicative process of branding and corporate identity is a deliberate process of semiosis. This chapter, however, is more concerned with the semiotic process or semiotic structure of branding and corporate identity, and does not aim to be a study of semiotics. Instead, the chapter utilises semiotic theory as a means to explore identity constructions within the SABC channel brand identities.

The chapter briefly engages with the origin and evolution of branding practices, and also discusses key concepts of branding and corporate identity that assist in a better understanding of the SABC television channel brands. The chapter also investigates the on-air elements specific to television channel branding. The signs, codes and meanings of brands and corporate identity are explored in terms of their places in the process of semiosis. The chapter also argues that the process of semiosis, the process of branding, and the societal structure of a dominant political ideology, are similar in their structures.

The fourth chapter applies the findings of Chapters Two and Three to the visual examples of the SABC channel brand identities to examine the possible underlying myths and ideologies of each channel. Various examples of the visual brand identity of each channel are looked at critically and then linked to dominant political ideologies and myths. This chapter explores the relations between these individual sets of political ideologies of the television channels and the prevalent political ideologies of contemporary South African society during the period 2000 to 2009. The study argues that the structuring of the SABC television channels, each with their own ideologies, indicates how disparate ideologies co-exist in South Africa. It is also argued that such ideologies can influence the process of identity construction.

The fifth and last chapter of this dissertation provides a summarised view of the findings in the previous chapters. This chapter also includes the conclusions made from this study and indicates some of the possible implications. It highlights the

contribution of this type of study, and also indicates its limitations. Lastly, this chapter suggests further areas of inquiry that could contribute to further research within the context of this dissertation.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic and contextualised the study of television channel brand identities within the context of Visual Studies. It also indicated the main goals and objectives of the study, and indicated the method in which the research has been dealt with. The chapter briefly introduced the SABC television channels, and the manner in which the channels have been structured according to audience segmentation based on race, language and culture.

The chapter also indicated that this kind of division has been at the centre of debate in South African Cultural Studies, and that post-apartheid discourse attempts to address such divisions in order to include that which has previously been marginalised. Consequently new language and realities are created that attempt to illustrate what a new, improved and inclusive South Africa should look like. The visual brand identities of the SABC television channels are examples of cultural productions that aim to promote visions of a 'new South Africa'. Each SABC channel appears to interpret and endorse distinct views regarding the definition of such a 'new South Africa', and presents this through appropriate brand identities that appear to be ideologically inspired.

Of central importance to this study is the manner in which the national broadcaster and its respective television channels represent or promote certain ideological messages. The study argues that the SABC television brand identities are carefully designed to reinforce the ideologies that these channels foster. The ideologies and myths are encoded within the channel idents, advertisements and websites by means of visual and textual signs and codes. In order to gain a better understanding of these ideologies within the SABC brand representations, it is first necessary to examine the ideological processes within South African television in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

IDEOLOGY AND SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION

2.1 Introduction

Mass media has become an important field for ideological analyses of cultural texts. Media culture is one of “the most visible and important social and cultural institutions” (Sonderling 2001:323). For Douglas Kellner (1995:1), media culture provides topical hieroglyphics of contemporary social life because it “articulates the dominant values, political ideologies, and social developments and novelties of the era” (Kellner 2001:[sp]). Media culture and its intersection with social and political struggles contribute greatly in the modelling of everyday life (Kellner 1995:2). Understanding the products of mass media therefore helps to understand contemporary society (Kellner 1995:5).

For Chris Barker (2003:70-71), culture “is political because it is expressive of relations of power”, and therefore, ideological. The concept of ideology is thus essential to any discussion of culture (Lemon 1996:209). If mass media, including South African television, forms a predominant platform “for the communication of ideology in society and manipulating people” (Sonderling 2001:311), then it is important to gain a better understanding of ideology and South African television as a medium that carries such ideology.

This chapter therefore investigates concepts and theories of ideology and also examines how ideology operates in the media and society at large. The purpose here is to contribute towards an understanding of ideology, its mode of operation and its relationship with television in South Africa. This chapter points out that the SABC, as a television institution, both embodies and transmits ideologies related to its ownership and its relationship with national broadcasting cultures (Bignell 2004:6). In this sense, it argues that the SABC produces discourses and ideologies “through the manipulation of language (texts, television texts, cultural artefacts) and the mass media in order to serve ... [its] own interests” (Sonderling 2001:311).

Defining the term ideology¹ proves to be problematic, since various definitions of the term seem to co-exist within literature. The multiplicity of its uses are exemplified with a description by Slavoj Žižek (1994a:3-4), who states that the term ideology

can designate anything from a contemplative attitude that mis-recognises its dependence on social reality to an action oriented set of beliefs, from the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas which legitimate a dominant political power.

In its simplest sense, “ideology is concerned with the study of ideas and how people and societies think” (Sonderling 2001:311). Similarly, Jennifer Lemon (1996:209) notes that the popular definition of the term ideology “refers to the ideas, attitudes, values, belief systems or interpretive and conceptual frameworks held by members of a particular social group”. Bignell (2004:308) expands on these definitions of ideology by adding that these values, belief systems or assumptions arise from the economic and class divisions in a culture, which underlie the ways of life accepted as normal in that culture.

In Bignell’s definition, the subject of the relations of power within society comes to the fore. Similarly, Barker (2003:71) maintains that “the concept of ideology refers to maps of meaning which, while they purport to be universal truths, are historically specific understandings that obscure and maintain power”. Within literature on ideology, it is generally believed that these assumptions, belief systems and maps of meaning are selective and promote specific (and perhaps partial) views of reality (Lemon 1996:209).

Above and beyond the existences of multiple definitions of the term, it is perhaps more important to note the dual use of this term. John B Thompson (1984:3-4) observes that the term ideology appears in the writings of many authors, and that “its occurrence in the literature today would show that the term is used in two fundamentally differing ways”. In the first instance, the term is used as a “purely descriptive term: one speaks

¹ Simon Blackburn (1996:185) defines “ideology” as “[a]ny wide-ranging system of beliefs, ways of thought, and categories that provide the foundation of programmes of political and social action: an ideology is a conceptual scheme with a practical application. Derogatorily, another person’s ideology may be thought of as spectacles that distort and disguise the real *status quo*. ... Promises that political philosophy and morality can be freed from ideology are apt to be vain, since allegedly cleansed and pure programmes depend, for instance, upon particular views of human nature, what counts as human flourishing, and the conditions under which it is found”.

of ‘systems of thought’, of ‘systems of belief’, of ‘symbolic practices’ which pertain to social action or political projects” (Thompson 1984:4). Thompson (1984:4) describes this use of the term as a *neutral conception* of ideology. From this neutral perspective, “ideology is present in every political programme, irrespective of whether the programme is directed towards the preservation or transformation of the social order” (Thompson 1984:4). In other words, this concept of ideology claims that all groups in society have their own ideology, and that all ideologies are equal. But this neutral concept of ideology is not very useful for the purpose of this study.

Following the approach of visual culture studies, this dissertation rather employs a critical theory of ideology. Thompson (1984:4) states that a *critical conception*² of ideology is “essentially linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power – that is, to the process of maintaining domination”. Cultural artefacts such as written or visual texts create and convey certain meanings and ideas, which for Thompson are culturally produced, and establish and maintain the power structures of society. For Thompson (1990:7) then, “[i]deology, broadly speaking, is *meaning in the service of power*”.

A critical theory therefore negotiates visual culture and its relation to ideology in a way expressed by Hall, where cultural practice is the “realm where one engages with and elaborates a politics” (Hall cited by Mirzoeff 1999:24). It is an engagement with the politics of cultural forms rather than party politics. In this way, cultural studies are a “more differentiated political, rather than aesthetic, valuation of cultural artefacts” (Kellner 2001). The concept of ideology and its relation to politics then “forces the readers to perceive that all cultural texts have distinct biases, interests, and embedded values, reproducing the point of view of their producers and often the values of the dominant social groups” (Kellner & Durham 2001:6). All cultural texts, including television and its channel brand identities, can therefore be regarded as political, since they are expressive of relations of power (Barker 2003:70).

However, in order to gain a clearer understanding of this critical concept of ideology, Lemon (1996:209) suggests that some of its main features can be understood by examining its theoretical and historical context. The following sections therefore employ

² Thompson (1984:4) maintains that a *critical conception of ideology* “preserves the negative connotation which has been conveyed by the term throughout most of its history and it binds the analysis of ideology to the question of critique”.

a historical perspective on ideology as a critical discursive practice³ within the context of cultural studies. The next section does not, however, provide an extensive history or explanation of the developments in ideology theory, but instead highlights the main concepts underlying ideology in order to provide a background that assists in a better understanding of the power relations within the context of South African television, and within the SABC television channels more specifically.

2.2 Classical Marxist theories of ideology and South African television in the 1970s

The word ideology was first used by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy in 1796 to describe a new “science of ideas” which he believed to be an objective study to uncover the origins of ideas (Althusser 1994:120; Heywood 2003:6). De Tracy’s aim for such a science could be considered as being in line with a neutral conception of ideology in the sense that it would study the origins and “the way attitudes and beliefs are organised into a coherent pattern” (Sonderling 2001:313). But despite De Tracy’s high expectations of this new science, the original meaning of the term had little impact on the later use of the term (Heywood 2003:6).

Within its contemporary sense, ideology is employed by the social sciences and humanities in its critical sense with resulting political implications. In other words, ideology does not have the general origin of ideas as an object of study, but instead has political ideas as objects of study.

This concept of ideology enjoyed in modern and political thought has its origins in the writings of Karl Marx, who took up the term 50 years later and gave it a quite different meaning than that described by De Tracy (Althusser 1994:120). Marx does not offer a general definition of ideology, but in his early work, *The German Ideology* ([1846] 1970), co-written with Friedrich Engels he writes:

[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling class ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time the ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the

³ The idea of ideology as discursive practice refers to an analysis of “the production of knowledge through language which gives meaning to material objects and social practices. Material objects and social practices are given meaning or ‘brought into view’ by language and are thus discursively formed” (Barker 2003:439).

means of *material* production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (Marx & Engels 1970:64).⁴

From this description, the term ideology describes a study and critique of the ideas of the ruling class. For Marx, the ruling class ideas or ideologies are the reason why the ruling minority, the so-called bourgeoisie or elite, is able to hold power over the masses of people, and why the proletariat or masses accept their subordination. For Marx, ideology is created from the construction and communication of a dominant vision of society that justifies the rule of the elite over the subordinate masses (Sonderling 2001:314). When this construct or image is accepted by the masses as legitimate, the power of the ruling class becomes secure, and force becomes unnecessary. The ideas of the ruling class thus rule or dominate the masses and ideology becomes the science of the “ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or social group” (Althusser 1994:120; Kellner & Durham 2001:6).

Classical Marxist theory⁵ interprets this social group or social order in terms of a base/superstructure metaphor or model (Figure 1). Marx (1961:67) explains:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which legal and political superstructures arise and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.

According to this Marxist model, it is a society's base which determines its superstructure. The economic or material base, or infrastructure as it is known, is the sum of the means of production (material powers) and the relations of production. The

⁴ Heywood (2003:7) believes that this quote from *The German Ideology* contains Marx's clearest description of ideology.

⁵ Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were “primarily concerned with economic, political and philosophical issues and worked out explanations of the capitalist theory and mode of production. They did not develop an ‘aesthetic’ of culture or literature, although ... Marxist principles and attitudes have been adapted to create a Marxist theory of literature: what it has been, and what it might and, perhaps, should be” (Cuddon 1998:492).

means of production is the combination of the apparatus or means of labour, and the resources or subject of labour. Within this model, the class that owns the means of production of material goods in a society, and profits from it, holds the power and constitutes the ruling or elite minority, or the dominant class of the society (Marx 1961:93; White 1992:164).

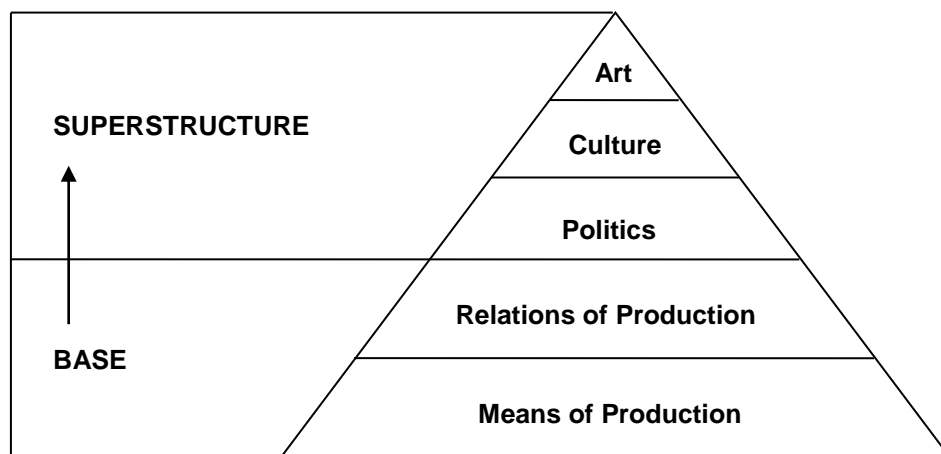


Figure 1: Base and superstructure in Marxist theory.
(Barker 2003:71).

For example, the base or infrastructure in a developing South African capitalist economy, from about 1870 to 1994, was controlled by white people, with large-scale capital (particularly mining but also sections of secondary industry) dominated by English speaking people, and agriculture dominated predominantly by a growing Afrikaans petit bourgeoisie (Wolpe 1995:67, 79-80). The dominance of the capitalist mode of production emerged first through British imperialism, followed by internal capitalist development (Wolpe 1995:66).

Harold Wolpe (1995:62) notes that the apartheid economic system developed “in a period in which ‘gold’ and ‘maize’ were the dominant productive sectors of the economy” during a time when massive “secondary industrialisation” was occurring. For Wolpe (1995:67-68), separate development (before 1984) and apartheid (from 1984) functioned as “the *mechanisms specific to South Africa* in the period of secondary industrialisation, of maintaining a high rate of capitalist exploitation through a system which guarantees a cheap and controlled [migrant] labour force” by facilitating the disintegration of the pre-capitalist African subsistence and redistributive economies. Wolpe (1995:62) thus defines apartheid as “the attempt of the capitalist class to meet the expanding demand for cheap African labour in the era of industrial manufacturing

capital” and secondly, as a mechanism of protection of white workers “against the resulting increased competition from Black workers”.

Although the economic system that followed the inauguration of the Nationalist Party to power in 1948 was a system based on private enterprise, it was controlled by the social interests of government (Legassick 1974:10, 25). In addition to private enterprises, large organisations like Iscor, Eskom, Spoornet, Telkom, South African Airways and the SABC were fully or partially owned and controlled by government. Both private and state-owned industries experienced restrictions on employment by the government. Profitable means of production was assured by creating legislation that sustained the exploitation of a migrant African labour force. The racial laws were made to appear neutral, thus masking the nature and consequences of capitalism (Wolpe 1995:66).

From the above it is apparent that the base or infrastructure of South Africa was owned and controlled by white people. For Marx and Engels (1970:64), the question of who owns the means of production is central to the ruling class ideas or ideology of that society. At this level of social organisation, “[f]undamental class identities, alliances, and material interests are established ... according to who owns, controls, and profits from the basic mode of production” (White 1992:164). Out of this organisation of the base, class differences are established, so that the bourgeoisie has control over the material production (the economic base), and also control over the mental production (superstructure). At this level, those who lack the means of material and mental production, namely the proletariat, are subject to it (Marx & Engels 1970:64).

The superstructure is therefore a direct result of ownership of means of production at the economic base. In other words, according to classical Marxist theory, the economic base in the hands of mostly white South Africans, with its capitalist mode of production and exploitation of a cheap and controlled labour force, facilitated the maintenance of apartheid laws and politics, and its support for military patriotism, racialism, patriarchy, Christianity, morality and “high” culture (White 1992:164; Wolpe 1995:67-68).

The organisation of South African society and its relationship with media culture stems from the aim of upholding a capitalist economic base. The importance of who is in control of the economic base and the role of the state had profound effects on the superstructure and developments of South African television. The British Broadcasting

Corporation (BBC) formally started television broadcasting on 2 November 1936 (Bignell 2004:42). However, the new technology was not received enthusiastically by the South African Nationalist Government, which opposed the introduction of a television service on the grounds of a fear of exposing South African citizens, black and white, to international opinion and liberal thinking (Harrison & Joyce 2005:163). David Wigston (2001:12) states that the Nationalist Government “vehemently opposed the introduction of television on moral and ethical grounds”. Erstwhile Minister of Post and Telegraphs, Dr Albert Hertzog, referred to television as “the evil box”, “regarding the new media as a negative influence on society throughout the world” (Mersham 1998:211).

However, in 1971 the government appointed the Meyer Commission to look into the prospect of introducing television to South Africa (Wigston 2001:12). The commission suggested that the SABC should provide a television service under statutory control, “to advance the self-development of all its peoples and to foster their pride in their own identity and culture” (Mersham 1998:212). As this idea of state control was in alignment with the ideology of the government (Wigston 2001:12), it accepted the proposal to introduce a television service. The government announced on 27 April 1971 that the SABC was to provide a television service. Therefore, since its beginning, television in South Africa was subject to a monopoly provider of public service broadcasting under statutory control of the ruling National Party (Wigston 2001:12; Mersham 1998:212).

The SABC’s regular television service was officially launched on 5 January 1976 (Mersham 1998:212), 50 years after John Logie Baird’s first demonstration of television, and 40 years after the BBC started a regular television service. The morals and ideologies of the National Party thus delayed South African television considerably. South African television started with 37 hours of programmes per week, on one television channel, in both English and Afrikaans (Mersham 1998:212). The structure and policy of SABC television was based on the public broadcasting model of the BBC “in which public broadcasters aim to function as public resources that inform, educate and entertain” (Mersham 1998:212). This BBC model is also known as the Reithian tradition, named after John Reith, the first Director General of the BBC and the father of public service broadcasting (Mersham 1998:212; Teer-Tomaselli 2001:124). Reith held that “public service broadcasting should act as a national service. It should act as a powerful means of social unity, binding together groups, regions and classes through

the live relaying of national events”⁶ (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:124). For Reith, this “is best achieved when audiences share common cultural resources, and are subjected to a monopoly provider of a single service”⁷ (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:124).

Reithian tradition in South African television was palpable in the amount of education and information programmes, as well as the manner in which television entertainment did not cater for the interests of the general public; “the emphasis in the entertainment programmes tended to be on ‘high culture’, particularly aimed at white audiences, and not on the ‘soaps’ and sitcoms favoured by mass audiences, nor on programmes of interest to the black majority of South Africans” (Mersham 1998:212).

It is clear that from its inception South African television reflected the values and interests of the dominant class, or bourgeois minority, of the National Party government. When South African television advertising was introduced in 1978, SABC viewers (no matter what their class or race) are seen as buying into the values of separate development or apartheid by accepting, and even expecting the absence of black people in TV1 commercials (and the absence of white people in TV2/3 commercials from 1982 onwards) (Mersham 1998:212; White 1992:164).

For Mimi White (1992:164), there are important factors at play with regard to viewers buying into the meanings expounded upon on television. The first is the aspect of ownership. Since the “dominant class owns and operates the television industry – including production and programming – it is assumed that other sets of meanings and beliefs are rarely, if ever, given a full public airing” (White 1992:164). Other meanings and values, for example democracy, freedom of expression and plurality of views, were simply not available on South African television in the same manner as the values of

⁶ Teer-Tomaselli (2001:124) cites from Keane (1996:33).

⁷ Even before television was introduced in South Africa, the SABC and its radio programmes were based on the charter of the BBC. In 1934, the then South African Prime Minister, JBM Hertzog, invited John Reith to tour South Africa and “to recommend a new form of broadcasting for the country” (Teer-Tomaselli & De Villiers, 1998:153-154). According to these suggestions from Reith, the Draft Broadcasting Bill was introduced in March 1936. The Broadcasting Act of 1936 “assumed a consensus between English and Afrikaans speakers which in fact did not exist at the time. Representation was to be achieved through the Governor-General’s appointments to the Board of Control. Appointed persons were to be unaligned to any specific interest group within the country’s political landscape. Clearly, Reith was unaware of the degree of conflict which existed between the two main European language groups, and the political tendencies they represented, not to mention the implications of excluding black audiences” (Teer-Tomaselli & De Villiers 1998:153-154).

the dominant apartheid ideology. The second aspect for White (1992:164-154) is that of cultural norms, and she states that

all viewers participate in the society and culture on an ongoing basis and are able to understand it, whether or not it directly serves their interests. The process of having been raised and educated under the sway of certain dominant meanings and beliefs (ideology) establishes certain norms and expectations for all viewers.

The absence of programmes for and by black people, as well as the absence of programmes catering for politically Left groupings, was understood as the norm, whether or not this served the interests of South African viewers.

From its inception in 1976, SABC television propagated the ideas and cultural norms of apartheid under the statutory control of the National Party. In order to transform the ideological practices of television within a classical Marxist framework, “a shift in the mode of production – a total reorganisation of ownership and control of the medium” would be required (White 1992:165). The transformation and reorganisation of SABC television (and its practices of exclusion aligned with apartheid ideology) could occur in the following ways; a different group (perhaps the dominant class of a new government that opposes apartheid) had to take ownership of the television industry, or privatisation of the television industry had to occur. South African television thus had to be completely restructured to accommodate alternative views, which only took place on a large scale in the first half of the following decade (1990-1996).

The two above-mentioned aspects of ownership and cultural norms support the notion of ideology as a *false consciousness*. Classical Marxist writings (see Marx 1961; Marx & Engels 1970) tend to regard ideology as *false consciousness*, where ideology is “a complex production of illusory ideas about the way society works and in whose benefit” (White 1992:165). Heywood (2003:327) defines *false consciousness* as a “Marxist term denoting the delusion and mystification that prevents subordinate classes from recognizing the fact of their own exploitation”. Those who own and control the television medium can create a set of illusory ideas, or false or mistaken views of the world, and create systematic misrepresentations of it in order to serve the ruling class interest of control over the viewers or masses. The viewers or masses accept the beliefs and meanings expounded on television, no matter what their colour or position within the economic system, because separate development or apartheid has

systematically been misrepresented as the cultural norm. Ideology is when beliefs, such as separate development, are accepted as 'natural' when in fact they keep the status quo alive and perpetuate the class system of oppression (White 1992:165).

In short, classical Marxism holds the belief that, firstly, ideology is always determined by the material and economic conditions (the economic base determines the ideology), and secondly, that ideology is always a distortion of reality, or false consciousness (Sonderling 2001:315). There are some shortcomings and criticism regarding these classical Marxist notions of ideology, of which the criticism of economic determinism seems the most prominent.

Sonderling (2001:316) regards the classical Marxist notion that a person's ideology is always determined by his class or social position within the economic system, as a simplistic view, since the theory does not account for the personal experiences people have, and the ways in which these individual experiences influence people's world views. Another basic shortcoming for Sonderling (2001:316) is that the theory of ideology as false consciousness assumes "that there is true consciousness and that it is possible to understand reality from an objective point of view". For White (1992:166), the theory of false consciousness "does not explain how or why people so readily adopt ideas that would seem to be at odds with their own interests in society, especially their material interests".

Classical Marxist theory also does not explain how different and even contradictory ideologies can exist simultaneously (Sonderling 2001:316). Consequently, alternative approaches to ideology "stress contradictions within society (and within individual social subjects), the coexistence of competing ideological positions, and the ways in which individuals assume positions in relation to their social world" (White 1992:166).

2.3 Neo-Marxist concepts of ideology and South African television in the 1980s

Neo-Marxist critical theories have extended Marx's views and evolved beyond the notion that ideology is, in the first instance, always determined by the economic conditions, and in the second, that ideology is a false consciousness or distortion of reality. The neo-Marxist notions of ideology are most evident in the writings of Louis Pierre Althusser (1918-1990) and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937).

Althusser (1971)⁸ rejects Marx’s idea that ideology is a direct result of – and always determined by – the material conditions (or economic base) (Figure 1), and proposes a revision of the classical Marxist topographical base/superstructure metaphor of society (Figure 2). He agrees that the mode of production influences the character of society, but rejects the idea that the mode of production is a base that determines and supports the entire cultural superstructure (Althusser 1994:105). He suggests that society consists of various interrelated areas of social practice – economic, political, and ideological activities,⁹ and as White (1992:168) notes, “exert[s] mutual influence and pressure on one another but also operate with relative autonomy”.

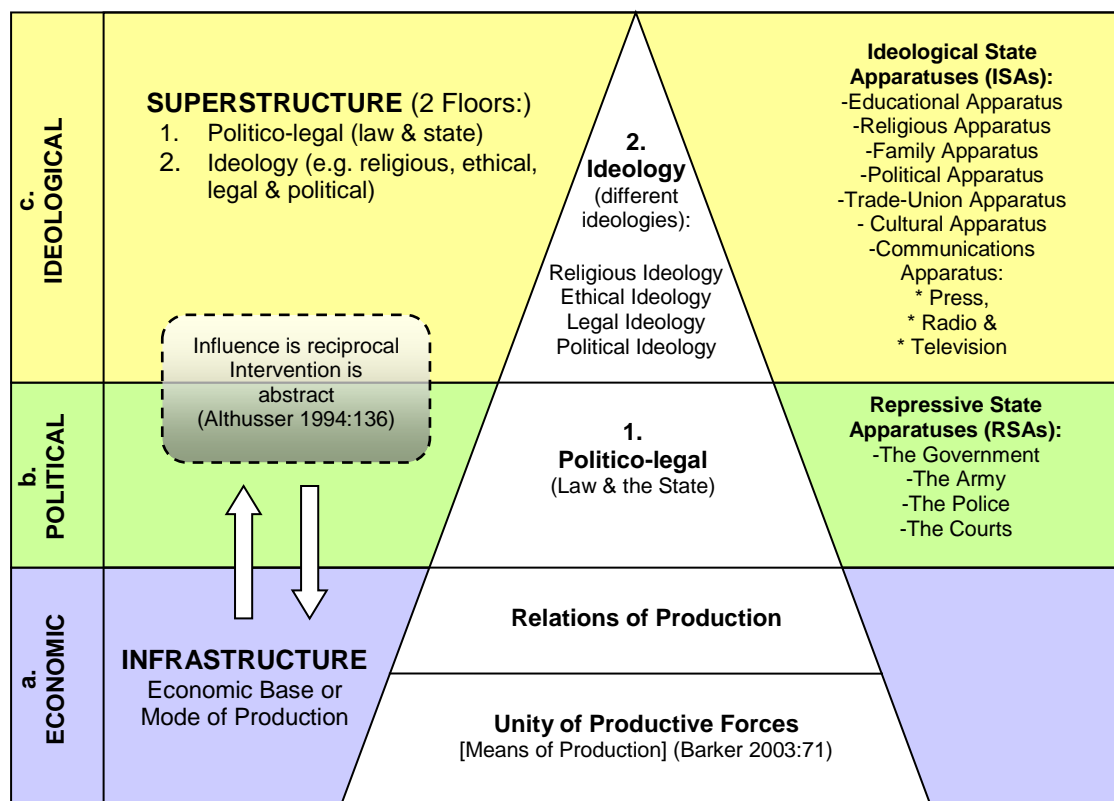


Figure 2: Schematic representation of the social formation (societal structure).
(Adapted from Althusser 1994:104-106.)

⁸ Althusser’s article first appeared as ‘Idéologies et appareils idéologiques d’état (Notes pour une recherche)’ in the French journal *La Pensée* in June 1970. It was then reprinted as ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ in 1971 in the collection of Althusser’s articles translated into English by Ben Brewster, entitled *Lenin and Philosophy* (London: New Left Books:123-173) and also New York: Monthly Review Press. Several reprintings of the article followed (Wolff [sa]:9; Harrison & Wood, 2003:953). The copy of the article used here is Althusser (1994 [1971]:100-140) that appears in *Mapping Ideology*, edited by Žižek (1994).

⁹ For Althusser, the economic, political and ideological practices make up the social formation. These areas of human practice “designate key arenas within which individuals find their identity in the social formation” (White, 1992:168).

According to Althusser's (1994:104-106) revision of the base/superstructure model, the mode of production and capitalist economic practice in South Africa, for example, will determine the political and ideological activities within the social formation or social practices of its society. However, "political and ideological practice are not necessarily direct reflections of economic practice but have a life of their own [... and] each sphere of social practice has its own structures, dynamics, and history" (White 1992:168). So instead of the classical Marxist notion of a one-way influence and enforcement of ideology from the base on the superstructure (Figure 1), Althusser suggests that each sphere (illustrated as levels a, b and c in Figure 2) – economic, political and ideological – influences the other reciprocally, while at the same time operating relatively autonomously.

Integral to Althusser's revised notion of ideology and the base/superstructure model of society, is his concept of Ideological State Apparatuses. Althusser (1994:106-113) reconsiders the classical Marxist theory of the State, and argues that it is necessary to distinguish between State power on the one hand, and the State Apparatus on the other which comprises two bodies. The one is "the body of institutions that represent the Repressive State Apparatus" (abbreviated here as RSA) and the other is "the body of institutions which represent the body of Ideological State Apparatuses" (abbreviated here as ISAs) (Althusser 1994:113).

Althusser's (1994:110-111) empirical list of ISAs includes the religious ISA (the system of the different churches); the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private schools); the family ISA, legal ISA, political ISA (the political system, including the different parties); the trade-union ISA; the communications ISA (press, radio and television); and the cultural ISAs (literature, the arts, sports, etc.). He maintains there is a *plurality* of Ideological State Apparatuses in society and that they are part of the *private* domain (Althusser 1994:111). However, more important than their plurality or their belonging to the private domain, is the manner in which they function. Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by *ideology*, while also functioning secondarily by repression (Althusser 1994:112).

The other body of institutions that represent the Repressive State Apparatus, in contrast, "functions massively and predominantly by *repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology" (Althusser 1994:111-112). The

Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) often functions by violence and is constituted by the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, and the prisons, for example (Althusser 1994:110). Althusser (1994:111) states that there is one Repressive State Apparatus, and this unified RSA “belongs entirely to the *public* domain”. The government, army and police are a part of the public domain while churches, some schools, families, most newspapers and cultural ventures (or ISAs), for example, are part of the private domain (Althusser 1994:111).

Observing the Althusserian version of a base/superstructure (Figure 2), it appears that both the ISAs and RSAs are part of the social formation’s superstructure. The RSAs function within the first floor of the superstructure, namely the politico-legal floor, or the floor of the law and the state (level b). The ISAs function within the second or top floor of the superstructure, the floor of ideology of which culture, art, education, communication and religion are a part (level c). Mass media and the SABC television channel brand identities are part of the top floor of the superstructure, of ideology (level c), and is also part of the communication ISA. According to Althusser’s theory, the SABC, its television channels and their brand identities will be influenced by the economic base and the politico-legal level of the superstructure. At the same time, the SABC television channels and their brand identities will influence the politico-legal level of the superstructure and the economic base while also operating with relative autonomy.

The SABC and its operations have long been regarded as a government mouthpiece or Ideological State Apparatus. As mentioned in the previous section, South African television was subjected to a monopoly provider (SABC) of public service broadcasting under statutory control of the ruling National Party since its inception in 1976 (Wigston 2001:12; Mersham 1998:212). In fact, public service broadcasting around the world has been characterised by centralised state control (Thompson 1990), so it is no surprise that this was the case during the height of apartheid (Mersham 1998:212; Tomaselli, Tomaselli & Muller, 1989). The SABC played an important role in the construction and support of apartheid structures (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:117). During the 1980s, “the SABC explicitly supported the then government in its efforts to combat the ‘Total Onslaught’ of revolutionary forces, seen to be spearheaded by the ANC [African National Congress] in exile” (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:117).

The entrenchment of apartheid ideology by means of, often conservative, Afrikaner cultural theory during the 1980s occurs through tight control of various ISAs (Mersham 1998:212). Mass media is an ISA that also allows for the expression of other ISAs. In other words, other ISAs such as the church, schools, family, language, culture and art, in addition to finding expression through their own media, also find expression through television. Religious views of the Dutch Reformed Church as an ISA, for example, find expression through religious programmes and topics on television, while patriarchal conservative notions of the family ISA penetrates, for example, dramas, comedies and sitcoms. This is also an example of Althusser's (1994:112) notion that diverse ISAs¹⁰ are unified through the ideology of "the ruling class". Television programmes, news and other content thus matched the ideals of apartheid ideology to preserve Afrikaans culture and promote Afrikaner nationalism.

The 1980s comprised a decade in which the RSAs of the National Party government were particularly visible. By the mid-1980s, a State of Emergency was declared and the police and army were employed to control the political unrest and violence in townships. Among other things, meetings and gatherings were banned, movement of people restricted, curfews imposed and political prisoners violently detained. Television news and the South African mass media generally reported on the State of Emergency in such a manner in order to promote the social norms, values, beliefs and ideas that would make people conform to society (Sonderling 2001:317) and the apartheid ideology imposed by the ruling class (National Party government). The SABC was thus an ISA and a propaganda tool that served the interests of the ruling class. Althusser (1994:112) states

[g]iven the fact that the 'ruling class' in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class factions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses in so far as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realised in the Ideological State Apparatuses.

Althusser (1994:113) also states that "the Ideological State Apparatuses may not only be the stake, but also the site of class struggle, and often of bitter forms of class

¹⁰ John Fiske (1992:287) states that there are "no overt connections" between Ideological State Apparatuses, "yet they all perform similar ideological work. They are all patriarchal; they are all concerned with the getting and keeping of wealth and possessions; and they all endorse individualism and competition between individuals".

struggle”. The Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976 is such an example of the educational ISA as the stake and site of class struggle. Students from Soweto protested against the National Party’s education policy of tuition in Afrikaans, and Hector Pietersen and many other students were shot by police during the incident.¹¹ The communication ISAs, such as the press, radio and television, were also a site and subject of contestation during the dismantling of apartheid (Jacobs 2003). It is also Althusser’s (1994:112) opinion that “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses”. It was thus imperative for the National Party government to maintain control over the SABC and other mass media institutions during the apartheid era.

In addition to Althusser’s contribution of the notion of ISAs and his revision of the structure of ideology, he contributes to an understanding of the functioning of ideology and the position of the individual therein. Within an Althusserian framework, “ideology is the system of representation in which people live their imaginary relationship to the real conditions of existence” (Sonderling 2001:317; Althusser 1994:123).¹² This is an imaginary relationship because “people cannot have a direct and objective view of a reality as there is no way that one can step out of ideology into some non-ideological position and measure how ideology distorts and misrepresents true reality” (Sonderling 2001:317). Therefore, ideology as a system of representation, creates a symbolic order which constitutes the individual, or rather, constitutes the subject.¹³

John Fiske (1992:288) explains the Althusserian conviction that all individuals are

¹¹ Media images of the past (such as the one of Hector Pietersen), often become the propaganda tools of the ISAs in the hands of the succeeding government to promote its own ideology.

¹² Althusser (1994:123,125) presents two theses, one negative, and one positive to approach his central thesis on the structure and functioning of ideology: firstly “ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” and secondly that “[i]deology has a material existence”. The central thesis regarding the functioning of ideology is that “[i]deology interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser 1994:128). Although Althusser’s concept represents a Neo-Marxist concept of ideology, it is a concept in close proximity to post-modern notions of ideology.

¹³ Fiske (1992:288) explains that the idea of the individual needs to be replaced by the idea of the subject. “The individual is produced by nature, the subject by culture. Theories of the individual concentrate on differences between people and explain these differences as natural. Theories of the subject, on the other hand, concentrate on people’s common experiences in a society as being the most productive way of explaining who (we think) we are” (Fiske 1992:288).

constituted as subjects-in-ideology by the ISAs, that the ideological norms naturalised in their practices constitute not only the senses of the world for us, but also our sense of ourselves, our sense of identity, and our sense of our relations to other people and to society in general. Thus we are each of us constituted as subjects in, and subjects to, ideology. The subject, therefore, is a social construction, not a natural one.

Within this context, there is no way that people can step out of this symbolic order of ideology, and therefore, “there is no such thing as being ‘outside’ ideology” (White 1992:170; Lemon 1996:212). In other words, if culture is ideological, and if every individual, group, society or culture has an ideology, one can say that the SABC and its television services are ideological. In the same way that there is no non-ideological point, the SABC cannot claim to be neutral, objective or ‘real’ since people’s sense of reality is constituted by various ideologies and other social, cultural and political elements that create a symbolic order.

Even if cultural texts oppose a certain ideology, it is important to take note that they cannot function outside the symbolic order of ideology. But more often than not, ideology functions more dexterously. Ideology is not always forced from the top down on the seemingly unsuspecting masses as the classical Marxist notion of ideology implies. Antonio Gramsci’s (1971)¹⁴ theory describes more accurately how people (or the ‘suppressed’ masses or proletariat) willingly participate in ideology and even accept their own subordination.

For Barker (2003:80), Gramsci’s work¹⁵ offers “a more flexible, sophisticated and practical account of the character and workings of ideology”. Gramsci’s (1971) major theoretical contribution is the concept of hegemony which describes “the *process*¹⁶ by which a dominant class wins the willing consent of the subordinate classes to the system that ensures their subordination” (Fiske 1992:291). Hegemony is a practice “... where a ‘historical bloc’ of ruling-class factions exercise social authority and leadership

¹⁴ Barker (2003:80) notes that even though “the work of Gramsci was written prior to Althusser’s, its influence within cultural studies post-dates the former’s enterprise (itself indebted to Gramsci). Indeed, the popularity of Gramsci within cultural studies was in partial response to the problems of Althusserian theory”.

¹⁵ Gramsci’s political and social writing appears to span from 1910 to 1935, and his seminal writing appears in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971) edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (see Gramsci 1971).

¹⁶ While the term Ideological State Apparatus refers to *means or mediums* of specialised institutions through which they propagate their social norms and values, hegemony refers to the *process* whereby willing consent is won.

over the subordinate classes ... through a combination of force, and more importantly, consent” (Barker 2003:80).

Terry Eagleton (1994:195) believes there is an explicit difference between ideology and hegemony, where hegemony refers to the consent a governing power wins as an alternative to ideology being forcibly imposed by the governing power. Consent is achieved when the ruling class interests are recognised and accepted by society as the prevailing interests, even though society itself is made up of a variety of conflicting class interests (White 1992:167). Hegemony thus describes “the general predominance of particular class, political, and ideological interests within a given society” (White 1992:167). The political and ideological ideas of the ruling class thus become the commonsense view for the majority of people (White 1992:167).

From the start, South African television channels developed along the lines of the ruling class interest to promote separate development. As previously stated, the first channel commenced broadcasting in both Afrikaans and English in 1976. Additional television channels emerged in the early 1980s. TV2 and TV3 were the first additional channels, and were initially launched together as TV2/3 on 1 January 1982. TV2 was broadcast in the Nguni languages and TV3 in the Sesotho languages (Mersham 1998:212; Wigston 2001:12). Mersham (1998:212) states that an additional entertainment service, TV4, was inaugurated in 1984. The programmes on this channel were mostly in English.

On 30 March 1985, TV2/3 split into two separate channels. This expansion of television channels situated TV1 as the dominant ‘white’ channel and TV2 and TV3 as the subsidiary ‘black’ channels. Orgeret (2004:150) writes that TV2 and TV3 “showed ‘black’ news, which differed considerably from the English and Afrikaans versions on TV1”. This separation or “divide was thus a hallmark of SABC news during apartheid [when] the news [items] were separately produced in different ethnic languages reflecting different news values and reinforcing the apartheid ideology of different development” (Orgeret 2004:150).

Separate channels created by the SABC for Afrikaans and English (or white) viewers on the one hand, and Nguni and Sesotho (or black) viewers on the other, create the illusion that such separation is commonsense. White (1992:167) maintains that

hegemony “appears to be spontaneous, even natural, but it is the historical result of the prestige enjoyed by the ruling class by virtue of their position and function in the world of production”.

During the 1980s, the National Party government, in concert with the SABC as an ISA of the ruling class, endeavoured to keep the dominant position of the hegemonic bloc intact by opposing participation of new broadcasting enterprises such as Bophuthatswana television (Bop-TV) and M-Net.¹⁷ As an initiative of the Government of Bophuthatswana, Bop-TV started broadcasting by means of the SABC’s distribution network on 31 December 1983 (Mersham 1993:183; Wigston 2001:13).

The new station deviated from the SABC’s approach by broadcasting popular international programmes and news that was less government influenced. This resulted in TV1 losing a large number of white viewers to Bop-TV (Wigston 2001:13; Mersham, 1993:183). Since this was in direct conflict with the aims of promoting the ruling class ideology of the National Party government, the SABC soon blocked the signals, restricting Bop-TV to Soweto only (Wigston 2001:13; Mersham 1993:183). It further became clear that Bop-TV¹⁸ gained popularity amongst TV2 and TV3 viewers, resulting in the further narrowing of signals down to certain areas of Soweto where mainly Tswana-speaking people resided (Wigston 2001:13; Mersham 1993:183).

Similarly, the government exerted control over the 1984 proposal to government for a subscription television service, M-Net. The government approved the proposal on the condition that M-Net would only broadcast entertainment programmes, and not news (Wigston 2001:13). M-Net was managed and owned by a consortium of the four major English and Afrikaans newspaper groups¹⁹ (Wigston 2001:14, 48) and commenced its broadcasting on 1 October 1986. “Effectively the new service was then not in

¹⁷ M-Net is the acronym for the subscription television channel *Electronic Media Network* (Wigston, 2001:14, 48).

¹⁸ Bop-TV continued to battle for existence. Wigston (2001:14) state that “[o]ver the years, Bop-TV has tried to expand its services to a larger part of South Africa but owing to opposition from the SABC it had little success. In 1988 Bop-TV hired transmitters and began broadcasting by satellite. On 1 March 1998, Bop-TV was formally incorporated into the SABC ... [but] continues to remain available only to a narrow audience located in the townships” (Wigston 2001:14). Bop-TV was closed down on 30 July 2003. The SABC maintained that Bop-TV was a financial burden, and would make way for two new regional television channels.

¹⁹ The four major press groups were Naspers (Nasionale Pers Limited); Caxton Limited (formerly Perskor and Kagiso); Independent Newspapers also known as the Argus Group; and Times Media Limited (Wigston, 2001:64-68).

competition with the SABC as an information provider, over which the government exerted a strong influence” (Wigston 2001:14). The possibility of competition to the ruling class ideology or the creation of a counter-hegemonic bloc was thus eliminated by the SABC.

The notion of power clearly comes to the fore with the above discussions. For Lemon (2001:374), hegemony is indeed “another way of referring to, or explaining, power [and] refers to a type of domination, by which the ruling classes try to win the voluntary approval or active consent and cooperation of the subordinate classes to the very system that ensures their subordination”. The Neo-Marxist “reformulation of a theory of ideology clearly indicates an important shift in Marxist thinking, and marks a definite move away from the notion of ideology as a distorted reflection of reality or as false consciousness” (Lemon 1996:213).

Althusser rejects Marx’s idea that the economic base of society always establishes the entire cultural superstructure, and instead, proposes a theory that “not only allows the superstructure to influence the base but also produces a model of the relationship between ideology and culture that is not determined solely by economic relations” (Fiske 1992:286). Both Althusser and Gramsci “open the way for the analysis of culture as a set of practices instead of seeing artefacts as fixed entities with specific, hidden ideological meanings waiting to be exposed by the Marxist critic” (White 1992:169-170). Althusser and Gramsci also provided the theoretical foundation of a cultural studies approach by focusing on individuals as social subjects who both construct and are constructed by systems of representation (Lemon 1996:213).

2.4 The Cultural Studies approach to ideology and South African television in the 1990s

The work of Althusser and Gramsci²⁰ greatly influenced the essentially Marxist tradition of Cultural Studies (Fiske 1992:284-285). Cultural Studies as a discipline was

²⁰ Barker (2003:82) notes that Gramsci campaigns for cultural studies when he states that “it would be interesting to study concretely the forms of cultural organisation which keep the ideological world in movement within a given country and to examine how they function in practice”. Barker (2003:82) cites Gramsci from Bennet *et al* (1981:195-196). For Barker (2003:82), “Gramscian concepts within cultural studies proved to be of long-lasting significance ... because of the central importance given to popular culture as a site of ideological struggle”. Gramsci “makes ideological struggle and conflict within civil society the

established with the founding of the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in 1964 by Richard Hoggart²¹ (Lemon 1996:213; Fiske 1992:284; Kellner 2001:1; Kellner 2004:8; Bignell 2004:23). The three founding Figures of the Birmingham group, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and EP Thompson initiated cultural theory with an analysis of working class culture and a critique of capitalism (Carnie 2003:[sp]).

The foundation of cultural studies was based on Hoggart's *The uses of literacy* (1957), Williams's *Culture and society* (1958), *The long revolution* (1961), and EP Thompson's *The making of the English working class* (1964) (Schulman, 1993:[sp]). Hoggart and Williams were literary critics interested in the subject of popular working class culture as opposed to elite or high culture (Carnie 2003:[sp]). For Thompson, class is the main point of focus, which for him is a social and cultural formation and a fluid historical event that cannot be understood as a static structure or category (Carnie 2003:[sp]).

The above left-wing intellectuals of the CCCS tried to preserve the culture of the working class in the light of the concomitant mass culture emanating from the culture industries (Kellner 2004:7), encouraging the view that culture (such as radio, music, television, radio) was important to define one's class position as well as identity, and that such cultural activities were enmeshed with the British society and economy (Bignell 2004:47).

Cultural Studies theories argue that what shapes everyday life is derived from the ways wealth-producing businesses in a country place people as workers or owners in such industries (Bignell 2004:47). For Hoggart, Williams and Thompson a change in people's relationship to work and wealth and also a debate and struggle for change in culture itself would improve social structures and people's everyday conditions of existence (Bignell 2004:47). These authors worked in a socialist, working class arena where the working class was advocating social change and wanted to reject the inequalities of the prevailing capitalist system for a more inclusive society (Kellner 2004:7).

central arena of cultural politics, with hegemonic analysis the mode of gauging the relevant balance of forces".

²¹ Hall succeeded Hoggart as director of the CCCS in 1968.

British Cultural Studies emerged in the 1960s during a time of increased resistance to consumer capitalism, times of social struggles and revolutionary movements such as the women's liberation movement and the black civil rights movement (Kellner 2004:7). The Birmingham group initiated a number of critical approaches that could be used to analyse, interpret, and critique cultural artefacts (Kellner 2004:8). By the 1970s, under Hall, the focus shifted to media texts as sources of examples of how ideology inscribes the ideas of the dominant groups in society (Schulman 1993:[sp]).

The "re-reading of Gramsci in the late 1970s, in light of race and gender studies, did a lot to set in motion the Centre's reassessment of popular culture – seen until that time as merely an ideological vehicle for inflicting dominant paradigms of experience and certain culture – and class-based assumptions advantageous to the status quo" (Schulman 1993:[sp]). The focus of the CCCS increasingly shifted to conceptualise popular culture as a potential area of conflict (Schulman 1993:[sp]). The Birmingham group thus involved in the social conflict regarding *inter* class and media culture, and were among the first to examine the effects of newspapers, radio and film on audiences (Kellner 2004:8).

The work of the CCCS indicates a great restructuring of the cognitive map of society and the power relations therein. Restructuring within the South African broadcasting environment during the 1990s occurred along similar lines as the changes instigated by the CCCS and the consequent inclusion of marginalised and disempowered groups. Changes in the SABC during the 1990s were not only occurring on economic levels, but also in terms of policies regarding gender and race. Generally the 1990s marks a decade of great changes in television. Globally, the developments in digital satellite technology contributed to distinguish the 1990s as a decade of increasingly competitive broadcasting environments and the decade of global audiences (Mersham 1998:207-209).

On a more negative side, state television organisations around the globe were affected by "government cuts, spiralling costs and declining revenues" (Mersham 1998:207). The SABC faced similar difficulties as it prepared for its own major restructuring on business-oriented lines to meet the challenges of the increasingly competitive broadcasting environment (Development [sa]:2). In addition to large technological and

economic changes, South Africa and the SABC continued to experience remarkable democratic transformation (Mersham 1998:208).

The Viljoen Task Group was appointed by the government in 1990 in order to investigate the future direction of broadcasting in South Africa (Wigston 2001:14-15; Mersham 1998:213). Criticism towards the Viljoen's Commission included a concern that findings might be within the ideology of, and biased towards the promotion of, the Nationalist Government by the SABC (Wigston 2001:16). Another criticism was that the Viljoen Task Group was unrepresentative, as it did not "include any blacks [or] females, [nor did it] represent the advertising and marketing sectors" (Mersham 1998:213).

During the time of investigation by the Viljoen Task Group, numerous organisations, political parties and national forums "were actively campaigning for the restructuring of broadcasting in South Africa, [and] presented memoranda on the future regulation of [broadcasting] in South Africa" (Mersham 1998:213). The report of the Viljoen Task Group was released in 1991,²² and showed that dramatic changes needed to be made to broadcasting in South Africa (Wigston 2001:16). One of the recommendations made by the commission was that South African broadcasting should be restructured and that the SABC should have a public broadcasting role (Louw 1992:10; Wigston 2001:15). Another important recommendation was the setting up of an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) (Wigston 2001:15).

The IBA was established after the Multi-Party Negotiation Forum took place in 1993; the IBA Act was passed by Parliament in October 1993. The IBA's responsibilities included "conduct[ing] public enquiries into broadcasting issues; ensur[ing] a broadcast industry free of political control and influence;²³ regulat[ing] the broadcast industry and telecommunications; and encourag[ing] new stations among interested private and community parties" (Mersham 1998:213), as well as ensuring South African broadcasting services provided for regular news services; actuality programmes on matters of public interest; programmes on political issues of public interest; and programmes on matters of international, national, regional and local -significance

²² According to Louw (1992:10), the "Viljoen Report was a clear expression of the NP's agenda which tries to ensure that any new non-NP government coming to power does not inherit the same all-powerful broadcast system the NP had itself controlled for over four decades".

²³ Wigston (2001:16) explains that the SABC had to be distanced from the government "in order to give the SABC greater credibility as a purveyor of news and information, particularly regarding the upcoming democratic elections in South Africa during 1994".

(Mersham 1998:214). The IBA's duty was to ensure that South African broadcasting services "develop and protect a national and regional identity, culture and character" (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:117).

The IBA carried out a 'Triple Enquiry' into the protection and viability of public broadcasting services; cross-media control of broadcasting services; and locally-produced television content (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:117; Mersham 1998:214), and report was released in September 1995, stating the IBA's intention to regulate satellite broadcasting (Mersham 1998:214) and recommended that another private television licence should be granted²⁴ to a free-to-air commercial channel in addition to the one held by M-Net (Mersham 1998:214). The report imposed significant local content programming quotas²⁵ on public broadcasting services. For Teer-Tomaselli (2001:128-129), this seemed to address two separate, but interlinking goals, namely "the ideological, directed towards the purpose of building a nation and an identity [and] the economic, directed towards the development of a film, television and recording industry".

In the same year as the IBA Act (1993), the SABC appointed its first post-apartheid, democratically elected 25-member Board, albeit criticised (Ten Years of Broadcasting 2003:1). The board was headed by Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi, and was tasked to transform "a former state broadcaster into a fully fledged public broadcaster [that committed to] deliver full-spectrum services to all South Africans in all parts of the country, and in each of the eleven official languages" (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).

Changes in South African television during the early 1990s are thus land marked by the establishment of the IBA and the democratic election of the SABC board. Yet the SABC struggled financially owing to non-payment of licence fees and piracy, and the failure of the Astrasat project²⁶ in 1998 (Wigston 2001:20). Additionally, it still had to deal with the problem of credibility, low staff morale and various scandals, resulting in a rapid management turnover (Wigston 2001:21).

²⁴ This license was granted in April 1998 to E.tv – a black empowerment broadcasting initiative (Wigston, 2001:21-24).

²⁵ In order to meet its specific mandate as public broadcaster, "a median of 50% of local content was set for the SABC, to be complied with over three years" (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001:129-130).

²⁶ The Astrasat project was an analogue free-to-air satellite service that began operating during July 1996 (Wigston, 2001:20).

Ideology in South African television during the 1990s became increasingly complex. The organising of the SABC television channels in the 1990s (see Appendix 1) illustrates how culture and specific platforms of South African culture become sites of struggle. Politics and the “interplay of representations and ideologies of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality” (Kellner 2004:8) became central to the institutional organisation of the SABC and its television channels. The Birmingham CCCS “focused on how various audiences interpreted and used media culture in varied and different ways and contexts, analysing the factors that made audiences respond in contrasting ways to media texts” (Kellner 2004:8).

Previously, SABC television channels were organised in terms of language and differences of ethnicity among South African viewers. Even though the SABC still favoured the National Party in the first half of the 1990s, it was beginning to reflect the future changes in the political dispensation (Jacobs 2003). It would not be useful for the SABC to suddenly structure the television channels according to a singular, unified ideology in anticipation of political changes, since this process would include some viewers and alienate others. Theorists of the Birmingham CCCS proposed “that society is not a unified collection of people that accept one particular ideology [and] is more dynamic and characterized by many conflicting ideologies rather than a single ideology” (Sonderling 2001:319). The various economic, social, cultural differences of SABC television viewers and the conflicting ideologies they espouse had to be incorporated and accommodated in the restructuring of the SABC channels in a democratic way. This was a big task demanding restructuring, constant revision, refinement and adjustment. The SABC television channels were subjected to two attempts at restructuring, one in the first half of the 1990s, and the other in the second half of the decade.

In 1990 the SABC consisted of four television channels, namely TV1, TV2, TV3 and TV4. In addition to these four channels, the SABC launched the TSS (Top Sport Surplus) channel in 1990. Initially, the TSS channel carried the sports programmes that could not be accommodated by the TV1 schedule (Mersham 1998:212; Development [sa]:2). Soon, TSS “developed into a channel in its own right, but was limited to broadcasting in and around metropolitan areas” (Mersham 1998:212). In January 1992, TV2, TV3 and TV4 were merged into a multicultural channel called CCV-TV (Contemporary Community Values Television) and this amalgamation “reflected a

radical departure from previous policy which was based firmly on the language and ethnic differentiation of viewers” in that it aimed to broadcast programmes that would attract viewers from all cultural groupings (Mersham 1998:214).

Mersham (1998:213) describes the changes on CCV-TV as cosmetic, however, since “substantive change at political level had yet to occur”. Since TV1 was considered to be the main SABC channel during the apartheid era, and broadcast in Afrikaans and English, CCV-TV was grounded as the ‘other’ channel when “television had largely served segregated audiences in segregated languages” (Mersham 1998:214).

On 11 February 1994 the TSS channel was discontinued and replaced by NNTV (National Network Television) (Development of broadcasting ... [sa]:2). This channel became a kind of “alternative, experimental channel carrying a wide diversity of material” (Mersham 1998: 212-213) and aimed to provide a platform for free speech and democratic, non-racist standards. The SABC also broke new ground when it introduced regional television on 5 February 1996,²⁷ broadcasting in the Western Cape, Northern Province, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal (Ten Years ... 2003:6). This was aimed at breaking away from SABC2’s national network “on weekdays to broadcast news and information specifically focused on, and in the languages of, the targeted provinces” (Ten Years ... 2003:6).

Although some progressive changes occurred within the SABC during the early half of the 1990s, it was not until the restructuring during the second half of the 1990s that major assumptions about groups of viewers or the distinction of specific South African demographic groups²⁸ presented themselves on television channels. Bignell (2004:23) states that Cultural Studies “recognise the significance of popular television and studies how television contributes to assumptions and attitudes of sectors of society, a set of ideas and emotions described as a ‘structure of feeling’”.

²⁷ During 1999 the regional split programmes were discontinued after funding from the government was stopped. However, the SABC retained the regional programme for the Northern Province, Mopani, at its own cost. This, too, was later discontinued (Ten Years ... 2003:6).

²⁸ The distinction between certain groups of people in South Africa traditionally occurs firstly on the basis of race, and then class, while class was the major distinguishing factor in European countries

In other words, groups within South African society may have their own assumptions and attitudes, and television fuels these assumptions with structures of feeling or sets of ideas and emotions. Viewers ascribe different meaning to television content, and may interpret such content in a different manner than intended by the producer of the television text. Stuart Hall's essay, *Encoding, Decoding*²⁹ (1980), provides a theory of how messages are produced and issued, particularly television (During 1999:507). Hall's essay posits that television programmes are "open texts" and thus mean different things to different people (Fiske 1992:292).

According to Hall's theory of "preferred reading",³⁰ there are inherent power and ideology structures within television. Hall (1999:513) notes that signs and codes on television belong to "the 'maps of meaning' into which any culture is classified; and those 'maps of social reality' have the whole range of social meanings, practices, and usages, power and interest 'written in' to them". Television content thus presents maps of social reality that are embedded with social meanings and ideologies. This happens because a society or culture enforces its classifications of the social, cultural and political world, and these imposed classifications constitute a dominant cultural order (Hall 1999:513). The dominant cultural order and the "different areas of social life appear to be mapped out into discursive domains, hierarchically organised into dominant or preferred meanings" (Hall 1999:513).

These are *dominant* or preferred because they have the institutional, political, or ideological order imprinted in them (Hall 1999:513). The other two positions of meaning are *negotiated* and *oppositional* readings by the viewers. Television becomes the domain for *dominant* or preferred meaning, and such domains of preferred meanings "have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimations, limits and sanctions" (Hall 1999:513).

²⁹ This essay was originally published as "Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse" in 1973. The essay also appears as *Encoding/Decoding* in 1980, in *Culture, Media, Language*, edited by Stuart Hall *et al* London: Hutchinson, p128-139. Simon During's (1999:507-517) edition of Hall's article, *Encoding, Decoding*, is used here.

³⁰ The dominant, negotiated and oppositional readings described by Hall's (1999) theory of preferred reading are applied in Chapter Four of the study.

According to Hall's theory, one can expect post-1994 South African television to contain "maps of social reality" that will convey the dominant cultural order of a post-apartheid South Africa, and that the SABC will impose its classifications of the social, cultural and political world in order to constitute the new dominant cultural order. The dominant cultural order set in place by the new African National Congress (ANC) government is significantly different to the preceding cultural order set in place by the National Party government, and the structure and content of SABC television as a state-owned public broadcaster had to be redesigned to accommodate a new cultural order.

As mentioned previously, the redesigning and restructuring of the SABC³¹ started with the first democratically elected Board and the establishment of the IBA in 1993, and the coming to power of the ANC in 1994 (Lewis 2000:163). The SABC was restructured according to the mandate from the IBA "to transform itself into a broadcaster which served the public's needs and reflected the population's diversity" (Mersham 1998:214). The task of transforming the former *state* broadcaster into a fully fledged *public* broadcaster was constantly negotiated, and a new framework for the SABC's programme content, including visions and values such as nation building, and the promotion of the 'African Renaissance' were established as primary goals in the second half of the 1990s (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).

The SABC

declared a commitment to deliver full-spectrum services to all South Africans, in all parts of the country, and in each of the 11 official languages. Their programme content is aimed at protecting and nurturing South African culture and creativity, and reflecting the reality of South Africa to itself and to the world; a South Africa from a distinctly South African perspective (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).³²

³¹ Teer-Tomaselli (2001:118) states that the SABC, prior to restructuring, only "served the interest of the middle classes only: predominantly white, 'coloured' and Indian, with an increasingly large percentage of black people falling into this category".

³² Teer-Tomaselli (2001:118) cites from Launch SABC television: Commemorative publication on the re-launch of the SABC's television channels, a document released in 1996 by the SABC.

Nation building as an over-riding consideration is evident in the SABC's guidelines for programming content.³³ Teer-Tomaselli (2001:125) quotes the following from the 1996 guidelines:

In a multi-cultural society, the SABC needs to ensure not only that the diversity is reflected, but that it is reflected positively ... Programmes should contribute to a sense of nation building and should not in any way disparage the lifestyle or belief systems of any specific cultural group or in any way attack the integrity of such a group, unless it is established to be in the public interest. However, the news and beliefs of different groups are obviously open to honest, thoughtful scrutiny in programmes like documentaries.

Not only does the SABC task itself with the project of nation building, but it also commits to the rebirth of the whole continent as a promoter of the African Renaissance (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:127-128). The SABC thus successfully aligns itself with the policies and ideologies of the new ANC government.

As a result, the three multicultural television channels were re-launched to reinforce rebirth, nation building and social solidarity. The channels were re-launched on 4 February 1996,³⁴ replacing CCV-TV, TV1 and NNTV and naming the new channels, SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 (Mersham 1998:214; Development of broadcasting ... [sa]:3; Ten Years ... 2003:5-6). The new channels were the result of much research and public opinion and aimed at replacing the channels created under the previous twenty-year apartheid era (Ten Years ... 2003:5-6).

The aim of the re-launch was to "move closer to delivering public broadcasting by providing more of the country's eleven official languages, as well as ensuring that the seven which were already broadcast, did so with greater equity" (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118). For the first time in South African television, all 11 official languages and a variety of cultural content were included in programme schedules, but the majority of programmes continued to be in English (Ten Years ... 2003:5-6; Mersham 1998:214).

³³ See, for example, SABC request for proposals (2005, 2006 and 2008).

³⁴ The re-launch of the SABC's TV and radio portfolios were introduced at an evening launch party at the Waterkloof Air Force base. Three thousand invited guests attended the launch which ended with a "magnificent fireworks display" (Ten Years ... 2003:5-6). Lavish or decadent parties such as this one held by parastatal and government organisations are indicative of a hedonistic post-apartheid trend fixated on self-gratification, appearances and "image" rather than the actual resolving of deep underlying economic, sociological and political problems caused by the previous apartheid regime.

The new channels “were to be the visible face of the SABC’s commitment to transform from a commercially driven state broadcaster to a programme and audience driven public broadcaster [and directed] itself to serve the needs of the new South Africa” (Ten Years ... 2003:6).

The structure, maps of social reality (Hall 1999:513) and the positioning of viewers during and after the reconfiguration of the three SABC channels in 1996 remained similar and set the tone for the channel identities succeeding this decade. The CCV-TV channel, itself made up of the old TV2, TV3, and TV4 channels created in the 1980s, moved from the margins to the centre as it was repositioned as the number one channel, named SABC1 (Television in South Africa [sa]). With its repositioning, it is important to note that the channel that is numbered ‘one’ has always been associated with the ruling class political ideologies of the day; TV1 with the apartheid ideologies and now SABC1 with the ideologies of the ‘New South Africa’. This channel is thus of particular interest in visual analysis to determine which signs, codes and ideological meanings are represented by the ruling hegemonic bloc.

SABC1 was branded with the slogan *Simunye, We Are One* and emphasised the Nguni family of languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele and Siswati) (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131; Wigston 2001:33). SABC1 had the largest footprint or signal distribution network in the 1990s, and programmes were broadcast in the Nguni languages during peak hours, while the morning and afternoon schedules were a mixture of the Nguni languages interspersed with English (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118). Wigston (2001:33) notes that the SABC1 channel “focuse[d] on nation-building projects based in the community” and aimed the spotlight at “edutainment with a strong focus on health and social issues”. SABC1 targeted younger viewers and covered the largest average daily adult audience of 8,613 million in the 1990s (Wigston 2001:33).

SABC1 and its 1996 *Simunye, We Are One* brand identity creates a “map of social reality” (Hall 1999:513) that conveys the dominant cultural order of a post-apartheid South Africa. In a discussion on television game shows, Desiree Lewis (2000:155-177) notes how the new brand identity of the SABC1 captures the myth of the newly elected government; the ‘rainbow nation’. Lewis (2000:163) describes how the channel’s advertisement “includes images of its racially and linguistically diverse presenters united in a spirit of exuberant camaraderie – as though they themselves embodied the

new society of different, but united peoples”. The SABC1 advertisement reproduces the hegemonic ‘rainbow nation’ definitions of a post-apartheid nation, thus representing definitions of situations and events which are “in dominance” or preferred, as Hall (1999:516) puts it.

The transition to a democratic nation is a challenging situation, and the transformation of the SABC could be perceived similarly. The *Simunye* brand identity is a strategy or ideology that aims to resolve such challenges or “conflict around competing interests and identities through the audience’s being persuaded that ‘you are us’, that ‘since we work happily together, then so do you’” (Lewis 2000:163). The new identity of SABC1 obliterates possible conflict, thereby neutralising the hegemonic powers of the dominant channel’s underlying ideologies. Lewis (2000:163-165) writes that SABC1’s new identity, *Simunye, We Are One*, reflects a sense of unity and

provided the audience with a gratifying and purely symbolic arena for negotiating the difficulties of living in a world of polarized interests around scarce resources, of violence and political uncertainty. They offered a safe and mythical space for redefining subjectivity, where the individual ‘you’ became the communal ‘we’ [...]. SABC1’s advertisement, and especially its catchy signature tune, ‘Simunye’, held out fictive opportunities of transcendence through appreciating and identifying with a fantasy of ‘oneness’.

Lewis (2000:163) explains that this is an example of the success and adroitness of hegemony where an agreement is reached amongst viewers to consent to a “ruling-class imperative even when this message does not reflect the interest of society’s antagonistic groups”. If viewers interpret the advertisement as it was intended, they assume the dominant-hegemonic³⁵ position and accept the ideology or subjectivity it produces (Hall 1999:515; Fiske 1992:292). With such a *dominant* reading, the code seems transparent or natural (Hall 1999:515; Chandler 2002:192).

TV1 was re-launched as SABC2 in 1996 and was popularised with the catch-phrase *Come Alive with Us* (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131). SABC2 is the second largest channel, broadcasting to an average daily adult audience of 6,199 million in the 1990s (Wigston

³⁵ Hall (1999:516) states that the “definition of a hegemonic viewpoint is, first, that it defines within its terms the mental horizon, the universe, of possible meanings, of a whole sector of relations in a society or culture; and, second, that it carries with it the stamp of legitimacy – it appears coterminous with what is ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’, ‘taken for granted’ about the social order”.

1999:33). Teer-Tomaselli (2001:131) notes that the SABC2 was the first channel to reach the revised quota of 30% local television content within the first two years of implementation. The channel has a strong signal network in the northern part of the country (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118) and presents programming in four separate language groups, namely the Sesotho family of languages (Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi), Xitsonga, TshiVenda and Afrikaans (Wigston 2001:33). Other programmes on SABC2 are in English or are multilingual (Wigston 2001:33).

Mersham (1998:215) states that the most significant changes to South African television during the 1990s were related to mixed cultural and language content, since this was not the case in preceding decades; “In the two decades of broadcasting during the apartheid era, television had largely served segregated audiences in segregated languages, in line with the policies of the government of the day”.³⁶

Languages on television after 1996 were, however, rearranged and segregated in a different manner – not in terms of the skin colour of viewers, but in terms of their culture or ethnicity. The ‘map of social reality’ created by SABC2 (and SABC1 and SABC3) and its categorisation of culture reveals that it is possible that the dominant hegemonic bloc regards the Sesotho family of languages, as well as the Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans languages, to be situated at the periphery, while the Nguni languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele and Siswati) are given preference and situated at the centre by virtue of their position on the number one channel, SABC1. The languages and cultures presented on SABC2 are thus placed in opposition to the languages and cultures presented on SABC1, thereby positioning the SABC2 as the ‘other’ channel. It is possible that an oppositional position to the new restructuring of channels may be taken by SABC2’s Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans viewers.

Hall (1999:515-516) maintains that the *oppositional* or counter-hegemonic position is taken when the viewer decodes the message in a contrary way. Mersham (1998:214-215) notes that “Afrikaans speaking segments were greatly dissatisfied with the reduction in Afrikaans programming on SABC-TV channels in the mid- to late 1990s [and that users] of the lesser spoken north-eastern languages, for example Xitsonga and Tshivenda, were also not satisfied with the percentage airtime granted their

³⁶ Mersham (1998:215) cites from SABC (1996a:2).

languages on television”. These SABC2 viewers take up an oppositional relation to the dominant code behind the restructuring of SABC channels. SABC2 viewers may understand the preferred reading of the restructuring of the SABC channels according to mixed cultural and language content, but do not necessarily share its code of preference towards the Nguni languages and cultures, and may reject the marginal position laid out for them by the restructuring process (Hall 1999:517; Chandler 2002:192).

SABC3 took over the signal distribution of NNTV, and was branded with the slogan *Quality Shows* (Development of broadcasting ... [sa]; Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131). SABC3 has the smallest signal footprint covering the predominantly urban areas (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118). Wigston (2001:33) notes that during the 1990s the restricted terrestrial transmitter only reached 56 percent of the total population in comparison with the 72 percent for SABC1 and 76 percent for SABC2. SABC3 in the late 1990s was a predominantly English channel that broadcast very few multilingual programmes (Wigston 2001:33; Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118,131); for example, Tsivenda and Xitsonga programmes were seldom broadcast and the channel did not reach the required quota of 30 percent local television content (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118, 131). The channel catered for a “more upwardly mobile audience” (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131) with a larger variety of programmes originating from Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia (Wigston 2001:33). SABC3 transformed from “a channel that was mainly educational in orientation, to one with a bias for family entertainment and more specialised and niche programming that proved popular on the previous NNTV” (Wigston 2001:33).

The other position that Hall (1999:516) identifies, the *negotiated* position, “contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements [and] accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to ‘local conditions’” (Hall 1999:516). The “negotiated version of the dominant ideology is thus shot through with contradictions, though these are only on certain occasions brought to full visibility” (Hall 1999:516). It is possible that SABC3 viewers partly accept the preferred reading and the position of the new SABC3 channel in terms of the restructuring of the SABC, but sometimes resist and modify it to reflect their own position, experiences and interests (Chandler 2002:192).

According to Teer-Tomaselli (2001:118) English was mainly used as the core language as it is widely understood as a second language in South Africa, and further, there exists a wide choice to draw from in the international arena. The restructuring of the SABC in 1996 claimed to create a unique South African broadcasting environment, but SABC3 relies heavily on international, popular programming, thereby neglecting its role to promote local, African television content. It is thus contradictory to the ideals of the SABC during the 1990s, since instead of cultivating African norms, it continues to promote western ideals. Viewers may adopt a negotiated reading of the new channel identity by accepting the Western programming content on the premise that English is a core language understood by most South Africans. The local conditions and the lack of local productions (owing to high costs) are seen as an exception to the general rule (Chandler 2002:192).

Hall's theory of preferred reading with its proposal of the possible dominant, negotiated and oppositional reading positions of the viewer is valuable, since "it frees the text from complete ideological closure, making the text open to many different interpretations" (Lemon 1996:217). Another benefit is that Hall's theory "shifts the focus away from the text towards the recipient as the site where meanings are ascribed or attributed" (Lemon 1996:217). David Morley,³⁷ on the other hand, considers Hall's three categories to be too simplistic since there are, in reality, few purely dominant or purely oppositional readings (Lemon 1996:217). Morley is of the opinion that Hall's theory of preferred reading "overemphasised the role of class [and] underestimated the variety of readings that could be made" (Fiske 1992:300).

Fiske (1992:301) states that Morley's study led to a theory of discourse, as opposed to class, for the reasons of various interpretations of TV, and goes on to explain that a discourse is

a socially produced way of talking or thinking about a topic. It is defined by reference to the area of social experience that it makes sense of, to the social location from which that sense is made, and to the linguistic or signifying system by which that sense is both made and circulated. [...] A discourse, then, is a socially located way of making sense of an important area of social experience.

³⁷ Lemon (1996:217) cites from Morley (1980a) and Fiske (1992:300-302) cites from Morley (1980b).

Television is a text made up from various discourses and the viewers' consciousness also consists of multiple discourses through which to make sense of their social experience (Fiske 1992:301-302). Ideology then refers to a discursive practice that constantly negotiates individual experience within a social formation where economic, political and ideological practices exert mutual influence on one another, on individuals and on cultural productions (White 1992:168). The act of reading a television text is "the moment when the discourses of the reader meet the discourses of the text" (Fiske 1992:302). The reading or interpretation of the television text is a constant process of negotiation between the text and the recipient, between the social meanings and sense inscribed in the programme and the meanings of social experience ascribed to it by its various recipients (Fiske 1992:302; Lemon 1996:217). The constant negotiation and the struggle for meaning reveal that it is possible for a text to have many potential meanings; therefore the text is polysemic.

In other words, a text will be read and "constructed differently depending on the discourses (knowledge, prejudice, resistances) *brought to bear on the text by the reader*" (Morley 1980a:171). Morley (1980a:170-171) insists that the meaning of a text cannot be deduced from its "textual characteristics" only, and must be considered in relation to the historical conditions of its production and consumption, in relation to the reader's economic, political and ideological positions, and in relation to the different strands of ideologies and discourses in struggle. An analysis of ideology in a cultural text might therefore not always be easily identifiable, and often analyses reveal a multitude of ideologies that correspond to polysemic interpretations of cultural texts.

This implies that SABC viewers engage in a constant negotiation between the social meanings inscribed by the SABC in the restructuring of the television channels and the personal or social meanings that they ascribe to the texts. A reader, or SABC television viewer, will interpret the newly restructured SABC channels and their brand identities in terms of its visual and textual characteristics, the post-apartheid capitalist conditions in which the channels are produced, and in terms of their own personal economic, political and ideological positions (for example class, race and gender positions). Interpretation of the new television channels and the restructuring of the SABC thus becomes a discursive practice. Since recipients bring their own discourses or sets of knowledge, experience, prejudice, attitudes and political views to the table, the new

television channels will have different meanings for different viewers, and thus become polysemic.

Prior to the Cultural Studies approach, the focus was on the political economy of culture which perceived the economical level not only as necessary, but also a sufficient explanation of cultural and ideological effects (Storey 1996:10). In other words, in addition to the traditional importance of class in ideology analysis, a Cultural Studies approach to ideology emphasises the important role of readers and their relation to gender and patriarchy, race and politics. Ideology is no longer seen as a unified set of static ideas imposed on the masses from above, but a dynamic process of constant negotiation between individual readers and texts with polysemic meanings.

2.5 Post-modern and contemporary notions of ideology and SA television in 2000 and beyond

Post-modern notions of ideology become increasingly abstract and the boundaries of definitions increasingly blurred. To understand culture in the post-modern age, it requires interpretation of social constructs, and not just an interpretation of the economy. Cultural Studies initiated such a move towards interpretation beyond mere economics. In turn, post-modern notions of ideology move a step beyond the Cultural Studies approach to ideology by asserting that the position of a reader is not only determined by gender, race, class and age, but also by, “a conglomeration of images and attitudes assimilated from the external environment”³⁸ (Hawkes 1996:1). Readers thus carry multiple ideas and attitudes that extend beyond their economic, political and ideological position. In a similar way, the meaning of cultural products includes economic, political and ideological social messages, but additionally embodies socially constructed codes, conventions, discourse and myths that support such ideological messages.

³⁸ The author borrows this phrase from David Hawkes (1996:1). He does not make a statement here, but instead ponders the artificiality of the interior self, and asks if a person’s identity is “nothing more than a conglomeration of images and attitudes assimilated from the external environment?” The author believes his idea of the subject constituted by “a conglomeration of images” is a good summation of post-modern ideas regarding ideology and identity.

Roland Barthes³⁹ (1972), French lecturer and critic, analyses everyday cultural artefacts and practices and shows how codes, conventions and myth are socially constructed to uphold certain economic, political and ideological messages. His text *Mythologies* (1972) was published in 1957, and consists of a collection of essays decoding a variety of contemporary French cultural phenomena and social life of the 1950s. Barthes reads the cultural aspects of social life from surface to depth, and shows that cultural phenomena is socially constructed as an illusory reality aimed at maintaining the status quo (Bignell 1997:17; Walker & Chaplin 1997:45, 134-135).

This socially constructed and illusory reality is what he calls myth. For Barthes (1972:109), “myth is a system of communication” or a type of speech. Barthes’s notion of myth is “not concerned with archetypes, untruths or Greek myths and legends, but how signs take on the value of the dominant value system – or ideology – of a particular society and make these values seem natural” (Lacey 1998:67). Myth is thus a representation of social reality that communicates social and political messages about the world, usually aiming to justify and naturalise the dominant position of the bourgeoisie (Barthes 1972:137). Myth represents social meanings as natural, acceptable and common sense (Bignell 1997:24).

Myths are stories emptied of history, and therefore a distortion of truth or reality. Myth is “not so much a nontruth as a socially constructed *truth* with an underlying ideological meaning” (Fourie 1996:162). Barthes (1972:121, 129) states that myth’s function is to distort reality rather than to make it disappear; myth “hides nothing and flaunts nothing: it distorts; myth is neither a lie nor a confession”. Instead, myth turns reality inside out, empties it of history and fills it with nature (Barthes 1972:142). An ideology is historical, but myth empties it and present it as universal and eternal (Barthes 1972:141).

If myth communicates political and social messages about society, another way to look at myth is as a servant to political ideologies. Myths are akin to the concept of ideology, but are not equivalent to it (Barker 2003:93). Myths are fictional narratives that

³⁹ The contribution of Barthes’ work ensured that the study of semiotics became a popular approach to cultural studies in the 1960s (O’Sullivan *et al* 1994:281). The semiotic side of Barthes concept of myth will be explored further in Chapter Three. Barthes could also be discussed together with a Cultural Studies approach to ideology in the previous section (2.3), but the author wishes to emphasise his notion of myth as a language emptied of “reality” and infused with new meaning. In this way it fits with post-modern ideas of the “spectral” nature of ideologies, the idea of the symbolic order, and myth itself as a kind of pastiche.

legitimise the dominant ideology, and aim to preserve the cultural unity of a society by convincing a diverse group of people that they are part of the same culture and national identity (Silverstone 1988:29; Price 1995:40). This ability to foster national identity is an important aspect of myth that contributes to an understanding of the SABC television channel brand identities.⁴⁰SABC television is an ideal platform and medium for the communication of myth that serves to strengthen national identity.

An example of such a myth communicated by the SABC (although socially constructed in the previous decade) is the myth of the African Renaissance. Former South African president Thabo Mbeki is credited with the addition of the African Renaissance rhetoric to national discourse after his influential “I am an African” speech (Mbeki 1996; Hadland & Rantao 1999:153-158). Mbeki (1998a) explains the concept of African Renaissance in the following manner:

The government is committed to the reconstruction and development of the country in order to provide a better life for all. This vision extends to making concrete contributions towards the transformation and rebirth of the African continent. This Renaissance - An African Renaissance, is about democracy, peace and stability, economic regeneration and improving the quality of life of our people in the region; through jobs, education and health. It is also about ensuring that the continent takes its rightful place on the world stage. But the region cannot achieve sustainable development unless it mobilises domestic and international resources. This requires practical policies to enable the region to build partnerships with other regions and the private sector to address issues of human resources development and the globalisation of the region's economies.

The concept of the African Renaissance is thus used by Mbeki as a metaphor for rebirth, reconstruction and regeneration of the African continent and its people. Speaking about the African Renaissance, Teer-Tomaselli (2001:127-128) notes how “the SABC has associated itself with the process of mythology-building”. SABC hosted a banquet at which Mbeki (then Deputy President) delivered his ‘African Renaissance’ address (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:128; Mbeki 1998b). The SABC therefore associated with the process of mythology-building by providing “a platform on which national leaders are able to articulate their vision of the African Renaissance” and through the total amount of local productions and thematic content of local programmes (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:128). The SABC therefore “consciously aligned itself with the process of African

⁴⁰ Barthes’ concept of myth and its support for dominant political ideologies is engaged further in Chapter Four.

Renaissance⁴¹ ... with the objective of creating a sense of national solidarity and oneness” (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:134).

Stating that the concept of the African Renaissance is a myth does not mean it does not exist, or that it is a false story. Instead it implies that the African Renaissance is a socially constructed representation, a depoliticised speech that creates an innocent metalanguage and distorts it into ‘nature’ or common sense (Barthes 1972:146-147). The myth of the African Renaissance is thus a symbolic concept that functions as a servant to Thabo Mbeki and his neo-liberal economic policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). It masks the goal to centralise power and secure wealth for the black petit bourgeoisie. Barthes (1972:146) notes that “[t]he bourgeoisie hides the fact that it is the bourgeoisie and thereby produces myth.”

The African Renaissance aspects of restructuring and rebirth are evident in the developments of South African television in the 2000s. The IBA Act of 1993 and the Broadcasting Act of 1999 in the previous decade set in motion the transformation of the SABC from a statutory body to a public company (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118, Funde 2004:30). The legislation and the thinking behind it parallels “the world-wide trend towards deregulation, which has seen the opening up and liberalisation of public service enterprises” (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:120). The first decade of 2000 therefore marks the corporatisation of the national broadcaster (Ten Years ... 2003). On 1 October 2003 the SABC officially became SABC Ltd. after acquiring the status of a limited liability company (Ten Years ... 2003).

Wigston (2001:31) states that the Broadcasting Act of 1999 resulted in the corporatisation of the SABC. This corporatisation is a process that involved the implementation of the following four points; the governance of the SABC by a Broadcasting Charter that is monitored for compliance by ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa), the structuring of the SABC into the two public and commercial broadcasting groups, the subsidising of public broadcasting services by commercial services, and lastly, the establishment of the SABC as a limited liability company with the State as shareholder (Wigston 2001:31). The provision of a

⁴¹ After corporatisation of the SABC (2003) the organisation articulated its alignment with the African Renaissance even further when the Board of Directors (appointed in 2004) included the goal to “[e]nsure that the SABC plays a meaningful role in supporting the objectives of the African Renaissance and NEPAD” in its list of corporate goals (SABC Annual Report 2006:8-9).

public service with commercial feasibility is a difficult task. Teer-Tomaselli (1998) believes the purpose of public⁴² service broadcasting is

the provision of a universal service of excellent programming, while maintaining public legitimacy through an editorial independence from both the government of the day and rampant commercial interests. By 'universal' [she means] programming which covers a full range of genres, from information to education and entertainment, for the widest possible audience and covering the most extensive geographical spread.

The SABC is a broadcaster that has a public mandate although it operates as a commercial entity (Teer-Tomaselli 1998). The requirement to provide such a public service for each of the 11 official languages places additional strain on the SABC (Wigston 2001:27). The contradiction of public service broadcasting becomes apparent "where the pragmatism of limited financial means meets with the idealism of an all-encompassing mandate" (Teer-Tomaselli 1998). Nevertheless, the corporatisation of the SABC in 2003 meant that two of the three free-to-air television channels were repositioned and dedicated to public broadcasting, and one channel was repositioned as a commercial⁴³ service television channel (SABC Annual Report 2004:60, 68). SABC3 functions as an important source of revenue to the SABC and has to be completely self-sufficient. It also needs to fund SABC1 and SABC2 as public services. Therefore SABC3 has to be run cost effectively and in a manner that will maximise income (SABC Annual Report 2004:68).

The content and appearance of the television channels had to be consistent with the corporatisation and restructuring along the lines of public and commercial services, and channels required rebranding accordingly. United States specialist, Dr Susan Tyler Eastman (2003:71), was invited to consult on network programming at the SABC in 2001. One of the principle recommendations in her report was "to set aside [problems

⁴² Teer-Tomaselli (1998) states that public broadcasting is "premised on the understanding that the broadcasting spectrum is limited and belongs to the nation. The government, while it may act as the guardian of the nation-state, should be kept at arm's length from the day-to-day operation of the broadcaster. Broadcasting, in this view, is a public good belonging to the whole nation, not to be exploited for private or sectarian gain of either a monetary or ideological kind. Conceptually, the right place for the broadcaster is the public sphere".

⁴³ Wigston (2001:29) clarifies that commercial broadcasting "is defined as a service operated for profit. Being financed through advertising revenue, commercial broadcasters need to have a high success rate with their programming structure in order to deliver an audience to potential advertisers. This means that commercial stations are free to take advantage of new ideas, trends and developments in programming as they are purely market-driven".

concerning] languages temporarily and focus instead on a [distinct] image for each channel” (Eastman 2003:76). Eastman (2003:76) also suggested that the three channels should be reconstituted “as one all-news and political talk channel ..., one family oriented channel ..., and one young adult [or] teen-oriented channel” and suggested that this would “create three distinct images to promote to audiences that would cross over the language barriers”.

Accordingly, SABC1 was rebranded as the channel that reflects a youth-oriented identity which Orgeret (2004:156) describes as aspirant and youthful, “addressing mainly the young, black audiences”; SABC2 was rebranded as a channel with a family focus; and SABC3 was a channel aimed at “the more up-market English-speaking audiences” (Orgeret 2004:156).

The SABC Annual Report (2004:60) maintains that the rebranding of SABC1 took place after thorough market research and an “extensive process of understanding its viewers”. SABC1 realised that the previous *Simunye* brand image needed to be changed, thus they discarded the old payoff line, and replaced it with the *Ya mampela* slogan which means “the real thing” (De Jager 2003:1; Marutlulle 2005:66). The visual results of the new channel identity (see 4.3.1) indicate that the channel’s viewers⁴⁴ did not consent to “the media and state-driven project of nation building [in the sense of] a nauseating *Simunye* myth [that aims] to create a representation of a pluralistic society” (Della-Donne 2004:80).

The new brand positioning campaign was launched on 18 August 2003, and was aimed at the 16 to 34 year old viewers in the LSM 5-8 group⁴⁵ (De Jager 2003:1; Brands Bulls-Eye 2004). At the epicentre of SABC1’s market is the 25 year old, working class person, who is young at heart (Brands Bulls-Eye 2004). At this time SABC1 reached 89 percent of the population with a daily audience of 15 million viewers, and broadcast in the Nguni languages and English addressing mainly the

⁴⁴ The Brands Bulls-Eye/Blueprint (2004) indicates that the primary core of the SABC1 target market is viewers between the ages of 16-34, in the LSM 5-8 group.

⁴⁵ Klintworth (2004:27-28) explains that LSMs (Living Standards Measure) are a “categorization of consumers based on their sophistication of living standards”, where a LSM 1, for example, “will only have a paraffin stove and no water-borne sewage versus LSM 22 which has a number of personal computers and all that goes along with it” (Klintworth 2004:28). Also see All about SAARF (2010:[sp]).

young, black audiences (Development ... [sa]; SABC Annual Report 2004:60; Orgeret 2004:156).

The SABC2 brand was repositioned with the slogan *Feel at home* on 18 November 2002 (New look ... 2002). The new payoff line thus replaced the previous *Come Alive with Us* slogan. The SABC Annual Report (2004:61) describes the channel as one that celebrates “the family and nation building”, thereby creating a sense of belonging. The SABC Annual Report (2004:62) also states that SABC2 is the television channel “that truly reflects the multifaceted nature of the South African family”.

SABC2 surpassed SABC1 which had the largest transmission footprint in the preceding decade, covering 91 percent of the national population. Even though SABC2 has a larger footprint, it had a daily audience of nine million viewers in 2002 to 2003, thus smaller than the audience of SABC1 (Development ... [sa]; SABC Annual Report 2004:61). The channel broadcasts in Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, xiTsonga, tshiVenda and English, while aiming to meet “the needs of the South African family nationally” (SABC Annual Report 2004:61).

SABC3, with its slogan *Much Better*, was the result of the rebranding of the restructured SABC channels in 2002 and 2003. Orgeret (2004:156) notes that SABC3 wanted to be more cosmopolitan in its reach for the more up-market English-speaking audiences. The channel focuses on entertainment and information that offers “the best fusion of local and international content [and] prides itself on reflecting a successful and stylish new South Africa” (SABC Annual Report 2004:68-69). The channel is a “contemporary adult channel targeting viewers in the LSM 8-10 group and the 25 to 49 age bracket” (SABC Annual Report 2004:69). SABC3 has an average daily audience of five and a half million viewers, and has the smallest transmission footprint covering only 77 percent of the national population in 2003 and 2004 (Development ... [sa]; SABC Annual Report 2004:68-69).

The establishment of the SABC channels according to the three distinct images that Eastman (2003:73) recommended is a characteristic of the postmodern notion of the ‘society of the spectacle’. Guy Debord (1994:12) believes this is a society based on the “social relationship between people that is mediated by images”. The images become the organising principle of social relationships between people. With regard to the

SABC channel brand identities, this means that the self-promotional images of the channels and the associated brand images promote certain values aimed at specific groups of people situated in specific geographic areas, and situated within specific cultures with their own conventions. The brand identities thus represent certain world views or specific disseminations of the social relationship between groups or types of people; it is “a world view transformed into an objective force” (Debord 1994:13). The image of youth resistance thus becomes the organising principle in the SABC1 *Ya Mampela* brand, the image of a national family the organising principle in the SABC2 *Feel at home* brand, and the image of upmarket class and style becomes the organising principle in the SABC3 *Much better* brand.

The changes of the brand identities according to three distinct images coincided with the corporatisation of the SABC during 2002 and 2003, and this phase of the rebranding of the SABC television channels was the first of two major changes in the SABC television channel brands, with the second phase occurring during 2007 and 2008. However, SABC2 and SABC3 also experienced stylistic changes in the middle of these two periods (in 2006 and 2005 respectively). The structure and nature of the channels, including the programmes and target audiences remained the same during this interim phase. Changes were visual, stylistic and superficial. The frequent changes in the visual brand identities of the SABC television channels are perhaps examples of the planned obsolescence and rapid rhythm of styling changes in postmodern society that Frederic Jameson (1983:124-125) observes.

The second phase of major changes in the SABC television channel brand identities that occurred during 2007 and 2009 follow the results of research conducted by the SAARF and its subsequent announcement of the findings regarding the attitudes of consumers. The SAARF attitudes segmentation model⁴⁶ divides people into groups in terms of their attitudes to various topics, thereby adding a third dimension to the traditional bi-dimensional demographic segmentation according to living standards and

⁴⁶ The SAARF website (All about SAARF 2010:[sp]) explains that the “SAARF Attitudes is the newest of the SAARF segmentation tools and divides people into 5 attitudinal groups. The attitude groups are based on people’s attitudes to various statements ranging from topics such as advertising to crime. Attitudes are hard to define. Whilst clearly related to values they are less deep seated and subject to change in much shorter time periods. Attitudes are also a manifestation of behaviour and the results of SAARF Attitudes confirm this. However whether attitudes precede behaviour or the converse is not always clear cut. They certainly help to define a person’s character and personality and can be extremely insightful in fleshing out a media user or target market”.

language (SAARF attitudes 2008; All about SAARF 2010:[sp]). According to these findings of the SAARF, the SABC released a new audience segmentation model (Introducing 2008:[sp]). The new audience segmentation model encouraged an endeavour to understand the SABC television audience in a wider, new manner. The added third dimension includes the attitudes of audiences on the premise that attitudes are predictive of behaviour, which are driven by needs and wants in order to fulfil values.

SABC viewers are divided into the following six segments according to their attitudes: nation builders; now generation; survivors; established; global citizens; and rooted (Introducing 2008:[sp]). Although the SABC audience segmentation model does not state which attitude groups are likely to watch each channel, an estimated observation can be made that SABC1 caters primarily for the now generation, and secondarily for the survivors and the rooted; SABC2 caters primarily for the nation builders, and secondarily for the survivors and the rooted; and SABC3 caters primarily for the global citizen, and secondarily for the established (see Appendix 3).

The new segmentation is a response to the needs of the various groups of viewers interviewed by the SAARF, and the re-structuring of the SABC channels and their brand identities⁴⁷ in 2007 and 2008 occurred along the lines of these attitudes. SABC1 was repositioned with a new brand identity and slogan, *Mzansi fo sho* (on 4 April 2007) while SABC2 retained its slogan *Feel at home*. The SABC2 brand identity included a new on-air look with a range of new idents. SABC3 was repositioned on 26 July 2007 with a new brand identity and on-air look, as well as a new tagline *Stay with 3*.

At this level ideology seems even less apparent and less imposed since it is no longer language and wealth, or culture and class that determine the position of people and their identities within the media environment. The language, wealth, race, culture, age and class of SABC viewers are referred to less directly and less often, but continue to be implied in the brand identities and audience segmentation of each channel. The underlying ideologies of the SABC brand identities thus become increasingly abstract and fragmented. The changes in the SABC television channel brand identities indicate that ideology becomes mere representation in the society of the spectacle. In other

⁴⁷ The brand identities of the SABC television channels and the changes therein during the 2000 and 2009 decade are explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

words, ideology becomes a spectacle emptied of historical context, a spectral supplement to reality that becomes more real than the real, a simulacrum. The SABC television brands are indicative of Debord's (1994:24) notion that the "spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image".

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter indicated that ideology discourse aims to highlight the political aspects of cultural forms such as television. The chapter explored key concepts in ideology theory alongside relevant examples in South African television, and also provided a brief historical overview of ideology theory and contextualised the SABC television channels within the history of South African television. The exploration of each decade of South Africa television shows the various manifestations of asymmetrical relations of power in South Africa.

Ideology as a critical discursive practice has become increasingly complex, since it is no longer only economics, wealth, class, race, gender and age that determines the position and identity of people within the media environment, but also their personal and individual aspects, their aspirations, beliefs, opinions, cultural influences and family influences, for example. Ideology thus becomes increasingly abstract. The "spectacle" or conglomeration of images creates maps of meaning with which the viewer can or cannot identify with, and ideology seems even less imposed this way since the viewer has a choice. The chapter highlights a tendency to increasingly prioritise the viewer rather than the producer, and also indicated that the SABC have progressively become a more democratic medium.

However, that does not mean that ideology is currently less involved than it was 30 years ago. On the contrary, ideology continues to underlie all cultural activities, but it does so in a more inconspicuous manner. Ideology appears emptied of historical context so that it becomes an image or representation. It is the representation that carries more weight than the aspect it represents, so that the image has more value than its material counterpart. It is in this vein that the capital of image and the image of capital is explored in the next chapter. It is argued that brands and their visual brand identities are spectral elements of the postmodern capitalist society, and that the

meanings of brands are very significant in terms of the cultural and economic importance given to brands in this postmodern society of the spectacle.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SEMIOTICS OF BRANDING AND CORPORATE IDENTITY

3.1 Introduction

Having concluded the discussion on the concept of ideology and ideological meanings in the context of South African television in the previous chapter, this chapter engages with the meanings of brands and the semiotics of brands and corporate identities. The semiotic theory employed in this chapter, and its interdisciplinary link with theory regarding branding, attempts to cast light on the encoding and decoding of social meanings and ideological messages in the SABC television channel brand identities under discussion. By determining the signs, codes and meanings suggested by a semiotic approach, semiotics becomes a useful tool to decipher how ideological meanings are created, circulated, propagated and reformulated in the branding process, and more specifically, the evolution of the SABC brand identities.

The appearance of brands on television range widely from branded products in advertisements, brands displayed in programmes, branded news broadcasts, branded television programmes and even branded television personalities, to name a few examples. Patrick Barwise, Andrea Dunham and Mark Ritson (2000:73) proclaim that “[w]e live in what anthropologist John Sherry has called ‘brandsapes’, places in which brands are an integral part of our everyday existence”. Products, services, experiences, events of communication, political leaders and wars are all being branded (Moore 2003:332). In fact, the “centrality and ubiquity of brands and branding is one of *the* defining characteristics of contemporary experience” (Moore 2003:332).

Barwise *et al* (2000:73) maintain that brands seem to be present everywhere, but find it strange, however, that their nature and function are rarely questioned. Simply stated, brands are nothing other than signs made up of various components. These components are signs themselves. The most prominent component of a brand is the logo, name, symbol or trademark; in other words, the mark denoting ownership (Pavitt 2000:21). A logo is a signifier, and all the qualities associated with the brand are signified by this logo or sign. All the components of a brand are encapsulated within or

summarised with a logo. It is argued that this semiotic quality of a brand assembles all aspects forming a brand as a whole (Bernsau 2006:[sp]).

Robert Moore (2003:332) bemoans the fact that semiotic analyses of brands are scarce and perceives a need within academic literature for “semiotically sophisticated and ethnographically rich understandings of brands”. Klaus Bernsau (2006:[sp]) also states that semiotics “is the only academic method to describe and research brand-phenomenon comprehensively. Semiotics is an interdisciplinary method that examines a brand with all relevant and subject-oriented tools and synthesises them through an abstract sign theory”. This chapter argues that the semiotic qualities of brands add to an understanding of the manner in which meaning is created, communicated and contested in the SABC channel brand identities.

This chapter addresses a variety of concepts and methods from the theory and practice of brands and branding, as well as the theory and practice of social semiotics and semiotic analysis. Social semiotics employs interdisciplinary analysis to explore the manner in which semiotic resources are used to produce and interpret communicative artefacts (Van Leeuwen 2005:xi, 1). Structural semiotics focuses on the form of the message, or the formal aspects, techniques and codes of the message, while social semiotic focus on the social or ideological meaning of messages (Fourie 1996:77). Social semiotics therefore “only comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems, and it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field” (Van Leeuwen 2005:1).

This chapter thus deals with semiotic concepts and methods – not as the rules of a ‘pure’ semiotic theory or self-contained field to understand and create meaning, but rather as the tools or resources used to decipher meaning within “specific historical, cultural and institutional contexts” (Van Leeuwen 2005:3). This chapter borrows from structural and social semiotic theory to explain key concepts necessary for a social semiotic approach for an investigation of possible ideological meanings in the SABC television channel brands that follow in Chapter Four.

3.2. Semiotics

Semiotics is a fundamental approach to understanding media, and especially television texts. The way the term ‘semiotics’ is used today, however, is very different to what its original meaning implies. The original word “semeiotics” was coined by Hippocrates (460-377 BC) to define the branch of medicine that studies symptoms¹ (Danesi 2002:29). The formal study of signs was only introduced much later, by British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), who introduced it in his *Essay concerning human understanding* (1690), “anticipating that it would allow philosophers to understand the interconnection between representation and knowledge” (Danesi 2002:30).

The modern use of the term ‘semiotics’ can be defined as the study of signs and sign systems. Semiotics is “concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign” (Eco 1976:7) or “anything which ‘stands for’ something else ... not in isolation but as part of semiotic ‘sign-systems’ ... ” (Chandler 2002:2). Semiotics is thus a tool for the study of communication, and studies the way signs, such as words, images, traffic signs, flowers, and music communicate, and also studies the rules that govern the use of such signs (Seiter 1992:31). In this sense, semiotics “first asks *how* meaning is created, rather than *what* the meaning is” (Seiter 1992:31). This definition of semiotics has its origins in the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), who without knowing about the other’s work, founded the study of signs simultaneously (Lacey 1998:56).

Saussure (1983:15) defined this field of study as *semiology*. For Saussure (1983:15), it was possible to have a science that studies the role played by signs as part of life, which he called “semiology” (from the Greek *sēmeîon*, ‘sign’). To Peirce this study field comprised the “formal doctrine of signs”,² and “was closely related to logic” (Peirce cited by Chandler 2002:6). Chandler (2002:6) notes that on occasion, Saussure’s term ‘semiology’ is used to refer to the Saussurean tradition while ‘semiotics’ (with the added ‘s’) refers to the Peircean tradition, although the term ‘semiotics’ now describes the entire field and is thus an all-inclusive term.

¹ Danesi (2002:29) further explains that a symptom is “in effect, a semeion: ‘a mark or sign’ that stands for something other than itself.

² Peirce (1931-58, 2, 227) cited by Chandler (2002:6).

Saussure's *Course in general linguistics*³ was published in 1916, three years after his death. The focus of Saussure's work was on the linguistic sign, and he believed that "language is made up of signs (like words) which communicate meanings, and that all kinds of other things which communicate meanings could potentially be studied in the same way as linguistic signs" (Bignell 1997:5). Photographs, art works, designs, television programmes and channel brands, for example, all communicate meaning and can be studied through semiology. For Saussure (1983:68), "linguistics serves as a model for the whole of semiology, even though languages represent only one type of semiological system".

In contrast to Saussure's emphasis on *structure*, Peirce emphasised 'semiosis' as a dynamic *process* of dialogical thought (Chandler 2002:34). For Peirce, semiotics was an abstract explication of the formal structure of intelligence, or the philosophy of mind (Sebeok 1986:674). Peirce developed intricate logical taxonomies of types of signs, but it is his distinctions between symbolic, iconic and indexical signs⁴ that are particularly useful in the semiotic analysis of images or non-verbal signs (Bignell 1997:14).

Saussure (1983:15) envisioned that semiology would become a science "which studies the role of signs as part of social life", but neglected the study of the role of signs in society in his own work. This proposal was pursued by the structuralist Roland Barthes, who popularised and extended the study of semiotics in the 1960s when it became a major approach to cultural studies (O'Sullivan *et al* 1994:281). In *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes draws attention to the value of studying media, everyday objects and popular culture with the theoretical tools of semiotics (Danesi 2002:33). O'Sullivan *et al* (1994:281-282) state that it was owing to the success of semiotics as an analytic tool in Barthes work that it "has become associated largely with the increasingly serious study of various forms of popular culture". Before the work of Barthes, popular culture had been a much neglected field in academic study. It was his emphasis on "the social and ideological relationship of and between signs and codes" (Fourie 1996:33) that was especially significant in the use of semiotics to study media and popular culture.

The social and ideological relationship between signs and codes in popular culture evolves further in *social semiotics* with its importance placed on the reader. Chandler

³ This collection of Saussure's work was assembled from lecture notes taken by his pupils, and was put together by his colleagues (Saussure 1983:xii).

⁴ Symbolic, iconic and indexical signs are discussed later in this chapter (see 3.6).

(2002:12) notes how “[c]ontemporary *social* semiotics has moved beyond the structuralist focus on signifying systems as languages, seeking to explore the use of signs in specific social institutions”. In other words, the shift in focus in semiotics has moved from *structure* to the *process* of semiosis and the “role of the reader in realising or producing meanings out of textual resources in an interactive way” (O’Sullivan *et al* 1994:282).

The semiotic theory applied in this chapter therefore examines the structures and codes of brands. In addition to conventional semiotic theory which stresses system and product, *social* semiotic theory regards semiotic systems, such as SABC television channel brands, to be communicative processes that exist in concrete social contexts and consider such systems to be part of social and political thought. The shift in semiotic theory regards “participants in semiotic activity as connected and interacting in a variety of ways in concrete social contexts” (Hodge & Kress 1988:2). Those who participate in the semiotic systems of the SABC channel brand identities interact, connect, and communicate within specific social contexts, which in turn influences the way meanings are created, interpreted and re-created.

A similar shift in focus towards the reader can be observed in brand theory and the process of branding, resulting in a focus on the consumer and brand image. The role of consumers and their interactive relationship with brands and their meanings has become a central factor in the process of branding. As an important part of popular culture and the study thereof initiated by Barthes, this chapter explores brands and branding as a specific platform for the creation and consumption of meaning in society. The following section explores the increased focus and awareness of the importance of the consumer in branding processes.

3.3 The origin and evolution of branding practices

The word *brand* derives from the Old Norse word *brandr*, which means ‘to burn’ (Blackett 2004:[sp]), and refers to “the practice of indelibly marking or stamping property, usually with a hot iron” (Pavitt 2000:21), mainly for identification purposes (Danesi 2002:186). Branding has been around for thousands of years, with livestock being branded by the Egyptians as early as 2000 BC (Danesi 2002:186). Artefacts such as medieval swords, ancient Chinese pottery, furniture and tapestries were

marked with identifiable symbols to denote the origin and quality of products (Danesi 2002:186; Blackett 2004:[sp]). Symbols and characteristic marks of trades people and guild members also appeared outside shops, for example the red and white striped pole of the barbershop (Danesi 2002:186).

Branding as it is known today emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the industrial revolution propelling improvements in manufacturing (Blackett 2004:[sp]). With the advent of the factory it became necessary to distinguish between mass-produced products that seemed very similar (Klein 2000:6). A key strategy for product differentiation was image-based naming, since products such as soap, sugar and flour, for example, were previously sold from bulk containers in neighbourhood stores; “[t]he first modern-day brand names were thus invented” (Danesi 2002:186). Naomi Klein (2000:6) notes that “[c]ompetitive branding became a necessity [and] image-based difference had to be manufactured along with the product”; the brand identity or logo on packaged goods and advertisements thus replaced the local shopkeeper as an advocate of products.

It was the post-World War II era that saw the real explosion in the use of brands (Blackett 2004:[sp]) with a growing first world consumer society, owing to a higher quality of life after the War. The post-war period witnessed an economic boom with increases in personal income and the growth of the suburban middle class (Low & Fullerton 1994:181). During this time, television advertising had a big impact on the importance of brands and brand advertising in America (Low & Fullerton 1994:181). Danesi (2002:187) notes that by “the early 1950s, it became obvious that branding was not just a simple strategy for product differentiation, but the very semiotic fuel that propelled corporate identity and product recognisability”.

During that period, the ephemeral quality of brands emerged. Corporations searched for their ‘corporate consciousness’ or ‘brand essence’, which “gradually took the agencies away from individual products and their attributes and toward a psychological/anthropological examination of what brands mean to the culture and to people’s lives” (Klein 2000:7). Tony Meenaghan (1995:23) similarly observes increased awareness towards the symbolic associations and expressiveness of products and brands rather than functional benefits. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the physical product remained the central differential, rather than the brand, but consumer

products were sold based on emotional appeals to the needs for security and conformity (Maio 1999:12). This was an important shift which resulted in the belief that although corporations manufacture products, consumers actually buy brands (Klein 2000:7).

David Norton (2003:23) explains how the 1980s and 1990s contributed to millennial brand trends, with an increased desire for “connection, community, and purpose”. He describes the 1980s as a time of “unabashed conspicuous consumption”⁵ that paralleled the focus on brands and brand image (Norton 2003:19). Klein (2000:7) describes the 1980s as “brand equity mania”, when the corporation behind the brand became the brand. For Norton (2003:19), the 1980s formed the historical basis that contributed to the revolution in branding that has taken place in the 1980s, 1990s and the 2000s (Figure 3).

The evolution in consumer demand

	Millennial	Meaningful experiences	Brand truth	Meaningful brand experiences
	'90s	Experiences	Brand experience	Experiential customer encounters
'80s	Products & services	Brand image	Products & services with personality	
	Evolution in consumer demand	Successful brand strategies	Design solutions	

Design must evolve to meet consumer demand. The millennial decade will build upon the best practices of the previous decades. Brand image still matters. Brand experience is critical. But the most successful companies will produce meaningful brand experiences.

Figure 3: The evolution in brand trends since the 1980s.
(Norton 2003:21.)

There is a similarity between Norton’s model and the evolution of the SABC television channel brands. The 1980s witnessed a major expansion of the SABC television network products or services. By 1985, SABC television channels consisted of TV1, TV2, TV3 and TV4. TV1 and TV4 broadcast in Afrikaans and English, while TV2 and TV3 broadcast in the Nguni languages and the Sesotho languages respectively (Mersham 1998:212; Wigston 2001:12). As previously noted, TV2 and TV3 “showed ‘black’ news, which differed considerably from the English and Afrikaans versions”

⁵ Meenaghan (1995:25-26) notes that it “has long been recognized that products have meanings for consumers beyond providing mere functional utility”. He notes, for example that “[s]ymbolic consumption was recognized by Veblen (1899) in his Theory of the Leisure Class and termed conspicuous consumption”. Meenaghan (1995:25-26) also includes Karl Marx’s metaphor of “the language of commodities” in which “the linen conveys its thoughts” and Barthes’ notion of objects that exists above the “utilitarian or functional aspects of objects”.

(Orgeret 2004:150). The brand image that this expansion created was that TV2 and TV3 were 'black' television channels while TV1 and TV4 were so-called 'white' channels.

During the 1990s, the ephemeral brand became stronger than the physical aspect of its products and services. The consumer focus changed in the 1990s from the physical, or the accumulation of things, to the accumulation of the abstract, or experiences (Norton 2003:21). This is also evident in the changes of the SABC television channels, which became the platforms for the experience of unity in diversity during the 1990s. The changes in 1996, and the consequential brand identities of the channels, indicate a move towards 'higher values' with a focus on democracy and non-racist standards. The slogans of the channels launched in 1996, namely *Simunye, We are One* (SABC1), *Come Alive with Us* (SABC2) and *Quality Shows* (SABC3) indicate an increased focus on brand experiences and experiential viewer encounters.

Together with an increase in consumer goods, a decrease in cultural capital⁶ caused a great demand for meaningful experiences (Norton 2003:20). Elsie Maio (1999:11) explains that "the Western consumer has begun to expect more than high quality products and services from corporations" and the public started demanding that corporations demonstrate higher values. Klein (2000) describes how anti-corporate imagery started emerging with an increase in activists targeting deceitful and socially irresponsible corporations and brands.⁷ The anti-corporate movement embodied "culture-jammed logos [in] the guerrilla-warfare stylings" (Klein 2000:449) that served as counter-messages. These counter-messages uncovered "not an opposite meaning but the deeper truth hiding beneath the layers of advertising euphemisms" (Klein 2000:281-282). The culture jammers, as such activists became known, started attacking the passive culture of spectatorship and the ethos of mainstream capitalist society (Klein 2000:283).

⁶ Norton (2003:20) refers to Pierre Bourdieu's seminal use of the term *cultural capital* that is used in a similar way to the concept of economic capital. Bourdieu (1984) asserts that cultural capital is the cultural, educational, and intellectual assets, the social habits and knowledge inherited from the family and educational institutions. Norton (2003:20) states that cultural capital "is produced by the "softer" aspects of life: nature, art, family, faith, community, and school". For Norton (2003:20) these resources are "literally priceless, from which we draw distinctions regarding our purpose in life" and notes that the 1990s witnessed a demand for meaningful experiences that are usually stored up as cultural capital.

⁷ Klein (2000) exposed how big brands such as Nike and McDonalds had negative effects on the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

The change of SABC1 from *Simunye* to *Ya Mampela* indicates how this culture jamming aesthetic or anti-corporate imagery was taken up by corporate marketing (Klein 2000:448; Spark 2004:65-66). Punk styles, cutting, pasting and graffiti are often used in contemporary marketing strategies, which for Klein (2000:448) indicates a fast corporate co-option. The re-branding of SABC1 indicates a move towards brand truth, since the channel's antagonistic viewers believed the *Simunye* brand identity "held out fictive opportunities of transcendence through appreciating and identifying with a fantasy of 'oneness'" (Lewis 2000:163-164). The adoption of imagery associated with anti-corporate movements by the *Ya Mampela* brand identity of SABC1 in 2003 indicates how brand trends have been incorporated in design strategies to create meaningful experiences for its stakeholders (Spark 2004b:66).

The activism in the 1990s resulted in a new consumer demand for the 2000s. Norton (2003:23) indicates that this is the need for brand truth and meaningful brand experiences. Consumers increasingly demand that organisations must be socially responsible and stand for something 'true'. Norton (2003:23) states that in "a market in which cynicism about corporate intentions runs so deep, it is absolutely necessary that companies learn to stand for something more than 'more' [and] produce not just economic capital, but cultural capital, as well". Consumers desire sincere and socially accountable organisations that facilitate chances to meaningfully connect with their family and community (Norton 2003:23). Maio (1999:13) finds a solution in soul branding:

soul brands are not only communicating, but are really trying to *live* by, a set of higher ideals, including a sense of social responsibility. They express strong, uplifting emotions; they embrace the notion of being a global citizen; they advocate and cherish human values through their actions.

She sees soul branding as the "result of deep psychological and emotional needs that have been evolving for decades" (Maio 1992:14), and equates these needs to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow 1943). Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed a topographical model of human needs suggesting that the lower or basic needs (such as food and shelter) must be met before the higher needs (such as love) can be met. At the highest level of the human needs is self-actualisation, that is, the need to become the best a person can be (Maslow 1943:382).

The historical evolution in branding indicates a move upwards in the hierarchy of needs, from functional to emotional and ultimately, inspirational branding (Maio 1999:12). Whereas this section explored the evolution of branding practices in general, it is also useful to explore the historical thread of specific brands. Mary Jo Hatch and James Rubin (2006:40) suggest that a hermeneutic approach to branding permits an explanation of the ways in which the meaning of a brand changes over time, thereby providing a brand with a historical dimension. They maintain that the meaning of a brand results from “collective interpretations by multiple stakeholders over numerous but particular moments” (Hatch & Rubin 2006:41). A historical dimension of a brand traces the meaning from its early stages to its present manifestation. They state that “even through remarkable changes in what a brand signifies, or the stakeholders it engages, a brand often retains a trace of its original intention” (Hatch & Rubin 2006:41).

The meaning of SABC1 branding, for example, has changed significantly over the last few years. The *Ya Mampela* brand identity (2003) was quite different from the *Simunye, We are One* brand identity (1996), and both of these are different from the *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity (2007). The changes in meaning of the SABC1 brand can perhaps be explained with a metaphor of a pendulum, swaying first to the right with the *Simunye* identity (1996), then swinging to the left with the *Ya Mampela* identity (2003), and finding a (temporary) position in the middle with the current *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity (2007). Throughout all the changes, the SABC1 brand retains its association as ‘the people’s channel’. Hatch and Rubin (2006:55) state that brands are mutable because they are constructed and indeterminate, and they have value because they symbolically create and communicate meaning and invoke various interpretations across time and place.

The brand identities of the SABC television channels are mutable and the changes in them and their meanings during the last decade illustrate a shift towards higher values and inspirational branding. The national broadcaster attempts to create distinct and meaningful brand experiences for viewers, in a move that is increasingly people oriented and aligned with a public service mandate striving for “citizen empowerment” (SABC Annual Report 2007:14). Whereas this section explored the origin of the term ‘brand’ and the evolution in branding, the next section examines the nature and function of brands, as well as the terminology and key concepts of branding.

3.4 Key concepts of branding and corporate identity

It is a common misconception that a brand is a name, logo, symbol or trademark. Pavitt (2000:21) explains that these aspects are indeed “the most recognizable feature[s] of a brand”, but are not *the* brand. In the same way, the word *branding* is often used interchangeably with *advertising*. Klein (2000:5) explains that the *brand* is “the core meaning of the modern corporation”, whereas *advertising* is “only one part of branding’s grand plan”, or only one vehicle to convey the core meaning of a corporation to the world.

Similarly, Peter Kim (1990:65), and John Balmer and Edmund Gray (2003) note that the use of terms such as product, brand name, product brands, corporate brands, brand identity, brand image, brand identity, corporate image, corporate identity and brand personality are “worn, limited and confused [and are used] carelessly and even interchangeably, thereby losing nuances in meanings that differentiate these terms and give each its original precision”. With each term, the producer/brand proprietor/sender and the consumer/stake-holder/receiver are situated in a distinct position within the communicative process or semiosis of branding. It is therefore useful to explore the meanings of these terms to avoid confusion in understanding them. Distinctions between these terms are also useful to establish the process of semiosis in the branding process.

The first ambiguity exists between the terms *product* and *brand* since product brands are most often the central subject in literature on branding. Peter Kim (1990:65) provides a useful distinction between these two terms; a *product* is “a physical thing that is made in the factory, or a service that is made available. It exists in the external, temporal world. ... A product can usually be seen, touched, eaten, experienced, used; it can be objectively defined, measured, assessed”. Kim’s definition therefore indicates that the product can be defined as the material and corporeal component.

A *brand*, on the other hand, is the non-material or mental component. Kim (1990:65) states that a brand “has no tangible, physical, or functional properties. It is a mental translation, an abstraction of that object or service. It is conceptual and abstract, like an idea, and is present only in the mind of the person seeing it, and does therefore not exist independently. Although a brand exists in the imagination of the consumer, it is

“as real as the product, for it is as real in its consequences” (Kim 1990:65). Brands acquire their value and meaning through the consumer’s interaction with “fragments of experiences, thoughts, feelings, associations, and images provided by the beholder of the brand” (Kim 1990:65).

The brand identity of SABC2 can be used as an example to distinguish between *product* and *brand*. The *product* or service consists of television programmes considered appropriate for family viewing. The *brand* on the other hand, is the aura of familial intimacy and unity. The product “is seen as providing core functional benefits while the *brand* is responsible for creating the magnetic human-like aura around the actual product” (Meenaghan 1995:24). In this way, the *brand* is a component of *image* received in the mind of the receiver, while the *product* or service is a component of *identity* sent by a company.⁸

Brands have also become two-faceted entities viewed from the respective positions of base and superstructure in Marxist theory. From the base or *economic perspective*, brands are economic events or economic entities that serve a strategic purpose to add value to an organisation. Jeremy Sampson (2004:11) notes that brands emerged as essential ingredients of twenty-first century business in the last decade, and that company owners and brand proprietors increasingly recognise and treat brands as “economic entities, with immense potential for wealth creation”. Coca Cola⁹ is an example of the value-creating capacity of its brand, with the brand becoming *the* “most valuable asset a company can own” (Sampson 2004:11). While brands are valuable economic assets, they also have the potential and capacity to be social and political instruments (Sampson 2004:11).

The brand’s potential to be a social and political instrument is viewed from the superstructure or *cultural perspective*. From the cultural point of view, brands are social events with the capacity to become social signals and providers of identity. For Tony Meenaghan (1995:26), brands are “social signals ... with congruity between brand and

⁸ The *product* can be equated with Saussure’s “signifier” and the *brand* with its “signified”.

⁹ Melin (2002:109) states that Coca-Cola is perhaps the world’s strongest brand with a brand value of 700 billion Swedish crowns (approximately R712 billion or US \$97.2 billion), and corresponds to 60 percent of the company’s value on the stock exchange. Similarly, companies such as BMW, Nike and Apple “are even more dependent on their brands, which actually represent more than 75 percent of the company’s total stock-market value” (Melin 2002:109).

user self-image”. The brand is endorsed as “a sign of self”, becoming an indicator to others of personal status, aspiration or personal values (Pavitt 2000:44). Judie Lannon and Peter Cooper (1983:205) express similarly that

[b]rands are used as a sort of language. Brands tell you a great deal about who you are, where you are in life, what you are and where you are going. Brand choices are as much a part of ourselves as the way we speak, the words we use, our dialect, dress, gestures and language. Brands are part of ourselves and we are part of our brands.

However, it is when consumers or viewers cannot identify with the inherent qualities of a brand that they show resistance towards brands. It is then that brands, for the consumer, become a political weapon. Klein (2000) describes how brands have become a tool in the hands of anti-corporate activists campaigning against corporations that choose profit over conscience. Nike, for example, has been used by members of society to expose and transform unjust labour practices (see Klein 2000:365-396). In this case, brands as political tools are viewed from the consumer-end.

From the sender-end, brands can also be used as political weapons. Lewis (2000:163) perceives the brand identity of SABC1 – with its catch-phrase *Simunye, We are One* – as a political tool that serves the strategy to ensure smooth transition into a new democracy. Through its unifying slogan and cheerful imagery of racially diverse presenters, the SABC1 *Simunye* brand propagates the post-apartheid ideology of the rainbow nation and its entreaty to South Africans to be united despite their differences (Lewis 2000:163).

From the two notions of brands above, firstly that brands are economic events, and secondly that brands are social events and providers of identity, it becomes clear that brands have different meanings. The meaning of brands as economic events serving a specific strategic purpose can be viewed from the sender-end, while the meaning of brands as providers of identity can be viewed from the consumer-end. From the consumer-end, for example, a brand can function as “an information carrier, a guarantee, a catalyst and an image creator [and] together, these qualities in a brand help to create value for the consumer” (Melin 2002:110). Balmer and Gray (2003:973-974) provide five valuable definitions, functions or meanings of brands based on the two perspectives of sender- and consumer-end.

Firstly, brands are marks indicating ownership. Traditionally viewed from the sender-end of the equation, a brand in its simplest sense “denotes a name, logotype or trademark denoting ownership” (Balmer & Gray 2003:973). The brands explored in the following chapter are all owned by the SABC. The word SABC is used in a uniform font within all the logos of the SABC television channels, and as such, indicates the ownership of the SABC.¹⁰ While the television channels compete for audience share and advertising revenue, the endorsement of the SABC name on all channels provides a collective corporate consciousness and unified corporate identity.

Secondly, from the sender-end of the equation, brands are known as image-building devices utilised in corporate image building (Balmer & Gray 2003:973). In this way organisations use brands to evoke the conviviality of their brand identity. SABC1, for example, uses their *Ya mampela* brand to suggest an image of youth television and social realism. The brand image this channel aims to evoke is that of brave, responsible youthfulness and social realism that serves as an inspiration and guiding light to social action for youthful people (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:5-6).

SABC2 uses their brand to advocate an image of family television and good moral values regarding unity and Nation Building (SABC commissioning briefs 2005:7-8). The brand image the SABC2 aims to evoke is a sense of belonging within the domestic family, national family and continental or African family. SABC3 uses their brand to inspire an image of upmarket cosmopolitan television and progressive sophistication (SABC channel statements 2006:7-9). This brand aims to evoke an image of aspirations, progression, achievement and national consciousness, situated within a world view. From the sender-end, each channel uses its brand to create a brand image in the mind of the consumer – which would ideally be consistent with the channel identity.

Thirdly, brands are symbols associated with key values. In this sense, brands from the sender-end are seen to represent the inbuilt values of the corporation (Balmer & Gray 2003:973). According to the SABC channel statements (2006) the television channel brands encapsulate the following additional values, SABC1: entertaining social realism, reality, honesty, social action and dialogue, courage, freedom, truth and youth culture;

¹⁰ This is part of what Olins (1989:78) calls *endorsed* corporate identity, where “an organisation has a group of activities/companies which it endorses with the group name and identity”.

SABC2: family values, responsibility, South African identity, African identity, moral values, personal ethics, nation building, pride, tradition, history, culture, unity, acceptance and solidarity; SABC3: sophistication, style, upmarket entertainment and cosmopolitanism.

The fourth definition of brands, this time from the 'consumer-end' of the equation, defines brands as means by which consumers construct individual identities (Balmer & Gray 2003:973-974). In this sense, the manner in which consumers interact with brands defines "who they are, aspire to be and/or wish to be seen" (Balmer & Gray 2003:973). A SABC1 viewer may wish to be seen as "a people's person, friendly and caring and with lots of vibe [a person who] hasn't forgotten her roots" (SABC channel statements 2006:1), a popular, responsible, truthful, socially active, and socially aware, optimistic, youthful, proudly African, courageous, 'hip', person. A SABC2 viewer may wish to be seen as a person with good moral, ethical and family values, a person engaged in nation building, serving the community, proudly South African, a person who values tradition, history and culture, African unity and solidarity, support systems, and a person who values "caring, sharing, looking out for each other, love, respect, and acceptance of who we are as people" (SABC channel statements 2006:5). The SABC3 viewer may wish to be seen as an upmarket, urban achiever, progressive and sophisticated, a person with a world view who nevertheless possesses a uniquely South African identity (SABC channel statements 2006:7-8).

The fifth definition of brands, again from the consumer-end of equation, defines brands as a conduit by which pleasurable experiences may be consumed (Balmer & Gray 2003:974). Accordingly, the SABC1 brand can be the conduit by which the pleasurable experience of youth entertainment, popular and 'cool' television can be experienced. The SABC2 brand can be the conduit by which pleasurable family, cultural and community entertainment can be experienced. The SABC3 brand can be the means by which stylish, intelligent and sophisticated entertainment ('high culture') can be experienced.

Focusing on the communicative qualities of brands, and the meanings of brands viewed from both the sender- and consumer-end, it also becomes necessary to distinguish between the terms brand *image* and brand *identity*. Meenaghan (1995:24) provides a useful distinction between the terms *image* and *identity*, *identity* means "the

sum of all the ways a company chooses to identify itself to all its publics”. Identity is the element that a company can control and the element that a company will focus on in relation to the management of the image development process; “[i]n short, identity is sent” (Meenaghan 1995:24). *Image*, on the other hand, “is formed in the mind of the receiver”; it is the perception of the company that the receivers hold in their mind: image is received or perceived (Meenaghan 1995:24).

Expanding on the definition above, *identity* is also considered to be the company’s expression of “what the brand stands for, what gives it meaning and what makes it unique” (Melin 2002:118-119). Brand identity¹¹ “is the brand’s unique fingerprint which makes it one of a kind [... and can be] compared to a genetic code, an inbuilt plan for the development of the brand” (Melin 2002:120). Brand identity is also a strategy of expression or communication influenced by, among other things, choice of *name*; its historical, geographical, cultural, social and ideological *origins*; self-image or *personality*; *use* (when, where, why and by who will the brand be used); and *distribution* (the control of the manner in which products or services are distributed) (Melin 2002:120-121). Melin’s (2002) description of identity indicates that building a strong brand identity is a strategy of communication that involves a holistic approach similar to the approach propagated by Wally Olins (1989).

Olins’ holistic approach requires that all organisational activities must affirm and express the corporate identity, and it is thus the responsibility of the organisation’s leaders and employees, and not just its advertising agents, designers and public relations managers (Olins 1989:7, 33). Everything a company “makes or sells, everything that it builds, everywhere that it operates, everything that it says or writes or displays, should build up the corporate spirit, the corporate identity” (Olins 1989:25). Olins (1989:7) states that a corporate *identity* is concerned with four major areas of activity.¹²

The *products* that the company makes or sells must project its standards and its values. The *buildings* in which it makes things and trades, its offices, factories, and showpieces – their location, how they

¹¹ For Abratt (1989:68) corporate identity is an assembly of cues “... by which an audience can recognise the company and distinguish it from others and which can be used to represent or symbolise the company”.

¹² These four major areas are similar to what is often referred to as the “Marketing Mix” or the “Four Ps of the Marketing Mix”, a term originally coined by Neil Borden in 1964. The four Ps are *Product*, *Price*, *Place* (or distribution) and *Promotion* (McDowell & Batten 2005:13).

are furnished and maintained – are all manifestations of identity. The corporation’s *communication material*, from its advertising to its instruction manuals, must have a consistent quality and character that accurately and honestly reflect the whole organization and its aims. All these are palpable, they are visible; they are designed – and that is why design is a significant component in the identity mix. A further component, which is just as significant although it is not visible, is how the organization *behaves*: to its own staff and to everybody with whom it comes into contact, including customers, suppliers and its host communities. This is especially true in service industries that have no tangible products. Here, too, consistency in attitude, action and style underlines the corporation’s identity.

Expressing corporate *identity* holistically can be very challenging. In this sense, brand identity is sent, controlled and created, and involves the action of *encoding*¹³ the company with the sum of its own perceptions of all its qualities expressed through all its activities. Companies cannot create their brand image as such, but a company can influence the reception of brand image by encoding its brand identity.

Brand image, on the other hand, involves the action of *decoding* on the part of the receiver or consumer. For Pavitt (2000:21), brand image or brand value results from “the dialogue that takes place between producer or brand owner and the consumer or user ... and the reception of that message by the consumer”. Brand image is the combination of beliefs, knowledge, associations, feelings, ideals and reflections that exist as a mental concept in the receiver or consumer’s mind, and is associated with the company as a result of the company’s entire activities, including the communication of its brand identity (Aaker 1992:109-110; Meenaghan 1995:23-27). The brand image is thus “the associated symbolic values, personality or character of a brand in the mind of the consumer” (Meenaghan 1995:27) and is more intangible, abstract and ephemeral than the brand identity.

The term *branding* involves both creating a brand identity and its involvement with the reception of brand image. Usually viewed from sender-end of the communication equation, *branding* “is principally the process of attaching a name and a reputation to something or someone” (Pavitt 2000:21). Schultz and Hatch (2002:142) provide two definitions of branding from the sender-end. Firstly, they state that “corporate branding

¹³ Hall’s notion of encoding and decoding (1990 [1980]) in television texts has been mentioned in the previous chapter (section 2.3). Branding as a cultural text displays the same principle of encoding on the part of the producer of the text, and decoding on the part of the interpreter (viewer/reader) of the text.

means putting the company name on all the products and services”, and secondly that branding means expressing “core values creatively and emotionally, for instance, by inspiring a distinctive look and feel that pervades the whole company” and all areas of company activity.

Schultz and Hatch (2002:142) provide a third definition leaning more towards the consumer-end, by stating that branding is an “ambition to tap into the core values of the organization and reflect about how they are being expressed and interpreted among all stakeholders”. The stakeholder or receiver is thus included. Leslie De Chernatony (1989:10) states that the “consumer is an active participant in the branding process ... and thus branding is a consequence of both the organisations input and the resulting consumer perception (i.e. the output)”. It could then be argued that branding is the *process* of the construction of brand identity and brand image, and a process of communication or negotiation between producer and consumer that includes both brand proprietor and stakeholder as active participants in this process.

The *brand name* plays a pivotal role in the communication process of branding; as such, “[n]aming is a subset of branding” (Grimaldi 2003:[sp]). A brand name consists of any combination of sounds or phonemes and should ideally be “unique enough as to identify a product or service without ambiguity” (Grimaldi 2003:[sp]). The name can be that of a company or product owner, service provider, the name of a particular product or product range, or the name of a particular service, or both (Pavitt 2000:21). The brand names of the SABC are an example of a family of branded products and services, all owned by the same company (Pavitt 2000:21). SABC News, SABC Sport, SABC Education, SABC1, SABC2, SABC3 and SABC Africa (before its dissolution), for example, “share certain features of their brand image, while still possessing a distinctive character or potential market” (Pavitt 2000:21). This is an example of what has been termed ‘brand DNA’, where “each brand depends upon the image of the parent-brand” (in this case the parent SABC brand), despite their individual character (Pavitt 2000:21).

The function of a *brand name* involves more than just identifying a product or service. Danesi (2002:185-186) states that brand names at an informative, practical level have

a denotative¹⁴ function that allow the consumer to determine the origin or identity of a particular product or service, although at the connotative level, the name of the product can provoke an image beyond the initial function of identification. Therefore the brand name can further, or extend, denotative meaning into what is known as connotation¹⁵ (Danesi 2002:186).

The pictorial counterpart of a brand name, the *logo*,¹⁶ is “designed to generate the same kinds of connotative signification systems for a product [or service] through the visual modality” (Danesi 2002:187). In a manner similar to the brand name, the *logo* becomes a signifier that can signify all the values and meanings attached to a brand. Schultz and Hatch (2002:143) maintain that a logo is a symbol that “can stand for any and all the meanings that stakeholders give to a company”. They believe that logos are powerful symbols that capture the meanings stakeholders associate with the brand.

For Schultz and Hatch (2002:143), these symbols react on one’s emotions, imagination and intellect, and are better for producing involvement and commitment, but symbols or logos can signify many things and are arbitrary (Schultz & Hatch 2002:143). A symbol functions by convention. Peirce (1931-58, 2.249) states that a symbol is a sign which points to the denoted object by virtue of a ‘law’ (generally similar ideas) which then function to cause the interpretation of the symbol as referencing the object. It is therefore important for the proprietor to actively create the association of ideas associated with a brand. Olins (1989:25) states that symbols of loyalty (such as flags, rituals, and names for example) have to be manufactured by an organisation to create loyalty. Olins (1989:29) also contends that the identity should be symbolic and ritualised with elements such as names and graphic devices. The logo is thus an important element of the visual brand identity that aims to create such loyalty.

The *visual brand identity* is a combination of the brand name, logo, symbols, graphics, advertisements, design, colours and style used to distinguish it from other brand identities. These elements make up the brand’s visual code. These elements are

¹⁴ Denotation refers to the literal or obvious conceptual meaning of a sign, while connotation refers to the figurative and associated mental concepts and meanings of a sign (Chandler 1999; Fourie 2001:346).

¹⁵ The author recognises that the discussion of denotation and connotation is brief here, but the purpose is to describe and focus on the concepts and elements of branding and corporate identity. Denotation and connotation as semiotic processes are explored in greater details in section 3.6.3.

¹⁶ Danesi (2002:187) comments that the word *logo* is the abbreviation of the word logograph.

mainly found in an organisation's communication material, and they are tangible, visible and designed (Olins 1989:7). Throughout his work, Olins (1989:9) is primarily "concerned with how the visual style of an organization affects its positioning in the market; and how the corporate purpose [or identity] is made visible through design and behaviour".

The visual brand identity is not *the* corporate brand identity, but is indeed one of the most important resources to establish communication and a relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders. The visual brand identity is in itself a rich, composite sign, a visual signifier expressing or signifying a company's core values associated with their products and services, in order to create a positive relationship between brand proprietor and stakeholder. The visual brand identity is sent from proprietor to stakeholder to communicate the brand's core values and also allows for feedback from its stakeholders in an ongoing process of communication or semiosis. The next section explores the specific instance of television branding.

3.5 The on-air elements of television channel branding

Branding has been discussed in a general sense thus far, but television network or channel branding requires a discussion of its own, since it involves a unique set of circumstances, definitions and jargon which emerged with the practice of television channel branding. Television branding, and the creation of idents and channel promotions, have traditionally been the task of in-house designers and editors, but in recent years have become increasingly sophisticated in terms of visual appeal and technical intricacy. An increase in sophistication also necessitates an increase in techniques, in turn resulting in an increase in terms and definitions associated with television channel branding as a specific instance of branding.

Robert Bellamy and Paul Traud (2000:18) provide useful definitions regarding the branding of television channels, and explain that "[i]n television, the brand can be represented by call letters or an acronym, logo, company wordmark (name), theme, jingle, sound, or some mixture of these, often in combination with individual programme promotion, designed to differentiate one station/ channel/ programme from another". The term *brand* in television can also refer to specific programmes that are considered

brands in their own right, but a *television brand* is mostly regarded as the specific television channel or television network (Bellamy & Traud 2000:128).

Defining and conceptualising *television brands* are different from rationalisations of brands in other industries due to intrinsic and historical variables; and four such differences are pointed out by Bellamy and Traud (2000:134-135). The first aspect is that the television brand denotes a television channel with uninterrupted surges of television content, thus enabling a steady opportunity for self-promotion (through bugs and idents) so that the source of the brand is the brand itself (Bellamy & Traud 2000:134).

The second and perhaps most characteristic aspect of the television brand is that “price is rarely a consideration in television” (Bellamy & Traud 2000:135). This is especially applicable to South African terrestrial television, where all viewers are subject to general television licence fees only.¹⁷ A third difference is that consumer loyalty to one brand or is nonexistent in television, since “[t]elevision has always operated with the assumption that viewers will sample other channels/networks” (Bellamy & Traudt 2000:135) and that channel surfing according to favourite programme schedules is inevitable. The fourth and final aspect is that “television is more ephemeral and nontangible than most other products and services” (Bellamy & Traud 2000:135). They maintain that branding is therefore “more important in television than in many other businesses, as awareness and image essentially are all television has to ‘sell’ to the viewing audience that it must create” (Bellamy & Traud 2000:135).

Television channel branding has become necessary to differentiate between channels in a multichannel environment since the advent of satellite and cable television (Chan-Olmsted & Kim 2001:79; McDowell & Batten 2005:3). The term *branding* and its use in the American television market emerged and became popular in the early 1990s (Chan-Olmsted & Kim 2001:79). The increase in television channels – and thus an increase in competition – in the 1990s, encouraged a “deeper interest in the art and

¹⁷ In other words it does not matter if the viewer prefers one SABC channel above the others, or if the viewer only watches e-tv, since the viewer has access to all the terrestrial channels regardless. The brands of satellite television channels are somewhat of an exception to the aspect of price, since viewers are able to modify their subscription to satellite channels according to individual preferences and budgets. Even then, the price aspect and its influence on viewer choices seems less than the influence of price on other consumer brand choices.

science of brand management” (McDowell & Batten 2005:3). These developments in the television industry created a need for channel controllers to “ensure that viewers knew immediately what channel they were tuned to, and what that channels stood for” (Elen 2003:[sp]).

It appears that the need to differentiate between television channels is thus the most important aspect regarding television channel branding, but a television brand is also much more than a channel differentiator. Peter Meech (1996:69) accurately describes television brands in the following manner; they “constitute a hybrid form of *both* promotional sign *and* commodity sign”; their function is cognitive and effective; they inform or remind the viewers of the channel they are watching; and “express – visually and audibly – aspects of the broadcasting company’s self-perception as an organisation in the hope of creating a favourable image and attitude among its audience”. Meech’s (1996) description of a television brand is more in alignment with Olins’ (1989) holistic approach to branding discussed in the previous section.

The increasing interest and emphasis on television branding since the 1990s has not necessarily delivered a large increase in academic studies in this field. Bellamy and Traud (2000:131) note that “academic studies of television branding are scarce in both media and marketing literatures”. Most texts on television branding are written from either a marketing perspective, or a design or aesthetic perspective. For example, Martin Lambie-Nairn (1997) writes from an aesthetic perspective providing insight into the discipline and graphic techniques of television channel branding. Walter McDowell and Alan Batten (2005), on the other hand, write from a marketing point of view and suggest key principles and practices for the branding of television channels. So do Bellamy and Traud (2000), who provide useful insight into television branding in general. Meech (1996; 1999a; 1999b & 2001) regards corporate identity in the television broadcast environment as a noteworthy academic contribution.

Writing about the promotion of television programmes and television channels, Meech (1999a) attempts a typology of the on-air elements that occur during junctions¹⁸ on British television and defines these elements as *clutter*,¹⁹ referring to those elements

¹⁸ This “junction” is a term used in industry jargon to describe the break between television programmes (Meech 1999a:37).

¹⁹ Meech (1999b:293) explains his preference for the term ‘clutter’ in the following way: “despite its negative overtones of disorder and confusion, [‘clutter’] is preferable to the more

used by the channel for self-promotion and identification, thus excluding television programmes and advertisements. This *clutter* is an essential part of television *flow*,²⁰ a metaphor suggested by Raymond Williams (1975) to indicate the manner in which the continuous river of images and sounds are channelled through television²¹ (Allen 1992:12). McAllister and Giglio (2005:28) maintain that techniques like television programme promotions, cliff-hangers (which appear before a commercial break) and programme scheduling, in combination with the characteristics of television as a medium, decrease the incongruence between images on the screen and enhance their ability to flow from one to the next. Further, they state that ease of channel switching, similarity of programme structure and uniform scheduling on most channels renders the flow as an “inter-channel experience” (McAllister & Giglio 2005: 28).

For Meech (1999a), the television flow, or *clutter*²² as he calls it, is “becoming more strategically important, more technically sophisticated and more professionally managed”. Gone are the days when a “broadcaster would produce the corporate identity – the logo, the idents and other material, right down to the letterhead – in-house, in their own presentation graphics department” (Elen 2003:[sp]). The simple and sometimes haphazard animated images and accompanying sounds have since evolved into complete identity statements that provide the viewer “an instant feeling for what channel they were tuned to, and what that channel stood for” (Elen 2003:[sp]).

Branding a television channel involves much more than putting a logo at the bottom of the television screen. Branding is a holistic approach and the creation of a visual brand identity is merely one, although important aspect within such an approach. The visual brand identity of a television channel primarily manifests on-air (through its channel

informative but cumbersome ‘non-programme editorial items’ [...and includes] title sequences, end credits, production company credits, sponsorship idents/ ‘break-bumpers’, presentation announcers, menus, clocks, programme promos or trails, station idents and corporate campaigns”.

²⁰ Bignell (2004:23) states that fundamental works in this field include “books by Raymond Williams (1974) and John Ellis (1982), whose interest was in the flow of programmes in the television schedule, and how viewers rarely watch programmes singly but instead as part of a flow of programmes and commercials over a period of hours. Viewers also switch from one programme or channel to another, composing their own ‘text’ of television from these segments”.

²¹ Williams (1975:86) describes this continuous flow of television texts as possibly *the* defining characteristic of broadcast television.

²² Meech (1999b) states that clutter helps to provide a sense of “atmosphere as well as suggesting the kind of wider audience with which individual viewers are in company.”

idents, on-air promotions and own advertisements), and also appears off-air (through print advertisements, billboards, and its website, for example).

For Meech (1999a:39), *logos*²³ are the most important component of television clutter, identifying corporate emblems of television companies through “an assemblage of shape, colour and typography and, ideally, connoting its essential values”. Meech (1999a:39) maintains that logos (Figure 4) are the most ubiquitous of all categories of clutter, “appearing off-air on everything from annual reports to outside broadcast vehicles as well as on the television screen”. Another related element in the typology of clutter is the *dog* or *bug* (Figure 4), a graphic, miniature logo located in the corner of the television screen.²⁴ Meech (1999:42) indicates that “some maintain it stands for ‘digitally originated graphic’, others for ‘digital on-screen graphic’ or even ‘downstream originated graphic’ (i.e. added to the signal at the vision-mixing stage)”. Sometimes it is translucent in appearance and also known as a watermark. The function of the dog or bug (hereafter only referred to as a dog) is similar to the function of idents, namely to function primarily as a station signifier (Meech 1999:40).



Figure 4: Screen shot with the SABC Africa logo (centre) and SABC Africa dog (top left), 2006. (Screen grab, photographed by author.)

²³ Meech (1996:70) uses the term ‘corporate logo’ in a generic manner “to encompass symbols, logotypes (full names), monograms (initials), and composites of these.”

²⁴ Meech (1999a:40) clarifies that dogs are not “strictly clutter in the sense of occurring in the junctions between programmes”. They are, however, an important element of the television channel’s visual brand identity.

Another element of clutter (or visual branding) on television is the station identification, or channel *idents* (Figure 5), occasionally called stings (Meech 1999a:39). A channel ident, according to Meech (1996:70), is a “short animated sequence that appears between programmes, either in unchanging form or in a variety of seasonal or other variations, to signify the channel and its ethos.” Bignell (2004:308) defines channel idents as “the symbols representing production companies, television channels, etc., often comprising graphics or animation”. Idents are “moments of television which are frequently repeated and familiar, giving a brand identity to television broadcasters” (Bignell 2004:10). Idents make it possible to combine important programme information with channel branding, and often make use of technical innovation and interesting visual imagery in order to effectively combine marketing objectives and design considerations (Meech 1999a:39-40).



Figure 5: SABC Africa ident, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

A fourth component of television clutter is called the *special* (Meech 1999a:40), “a promotional vehicle devised and produced for special occasions or purposes”. Meech (1999a:40) clarifies that idents appear consistently during junctions, whereas specials²⁵ (Figure 6) only occur intermittently according to specific events or specific marketing goals.

The fifth component in Meech’s typology of clutter, and also the “items which individually take up most airtime and yet paradoxically are the most ephemeral and least prestigious are *promos* or *trails*” (Meech 1999a:40). The main purpose of promos or trails is to advertise programmes or series. Promos and trails are often “[c]reated inhouse by small teams consisting normally of a producer/director and editor, they have traditionally been disparaged by observers as formulaic hack work” (Meech 1999a:40). The promos and trails (Figure 7) have become increasingly creative, and the building of

²⁵ Specific examples of ‘clutter’ such as specials, logos, idents, promos and dogs will be discussed in Chapter Four.

bridges between programmes and channels through imaginative promos is an important part of the branding process (Meech 1999a:41).



Figure 6: SABC Africa special for Africa Day, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)



Figure 7: SABC Africa channel promo, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

Meech (1999a:41) states that the most noticeable and memorable of the on-air promotional elements are logos, dogs, station idents, stings, specials and trailers. Other mechanisms (Figure 8) include programme and merchandising slides, menus, clocks and break-bumpers ... [as well as] acoustic features as sound effects, musical signifiers and continuity announcers” (Meech 1999a:41). These on-air corporate branding techniques or “brandcasting” as Meech (1999b:292-293) calls it, aspire to communicate a cohesive message about a multifaceted entity or organisation to a large audience of diverse viewers (Meech 1999a:42).



Figure 8: SABC Africa slides, menus and break-bumper idents, 2006.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

The next section explores the cohesive message communicated to the audience in terms of the signs, codes and meanings in television channel branding as part of the process of semiosis.

3.6 The signs, codes and meanings in television channel branding as a process of semiosis

Semiosis is the semiological term for communication and it “literally means the way in which any sign functions in the mind of an interpreter (communicator and recipient) in order to convey a particular meaning in a particular situation” (Fourie 1996:20). The sender and receiver of the communicated message are situated in their respective positions based on their use of signs and codes. The creation, use and interpretation of such signs and codes are part of this process of semiosis. Pieter Fourie (1996:20) states that the concept semiosis “is the active form of the term semiotics”, embracing all the components that play a part in the communication process.

Branding is a signification process or a process of semiosis. The discussion of branding as a process of semiosis pursues the definition of semiotics as “the science of signs and codes and the meanings they convey” (Fourie 2001:326). The three key elements, concepts or “instruments” of semiotics, as Fourie (1996:35) calls them, are signs, codes and meanings. The following section thus explores the signs and codes of television branding and the meanings they convey.

3.6.1 Signs and sign systems

Semiotics usually departs with a consideration of the smallest unit or element of meaning in a form of communication, called a *sign* (Seiter 1992:33; Fourie 1996:35). Unlike language, however, “television does not conveniently break down into discrete elements” (Seiter 1992:42). The images on screen are already “combinations of several signs at once and involves a complex set of denotation and connotations” (Seiter 1992:43). A *sign* can be an image, words, sounds, flavours, acts or objects, in fact, “[a]nything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as ‘signifying’ something – referring to or *standing for* something other than itself” (Chandler 2002:17).

Saussure (1983:67) defines the linguistic sign (whether written or spoken form) as

a two-sided psychological entity, ... a combination of a concept and a sound pattern. ... We propose to keep the term *sign* to designate the whole, but to replace *concept* and *sound pattern* respectively by *signification* and *signal*. The latter terms have the advantage of indicating the distinction which separates each from the other and both from the whole which they are part.

Saussure's model of the sign therefore indicates that a sign consists of two parts, a signifier (sound pattern) and a signified (mental concept).²⁶ The "sound pattern (signifier) is the hearer's psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses ... and may be called a 'material' element" (Saussure 1983:66). The concept (signified), on the other hand, is usually more abstract (Saussure 1983:66). It is a mental concept or a concept in the mind rather than a physical thing.

It is possible to equate the Saussurean (1983) model of the sign and his distinction between the signifier and signified with Meenaghan's (1995) notion of the brand and the distinction he makes between identity and image (Figure 9). For Saussure (1983), the *sign* is the sum of the *signifier* and the *signified* (or the combination of the sound pattern and the concept, or the signal and the signification). Similarly the *brand* can be conceived as the sum of the *identity* and the *image*. Keeping in mind that Olins (1989:7) defines corporate *identity* as the sum of the organisation's products or services; buildings or physical environment; information or communication material; and the staff and organisational behaviour, Meenaghan's (1995) *identity* resembles Saussure's (1983) *signifier* in that both elements are the material or physical aspect of the *sign* or *brand*.

Both the *identity* and the *signifier* can be controlled or influenced directly by the sender (sign producer or brand proprietor), and both involve the aspect of encoding by the sender. The *signified* and *image* on the other hand, involve the aspect of decoding by the receiver, viewer or consumer and exist as an abstract or mental concept in the mind of the receiver and cannot be controlled directly and accurately by the sender.

²⁶ Daniel Chandler (2002:20) notes that Saussure's "*signified* is not to be identified directly with ... a referent [an object existing in the world] but is a *concept* in the mind – not a thing but the notion of a thing. ... Thus, for Saussure the linguistic sign is wholly immaterial".

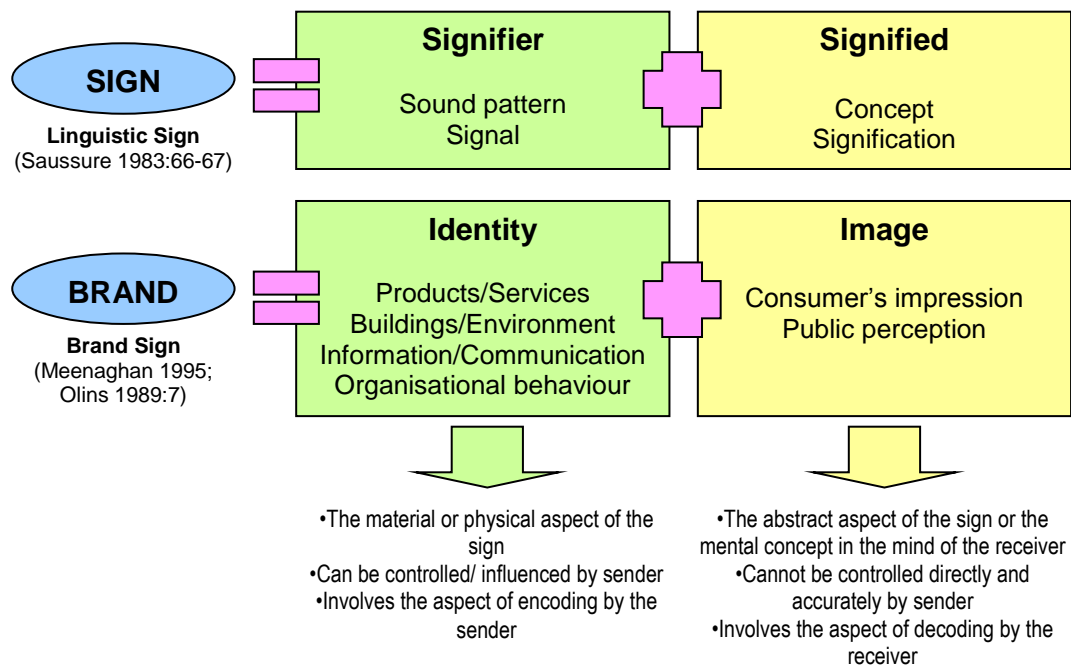


Figure 9: Schematic representation of the similarities between Saussure's signifier and signified and Meenaghan's identity and image. (Author's representation.)

The Saussurean model and its relation to branding may appear simplistic presented in this way, when in fact it is more complex to clearly determine the boundaries of the signifier, the signified and the sign. In terms of television channel branding the signifier/ sound pattern/ signal/ material element can be visual or aural. It can include jingles and other audio mnemonic devices; representational and non-representational images; photographic material; linguistic signs; graphic signs; logos; slogans; idents or stings; dogs; advertisements; trailers; menus and clocks, for example (Bignell 1997:141-143; Meech 1999a:41). These visual and aural brand elements that appear on the television channel can be described as the signifiers. These are the signals or material aspects and can be controlled and changed by the sender, and it therefore includes the act of encoding by the communicator.

However, these same brand elements described above as signifiers can also be regarded as the signs, for example the logo that is mentioned as a signifier above is also an example of a sign. An SABC television channel logo (sign) is the sum of the channel name; the colours; the style in which it is executed; the graphic numeric symbol; and the slogan (signifiers) and the public perception of the television channel (signified). In an equivalent way the signifieds (or mental concepts) can become

signifiers in further chains of signification, since meanings are organised in chains of signification (Dyer 1982:123). Similarly Chandler (1999) notes that “[w]ithin a single language, one signifier may refer to many signifieds ... and one signified may be referred to by many signifiers”. In other words the margins of signs, signifiers and signifieds are not always clear when Saussurean semiotics is applied to brands and branding.

Saussure (1983) makes an additional contribution in his conception of the linguistic sign that is particularly visible in television branding. For Saussure (1983:67, 78) the linguistic sign is arbitrary since there is no intrinsic or natural relationship between the signifier and the signified. The meaning of the linguistic sign depends entirely on the context, or the social and conventional use of language in that context. A pictorial sign or a television channel brand element (such as a logo, animated figure, or brushstroke) that appears on screen is entirely arbitrary too, since the meaning of its signifier and signified depends on the context and the social and cultural conventions controlling the use of such signs.

A logo with the brand name illustrated in red can carry meanings of romance, or meanings of revolution, depending on the context. If the logo consists of the brand name in red lettering placed next to a heart symbol, it would carry meanings of romance, and if the logo consists of red lettering placed next to the symbol of a raised, clenched fist, it would carry meanings of rebellion or uprising. The red lettering is thus arbitrary and the meaning agreed by convention and its relation to the context (Bignell 1997:8-9). The arbitrariness of signs mean that they can be polysemic (having many meanings) (Lacey 1998:58).

Whereas Saussure’s sign consists out of two parts, signifier and signified, Peirce offers a triadic model that consist of the *representamen*, the *interpretant* and the *object*, and the interaction between these three parts is referred to by Peirce (1931-58, 2.228) as “semiosis”. Lars Christensen and Søren Askegaard (2001) offer useful examples and models of Peircean (1931) semiotics applied to corporate communications. In terms of the signifying process of branding, the sign or representamen can be a “gesture, a logo, an advertisement, a slogan, a product, a package, a narrative, a written text, a set of behaviours, or even an entire persuasive campaign” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303). The object which the sign or representamen stands for, is sometimes also

called the “referent – an equivalent to the notion of the world as it ‘is’ in itself – in the present context, for example, the so-called personality of a product or the ‘real’ character of an organization” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303).

Lastly, the interpretant “can be thought of as a mental image of the interpreter created or stimulated by the sign - an image that links the sign to its object or referent, just as the word ‘IBM’ creates a mental image that links the three letters I, B and M with a large corporation that produces computers” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303). The relation between the three elements representamen (or sign), interpretant and object is illustrated in Figure 10.

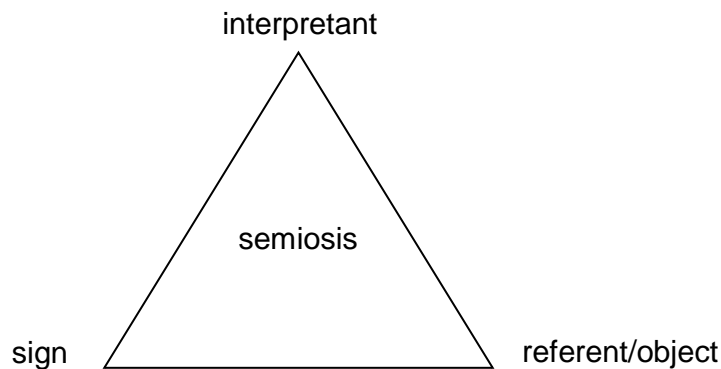


Figure 10: The signifying process.
(Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303.)

Corporate identity is the total sum of the signs representing an organisation to its stakeholders (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:304; Meenaghan 1995:25). An organisation’s corporate identity is what represents it despite the sometime intangible, incoherent, fragmented and perhaps self-contradictory nature of the set of signs (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303). In Meenaghan’s (1995:25) terms, this identity (or sign) is sent. There is a need to make a clear distinction between the signs carefully manufactured to communicate and promote an organisation and its products and services, and the unintended signs (negative rumours, for example) (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:303). The intended or manufactured signs form part of the organisation’s formal profile and “often receives more prominent attention internally than the other representations of the organization” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:304-305).

Corporate image (Figure 11), on the other hand, is the perception of the company that an audience holds mentally and is received or perceived (Meenaghan 1995:24). Corporate image is the “impression created or stimulated by a sign or a set of signs” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:305). The image is therefore equivalent to the Peircian concept of the interpretant (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:305). Corporate image is a collective or partly shared interpretant and also a “complex construct generated by signs that has come to represent the organization in the minds of its various audiences” (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:305). Christensen and Askegaard (2001:305) recognise a need to distinguish between an organisation’s “official self-image” and its “reputation” or general impression; two frequently contrasting impressions. A successful brand identity is one where the self-image and reputation are very similar.

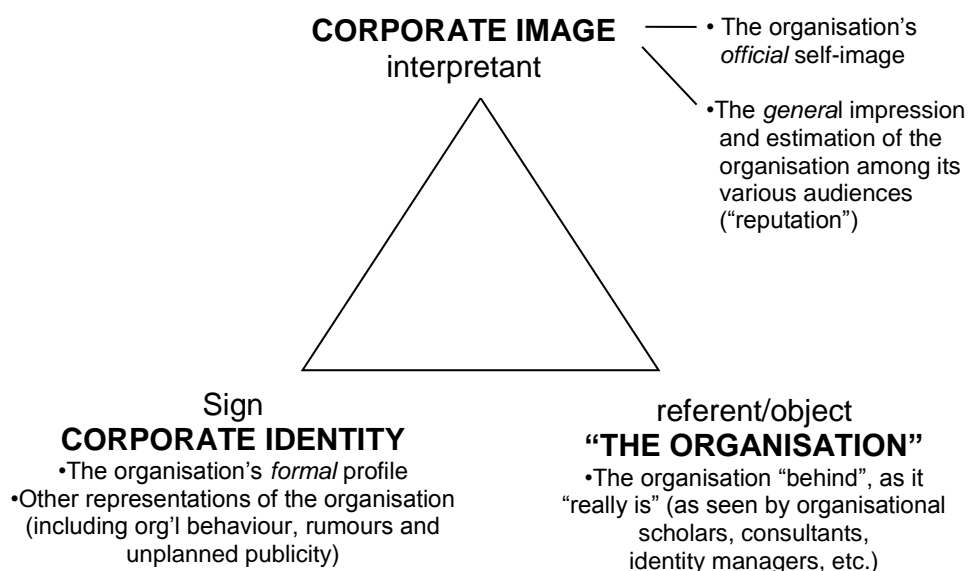


Figure 11: The semiotic dimensions of corporate identity and corporate image. (Christensen & Askegaard 2001:305.)

Chandler (2002:35-36) further contemplates the meaning of signs and sign systems. He maintains that the meaning of a sign emerges from its interpretation rather than from the sign itself (Chandler 2002:35). He also notes that semioticians distinguish between a sign and a ‘sign vehicle’, and that the ‘sign vehicle’ is a ‘signifier’ to Saussureans, while Peirceans call it a ‘representamen’ (Chandler 2002:35-36). The sign is thus more than just a sign vehicle. If the term “sign” is used loosely, the distinction can be lost. Within Saussurean theory, some references to ‘sign’ refer to the

signifier, and likewise, Peirce also uses 'sign' when he actually refers to the *representamen*. As Chandler (2002:35-35) states, "the *signifier* or *representamen* is the *form* in which the sign appears (such as the spoken or written form of a word) whereas the *sign* is the whole meaningful ensemble" (Chandler 2002:35-36).

Pierce (1931) also contributes further to the notion of the sign by classifying three distinct types of signs that are particularly useful in the analysis of images. Chandler (2002:36) notes that Peirce's "classification of distinct 'types of signs' ... is more usefully interpreted in terms of differing 'modes of relationship' between sign vehicles and their referents" which are *symbolic*, *iconic* and *indexical* (Chandler 2002:36; Fourie 2001:335; Adams 1996:137; Lacey 1998:65-66 & Dyer 1982:124-125).

The *iconic* aspect of a sign is the recognisable aspect in the sense that it resembles and relates to that which it represents (Adams 1996:137; Lacey 1998:66). The icon and its relation to television channel branding can be exemplified with an example from SABC2's channel branding. If the break-bumper or ident consist of a photograph of a family, the channel name and number (or logo), and the slogan (feel at home), it is the photograph that forms the iconic sign. The photograph or iconic sign of the father and three children resembles the family and the family members it depicts, but is not the actual family (Dyer 1982:124). It is thus only a resemblance of the family.

However, Lacey (1998:66) includes that an "iconic sign does not necessarily have to resemble *physically* what it refers to" and provides the example of ordinance survey maps that are graphical iconic signs. With this example Lacey (1998:66) illustrates that iconic signs are not only photographs and can also include graphic signs, for example. The relationship between the signifier and the signified of the iconic sign is "one of resemblance or likeness" (Dyer 1982:124).

The relationship between the signifier and the signified in the *indexical* sign is direct, sequential and causal (Bignell 1997:15; Lacey 1998:66; Dyer 1982:124). The sign of rising mercury in a thermometer is indexical of the rise in temperature, so that the sign (rising mercury in a thermometer) is caused by the thing it signifies (rising temperature) (Bignell 1997:15; Lacey 1998:66).

In television channel branding all sorts of indexical signs appear on the screen, for example a clock on SABC2 is indexical of the commencement of the news; a graphic sign resembling a film strip is indexical of the start of a film and a menu ident with a list of programme titles and times are indexical of the evening's programmes. The images or signs that appear in the junctions between programmes can be iconic (whether it is of photographic or graphic nature), but are simultaneously an *index* that represents more than itself: they also point to the end of one programme and the beginning of another or the beginning of a series of advertisements, for example. Adams (1996:137) notes that the indexical possibilities of a work of art (or graphic design, in the case of television channel branding) is extensive and include elements of style; application of techniques; social, political and economic contexts; and the viewer's response, among other things.

In the case of a *symbolic* sign, "the signifier does not resemble or cause the signified, but is related to it only by convention or 'contract'" (Dyer 1982:125). In other words the "relationship between the signifier or signified in some signs is arbitrary based neither on resemblance nor on any existential link" (Dyer 1982:125).

An example from the SABC Africa channel branding can be used to gain clarity about the notion of a *symbolic* sign. The symbol of the butterfly in the SABC Africa idents (Figure 12) is a symbol for rebirth, revival and transformation – not so much because the butterfly embodies the process of transformation, but because the butterfly has been used by members of some cultures to signify rebirth and transformation (Dyer 1982:125). The meaning of the symbol (butterfly) depends on the "conventional, agreed-upon meanings [rebirth], and as such is related to Saussure's sign" (Adams 1996:137). The symbolic sign (butterfly) is arbitrary and exists as a symbol only because there is a consensus regarding its meaning (transformation) (Lacey 1998:66).

Dyer (1982:125) also states that brand images (in this case the visual and aural brand elements of television channels) perform as symbols for the product, and suggests that it may be more important to note that often iconic, indexical and symbolic signs overlap and are simultaneously present in many advertising campaigns.



Figure 12: SABC Africa idents, 2006.
(Screen grabs photographed by author.)

In addition to a distinction between different types of signs, one can also distinguish between different types of sign systems (Fourie 1996:45). Fourie (1996:45) defines a sign system as “a group of signs with much the same character, integrated by the same rules of grammar [for example] language, style of dress, traffic signs, mathematics, music, physical movements ... television, film and photography (the electronic visual media)”. Television channel branding is a unique sign system “with its own rules, grammar, syntax or codes” (Fourie 1996:45), and it is a sign system that shares characteristics and elements with film, television, advertising and linguistic sign systems. This is in line with Fourie’s (1996:45) observation that “we seldom use a sign system in isolation [and that] we generally use several sign systems simultaneously” when communicating. This discussion of sign systems with unique rules, syntax or codes brings us to the next element or instrument in the process of semiosis, namely codes.

3.6.2 Codes

The sign discussed in the previous section can be considered as the smallest unit in semiotics, but signs are combined according to a “so-called *recipe* or technique” (Fourie 1996:50) to convey meaning, and it is this recipe or technique that is the code (Fourie 1996:50). The code is thus the larger semiotic unit (Fourie 1996:50) or system in which signs are organised into groups (Bignell 1997:9). Codes enable the “formation and understanding of messages (encoding and decoding) [and are] a set of rules or

and interpretative device known to both transmitter and receiver, which assigns a certain meaning or context to a certain sign” (Dyer 1982:134). For Bignell (1997:10), the “concept of a code becomes very useful in dividing signs into groups, and working out how meaning of the signs depend on their membership of codes”.

Fourie (1996:50) also reiterates that codes are more than a mere means to combine signs and have meaning in themselves, and this meaning “is usually conventional and social”. In other words, codes are consensual “forms of social knowledge which are derived from social practices and beliefs” and assist in the organisation and understanding of the world in terms of “dominant meaning patterns” (Dyer 1982:135, Lacey 1998:31). Such dominant meaning patterns are mentally present when one interprets meaning and reflect on things, and although such patterns are often taken for granted, they actually differ from time to time and culture to culture (Dyer 1982:135). The interpreter’s understanding of (and the significance of) an individual sign depends on the recognition of its belonging to a code that has specific meaning for him or her (Bignell 1997:10).

In the case of corporate branding and identity it is possible to view the brand as the smallest element or sign. The recipe, larger semiotic unit or the set of rules that govern their use, can be perceived as branding. The practice of branding operates by making use of established conventions. The meanings of all the signs that make up the brand thus depend on their membership to the practice of branding. Applied to television channel branding in particular, the larger interpretative frameworks or codes include the conventions and codes of branding, the codes of camera editing and techniques, the codes in design, cultural codes, linguistic codes and stylistic codes. The relationship between all the signs that compose the visual brand identity of the television channel (name, slogan, logo, colour, icons, symbols, graphics, photographs, jingles and audio mnemonics, for example) is determined and directed by, for example, television codes, branding codes, design codes and social codes (Fourie 1996:50).

Writing about television, Bignell (2004:88) describes the codes and connotations of the title sequences in news programmes, and this description can easily be applied or compared to the branded idents and channel sequences appearing between programmes. Bignell (2004:88) notes that the music accompanying the title sequences of news programmes often have “music with loud major chords played on brass

instruments [... to connote] importance, dignity and drama”. The music accompanying idents are similarly distinct and catchy in order to identify the channel and entice the viewer to watch upcoming programmes. Furthermore, title sequences and channel idents

feature computer graphics in fast-moving sequences, syntagms in semiotic terminology, connoting technological sophistication. The function of title sequences in television news programmes [or idents] is to establish the status of news [or the channel and its programs] as significant and authoritative, and also to differentiate one channel's [...programmes] from another, providing 'brand recognition'. The title sequences [...and idents] share many of the functions of television commercials, in differentiating products which are very similar and endowing them with connotations supporting a familiar identity. Title sequences are sequences of signs which collectively signify the boundaries between one part of the continual flow of television broadcasting and the rest of it (Bignell 2004:88-89).

The television viewer's understanding of the flow of television and the sequences of graphic clutter depends on the viewer's understanding of codes. Codes thus form the framework of social knowledge around which meaning is structured and around which meaning is encoded and decoded.

Since they draw from a variety of codes, television channel brands consist of many messages (Dyer 1982:135). It is thus likely that the viewer of the channel interprets the multifaceted message “as an integrated text according to the media/cultural codes at his or her disposal” (Dyer 1982:135). If the codes are examined, the meaning of television channel brands and the manner in which channel branding works become clearer because the codes allow multiple messages to be combined in the text (Dyer 1982:136).

3.6.3 Meanings

The meaning of a text, or more specifically the meaning of a television channel brand, has intricate facets and can be explored from various angles. The exploration of the codes of television channel branding already indicates that a number of meanings can be deduced depending on the interpreter's knowledge and familiarity with certain codes. “Viewer's assign meaning to images (signs) and experience them in terms of their own knowledge, background and experience” (Fourie 2001:346).

A useful point of departure or way to ponder meaning is to consider its relation to the semiotic concepts of denotation and connotation. Chandler (1999) states that “denotation and connotation are terms describing the relationship between the signifier and its signified”, and that meaning includes both these two concepts.

For the purpose of distinguishing between these two terms, denotation can be described as the “definitional, ‘literal’, ‘obvious’, or ‘commonsense’ meaning of a sign” (Chandler 1999). Denotation is about the identification of a sign; it is about the perception of something through any of our senses, and it is such perception that is the denotation (Lacey 1998:57). In terms of branding one can consider the logo as a sign, and that this logo denotes the name or identity of an organisation. Denotation “refers to the literal meaning of a sign; to what is ‘objectively’ present and easily recogni[s]ed or identified” (Dyer 1982:128). To take another example, this time from television channel branding specifically, one can say that an image in an ident denotes that what it is a picture of (Seiter 1992:39); for example, the illustration of a butterfly on the SABC Africa idents denotes a butterfly insect (as shown in the example in Figure 12). Denotation therefore refers to the “literal or dictionary meaning (conceptual meaning) attached to a sign” (Fourie 2001:346).

Connotation, on the other hand, is the associated meaning of a sign, or the associated mental concept of the sign (Lacey 1998:59). Connotation is the meaning that lies beyond the literal meaning, thus lying beyond the denotation of a sign (Dyer 1982:128). Connotations are the cultural associations and connections that signs have (Bignell 2004:88). To take a well known example, the Nike logo with its swoosh symbol denotes the name or identity of an organisation, but its connotations may vary from person to person. For one interpreter this logo may connote desirable, quality footwear; as for another, it may give rise to connotations of the unjust exploitation of cheap labour (Klein 2000). The term connotation thus refers to the “socio-cultural and ‘personal’ associations” of the sign and “are typically related to the interpreter’s class, age, gender, [and] ethnicity”, for example (Chandler 1999).

Connotation thus depends on the viewer’s knowledge and social context, and is therefore subjective. It is, however, possible that many interpreters of the same sign will have similar connotative meanings they attach to such a sign, because the

“connotations have reached the status of a social consensus” (Lacey 1998:59). This occurs because the meaning of such signs “involves the associations of signs with other cultural codes of meaning” (Barker 2003:92). The connotation is “activated by the means of conventions or codes” (Dyer 1982:128). For example, it is possible that South African viewers associate the SABC Africa idents (and its signs including the butterfly, the sun, and the shape of the African continent as shown in Figure 12) with rebirth, growth, illumination and an African Renaissance. The connotation of the African Renaissance is conjured up by the denotation of the ident and its associations drawn from design conventions and (stylistic, television and cultural) codes.

Although a distinction between the two terms aid in a better understanding of denotation and connotation, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish between the two (Chandler 1999). Seiter (1992:39) notes that in television criticism “the difference between connotation and denotation seems rather mechanical” and difficult to isolate since the signs in television are already complex, layered messages or texts. Chandler (1999) additionally states that “no sign is purely denotative”. Stated in another manner, no sign is free of connotation, and no sign is free of value judgements. The value judgements are influenced by cultural codes that provide a sign with connotational frameworks and associative attributes (Chandler 1999). In this way a sign has no purely ‘neutral’ or purely ‘literal’ meaning because it is part of a sign system situated in a cultural and historical context.

For Chandler (1999) “denotation is just another connotation” but it is a connotation that has been naturalised. Barker (2003:92) believes that where connotations are accepted as “normal” and “natural”, “they act as conceptual maps of meaning by which to make sense of the world”, and that these maps of meaning are cultural constructions, or myths.²⁷

Such socially constructed maps of meaning (or myth) and its relation to denotation and connotation can be considered in conjunction with Barthes’ spatialised metaphor of the levels of meaning (Barthes 1972:114-115). This spatialised metaphor points to the layered or complex structure of meaning (see Figure 13).

²⁷ Myth has been discussed in Chapter Two in terms of the power structures it masks in order to uphold the ideologies of the dominant classes. This section explores myth from a semiotic angle, and as such, it is useful to consider myth and its relation to denotation and connotation in conjunction with Barthes’ (1972:114-115) spatialised metaphor of the levels of meaning.

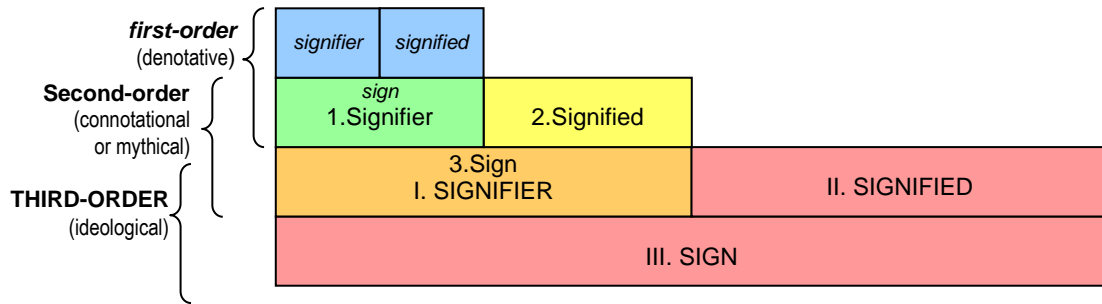


Figure 13: Schematic representation of the layered structure of meaning. (Barthes 1957:115; Fourie & Karan 2001:475.)

At the first level of meaning (or the first-order of signification), it is the signifier and the signified that constitutes the sign (illustrated by the blue and green rectangles in Figure 13). It is in this first-order of signification that *denotation* occurs (Chandler 1999). The first or denotative level of meaning in channel branding can be perceived as “a non-coded iconic message” (Dyer 1982:128). In the case of an ident as an element of television channel branding, it is the channel’s name, slogan, logo, dog, colours, photographic images, graphic images, backgrounds, linguistic signs, jingles and other audio mnemonics that are the signifiers of the television channel (as stated previously, much similar to the way that a person’s hair colour, facial features, posture and voice are signifiers of a particular individual). What is signified or denoted by the multiple on-screen signifiers is the visual brand identity of the television channel.

Together the individual signifiers in the ident and its signified visual brand identity create non-coded iconic message – a sign – that becomes the condensed representation for the television channel. At the denotative level the ident is thus a sign that serves to identify a particular television channel. In this first-order of signification, the sign (ident) is thus the sum of the signifiers (logo, slogan, images and jingles, for example) and the signified (a specific television channel with unique characteristics).

Connotation, on the other hand, “is a second-order signifying system that uses the first sign, (signifier and signified), as its signifier and attaches an additional meaning, another signified to it” (Seiter 1992:39). It is thus the denotative sign that is used as a signifier in the second level of meaning (illustrated by the green, yellow and orange rectangles in Figure 13). The second or connotational level can be perceived as “a

coded iconic, or symbolic, message” (Dyer 1982:128).²⁸ It is at the second level where connotations, cultural associations and associated meanings emerge. The connotation is therefore a second-order semiological system, or a meta-language (or second language) that speaks about the denotation or the first-level language (Barthes 1972:114-115; Barker 2003:92).

At this level of connotation the ident becomes a signifier that signifies a particular television brand with unique characteristics. The unique television brand, as the signified of the second-order of signification, is a coded iconic or symbolic message that carries a variety of connotations, values and cultural associations. For example, the television brand may carry associations of youthful, revolutionary television (SABC1); family entertainment (SABC2); or quality, upmarket programming (SABC3). Together the ident (signifier) and its television channel brand (signified) becomes yet another sign. At this second level the ident and the television channel brand stands for something other than itself. For example, the SABC Africa channel brand becomes a sign of ‘Africanness’, and of ‘African Renaissance’ in particular. The whole SABC Africa brand (including its products or services; buildings or environment; information or communication; and its organisational behaviour) thus becomes a signifier in another chain of signification. It is at this second level that the meaning of a sign depends heavily on associations and connotations, and it is at this level that the meta-language or *myth* emerges.

‘Africannes’ and ‘African Renaissance’, as connoted by the SABC Africa channel branding, are socially constructed *mythical* meanings (Fourie & Karam 2001:475). Chapter Two briefly described that the idea of ‘African Renaissance’ as a socially constructed myth; a symbolic concept or metaphor of rebirth that serves the neo-liberal economic policies and ideologies, for example Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), that masks the goal to secure power and wealth for the black petit bourgeoisie.

This is not to say that the idea of ‘African Renaissance’ is false, or wrong. At times the myth of the African Renaissance may be considered a ‘useful’ myth, one that creates a map of meaning that supports a positive sense of unity amongst all Africans. In this

²⁸ Dyer (1982:128) states that, in “an essay on semiotics and publicity images, Barthes ... calls the denotative, first level ... a non-coded iconic message and the second level, a coded iconic, or symbolic, message [and that the] latter is based on pre-existing bodies of knowledge of a practical, cultural, national, historic or aesthetic nature”.

case, 'African Renaissance' may be accepted by the majority of Africans (and also South Africans in particular) even though they do not benefit from the centralisation of wealth and power, and even if it goes against what appears to be in their best interest.

Myth serves to justify and naturalise cultural values, and is a servant to the ideology and power structures which the myth serves (Barthes 1977:45-46). Barthes (1972) places emphasis in his work on this second level where *connotations* and *mythical* meanings surface from the interpretation of texts, and the discussion of the African Renaissance myth associated with the SABC Africa channel is an indication that myths are signs that "carry particularly powerful connotations" (Lacey 1998:59).

In addition to the first and second levels of meaning, authors including Fiske and Hartley (1978:43); O'Sullivan *et al* (1994:287); Dyer (1982:94) and Fourie and Karam (2001:475), for example, suggest that a *third* order of signification exists, and that this is the level of *ideology* (illustrated by the orange and red rectangles in Figure 8). In all three levels of signification the tri-dimensional pattern of the signifier, the signified and the sign appears. Stated in another way, at each level (the first, *denotative* level; the second, *connotative or mythical* level; and the third *ideological* level) the meaning has a signifier, a signified and a sign that evolves according to the chains of signification. At the third level one can say that the denotation of the SABC Africa television channel branding and the connotation or myth of African Renaissance combine to produce and support ideology (for example, cultural imperialism and Black Economic Empowerment), thus creating a third order of signification (Chandler 1999). Ideology is thus the third-order of signification where a "sign reflects major culturally-variable concepts underpinning a particular worldview – such as masculinity, femininity, freedom, individualism, objectivism, [... Africanness] and so on" (Chandler 1999).

The above interpretation of meaning in the SABC Africa channel branding and its association with the African Renaissance myth that serves the ruling ideology of Black Economic Empowerment is only one interpretation of meaning in the branding of this television channel. The signs used in the SABC Africa channel branding are arbitrary, and may thus have many meanings. The meanings in the branding of the SABC Africa channel are thus polysemic (Lacey 1998:58) and are influenced by the cultural, economic, political and personal context of the interpreter and the interpreted text.

The brand identity of the SABC Africa and any associations with 'Africanness' or 'African Renaissance' may be perceived differently; for example Orgeret (2004:152, 153, 155) perceives SABC Africa in the following ways: a result of an ongoing process of globalisation; a process where South Africa is promoting itself as the gatekeeper and gateway to Africa; and, on the other hand, notes that 'African Renaissance' is a narrow and exclusive realm of ethnicity. Oregeret (2004:155-157) mainly perceives SABC Africa to reflect an outward-looking perspective of African Renaissance as African unity, and an inward-looking perspective of the channel as the custodian of the national cultures and languages of South Africa. In Orgeret's view, African Renaissance and its associations with the SABC creates a division, first in terms of ethnicity (African versus European), and secondly in terms of the local and the global (South African versus African).

Musa Ndlovu (2003) believes that the expansion of SABC into the African regional media markets is indicative of South African media and cultural imperialism,²⁹ rather than of African Renaissance, whereby South African information and cultural norms are imposed on its African neighbours. In this way 'African Renaissance' can be viewed as the ideological manipulation by the corporations that control the means of communication, or the manipulation by other dominant and ideological groups, such as politicians, for example (Ndlovu 2003:302).

Even though the television channel brand may have many meanings and even if it appears difficult to determine the overall ideology of the channel, it is possible to identify various connotations, myths and ideologies. Dyer (1982:130) states that all images consist of "a number of 'floating' signs and [are] subject to a variety of interpretations" but that the ambiguity and contradictions in the image can be resolved by the linguistic message. The linguistic message in television branding can be a caption, headline, copy, tagline, slogan, dialogue or voiceover and this linguistic message limits the number of possible meanings the image might have by "inviting some interpretations rather than others" (Dyer 1982:130; Seiter 1992:44). The linguistic message thus "fixes the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the

²⁹ Ndlovu (2003:302) states that the concepts of media and cultural imperialism are analytical concepts used in the field of international communication to examine "the manner in which transnational media industries of the developed nations exercise dominance over the cultural/information sphere of their developing counterparts".

terror of uncertain signs”³⁰ (Dyer 1982:130). The linguistic message “aids identification and also connotes, backs up or secures the meaning intended” (Dyer 1982:130) thereby ‘anchoring’ the preferred reading or the meaning intended by the producer of the television channel brand (Barthes 1977:38-39).

The concept of ‘anchoring’ as introduced by Barthes (1977:38) is useful in an engagement with television channel branding where the images and graphics are often more abstract or symbolic and indexical rather than iconic.

In addition to anchoring, the linguistic message can also function as ‘relay’ where the caption, slogan or voiceover communicates what cannot be interpreted from the graphic images (Dyer 1977:41). Dyer (1982:30) notes that “[s]ometimes it is the linguistic message and not the image which predominates, and the image is used to ‘anchor’ an eye-catching but unspecific or puzzling caption”. ‘Relay’ thus describes the complementary relationship between the linguistic message and the image (Chandler 1999; Barthes 1977:41).

Whether it functions as an ‘anchor’ or a ‘relay’, the linguistic message is the definitive meaning of the image and the mechanism through which ideology operates; and can also be seen as the third level of meaning (Seiter 1992:44, Dyer 1982:130). Barthes (1977:40) states that the “anchorage may be ideological and indeed this is its principle functioning; the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others; by means of an often subtle *dispatching* it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance”.³¹

Whereas Fiske and Hartley (1978:43), O’Sullivan *et al* (1994:287) Dyer (1982:94) and Fourie and Karam (2001:475) generally regard myth as the second-order signification and ideology as the third, Chandler (1999) places both myth and ideology in the third-order of signification (with connotation at the second level and denotation at the first). Both views may be accurate, as well as the view that denotation may be regarded as the first level, connotation as the second, myth as the third and ideology regarded as an additional fourth level. What does seem to be clear, is that the meaning, as it

³⁰ Dyer (1982:130) cites from Barthes’s (1977:37) “The rhetoric of the image” published in *Image/Music/Text* translated by Stephen Heath. “The rhetoric of the image” was originally published in *The responsibility of forms: critical essays on music, art and representation* written by Barthes in 1964 and translated by Richard Howard in 1985.

³¹ This quote of Barthes (1977:40) is also cited by Seiter (1992:44).

progresses from the first level to the third (or fourth) becomes increasingly elusive and subjective.

The layered structure of meaning with its various levels (as represented in Figure 13) is a useful manner to approach the interpretation of television channel brands. Chapter Four will first explore the first- and second-orders of signification (denotation and connotation) followed by an exploration of the myth and ideology (the third- and fourth-orders of signification) of each SABC television channel brand as they appear on screen.

This chapter explored the signs, codes and meanings of brands and television channel brands in particular. It also explored the structural elements of signs, codes and meaning as they relate to branding. The next section explores the similarities between the structural frameworks for the process of ideology, semiosis and branding which may provide a clearer indication of the manner in which television channel branding operates.

3.7 The structural framework for the process of ideology, semiosis and branding

This section advocates the semiotic analysis of branding (and specifically television branding) as a process of communication that carries ideologies which are culturally located. It is also possible to compare the manner in which the process of semiosis, branding and ideology work, and to demonstrate it structurally. Julie Reid (2004:53) notes that there are five levels in which the process of semiosis occurs (Figure 14).

The producers of signs are situated in the first level (Figure 14, top level). She explains that the signs on the third level of semiosis are produced by combining the signifier and the signified located on the second level (Reid 2004:53). The fourth level of semiosis is the level at which the sign is received by the reader, and the sign is then interpreted by the reader to determine what is signified by the signifier on the fifth level (Reid 2004:52-53).

Producer of sign	
Signifier	Signified
Sign	
Readers of the sign	
Reading produced is similar to the intended meaning of the producer of the sign	Aberrant reading is produced

Figure 14: The process of semiosis.
(Reid 2004:52.)

This model of the process of semiosis (as shown in Figure 14) can be applied to branding as a specific instance of semiosis (Figure 15) with the creation, reception and interpretation of the signs and codes expressed through corporate identity. The producer of the sign, and also the sender of the communicated message, is the brand proprietor. In the case of this study, the brand proprietor is the SABC television channel. The brand proprietor, or SABC television channel, makes use of specific signifiers, such as brand names, logos, idents, or even colour, for example, to signify the brand values of the television channels, and ultimately the SABC organisation. The collective use of signifiers such as logos, letterheads, idents, colour, advertisements, photographs, symbols, continuity presenters, music – even the buildings and sets – all communicate the organisations values, and collectively establish the television channel’s brand identity.

Brand proprietor (SABC)	
Brand name	Brand values
Brand identity	
Stakeholders (viewers & advertisers)	
Brand image in the mind of receiver is similar to brand identity sent by brand proprietor	Aberrant reading is produced (Culture jammers)

Figure 15: The process of branding.
(Author’s representation.)

The stakeholders, or television channel viewers and potential advertisers, read and interpret this brand identity sent by the organisation or television channel. If the brand identity is successful, the interpretation or brand image in the mind of the receivers

(viewers and advertisers) is similar to the brand identity sent by the producer or brand proprietor (SABC television channel). If the viewers or receivers cannot identify with the brand image perceived, an oppositional or aberrant reading might be produced by them, such as the anti-corporate imagery which emerged during the 1990s (Klein 2000). Klein (2000:448) notes that the counter-messages by culture jammers are not necessarily opposite meanings, but rather aim to uncover “the deeper truth hiding between the layers of advertising euphemisms”.

Good branding principles would include an exploration of such counter-messages (Spark 2004b:66-67). It might also be necessary for the producer or brand proprietor to re-evaluate the organisation’s values, and to come up with new ways to communicate such renewed values through a revised brand identity.

From the discussion regarding brands in sections 3.3 and 3.4 it becomes clear that brands can be regarded as economic events or entities that form part of the base, and also that brands are social events or cultural artefacts belonging to the superstructure. As previously stated, Classical Marxist theory asserts that it is the material or economic base which determines the superstructure, or that the economic base is the organising factor of human society. Klein (2000) indicates, however, that the superstructure also influences the base, where culture jammers and “adbusters” communicate their dissent of the exploitation of sweatshop labourers. Brands in the twenty-first century permeate both the base and superstructure. A successful brand invests in the symbiotic relationship between base and superstructure, economics and culture. The economic base and the production of brands influence the superstructure and culture. In turn, the cultural aspects of brands influence the economic base. It is a continuous process of communication that re-creates the meaning of brands.

The process of semiosis (shown in Figure 14) as it operates within branding (shown in Figure 15) reveals a structural similarity to the process of ideology (Figure 16). In this study, the dominant group is considered to be the SABC and its organisational ties with the ANC government.³² The producers of each SABC television channel brand, for example the general managers and brand managers, are part of this dominant group

³² ANC member Thabo Mbeki was the South African president from 14 June 1999 to 24 September 2008, and it appears logical that many of the country’s policies and rhetoric informed by the Mbeki’s presidency will also inform the organisation of the SABC during the time period covered in this dissertation (2000-2009).

(Figure 16, top level). These producers are part of the first level of semiosis, and they commission manufactured designs and “signs that are imbued with the ideological meaning that is injected into them by the downward pressures of the dominant ideological group” (Reid 2004:53).

The SABC Africa channel branding, as shown earlier in this chapter (Figures 4-8; 12), is an ideological text (Figure 16, level three) imbued with ideological messages (Figure 16, level two). The ideological state apparatus, in this example, is the SABC who conveys such ideological messages in support of the idea of an African renaissance (Figure 16, level two). This occurs due to downward pressure on the ideological state apparatus (SABC and its managers) from the dominant ideological group (or ANC government and its support for Thabo Mbeki). Individual members of society may accept the idea of African renaissance as propagated by SABC Africa, in which case a dominant or negotiated reading of SABC Africa branding may occur and hegemony is achieved (level four and five of Figure 16).

Dominant ideological group	
Ideological State Apparatus	Ideological message
Ideological text	
Individual members of society	
Dominant or negotiated reading	Oppositional reading

Figure 16: The societal structure of a dominant political ideology.
(Reid 2004:54.)

Oppositional readings may result in a resistance to the ideologies propagated by the ISA, which in turn may contribute to resistance or opposition to the dominant ideological group in general. It is thus in the best interest of the dominant ideological group to minimise the possibility of oppositional readings and to adjust the ideological texts to be inclusive of all members so that hegemony can be achieved. The three illustrations in this section (Figures 14-16) therefore indicate that the structures for the process of semiosis and the process of branding as they are explored in this chapter are similar to the process of ideology explored in Chapter Two.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with some basic concepts regarding semiotics and corporate identity. The chapter created an interdisciplinary link between semiotic theory and theory on brands and branding, and explored the parallel development towards theory that increasingly emphasises the importance of the reader, consumer or viewer. Chapter Three also underlined the communicative process of branding and indicated that the producer/brand, proprietor/sender and the consumer/stakeholder/receiver are situated within a distinct position within this communication process or semiosis of branding. The communicative process of branding was structurally compared with the process of semiosis, and the structural framework of both branding and semiosis shows a similarity to the structural framework of a dominant political ideology. Chapter Three thus explored the theoretical underpinnings of semiotics, branding or corporate identity and television channel branding. The following chapter explores the visual examples of television branding from each SABC channel. The theory from Chapters Two and Three is applied in Chapter Four in order to examine the visual brand identities of SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3.

CHAPTER FOUR

IDEOLOGY AND MYTH IN SABC TELEVISION CHANNEL BRAND REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Introduction

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

4.2 The television channel as pedagogical narrator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3 SABC1 Ya mampela and Mzansi fo sho

The SABC1 channel was re-branded twice since 2000 – once in 2003, and once again in 2007. The first took place during 2002 to 2003 and the resulting *Ya mampela* brand identity was unveiled on 18 August 2003.² Discarding its 1996 *Simunye, We are One* identity (Figure 17), the channel did “away with its glossy, metallic look and neon lights in favour of a more toned-down, earthy feel”³ (De Jager 2003:1). Although the *Simunye* identity was successful in establishing a clear brand identity for the post-apartheid SABC1 channel, the brand values portrayed by its visual imagery of racial camaraderie, clinical metallic colours and neon lights created an image that was later perceived as contrived. Research revealed that viewers perceived the ideals of the *Simunye* identity⁴ as a pipe dream, something far removed from the reality of contemporary South African society, and considered SABC1 as a proposer of such utopian forms (Lewis 2000:155-177; About SABC1 2008).

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

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

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

⁴ The new brand identity of SABC2, with its *Feel at home* slogan and rainbow nation ideals is closer in meaning to the 1996 *Simunye* identity, and clearer product differentiation, or a more distinct channel identity was thus needed.



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

4.3.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC1 brand identity

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

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

Whereas the divergence in colour points to an agenda of channel differentiation, elements within the logo point to a similarity. Pavitt (2000:21) states that the “most recognisable feature of a brand is a name, logo, symbol or trademark that denotes a product’s origin”, and that this logo “is the point of entry to the brand”. The SABC1 logo (Figure 18) seems similar in appearance to the other SABC logos. The SABC television channel logos all include the acronym *SABC* in an identical font (Helvetica Neue),⁶ which is also identical to that of the SABC parent-brand.⁷ In addition to the font similarity, the SABC acronyms in the logos are similarly followed by an encircled number. This contributes to the endorsed identity⁸ of the SABC television channel brands and is also an example of “brand DNA” where each brand depends on the image of the parent brand, despite their individual character (Pavitt 2000:21). The television channel brands thus share certain features of the parent SABC brand image, but also have certain distinct features. The encircled number one in the SABC1 logo carries the connotation that it is the parent-brand, SABC’s number one, or foremost channel.

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

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

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

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



Figure 18: SABC1 logo, 2003.

The encircled number one also appears as a dog in the corner of the screen, in the top left corner in this case (Figure 19). The dog is similar to a signature applied to an artwork by an artist, thereby indicating ownership or the intellectual property of a personified television channel. The colour and style of the dog applied during the *Ya Mampela* identity is particularly reminiscent of, on the one hand, the mark left by the hot iron stamp used in the marking or branding of cattle, and on the other, the ‘tagging’ of graffiti art. The visual style of the SABC1 logo and dog deliberately invoke associations to hip-hop spray-can graffiti art and its connotations of youth activism⁹ and resistance art. In all these cases, namely that of artist signature, cattle branding, graffiti tagging and television channel dogs, the common denominator or function is that of identification.



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

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

The dog thus serves as a television channel identifier. An ident¹⁰ has a similar function. Idents inform the viewer of the channel they are currently watching and serve as brand identifiers. However, television channel idents (also called stings and break-bumpers) have multiple functions that extend beyond television channel identification. SABC1 employs a particularly rich variety of different sets of idents for the *Ya Mampela* on-air look: idents that serve as hailing channel identification (for example, the ones stating “We’ll be back”); idents indicating day-time, early prime, and prime-time viewing; idents depicting the South African landscapes; programme genre identifications and forthcoming attractions.

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

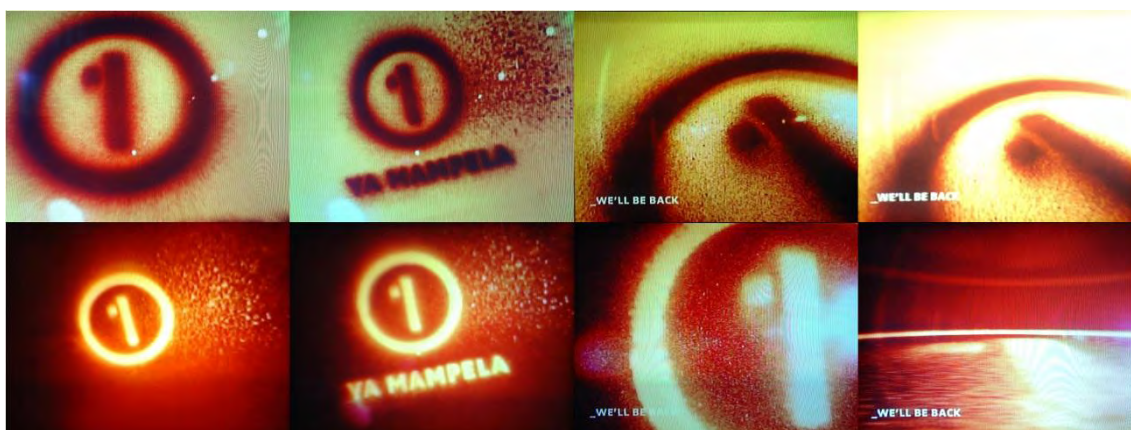


Figure 20: SABC1 night-time and day-time idents, 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

¹¹ Cuddon (1998:836) explains that a ‘slice of life suggests “that a work presents life ‘in the raw’, factual, visceral and unadulterated by art”.

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

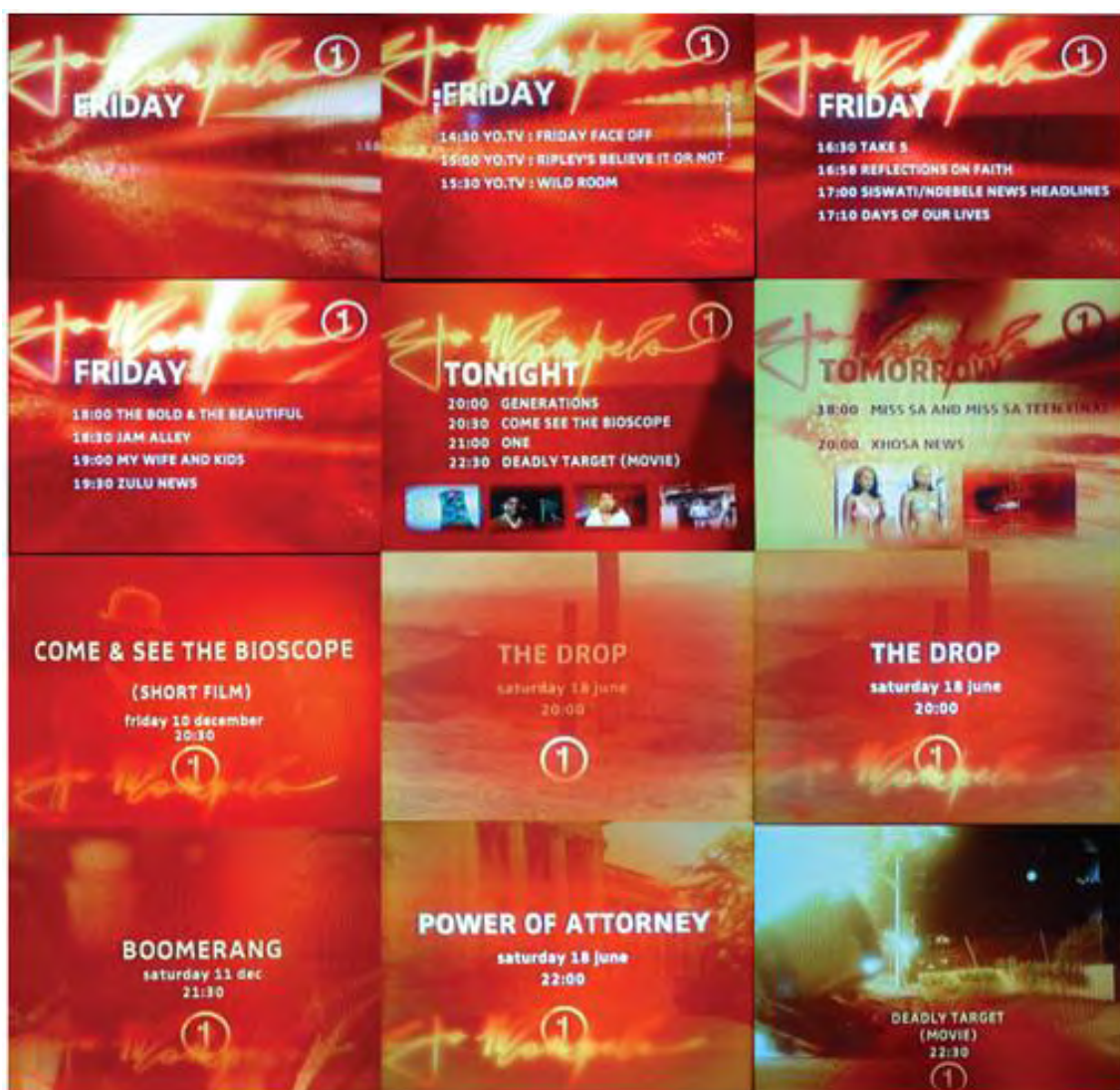


Figure 25: Forthcoming attractions and menu idents, SABC1 2004.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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



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



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

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

The *PF Jones* advertisement (Figure 28) created by TBWA Hunt Lascaris for SABC1's *Ya Mampela* brand identity was aired on television between 2002 and 2004. The television advertisement¹² (SABC1 brand advert 2002) communicates values and ideologies that are significantly different to the ones expressed in the preceding *Simunye* brand identity. Whereas the *Simunye* identity attempted to emphasise equivalence, camaraderie and unity in diversity, the *Ya Mampela* identity indicates a radical departure from its predecessor by pointing out distinct cultural, social and economic differences. The presentation of the advertisement resembles a short, documentary film, depicting "a day in the life of a typical South African teenage boy" (Cohen 2004:63). It is a 'slice-of-South-African-life' illustrating the daily experiences and observations of *PF Jones*, the main character in the advertisement. The advertisement commences with *PF Jones* "getting out of bed in his township shack" (Gilfillan 2003:[sp]); he gets dressed, and as he leaves, puts on his *spotti*.¹³ The character moves through Soweto towards the busy taxi rank while observing the landscape, people and the township tour bus along the way. The character then commutes to the city in a crowded taxi, and along the way observes the contrast between the township and the more wealthy suburban areas.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

is simultaneously poignant and funny, working on various subtle levels to arouse awareness and empathy with “the other”. Its basic premise seems to be that putting oneself in the shoes of another (the racial “other” in this case) is a useful lesson in mutual understanding and tolerance. Along the way, it educates by focusing on various black cultural practices: street-dancing, hair-braiding¹⁵ – and in each case the race roles are cleverly reversed for impact.

The soundtrack to the *PF Jones* advertisement, “Kleva”, by Kwaito star Mapuputsi, received a Clio award for original music. Kwaito¹⁶ elements are also visible in the website created for the *Ya Mampela* brand identity. The SABC1 website (Figures 29, 30) uses words in an eclectic manner and slang words in various languages are included, for example, *mzanzi*, *kwaai*, *waar*, *nca*, *cho* and *hana hana*. Eclecticism is a common characteristic of kwaito, and is also a common characteristic of the culture jamming aesthetic and postmodern visual strategies. Klein (2000:282) describes this

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

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

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

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

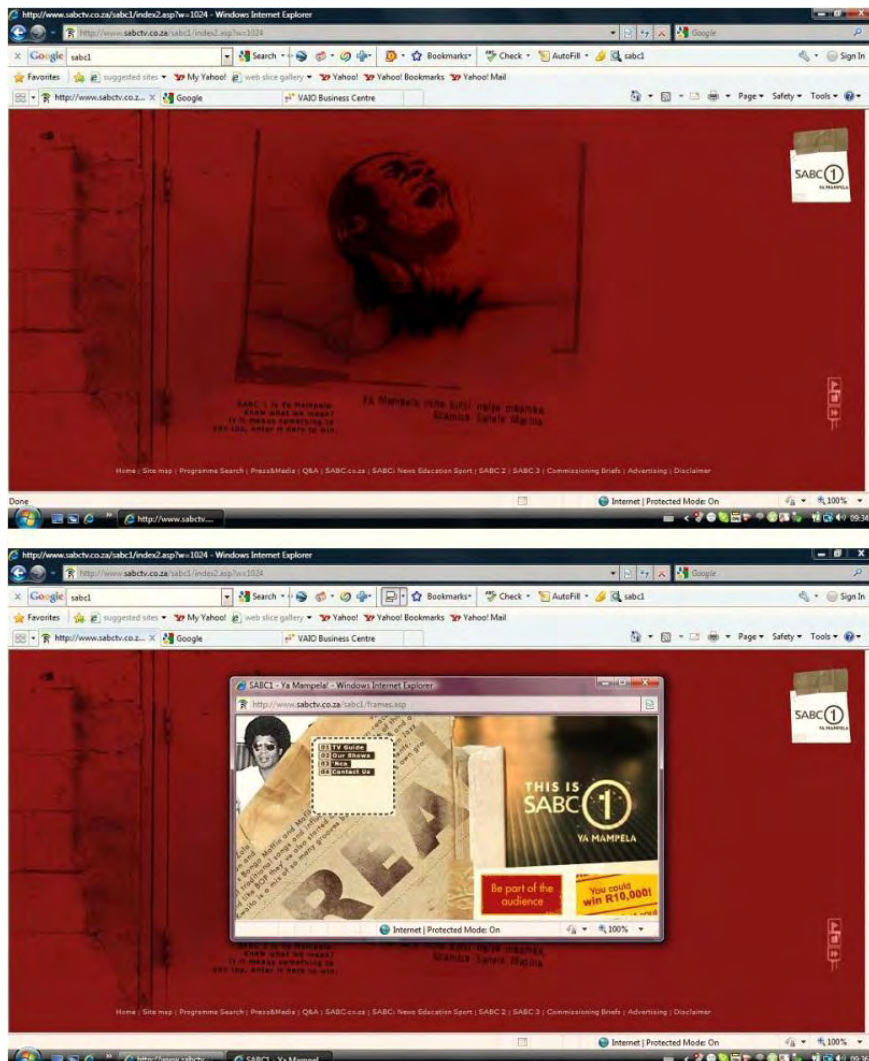


Figure 29: SABC1 website background and home page, 2004.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)



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

The visual brand elements in the SABC1 idents, advertisement and website, in particular, and the stylistic resemblance to a culture jamming aesthetic¹⁷ is an example of the characteristic use of bricolage in postmodern visual strategies, where an image or design is created by combining various available materials to create something new. Chandler (1999) states that a *bricoleur*¹⁸ appropriates existing materials in order to create improvised structures, and that

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

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

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

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

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

art, South African resistance posters and culture jamming (Figure 32). In this way it is a unique combination of specifically South African elements and commodities¹⁹ associated with youth subcultures, and in all three instances, social and political ideas are communicated that often include criticisms of, and resistance to, the status quo.



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

The new logo²⁰ (Figure 34) includes the SABC acronym, the new *Mzansi fo sho* payoff line and an encircled number one. The font used for the SABC acronym is the same as the one used for the renewed SABC parent brand, which is based on the Frutiger typeface (SABC visual identity standards [sa]). The corporate identity document of the SABC describes this typeface and its parallels to the SABC as “by no means ordinary, state-of-the-art but not artificially claiming to be new” (SABC visual identity standards [sa]). The new *Mzansi fo sho* payoff line has a very similar meaning to the payoff line used in the *Ya Mampela* brand identity. *Mzansi* means “the South” and originates from the Xhosa word for “south”, *umzantsi*, and *Mzansi fo sho* is thus a colloquial phrase denoting a democratic youthful South Africa (About SABC1 2008). The SABC acronym and the slogan (or payoff line) of the channel are executed in a dark red. The encircled number one consists of the negative red space around a white number one, and a

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

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



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

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

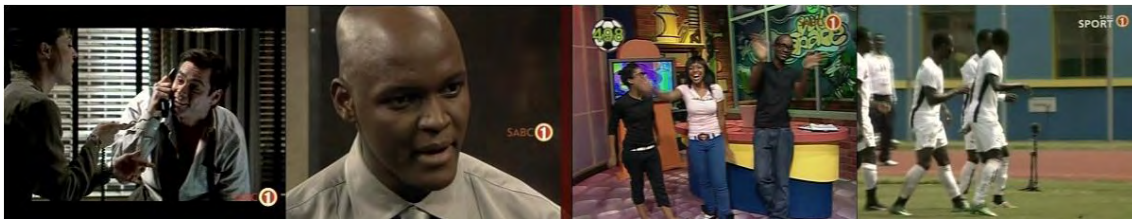


Figure 35: The SABC1 dog on the right of the screen, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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

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

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

create a new on-air look (Dicey 2007:39). The channel's general manager, Ray Nkwe, states that "music is tightly wound up in the lifestyles of the youthful audience targeted by SABC1" and the creation of a soundtrack that could be an audio mnemonic for the channel was thus paramount in the creation of the new on-air identity (Dicey 2007:39). Eject Media approached Brandon Jury²³ to compose the channel's signature tune, and Vinyl created the graphic animations accompanying this soundtrack.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

The channel additionally employs another set of idents to function as station identification and break-bumpers (Figure 38). Idents in this set²⁵ commence with coloured vertical banners filling the screen and then reveals four “Mzansi” locations: a suburban area; a taxi rank; luxury cars in an urban setting; and a metropolitan location with skyscrapers in the background. Urban settings are often depicted in the SABC1 idents. They create a sense of development, progress, ambition, civilisation and sophistication that challenge older notions of South Africa as simple, rural and primitive.

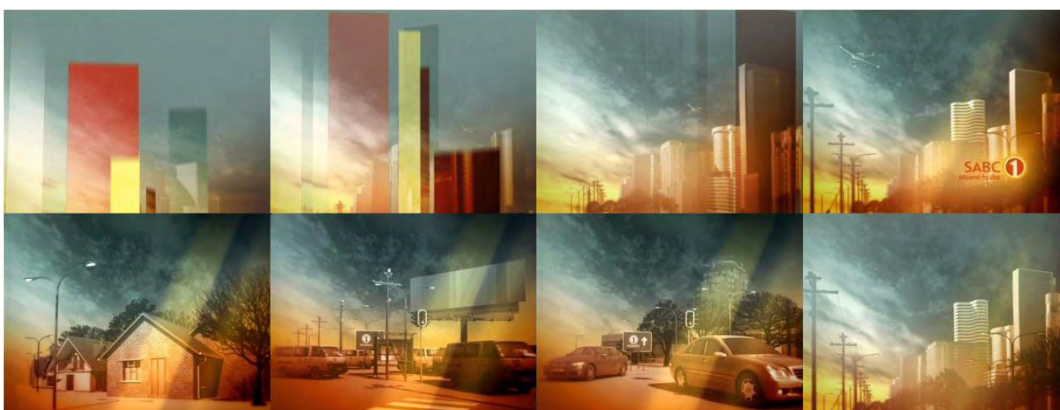


Figure 38: SABC1 idents and break-bumpers, 2007.
(SABC1 elements ... 2008; Vinyl [sa].)

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

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

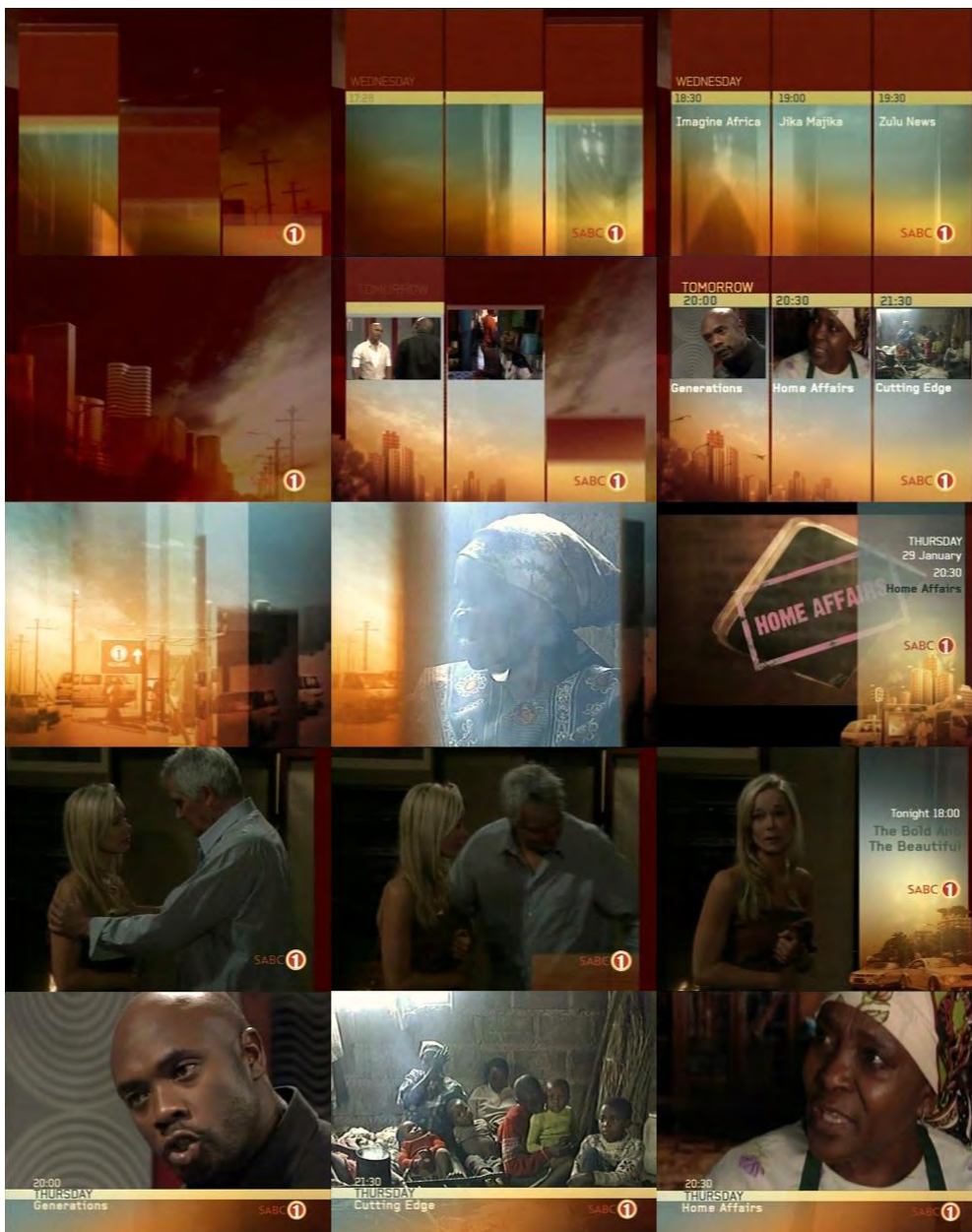


Figure 39: SABC1 forthcoming attractions and menu idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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



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

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



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

The other set of idents, created by Espiál, indicates specific genres such as current affairs, documentaries, drama, entertainment, movies and sport (Figure 42). The function of the 30-second genre line-up is to “relay information about relevant SABC1 programming” and aims to “communicate the exciting new visual aesthetic and fresh on-air style of SABC1” (Espiál television and motion graphics [sa]). The genre line-ups²⁷ are created with technologically sophisticated animations combined with television recordings.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

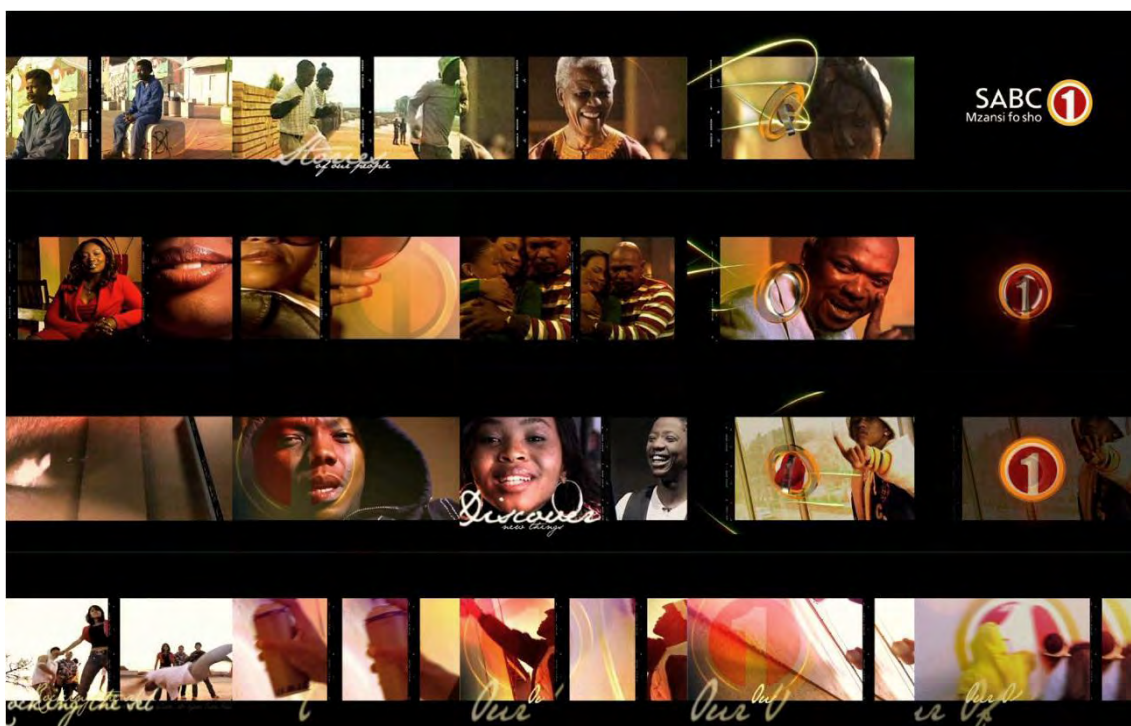


Figure 43: SABC1 on-air promos for documentaries, drama, entertainment and a generic promo created by Espiál, 2008.
(Espiál television and motion graphics [sa].)

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

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

Another category of a channel’s on-air promotion or clutter is specials (Meech 1999b:299). As mentioned in the previous chapter (in section 3.5), specials are formulated to promote short-term corporate campaigns or special projects (Meech 1999a:40, 1999b:299). For example, SABC1 promoted the films to be aired on the television channel in January, 2009. This special (Figure 44, top row) depicts fast moving clips from the films to be aired, a box gift wrapped in the channel colours and logo, and fireworks exploding from the box, thus suggestive of the New Year’s celebrations²⁸ of the channel and its gift of good quality films to its viewers.

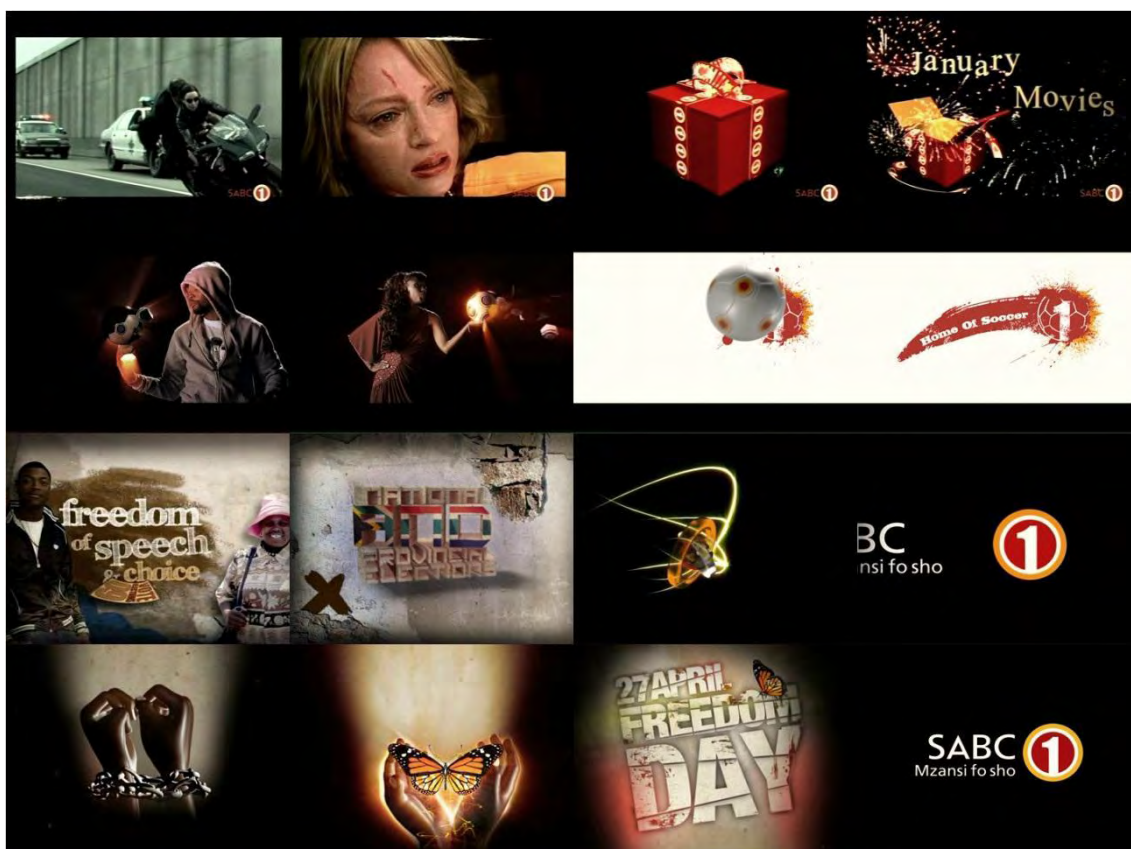


Figure 44: SABC1 specials, created by Espiál, 2009.
(Espiál television and motion graphics [sa].)

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

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

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

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

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

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

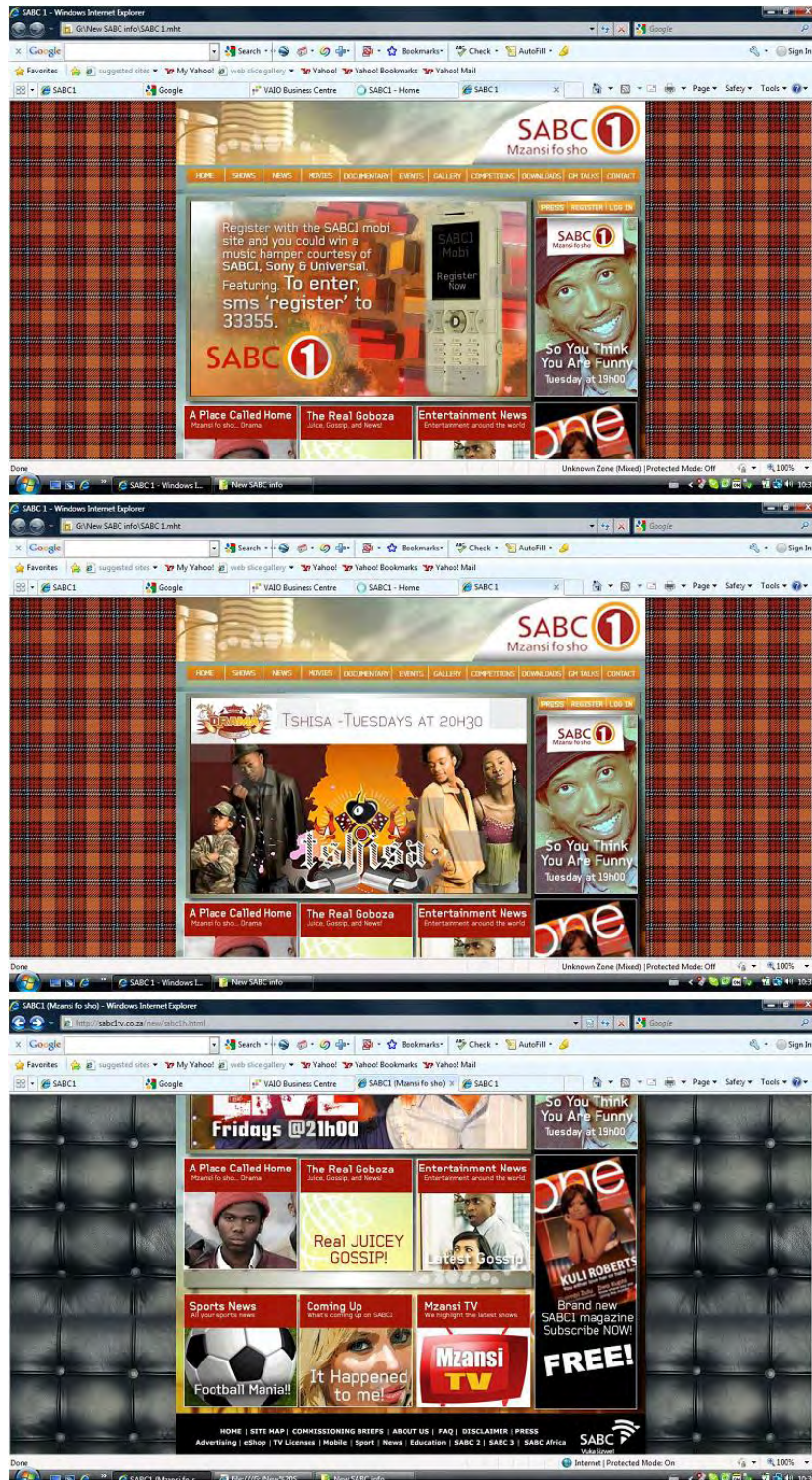


Figure 45: SABC1 website, 2008.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

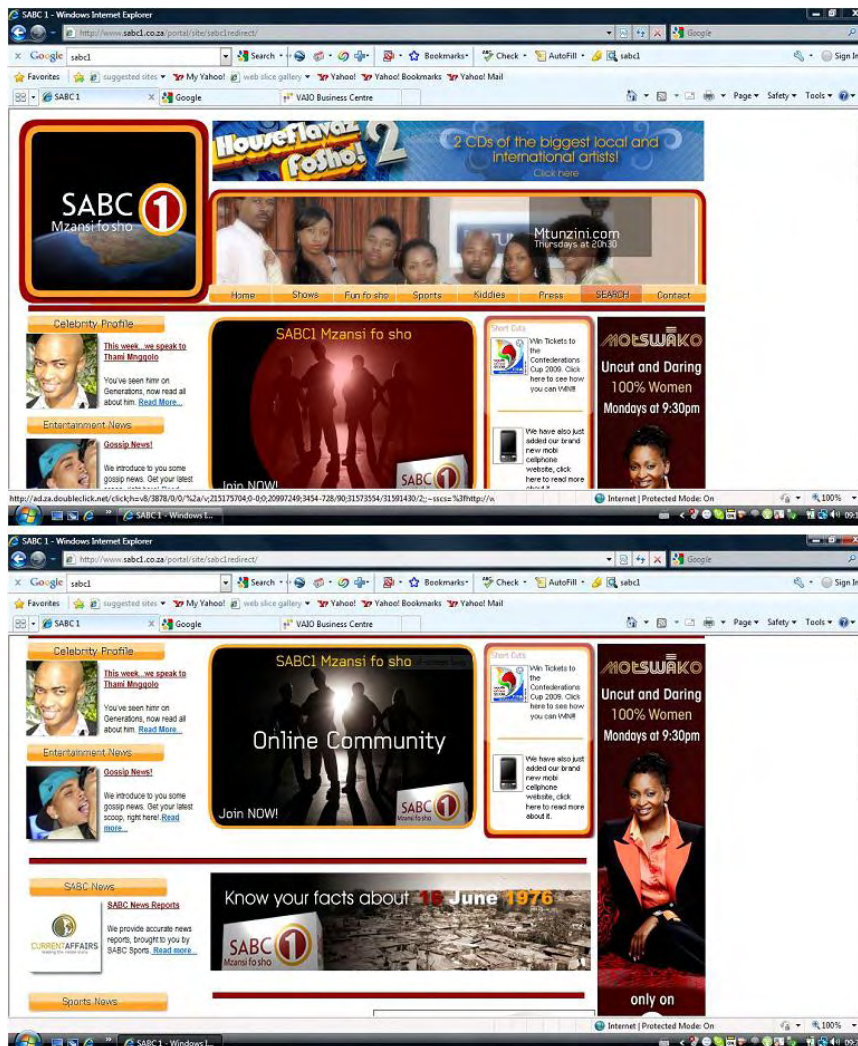


Figure 46: SABC1 website, 2009.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.2 Myth and ideology in the SABC1 brand identity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4 SABC2 Feel at home

SABC2 is the result of the restructuring and evolution of its predecessor TV1, a channel that was established in the apartheid era. With the restructuring of South African broadcasting for a post-apartheid era, the SABC2 channel took a back seat to the dominant SABC1 channel since it was repositioned as the second or ‘other’ channel. Perhaps this less dominant position is the underlying reason for a more timid branding strategy and perhaps also the reason for the appearance of a smaller budget³¹ allocation to the branding and marketing of the SABC2 channel. On the other hand, it could just be a result of the channel’s overall tendency towards responsibility and conservatism. Regardless of the reasons, the changes in the brand identities of SABC2 have not been as dramatic as those of SABC1, with changes occurring modestly and in smaller increments. Whereas the SABC1 brand identities, especially the controversial *PF Jones* advertisement, received some media and academic attention, the SABC2 brand identities and its changes went unnoticed.

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

4.4.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC2 brand identity

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

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

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

were used for the channel's brand identity and on-air look prior to 2002, and continued to be used for its new *Feel at Home* idents³³ in 2002 (Figure 48). It may be a coincidence that these colours are similar to the colours of the old South African flag, but it is also possible that the channel chose these colours to create a subconscious link for its viewers regarding programming and television content to minimise the alienation that former TV1 viewers might experience in the transition into a post-apartheid broadcast environment. The continued use of variations of orange, white and blue for the various SABC2 brand identities create a sense of continuity and familiarity for the channel's viewers. The *Feel at Home* idents in dark blue and white depict iconic images of happy family members interacting in their home environments, and show the new logo with a larger orange number two in a solid blue circle (Figure 50).



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



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

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

brand identity can be viewed on YouTube (see SABC2 come alive 2008; SABC2 continuity presenters 2008).

³³ A video clip of this ident can be viewed on YouTube (see SABC2 jingle 2002).

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

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

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



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

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



Figure 50: SABC2 logo, 2004.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

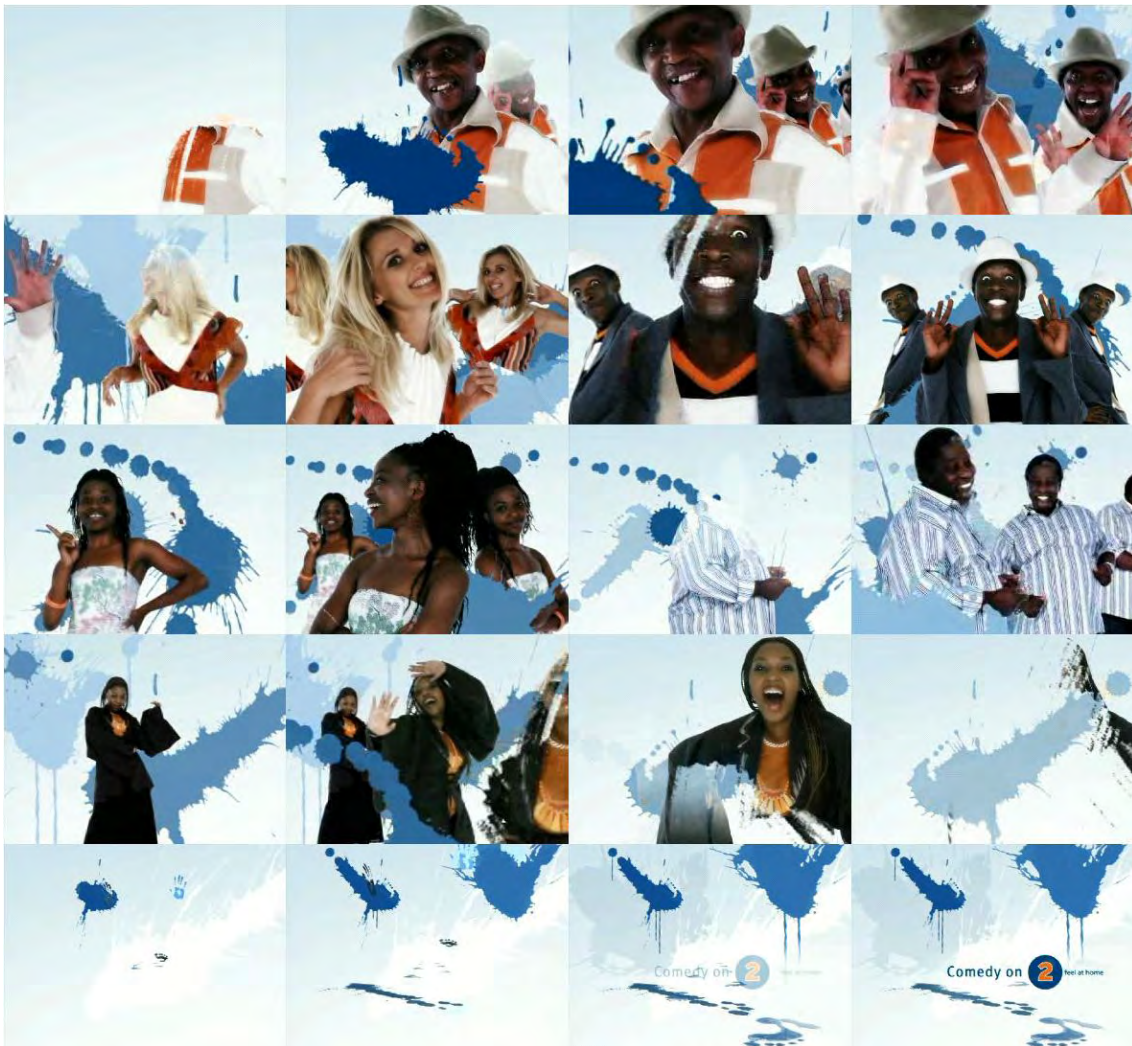


Figure 53: SABC2 comedy promotion ident created by Vinyl.
(Vinyl [sa].)

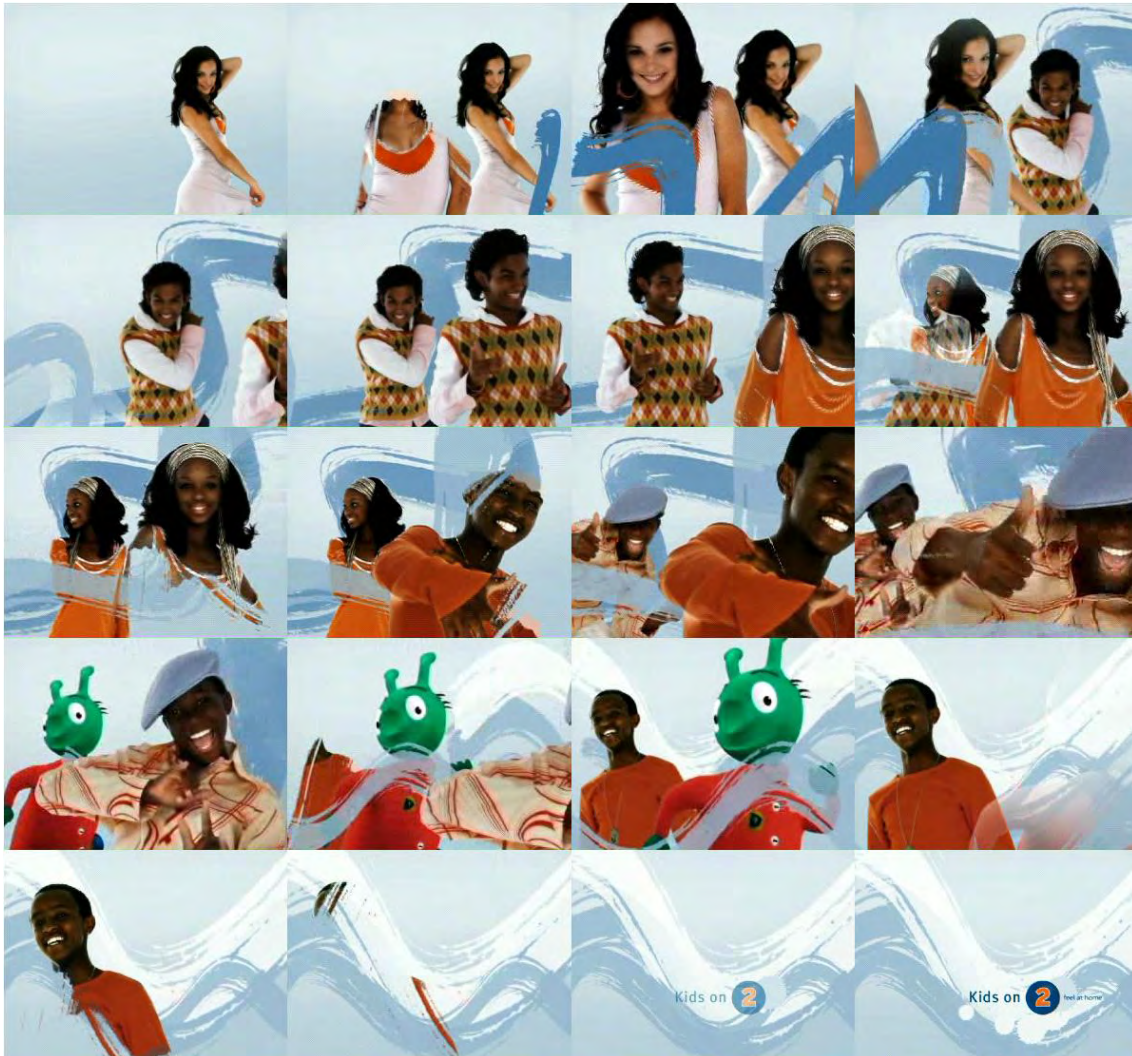


Figure 54: SABC2 promotion ident for children's programmes, created by Vinyl.
(Vinyl [sa].)

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

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

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



Figure 55: SABC2 film genre idents (action, comedy, home sounds and romance) created by Vinyl (Vinyl [sa].)

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



Figure 56: SABC2 website, 2006.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

idents to accommodate the channel's tenth anniversary in 2006³⁶ (Figure 57). The colours of this brand identity predominantly remained the same as the one before, yet include more colours to create a festive impression. Animated balloons, beads and *rondavels* are added to the channel's collection of iconic South African symbols. These objects move on screen, where after one object remains still to resemble the zero of the number ten, indicating its tenth birthday celebrations. The final frames of these idents show the channel's logo (without payoff line) on the left of the screen, together with a blue, painted number one and the circular image of the beads, *rondavels* and balloons forming the zero of the number 10.



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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



Figure 60: SABC2 logo, 2007.



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



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



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

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



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

4.4.2 Myth and ideology in the SABC2 brand identity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 SABC3 Much better and Stay with 3

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

4.5.1 Visual signs and codes in the SABC3 brand identity

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



Figure 76: SABC3 logo, 2003.

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

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

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

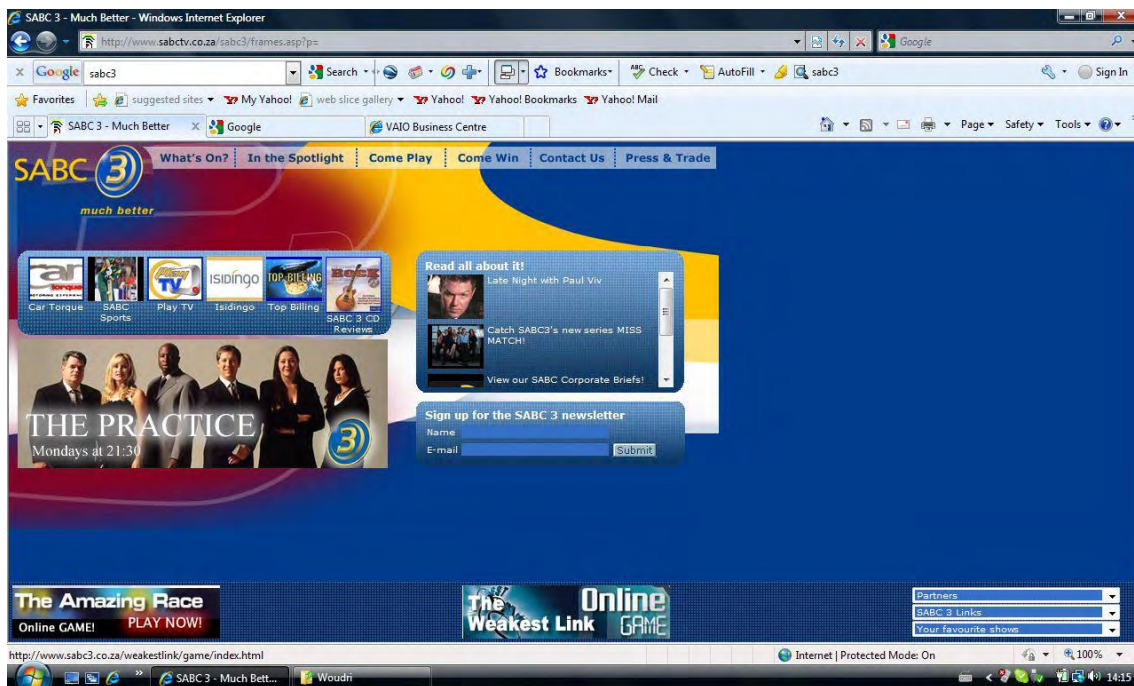


Figure 77: SABC3 website, 2003.
(Web grab, photographed by author.)

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

distinguishable from the SABC2 channel that also made use of blue⁴⁰ in its designs. On the other hand, it may have been refurbished to provide the channel with a more contemporary, sophisticated appearance in order to increase its visual appeal. Either way, the gold disk used for the previous identity was replaced by a platinum logo in which the number three melded in with the circular ring to create a combined shape almost resembling the badge of a luxury car. This circular disk also appeared on-screen as the channel's dog. The SABC acronym in the Helvetica Neue font, was rendered in white on a dark background, and in grey on a white background. The new logo connoted luxury, affluence and status.



Figure 78: The SABC3 logo, 2005.

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

⁴¹ These comments were made on the SABC3 website in an announcement regarding the 56th Annual Emmy Awards. The article on the website aimed to indicate that the channel airs many of the award winning programmes thereby “outstrip[ing] its competitors” (SABC3 website 2006:[sp]).

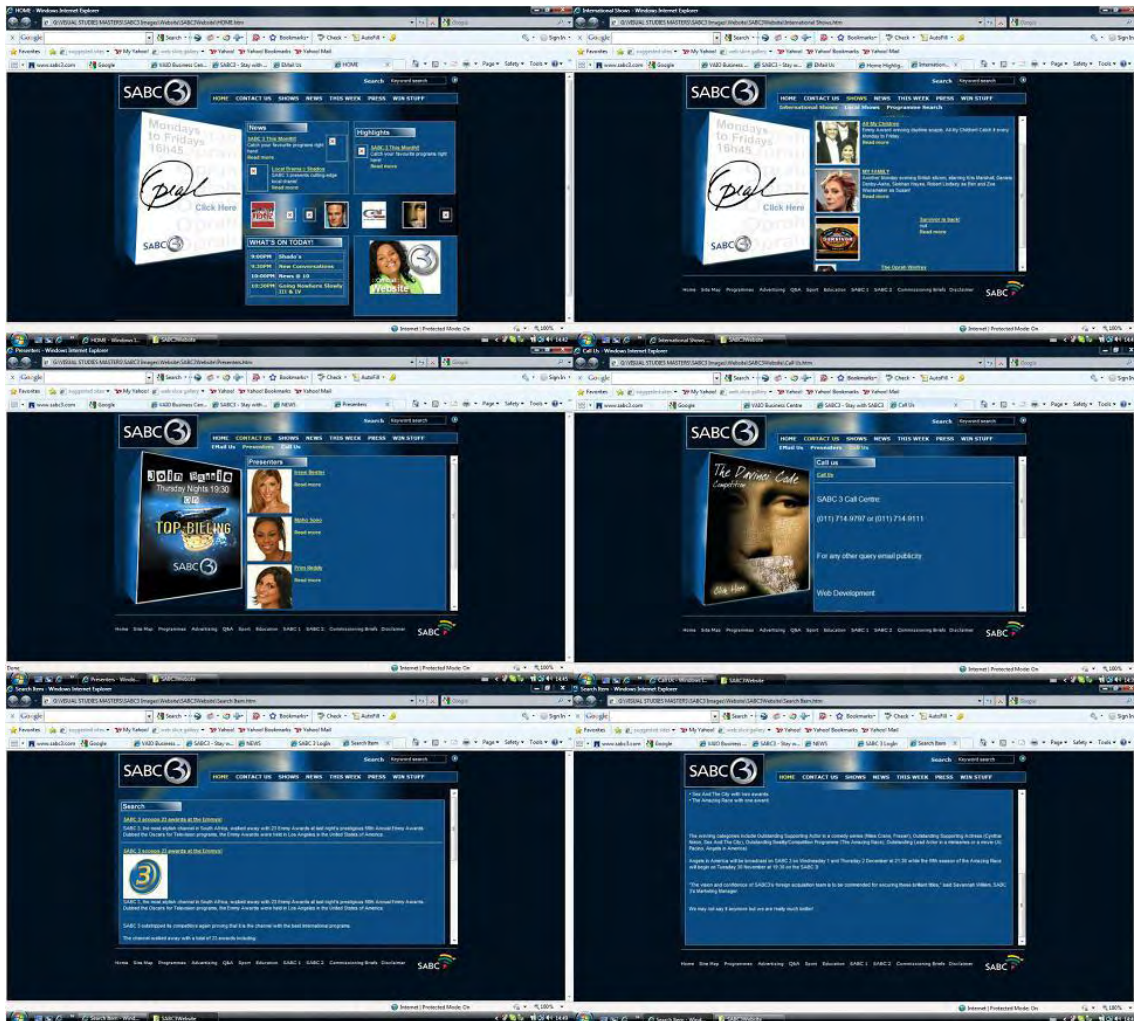


Figure 82: SABC3 website, 2005.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



Figure 84: SABC3 logo, 2007.

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



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

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

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

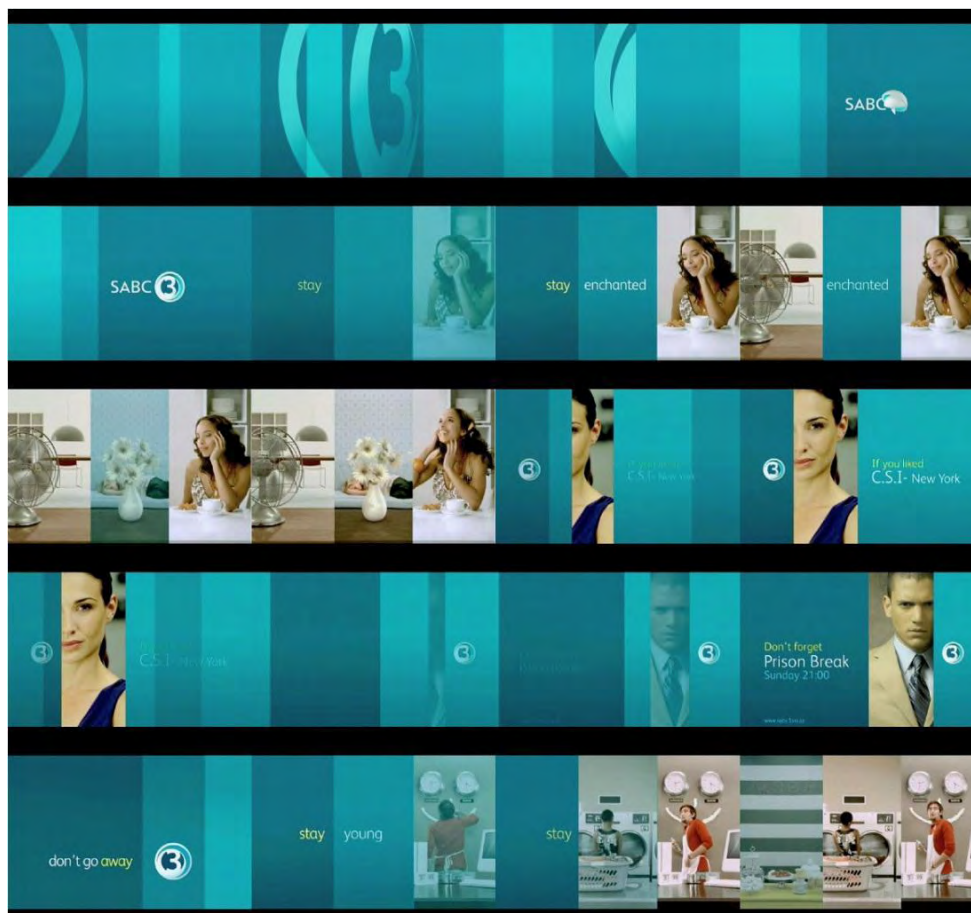


Figure 86: The SABC3 on air-identity designed by United Senses and Eject Media, 2007-2008. (United Senses [sa].)

The designs for the idents and on-air identity were altered slightly so that the teal and tiffany hues of blue colour were adjusted in favour of deeper hues of cobalt, cerulean and midnight blue⁴² (Figure 86). The three panels depicting various scenes have also been altered slightly so that they move across the screen in a different manner. The triptych idents depict different locations and scenes, for example, a fan (left panel) blows flower petals (middle) towards a woman having tea (right panel), and in another example, a woman walks from a beach (left) onto a catwalk (middle) and onto a diving platform (right), then dives into a lake. The figures depicted in the triptych location idents (Figure 87) thus move across the scene, thereby connecting people from the different places in the three panels. This set of idents functions mainly as brand endorsement idents.



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

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

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

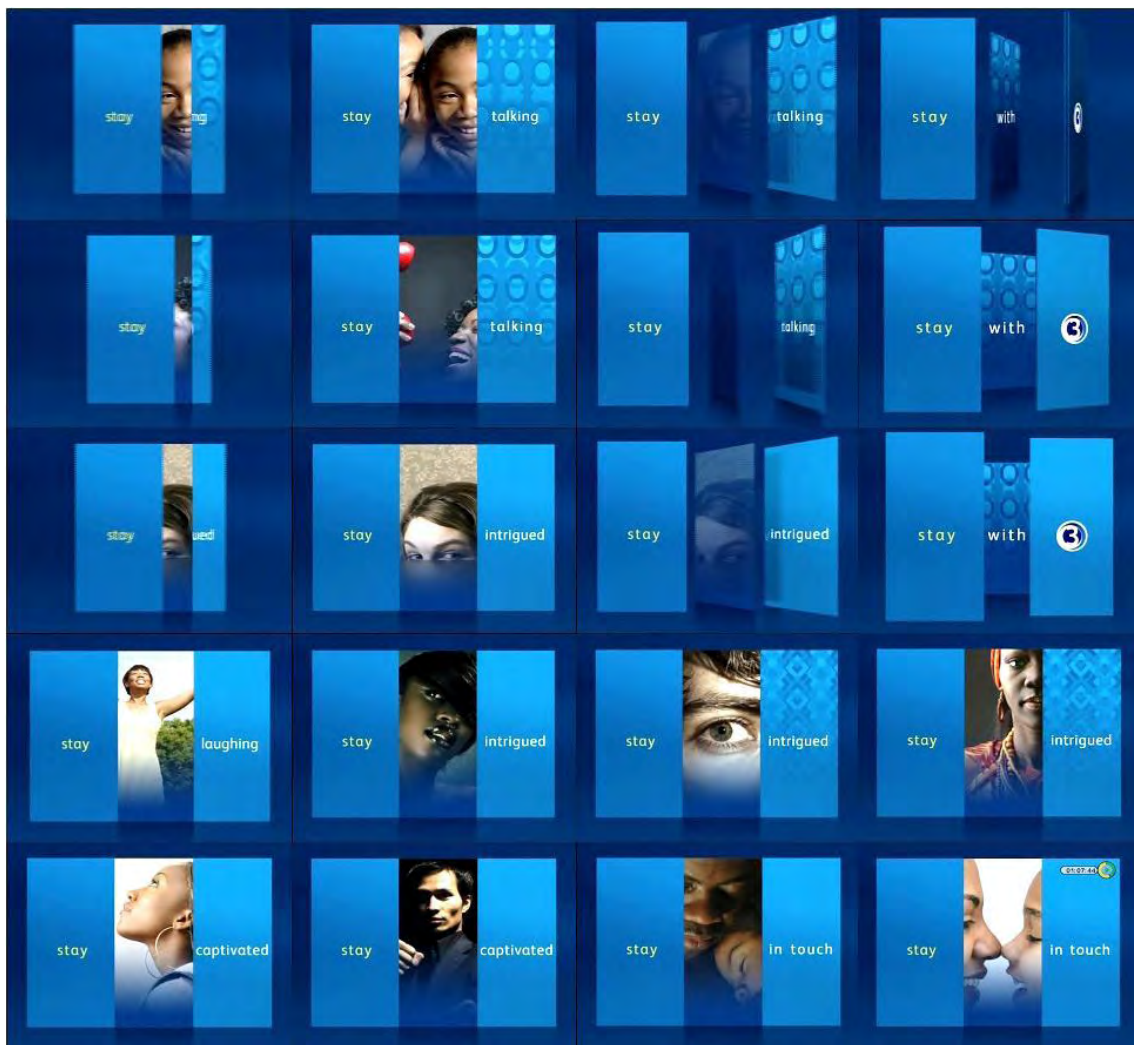


Figure 88: SABC3 Idents with a three panel theme, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

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

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

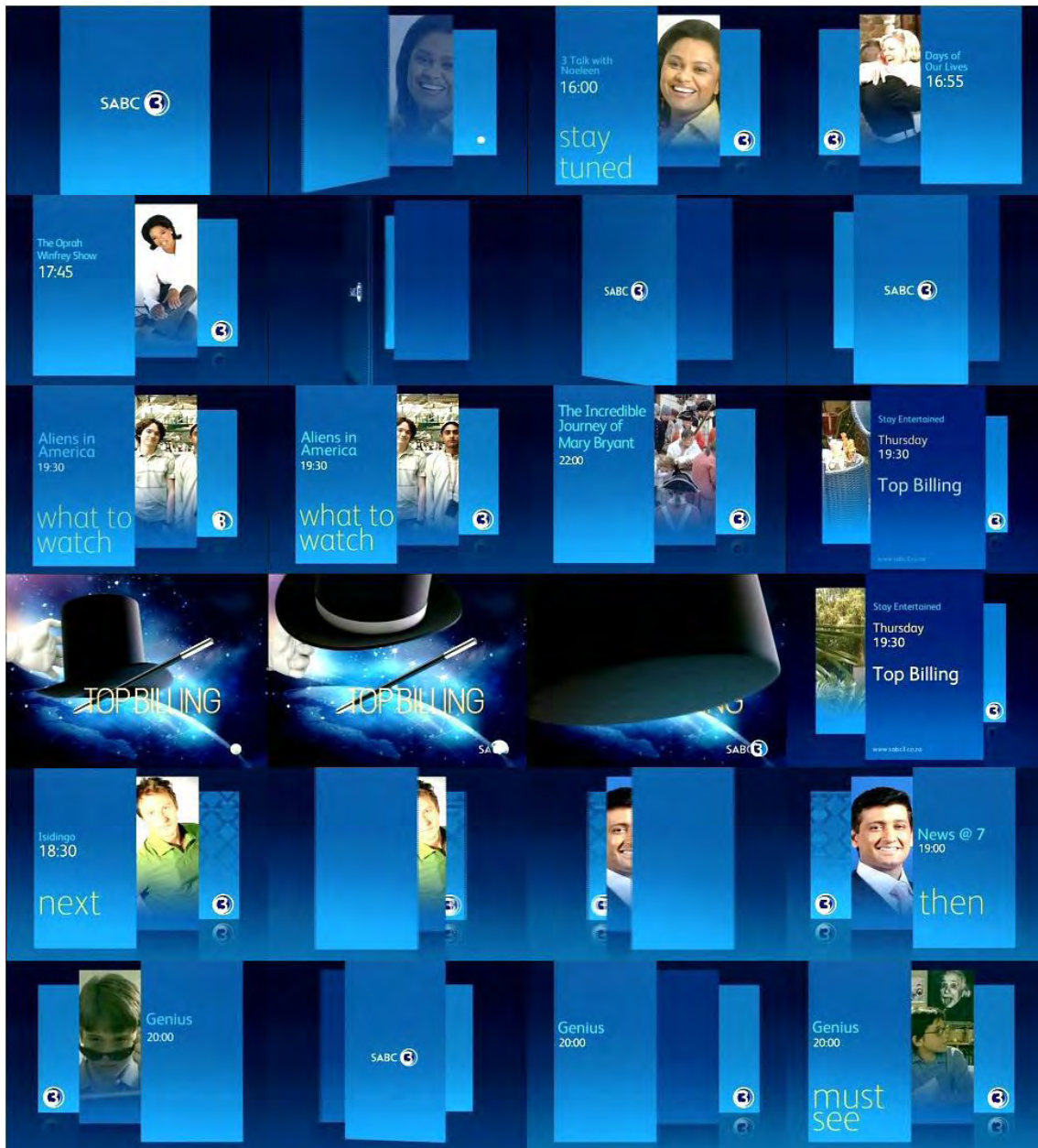


Figure 89: SABC3 Forthcoming attractions and menu idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author).

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



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

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

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



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

A special promotional⁴³ ident has also been created for the broadcast of a live open heart surgery programme aired on Three Talk as part of a heart awareness campaign (Figure 91, bottom three rows). The ident depicts a graphic animation of a heart,

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

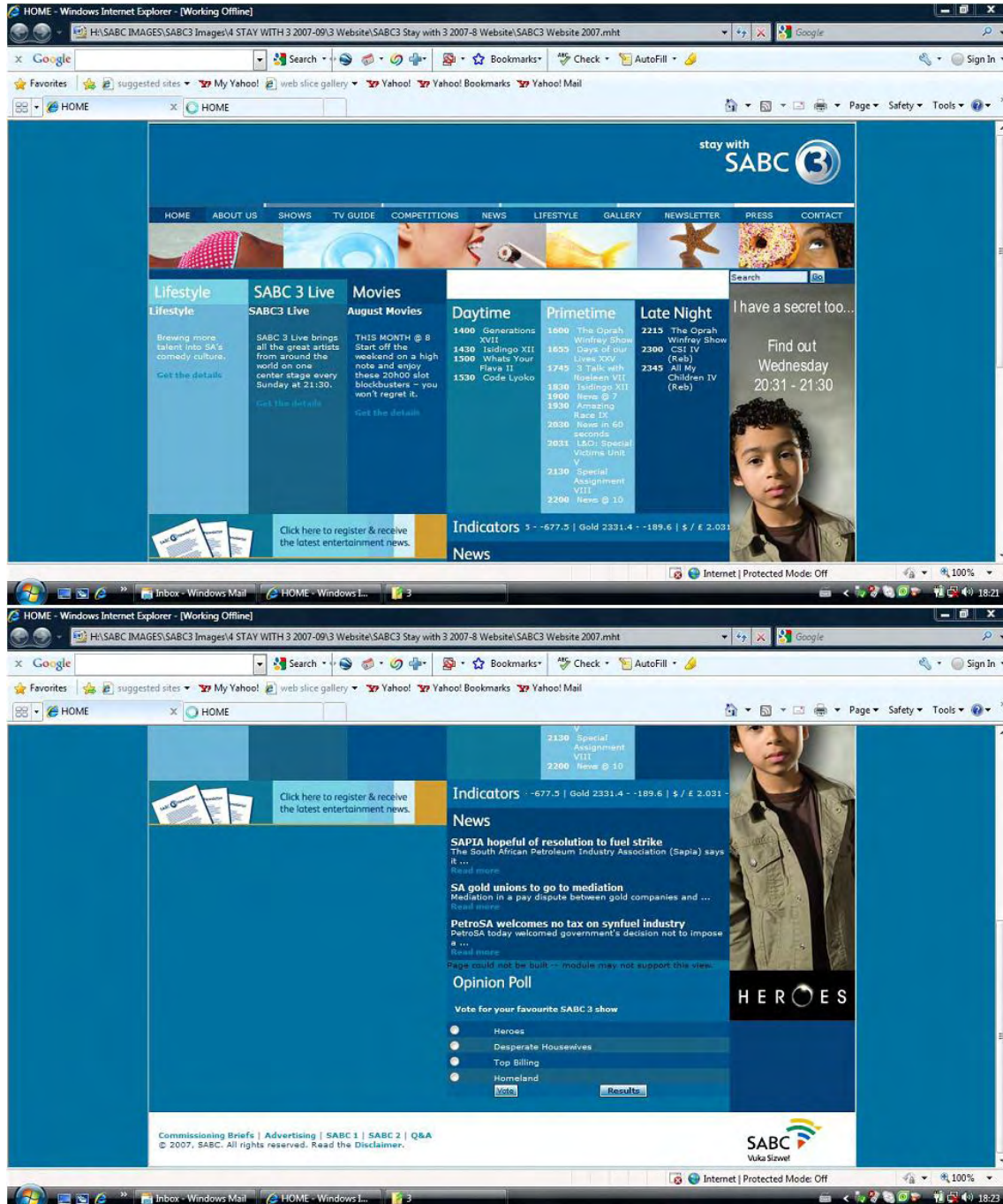


Figure 93: SABC3 website, 2007.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

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

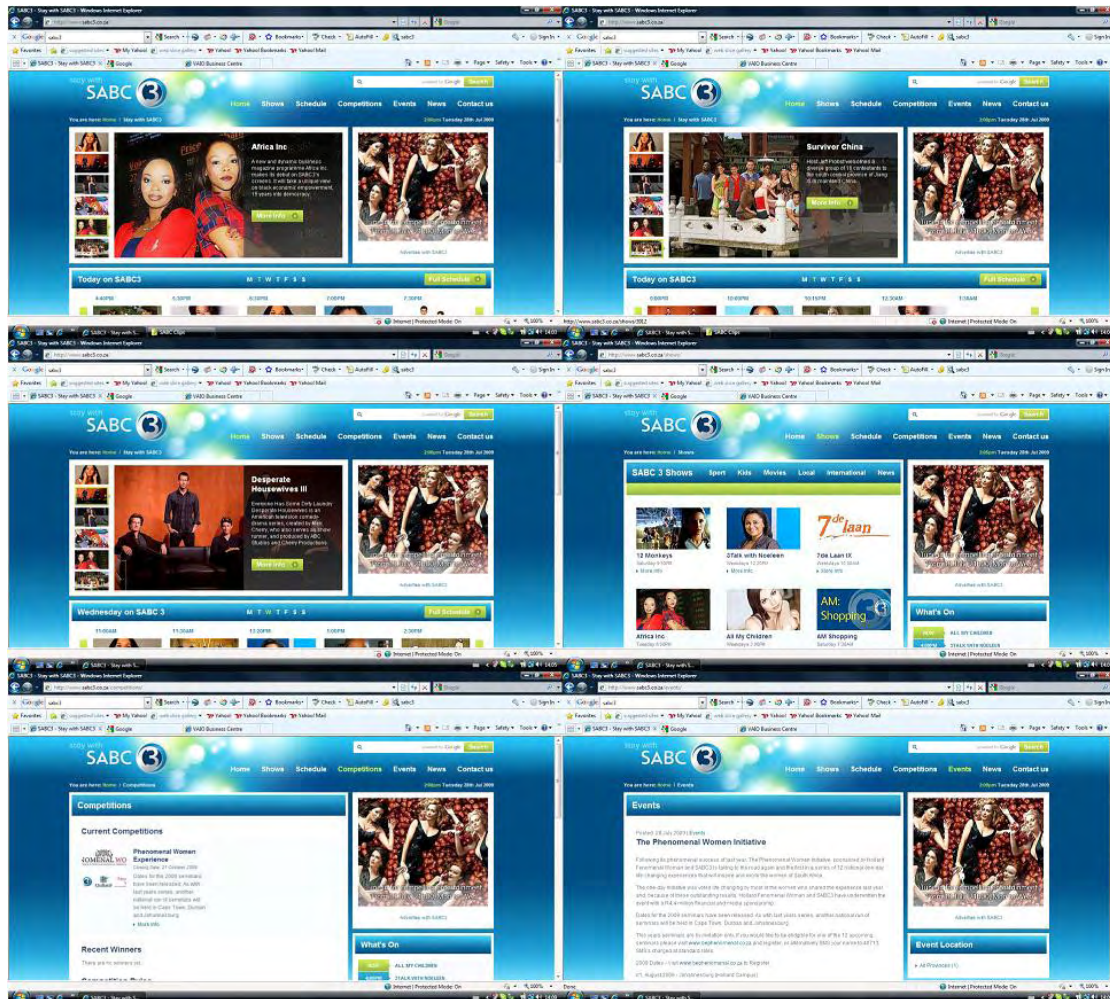


Figure 94: SABC3 website, 2009.
(Web grabs, photographed by author.)

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

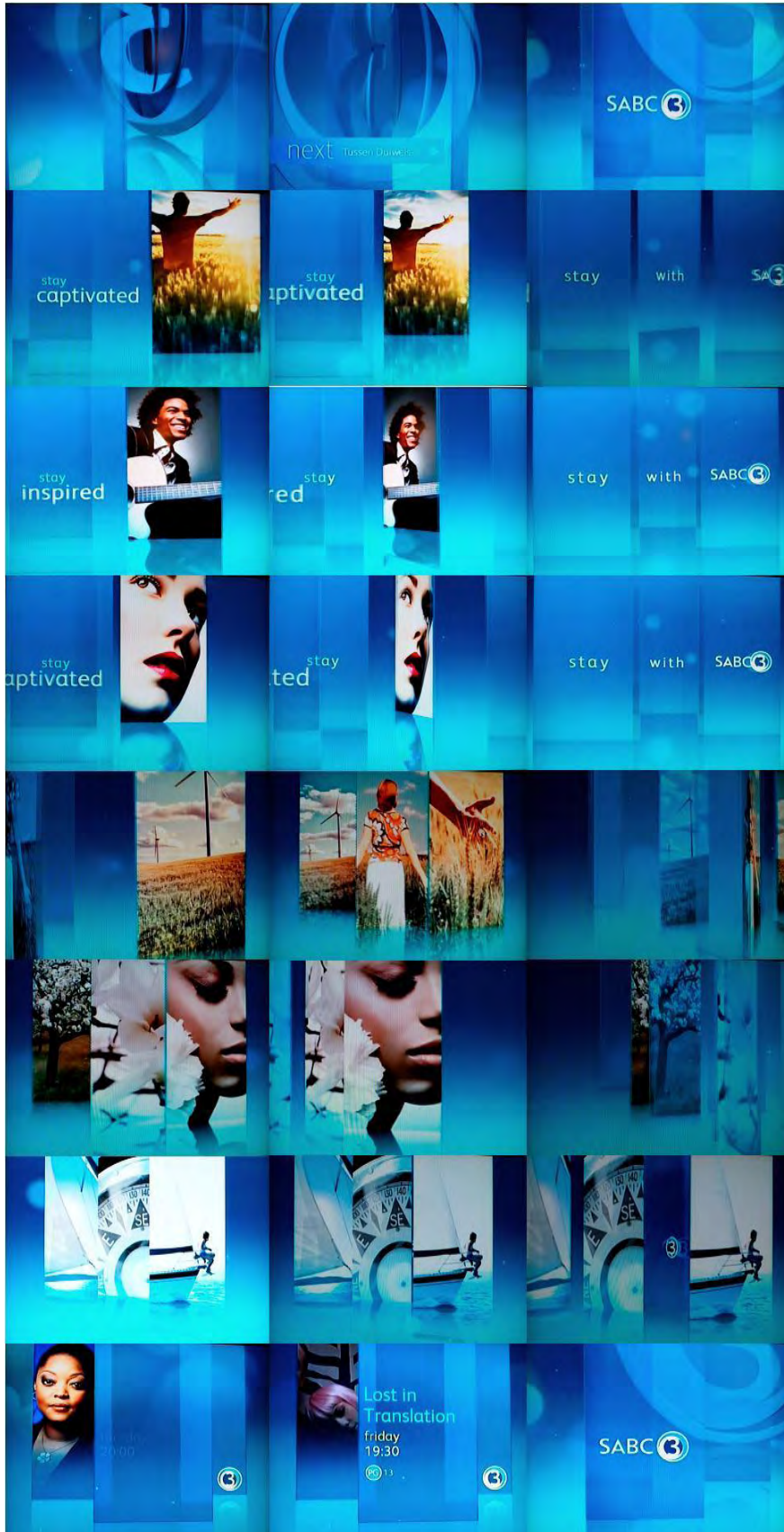


Figure 95: SABC3 renewed idents, 2009.
(Screen grabs, photographed by author.)

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

4.5.2 Ideology and myth in the SABC3 brand identity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.6 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by firstly providing a summary of the main points addressed in each chapter. Each chapter's main topics, theories and findings are reiterated here, and thereby draw together the findings made in the previous chapters. The final chapter highlights the contributions of the study and expresses its significance. The chapter also indicates some of the limitations of the study and makes suggestions and recommendations in terms of further research.

5.2 Summary of chapters

The first chapter provided a brief introduction of the SABC television channels and their location within the South African television environment. The chapter also contextualised the television channels within South African culture and within academic discourse that engages cultural forms in a political manner. It also indicated that this study of the brand identities of the SABC television channels is situated in the field of Visual Studies.

The first chapter suggested that brands, and television channel brands in particular, are powerful metaphors that allow the communication of complex theories, and contribute to the manner in which people think about their society and their national, cultural and personal identities. The chapter put forward the idea that post-apartheid television continues to be structured around the differences in race, class, wealth, culture and language, for example. The dissertation maintains that the SABC organises, defines and addresses audience members according to different groups, and that these structures and definitions are indicators of the importance of the media in the construction of national, cultural and personal identities.

The second chapter highlighted the different power relations in the South African media and in the SABC in particular. It briefly mapped the historical changes and shifts of power in the SABC and in its television channels. The chapter also explored ideology

theory from a historical perspective, thereby discussing key concepts in ideology theory alongside developments in South African television in a chronological manner. The main concepts and theories of ideology discourse were divided into four chronological categories and explored simultaneously with four major phases (or decades) in South African television history to illustrate the main principles and ideas of ideology theory and their relevance in terms of South African national television.

Classical Marxist notions of ideology, such as the base/superstructure model and the idea of false consciousness, were explored alongside discussions on the apartheid economic system and the delay in starting a television service in South Africa only in the 1970s. Neo-Marxist concepts of ideology and the concepts of Ideological State Apparatuses and hegemony were explored together with South African television in the 1980s when the SABC was criticised for being an apartheid mouthpiece. In spite of this, black and white viewers accepted the SABC's division of so-called 'black' channels (TV2, TV3 and TV4) and 'white' channels (TV1), so that consent was won and the convention agreed upon to divide the audience according to race and language.

A Cultural Studies approach to ideology was explored together with SABC television during the 1990s. In both areas active attempts were made to include marginalised and disempowered groups. Race and gender issues, in addition to class, were addressed by the CCCS. The developments in legislation of South African broadcasting indicate a similar strategy to be more inclusive of different classes, genders, races, languages and ethnicities, for example. The idea of preferred reading indicates that there are inherent power and ideology structures in television and that television representation creates maps of social reality (Hall 1999:513). The channels were re-launched in the 1990s according to the new maps of reality created by the emergence of a new, post-apartheid country.

Chapter Two also explored postmodern notions of ideology in relation to developments in South African broadcasting in the decade 2000 to 2009. The structuring of television channels and their brands became increasingly abstract and fragmented in this decade, and ideologies were ascribed to the viewer's individual conglomeration of images and attitudes gathered and incorporated from the social environment (Hawkes 1996:1). The chapter also explored Barthes' (1972) notion of myth whereby social

codes and conventions are constructed to uphold ideological messages. The chapter also highlighted the importance of myth in the maintenance of ideological power structures in a society where identities are fragmented and where maps of social reality become mere image and representation.

The third chapter introduced brands and corporate identity as key characteristics of the society of the spectacle, where the brand image can carry significant economic weight. Chapter Three explored various concepts from the theory and practice of brands and branding, and created an interdisciplinary link with social semiotic theory that focused on the form and social meanings of cultural artefacts such as brands. The chapter also indicated that the meanings of brands and their use evolved from functional to emotional, and ultimately inspirational branding, and increasingly focused on the needs and concerns of the consumer to achieve self-actualisation. Key concepts and definitions in branding were addressed in terms of their position within the communicative process or semiosis of branding. The on-air elements of television branding were explored as a particular instance of branding with its own methods and terminology. The seminal definitions, terms and typologies of Meech (1996; 1999 & 2001) and Bellamy and Traud (2000) were particularly valuable in this regard.

Chapter Three explored the three components of semiotics, namely signs, codes and meanings. The chapter discussed the signs, codes and meanings specific to branding as a process of semiosis. The definition of the sign was equated to the definition of a brand, and similarities were highlighted between the Peircian notion of the sign, interpretant and referent or object, and the corporate identity, corporate image and the actual organisation. The codes and conventions of television channel branding were explored in terms of the flow in television broadcasting. Concepts of meanings and the layered structure thereof were explored in relation to the ideas of denotation, connotation, myth and ideology as distinct levels in the structure of meaning. Lastly, Chapter Three compared the structural framework for the process of ideology, semiosis and branding and indicated the similarities between these three structures.

The fourth chapter started by contemplating the ideological implications of television channels and broadcast institutions that function as pedagogical narrators. The channel positions itself as an authoritative voice while constituting its viewers as subjects. The brand identity functions as a narrative voice, thereby personifying the

television channel and providing the context for the programming content. It was also noted that the visual codes of television branding identify a television channel in the same way in which people identify others by paying attention to their hair colour, facial features, voices and dress styles.

The main body of Chapter Four engaged in the critical exploration of the visual brand identities of each national SABC television channel during the decade 2000 to 2009. Each channel was briefly introduced, and was followed by a discussion of the visual signs and codes of the channel's brand identity. The changes in the visual signs and codes of the channel branding were followed in a chronological manner so that the brand identities corresponding to the corporatisation of the SABC were explored first. Interim changes according to special events were explored thereafter, followed by the changes that coincided with the implementation of suggestions regarding the segmentation of audiences in terms of attitudes (Introducing ... 2008). The meanings in the brand identities of each channel were explored first on the level of denotation and connotation, thereby focusing on the visual signs and codes of each channel, and were followed by a deeper exploration of meaning on the levels of myth and ideology.

The brand identity of each channel was explored in terms of its logo, colours, fonts, slogans, dogs, idents, advertisements and websites. The largest amount of 'brandcasting' that occurs on television is in the form of idents. It is further noted that the channels use a variety of sets of idents or stings with different functions, and these include brand identification and endorsement idents, hailing idents, break-bumpers, daytime idents, genre idents, forthcoming attractions and menu idents, special promotion idents (specials), announcement idents, clock idents, branded news idents and branded programme idents. The chapter contended that the sequences in junctions depicting continuity presenters are idents too, since they provide a sense of narration, identification and personification of the channel.

Chapter Four explored the *Ya mampela* and *Mzansi fo sho* brand identities of the SABC1 that were launched in 2003 and 2007 respectively. The *Ya mampela* visual brand identity utilised visual signs and codes associated with South African youth subcultures, youth resistance, hip-hop graffiti art, resistance posters, culture jamming and social realism. The branding aimed to portray the channel as an authentic revolutionary leader. It was found that some members of the channel's targeted

audience experienced alienation due to its rebellious youth proposition and its strong Gauteng influence. Accordingly, the SABC1 repositioned itself with a new *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity, launched in 2007. The new *Mzansi fo sho* brand identity aimed to broaden its audience appeal to include a wider audience in terms of age, class and location (but not race, as it continues to cater for almost exclusively 'black' viewers). Both brand identities contribute to a specific, vernacular visual vocabulary which includes iconic signs such as street art; graffiti; cityscapes; rural landscapes; townships; various modes of transport such as taxis, buses, luxury cars and bicycles; lampposts; electricity pylons and telephone poles; skyscrapers; street dancers and music speakers to name a few.

On a deeper level, Chapter Four argued that the SABC1 capitalised on the notion of the youth as trouble (*Ya mampela* brand identity) and the youth as fun (*Mzansi fo sho* brand identity). It argued that the *Ya mampela* brand identity deliberately created a style that connotes youth resistance, but argued that the idea of youth resistance, as perpetuated by the *Ya mampela* brand identity, is a myth. The channel's rebellious aesthetics were an ideologically inspired mechanism that ensured subordination to the norm and the current status quo. Visually the brand appeared as a site of resistance, but it was not, since it was a visual style emptied of its original meaning in order to commodify the discourse of struggle. Another myth of authenticity was also implied in the SABC1 branding. The authenticity of the brand was deliberately constructed and became a question of image and appearance. The chapter argued that the 'real' is an impossible state to attain and instead, the 'real' in the SABC1 brand identity became a simulated one, mediated by language and a strategically designed brand identity. Chapter Four also highlighted the channel's association with social realism in the Brechtian sense, and to the ideology of populism. The chapter argued that the SABC1 supported the ideology of populism in its dissemination of the rhetoric of struggle. It was contended that the rhetoric of struggle was used as a mechanism to ensure the subordination of the people it was supposed to liberate, and that populism thereby functions ideologically by masking the real relations of power.

The *Feel at home* brand identity of the SABC2 remained quite similar throughout its visual changes in 2002, 2006 and 2007. Some of the visual signs and codes remained the same, for example the channel colours, logo, slogan, motif of the brushstroke, national symbols like the protea and the South African flag. The visual signs and codes

aimed to communicate a sense of national unity and a notion of the national and domestic family. The vernacular visual vocabulary of the SABC2 includes artistic brushstrokes, cityscapes and landscapes, a variety of dwellings, especially *rondavels* (huts), smiling faces of various races, protea and strelitzia flowers, baobab trees and thorn trees, vintage bicycles, films strips, telephone poles and wind pumps. Whereas the SABC1 reflected a sense of pessimism, the SABC2 created a sense of exaggerated optimism, harmony and unity. Illustrations were depicted in a painterly manner, perhaps aiming to illustrate the broad South African canvas of various people and diverse landscapes.

On the deeper levels of myth and ideology, one can say that the SABC2 supports the myth of the 'rainbow nation'. Chapter Four explored the metaphor of the 'rainbow nation' and the connotations it carries. The chapter argued that the SABC2 and its myth of the 'rainbow nation' construct a utopian sense of national identity. It was argued that Benedict Anderson's (1991) concept of an "imagined community" can be associated with the SABC2 channel in its aim to create the idea of a shared, national identity. Both the myth of the 'rainbow nation' and the concept of an imagined community support the ideology of nationalism. It was argued that the metaphor of the 'rainbow nation' is a rhetorical device that aims to unify cultural diversity in a manner that ignores issues of wealth and class through a superficial focus on race. The 'rainbow nation' metaphor is thus a diversion that artificially prioritises the importance and acceptance of racial diversity to mask the differences in power and in wealth. It also masks the ruling class imperative of the ANC to secure wealth and power for the emergent black elite. The utilisation of the 'rainbow nation' rhetoric and its emphasis on national identity fails to address important social issues, and instead of recognising such issues, it glosses over them, preferring to provide a pretty picture of the new national family.

Similar to the SABC2, SABC3 also experienced three changes in its brand identity, but visual changes were more distinct in the latter than in the former. Changes in the SABC3 occurred in line with the SABC strategies of corporatisation in 2002 and 2003, and a renewed understanding and definition of audiences and their attitudes in 2007. Interim changes to its visual brand identity occurred in 2005, but all the changes were visual and the underlying brand strategy remained the same. In 2003 the channel's slogan proclaimed itself as *Much better*, and in 2007 the channel inspired a sense of

audience engagement and loyalty with its slogan *Stay with 3*. The SABC3 brand elements are more abstract than the other channels, and the few representational brand elements include people participating in leisure activities. Chapter Four noted that, in spite of its visual changes, the visual signs and codes in the SABC3 brand identity continue to connote class, sophistication, superior quality, cosmopolitanism, stability, inspiration, leisure, success and innovation.

On the level of myth and ideology, Chapter Four argued that the SABC3 brand can be associated with Veblen's (1912) notions of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. The chapter contended that the SABC3 brand supports the myth of a leisured lifestyle. The concepts of leisure and lifestyle are social constructions that support the aim of capitalism to encourage conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. This has ideological implications since it furthers the goals of those in positions of wealth and power, while exploiting the subordinate classes. The idea of a leisured lifestyle is propagated as an ideal to aspire towards, and in the current economic situation is a reality that eludes the vast majority of South Africans. It thus creates a separation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in South Africa, thereby fuelling tensions between different classes. It is argued that the SABC3 and its brand identity support the ideology of capitalist materialism.

It appears as if the ideologies and myths behind the SABC1 and SABC2 brand identities are in contrast with each other, each upholding its own version of a new South Africa. The chapter argued that each SABC television channel communicates messages that disseminate specific myths that are prevalent in contemporary South Africa. These myths also support different ideologies.

From the exploration of the messages, myths and ideologies communicated by the SABC television channels, it became apparent that four major ideologies dominate political discourse and became part of the national and cultural rhetoric of a post-apartheid South African nation. From the exploration of the SABC Africa channel, it appears that the myth of African Renaissance supports the cultural imperialism and influence of South African culture on the rest of its African neighbours. The SABC1 channel indicates that the myth of youth resistance and the myth of authenticity support populist ideologies and propagate social action based on populist sentiments. In opposition to SABC1's seeming support of a populist democracy, the SABC2 channel

supports a pluralist democracy. It was argued that the myth of the 'rainbow nation' and the idea of an imagined community further the nationalist ideals and ideologies of a unified nationalism based on unity in diversity. The SABC3 channel appears to support the notions of leisure and lifestyle, thereby encouraging conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure (Veblen 1912). It was argued that the myth of a leisured lifestyle is a current trend that supports the ideology held by capitalist materialism.

5.3 Contributions of study

The study contributes to the academic knowledge and research available regarding South African mass media. Very little research exists on the recent changes and developments of the SABC television channels. While most sources, including those of Teer-Tomaselli (1998, 2001), Mersham (1998), Wigston (2001), Jacobs (2003) and Fourie (1996, 2001, 2003) accurately describe the channels and their transformations in 1996, fewer authors note the changes in the channels during the phase of the corporatisation of the SABC in 2002 to 2003. At the time of writing, no academic work existed on the changes in SABC television channels or South African television in general since 2007. This study aimed to contribute to filling the gap with regard to academic research that addresses the recent changes in the SABC and its television channels.

The dissertation additionally contributes towards a theoretical model by which brands, and particularly television brands, can be explored in a manner that links various academic fields. It was suggested that semiotics and ideology theory are useful frameworks whereby television brands can be explored, thus transgressing the boundaries imposed by the traditional marketing or design fields of academic inquiry.

The study further contributes to a currently scarce opus of academic research regarding television channel branding. While some sources address the theoretical and economic principles and practices of television branding, for example Chan-Olmsted and Kim (2001), McDowell and Batten (2005), Eastman (2000), Bellamy and Traud (2000) and Elen (2003), very few of them simultaneously engage visual examples of television channel branding. It was argued that corporate strategy is revealed by the design of the television channel brands, and that the visual brand identities of television channels are rich sources of cultural symbols and national discourse. The work of

Lambie-Nairn (1997), Meech (1996, 1999 and 2001) and Lloyd (2002) appear to be the first to address the visual aspects of television channel branding in an academic manner.

Few of the sources consulted consider the implications of television channels and their visual brand identities regarding the economic and cultural platforms of society; that is the base and superstructure. This dissertation highlights the ideological implication of audience segmentation that constructs a commodity to sell to advertisers, and also indicates the power struggles that may be present in such processes of viewer segmentation and definition. The contribution that semiotics can make to construct and to interpret or understand television channel brands was further emphasised, and the value of television brands in terms of their cultural and economic contributions are accentuated by this study.

In all the SABC television channels, the seemingly contrasting political ideologies of cultural imperialism, populism, nationalism and capitalist materialism came to the fore. This indicates the varied ideas that exist regarding concepts of a new South Africa and also highlights the differences in the myths and messages that are communicated in popular discourse. The brand identities illustrate how different maps of meaning are created, and the manner in which those meanings have been communicated by each channel.

The study furthermore contributed by showing which ideologies and myths are communicated to which language, cultural, ethnic and class groups in South Africa. The study observes that, in order to maintain the status quo, it appears necessary for the ANC to communicate and propagate various myths and ideologies to different groups of people. In this way things are not much different from the manner in which apartheid television produced different news bulletins and produced different stories to tell to different groups of people. In many ways apartheid logic continues to dominate with regard to the division of channels and their audiences in terms of race, language, class, geographic location and culture.

The new audience segmentation of the SABC partly addresses this matter with an improved endeavour to determine audience segments in terms of their attitude rather than their living standards, income, ethnicity or language. Even though new

segmentation models have been implemented and the brand identities adjusted, the SABC and their television channels seem to retain the original meanings that were associated with the brands since their inception.

In a general sense, the study indicates the manner in which popular culture can be analysed in order to discover the hidden meanings and ideologies within such cultural and representational forms. The study delineated a need for critical analyses and debate of seemingly unimportant and unnoticed cultural artefacts such as television channel brands. The studies of popular culture and also seemingly unimportant cultural artefacts may contribute to the understanding of South African myths and ideologies perpetuated by the media. The rich illustration of various myths and ideologies that appear in the SABC television channel brands appear to be unique to South African television; a tendency perhaps set in motion by the transformation of an apartheid nation to a democratic one.

5.4 Limitations of study

The first chapter indicated that SABC Africa can be explored in the same possible depth as SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3, but this has been omitted owing to restrictions in space. The addition of the SABC Africa channel may further contribute to the visual vocabulary, metaphors, myths and ideologies disseminated by the ANC which can be associated with a new South Africa and the idea of the African Renaissance in particular.

Sources and information regarding the SABC and its television channel brands are limited to the biased annual reports, websites, and press releases published by the SABC regarding the changes within the broadcasting environment and are loaded with marketing 'spin'. Clearer insight may be gained into the SABC television channels and their brand identities by interviewing the appropriate on-air managers, brand managers and general managers of the SABC channels, and perhaps also the design and marketing companies responsible for the creation of the visual brand identities. This was, however, impossible to organise owing to multiple rejections of requests to interview managers as a result of their own time restrictions.

A major limitation was the restriction in space. The myths and ideologies in the SABC channel brand identities have been analysed and engaged with rather superficially and may be analysed in much greater detail with the improved incorporation of theories related to the myths and ideologies espoused by each channel. It would be possible to dedicate whole chapters to each of the channels, thereby detailing the various brand elements, signs, codes, and also the meanings, connotations, myths and ideologies that can be associated with the channels.

The study is also limited in the sense that it did not mention any of the brand identities of the other South African television channels, and did not make any comparisons with other channels from other broadcast institutions. An exploration of the brand identities of other channels may give a clearer impression of the SABC channels and their position in the larger context of South African television.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

A first recommendation is a more in-depth study of each SABC television channel and the manner in which the channels and their brand identities have been constructed and represented visually. A more detailed exploration would benefit from the inclusion of additional visual examples of the television channels and their brand identities, and it would expand the theories and concepts potentially associated with the myths and ideologies advocated by each channel. It could thus be possible to unpack the theories in a more detailed and logical manner, thereby lessening the likelihood of superficial analysis of the potential myths and ideologies of the television channels. The author is nonetheless confident that the findings expressed in this dissertation will be upheld, even within a more comprehensive dissertation.

The inclusion of contributions and opinions of the brand managers, on-air managers and general managers, together with the contributions and perspectives of design companies, could contribute positively to the research of television channel brand identities. In a similar fashion, clearer insight into the meaning of SABC television channels may be gained from interviews of audience members to establish the manner in which audiences interpret and make sense of television channel brand identities, how viewers perceive such brands, and their influence on the construction of their own cultural, national and personal identities.

Furthermore, it would be valuable to explore the brand identities of other television channels, especially other popular television channels such as M-Net and E-TV. Research regarding the other channels and their brand identities may provide a clearer knowledge of the South African television environment, and the manner in which the various television channels are constructed and defined, and the manner in which, in turn, the channels define their audiences. An exploration of channels other than the national television channels may indicate the power relations of South African media as a whole.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The division of audience members into distinctive groups is not necessarily a negative concept. It is an almost natural result of the structuring of media markets in a competitive multichannel environment. However, it becomes a concern when viewers are organised and addressed in a manner that marginalises some viewers and imposes seemingly complimentary definitions on others.

It is also not necessarily negative that conflicting ideologies and myths are communicated by the media. On the contrary, it is an indication of a democratic society that allows the expression of various and sometimes conflicting ideas. It does become a concern when different opinions are expressed in such a manner that deliberately evokes conflict and racism. Instead, opposite views and opinions should be allowed in an objective and equal manner by the media. Language is an important aspect of national discourse, as it is disseminated by the media, and should be carefully considered so that it may be respectful of differing views.

In a world that is still heavily defined by dichotomies, it seems natural that oppositions and contrasts may exist. In South Africa such dualities appear more intense so that the differences between black and white, rich and poor, right wing and left wing, peace and violence, and ubuntu and corruption fed by selfish greed, to name a few, are in starker contrast with each other. The underlying cause of conflict between dualities lies in the cycle of dominance and submission that seems apparent in the social structure. The only way to break the cycle of dominance or submission is to refuse the positions of dominance or submission. In other words, the cycle will not be broken by electing new

political parties – even though they may have wonderful policies or leaders – since allowing that party to dominate will enable the cycle of dominance and submission to continue. The cycle of dominance and submission will be broken when the submissive ones (however they may be defined at a particular point) are taken aboard and included so that everyone can move forward together and on equal terms, without any dominance or submission that goes on (Deutschmann 2008).¹

The rhetoric of struggle and the metaphors and myths that support ideologies of dominance and submission “grip our imagination, and, for a time, govern our thinking about scenarios and possibilities of cultural transformation, [but hopefully they eventually] give way to new metaphors, which make us think about these difficult questions in new terms” (Hall 1996f:287).

¹ The ideas in this paragraph are borrowed from Angela Deutschmann (2008), a spiritual teacher and writer based in Johannesburg. The particular angle of her writing with regard to current situations that influence people’s lives is particularly insightful.

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APPENDIX 1: Chronological overview of changes in the SABC television channels

	SABC 1	SABC2	SABC3	SABC Africa
1980s	<p>This was the second South African television channel. On 1 January 1982 the new channel TV2/3 was launched together, with TV2 broadcasting in the Nguni languages and TV3 in the Sesotho languages (Mersham 1998:212). In 1984 TV4 was launched as additional entertainment service with mostly English programmes (Mersham 1998:212). On 30 March 1985 TV2/3 split into two separate channels (Orgeret 2004:150).</p>	<p>The first South African television channel, TV1, was officially inaugurated on 5 January 1976. The channel started with 37 hours of programmes per week broadcasting in English and Afrikaans (Wigston 2004:12). It continued to broadcast in English and Afrikaans in the 1980s, and the expansion of TV2/TV3 thus positioned TV1 as the dominant channel (Alexander & Heugh 2001:20).</p>	<p>This channel did not exist until the 1990s.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>This channel did not exist until the 1990s.</p>
1990s	<p>In January 1992 the existing TV2, TV3 and TV4 channels merged into a singular multicultural channel called CCV-TV (Contemporary Community Values Television) (Mersham 1998:213).</p> <hr/> <p>On 4 February 1996 CCV-TV was relaunched as SABC1, and was branded with the slogan Simunye, We Are One (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131). SABC1 with the largest signal distribution broadcasts in the Nguni family of languages (isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele and isiSwati) interspersed with English (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>This channel was known as TV1 from the 1970s to the early 1990s and continued to broadcast in both Afrikaans and English.</p> <hr/> <p>On 4 February 1996 TV1 relaunched as SABC2 and was popularised with the catch-phrase Come Alive With Us (Wigston 1999:33). SABC2 has a strong signal distribution in the northern part of the country and broadcasts in the Sesotho family of languages (Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi), Xitsonga, TshiVenda and Afrikaans (Wigston 1999:33).</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>This channel was launched as the TSS (Top Sport Surplus) channel in 1990, carrying sports programmes that could not be accommodated by the TV1 schedule (Mersham 1998:212). On 11 February 1994 the TSS channel was discontinued and replaced by NNTV (National Network Television), an alternative channel providing a platform for free speech and democratic, non-racist standards (Mersham 1998:212-213).</p> <hr/> <p>On 4 February 1996 NNTV was relaunched as SABC3, an all-English channel catering for a more upwardly mobile audience, and branded as Quality Shows (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:131). The channel had the smallest signal footprint covering predominantly urban areas (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).</p>	<p>The SABC launched two pay-television channels on 16 November 1998. SABC Africa offered 24 hours of news and information, while Africa-to-Africa was an entertainment channel (Wigston 2004:34).</p>

	SABC 1	SABC2	SABC3	SABC Africa
2000s	<p>Following the corporatisation of the SABC during 2002-2003, the new brand positioning campaign of SABC1 was launched on 18 August 2003 (De Jager 2003:1). With a new logo and consumer pay-off line, Ya Mampela, this campaign is aimed at a youthful market and broadcasts in the same languages than it did in the 1990s (Orgeret 2004:156).</p>  	<p>The new brand positioning of SABC2 was launched on 18 November 2002 with a new slogan Feel at Home (Mediatoolbox 2002).</p> 	<p>The SABC re-branded its television channels in line with new strategies following the corporatisation of the SABC in 2002 to 2003. The SABC3 re-branding included a new slogan proclaiming that the channel is Much Better.</p>  	<p>SABC Africa was relaunched on 1 April 2003. The Africa-to-Africa channel was terminated at the end of March when it was merged with SABC Africa into a channel with a new look, broadcasting news and entertainment programmes.</p>   
	<p>On 4 April 2007 SABC1 unveiled the revitalisation of its brand identity, repositioning itself with the colloquialism Mzansi fo sho.</p>   	<p>During 2006 SABC2 slightly changed the channel idents to accommodate the channel's 10 year celebrations.</p>  	<p>During 2005 the channel changed its look with a new platinum logo, website and idents.</p> 	<p>SABC Africa was discontinued on 1 August 2008 (Mochiko 2008).</p> 
		<p>In 2007 SABC2 slightly changed the idents again, although predominantly, the visual identity and the slogan remained the same as the one launched in 2002. In 2007 the SABC2 continues to broadcast in the same languages as it did in 1996.</p>  	<p>On 26 July 2007 the SABC3 was re-launched with the tagline Stay with 3. The new brand identity includes a new logo, website and new channel idents in a more informal style. SABC3 continues to broadcast in English. From April 2009 the channel additionally broadcast some Afrikaans programmes.</p>  	

APPENDIX 2:

Visual overview of changes in the SABC television channel brand identities



SABC1 Brand Identity 2003-2007

SABC 1
YA MAMPALA

The *Ya Mampela* brand identity was launched on 18 August 2003. This brand identity follows after the *Simunye* identity created in 1996. The channel is aimed at a youthful market and broadcasts in isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele and isiSwati interspersed with English (Teer-Tomaselli 2001:118).



SABC1 Brand Identity 2007-2009

SABC 1
Mzansi fo sho

On 4 April 2007 SABC1 unveiled the revitalization of its brand identity, repositioning itself with the colloquialism *Mzansi fo sho*.



SABC2 Brand identity 2002-2006



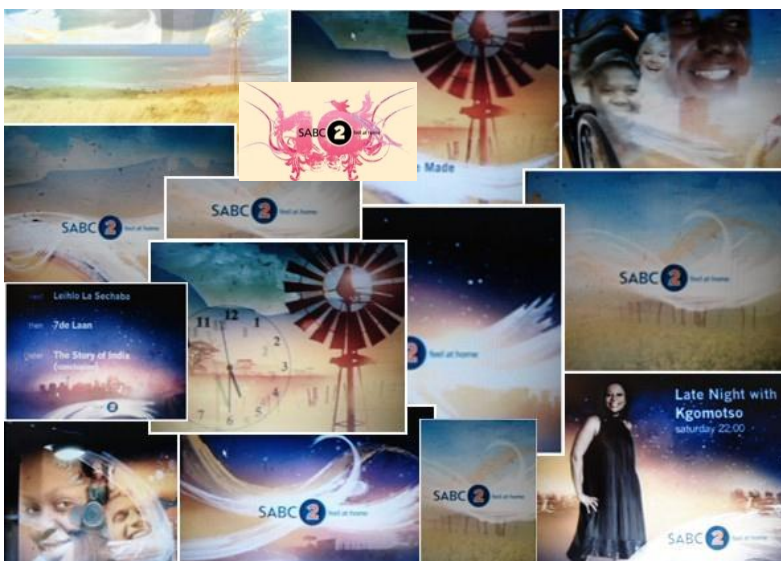
The *Feel at Home* brand positioning campaign of SABC2 was launched on 18 November 2002 (Mediatoolbox 2002). This new brand identity replaced its predecessor, the *Come Alive with Us* brand identity. The channel broadcasts in Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans (Wigston 1993:33).



SABC2 Brand identity 2006



During 2006 SABC2 changed the on-air look of the channel to accommodate the specials for the channel's 10 year celebrations. The basic elements such as the logo, slogan (*Feel at home*) and colours remained the same.



SABC2 Brand identity 2007-2009



The on-air look of SABC2 changed again in 2007, and during 2007-2009 the channel revamped the brand identity. The SABC2 logo and the *Feel at home* slogan remained the same. The colours of the idents were adjusted to create daytime and night time idents depicting South African landscapes. This was part of the repositioning campaign of the channel as the "Station for the Nation" in May 2008.



SABC3 Brand identity 2002-2005



The SABC3 *Much Better* brand identity was the result of the rebranding of the three SABC channels during 2002 and 2003. This brand identity replaced the *Quality Shows* identity created in 1996.



SABC3 Brand identity 2005-2007



During 2005 the channel changed its look with a new platinum logo, website and idents. The channel was not allowed to use the *Much Better* slogan during this period, so the channel had no pay-off line during this time.



SABC3 Brand identity 2007-2009




On 26 July 2007 SABC3 was re-launched with the new tagline *Stay with SABC3*. The new brand identity includes a new logo, website and new channel idents in a more informal style. SABC3 continues to broadcast in English.

APPENDIX 3:

The attitude segments according to the SABC's audience segmentation model.
(Introducing ... 2008:8-13).

Nation Builders




Nation Builders are the cheerleaders of South Africa. They are defined by their cultural customs and traditions. Community, culture and family are very important to them. They believe that education is key to personal advancement. They are optimistic and interested in the happenings of the country. The concept of Ubuntu is alive and well.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- Mostly aged 35+ and in lower to middle LSM's
- Whites are least represented; largely urban
- Fair spread of African languages
- Are most patriotic segment; outspoken on moral issues
- Intense interest and involvement in community affairs
- Place emphasis on cultural activities & are defined by customs and traditions
- Home language is important to them
- Forward thinking particularly in matters relating to the country
- Have an understanding of the nation's history

Media Value

Population ('000)	6,063 (07A)	5,450 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	741	712
Ad Spend (% total)	19.5%	18.7%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	122	131



nation builders

caring proud

Vision

The SABC will serve the Nation Builders through content that recognises and capitalises on the achievements of our democracy and gives space for national debate on important topics that affect their lives

Now Generation



The Now Generation is the young fibre of South Africa. They are highly materialistic and full of aspiration. Fashion and entertainment is high on their priority list. They are fast paced and greatly influenced by advertising. They do not believe that old ways are always the best, they are often first to try out new things. They love variety and choice.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- Age 16-24 and some 25-34; Mostly Black; Predominantly in Urban and Small urban areas
- After celebrity, status and brands; Seeking identity
- Need approval/recognition; Segment is self-reliant
- There is a huge emotional need for safety, and the feeling that somebody is taking ownership of the problem
- Interested in a number of sport activities, for example soccer and basketball; Outdoor bodies
- Entertainment & friends are important to them
- Are conscious of the inequalities of the past especially with regards to jobs

Media Value

Population ('000)	6,561 (07A)	5,830 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	766	759
Ad Spend (% total)	20.12%	19.92%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	117	130



now generation

aspirations
fashion status

Vision

The SABC will serve the Now Generation with programming via TV, Radio and New Media that encourages self-growth and social responsibility in a way that is fun and entertaining, and which also entrenches cultural and national identity.

Survivors

Green Revolution
putting our Strategy into ACTION

The Survivors represent those people who are marginalised because of their very limited resources. They feel isolated and alienated by the general South African society. They have learnt to survive on their own as a result they are closer to their immediate community and environment. This segment strongly feels that efforts to alleviate poverty have not been successful. Their isolation makes them anxious about the present & long for the past.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- Aged 50+ and 16-24
- Mostly Black; Venda, Afrikaans and Xhosa
- Predominantly in rural areas
- Feel neglected by broader society
- Major lack of resources
- Highest rates of illiteracy & unemployment
- Take the most financial risks

Media Value

Population ('000)	3,227 (07A)	3,697 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	285	384
Ad Spend (% total)	7.47%	10.08%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	88	104



Vision

The SABC will serve the **Survivors** by providing differentiated content mainly on radio that recognises and addresses perceptions of alienation and embraces their need to be part of a broader South African society

Established

Green Revolution
putting our Strategy into ACTION

The Established wilfully isolate themselves from the broader society and often feel lonely as a result. The environment is important to them and they believe that not enough is being done to look after it. They are not easy adopters of modern technology. They are not particularly patriotic but committed to living in South Africa. They prefer 'outdoor lifestyle' and this comes from their standard of living.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- More older than younger
- Mostly White, coloured and Indian
- Predominantly English and Afrikaans
- Predominantly in Urban and Small Urban areas
- Withdraw themselves from immediate society
- Earthy people
- Conscious of environmental issues
- Prefer the "old way" of doing things
- Less hope about a shared future

Media Value

Population ('000)	2,749 (07A)	2,307 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	472	416
Ad Spend (% total)	12.40%	10.92%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	172	180



Vision

The SABC will serve the **Established** by providing differentiated content on TV, Radio and New Media that recognises and addresses perceptions of alienation and embraces their need to part of a broader South African society.

Global Citizens

Green Revolution

putting our Strategy into ACTION

Global Citizens represent innovation, wealth and technology. They live busy lives and seem to thrive at the next challenge. They do not like to be restricted by tradition and believe in equal opportunities for both men and women. This group of people is well travelled and therefore has a broad outlook in life.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- Strong in ages 16-24, but also have 25+; From mid to upper LSMs; Mainly Whites, Indians; Largely Urban suburbs; Highly educated
- Forward thinking and creative
- Strong spirit of entrepreneurship
- Well travelled and well read
- Individual oriented
- Confident in what they know and what they can do
- Heavy internet users
- Highly interested in a great variety of sport, particularly adventures sport
- Busy bodies.

Media Value

Population ('000)	5,558 (07A)	4,804 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	876	824
Ad Spend (% total)	22.99%	21.65%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	158	172



Vision

The SABC will serve the Global Citizens with TV, radio and new media services that bring the world to them while reminding them of all that is best about South Africa

Rooted

Green Revolution

putting our Strategy into ACTION

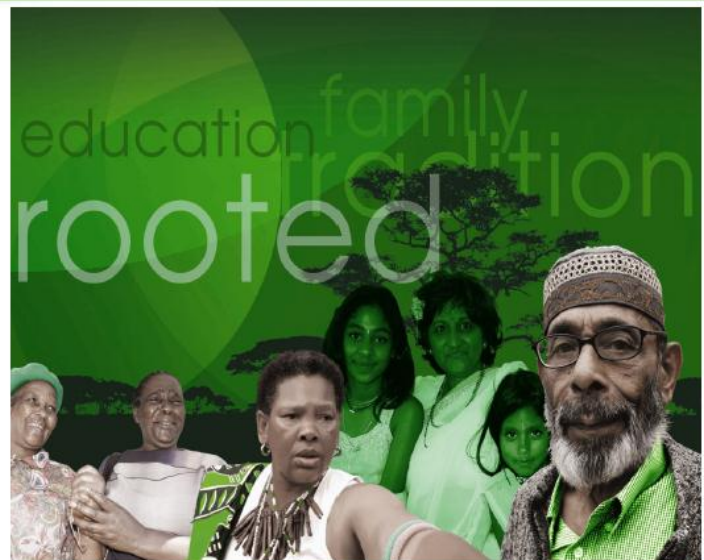
With mounting socio-economic pressures "The Rooted" have become increasingly concerned about crime, poverty and education. As a result they have become pragmatic about women also providing for their families. They continue however to have low expectations for the mutual benefits of community involvement.

Defining Demographics & Attributes

- Fairly spread across all demographics with high representation of Indians
- Not social activists
- Stability is important to them
- Like keeping it simple
- Literacy and education are linked to personal development
- Indoor types
- Jobs are for earning money and NOT for satisfaction
- Not at ease with technology but not afraid to use it
- Financially prudent & plan for the future

Media Value

Population ('000)	5,527 (07A)	4,824 (07B)
Ad Spend (Million Rand)	669	713
Ad Spend (% total)	17.56%	18.73%
Ad Spend per person (Rand)	121	148



Vision

The SABC will serve the Rooted through programmes on TV and radio that recognise the cultural richness and diversity of the South African audience while encouraging a sense of belonging